

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



**The Perfect Time For Zigs by Darrell Peck**  
**Ice Melt Success by Kev Hewitt**  
**Manor Monsters by Matt Miller**  
**How To Tie my Version of the D Rig by Scott Sweetman**  
**A Hat trick of SIXTIES! featuring Christopher Paschmanns**  
**The Norfolk Syndicate by Will Bale**  
**This Time Last Year featuring Billy Wells**  
**Riders of the Storm featuring Joe Venus**  
**Winter and Just Bitter by Michael Madeley**  
**Back out and doing it, and in some style too! by Scott Lloyd**  
**Burghfield by Elliott Gray**  
**Sandhurst Lake by Dale Turner**

**Day Ticket Monster by Joe Saliba**  
**The Special Old Ones (Part 02) by Vincent Cole**  
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**Lean Spell by Ryan Gibson**  
**Three Carp in 36 hours by Mick Dukes**  
**Looking Back by Dave Lane**  
**Looking Back Moving Forward by Rick Golder**



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# BIG CARP

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### Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

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5	ABBAY
6	LAC ROSE
7	BERNIERE
8	DREAM LAKES
9	LES QUIS
10	JONCHERY

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5	CC MOORE
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### Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies

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10	CHILTERN CUSTOM RODS

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3	YATELEY ANGLING CENTRE
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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!*



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# BC

ISSUE 332

## SPRING WATERCRAFT ISSUE

**Scott Lloyd**  
– Back Out  
There Doing It

**Darrell Peck**  
– The Perfect  
Time for Zigs

**Dale Turner**  
– Sandhurst

**Matt Miller**  
– Manor

**Elliott Gray**  
– Burghfield

**Scott Sweetman Gets Riggy**  
**Kev Hewitt – Ice Breaker**  
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## Spring Watercraft Issue

As show season comes to an end this weekend with The Big One in my home town of Farnborough, it's time to look forward to the clocks going forward at the end of the month. The days getting longer by about 30 minutes a week. Day and night time temperatures on the rise and the start of the most prolific and often devastating season of the year, Spring! Alleluia I hear you say. About time. Not that we have really suffered, weather wise this winter, other than a couple of cold weeks, it's been pretty mild throughout.

This month I have some Spring Watercraft and Tactics from some of the best in the sport. Anglers who have been consistent through the winter too. For instance, this month's cover star Scott Lloyd, who has been very successful over the past few months. Honestly I could have had him on the cover three times with what he has banked recently. The one I have chosen is a near 60lb common, just one of his recent accolades.

Darrell Peck returns this month, he too very successful recently, this month he looks at zigs, and he recons this is the perfect time of the year for them, and he would know! Scott Sweetman also returns this month to talk about rigs. In particular his very successful version of the D Rig. How to tie this devastating rig and get the best out of it. Deadly at this time of year and throughout.

Kev Hewitt has been catching a few, now the ice has melted on his chosen venue. While Joe Venus has banked a trio of clonkers once the storms subsided.

Next up, Sandhurst, Manor and Burghfield, three of the UK's most famous lakes. Three anglers, three great venues, it can only mean one thing! Big Carp on the bank for Dale Turner, Matt Miller and Elliott Gray.

Will Bale makes a welcome return this month with some memories from his Norfolk syndicate, while Billy Wells takes a look back at this time last year when he landed a monster common and a big hit of other fish.

Speaking of big hitters, there aren't many bigger than Christopher Paschmanns who recently landed a hat trick of sixty pounders!

Last but by no means least, the first of several articles by catching machine Mike Madeley, Mike catches them where ever he goes and is an active member of the British Armed Forces fishing division. We will hear more about them in coming months.

Finally, I have to mention this month's catch report section, all 26 pages of it! I said earlier it's been mild and my goodness, has there been some big carp being landed. You will not want to miss this, spectacular array of monsters!

Add to these some carpy humour, the latest news and reviews and this month's FANTASTIC FREE COMPETITION from Carp Life Competitions where you can win a ND BAIT BOAT!

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)

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WITHOUT YOUR INPUT THERE WILL BE NO MAGS!

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

*Rob Maylin*

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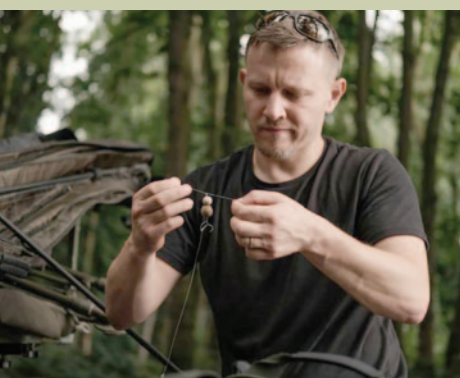
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**Front Cover**

Scott Lloyd 58lb 2oz common.



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# SWAN VALLEY COMPETITIONS



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### Rob's Recommendation:

"I fished Swan Valley for over two years and I can honestly say it was some of the most enjoyable fishing I have ever experienced. It's a beautiful lake offering great opportunities for stalking, floater fishing and traditional methods. The stock is incredible for a water of this size, with upwards of a dozen forties" with some quickly approaching 50lb. I would not be at all surprised to see the first Swan 50 come out this year. The recent opportunity to book the whole venue for a group of friends is a brilliant idea and is realistically priced. Check out the photo galleries on their website and Face Book and get booked up asap because there are vacancies for some great weeks available but it will soon get booked up, you won't regret it." (See also the chapters on Swan Valley in my book One Last Cast)

## SWAN VALLEY LAKE COMPETITIONS ENTER TO WIN

# catch

### LAKE BOOKINGS

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# ShockLeader

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

## Farnham Angling Society News

### A fantastic start to 2024 for FAS:

A merger of Farnham Angling Society with Cove Angling Society, resulting in an additional fishery within next seasons handbook.

Farnham Angling Society (FAS) is delighted to announce that we shall have ownership and stewardship of Chaley Park Fishery, Normandy (near Guildford), as a result Cove Angling Society(CAS) merging with FAS on 19th January 2024.

CAS believe that the merger is far and away the best course to ensure the future of the fishery. FAS paid no money for the fishery, which is now the property of FAS, but have agreed that the full CAS membership (57 members), will have free membership for the next 5-Yrs and that their 7 Executive Committee members will be given free Life Membership, in recognition of their dedication to CAS and work at the fishery over the last 25-Yrs.

FAS considers itself extremely fortunate to have received the approach from CAS, which initially came via Bob Hall our Match Secretary who regularly fishes the venue.

However, once the approach was made, no time was wasted in us discussing the possibility of a merger, establishing the desires of both parties, arranging a site meeting, undertaking due diligence and using both Fish Legal and local solicitors to prepare the Merger Agreement which has now been signed and completed.

Our thanks to Dave Wilkins, Rod Carroll, Paul White & Doug Arnold at CAS for their communications and



involvement in bringing this about.

Purely as a result of the appreciation of FAS's management of our Society and stewardship of our fisheries, CAS's executive committee's approach has led to FAS having obtained an excellently set up fishery, costing nothing but a small legal fee for arranging the merger documentation and a period of free membership for CAS members as detailed above.

It is good to know that our reputation as a well-run fishing club afforded us this golden opportunity, and better still to have secured a new fishery and extended our portfolio of FAS fisheries available to our members. We are delighted to advise that Chaley Park Lakes comprise a gated secure fishery with two well-stocked ponds of approximately 1.7 & 0.5 acres, which are oval in shape with large central islands offering 'canal' style fishing.

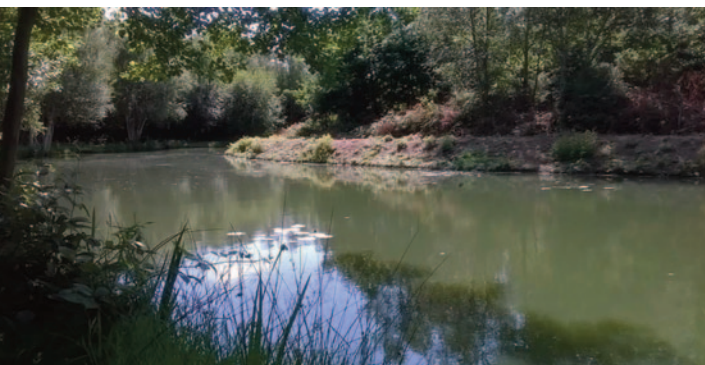
The larger lake has 36 pegs and offers a consistent average width of approximately 18-20m to the island, and has an average consistent depth

of 5' (1.5m). The smaller lake has 24 pegs and offers an average width of 12-14m, with an average and consistent depth of 4' (1.3m). Both of the ponds are well stocked and contain a mixed stock of Common and Mirror Carp to 15lb, Tench, Bream, Roach, Rudd, Perch, and a few Crucian Carp.

Summer matches are regularly won with 50lb +. The venue will host open matches every Thursday throughout the year from 7:30am – 5:30pm, with the larger lake also closed on some Sundays to visiting fishing clubs.

During these matches, one of the ponds will always be available for members to fish. Existing CAS bailiffs will work with our own, to bailiff the fishery and an existing maintenance contract will be maintained for the next 3-seasons. We hope you enjoy the new fishery, which will be available to our members to fish from 1st April 2024, with full details being included within our 2024 – 2025 handbook.

Ian Gray, Honorary Secretary, on behalf of the Executive Committee. ■







# Monthly Newsletter

JANUARY 2024



## Great Fishing Prize Draw – fish with a legend!

It's back! And seven legends of our sport have generously donated their time for free to support this amazing fundraiser.

Tickets are just £2 and you could win a session with Ali Hamidi, John Locker, Matt Godfrey and Frankie Gianoncelli, Hywel Morgan, Neville Fickling or John Bailey.

Whatever your preferred style of fishing – match, coarse, game or sea – there's a prize for you! Simply check out the

list of fabulous prizes and decide which ones you would like to enter.

All proceeds from the draw will be used to continue our work to introduce new people to fishing and our fight to protect fish, fishing and the environment.

You can choose to take part in as many of the draws as you wish and remember, the more tickets you buy the better your chances of winning. ■

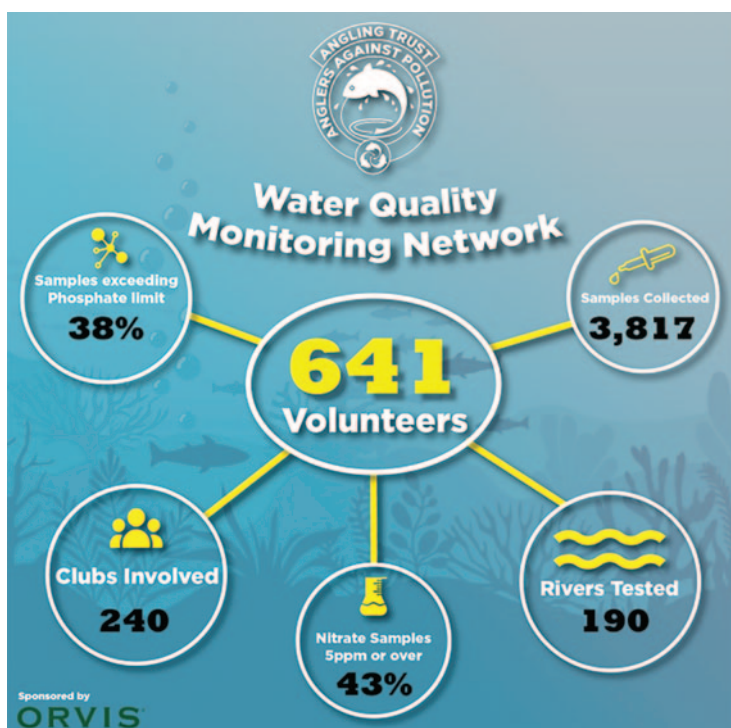
### ANGLERS AGAINST POLLUTION

## Over 640 volunteers sign up for water testing

Did you know the Water Quality Monitoring Network (WQMN) now involves over 640 volunteers from 240 angling clubs, testing water samples on 190 rivers? It's a remarkable achievement since we launched the Severn catchment pilot in May 2022, and testimony to how concerned anglers are about the state of our rivers.

The WQMN is an essential part of our Anglers Against Pollution campaign and the findings from the water sampling will be used to engage angling clubs in better understanding pollution issues on their waters, seek local solutions that restore rivers to a healthy state, and help the Angling Trust hold the government to account, ensuring it meets its own legal responsibilities.

You can show you care about our water environments by purchasing Anglers Against Pollution clothing from the online Angling Trust Shop. ■





## Blog: How sea angling is supporting healthier lives

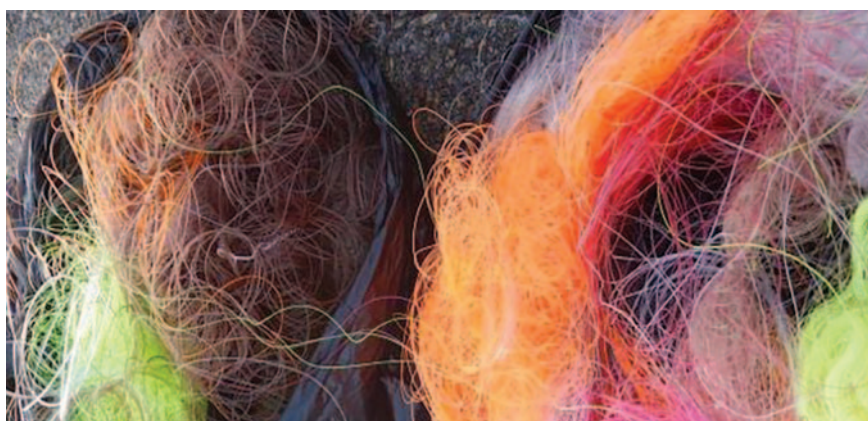


Amelia Henderson at Bedlington Station Sea Angling Club has been organising a women's boat fishing group and supporting local military veterans and their families with angling activities. It's an incredible example of how one person can be the catalyst for so many people to benefit from life-improving experiences simply by spending time fishing.

In an inspiring Get Fishing blog, Amelia tells how the Together Fund, administered by the Angling Trust and Sport England, was a great opportunity to support more participation, and share the social, economic and health benefits of sea angling. ■

### VIRTUAL FISHERIES FORUM

## Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme – 6 Feb



### 6th February, 7pm – open to all

The Angling Trust's Anglers Against Litter campaign has gained national acclaim and widespread support from anglers and clubs. As part of our mission to help tackle pollution and littering, we are delighted to have the Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme's Steve Tapp join us for what promises to be a fascinating Virtual Forum.

Since its launch in March 2018, over 378 shops have signed up to the ANLRS along with over 192 fisheries, angling clubs and charter boats – with some manufacturers having also pledged their support. The scheme is also working with the Angling Trust to investigate collaborative projects that will expand its impact across the country. ■

### 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. ■




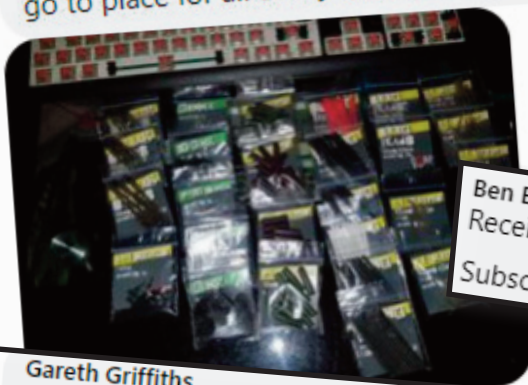
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
 **Mark Davey**  
Just received my second order, ordered Sunday at 7 arrived Tuesday at 9am. Great communication and products. It's possibly the best tenner I have spent joining up. Highly recommended. M  
2 h Love Reply Send message Hide

 **Matt Applegate**  
My order arrived this morning. Very happy mate, fast delivery aswell. I cant big carp punk up enough, my go to place for all of my end tackle from now. All this for under 50 notes is insane. Thanks again mate.



**Dan Care**  
Cracking gear with quick turnaround 

**Ben Bradley**  
Received my samples and really impressed with the quality of everything  
Subscribed and order to follow 🙌

 **Gareth Griffiths**  
Mine have arrived thanks very much. Look awesome bits of kit, I am tying a rig now and will test as soon as the lake isn't frozen!!!! Thanks again. 🙌  
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## FUNDRAISERS



## Online Auction – can you donate a lot?

Our annual online auction takes place in March – and we need your help! Every year we are humbled by the generosity of our member Clubs, Fisheries and Trade partners who provide day tickets, memberships and tackle for us to sell. We had a fantastic range of items on offer last year and we would love to make this year's even bigger!

If you can donate a lot, please either complete our online form or contact our Membership Marketing Manager at [samantha.frost-jones@anglingtrust.net](mailto:samantha.frost-jones@anglingtrust.net). ■

## COMPETITIONS

### FishOMania tickets on sale



Matchroom Multi Sport and the Angling Trust can reveal that the hottest tickets in British match fishing will go on sale Friday February 2 as FishOMania launches for 2024.

This season's 20 qualifiers will be staged at locations which include the most popular venues from last year, along with one new water – Marston Fields – and two returning favourites from FishO's illustrious history, the superb Hallcroft Fishery and Gold Valley Lakes. The grand final will once again be hosted at the amazing Westwood Lakes, in Lincolnshire – this year on Saturday July 27. ■

### England Shore squads for 2024



ENGLAND'S shore angling squads have confirmed they will compete in nine major championships in 2024 after some of the strongest-ever squads were named this week.

There are new caps for several anglers this season, with progression from youth to senior squads also in evidence, and follows a rigorous selection process led by team managers and chaired by Senior England Manager Richard Yates.

The squads will be flying the flag for Team England both home and abroad with World Championships in Cyprus, Ireland, and Spain, and on the beaches of Montrose, Scotland for the Home Internationals. ■

## COMPETITIONS

### Launch of TroutFest 2024 fundraiser

The Angling Trust has launched a new competition for game anglers – TroutFest 2024. Hosted at some of the finest trout fisheries in the country, TroutFest 2024 will see seven individual qualifying matches take place over the next few months, all leading to a grand final at Millets Farm Fishery, in Abingdon, Oxfordshire, on Sunday, September 15.



Each qualifier will be fished from the bank and the top anglers from each event will win a TroutFest fishery trophy and a golden ticket to the final where 28 rods will compete for the inaugural title, main trophy, and winner's purse.

Steve Fitzpatrick, Angling Trust Head of Competitions, said: "The purpose behind the new event is two-fold, firstly to give game anglers an exciting new competition to be part of in 2024 and secondly to help raise awareness and much-needed funding for the England Youth Flyfishers squad." ■





## MEMBER OFFERS



### 15% off Pallatrax baits and products

Pallatrax, the innovative bait and tackle company, is offering Angling Trust individual members 15% off all telephone orders. Pallatrax products can be viewed online. Pallatrax can also be followed on Facebook and on X at @pallatraxuk. Orders must be by telephone to 01409 240 042. Please have your current Angling Trust membership number to hand.

### Save on DFDS ferry trips to Europe



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

Whether you are looking to book travel for your fishing trip, holidays for the family or superb mini cruises, our DFDS partnership gives you access to Europe in comfort and style. Generously partnering with us to provide travel for our England teams, the fabulous team at DFDS have also agreed to offer exclusive discounts including:

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

## TRADE PARTNERS



### Flyfishing Journal – made for the modern fly angler

We are grateful to our trade members for providing invaluable support for our work to protect fish, fishing and our waters, and to encourage more people to take up fishing.

Trade Supporter Flyfishing Journal is a quarterly publication edited by England international Andy Taylor along with expert contributors from around the globe.

Published by Nous Media, Flyfishing Journal comprises a wealth of evergreen features that inform, entertain, and inspire both seasoned anglers and a new, more diverse audience.

And as a special offer to Angling Trust members, you can get four issues of Flyfishing Journal for the price of three. Simply login to your Members Dashboard to obtain the promotional code to use when ordering on the Flyfishing Journal website.





## Albury and Heron Lakes Syndicate News

### Limited number of syndicate tickets now available from April 2024

We are now opening up our membership for the new season from April 2024 to new member enquiries. Those who have already contacted me and are on the waiting list can you please get in touch with me again to arrange a visit.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the syndicate from April 2024 please do get in touch.

Membership syndicate ticket price is £550 for Albury Lake, and

£880 for both Albury & Heron Lakes for the 2024-25 season. All prospective members are interviewed and given a tour around the lakes before being accepted onto the syndicate.

Contact details are on our Facebook page and more information is also available on our website [www.carpfishinghuntingdon.co.uk](http://www.carpfishinghuntingdon.co.uk). Many thanks Tony Humphrey Albury & Heron Lakes Bampton. ■

### Here is a little taste of some of the catches from 2023/24.







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## Landowners and anglers key to preserving Scotland's vital fishing seasons



**Her Grace, The Duchess of Sutherland, casts the first line of the 2024 season**

The vital contribution of angling to the environment and conservation, tourism and the economy has been marked as the River Tweed opens for the 2024 season.

At an event held at Kelso on Thursday, Scottish Land & Estates chief executive Sarah-Jane Laing represented the rural business organisation as one of the gold sponsors of this year's opening.

The opening was officially conducted by the Duchess of Sutherland whilst Màiri McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition, addressed attendees at the occasion organised by the River Tweed Commission.

Through the work of members of Scotland's District Salmon Fishery Boards, the River Tweed Commission and charitable Rivers and Fisheries Trusts, Scotland's valuable and iconic wild Atlantic salmon and freshwater fish are protected despite populations facing a severe decline in recent decades.

In 2023, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) reclassified Atlantic salmon from 'least concern' to 'endangered' in Britain (as a result of a 30-50% decline in British populations since 2006 and 50-80% projected between 2010-2025).

Much of the ongoing conservation work is funded privately by landowners and through angling by both domestic and international visitors, whose expenditure not only supports



**SLE CEO Sarah-Jane Laing and Màiri McAllan MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Just Transition**



key expertise such as ghillies but also generates income for the wider rural economy.

Sarah-Jane Laing, chief executive of Scottish Land & Estates, said:

"The opening of our Scottish salmon fishing seasons is not only a wonderful occasion for anglers and rural communities but is also an opportunity to mark the substantial contribution made by those who care for our rivers and fish populations.

"Real concern exists over fish stocks, particularly Atlantic salmon, due to a range of factors including global warming, climate change, altered river flows, a reduction in food stuff for fish and an increase in preda-

tors.

"Ghillies and those who own and manage rivers and land are working hard to address these factors where they can and are also taking steps to maintain high water quality in the hope of helping the lifecycle of salmon and trout. In the Scottish Borders, we've seen examples of Philiphaugh Estate undertaking peatland restoration that they hope will improve water flow regulation in the Tweed Catchment whilst the Hirsell Estate has carried out planting of riparian woodlands on the River Tweed, a measure that can help to combat rising water temperatures.

"By visiting Scottish rivers, domes-

tic and international anglers bring a lot of economic benefits to the local communities. They spend money on various things, such as accommodation, travel, food, and fishing equipment. They do more than just fish, they also help sustain a wide range of jobs and businesses.

"Growing up in Kelso, I've always recognised the huge importance of angling to rural Scotland. It's a real honour to be part of the River Tweed Commission opening ceremony for the 2024 Salmon Fishing Season, and on behalf of Scottish Land & Estates, we pay tribute to those who will undoubtedly make the 2024 season a great success." ■

## Specialist Angler UK



We are recruiting for team members and consultants to join us... to represent and promote our business and its values in return for Exclusive team member or consultant discounts on both our materials range and lead range.

The team members and consultants will be required to send in pictures and catch reports. Any vlogs they can do and along with this put the word out about the company and its products. Be highly visible on social media and post regularly. Take part on product testing with feedback on ideas and improvements.

We will run a socials during the year for the consultants and team members at locations and dates to be confirmed.

If you feel you can contribute to pushing the company forward and representing the values we hold so hi please DM us on Facebook or email [specialistan-gleruk@gmail.com](mailto:specialistan-gleruk@gmail.com)

With a brief description of your fishing history and experience and what you feel you can bring to the company.

We are recruiting team members and consultants depending on knowledge and experience, team members can develop into consultants when they feel they are ready and spaces become available.

Regards

Paul Worstencroft and Mandy Coles

Specialist Angler UK ■

## Carpy humour





# Hook Lake exclusive!

**First time ever exclusive lake bookings now available for 2024**

Hook Lake is a proper Old Skool estate lake set in beautiful, secluded and peaceful surroundings in the Hertfordshire countryside. For an eternity the fishery has been run as an exclusive 25 man syndicate, and such is the demand for one of these sought after places, it is considered almost impossible to get on. Until now that is!

For the first time in its history and for a limited time only, starting in May and running through until the end of September, the fishery will be available for 3 and 4 night exclusive bookings for up to six anglers at a time.

Over the years, this historic two acre estate lake has seen many well known anglers grace it's banks, including the likes of Kevin Madocks, Vic Cranfield, Tim Paisley, Rob Hughes, Simon Crow, Dave Lane and Ian 'Chilly' Chillcott who likened it to the famous Redmire Pool, and in fact, back in the lake 90's the lake was stocked by Les Bamford with a number of Leney strain carp from Redmire, some of which are still alive today.

There are around 55 English carp in the lake, with the large majority over 20lb and currently around ten 30's, with the lake record being 35lb 8oz (as of June 2023).

Despite its size and stock of carp,



Hook Lake isn't an easy fishery, however, it's a great place for anglers who want to improve their fishing skills, who are looking for a new challenge, or simply want to experience a different, more traditional style of fishing then they may be used to.

The size of the lake and its secluded location, makes it a perfect venue for a social and there are a few large benches in various swims

around the lake which have seen their fair share of socials over the years.

There are 16 recognised swims on Hook Lake which are all large enough to house a bivvy, with many of them easily big enough for a two man bivvy, and each of the swims on the fishery have their own little hot spots.

There is a pub a few hundred yards away in the village which also serves food, and there are plenty of shops







and amenities including a small fishing tackle shop in the local towns of Potters Bar and Cuffley, both less than 5 minutes drive away.

In over 45 years there have been no issues relating to damage or theft of any property, and whilst the secluded location of the fishery is beneficial, there are two locked gates into the fishery itself, which is also completely fenced, helping to prevent access onto the property through the surrounding woodland or fields.

For more information or to book a session, visit the Hook Lake website: [www.hooklake.co.uk](http://www.hooklake.co.uk) and also watch Simon Crow's recent video of the lake on YouTube.

There is an online booking system on the website where the discount code: BCFL24 will get you 10% discount off the total value of your booking! ■





# THE ORIGINAL AND BEST



**The Carp4Kids Academy**  
**The Original and best**  
**5th-9th August 2024**  
**@windsorview Lakes**

**For more information email:**  
**carp4ourkids@gmail.com**

The Carp4Kids Academy are proud to be partnered with Windsor view lakes for this year's event. Our tutors have years of experience, teaching the vital points of carp fishing to your kids. We will ensure the future of our beloved obsession, through the next generation.  
**TACKLE BOXES NOT XBOXES**



## Angling Trust East of England

Brilliant guide for understanding how to fish legally. For anyone young or new to fishing, it can be hard to work out what licence you need. The Angling Trust have some very helpful guides that tell you what you need to know and this 'Lines on the Water' blog below explains it all in a simple way. Share this post with friends to give them all the help they need. <https://linesonthewater.anglingtrust.net/2020/05/19/how-do-i-go-fishing-legally/>.

Our Enforcement work is funded by fishing licence income delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency. ■





# BIRCH WATER



## One of the best kept secrets in French Carp Fishing

- 16 acre lake set in rural France.
- Stunning young Carp average weight 35lbs.
- Many fish yet to be caught.
- Lots of action, September 23 saw 84 fish to three anglers.
- Luxury bankside accommodation terrace overlooking lake.
- Great set up for a social break.
- Options to suit everyone, Drive, fly (airport pickups), tackle hire, food and bait available.
- Taking bookings for 2025.
- Last minute availability for 2024.
- Drop us a mail and we will be happy to chat



"Had an amazing week fishing. My wife loved it as a non-angling guest. The boathouse really is the best accommodation on a fishing lake I have ever seen. In beautiful surroundings and the fish put up a hell of a fight."

"The fish just kept on coming. what a week and what a lot of beautiful carp. See you next year."



"71 fish (wow) up to 49lb with an average weight of 34lb. For over 10 years we've been looking for a venue that fulfils everyone's wants from a fishing holiday, and we all agree we've now found it and will be returning year after year now..."



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

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## Carping4Charity Events

### All Carping Friends and Family

Well, we have been very busy at C4C HQ and we present 3 Events for 2024.

Our first is DARENTH BIG LAKE – Your chance to fish this AMAZING Members ONLY Lake – In our ULTIMATE PAIRS Event.

2nd EVENT – BRASENOSE 2 – LINEAR FISHERY – GIRLS VS BOYS AUG 16th – 18th 2024

3rd EVENT CROWSHEATH FISHERY – A LADIES SOCIAL – Sept/Oct dates TBC.

Let's talk about our 1st Charity Event – A Pairs Match on Darent Big Lake on Friday 17th May – 19th May 2024 – Plenty of room to fish with only 15 Pairs @ £300 a pair (may have 2 swims per pair). This can be made up of any pair – Men, Ladies or Mixed.

Darent Big Lake – About the lake:

40 swims set within 14.5 acres of this premier fishery.

The Lake itself holds some 280 fish including 30 fish nearing the 40lbs mark and a further 4 fish exceeding the 50lbs mark.

The current lake record is a Mirror Carp at 57lbs 8oz, Leather Carp 56lbs 8oz, Common Carp 50lbs 4oz, Ghost Carp 38lbs 14oz.

The lake also holds some Catfish the record weighing in at 101lbs.

We also have quality roach in excess of 3lbs, Bream in excess of 15lbs, Tench in excess of 12lbs and pike in excess of 27lbs.

There is something for everyone whether you're an experienced Carp hunter or the individual who wants to while away the time in a secure and beautiful location.

TO BOOK YOUR SPACE on any EVENT Contact Myself Tania Williams or Miranda Brown. Provide your contact details and we will send you instructions how to pay and an EVENT PACK.

07446199184 – Tania

07919006651 – Miranda

EVENT 2 Details will be Posted tomorrow ■



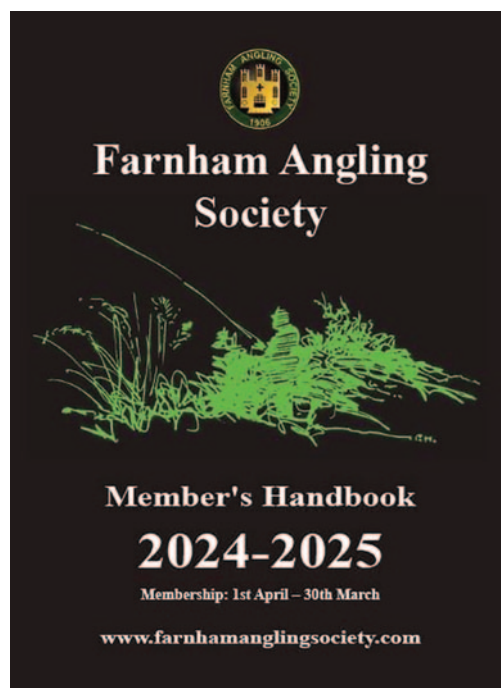
## Bayeswater Fisheries 2024 Rules for Syndicate and Day Ticket Lakes



- No driving around either lake, park in the car park provided and stay off the farmers' fields.
- NO leaders of any sort, leadcore, shock leaders, nylon, braid etc are all BANNED.
- The Twig and all Plastic Baits are also BANNED.
- All Rubbish must be taken home with you, anyone leaving rubbish will be banned instantly.
- Dip weigh slings etc on arrival.
- If you are waiting for a swim, place a bucket in there and wait in the car park until the swim is available, no waiting in swims!
- You must use the cradles provided in each swim.
- Drones are prohibited!
- No Dogs allowed.
- No Retaining fish.
- Bait boats are allowed but please be considerate of other anglers.
- Hooks are your own preference.
- 15lb B/S line minimum.
- You must carry your IDCard on you at all times.
- Keep all gates shut at all times.
- Syndicate members must lock boats up!
- Leave the toilet clean!
- For guest and visitor request, contact Steve Bugg for more information.
- Do not enter Bayeswater unless you have booked. ■



## Farnham Angling Society Membership News



Applications to renew or join FAS for the 2024-2025 season Members may now apply to renew for the 2024-2025 season via our website: <https://www.farnhamanglingssociety.com/join-us/> The Gold Valley Office will next be open between 10:00- 14:00 on Friday 29th February 2024: full details of all opening times are within the newsletter. Postal applications may be made using the Renewal Form on Page 89 of your 2023- 2024 handbook or by downloading an Application Form from our website: <https://www.farnhamanglingssociety.com/membership-application/Handbooks> will be issued in early March 2024, once we have received them from our printers, for the forthcoming season which will commence on 1st April 2024. ■

## Kids in Mind Angling

Are you free on the 20th April? Well, we may have something that @everyone may be interested in! We are holding an open event alongside CarpBasics to kick off the season and the season of hopefully the better weather at the picturesque Monks Lakes in Kent.

This fishery offers 7 stunning lakes spanning across 120 acres in the Kent countryside and we've been given the opportunity to put on an event and of course we agreed! Full café experience available serving hot food and drinks all day. Plenty of FREE parking! Best of all there's plenty of water to have a nice walk round while you're not catching a few carp with us.

More details to follow including Celebrity Anglers, Raffle and fundraising.

- Jonathan Terry
- New Direction Tackle UK
- Swimbooker

Are you free and want to get your yourself familiar with fishing or just fancy having ago? Why not come along! ■



## Horcott Lakes Open Day

With the release of the new CC Moore & Co Ltd Prostim Liver coming up we thought this would be a great opportunity to show case this amazing new bait.

On Saturday the 2nd of March 2024 you will be able to get your hands on this new bait line first hand at Horcott Lakes. In the testing period ProStim Liver has already had devastating results at Horcott.

We have some amazing bundle deals going on the day including boilies, boosters, pop ups, wafers, etc, along with any questions answered by CC Moore consultant Lee Polard.

- We will also have our famous bucket deals on offer with Pellets, PVA Bags, Liquid and Pop-ups with two of these containing FREE (yes FREE) season tickets for 2024-2025 and some 24hr sessions.
- Six Month tickets available only on the day (starting April 1st) for only £250.
- Massive savings on leads, £10 for 10 or £20 for 25.
- 10% off everything in the Tackle Shed.
- BBQ and refreshments.
- Free entry.
- Gates open 10am-3pm.

So why not pop in grab a bargain, a cuppa and have a stroll round. ■







## Adam Clarke catch report

New PB of 46.14, one of Notts finest and in January what a bloody buzz! I've fished the hardest I ever have during the dark and colder seasons with 22 work nights and odd weekend night since middle of October and I was rewarded on Thursday nights full moon with kingfishers "stalker" at 46.14lb, worth pursuing with all the floods we have had in the Trent valley recently. Big thanks to all the lads that kept me pushing through and to RG Baits for the support Starting 2024 off perfectly fishing and home life

## Trent Baits Catch Report

January 40 for Lee – For the winter Lee had one fish on his mind on the Pride of Derby complex. Getting bait going in and getting consistent action he set about playing the numbers game. First week of January after having caught a couple a slow steady take turned in to a powerful churner! After a long battle a big common popped up and he was sure it had to be the one. Once in the net he quickly realised it wasn't 'the one' but what a conciliation prize. A 41lb 8oz absolutely immaculate common. Fishing his beloved shrimp and Damson Cream mix of crumb and liquids with little wafers over the top. Just a matter of time before the other one turns up. Class angling mate well done.





### Milton Magic – Jonny Old

'I fished a two-night session through some very tough conditions. The first night was bitter and with temperatures going below -7, it wasn't looking good. Throughout the day I was seeing fish everywhere in the gin clear water, but with no feeding activity present, moral was low. However, the following night, temperatures only just dropped below 0 and the carp went on the feed. Throughout the night I managed a couple of bites, one being a carp I've wanted to catch since joining Milton, being a stunning old mirror called 'Steve's Lin' going 33lb 3oz with a lovely 20lb+ scaly following soon after.

I fished simple tactics, which consisted of my standard Heil Safe system with a size 4 Spinner Hook on short 20lb IQ2 hooklinks. This was fished on a clear area between the weed which I had seen fish drifting over the day before. I baited heavily with Cell boilies, which had been soaked in the Cell and Cream smart liquid few days prior to fishing.'



### Winter PB for Harry Collins

Harry Collins has had a great winter ticket so far landing multiple carp and being topped by a new personal best with 'Blackspot' from FURZEBRAY CARP LAKES at 47lb!





### Michael Brewster catch report

Michael Brewster with the Baby Brown at 44lbs first trip out on the bait from the Southern club water. Caught with a 15mm Plum Special We said these were special!



### Fox catch report – winter result!

Ches Boughen couldn't believe it, when during a shoot for Fox landed a pair of forty pounders! Incredible result, and all captured on our latest video on our YT channel Where Ches and his son Luke catch carp in a very wet and cold winter session!







### Adam Honeysett catch report

The last weekend in January saw me do a 48hr session on Elphicks Prairie lake. This is a lake I often overlook only having fished it once back in 2019 where I had 3 to mid 20's. We arrived to a relatively empty lake and after a walk round opted for a swim furthest away from the car park as I knew it was going to get busy & where I had seen a bit of bubbling, it was going to be a frustrating session knowing I had to shoot off both days to have the wound in my neck redressed but that's life, I had a couple of casts with a light lead to find the spots I was looking for and decided to have a baited area tight to the island in about 4ft of water and 2 in open water just fishing bags of crumb and maggots in the area I had seen the fizzing. I was hopeful although I knew both nights were going to get cold (-4 & -2). It started off frustrating as I couldn't get through the smaller fish up to high doubles but I said to my mate on the 2nd evening we just need the bigger ones to move in & bully them out & that they did on the final morning I managed 3 x 20's to 26.04 & 3 x 30's of 34.10 Mirror, 34.04 Ghost Common & 30.02 Mirror, I really enjoyable session 20 bites with 18 landed sadly I lost the 1st good fish but it came good in the end. The awesome Key Bait Solutions ASM boilie crumb & chops & Maggots doing the trick once again. Once again all the action caught on camera for my YouTube channel carp graft UK in the near future.



### Darren Davidson catch report

St Ives Laneys – Darren Davidson with Laneys at 51lb 8oz. Second time it tripped up in a couple of months to the Shrimp. Enough said.



### That's a Pretty Fifty

Congratulations to Brett Cork on the capture of this Wellington Country Park absolute stunner. He told us: "After a very bad day weather wise, I was able to get the rods out to areas I've fished during the summer months knowing the gravel would have been hammered all year I opted to fish in the silty areas. After a very wet and windy night I was feeling a little deflated but at 7.45am the rod indicated a bite. to be honest at first, I thought it was a bream due to the bite indication but as soon as I pick up the rod, I knew it wasn't a bream that had picked up my Cell hook bait and after a short fight the fish was in the net. Still dazed from being woke up I took a look and couldn't believe my luck, 'The Pretty Sutton' at a new top weight for welly 55lb 5oz and also my first ever Uk 50." Amazing stuff, Brett.



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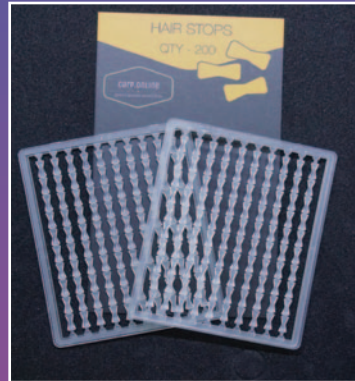
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Tungsten Putty



Shrink Tube



Hair Stops



Hook Beads



Swivels



Scorpion Chod Hooks



Scorpion Crank Hook



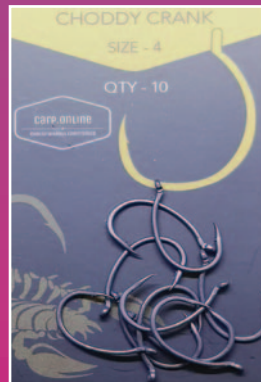
Scorpion Snag Hook



Scorpion Ronnie Rig



Composite Leadclips



Choddy Crank Hook



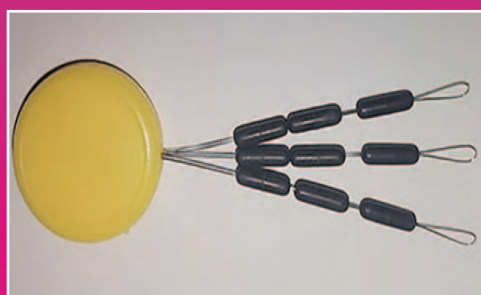
Hair Aligners



Tungsten Kickers



Swivel Deal



Tungsten Hooklink Sinkers



Chod Filament



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First time carping today for a good while resulted in 3 fish. Best being a 20lb 10oz mirror and a nice 16lb linear the other being a small double common. All caught on dumbbell wafers on a slip-d using a scorpion curve shank hook.



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

Team member 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. 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 it 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!



This decided to interrupt pictures but worth it going just over 30lb, not bad for a December carp. This taking on @carptackleonline ready-made Ronnie. "By this time couldn't feel my fingers dint help trying to set up for pictures!" Well done, Lee.

Team member Lee Oxley has been doing what he does best, putting carp on the bank again: "Managed to temp this 22+ at 3am on KAPER Ltd dispersion sweetcornz 12mm pop up on Carptackleonline Scorpion Wide Gape hook. Not the biggest in here by any means but carps a carp especially this time year!" Well done, Lee.

We are looking for active anglers that have decent camera skills and can put a few articles together. Need to be over 16, living in the UK and have good social media presence and skills. In return we offer a decent discount from our range of end tackle. If you think you have what we are looking for drop us an email with a bit of information about yourself to sales.carponline@gmail.com

### CARP TACKLE ONLINE RECRUITMENT

Carptackleonline is looking for new team members - do this for?

We need YOU!

What have we offered? / Compensation etc to be considered and to get involved, we have a great discount from our range of Carp Tackle Online and access to our social media channels. We will also provide you with a good range of bait and tackle to use on your catch. We will also provide you with a good range of bait and tackle to use on your catch. We will also provide you with a good range of bait and tackle to use on your catch.

How to apply: Email us with a bit of information about yourself to sales.carponline@gmail.com

Contact: sales.carponline@gmail.com





## Antony House with yet another Forty!

After his mega trip before Christmas, with the strong winds still pumping in, it was a simple case of repeating the process. A trip that resulted in 13 takes landed, and this 42lbs beast being the pick of the bunch!



## Katran Fishing Line Catch Report

Yeah, we are still under the impression! 78.04lb / 35,4kg winter carp landed! Absolute record of all winter landings by Katran expert! Our warmest, huge congratulations to Andreas Papesch! Thank you for your trust in SBM (our braided mainline solution)



## Loz East catch report

Loz East braved the cold weather recently and had a 24-hour session at Old Mill Lakes on Willow Lake, he was rewarded with a couple of fish, the biggest being this 28lb mirror. Loz used a Combi Rig constructed from our 20lb Spectre Fluorocarbon hooklink material and a supple section of 35lb Camo-X Soft braid, his hooks of choice were his favourite size 4 APE-X Curves.





### Lee Goddard catch report

Big up to Lee Goddard who braved the elements last month fishing his syndicate water, Monks Pit. Solid bags with crushed Cell, Cell Response Pellets and a few dead maggots fished at 80 yards was the tactic he used to bank 4 carp with three going over thirty pounds. Well done, Lee.



### Blackthorn Fishery Water Report

Pines lake record at 35lb 5oz for Matt this afternoon. We were beginning to think we would never see her on the bank as she has been particularly elusive! Matt's having a red-letter session on Pines. In fairness he's done really well, fishing through the two named storms we have had this week which have dropped trees around the farm and even a couple up at the main lake. We are glad to see the back of that wind! We have some availability on pines and the main lake in February and March. Drop us a private message if you would like to know more about the venue. Or visit our website [www.blackthornfishery.co.uk](http://www.blackthornfishery.co.uk)



### Blaise Price catch report

Well done to Blaise Price on the Christmas capture of this stunning Orchid Lakes mirror. He told us: "Well what can I say, I headed to the infamous Orchid Lakes over the festive period with my grandad, and with the weather right I knew I was on for a big fish with the full moon. Midday on the second day, I received a slow take on the left-hand rod and after a hairy battle I could not believe what resided in my landing net, a fish known as 'No Name.' Not only a PB but a lake record as well at 45lb, what a way to spend the moment with all the boys that helped and my grandad who used to take me there as a child! Memories to last a lifetime". Cell and Essential Cell Crumb with a few maggots and worms over the top did the trick for Blaise. Brilliant.





## New UK PB common first time using the bug!

Shane McDonagh's first-ever session using The Bug yielded a brand-new UK PB common of 42lb 4oz from the North Lake at Elphicks Fisheries. The 46-year-old from London said: "After watching a few of the lads on DNA picking out the bigger fish, I decided to give The Bug a go and on my first session using it had a new UK personal best common of 42lb 4oz. A great confidence-booster and a fantastic start on a new bait!" Shane targeted a spot at nine wraps, where he fished Bug Half Tones wafers amongst five kilos of crumbed and chopped Bug boilies, all soaked in Bug Liquid Food and Bug Hydro Spod Syrup.



## Darren Lane catch report

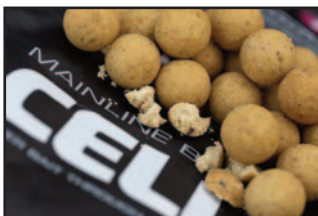
42 pound from clover.



## Trent Baits Catch Report

Incredible Crater – Part of a three fish catch within an hour, netting 120lb of incredible old English carp. Getting to the lake late and being able to find them before casting out has served Dan well in December. Casting just one spomb of crushed and whole shrimp and redberry to the spots, then deploying a 2-bait stringer over the top as accurately as possible has been the key. When using small amounts of bait, it's easier to put the bait out first. You can always recast a fishing rod.





### Wade Holmes catch report

Fishing in big winds isn't easy but the rewards are there if you take them. This is what Wade Holmes did recently whilst fishing his North Devon Syndicate. Setting up in the teeth of a very strong wind saw him bank three including a personal best Mirror of 42lb 8oz and two more both over thirty pounds. A few pouches of Cell over the spot in the deeper water was just enough for him to land these three fish. Happy New Year, Wade.

### Dave Bell catch report

You're not going to catch 'em sitting at home – a point well proven by Dave Bell, who resisted the temptation to spend a weekend in the warm at home, instead opting for a visit to his syndicate water, where he topped an incredible five-fish catch with this mega UK 50-pounder! As ever, Dave put his confidence in the Trakker terminal tackle range – including the awesome Clinga BP hooks.



# BAIT-CAP

easy hookbait system



The Bait-Cap Easy Hookbait System – a revolutionary, user-friendly hookbait concept that simplifies your fishing experience. Easily attach the cap to your rig using the pre-loaded wire loops or opt for side hooking.

Once attached, experience the convenience of a punch and bait-band in one. Reload your baits in seconds without the need for any tools. The loaded cap creates a protective skin around traditionally challenging soft baits like pastes, bread, meat, and cheese. Even hard baits such as boilies, pop-ups, pellets, and chum mixers can be used without bait-stops or pre-drilling.



**DISCOVER A NEW LEVEL OF SIMPLICITY WITH THE BAIT-CAP EASY HOOKBAIT SYSTEM...  
YOUR KEY TO EFFICIENT AND HASSLE-FREE FISHING ON THE BOTTOM, OR ON THE SURFACE!**



**3 SIZES**  
12MM

SMALL DUMBELL (10x15mm)  
MEDIUM DUMBELL (15x22mm)

**5 COLOURS**

SWEETCORN YELLOW  
BLOODWORM RED  
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4 X BAIT-CAPS PER PACK  
PRE-MOUNTED ON EASY FIT WIRES WITH STOP AND RING

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# NEW PRODUCTS

## SPRING 2024



8 COLOURS  
TRANS GREEN  
TRANS BROWN  
BLOODWORM RED  
WHITE  
PASTEL PINK  
ORANGE  
BLACK  
PASTEL YELLOW

### MULTIPLE PRESENTATIONS



Born from the unparalleled success of our Liquid Zig System, the DragonFly is the epitome of hookbait attraction, utilising soluble liquid and paste attractors to lure in the most elusive catches.

Effortlessly sliding over your hook, the DragonFly Aligner Cap boasts a large aligner tail, elevating hooking potential, whilst also ensuring the well-being of your catch by reducing mouth damage.

Customise your approach by adjusting the EVA foam within the Aligner Cap, seamlessly transitioning between a zig or a bottom bait/pop-up presentation.

Cast into endless possibilities by infusing pastes into the Aligner Cap, and for an extra surge of attraction, harness the power of the liquid booster cylinders. Use the liquid baffles in the cylinders to ensure a controlled and steady release of **ULTIMATE LIQUID ATTRACTION.**

### Full systems

Trans Green & Trans Brown	RRP: £10
Bloodworm Red & White	RRP: £10
Orange & Pastel Pink	RRP: £10
Black & Pastel Yellow	RRP: £10

### Support Packets

DragonFly Aligner Caps	RRP: £6
Liquid Booster Cylinders	RRP: £6
Liquid Baffles	RRP: £5



[WWW.LIQUIRIGS.COM](http://WWW.LIQUIRIGS.COM)







## Huge Common makes Ivan's Dream a reality!

Ivan Medic spent the autumn on Lake Šumbar hoping to land one of the huge carp it holds. "After three fishing trips and a couple of big fish over twenty kilos, I managed to realize my dream and catch one of the biggest fish in the lake at the moment.

A common that stopped the scales at 31,175 kg!! I didn't have many bites on this lake, and with every bite I felt an adrenaline rush as if I was catching a fish for the first time, because it could be the biggest one.

I consider every detail important in this kind of fishing, and I use the hooks and hooklink that I trust the most. This year I mostly used a spinner rig, made of Link in 25lb and an Edges Size 2 Curve Shank Hook". Brilliant result Ivan, well done.





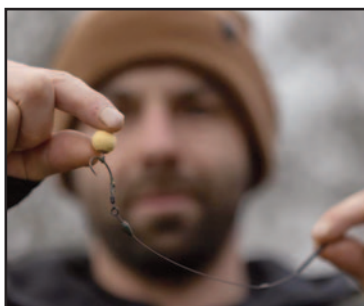
### Blaise Price catch report

Well done to Blaise Price on the Christmas capture of this stunning Orchid Lakes mirror. He told us: "Well what can I say, I headed to the infamous Orchid Lakes over the festive period with my grandad, and with the weather right I knew I was on for a big fish with the full moon. Midday on the second day, I received a slow take on the left-hand rod and after a hairy battle I could not believe what resided in my landing net, a fish known as 'No Name.' Not only a PB but a lake record as well at 45lb, what a way to spend the moment with all the boys that helped and my grandad who used to take me there as a child! Memories to last a lifetime". Cell and Essential Cell Crumb with a few maggots and worms over the top did the trick for Blaise. Brilliant.



### Luke Vallory catch report

A standout winter capture from Luke's time on Woolpacks Lake 8. A period which saw in excess of 90 bites through the colder months, beginning with a boilie only attack and then switching to bits and pieces as temperatures plummeted. His usual Spinner Rigs coverting the chances, with size 4 Kranks and dull coloured yellow hookbaits working well. This low 30 common a standout capture, taking whilst filming with Danny Fairbrass, where the pair sit down to discuss Luke's winter pop-up fishing in detail.



### Trent Baits Catch Report

Northy's Canon – The second bite on a very memorable December morning, came in the form of the beautiful Northy parks big girl for Dan. Placing a prototype tigernut hookbait over a handful of shrimp was Canons downfall. 44lb of old, knarly mirror in her winter colours. Just mega.



### Greg Regan catch report

Winter carve-up on the syndicate! 11 bites (so far). More than welcome after a long dry spell. I was supposed to be on a quick overnighter, but I'm filing my boots and staying another night.





### Orchid Lake Record for Blaise Price

Our man Blaise Price had the best end to 2023 possible, a new lake record and personal best, a 45lb mirror from Orchid lakes, the moment was made that bit more special by sharing it with his grandad. If that wasn't enough, he managed an upper 30lb common to round the trip off.



### Let's start the year with an 80lb brace

After last month's success Dane Elliott was eager to get back to the lake and what a return he had too. He told us: "After being away for a family holiday for two weeks. I called a couple of syndicate members to see what had been happening. I was informed it was fishing very slow just a couple of small ones and a lot of the lake was un-fishable due to flooding. The good news was the fish were still active at night. Excellent. I managed to find them and set the traps using Cell and corn with matching Smart Liquid. On the second night I had an 80lb brace which included 'Mr Pink' at 44lb and the one of the jewels of the lake 'Jake's Sutton' at 36lb. Followed by a nice 32lb linear the following night. It was well worth the soaking from the heavy rains too." Awesome, Dane. Top angling.







### Gary Clarke catch report

Pink Mistral Baits rose hip isotonic popups did the business for Gary Clarke over the Christmas break, taking several lovely carp to 34+ from his local pit.



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## Trent Baits Catch Report

Marcus had a slightly different Christmas than most and why not! With the awesome weather and no plans, he headed for the famous Orchid Lakes. Knowing it has form and from previous experience he headed to the venue full of confidence. Armed with his beloved boilie crumb and liquid mix it was only a matter of time. Christmas Day itself produced three bites from upper 30s to mid 20s. Amazingly this wasn't even the biggest of his trip!



## Jonny Old catch report

Jonny Old has been in touch with this catch report, after a New Year's Day session on his local syndicate... "Seeing that the weather was so mild, I was itching to get the rods out, and decided to do a day on my local syndicate. The evening before fishing I baited an area next to a large reed bed heavily with Cell boillies. Arriving just before first light the following morning I was worried I'd over-baited. However, after casting my first rod out, I received a liner as I was sinking the line, and it was only minutes later I received a take! This was a stunning old 33lb 4oz mirror! I got the rod back out as quickly as I could and just after first light the right hand rod was away with a lovely scaly 18lb. As I bundled that one in the net the other rod was away. This one rucked but finally went into the net. This one went 34lb 5oz and was a stunning grey mirror. The tactic I was using was solid bags with Cell Balanced Wafers concealed in a mix that just consisted of crumbed Cell boillies, which had been soaked in Cream Smart Liquid and Condensed Milk a few days prior to fishing. I also added extra Smart Liquid to the bags once made." Well done, Jonny.







### Big Carp from a Tiny Canal

As usual, Mark Bryant used his tried and trusted Combi-Rig, set up slip-D style with his favoured size 2 Kurv and Micro Ring swivel, with a match the hatch hookbait over matching loose feed. This mega old 52lb mirror and absolute trip maker for him!



### Friday Feeling

Natalie May struck gold last week when she slipped the net under this impressive 46lb 8oz Welsh mirror from the big fish venue, Lyn Cae ty nant. This was a carp that had been on the missing list for 15 months and it totally smashed Natalie's target of catching a Welsh forty in 2024 on her first session of the year. Our 12mm Scent from Hell hook-baits with CreAmino freebies that had been coated with screamer powder coating and matching liquid, plus a few other bits doing the damage. A big well done from all of us at Baitworks HQ Nat. The catch report we received simply said "I'm still speechless" IT- works.



### Stuart Dalton catch report

Well done Stuart Dalton 50lb 4oz Devon beauty.





### Dave Levy catch report

Holy common carp! My hunt for the White Tips common come to an end this week, 85 nights over a three-year period. Every frosty morning was worth it. Long live the fire. 51lb 10oz Essex Club water. Many of you would have already seen this capture but we wanted to say a big congratulations to Mr Consistent, Dave Levy on the capture of this immense winter common. We caught up with Dave just a day after the capture, he told us:

"I finally got to meet my nemesis 'The White Tipped Common'. My first session was some three years ago and since then I've fished 85 nights on the lake from hot summer sessions to freezing cold winter nights.

This winter saw the lake busier than before; it was seeing a lot of bait and although Cell had done me well in the past, I knew a different tactic was needed. I decided to fish solid bags with a super attractive mix. This consisted of crumbed Cell, Essential Cell, Spod and PVA Pellet Mix and some red maggots.

I had a 35lb fish at the start of the year then a few blanks, but as it was January this is only to be Expected. It was not the end of January and this session I cast six solid bags out through the day so there were the small super attractive food parcels. The night was quiet and at 8am the next morning I was just recasting a rod when the left bobbin dropped back, at first, I thought it felt like a thirty as it was slow and stayed deep, the fight was slow and deep but as the carp rolled for the first time, I saw what I was attached to. I must admit I was well nervous, but the fish slide slowly over the net and the long wait was over. Some say she's the best carp in Essex. I wouldn't disagree, and at 51lb 10oz she equalled the Essex club record. I'm still on cloud 9!"

Brilliant, Dave.



### Tony Reynolds catch report

This weekend was our first match of the year, up on Oxlease Lake, at Linear Fisheries Official, for the first round of the Four Seasons Carp Cup. Fishing with my partner Ian Beedell, we managed three fish to take the win, with this 38lb old Warrior being the best of the bunch. The weather was certainly mild, but the water is still freezing, roll on the spring.



### Luke Boughen catch report

Red letter session! A mid 20, 30 and this mega 40lb - can't complain for January. Oh, and as I write this, I've just landed what looks to be a bit of a chunk.



### Calum Pawsey catch report

2024 didn't get off to the best of starts for Calum Pawsey who unfortunately found himself involved in a car accident. The carp gods were looking down on him in other ways though, and at a smidge under 40lb, this cool slate-grey mirror was the perfect beginning in a new adventure!



### Winter 40 Completed!

A winter 40 for long-time Assassin Tackle team member Ben Taylor and what a fish from a super low stock 60acre pit. These sorts of fish don't come round very often and are not at these weights Mega result mate. If you know Ben and know the lake you know how hard this venue is and for him to produce a second 40 from this venue well it's what us anglers dream of. A size 6 widegape tied up in a trusty multi-rig done the damage and see this brute over the cord.





### The lucky hats back for Jack!

Jack Meyers lucky hat strikes again during his first trip of the new year. He told us: "My first trip of the year fishing and of course I opted for Welly. I haven't been down to Welly since beginning of September due to family life, work and filming commitments i just haven't had the time! Checking the weather forecast a few days previously I could see that a storm was heading with unusual double figure temps for this time of year, I had to get down the lake! "I had 3 takes in 48 hours (I lost the 2nd due to an old crack off in the lake – GUTTED). But still an amazing result to have 2 40's in a Jan session! The common going 43lb and the mirror hitting 47lb! "My standard approach for Welly using a mixture of washed out Cell and Hybrid in 15mm. Using White Milky Toffee pop ups over the top." Brilliant, Jack!

### The Secret is Out!

Argal Bailiff Marlon Weyeneth has had a great start to the year on Argal. With Marlon only able to do day sessions, it has made him put the extra effort in whilst fishing the venue and his efforts have been rewarded with the lakes' biggest resident, 'The Secret'. The fish topped the scales at 41lb 4oz and is a new PB for him and I think we can all agree the fish looks in great condition. He had 4 fish all together including a 26lb mirror, 23lb and 18lb carp, which is some day session in the winter! From all of the South West Lakes Trust team a massive well done to Marlon, top angling!



# AQUA LILIUM CLOTHING

## A NEW DAWN A NEW DAY

As we say farewell to the old season, we turn our attention to what prizes await us for the next.

The excitement begins to build, for Magic times are upon us once more, longing for those stretched out warm evenings,

Shared with friends. Or for some of us, just to be a way from life, for just a few hours is all it takes to re set the bobbin of life.

Although these are just my words, it's important to remember that words are the first step to creating memories.

I believe that once you're on the bank. You are at one with nature, the complete key to inner happiness awaits you.

For most this is enough, but not for me, not for us.

There is a new addiction (Show Season).

It's been nearly 3 years now since Aqua Lilium completed its first show, and we haven't looked back since. The adrenaline myself and Steven get loading the van and driving

to the venue to set up is a electric.

Turning up the morning of the show and chatting to all the friends we have made over the years, some of them you only see at the show. Then the







doors open and swarms of angling enthusiasts flood in.

That's it, that's the buzz that keeps us coming back for more. Don't get me wrong it's great selling online, but meeting you guy's is definitely where it's at for us.

We always try and bring something new to the table and this year is no different, we have a number of new designs, as well as tweaking a few of the old styles and making them better. This being, we have taken our award-winning windbreaker and extended the back of jacket, this is so the bottom of the windbreaker keeps your backside covered meaning you won't get wet.

We also have the all-new Full Monty Deluxe dog bivvy jacket, made in a beautiful black stretch fleece material. Finished off with a gold trim. The Deluxe model comes with your best friend's initials stitched to the side.

Then we have the designs, and this year we aim to start

with a bang. We start with Medusa, the design as standard is created by myself and is my artistic impression of the Medusa rig. This will be available to purchase by end of March. This will be transferred on only the best material, quality is our specialty.

The Aqua Lilium All-Rounder Jackets and Bottoms; these are a must for anyone who fishes the colder months but still likes to be mobile. They can be purchased in green or black and are super comfortable. Not only waterproof but windproof as well.

As we progress through the next coming months, we will be bringing something very new to the market so watch this space.

I really can't say it enough, but your support means everything to us. As previously mentioned, we don't have corporate money to invest, we are a very small

family that really does bring you the quality you deserve.

That's our promise to you.

Thank you, all the best, Mark Quinn, Aqua Lilium Clothing



# Aqua Lilium

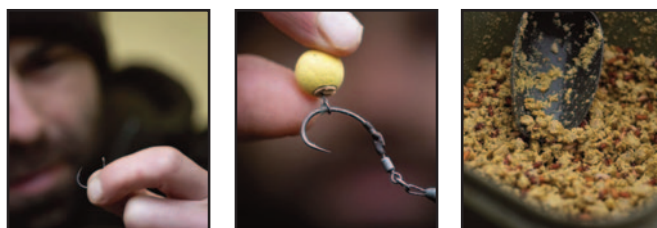
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You can also reach us through our Facebook and Instagram pages.





## Luke Vallory Catch report No 2

Day Ticket Success – Luke Vallory headed to Suffolk Water Park, in bitter early spring conditions. Settling in peg 34, 'Car Park', Luke fished just short of 25 wraps, to a nice firm patch where he positioned three rods over a small bed of crushed boilie, corn and caster, fishing his trusted spinner rigs over the top, with size 4 Kranks and Pineapple Goo'd baits. With a flurry of bream coming on the opening night, Luke kept working it, despite the freezing conditions, he knew carp wouldn't be far away, and on his second night, was rewarded with two lovely Suffolk carp. A deserved on-site breakfast helped warm him through and end the session on a mega high. No better buzz than a snow carp!





### Tom Maker catch report

Loaded with Cherry Coke and the @cinecarp.tv cameras, Tom Maker headed down to Linear Fisheries... With his horizon marker set, 3 rods deployed as tight as possible, and incorporating his theory of putting the rods out first and bait over the top, he was ready to go! Due to the noise of the spomb drawing the fish back in, almost like ringing the dinner bell, the action was thick and fast from the off! Lightly baiting the area with 2.3mm Bloodworm pellets, corn and chopped worm seemed to work a treat. Coupled with a mix of pink and yellow Mulbz (tipped with a bunch of wrigglers) being the downfall to 14x20s, 6x30s and the icing on the cake, the lake's biggest mirror at mid-40s!



### Adam Honeysett catch report No 2

This past week has been frustrating with still not being able to go back to work as well as not having much time for angling between doctors' appointments but I did manage to get a 20 odd hour session in, arriving at a busy lake with it being 1 away from being full gave me no option really which see me fish a swim which gave me access to an island as well as open water but with there being an angler opposite meant I had to stay short of the half way mark where a few fish showed on the build-up to darkness, the next morning I see a further 6-8 shows and around 10am I noticed the angler had packed his Bivvy down & was in the process of packing up so I skipped all the rods in hooked on fresh bags of maggots & Asm crumb with ASM wafter hook baits & lent all the rods against the bivvy for when he had reeled in. I then cast all 3 rods on the line of the showing fish, an hour later the left-hand rod signalled a flying drop back and after a spirited fight I landed this stunning 21lb Fully... As usual the session was caught on camera for my YouTube channel Carp Graft Uk





## Winter Hit for Luke Boughen

Luke Boughen had a brilliant winter hit of fish recently, landing a mid 20, two 30s to 35lb and topped by a 40lb mirror! With a mild spell of weather Luke chose to fish a shallow plateau with Multi Rigs using 25lb Semi Stiff Camotex tied to Size 4 Edges Wide Gape Long Shank Hooks. Great result Luke, well done.



## Big fish magnet Andy Beach doing winter work 'up north'.

Here's what Andy had to say: Well, if you're going to do a fish in January, it may as well be a Yorkshire 40. Big change in weather front from that recent cold spell, 2 big storms in the week bringing in mild temps for the weekend, this session couldn't come quick enough! Sun burned sunrises and full moon moonlight sky; you couldn't ask for more. Three bites, two landed. The best been this immaculate winter 40 at 42lb 8oz. Terminal Tackle UK end tackle and the ever-faithful J Precision Long Shank Hook.



## Jamie Bell – Big Common

Jamie sent us this lovely 42lb 8oz common from his syndicate. This brute is the lakes big common and one high on Jamie's wanted list. Our 18mm Atlantic Heat fished with a snowman presentation over 5kg of 18mm and 15mm Heat plus a bit of partblend and loads of liquid fish did the damage. Great work Jamie. IT-WORKS.





### Darren Belton catch report

Second trip to the winter syndicate and two forties hit the net! Not a bad session for Darren Belton - topping a six fish catch with a 40lb 8oz common, followed by another common weighing in at 45lb 9oz! Solid bags filled with our Spod and PVA Pellet Mix the winning tactic! Well done, Darren.



### Jonny Old catch report

Jonny Old has been having a great winter down on Milton Abbas banking some stunning carp. He told us: "I arrived early in the morning to find a large group of fish up the top end of the lake. I tried to nick a bite with a couple of singles and a few boillies over the top, however this seemed to spook them off and the area was devoid of fish within the hour. After doing a few laps and not seeing much I guess the fish had moved to the middle zone. I moved swims and found a good few clear areas which I baited with a few kilos of Cell boillies which had been smothered with a mix of Cell and Cream Smart Liquid to really try create a feeding response. This definitely worked because after an hour I had 2 fish in quick succession. These being a lovely 30lb 2oz common and a 29lb 12oz common. I rebaited the rods with another few kg of cell and casted my cell wafers back out into the zone. Throughout the night I had a lovely upper double mirror and the following morning a lovely 27lb 7oz common. Plenty of boillies kept them feeding." Brilliant, Jonny.





### Rod Hutchinson catch report

Lee Tompkins first trip of the year at Barham pits in Suffolk, followed 2 weeks of pre-baiting every other day in which he fed crumbed Nutty Bait boilies and liquidised sweetcorn in order to try and get one of the lakes better fish. After a dozen or so pre-baiting trips, Lee had the spot absolutely rocking and a 15mm Nutty Bait popup presented bang on the money gave Lee a brace of stunning 24lb mirrors topped off by this incredible 36lb common. Nice one Lee!

■ PLACE ORDERS ONLINE: [www.rodhutchinson.co.uk](http://www.rodhutchinson.co.uk) ■ PRODUCT ENQUIRIES: [info@rodh.org](mailto:info@rodh.org) ■ QUALITY MATTERS



### Trent Baits catch report

Old mill lakes up at Market Raisen has to be one of the best venues in the country for big n's per acre. A ridiculous stock of carp which Ashley Arnold recently took advantage of on a winter ticket. Armed with our Damson Cream winter bait he had a cracking session including a couple of 40s. Great angling mate I'm sure that won't be the last.



# 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.



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**Lauren Stanford catch report**







The weather gurus (allegedly) have forecast snow for some parts of the country, so a snowy carp set-up might be on the cards for some of you this week. Talking about a snowy carp set-up we received Lauren Stanford's January report the other day where she has been experiencing some stunning snow fall over in France. She told us: "Heading back to Lac Luna for my first session of 2024, I knew it wasn't going to be easy with the drastic change in weather, but nothing was stopping me from getting out. The reason I went back to this venue, was for a few reasons. I had a winter ticket back on here last year and done very well, with the lake being shallow and well stocked I knew there was definitely a chance of a winter bite."

With the temperatures dropping, my baiting strategy was completely different to how I'd normally attack the lake. This time using small solidz filled with Spod and PVA pellet mix - and the choice of either a Fruity Squid wafter or a Pink Quad pop up as the hookbait. Small simple rigs, made with 3.5 inches of 18lb supernatural with a whipping knot keeping the hookbait as close to the deck as possible.

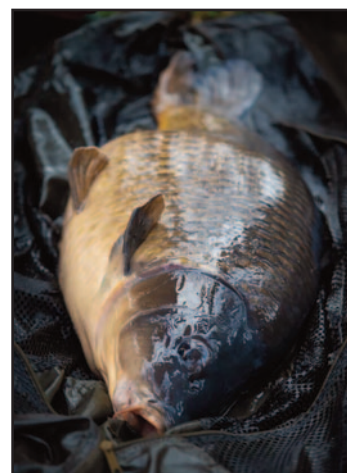
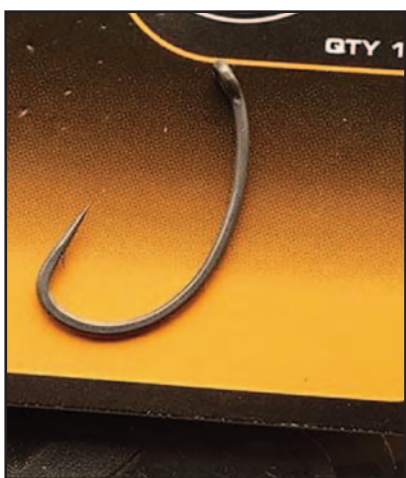
It was early in the week and I managed to nick a quick bite, this one being one of the recently stocked new carp, and I thought this would have been my only chance. However, I woke up one morning to a slow take, and to my surprise, the lake had a lid on. Playing this one very carefully under the ice, I was glad that I managed to land it in these conditions. The rods didn't go back out that night due to the thick ice, and I was hoping it would thaw out by the morning as the weather was going mild. However, this wasn't the case and I woke up to 6 inches of snow and I knew it was time to pack up..." Well done, Lauren.





### Horcott Haul Finishes with PB

Liam Hodges continues his good form on Horcott Lakes, landing seven fish on his recent visit, topped by a new PB common at 40lb 4oz, backed up with a lovely scaley at 37lb+. Using his usual tactics of Combi rigs with Illusion Fluoro, Reflex Camo Braid and Size 4 Edges Medium Curves. We also believe this common is the very one Mozza lost during the Carp Fishing Edges Underwater Film last year. Brilliant result.







# FISHING RESORT



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





## Paul Bacon catch report

After a blank first trip to Old Mill Lakes Birch Lake a month back I was keen to give it, another go, so with a very mild spell forecast I just had to have another try, the lake responded to the super mild conditions producing a good number of bites for the lads fishing, I ended up having 14 bites landing 12! Five fish of 40lb 2oz, 41lb 14oz Common, 36lb and two at 34lb 8oz. The others 20lb-23lb mega young stock fish. All caught on minimal bait just DNA Baits Bug in small mesh bags with 2-4 Spomb of the mega Crayfish Mini and Maxi mix each night just on dark. Big Thanks to Birchy for the night shots.

## Parting Gift for Cory McKay

Cory had one last session on his syndicate as at the end of the month it is changing to a lake exclusive. With time running out, Cory decided to book some days off and give it one final go. After losing a fish straight away on Sunday he was gutted especially after watching them show for the next couple days without so much as a bleep! Just when he assumed time had run out his swinger smacked the rod and he couldn't believe what he was seeing as he scooped the net around his main target since joining, the birthmark common. This huge framed fish was a new pb of 48lb 14oz, the prefect end to a good four years on the lake. The tactics included two kilos of whole and crumbed Monster Red with a pink Scent from Hell wafter over the top. Well done mate, what a carp.





## NEW LAKE RECORD 59lb 14oz

Jak Joyce lands 'TYSON'. A very sort after Common that Lives and hides in Hope Lake, Northamptonshire at an Incredible weight of 59lb 14oz!

Read Jaks story: "Two full seasons, fishing as hard as I possibly could to catch my target fish have now finally come to an end. After having a few months away from the lake, I decided to start putting the leg work in to try and locate the carp. After a couple of trips, it was apparent that the main bulk of the fish were still holding up in the middle of the lake. I decided to target the middle area of the lake fishing 12mm pop ups over beds of boilies, Corn and Maggots".

At roughly 7.30am the bobbin pulled up tight and after a strange battle the sight of this ridiculously huge carp broke the surface! There was only One common that could be that big. Before I knew what was happening, I scooped the net under this carp and I couldn't believe what I was looking at. Sulking in the bottom of my Landing net was the King of the Lake!"



## Jamie Rob catch report

After watching some big carp show in the middle of the lake, a plan was needed to get some rigs out there. The only problem was there is only three swims that control the bowl and all three where taken.

I had planned to be down there for three days but it looked like the only option was to position myself on the edge of the bowl, with good friends Rob and Glenn fishing and baiting the point swim and Robbie and Dan fishing and baiting the other two swims. Having baited an area just down from Rob and Glenn, I could see the whole bowl in the morning and the fish were in the same area showing out in the middle.

I was getting itchy feet not seeing anything on my pre-baited area, so I had a wind in and went for a brew with the boys. Everyone was fishing long but not right on where the fish had been showing at around 150 yards. Thinking the areas where going to be taken again in the morning I decided to have a look up the shallows and found a small group of fish feeding, a quick move of around two miles and I had a couple of rods positioned where the small group of carp where feeding. A couple of hours had passed and it looked like the fish had moved off, when Robbie turned up saying he had enough of fishing in the bowl having just caught about six tench and seven or eight bream that morning. He decided to bait an area where he caught a very special carp a couple of weeks prior, by this time it was getting late with only a couple of hours fishing left. I headed back down the lake to see if I could find a chance. I ended up in the swim where Robbie had just moved out of, where I had seen a big carp show in the middle again just before dark.

Wind in time was soon upon us and I had to get back in there the following morning after what I had seen. 7am was soon a reality and with being in pole position at the gate, I had only one area in mind. Having put the barrow down in the swim a quick look off the dam was all that was needed to locate some bubbling fish.

Setting up the rods all that was left to do was bait the rigs with a pimped up 'The Formula + Arctic Crab' pop up and blast it to the bubbling fish at around 150 yards. Unfortunately, the first cast had landed to the left of where I had wanted it, so it was down to one rod, if this next cast would land on the money. It landed bang on and the line was carefully slackened off before placing the rod on the stump at the side of the swim. The fish moved off slightly but a bite looked on the cards. It came nearly three hours after the cast when I thought the chance had gone. Picking up the rod it felt like a good fish straight away coming up to the surface in 10 ft of water at mega range. Slow and steady battle commenced with the fish staying on the surface most of the fight.

After netting the fish I was greeted by the most golden flanks of a big common, after safely placing her into a sling a quick wave was made to Dan the man and he came round with his camera to help out with the pictures. I knew she looked close to 40lb and on lifting her she felt heavy but with the scales reading 39lb 10oz I was mega happy to say the least. With her golden sovereign scales shining in the sun, she powered off to fight another day.



# Hay Fever

## Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

### In this issue:

- Haymax

## Helping Anglers Tackle their Hay Fever this Spring

Spring is a great time for anglers to get back to really enjoying the outdoors again, with warmer days and lighter mornings and evenings. However, it's not so great if you suffer from hay fever, as spring is the peak tree pollen season. Help is at hand, though; try adding HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balms to your fishing tackle this season, to help you enjoy your angling again.

Hay fever, or seasonal allergic rhinitis, is the most common allergy and is thought to affect almost half the UK population. It is an allergic reaction to pollen and other airborne allergens such as fungal spores. The two main types of pollen which affect hay fever sufferers in the UK are grass pollen and tree pollen. Tree pollen starts in February or March and peaks in April and May and affects around 25% of hay fever sufferers.

HayMax is the original natural, organic, drug-free prevention for hay fever sufferers and is now in its 20th year. Leading the way for almost 2 decades, HayMax has now won over 60 awards, including for 2023 a Soil Association BOOM Award, British Made Award, Enterprise Award, BizzieBaby Award, Global 100 Award and Corporate America Today Annual Award.

HayMax is a balm that has been used successfully by Olympic athletes to help combat their hay fever during their careers. It is applied around the rim of the nostrils and bones of the eyes to help prevent pollen and other airborne allergens getting into the body whilst you're angling. It has been proven to trap over one third of pollen before it gets in the body [1]. Less pollen, less reaction.

As HayMax is organic, drug-free and non-drowsy, it is ideal for anglers as it won't affect your ability to stay

alert. And the small pot fits easily into a pocket, fishing bag or back pack. It is available in 5 varieties – Pure, Lavender, Aloe Vera, Frankincense and HayMax Kids – each an equally effective barrier to pollen.

Damien Wilkins comments, "I have used your Balm for about 4 years now and I cannot recommend this highly enough this has stopped 99% of my Hay fever symptoms which used to have a big effect on my lifestyle during spring and summer months, not feeling drowsy and being able to function as normal is just amazing. Thank you. I even posted on LinkedIn about how good your product is."

Independent university studies show that HayMax traps all types of grass and tree pollen [2] and that HayMax traps over a third of pollen before it enters the body, in addition to dust mite allergens and pet dander [1]. In an independent survey by Allergy UK (the leading national charity providing support, advice and information for those living with allergic disease), 80% of hay fever sufferers say HayMax works [3]. And 94% of people find HayMax quick to be effective; 44% say that it works immediately and a further 35% say that it works within an hour or two [3].

With over 60 awards, Olympic athletes having used it successfully, doctors in the media regularly talking about it, and glamorous Hollywood actress Nadine Mulkerrin posting about HayMax on Instagram, it's hardly surprising that people are hailing it as their 'lifesaver'.

HayMax has a rrp of £8.49 per pot and is available from Holland & Barrett, selected Superdrug and Boots, Ocado, independent pharmacies, chemists and health stores and direct from HayMax at [www.haymax.biz](http://www.haymax.biz) and on 01525 406600.



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# The Perfect Time For Zigs

By Darrell Peck

## Zig Kit Essentials

**A**s we move further into winter, zigs will no doubt be the go-to tactic for many of you over the coming months. Being ahead of the game and being at the ready to give zigs a go will no doubt provide you with bonus bites on others. Now is the perfect time to prep that zig kit and have it in

the rucksack at the ready. Here's some zig essentials: -

- 1. Compac 110** – A neat little zipped storage pouch that'll keep all your zig kit in and can live in your rucksack taking up barely any room.
- 2. Guru N-Gauge Hooklink** – Developed by the match boys, this stuff is now a firm favourite of many of the team for their zig work. Super supple and low diam-

eter, it's mega strong and offers a lovely natural look to your bait.

- 3. Hybrid Lead Clips/Heli Leads/Anti Tangle Sleeve** – You want to drop that lead when zigging but you always want the lead to boast an immediate impact to quickly hook the carp. A Heli Lead will offer a faster reaction time than a swivelled lead. Fished on a Lead Clip, you know the lead will safely eject when







needed and combined with an Anti-Tangle sleeve, you know you'll be presented.

- 4. Kamakura Wide Gapes** – No doubt an edge, especially for those cagey feeding carp, the sharpness of a Kamakura is going to hook you more fish, no doubt.

- 5. Foam and Goo** – A classic combination, squeezing your

foam and coating it with Goo will allow the foam to fully take on the liquid and ooze attraction for hours. Squid and Garlic are firm favourites of the lads.

- 6. Marker Set Up** – An accurate way to measure the depths and ensure your zigs are presented in the layers you want.

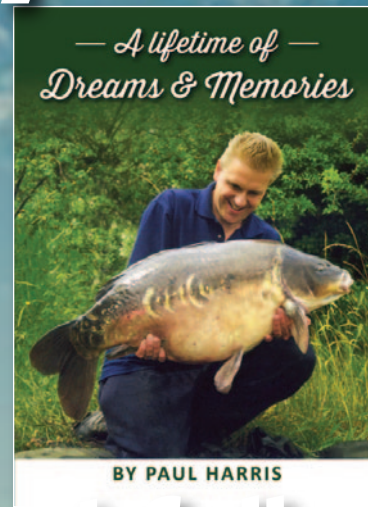
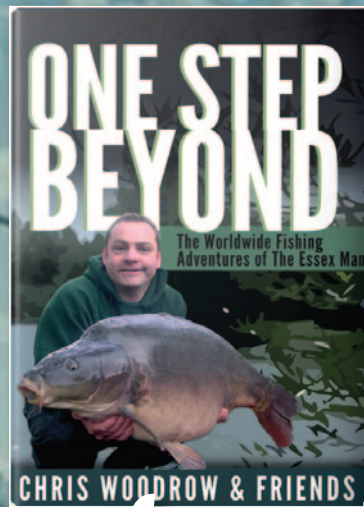
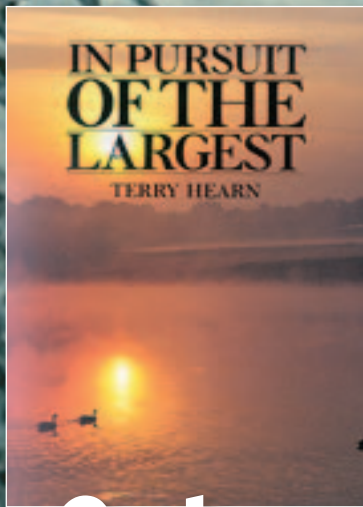
- 7. Adjustable Zig Kit** – For those

fishing deeper waters exceeding 12 foot, adjustables are a devastating tactic that allow you to effortlessly work the layers, pinpointing exact depths the carp are living.

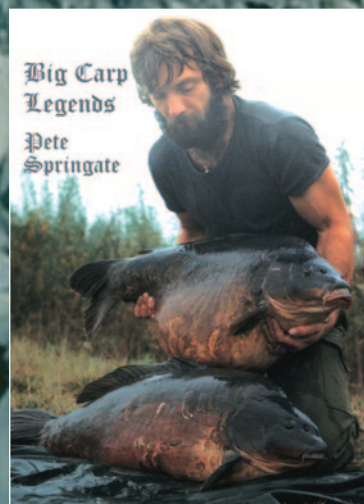
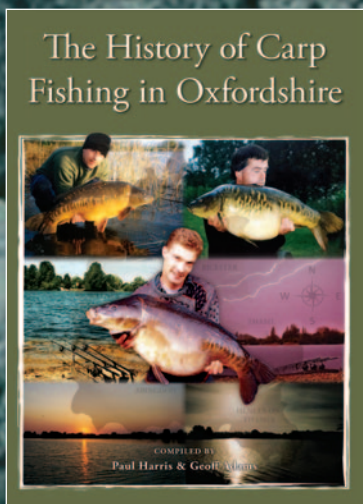
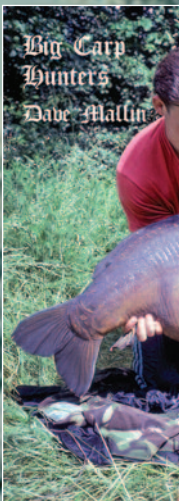
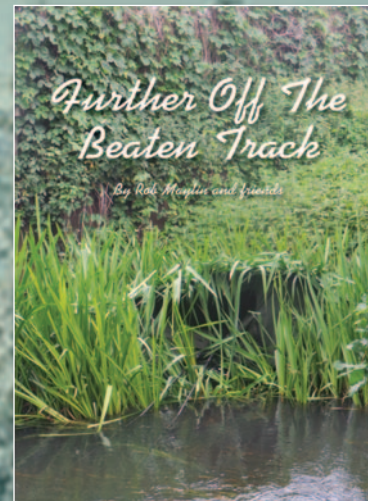
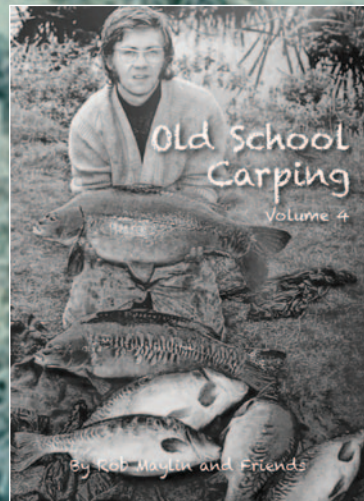
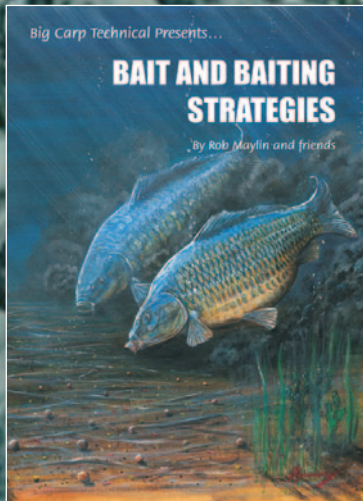
Stay ahead of the crowd, get those zigs ready. ■



# Warm Away the Cold



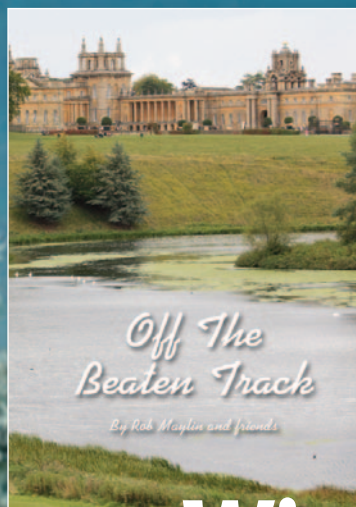
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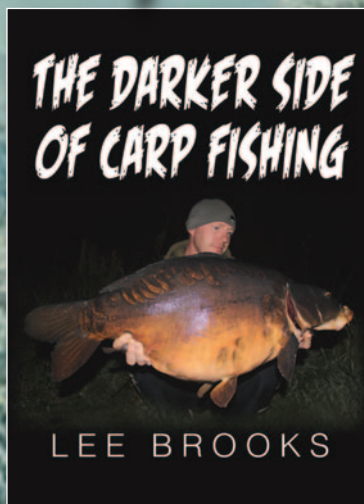
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# and Weather This Year



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**Exclusive**

# Ice Melt Success

By Kev Hewitt





**I** arrived to Horcott lakes on Sunday morning praying it would be ice free with the weather warming up on Saturday. Unfortunately, upon arrival I was greeted by a lake 100% frozen solid with the ice over an inch thick. I spent a good few hours breaking the ice up along the margins. A big storm was due to arrive later in the afternoon and I had hoped by smashing some ice it would help defrost the lake quicker once the wind arrived. I spent until about 1pm smashing ice but there was no sign of the storm, so I decided to head home and return the following day. Storm Isha arrived later that evening and it was brutal. In a way I was actually glad to be back home.

The storm passed overnight and I was back down the lake before first light and could see a decent ripple on the surface in the darkness. The lake had defrosted and it was game on! I set up off the back of the wind with the thinking that all of the ice would have smashed and melted on the







windward end of the lake. 3 rods were dispatched onto a small clear spot with my trusty Ronnies with a Northern Special pop up soaked in the new Halo liquid from CC Moore. I put about a dozen Spomb's over the top of crushed and chopped Oro Stim Liver boilies mixed with maggots and hemp.

My first bite came the following

morning in the shape of an incredible big plated mirror, the exact reason that drew me to fish Horcott in the first place.

Later that afternoon literally out of the blue I received a double take from another couple of stunning mirrors. I would have been buzzing with just the one fish but to end the trip with three fish was a right result. ■







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

## Ricky Collett new year catches



28lbs 12oz – 27th January for Mark Sinclair.  
Lovely winter catch.



Early February pike.



Never too young to enjoy a Fat Boys breakfast at the lakes.



Nice looking pike caught from Oak lake.

### Lake Prices

**Day ticket lake – Oak Lake** – £10 a day and £20 for 24 hours.

**Predator Lake** – Prices are the same as the day ticket lake for pike during the winter – £20 a day and £30 for 24 hours for catfish in the summer.

**Match Lake** – £6 for one rod and £10 for two rods.



# Manor Monsters

By Matt Miller

**W**hen we fish our syndicate waters, we all have one maybe two fish that we would like to catch more than others, in my case the anchor was my main target closely followed by a fish called georges in the Essex Manor. It was my second year on the manor, I had stella under the belt and a few of the other residents but the last few trips I set out for the anchor.

I noticed alot of fish kept getting in a area but not too much was being

caught, the odd one or two fish, so with the anchor due out and knowing that it likes to get caught from this area I went all out for it. I got in the swim I had choose to where I thought my best bet for her was, had a lead around and found some nice spots amongst light silkweed surrounded by small weed beds.

Around 10pm the alarm was singing to me, I had my first bite resulting in a 29.8 mirror. I gave em some bait and around 1.30am away went the right rod, strangely, another 29.8 mirror.

The next afternoon, with no signs

of fish in the area, I had another melter out the blue. This time a bigger mirror of 36 pound. Even tho the main baulk of the fish were'nt here I was still managing to get the odd bite.

The next session arrived and I choose the same swim with little signs of fish, something I don't usually do, had a lead around and found some nice hard spots and to these I baited heavily with Xcel KSC boilies. I expected them to turn up the following morning but my luck was in, as I lay on my bedchair around 1am I hear the sound of fish crashing getting closer and closer. They were on there



















way here. I could see they weren't in short so I quickly repositioned two rods out further to another two spots I had baited earlier and sat back.

They moved in and I had the bite but after a few minutes to which the fish had run me along the margin reed line where I was cut off. Not to be too disheartened, I got the rod back out and had another shot at em.

First light dawned and a manic one it was, left hand rod peeled off resulting in a 24lb common. I was off the mark. Within 10 minutes of casting that rod out, the middle rod this time flew off and after a fight not even a bream would be proud off I had an upper twenty in the net, but I didn't get time to weigh/photograph the fish as the left hand rod was away.

When I connected with the fish I knew I had something alot bigger on

the end. It had me in the reeds so I let the fish retained in the net go free and went wading down the margin in search of my prize.

After a hard battle, and giving the fish alot of stick, I had netted the bream common at 41lb exactly. The Gforce straight point hooks combined with the BlackOut hook link showing me again there up to the job as always. That was it for this session fish wise but I knew I was a step closer.

On the next trip, I opted to get in the same swim, where there had been two bites over the previous few days, one lost and a low 30. I baited light to begin my session, 50 baits per rod.

Within a few hours of setting the traps, a nice 25lb mirror was sitting in the net. I then thought, well im catching fish here, it must be along soon. I

baited with around 1kg per rod that night and after a quite night with alot of fish showing to the swims to the left, I decided not move and keep at it and at 7.30am I was away.

The fish felt heavy and gave me two short powerful runs, and then with my dad on net duty he done what was asked with no problems. I said what is it? Low 30? He turned round and by the look on his face I knew I finally had the fish I set out to get, the anchor.

A quick breather, we weighed the fish at 40lb 4oz. I knew it would come along soon where I was consistently catching in the area. I stayed in the swim for another 36hrs, where I had another 26lb mirror and a cracking 35.08 mirror. The lake has been kind to me this year so far so hopefully my luck continues. ■





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# How To Tie my Version of the D Rig

By Scott Sweetman

**F**irstly, I take off around 12-inches of 20lb IQ2 and attach a size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape X, using a 9-turn knotless knot.

Next, I thread a small section of silicone tubing down the hair section of the IQ2, before carefully threading the hookpoint through the silicone. I line the silicone up on the hook's shank,

just past opposite the barb.

I thread a Micro PTFE Ring Swivel onto the tag end of the IQ2 before threading it back down through the hook's eye, blobbing the tag end to create a nice curving D, offering plenty of movement for my hookbait. The section of silicone helps extend that D, something that I find really important for the effectiveness of this rig.

Using a section of bait floss through the Ring Swivel, I attach my bait, usually a white wafer, but in this case, the lake I'm fishing is riddled with Tench and bream, so a big snowman is my go-to. The D rig is very diverse, giving me a multitude of hook bait options.

Using a 5-turn grinner, I tie the far end of my hook link to a size 11 Ring Swivel, keeping the rig around 9-





## How To Tie my Version of the D Rig **Exclusive**

inches in length. I give it a gentle steam over the kettle to ensure it's nice and straight.

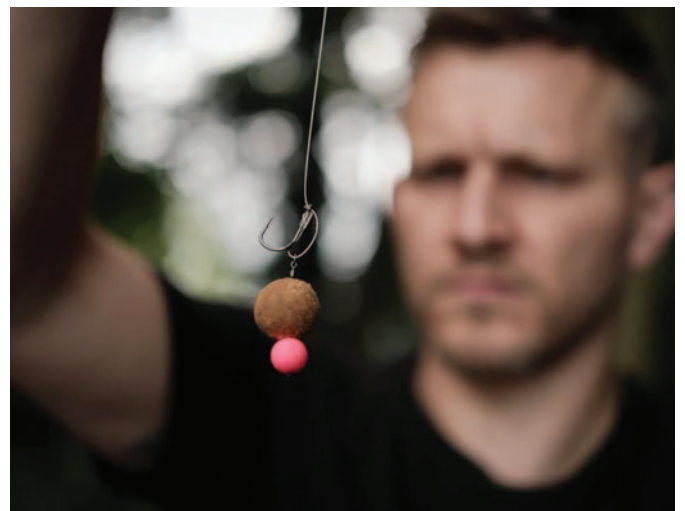
I usually fish this on a Heli Safe set up, with a 1.5oz lead, Leadcore Leader and Sub Braid mainline.

As long as I'm confident there's little to no weed on the spot and I'm

getting a really positive drop, then this is my go-to rig, usually fished over boilie, but you can fish it over various baiting approaches.

I've found this rig to be incredibly effective over the last few years, with virtually no hook pulls and when I've seen the fish on me, the rig usually

gets the job done. Having piece of mind that it won't tangle, with the ability to reset and being virtually invisible underwater fills me with a lot of confidence. What's more, it is incredibly simple to tie, requiring minimal components, suiting my angling perfectly. ■





# A Hat trick of SIXTIES!

Featuring Christopher Paschmanns

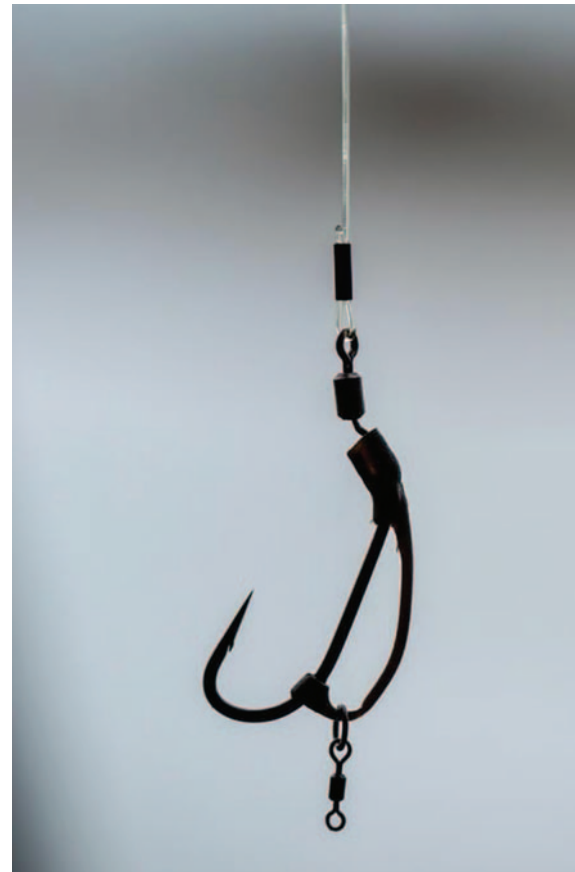
**H**ow about catching a 61lb two-toned mirror in Germany, a perfect common of 61lb in Austria and a 64lb beast of a mirror in France in succession? And all this to back up a series of stunning carp up to mid 50lb.

Christopher Paschmanns enjoyed an inspiring late autumn campaign on his tricky syndicate with not many but all quality big carp, catching his target – the big two-tone – as the last one. Sneaky angling in little corners with tiny hookbaits and disciplined preparation did the trick. With a bunch of mega carp under his belt

Chris went to Austria to give a tuition and used this chance for a two nights session on a gin clear and heavily weeded gravel pit. Dropping rigs in little holes in the weed from the boat was the job. And this resulted in only one take but with a 61lb common in true perfection you don't ask for more, do you? His next and last trip of 2023









**Exclusive** A Hat trick of SIXTIES!









in mid-December took him to Trois Iles, a famous big carp venue in France. There it is all about distance casting and being precise. On the second morning of his 3-night-session Chris received a steady take and after some nerve-wracking minutes he netted a true beast of a mirror of 64lb to end his season in style.

All his fish fell to the Longshank Spinner Rig DF is using to such great effect. In late summer Chris and Dan filmed for Thinking Tackle together and since DF showed the effectivity of this presentation to the German angler, he started using it as well and with these results – we are sure – he has no reason to look back. On this presentation the LSX hook always nails perfectly in the bottom lip resulting in excellent hookholds. The set-up of the rig and character of the hook with its straight point simply generates more pick-ups into carp in the net.

The next thing all big carp captures had in common is the timing: Good moon phases and mild weather in November, heavy storm and deep pressure on a good moon phase in December. ■



## Carpy Humour





# The Norfolk Syndicate

By Will Bale

**A**fter 2 nights with fish all over me and nothing to show for it, I was pleased when the sun came out Sunday and I could have a go for them on the

top. I had my first bite early that afternoon resulting in a lovely old mirror at 31lb 12oz.

I then packed up shortly after as the wind made it very hard work. As I made my way back to the car park I noticed a group of around a dozen

fish in a small flat piece of water, so stopped and had a go for half an hour and manage to hook and land another 30lb+ original, a mirror known as cluster at 32lb 4oz. ■

**(Top) Four-scale - 31lb 12oz.  
(Bottom) Cluster - 32lb 4oz**





# Burghfield

By Elliott Gray

One thing you realise very quickly when fishing the likes of Burghfield, is the necessity for strong kit. Never have I fished a lake before where the thought of hooking your target fish terrifies you. Many will have heard the stories of the epic battles endured whilst attached to what is undoubtedly the greatest carp that swims in the UK today, and they're nothing short of incredible. In my head I've prepared myself but I doubt anything will really prepare you for that moment if you're ever lucky enough to put a hook in that fish. One thing's for sure, all hell is going to break loose.

Burghfield boasts problems at almost every angle, whether it's buoys, snags, islands or weed, the chances are you'll have at least one of those to deal with, and usually two or three of them! Often, you're fishing at range too, which only adds to issues















the above can cause. In a nutshell, you have to think about a lot more than just hooking the carp, landing them is never going to be easy.

With all this in mind, I went in heavy from the outset and haven't changed yet. I've been an avid user of Sub Braid since the very first batch we received at Korda way back when, so that was my first choice in terms of main line. Not only is it bomb proof,

but it's ideal for achieving the right bite indication should I fish long. Attached to that I've been using long, 50lb Sinking Arma Kord leaders and then to that, 8ft of leadless leader. So, from the rod to the rig it's really strong stuff. It has to be.

I didn't change much in terms of the rigs, opting for my usual, which is pretty beefy anyway; size 4 Wide Gape X's in the Kamakura variety and

20lb N-Trap. I have absolute faith in both of these and that's so important on a pit like this.

The fishing has been quite varied, as it often is in the spring and I've caught fish both out the weed and over clean gravel.

The spring was fun, the summer has been a bit of a grueler but I'm loving it so far and hopefully, the next bite isn't too far away. ■



# Sandhurst Lake

By Dale Turner

**M**e and girlfriend had a week off work and we both decided to go fishing together for a couple of nights, we were suppose to be going to Par Fishery's but the dates got mix up somewhere along the line and it was fully booked so I made a last minute call to Sandhurst Lake and managed to get booked in. We got to the lake around 12pm lunch time, after walking around for a couple of hours and working out where the fish may be holding up and chatting to a few of the lads that were already on there we finely managed to find a few fish showing in front of the right hand side of the island swim.

Once set up it wasn't long before the rain came and the fish really started to move about more. I spent

an hour finding some spots as the weed was rather bad in places. I managed to find some proper nice clear areas amongst the weed so it wasn't too long before getting a bit of bait out and the fish obviously moved in on it, about half an hour later I got my first take. It was a right oh scrap and weeded me up but managed to get it moving with a bit of pressure and I soon slipped a proper old dark 26lb 10oz common in the net.

The rain went on through the night and the liners were too, fish were obviously out there on the bait but no pick ups which was weird. Morning came and the fish were still really active showing all over the place, so I had a little change and changed my hook baits from white to standard 16mm Krill pop ups, spread a good 2kg of bait back out over the area. A couple of hours later the same rod was away, I had another dark old 24lb

common. Once my girlfriend done a few pictures for me the rod was back out on the spot, about 1 hour later it was away again and when I lifted in to the rod it was like hooking into a train and all I could do was let it take some line and do what it needed to do.

After it had taken me 3/4 of the way across the lake and then weeding its self up I got my girlfriend Tamzin to hold the rod with a tight line whilst I ran round and got the boat from the other side of the lake.

As soon as I had got back over to Tamzin with the boat I was soon on my way out to the fish, once over the top of it I managed to get hold of the line and get it moving, it wasn't long and she weeded me up again, that didn't last long tho and it was back on the move.

I got towed about the lake for a good 20 minutes before I caught a





glimpse of it and could see it was a big fish, at this point I was praying that it didn't come off. After what seemed like an age it was tired out and ready for the net, as I slipped the net under I felt a whole lot of relief. I unclipped the rig from the swivel, broke my rod down and fastened the net to the side of the boat with the

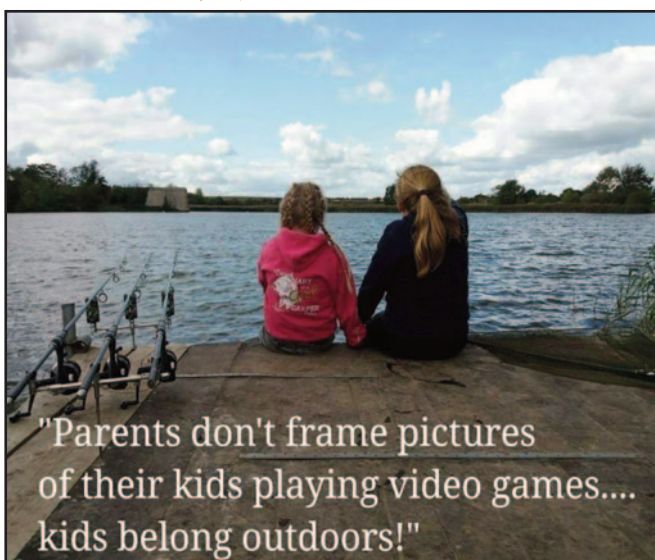
fish facing forward and slowly rowed back to my swim. When I'd got to the bank I popped my net back together, left the fish sitting in the margin while we got everything ready. Whilst I was lifting her on to the mat I was thinking this could be a new PB here but once on the scales they rolled around to 36lb 8oz not a PB but I was still well

chuffed. One to remember that battle.

It all seemed to slow up after that and before we knew it it was Friday morning and we had to be off the lake by 9am as there was a match on that weekend, which meant the end of our session at Sandhurst Lake but I will be going back for sure. ■



## Carpy Humour





# This Time Last Year

Featuring Billy Wells

## 'THE SPECIAL ONE!'

**B**ack in the second week of March, we were reporting on what a remarkable week it had already been for DNA anglers on Monks Pit – and by that point it was only Tuesday!

Whilst Billy Wells was hauling thirties for fun, Perry Alabaster was getting his hands on one of the most-sought-after fish in the Cambridgeshire syndicate, the magnificent Special One at 38lb 12oz.

"After spending most of the Monday listening to the wind howling as I was working, I couldn't resist ringing the Monks bailiff, Darren, to ask if I could bring my scheduled Tuesday/Wednesday session forward a day this week," said Perry.

"Once he'd agreed, I rushed home to load my gear and got to the lake

just in time to get the rods out before dark. The wind was still blowing a hoolie and with my two first-choice swims already occupied, I decided to set up in the teeth of a strong south-westerly. I eventually got the rods out after running up and down the bank chasing rod sleeves, landing-net bags, etc. that were flying around, but I still felt confident using the Crayfish wafers in solid bags of Crayfish Mini Mix pellets, a tactic that's worked well for me in recent weeks.

"Apart from feeling relieved the tree I was camped under hadn't fallen on my head as I woke up on Tuesday morning, my main feeling was that of disappointment that the night hadn't produced a bite. I was just contemplating a swim move when my right-hand rod rattled off! As I played the fish towards the bank, I thought it was probably a little stockie, but at least it'd be a blank-saver. It really

didn't fight much until it got within a few rod-lengths of the bank, when all hell broke loose and I battled with the fish under my rod tips for what felt like an eternity! Eventually I landed it and weighed it at 38lb 12oz. That would do nicely! I still hadn't realised what fish it was until my mate, Mark, who was just leaving, started taking photos. It was a much-sought-after Monks resident known as the Special One.

"I'd seen this carp on the bank a couple of times since returning to Monks in 2021 and it's been right up the top of my most-wanted list since I first set on eyes on it. What a creature! Needless to say, I didn't end up moving swims."

This is not the first time the Special One has given itself up to DNA products, having also been caught by Steve Haylett at 36lb 2oz on Secret 7 back in the summer of 2021. ■









# Riders of the Storm

Featuring Joe Venus

**J**oe Venus's Autumn/Winter campaign was nothing short of special. After fighting his way through the stock in just a few weeks, with the majority of them being stockies, it was only a matter of time before some of the better fish started to visit the zone.

With the bulk of the shows being in the early hours, it was no surprise when he landed two of the lake's smaller residents at around 2am. First light came and he was away again, but into what was clearly a better fish. After a dogged battle, he finally slipped the cord under what was a real jewel of the lake – with melted fins, small tail and pinky/red colouration – a real special one, looking prime in all its autumnal colours!

Joe saw himself back at the pond with a monstrous weather front getting ever so closer – it was time to batten down the hatches and hold on tight for the night! That was until his

middle rod started to tick away – before he knew it he was standing in the eye of the storm, soaked to the bone! The result was another one of the gems of the lake, a respectable 33lbs. With the rod only being in position for less than an hour, things were already shaping up to be a good night!

The following morning, with his left-hand rod pulled up tight, saw him again standing in the brunt of the storm. After a tense battle in the gin-clear water, he finally stuck the net under an immense mirror – with almost white tips, a red belly and one from the wanted list!

With the penultimate night drawing in, it was a simple case of repeating the process. After a chat with some of the lads, it became clear something special wasn't far away!

With conditions gaining more and more traction, the anticipation for the night ahead grew stronger. Not long into darkness, Joe received a bite on

his left-hand rod, lifting into a heavy weight, before slipping into his waders to save getting soaked! He commenced battle with what was to be a fish called 'The Scattered Lin' – another 30 pounder to add to his growing list.

Later, with the trap re-positioned and conditions continuing to pick up, he settled in for the night before he received a short burst of bleeps, having him scrambling out from under the brolly! Upon picking the rod up, he thought it was a smaller fish with weed over its head. It then became very apparent it was no small fish, after seeing a huge dorsal poke up in the moonlight as it rolled into the net. A search for his head touch seemed to take a lifetime, with thoughts of what it could be running through his head – little did he expect it to be the lake's biggest mirror 'Sparkie's Sister' at 44lb – a proper Essex relic and one that will for sure stay with him for many years to come! ■









**Exclusive**

# Winter and Just Bitter

By Michael Madeley





**W**hen fishing in what can be described as only miserable conditions, you do need to be in the right mind set from the off, and I mean from the start of the session leaving home. But as brutal Carp anglers we do and once at a deserted lake with nothing but muddy tracks to tread, we go on and start looking for any signs of fish. It was early Jan 2024 when I set up for a hellish 48hr sesh, it was pretty well calm to be honest when setting up but I knew a weather front was in bound.

When you're laying on the bedchair

2200hrs listening to the wind and sleety rain I was thinking I hope my alarms don't start screaming lol, but one did the right-hand rod was bending, in these situations nothing matters apart from picking that rod up and lifting into a pissed of carp who was only out the pack for five minutes and now he's being dragged about. For me it was 15 minutes of adrenaline especially when it was in the net, battle won and that feeling of "yes" however then comes real time, you are absolutely drenched, hands are so numb you think you have frost-bite and you can only move slowly.

Thoughts then turn to getting the self-take done! First thing set the Tripod and do a couple of practice pics

however Bluetooth just wasn't having it, whistle cam and the other self-take apps couldn't take that cold howling wind, only option was to record on video and select stills.

Once done time to get the misbehaving carp back home, he's been stressed enough. It was good to get back in the bivvy and kettle on for a good brew, dry of a little and start going through the video selecting stills.

The mind will only wonder if you let it.

Cheers, Mike Nadeley, International Consultant Katran line, Consultant Enterprise tackle, Member BCSG, Team Fishgsurd and RG Bait, Ex Army Sgt. ■



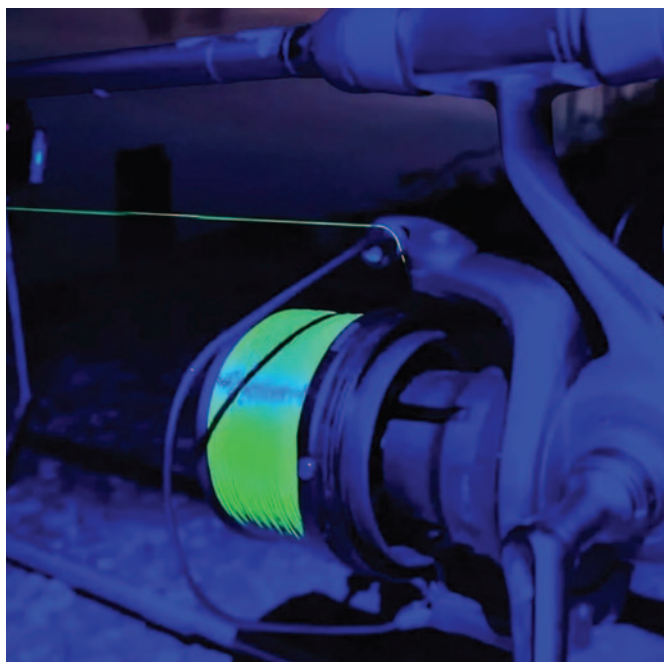












Synapse fishing line

Mike Madeley, UK

### Synapse Citron

Smooth, soft and durable on knots sinking fishing line citron colour. Made from co-polymer with low stretch 12-13% (measured by applying 50% of force from maximum written breaking strength) Line special coating decrease ring friction during the cast, which allows to make longer casts. Bright citron fishing line is highly visible at night in the light of a flashlight. The line offers convenient marks each 250 meters, that allow to equally spool line on 4 reels.

Article	Breaking	Strength	Diameter	Length
20291	9,35 lb	4,25 kg	0.234 mm	1000 m
20307	11,35 lb	5,15 kg	0.261 mm	1000 m
20314	13,25 lb	6,00 kg	0.286 mm	1000 m
20321	15,45 lb	7,01 kg	0.309 mm	1000 m
20338	16,55 lb	7,50 kg	0.331 mm	1000 m
20345	19,33 lb	8,77 kg	0.370 mm	1000 m

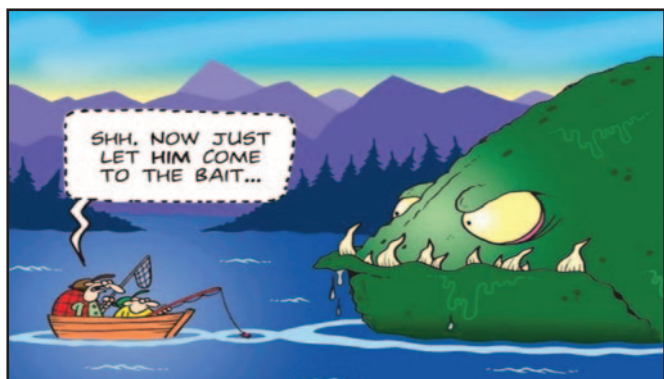
works great under blue light

### Synapse Feeder

The line, which we produced specially for feeder method. Fast sinking fishing line with dark brown colour. Made from copolymer of high quality, extremely durable on the knots, small stretch of 12-13%. Very smooth coated, which increases abrasion protection and prevents from scratches. Catching on the feeder means to have a big number of throws. A small stretch provides a better chance not to miss the slightest bite. And sometimes it can play a crucial role in the fight for the top places in the competition.

Article	Breaking	Strength	Diameter	Length
20161	9,55 lb	4,33 kg	0.234 mm	150 m
20178	12,45 lb	5,65 kg	0.261 mm	150 m
20185	14,25 lb	6,46 kg	0.286 mm	150 m

## Carpy Humour





# The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

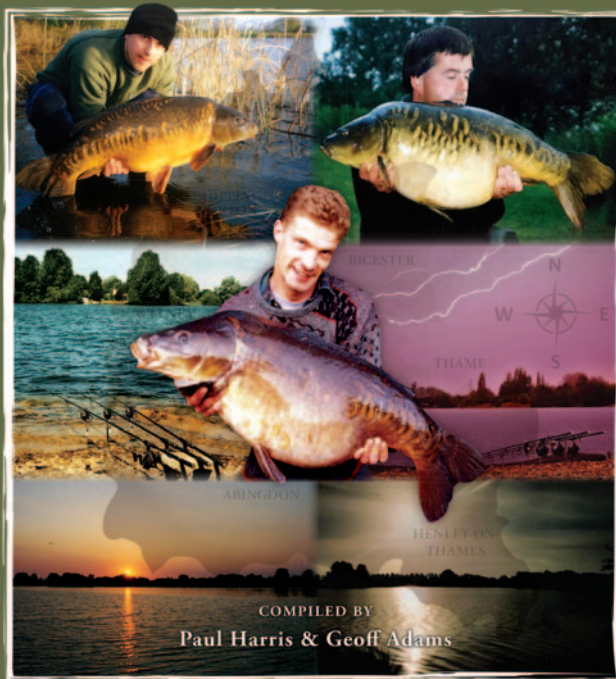
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

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

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

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

## The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire



CARD: 07768 731425

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

**AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN**



**Exclusive**

A man wearing a green cap and sunglasses is holding a large carp in a lake. The fish is partially submerged, and the man is smiling. The background shows a bridge and trees under a cloudy sky.

# Back out and doing it, and in some style too!

By Scott Lloyd



**S**cott Lloyd only went and done it again and has now earned himself a new nickname, 'Mr Autumn'. What a carp... what a guy. The 58lb 2oz tank of common being Scott's 31st bite from a hectic, but rather short, autumn campaign. Just mega!

Just like autumn last year, when he banked the big mirror known as The Croc, Scott Lloyd has been full throttle with his latest campaign, and inevitably the outcome was the same when he banked this immense creature.

The huge, 58lb 2oz common was the reward of a massive amount of effort, big long-range bait ups, early starts, and playing the numbers game, being his 31st bite in the 26 nights fishing on the big park lake.

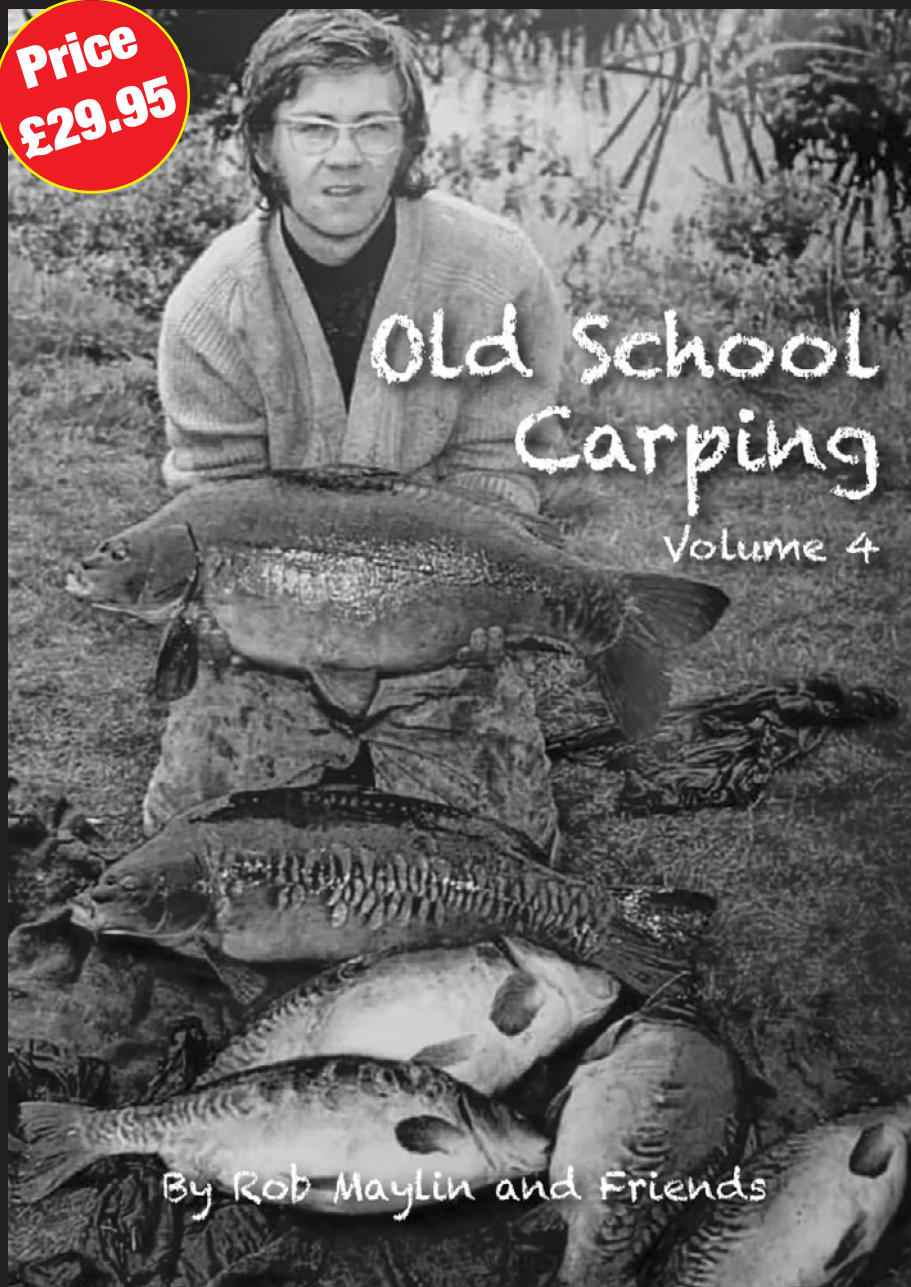
Well done Scott from all at Big Carp. What a carp! and what an angler Scott is!





# 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>**



# SPRING EDGES AND TIPS



**ALL STAR LINE UP!**  
LOOKING BACK BY DAVE LANE  
LOOKING BACK MOVING  
FORWARD BY RICK GOLDER



**ALSO FEATURING**  
RECENT SESSION BY STEWART SOUTHWARD  
A SUMMER IN THE SUN BY DEINIOL ROBERTS  
THE SPECIAL OLD ONES BY VINCENT COLE  
THREE CARP IN 36 HOURS BY MICK DUKES  
DAY TICKET MONSTER BY JOE SALIBA  
KINGFISHER LAKE BY ALEX MCQUIRE  
LEAN SPELL BY RYAN GIBSON





# VIEWS FROM THE BIVVY

Rob's Ramblings



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Also available this month,  
Big Carp Issue 332  
Miss it and miss out!

## The Big One Show is this Weekend!

Looking for something to do this weekend, Saturday and Sunday the 2nd/3rd March 2024 then why not head to Farnborough for the last show of this season. Great stands and great speakers. Here's what to expect.

### So MANY brands!

Take a look at all the brands and retailers coming to The Big One Show this weekend! Who will you be stopping at?

EXHIBITOR LINE UP With more to come		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Fishy Things</li> <li>Angling Technics</li> <li>Assassin Tackle Ltd</li> <li>Anglers Against Cancer</li> <li>Aqua Litium Clothing</li> <li>Angling4less</li> <li>Angling Trust</li> <li>Ashgar Export Kampus</li> <li>Barrow Conversions</li> <li>Boatman UK</li> <li>Bait Boat Pods</li> <li>Bio Source Baits</li> <li>Bait Clearance</li> <li>Bite Life</li> <li>Beckfords</li> <li>Brownies Rock</li> <li>Carp Lounge Tackle</li> <li>Carp Porter</li> <li>CarpLife</li> <li>CC Moore</li> <li>Carp Craze</li> <li>Carpodoma</li> <li>Clawford Lakes Resort &amp; Spa</li> <li>Catch &amp; Cook</li> <li>Carp Particles UK LTD</li> <li>Carp Green</li> <li>Castaway PVA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Castaway PVA</li> <li>Cult Tackle</li> <li>Carpology Magazine</li> <li>Capital &amp; Hippopotachunk</li> <li>Crafty Catcher</li> <li>Corus Tackle</li> <li>Club Mate</li> <li>Carp Chaos</li> <li>Carp Addiction</li> <li>Catmaster Tours</li> <li>Carp King</li> <li>Dynamite Baits</li> <li>Deeper</li> <li>Deception Angling</li> <li>Dinsmores</li> <li>Delkim</li> <li>Dogs Trust</li> <li>Devil's Bridge Rum</li> <li>Embryo</li> <li>Eye Level Optical</li> <li>E Z Feeds</li> <li>Estate Lake Systems</li> <li>Fish-on Tackle Shop</li> <li>Fortis Eyewear</li> <li>Farnham Angling Society</li> <li>Fox @ Angling4less</li> <li>Flagjockey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Garbolino</li> <li>Guru Clothing</li> <li>Guru</li> <li>Gardner Tackle</li> <li>Gemini Tackle</li> <li>Gilliams Fishing Resort</li> <li>Hefre Surplus</li> <li>Hadlow College</li> <li>Inspired Angling</li> <li>Ibhooks</li> <li>Insurance Emporium</li> <li>J&amp;S Artisan</li> <li>Korda</li> <li>Korda Clothing</li> <li>Korda &amp; Guru</li> <li>Meet &amp; Greet</li> <li>Kalzen</li> <li>KUMU Clothing</li> <li>Kent Particles</li> <li>Lidsters's Fishing Supplies</li> <li>Liquirigs</li> <li>LBC (Ultralight)</li> <li>Boots</li> <li>Little Hero</li> </ul>

EXHIBITOR LINE UP With more to come		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mainline</li> <li>Macmillan Cancer Support</li> <li>Nash</li> <li>Nu Fish</li> <li>Nyro</li> <li>NGT</li> <li>Navitas</li> <li>Nutrabaits</li> <li>NG Floats &amp; Elastic</li> <li>One More Cast</li> <li>Ooze</li> <li>O'donnell Moonshine</li> <li>Prologic</li> <li>Peg One</li> <li>Parker Baits</li> <li>Pole Position Tackle</li> <li>Partridge of Redditch</li> <li>Ridge Monkey</li> <li>Roman Tackle</li> <li>Riverside Leads</li> <li>Reel Deal Tackle</li> <li>Royal British Legion</li> <li>Ringers</li> <li>Rose Cottage Pantry</li> <li>Rigged &amp; Ready</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rig Marole</li> <li>Rippton</li> <li>Solar Tackle</li> <li>Sonik</li> <li>Shimano</li> <li>Sticky Baits</li> <li>Summit Tackle</li> <li>Samari Collection</li> <li>Sailvay UK</li> <li>Subsurface x Prolite Explorer</li> <li>Sea Angler Magazine</li> <li>Swimbookers</li> <li>Spero Tackle</li> <li>Sunfire Spirits</li> <li>So Simple Baits</li> <li>Surrey Carp Particles</li> <li>Stoney &amp; Friends</li> <li>Sean the Chef</li> <li>TRAKKER</li> <li>Total Fishing Tackle</li> <li>Thinking Anglers</li> <li>T.H.E. Plastic Piling Company</li> <li>The Squirrels Nuts</li> <li>Trident Leads</li> <li>Tails Up Baits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trent Baits</li> <li>Totally Hooked</li> <li>The Angling Store</li> <li>The Crusty Pie Company</li> <li>Totalcool</li> <li>The Great British Cheese Company</li> <li>Taylors Lead Lounge</li> <li>The Firm Carp Company</li> <li>Toslon &amp; Navigator</li> <li>Urban Carping Apparel</li> <li>Ultimate Carp Giveaways</li> <li>Urban</li> <li>Urban Carp Collective</li> <li>Ultipeg</li> <li>VASS</li> <li>Wolf</li> <li>Wychwood</li> <li>Wolfe Clothing</li> <li>Weston Developments</li> <li>Wintons France</li> <li>Zerofit</li> </ul>

Here's a look at all the speakers talking on the main stage and at the rig clinic at The Big One Show.



Looks like a great weekend!





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# CARP TACKLE ONLINE

## NEW PRODUCTS, BEST SELLERS AND DEALS

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First time carp fishing today for a good while resulted in 3 fish. Best being a 20lb 10oz mirror and a nice 16lb linear the other being a small double common. All caught on dumbbell wafers on a slip-d using a scorpion curve shank hook.



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

Team member 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. 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 it 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!



This decided to interrupt pictures but worth it going just over 30lb, not bad for a December carp. This taking on @carptackleonline ready-made Ronnie. "By this time couldn't feel my fingers dint help trying to set up for pictures!" Well done, Lee.

Team member Lee Oxley has been doing what he does best, putting carp on the bank again: "Managed to temp this 22+ at 3am on KAPER Ltd dispersion sweetcornz 12mm pop up on Carptackleonline Scorpion Wide Gape hook. Not the biggest in here by any means but carps a carp especially this time year!" Well done, Lee.

We are looking for active anglers that have decent camera skills and can put a few articles together. Need to be over 16, living in the UK and have good social media presence and skills. In return we offer a decent discount from our range of end tackle. If you think you have what we are looking for drop us an email with a bit of information about yourself to sales.carponline@gmail.com

### CARP TACKLE ONLINE RECRUITMENT

Carptackleonline is looking for new team members - do this for?

We need YOU!

What have we offered? / Compensation etc to be considered and to get involved, we have a great discount from our range of Carp Tackle Online and access to our social media accounts. We will also provide you with a good range of bait and tackle to get you started. We will also provide you with a good range of bait and tackle to get you started. We will also provide you with a good range of bait and tackle to get you started.

How to apply: Email us with a bit of information about yourself to sales.carponline@gmail.com

Contact: sales.carponline@gmail.com



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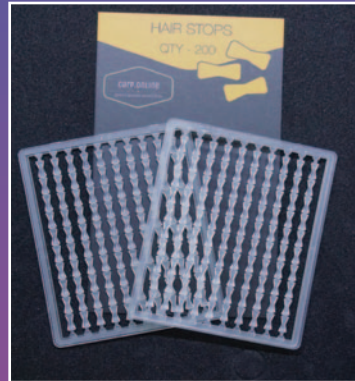
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Tungsten Putty



Shrink Tube



Hair Stops



Hook Beads



Swivels



Scorpion Chod Hooks



Scorpion Crank Hook



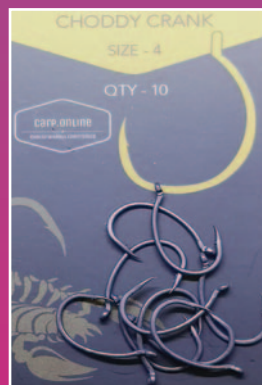
Scorpion Snag Hook



Scorpion Ronnie Rig



Composite Leadclips



Choddy Crank Hook



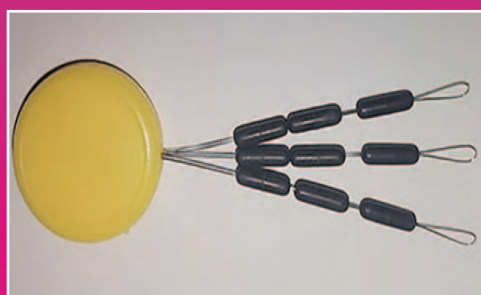
Hair Aligners



Tungsten Kickers



Swivel Deal



Tungsten Hooklink Sinkers



Chod Filament





# CARP CHAT

## Carpy News

### 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 everyone 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.

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. ■





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### Wide-Fit Ladies Wellington Boots

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

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

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

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

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

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

Jileon Extra Wide Fit Purple Wellies are available in sizes 4-8 from [www.jileon.com](http://www.jileon.com)

#### About Jileon:

Launched in 2006, Jileon are a family run business, focused on providing a range of high quality wide calf and funky wellies at a good price, backed by exceptional customer service. Website: [www.jileon.com](http://www.jileon.com)

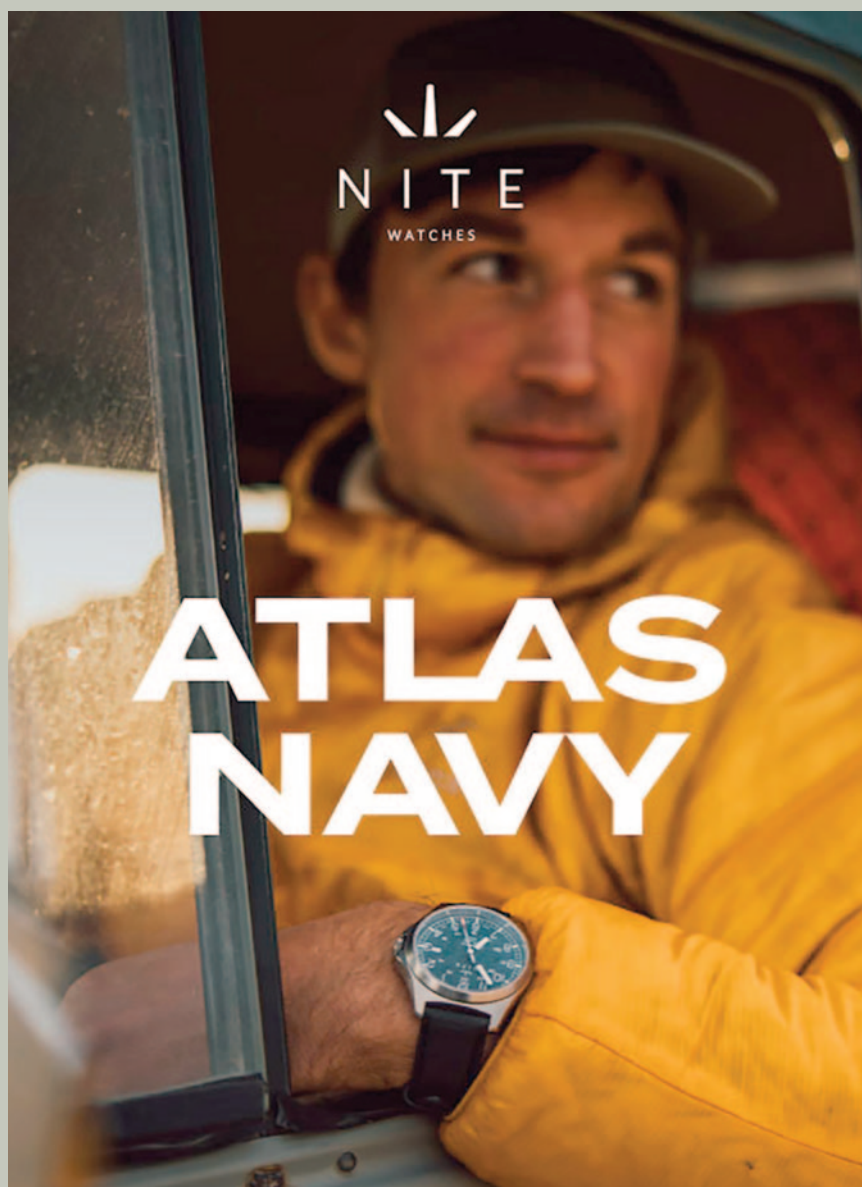


### PROVEN IN MONGOLIA...

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



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## 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." ■





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NEW RELEASE

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## HAWK 2.0

### HAWK 2.0 KEY FEATURES



SHOP HAWK

HAWK  
NIGHT FALL

ON  
POLYMER  
STRAP

### Nite Watches Hawk 2.0

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





# Day Ticket Monster

By Joe Saliba

I turned up to Coston day ticket lakes at around 2pm on Tuesday 11/10/16, and went in to a swim called the Snags. There were lots of showing carp at around 40 yards out, so I quickly got a rod onto them with around 30 boilies, a mixture of Big Fish Baits Squillberry and Milk One. I continued to sort out my gear for the session when after about ten minutes, the rod was away, and I was into a small mirror, which went just over 14lbs. I slipped her back and got the rod out again onto the same spot. The fish continued to show all afternoon and into the evening, and at around 8.30pm the same rod screamed off again, resulting in a nice mirror of 21lbs.

I recast my rod to the same spot again, firing out a mixture of Squillberry and Milk One, and then settled into the evening. Then at around 9.45pm, I had a slow take. I struck the

## Technical Details

### Name

Joe Saliba, 28 from Ormesby, Great Yarmouth.

### The fish

45lb 8oz common called Lucky and a new lake record from Coston day ticket lake.

### Bait

Lee Moore's Big Fish Baits' Squillberry and Milk One.

### Rig

Blowback rig, line aligner with snowman comprising a Squillberry 15mm bottom bait and a white Squillberry pop-up.

into the rod, and it felt very heavy, at first not moving a lot, but then it started swimming towards me fairly quickly. Within about five minutes my friend Chris Burman slipped the net under a huge common. We knew it

was the big one called Lucky that hadn't been out in over a year. We zeroed the scales with the weigh sling and weighed her at an unbelievable 45lb 8oz, which was a new lake record and of course a new PB for me. A fish of a lifetime – I was completely lost for words. I slipped her back into the water, watched her swim away, recast my rod and had a well-earned cup of tea. All was quiet for the rest of the night.

The following day the weather was up and down, and the carp just didn't seem interested. The last hour of the session was upon me. I could see a couple of carp swimming in and out of a bush on the right hand side margin, so I put my rod and about 20 boilies around the area, and about 20 minutes later I was into a lovely common that tipped the scales to 19lb. And that was the end to an awesome session, and one I will always remember. ■





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# 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!



# SWAN VALLEY COMPETITIONS



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"I fished Swan Valley for over two years and I can honestly say it was some of the most enjoyable fishing I have ever experienced. It's a beautiful lake offering great opportunities for stalking, floater fishing and traditional methods. The stock is incredible for a water of this size, with upwards of a dozen forties" with some quickly approaching 50lb. I would not be at all surprised to see the first Swan 50 come out this year. The recent opportunity to book the whole venue for a group of friends is a brilliant idea and is realistically priced. Check out the photo galleries on their website and Face Book and get booked up asap because there are vacancies for some great weeks available but it will soon get booked up, you won't regret it." (See also the chapters on Swan Valley in my book One Last Cast)

## SWAN VALLEY LAKE COMPETITIONS ENTER TO WIN

# catch

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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





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



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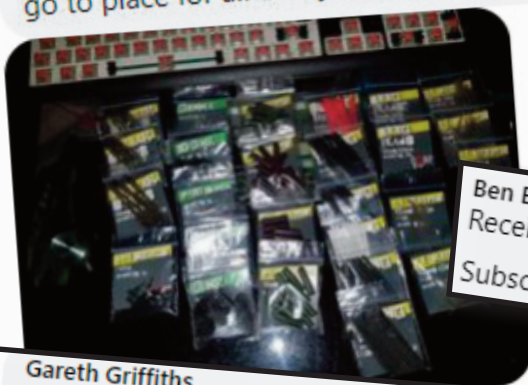
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well up in weight, so I could easily be looking at two near on 50lb carp and the 'small' 30. The most amazing thing of all was that the three fish were no more than ten yards from the bank, directly in front of my rods. Appearing to get bored, they 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! ■







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# A Summer in the Sun

By Deiniol Roberts

Dusk on the pit.



I grew up in the midlands and first started Carp fishing in the late 80s. In those days and on the waters I fished a 20 was a huge fish and for the first few years of my carp fishing life such a creature was nothing more than a dream. When I moved to Manchester to attend University in the early 90s fishing was certainly not my first priority (neither was getting a degree unfortunately) but I did take my gear with me and even managed to catch a few from a pretty scarey park lake on the edge of Moss Side. Although fishing took a back seat for several years I never lost the obsession so when my partner and I had to join the real world and re-located to Essex a few years later in search of work I thought I was moving to the Promised Land. Sadly, for the first few years we didn't have a car and I had to make do with fishing whatever lakes I could get to by Train or Bus and I found these little better than the places I knew from 'up north'. Sure there were a few more 20s but the lakes were normally small, invariably overcrowded and generally covered in litter. However, my mum eventually

**(Top) A misty morning on the Met.**  
**(Below) Arfur Tail, my first 30.**



took pity and bought us an old Peugeot 205 for Christmas. Suddenly the carp world was my oyster and I began scouring every piece of literature, every map and every old book looking for places to fish.

If I remember rightly, I first heard about the North Met from a free magazine which came with Carpworld. In a feature on lakes it mentioned the Lee Valley Parks authority so I called them up and spoke to the Fisheries officer. I told him I wanted somewhere quiet and beautiful and with the chance of a big fish and it didn't

matter if it was hard, and he suggested the Met. I can still remember the first time I walked onto the lake and being absolutely blown away. I had grown up reading about Savay in its heyday and suddenly I seemed to have stumbled on a similar place all of my own. It was big, and mature and crystal clear and what is more, on my first walk round I saw what (to me) were huge carp.

It's fair to say that for my first couple of years on there I was completely outgunned, pushing my gear round on a decrepit wheelbarrow and using







**What it lacked in size, it more than made up in looks – my first fish from the new lake.**

my old circa 1990 13/4lb test curve daiwa graphite coil rods. However, despite one of the locals telling me on my first trip that it had taken him 2 years to catch his first fish from there, I managed a few in my first year, including my first ever 30, a battle scarred old warrior called Arfur.

I continued to fish it on and off over the next few years, making plenty of mistakes but slowly learning how to fish a big pit. The Met was a fair drive at the time so in between sessions

there I was fishing a place called Aquatels in Basildon and mentioned the Met to a few of the locals. My continuous yapping about the place must have had an effect on one of them, as a few weeks later he (Jon) happened to mention that he had driven up to the to take a look. However, when he described the lake he'd found to me it didn't sound anything like the Met at all. The place he was talking about was much more overgrown and secluded so I made sure he told me where it was and stored away the information for another time.

A few weeks later, armed with a bottle of water, a pocket full of bait and Jon's directions clear in my mind I parked the car, strolled over the railway track that borders the park and headed off in search of adventure. It was a scorching day in the middle of May and I was already sweating as I made my way over the canal and deeper into the Park. After a few 100 yards, a silty reed infested ditch appeared which bordered the path to my right and beyond this the ground rose sharply and was covered in a mass of undergrowth. It was behind here that Jon had said I would find the lake so I kept walking and eventually found a place where an old fallen tree just spanned the gap and created a possible crossing point. I tested the rotting limbs and they seemed just about sound enough to take my weight so I clambered across and began to force myself through the tangle of nettles, brambles and creepers which covered every inch of the ground. It was like wading up to my chest through a fast flowing river (except that a river wouldn't be scratching and stinging me at every step) and if there had ever been a path I certainly couldn't find it now. However, eventually I reached the top of the incline and sure enough down below me I could see a narrowish channel of water leading into a reed fringed bay. What is more, the water seemed alive with the criss cross of bow waves as dark backs moved backwards and forwards through the clear water. There didn't seem any way to get to the water directly in front so I forced my way along the top of the ridge to my left until the undergrowth gave way to long grass which sloped gently down to the lakes edge. Standing in the relative shade of a small tree I could see that the bay was shallow and weed choked with a thick bed of Potamogeton spreading out from the margins to my left and a shallow bar in the middle of the bay which was marked by a stick. The water was absolutely crystal clear and as I looked to my right I could see a fish making its way slowly towards me tight to the marginal reeds. It swam past me unconcerned so I followed it round the bay, flicked a few boilies just beyond it and stood back to watch. Almost immediately the fish dipped down and I watched as its tail curled upwards out of the water and flicked gently backwards and forwards as the carp searched for food. Creeping as close as I dared I was





**The place was absolutely wild.**

able to get a proper look at the fish which was a scale perfect common and a nice one at that. I stayed a little longer, saw a few more fish and investigated the bay more thoroughly but there didn't seem any easy way to get to the main body of the lake so after an hour or so I reluctantly clambered back over the ditch and re-joined civilisation.

Back in the car I was already thinking about how I could get a ticket as it seemed I had stumbled on something very rare indeed - a lake full of carp in the middle of the , which appeared completely untouched by anglers. After a fair bit of phoning around a cheque was winging its way to the owners in the post and a short while later the ticket was mine. It transpired that the lake had a 2 month closed season, which suited me just fine, so I made plans for a traditional start in a few weeks time.

I would be nice to be able to write now about an idyllic start to the season, with me dropping a couple of baits into the margins, popping a bottle of vintage champagne and catching carp left right and centre. Sadly, the lake had me beaten before the start. I went back to the bay and there were fish all over the place. Unfortunately, try as I might I could not find anywhere to get my gear safely across the ditch and after spending the best part of the day trudging up and down the path in the scorching sun looking for a way through I gave

up and drove back to Aquatels where I just about managed to chuck out a couple of rods before collapsing on my bed with minor sunstroke. Needless to say, I blanked there as well!

I tried again a couple of weeks later. After a weekend on the Met I popped over for a look and finding some fish off the West bank thought I would try my luck. This time I at least managed to get my rods out, but despite having fish over my baits for much of the day I sat baking in the sun for several fruitless hours before once again leaving with my tail between my legs.

I obviously needed to come more prepared next time, so before trying to fish again I decided on a more in depth recon and enlisted the help of Lee, one of the other guys from Aquatels. We headed for the West bank again as it was much easier to access than the reedy bay. As we walked along the path the main body of the lake stretched out in front of us dotted with and cross hatched with a myriad of bars. The path was barely 10 ft wide in places and pretty treacherous. A canal ran alongside the path to the right and to the left was a sheer drop of some 30 feet straight down to the lake. Whilst this made access difficult for fishing, visibility was incredible and we could see way out into the crystal clear depths. About three quarters of the way down the bank two overgrown islands rose out of the water and 70 yards or so beyond this a reedy peninsula thrust itself out into the lake. These two features created a sizeable bay and it was here I had

found fish on my previous visit. Sure enough, as we got level with the islands we could see several grey backs basking in the weeds. However, we didn't stay long and carrying on past the peninsula we found ourselves staring down into a much smaller siltier bay which was also full of weed. Again, there were fish present and although it was difficult to tell from so far up one in particular looked quite large. Since the purpose of our visit was to find somewhere to fish, we decided we should try to get closer to the water so we began to look for a way down the steep bank. In front of us the path widened off significantly and an old World War II bunker blocked our way. Climbing right to the top we had a birds eye view of the lake and could see that here the bank stretched out and then turned left extending out in an L shape which thrust right out into the centre of the lake. If we could find our way down there we would have access to much of the main body of the lake, as well as the bays we had just walked past.

It looked like the bunker was a favourite meeting point for the local scallies as the wooded ground below was littered with old beer cans and broken bottles. This made clambering down the dusty slope even more precarious, but eventually we made it to the bottom. Being fairly close to the water level the ground here was quite marshy and we had to pick our way carefully between broken glass, occasional nettle patches and a maze of twisted trees, some still alive, some long dead and decaying. We broke through to the water's edge overlooking the silty bay and peering over the reeds in margins could see a few fish milling around in the shallow water. Carrying on past this we soon exited the little copse which had kept us shaded and once again we were confronted by a sea of impenetrable green. However, this time I had a secret weapon in the shape of my metal 24 ml Cobra throwing stick which I wielded like a machete slashing a passage through the nettles and brambles. It was hard going but slowly we cut a path through the undergrowth and before long we had turned left and were heading down a narrow peninsula which ran straight down the middle of the lake. A few feet from the end it opened out a little creating a beautiful swim shaded by big old trees. The swim was positioned directly opposite the wide



reedy peninsula we had seen from the high bank, with the narrow silty bay to my left and the bigger, deeper bay off to my right. Pushing on for the last few yards, when we got to the end of the peninsula we could see that it continued underwater in the form of a shallow gravel bar which stretched out as far as we could see down the middle of the lake. The bar was only a couple of feet deep and fringed with weed on each side. As we watched, a group of fish moved in from the right and swam over the bar only couple of feet out. Neither of the swims appeared to have been fished in years but both looked absolutely prime so we quickly made plans to come back with our gear. First of all though, we planned to give them a bit of bait so we returned after work the following week with a bucket of pellets and particles and a few bags of boilies too. I brought along a marker rod and it appeared that although the main body of water was around 5ft deep and absolutely choked with weed there were quite a few fishable bars which were completely clear on top. We baited up an area at the edge of one of these bars in the mouth of the big bay which was accessible from both swims and headed home eager for the weekend.

Saturday dawned bright and warm and we started the long trek from the car park full of hope. The first stretch walking down the path past the Met was easy but negotiating the narrow causeway between the pit and the canal was torture. I had decided to bring my barrow with me but the path, which had only been kept open by the odd dog walker, was far too narrow and I had to resort to using it as a battering ram to force my way through. To make matters worse I hadn't put a sweater on because of the heat and holding the handles of the barrow meant my arms were stung and scraped by every single nettle and bramble on the whole bank. By the time we got to the bunker we were shattered but the last few hundred yards were even worse. We had to pass the gear down the muddy slope in stages and by the time I was finally sitting in my swim I was surely near to death. However, after a bottle of diet coke and a sit down I thought I might make it through the night and set about chucking out a couple of rods. I had

picked the first swim (the nice comfortable one) whilst Lee had taken the one on at the end of the point. My right hand rod was cast to the baited spot 30 odd yards out at the base of the bar and my left hand rod went out to the margins of the reedy point straight out in front. Rods out and house sorted I was quickly able to get down to the important job of opening the wine and sitting back to watch the world go by. It was a beautiful warm summer's night, the sort when it is a joy to be out of doors, and after a few hours sitting chatting and enjoying a few drinks we returned to our bivvies for some well-earned rest. Nothing happened during the night but the following morning shortly after a lead about and a re-chuck Lee had a take. When I say a take, this wasn't one of those is it, isn't it sort of dribbling bites but a full blooded panic inducing screamer with the line ripping off at a furious pace as the fish headed for the next county at break-neck speed. However, following the initial run it was quickly subdued and a nice little double was soon in the net. Lee had obviously found a good spot as over the next couple of hours he had 2 more, all of similar size, and all giving the same crazy takes. By this time, I was starting to get a bit twitchy but despite my looking it didn't appear there was any movement

in front of my swim. Nevertheless, I reasoned that as the sun came up the fish might begin to venture into the shallows so I re-baited with a large single Halibut pellet and little bag and flicked back out to the opposite margins, hoping a nice fresh pile of bait would be visible to anything travelling through the shallow water on the way into the bay. I had just nipped down the bank for another sneaky look when I heard my buzzer sound and Lee shouted me to get back round there. I ran as quickly as I could and grabbed the rod which was arching over as the fish tried to make for the sanctuary of the far reeds. After a few minutes of heave ho the fish gave up on this and allowed me to drag it towards the deep margins where she was quickly bundled into the net. Until now I had not really seen my prize but a glimpse into the net told me she was a common and a lovely dark one too. In the sling the fish was just under 20 but what she lacked in size was more than made up for in looks. We fished on for a couple more hours but no more takes were forthcoming and eventually we had to drag our belongings back through the undergrowth to civilisation.

I came back the following weekend for a day session, arriving just on first light in a heavy fog. I was on my own this time so elected to spend the first



**23lb 5oz common. In the net it looked huge, but it had no depth at all.**



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**The Pug, my last fish from the Met.**

couple of hours on the end of the point, moving into 'my' swim at around 11ish when the sun had begun to warm up the bay. From a small mound to the left of the swim I could see a couple of clear gravel areas out to my right so put a pva bag and a simple inline rig onto each one. Over the next couple of hours I watched fish after fish feeding on the bars, clouding up great big patches of water, sending up huge sheets of bubbles and even waving their tails in the air in disdain. However, the two takes I eventually got ended in despair with both fish lost in the heavy weed. I could have stayed until late in the evening that day and probably would have managed another take, but I began to feel quite uneasy sitting all alone on the bank and eventually headed for home.

This feeling of unease was something I was to have again and again and I would often think about the Mere and the stories of the big cat

that was said to prowl its banks. Although I was never very far from the path the solitude was incredible. I was no longer in 'civilisation'. The place was absolutely wild and at times it felt quite eerie being there on your own. If there was ever going to be a 'Lee Valley Beast' then you can bet it would have set up home somewhere nearby, ready to prey on tired unwary hikers, dragging them screaming through the reeds and feasting on their still warm innards. So I reasoned that it must be my natural survival instinct kicking in and decided to head for home whilst it was still nice and light (it was either my survival instinct telling me to get home, or else I was a great big lightweight!)

However, as soon as I was safely home I began thinking about the place again and was keen to get back. It was now getting into August and with the bank holiday coming up it felt like an excellent opportunity to get in a longer session on the pit and because it was so quiet, I wouldn't

have to worry about arriving 3 days early just to get a swim. This time, I planned to fish the point and invited along another friend, Phil, to fish the mound swim. This meant that as well as me getting the prime fishing spot, anything trying to eat us in the night would reach Phil first. His screams would then undoubtedly wake me up in time to make my escape.

Phil is an old school friend and we have fished together on and off since our teens. However, his time at University was much better spent than mine and by this time he was an architect working in a prestigious firm in London. Consequently fishing time for him was fairly limited and he would often only get out a couple of times a year, so this was to be as much a social as a serious session. Nevertheless I made the journey down in the middle of the week again to bait up both swims, leaving the bucket of particles and some bits of gear hidden in the bushes for a couple of nights to make the trip over after work on Friday slightly less painful.



I was out of work like a shot on Friday and arrived at the lake by about 6ish, but it was still a rush to get everything ready and with setting up 2 bivvies, 2 sets of rods etc I had not even cast out when Phil and his girlfriend arrived around 9ish. However, I was only fishing a few yards out so it was an easy flick to put both rods out over the prebaited spots in the gathering gloom. My right hand rod went out to a small gully between two bars just in front of a tiny dot island and my left hand rod went into a slight depression in the main bar stretching out from the swim I was in.

We had only just settled down and cracked open the first bottle of wine when my right hand rod went into overdrive and a small common was soon in the net. I had only just it back in when the rod went again, but this time the fish felt a bit bigger and when I first got it into the net it looked absolutely huge. However, the fish had absolutely no depth to it and weighed 23 ½lb, yet another common but with a bit of a ghostly look about it. The rest of the night followed a similar pattern, with the three of us sitting up, chatting and drinking into the early hours, and me getting take after take. I think I ended up landing 5, fish with the next biggest another corking common of just under 20 and

**My biggest fish from the pit, a 25lb common. Pre-digital self takes didn't really do her justice.**

lost another 6 in the thick weed. However, up to this point Phil hadn't had a take and in the end I felt so guilty that I wound in and told him to put a rod out over one of my spots. Unfortunately, the action had died down by that time and all I could do was console him by making a trip up to the shops for some ice creams and more white wine. He got his revenge on the Saturday night though, catching a new PB common of 21lb which (I hope) made his weekend.

We left the lake on Sunday feeling decidedly the worse for wear and that was pretty much it for me in that first season, although I did make another trip down to the lake in November with Lee as I wanted to take advantage of the receding vegetation and try to walk around the whole lake. It was still hard work but wearing over-trousers protected me from most of the bankside foliage and we slowly forced our way round. After a good couple of hours we found ourselves at the end of a point which jutted out into the lake pretty much opposite our summer swims and sat down for a well-earned rest and a bite to eat. The main body of the lake was over to our right but to our left there was a narrow channel maybe 30ft across. After finishing our food we happened to look across and couldn't believe our eyes. Fish, after fish were stacked up in the narrow channel, some on the top but others visible drifting about much deeper down. We just happened to have our rods with us so

quickly dropped a couple of rigs into the margins and sat back to wait and see. Barely half an hour had gone by when Lee's bait was taken from right under the rods tip and after a short scrap in a very confined swim he did well to drag the fish over the net. What a fish it was too, at just over 27lb it was the biggest common I had seen on the bank at the time and absolutely immaculate in her winter colours. After that fish we fancied a proper go and came back the following weekend to try and catch a few more. Unfortunately we had forgotten that it was bonfire night and although it looked promising at the start, with me having a few liners and Lee capturing a couple of small ones, at 7.30 the far bank erupted into noise as the youth hostel firework display began. I'm sure they had a great time over there but it really messed up our night and we didn't have another bleep.

The following year I fully intended to carry on at the Met and started fishing it in early April. However, it quickly became apparent that the word was definitely out and it was no longer possible to turn up after work on a Friday hoping for a half decent swim. Couple that with the fact that the local kids were constantly making a nuisance of themselves, driving mopeds up and down the bank, setting fire to the huts used by the bird-watchers, and generally making fishing as unpleasant as possible, and I started to lose my enthusiasm for the place. My last fish from their came at the middle of April. I had turned up on the Thursday for 3 nights and as normal I arrived just before first light for a walk round. I didn't see much apart from one possible sighting in the first bay you come to as you walk into the lake. There is a small swim there just up from the snags which I had fished before. It was a bit awkward and right on the path but it was an area which didn't get too much pressure and I had seen the fish come right into the margins here before. I also liked the fact that it gave good access to the margins of some islands about 100 yards out with a different line angle from any of the more popular swims. Feeling confident, I dropped my gear into the swim and walked up to the corner to take a proper look into the snags only to be confronted by a set of handlebars poking out of the water. The locals had obviously felt like a change and instead of driving their own annoying mopeds up and down the bank, they had decided to steal





someone else's and chuck it into the lake when they got bored of it. After a bit of to and fro I managed to get it onto the bank and made a call to the parks authority to come and get it. By now the margins had a distinctive petroly smell about them and a nasty oily sheen was visible on the surface, so I was not very confident that there would be any carp visiting in the near future. Never mind, I still had the long range spots I thought and set about launching a stiff linked pop up as close as I could to the far margin. I was starving by this time and before putting out the third rod I sat back to have some breakfast. I had barely finished eating when the distance rod was away and a heavy fish was kiting round the back of the plateaux to my left. I slowly dragged it back towards me but it was still some way down to my left when it hit the margins and became snagged on some overhanging willows. However, steady pressure eventually got it moving and before long it was in the net. The carp wasn't the typical Met strain, being quite long and scaley with a big snub nose. But it was a nice old character and at just over 31lb it was to be my last fish from the Met for several years. Nothing else happened that day and when the lake began to fill up on the Friday I moved out before I got cut off by someone moving into the more popular swims round the corner. I fished a couple more sessions in the spring but it was just too busy and my walks round began to feel boring and predictable. I just wanted some peace and quiet and I began to think about the other lake more and more.

I had asked a few people about it by now and the stories I got definitely fell into two camps. On the one hand there were those who claimed to have seen fish well over 40. In fact I heard the same story from several different sources about a 43lb Mirror and 48lb common that had been caught a couple of years before. However, no one I spoke to had actually ever seen these fish on the bank, or even seen a picture. It was always a friend of a friend of a friend who had caught it. On the other hand were the 'realists' who said they were only fishing it for the peace and quiet and had only spotted a handful of decent fish. Since I hadn't seen anything big myself, I tended to veer more towards the realists camp. However, a bit of the unknown was really appealing to me after the circus on the Met and I began to look forward to 1st of June very much.



I thought that the point would definitely be a good place to start since it had clearly not been fished by anyone else in years, and covered a huge amount of water. Therefore, I decided that a few sessions in there would be a good way of trying to find out exactly what the lake contained. I still had a few days off in May so I carried on fishing the Met and didn't really pay the other place any attention until I drove over for a walk round after work on the opening day, intending to put some bait out for the weekend. After the solitude of the previous year I was disappointed to 6 or 7 people set up as I walked along the high bank, and when I looked across to the point I saw that there was bivvy set up over there too. I didn't see any point putting any bait out and walked off that evening feeling pretty despondent, but as there was nowhere else I really wanted to be I still planned to come back for the weekend. I knew that the lake had a 48 hour rule so I was hopeful the point would be free and although I was worried that dropping into the swim so soon after it had been vacated could be a mistake, I loved fishing there so much that I still wanted to take the chance.

I walked down the path on the Saturday morning full of trepidation and to avoid an unnecessary walk along the high bank I left my gear and ran up to the bunker to check if the swim was free before committing to another perilous trip. Thankfully there was no green mushroom visible and I eagerly battled my way through the undergrowth, arriving in the swim an hour or so later relatively unscathed (it looked as if the previous occupants had used a strimmer to make the journey a little easier). I started out fishing the same spots as the last year, one on the bar straight out in front, and one

**A battle scarred old linear taken in between the cricket matches.**

out to my right, but had a good lead about and found a really nice clean gravelly area at the end of one of the bars which ran out at right angles to the high bank over to my left. I spodded 3-4kilos of bait, mainly hemp and black eye beans, over the spot and left it alone for the first night, which was uneventful. At around 6am the following morning I noticed a fish top over the bait so I wound in the right hand rod and chucked it over to the new spot with high hopes. Nothing happened for the rest of the day but at 8pm, just after I had got everything ready for the night, I had a screaming take which resulted in a lovely common of around 18lb. I managed to get the rod back to the spot before it got dark and it was off again at 2am. This time the fish felt a lot better and a lovely looking common of 25 ¼ lb was the result. I sacked it for a couple of hours so I could get some photos, although at the time I had not yet graduated to digital and the pictures didn't really do it justice. Before I left, I had another double figure common, again of the left hand rod, which rounded off the trip nicely.

After spending the last few years fishing so intensely on the Met, this type of angling really appealed to me and over the next couple of months I made a number of trips which all followed a similar pattern. I had really got into the cricket that year (it was the summer of 04 and the England team were in the middle of one of their best runs of form in years). So I would often drive over at noon, trying to time the walk to the swim so that it fell during the lunch interval. This meant I had plenty of time to get the rods set up in time for the evening feeding spell and I could listen to





**A gorgeous fully scaled mirror from one of my 'holiday' sessions.**

commentary on radio 4 at the same time. (The downside to this was that my sessions always seemed to coincide with sunny weather and I was walking on to the lake in the heat of the day, which made the walk even more tortuous than normal).

The fish were quite predictable, they loved feeding on the top of the bars and you could almost guarantee a take at 2am, another at 8 and another at 11 as long as the bait was on 'the spot'. I had seldom fished 'runs waters' before so it was really good for me to get used to recasting accurately during the night - clipping up and feeling for the donk as the bait hit the gravel spot and the practice here has definitely helped me to catch fish on a number of occasions since. More importantly, I was beginning to re-discover the joy of simply being by the lake and catching fish, never mind the size. I even began to sense the lake had accepted me and I stopped feeling so uneasy down there on my own (after the opening week the place quickly became deserted again).

The fish all fought the same way (a manic first run then straight up to the surface allowing themselves to be slowly dragged back to the net) and the weed was so thick that occasional losses were unavoidable. However, only one of them felt like a decent

fish. It behaved like all the others and came back in nice and easy until the fish hit a small patch of surface weed a few rods out. It rolled on the surface and I saw a big tail flop out but the next second the line parted with minimal pressure. At the time I blamed the hooklink material but on reflection I think it must have hit something to cut off so cleanly.

I carried on fishing the pit until early September, when my Phil joined me again for our annual social. This time we decided to fish from a slightly more convenient spot (the place Lee had caught his 27 from the previous year) and it turned out to be my only blank of the year, albeit I still hooked a couple which fell off in the weed. It turned out to be a funny session in more ways than one. Although it was September, the weather was still scorching and we had to call for an ambulance as we found a couple of walkers suffering from Heat Stroke on the way to our swims. After performing this act of mercy I was feeling particularly pleased with myself and was sure the lake would pay me back with a couple of nice fat carp. I was happily daydreaming about this as I carried the last of our gear up to my swim when I suddenly felt a sharp pain in my foot. I screamed like a girl, dropped all my gear and ran off thinking I had been bitten by a snake. The next second all hell broke loose in the bushes opposite and I nearly soiled myself thinking that the Beast of the

Valley had come for me and I was about to be eaten alive. Fortunately, it was only a Muntjack which my screams had disturbed and it shot off at high speed in the opposite direction leaving me feeling quite foolish, and Phil pissing himself with laughter. I was thoroughly hacked off by this time and demanded he carry the rest of the gear while I hobbled back to the swim to nurse my wounded foot. A comprehensive investigation didn't reveal any bite marks so I eventually surmised it must have been a wasp (obviously a very fierce one, or maybe a killer bee) which had attacked me. With that realisation the pain began to subside, I started to see the funny side too and we quickly set about opening a few beers and watching the world go by.

We had donated most of our water to the walkers, which meant that all we had left to drink ourselves was beer and wine so we both felt pretty worse for wear the following morning. Things were looking bleak until Phil saved a total blank by capturing a lovely scaley mirror which he hooked in the margins and chose to bully into the net John Wilson style using his old 1 ¾ tc rod without giving an inch of line. We then headed for home, making a detour to the local Tesco to purchase enough drinks and sugary snacks to keep us alive on the journey back.

After that I moved on to pastures new and would only visit once or twice a season, normally treating it as a little holiday and just enjoying the beauty of the place rather than trying too hard to catch anything. Eventually I couldn't justify paying out for just one visit a year and I dropped the ticket a couple of years ago. Looking back afterwards, I really enjoyed my time on the lake and it was just what I needed to help me fall back in love with fishing. As long as you don't mind putting up with a bit of discomfort, there are still a few places left with a bit of mystery and even though the biggest I landed remained the mid 20 common I had caught at the start (and that fish actually turned out to be Lee's 27 down in weight and a bit tatty from spawning). I didn't mind at all. I know that more recently a couple of bigger fish have come out, but to be honest it wasn't the size of the fish which attracted me to the place and I enjoyed my summer in the sun catching those wild little carp more than many bigger fish I have had before or since. ■



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# Recent Session

By Stewart Southward





**A**s we were heading down the M6 I was laughing to myself at seeing my mate Stevey P pecking my brother Baz's head in. I was thinking to myself, I've been there, mate – your turn now. As we look at each other through the passenger windows, he looks at me, and I go into hysterics. The buzz we were all feeling was intense. My son Lee nudged me and said, "Look at the outside temps. 11.5 degrees and it's 2am!" We were buzzing; believe it or not, two days before we had snow, and we were all a bit concerned about whether the lake we were about to take on would take the knock.

We arrived at the lake and had a butchers. I knew where I wanted to be, but the customary walk around the lake took place. Deep down the snags were screaming out to me. I already planned this weeks before; I knew there would be some lumps



concealing themselves in there.

I'm sure few fellow carp anglers will raise an eyebrow when I say I like to put my bivvy up first, but I do, and thats for two reasons: the first is

purely because I'm riddled with arthritis in my knees and need to sit down pretty sharpish when the knees kick off, and secondly I like to set up my rods get things on the business





end exactly how I want them, put the baits on, and then sit down with a brew and watch the water. That's exactly what I was doing when I noticed a gorgeous dark mirror completely leave the water in open water, which kind of threw me a bit because it wasn't the norm for that swim. I'm sure you'll agree when things like this happen, it becomes like a sensory overload because it throws a curve ball into your planned approach. My lad looked at me, and we shared the same thought through telepathy, which was something like, "Get a bait on that!"

Being a fan of CC Moore's baits (not a plug, don't believe in it) and after hearing the reports on their Pacific Tuna, I switched from XXXL Odyssey to Pacific Tuna, and a bag of the crushed said bait with a double 15mm hookbait filled with glug was landed exactly on the spot. A second bag then landed exactly in a small hole in the snags that I had originally planned for the first rod, and then the third rod was sent to a bush on the

opposite bank that's lined with Norfolk reed that carp patrol when moving from the snags down to the bottom bay in the dark.

Within an hour of the snag rod landing the indicator tightened up to the rod, and because I was fishing tight, the rod was trying to bounce itself off the alarm and become airborne, but not this time. I was on it; I leaned into it, and it was trying to get in the snags with all the tricks it had learned throughout the years. But my knots were sound, they had to be, and I was on a strong hook and a strong leader (safety being the essential issue). I locked up and it was rolling at the surface.

A quick couple of step backs and it was clear of the snags and kiting to my right. Knowing full well the water was pretty clear there, the squeaky bum time was over and I'd now play a breathtakingly scaled flawless 30lb 8oz minter. I was off to flyer and feeling dandy.

After the necessary care issues and photos, we all had a brew and talked

about what a stunning strain of carp swim in these waters. Although the dreaded Simmo strain unfortunately have found their way into the lake, there are not that many of them, and the real focus is on the original habitants. My son Lee, brother Baz and Stevie P moved back to their swims, and with words of encouragement and abuse, things settled back down, and I was in the bivvy in my undies with a rather smug, warm, rosy feeling.

Due to traveling through the night, and after setting up the bivvy and landing that fish, it was now approaching 11am, and I was feeling it. I needed to get on my bed and have a doze and reflect on the events that have just taken place with a brew and a smoke, and then I drifted off to sleep. My alarm sounded and the indicator slowly rose up to the rod. It's the rod that was cast to the jumping mirror. I leaned into it, and it charged towards the snags at full bore, but I wasn't giving it any. I turned it just in front of the snags and







then played it out in the margins.

I Looked into the net and then looked at my lad. Surely this can't be happening? It's another fully scaled minter! I was thinking to myself, is this the same fish? To my relief it wasn't; it was bigger. We put it on the scales after the quick look over. No need for any Medicare, as it was pristine... just a little dab on the mouth where it was hooked. It was 32lb 10oz of pristine, fully scaled celebrity A-status mirror.

We all agreed that the frame of the fish and the neck of its tail told us that it has massive potential, and when it reaches the 40lb-mark it will be a very much sought after kipper. For that reason, I'm keeping her whereabouts pretty low key.

After the customary salvo of abuse from all my angling compadres, the rod was rebaited and put back on the spot where I caught from because it wasn't the same fish that jumped. The fish that jumped was big, black-backed mirror, and I wanted her so, so badly. I looked at the time and it was 2pm. I was thinking to myself, two thirties in three hours of setting up – this is going to be some session. My

thoughts couldn't have been further from the truth.

I got in the bag, now fully knackered. I'd gone over 24 hours without a proper kip, and my knees were screaming at me, "Give us a minute, fatty!" So I drifted off, feeling pretty smug with myself. I woke up shivering and my hands were feeling really cold. I looked at my watch, and it was saying 18:30. I was thinking to myself, I don't like the look of this, and my fears were confirmed when I checked out the temperature – one degree Celsius! The temperature at dropped from its warmest point at 16 degrees in four hours, high pressure had moved in, and the lake was like a millpond – flat calm and totally dead. I felt cheated of what could have been.

The following day was pretty much as we expected, nothing moving and surprisingly nothing holding up in the snags, so it was pretty much a day of manipulating our Barry into making brews and winding Stevie P up about his uncanny resemblance to Albert Steptoe, and also his massive fingers, which brings me to a story regarding his constipation, bringing tears to his

eyes... and mine through laughing about it.

Wednesday morning, and things were looking pretty bleak. My lad Lee was doing his usual scouting, trying to find the mere glimpse of carp. Our Barry joined him, and it was with their Polaroids, poking through reeds and bushes. After seeing two mid-twenties holding up in a hole in weed, Lee came up to me and said he was moving to my left into bay where he'd seen the two twenty plusses. As we were talking, Barry summoned Lee in hushed tones to come over to him. Apparently what had happened was the two fish had been bullied out of the hole by a common that dwarfed the two mirrors and filled the hole by itself. They both looked at the common and estimated it to be well over 45lb and in mint condition again. I'd just like to point out although I'm not a fan of fishing the continent, Barry is, and has had some magnificent captures to well over 60lbs, so I take his word as legit and pretty much spot-on.

This fish wasn't feeding; it was just holding up, basking the bright sunlight due to the high pressure. I saw



Lee walking up with his gear; he had a spring in his step and his confidence was revamped. It gives me a massive feeling of pride when I watch him. As a young lad when he started the game he was taught the ethos of "it's got to be bang-on, and if it's not happening, make it happen", which he does. We live in an area that's not blessed with big carp (Merseyside), and Lee, being only 21 years of age, has had some outstanding results through determination and good angling skills, which his portfolio will prove.

After nearly passing out laughing at Stevie P sunning himself on a blow-up airbed with just shorts on and kiddies' sunglasses, I make my way to Lee. He'd found a mark, a clear spot, and he looked at me with that sinister smile and a nod of approval, knowing full well he was on the money. I returned to the bivvy, and after a bit of head scratching I noticed movement

in the snags... "Aye aye... what's going on here, then?" I was thinking, as I scratched the three-day stubble on my chops. Then out the blue our Lee called down, "I'm in, old lad!" Bloody hell, the rod had been in ten minutes and he was into one already! As I got there the net slipped under a black-backed 26lb-plus common with a butter yellow stomach. To be fair, I think this was a case of mixed feelings... He was delighted with the catch, and rightly so because he made it happen, but in his heart of hearts I think there might have been a bit of sadness because initially he may have thought it was the big girl, but full credit to the lad – he was off the mark.

I was stood outside bivvy just looking out at the snags, our Barry was to my right about 30 yards, and Lee was 20 yards to my left. We all spotted a shoal of black shapes moving in, which was a good sign, as we all read

each other's minds, nodding in approval. Lee was soon away again, and after a pretty quick affair he slipped the net under another 21lb common. A big, cheeky grin on his face isn't really hiding his deep down feelings again, but that's carping, and he was satisfied with what he'd done to be able to say he'd caught these fish. He could have easily sat where he was and blanked, but that should never be an option.

My beloved Liverpool FC were playing Dortmund at Anfield, and with us all being Liverpool fans, we decided to listen to the match on my radio in my swim, with Baz kindly donating his Nashy chair to me due to my knees (thanks, mate – you'll get it back, honest... cough) and kindly offering to make all the cups of tea – he is a proper little love, you know. As we were listening to the match build, we were planning our next session on the place and what we would and would-

n't be doing next time... and just general chitchat with the customary abuse along the lines of my cuddlier size and questioning my parentage. Suddenly my middle rod tightened up, and our Lee was on it like a flash. He held firmly and handed it me after I hobbled the three yards to my rods.

Now this moment became the most special moment that I've ever had since I started carping in the mid eighties. I'd got my son, my brother, my best mate Stevie P, and I was on a beautiful lake, playing what can only be described as my special one because of the event. I'd got the sun slowly setting over the trees, and I had them singing "You'll never walk alone" on the radio... Life couldn't get any better!

The net was slipped under the fish, and we put her in the cradle, a beautiful chocolate mirror a shade under 30lbs.







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# Kingfisher Lake

By Alex McQuire



I arrived at the lake at around 7pm after finishing work, loading the van and travelling nearly two hours expecting to have a limited choice of swims. After speaking to the owner of the complex and being informed that the weed was a lot worse than normal in Kingfisher, I drove up to the car park and was surprised to find only one other angler on, so I took the opportunity to have a walk round to try and spot any signs of feeding fish and where to possibly set up for the night.

After only walking about half way round the lake I managed to see a few carp showing out in front of the swim amongst the weed patches and down my left margin. My mind was made up, and before long a chod rig baited with a JH Baits White Pepper pop-up was gently placed on the left hand side, and after a couple of casts with a bare lead out in front to try and find a clear spot in the middle of the weed, my other two rods were set for the evening. Both these were fished on stiff hinged rig helicopter style on KLF 16mm pop-ups with a drop-off lead system to provide as much chance as possible of landing the fish. I baited this area widely with about 2kg of KLF Black Pepper 16mms with the throwing stick so as to create a wide ranging area for the carp to feed on throughout the night without getting too spooked. I was happy with the rods, and with that I retired to the bivvy for some well-earned shut-eye.

I awoke the following morning at first light, poised and ready for what was hopefully yet to happen, but unfortunately this was not to be. I sat there in the swim wondering what had been happening throughout the early hours and why I hadn't had a bite, but with this water being notoriously difficult, I wasn't that surprised, but still felt that I could slightly tweak the rigs to just give me that extra percentage of a chance of a bite. After the morning feed time had passed I reeled the rods in from the middle spot and did what I thought I could to improve my chances. After rebaiting the hooks I had an idea to also change my baiting approach, not only to avoid the gulls by waiting till dark to bait up, but also to try keeping the free offerings to a tighter more enclosed space so as to try and draw the fish in towards the hookbaits.



With that in mind, the marker float was cast out to the spot, landing with an affirming thud and popping up into view confirming the location and allowing me to bait up accurately with the Spomb and place my rigs right in the middle. I put out another 2kg of the KLF Black Pepper that had been glugged lightly in the KLF liquid just to give that added attraction and pulling power. The rebaited rods were cast back out to the area, one landing a rod length to the left of the float and the other literally landing on top of the marker, and to be honest, I couldn't have been happier, as the feeling of confidence in the spot was growing within me. I repositioned the left hand margin rod over to my right hand side as I had had a cast about that area and found a lovely little clear spot around 25 yards diagonally out. This was baited with around 1 to 2kg just with the catapult, and I felt that this was going to be the rod that just stayed in place either till the end of the session or till maybe one of the residents of the lake slipped up and became my prize. After all this I was literally starving and settled down to a BBQ feast with my missus, who, bless her, had put up with my constant waffling on about finding spots, tweaking rigs and baiting approaches. I swear she knows more about fishing than me after hours upon hours of me babbling on!

The following morning couldn't come quickly enough, and at around seven o'clock my prayers were answered – finally a take on the mighty Kingfisher Lake, one that I had

only fished once previously and had dreamt about ever since. As the line tightened and the bobbin lifted, I struck into what I'd been hoping for – a carp of my dreams. The line suddenly went solid, as the fish had snagged me up in an underlying weedbed. I kept pressure on the line, hoping that it would work itself free, but this was to no avail. I got into my waders, and as much as I tried travelling from left to right in the margins trying to get an angle on the fish, it wouldn't budge. I laid down the rod with a fully loosened clutch, and the reel started to turn, but only slightly! The fish was still attached!

In the end I bit the bullet, as I had it in my head that whatever happened I couldn't lose this fish, and I went to inform the bailiff of my predicament. Hats off to the chap, within minutes he was at the back of my peg with the complex's boat, oars and life jacket all in tow. I explained to him that it would be my first time out in a boat, and more to the point, I didn't want to do anything to jeopardise my future on this water should I make a mistake whilst out there. Luckily he fully understood, and I can say he is one of the nicest blokes I have had the pleasure of dealing with as a bailiff. As I set off in the boat I could feel my heart beating out of my chest, as not only the bailiff and my wife, but also the other anglers now on the lake were all watching. It felt like their eyes were all fixed on me, although this was probably just my nerves kicking in.

I finally managed to get out to the spot and above the fish. As I pulled on





the rod, I could feel the weed lifting, each stem snapping was transferred to my arm, and I could feel the sweat gathering on my face. Just as I thought I had control of the situation, the heavens opened, and I found myself in the middle of the lake in a horrendous downpour. With the rain pelting into my face and the ever-looming threat of losing the fish, I strived as hard as I could to gently pull the fish out of the weed. As I gained line on the reel, the fish finally lifted from the depths, and to my horror, as it surfaced, I could only describe utter disappointment that what lay in front of me was nothing more than a slimy devil of a bream. I returned to the bank and slipped the culprit back into the lake after a quick reluctant weigh-in, showing seven and a half pounds. Luckily the bailiff agreed to leave the boat with me should I get snagged up again. I don't know if this was because he felt sorry for me and my efforts, or it was just lucky because of what was to come. The rod was put back on the spot and the waiting game ensued.

Fortunately I didn't have to wait long, as after the rod had been back in the water no longer than ten minutes, it was tearing off. As soon as I saw the spool spinning, I thought to myself, this is no bream. I struck into the fish, keeping my rod tip high so as to try and stop it from diving into the weed again. This seemed to do the trick, and it wasn't long before the fish that I now definitely knew was a carp was a few rod lengths from the front of the peg. I grabbed my net and waded out, as there were still a few thick patches of weed close in, and I didn't want to give it a chance of getting in to them. The carp kited from left to right, getting dangerously close to the patches

of weed as I tried my best to steer it clear, but the powerful fish had a different idea. It knew where it wanted to go, and within a rod length from the net it took a head-first plunge into a patch to my right hand side.

Suddenly, as I tried to turn the fish a few more feet to the edge of the net as I was already waded out to my limits, the horrible feeling of a slack line and hook pull sent a sinking feeling straight through my body, and the last I saw of that carp was a large heart shaped tail wafting in the air as if to say a final goodbye and "Unlucky, pal. Maybe next time" as it turned and swam away through the weed it had just done me in. My first kingfisher carp had just been lost right in front of my eyes, and as disheartened as I was, I had to get the rod back out as quickly as I could just in case any of his mates were still gorging themselves on the bait.

It wasn't till the following morning that I got my next run, and so as to try and stop a recurrence of the last bite, I was out in the boat heaving myself to what felt like an even larger carp. This time, I thought to myself as I got closer and closer, but about half way towards the fish the line went solid. As I got above the fish I knew then that it had done exactly the same as the bream and snagged me up low down close to the lakebed. As I heaved to try and lift the fish out, it gave back as much as I was giving, and the rod literally bent in half as the tip was plunged underwater. I loosened the clutch slightly, and line began tearing off the spool... The sheer power of this fish was unbelievable, like nothing I had felt before. Hoping that it would swim free of the snag, I let it run slightly before trying to gain back line as I pulled up with

all my strength.

This continued for what felt like an eternity. The more I heaved, so did the carp, and all I had in my mind was, don't lose this one whatever you do, no matter how long it takes. By this time my arm and wrist were in bits, aching like never before, but I wouldn't give up, and neither would the fish, even though every now and again I had to rest the rod and my arm, but funnily enough the fish never pulled at these points. It was as if it was resting itself ready for the oncoming struggle! Strange. No matter how hard I tried I couldn't budge it. God knows how long I had been out there, and one of the other anglers had even come round to see if I needed any help. It was the same chap who had been on the lake when I arrived, who I later found out was called Simon, a top bloke who had fished the lake for years.

As I tried my hardest to lift the fish, once again the unthinkable happened, and as my line parted the worst feeling in the world hit me like a steam train. Not only had I lost another, but this time it could have been one of the really big ones! As I let out one or two expletives, I just sat with my head in my hands bobbing about freely in the middle of the lake. The row back to shore was like torture, and I literally felt sick to my stomach. After getting consolidated on the bank, the feeling would not subside. The aftermath of this loss was unbearable, and I was sure that all my chances had come and gone. I had blown it, or at least that was what I thought. After dusting myself off and picking my chin up off the floor I rebaited the spot with another couple of kilos of the KLF, rebaited the rod and cast it back out, knowing that I had one more night to turn my luck around.

I didn't sleep much at all that night, wallowing in the devastating events of the day before, but at around 4.30am, the sound of a screaming alarm literally exploded life back into my body. I leapt out of the bivvy, hit into the rod and within seconds was aboard the boat that I had now become quite familiar with, quickly gaining line as I moved out towards the fish at great speed. This time I wasn't giving it an inch, and luckily the fish was in the upper layers and hopefully away from the underlying



weed that had been the cause of such disappointment previously. Again it felt like an unbelievably powerful fish, and it proceeded to drag me and the boat from one side to the other; I was helpless and unable to stop it.

Once I was closer to the carp, it decided to turn sharply and swim directly under the boat to my opposite side. I quickly reacted and spun the rod around at full arm's length, and as I did this the fish surfaced right next to the boat on my left hand side, and I got the first glimpse of a long, wide bodied common that sent shivers through my entire body. No sooner had I seen the carp than it swam in front of the boat and plummeted down deeper on my right hand side. I tried as hard as I possibly could to stop it in its tracks, and as the line lifted once again, all I could see emerging from the depths was a large clump of the dreaded weed. Once this was on the surface, I could no longer feel the pull of the fish, and my heart began to sink into my shoes once again.

I tried to get on top of the bunch of

weed for a better look, but with the wind now hacking across the lake, I couldn't get close enough to get a hand on the line. I let off some slack and positioned the rod towards the back of the boat to allow me to reach and grab hold of my line, eventually working my way to the leader. Once I had a hold of this, I suddenly felt something pull back – the fish was still on! Engulfed in all the weed, but still on! I immediately reached for my landing net and tried as best as I could to scoop up the large ball of weed and hopefully the carp as well. I frantically pulled off the parts of weed that I could, as it was weighing down the back of the net and I couldn't risk losing this one.

Finally, as I pulled away a large part of the weed, it was there, the head of my first Kingfisher carp safely within my net. I turned back to look at my swim to see my wife stood there eagerly awaiting the signal, and with one fist in the air and a loud cry of "GET IN!" She knew that my dream had finally come true. This time the row back to shore was a hell of a lot

more pleasurable than before, and I could feel the smile on my face getting bigger and bigger. The fish was safely placed in my retention sling whilst the camera and cradle were set up, and it wasn't until it was on the mat that I realised its sheer size and beauty.

The scales settled at 37lb, a new UK personal best, and one that I would never forget. After the pictures had been taken by my missus who had endured days of highs and lows, bless her, the fish was safely returned to the depths of the lake, hopefully to give someone else the immense pleasure and satisfaction that it had given me. What an incredible fish and an incredible lake that hopefully will give up some more of its jewels to me in the future.

I would like to give a special thanks to JH Baits for producing some of the finest quality baits that I have ever had the pleasure of using and to the man himself Jason Holden for giving me the opportunity to be part of the team. ■





# AQUA LILIUM CLOTHING

## A NEW DAWN A NEW DAY

As we say farewell to the old season, we turn our attention to what prizes await us for the next.

The excitement begins to build, for Magic times are upon us once more, longing for those stretched out warm evenings,

Shared with friends. Or for some of us, just to be a way from life, for just a few hours is all it takes to re set the bobbin of life.

Although these are just my words, it's important to remember that words are the first step to creating memories.

I believe that once you're on the bank. You are at one with nature, the complete key to inner happiness awaits you.

For most this is enough, but not for me, not for us.

There is a new addiction (Show Season).

It's been nearly 3 years now since Aqua Lilium completed its first show, and we haven't looked back since. The adrenaline myself and Steven get loading the van and driving

to the venue to set up is a electric.

Turning up the morning of the show and chatting to all the friends we have made over the years, some of them you only see at the show. Then the







doors open and swarms of angling enthusiasts flood in.

That's it, that's the buzz that keeps us coming back for more. Don't get me wrong it's great selling online, but meeting you guy's is definitely where it's at for us.

We always try and bring something new to the table and this year is no different, we have a number of new designs, as well as tweaking a few of the old styles and making them better. This being, we have taken our award-winning windbreaker and extended the back of jacket, this is so the bottom of the windbreaker keeps your backside covered meaning you won't get wet.

We also have the all-new Full Monty Deluxe dog bivvy jacket, made in a beautiful black stretch fleece material. Finished off with a gold trim. The Deluxe model comes with your best friend's initials stitched to the side.

Then we have the designs, and this year we aim to start

with a bang. We start with Medusa, the design as standard is created by myself and is my artistic impression of the Medusa rig. This will be available to purchase by end of March. This will be transferred on only the best material, quality is our specialty.

The Aqua Lilium All-Rounder Jackets and Bottoms; these are a must for anyone who fishes the colder months but still likes to be mobile. They can be purchased in green or black and are super comfortable. Not only waterproof but windproof as well.

As we progress through the next coming months, we will be bringing something very new to the market so watch this space.

I really can't say it enough, but your support means everything to us. As previously mentioned, we don't have corporate money to invest, we are a very small

family that really does bring you the quality you deserve.

That's our promise to you.

Thank you, all the best, Mark Quinn, Aqua Lilium Clothing



# Aqua Lilium

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



# Lean Spell

By Ryan Gibson

**O**n Sunday the 20th September I headed over to my syndicate for the first time in a couple of months. I had done two nights right at the start of the season, which, unfortunately, proved rather fruitless, as the carp were still in a bit of a spawnny mood, and with this knowledge I soon found myself packing away earlier than planned on both occasions.

The summer has been a bit of a lean spell for me time wise to get out on the bank with only four or five evenings spent chasing a few carp on one of the local Fen drains. All in all, it was rather enjoyable, and I had rea-

sonable success having a few fish along the way, which made the effort of doing so more than worthwhile.

With the autumn looming however and knowing that I would soon get a bit of free time with the little one going back to school, I was itching to get back to the syndicate and do a bit of time before the first frosts of winter arrived.

It was rather nice making the 30-minute drive over there knowing that for the first time in nearly two years, I had a couple of nights of angling ahead of me. I was looking forward to the session and also the break from what has been a rather manic and testing year for several different reasons, and I planned on making the

most of it whilst it lasted!

Upon arriving in the car park, the last of the weekend guys was just loading the final bits of gear into his car, and there was only one other weekday angler, Simon, who had beaten me down there, so it was nice to be able to have a leisurely walk round and take my pick from a decent choice of swims.

I settled on a swim called the Oaks, which had done me well in the past having had several fish from here, including the second biggest in the lake at the beginning of the previous season. The confidence from this combined with a few fish holding up in the heavy weedbed to the right of the swim made my mind up for me,



31lb 13oz Mirror.





**50lb 10oz Mirror - Harris.**

and the barrow was soon loaded and on its way round.

By early afternoon the rods were in place with around 4kg of Sticky Baits Krill spread over the three spots. The right hand rod went down the right hand margin, just off the corner of a large patch of lily pads. The middle rod was then cast to the edge of the rather expansive weedbed, which covered the majority of this area of the lake, and lastly, the left hand rod was sent over to the far margin also but much further to the left and much closer to the bank with the lack of weed in that area.

The other weekend angler mentioned previously had said a few fish were hanging around in a swim called Last Resort during daylight hours in recent weeks, which prompted me into putting the final rod over to there a bit more than I would've done normally. The smart money would have been to fish this one up against the heavy weed where the fish were holding up also, but I thought I'd take a punt on it, at least for the first night. With the rods set, it was time to get the brolly up and

await whatever the night was destined to bring, and I didn't have to wait too long for my first bite...

Just as Ben, the lake's owner, had arrived for a walk round, my middle rod fished tight to the weed on the far side pulled up tight, and I lifted into my first fish of the season from the venue. Unfortunately, the fish kited hard to my right, just missing the set of pads, which my right hand rod was cast to, but it didn't stop there, and it ended up burying itself into the reed bed that dominated my right hand margin.

Ben was soon on hand with the boat, but I had a feeling the fish had ditched the hook in the reeds, and upon his arrival, it was unfortunately confirmed that this was indeed the case. I was a tad disappointed, as you always are when losing a fish, but the rod was rebaited and cast back to the spot just before darkness fell. I went to bed with a sense of frustration, but at the same time I took confidence from the evenings events also, especially knowing I still had plenty of time ahead of me.

The night was quite warm in com-

parison with recent ones thanks to a good cloud covering overhead, and at just gone 1am I was awoken by a steady take on the left hand rod. As soon as I lifted into the fish, it was more than apparent that whatever I was attached to was fairly sizeable as it plodded off to left. Thankfully I managed to turn its head slightly before it disappeared off around the corner, and I began to coax it back along the front of the reeds, which also lined my left hand margin too.

In the mad rush to get to the rod, I had unfortunately not grabbed any form of light, and with the heavy cloud above, light levels were very low. I could just about make out the nearest tip of reeds, and I could see whatever was attached to my line slowly edging its way around the last few in front of me.

Even in the low light, I could just about make out a rather large flank as it broke surface for the first time, and I knew it just had to be one of the big three.

With that I started shipping my net out as far as I could reach, scooped up whatever was wallowing about in the



gloom and began to retrieve my prize. What happened next took me completely by surprise however, and I can only describe it as something I never want to experience again. As I started bringing the net head towards me I could see from the sheer size of its flank which fish it was. It was the big'un, the boss of the lake, and at this time of year, she was likely to be sitting on the better side of 50lbs!

As I was bringing her towards me however, she had other ideas, and with one great, powerful kick of her tail she shot in the opposite direction and pulled the head of my net from the end of the pole.

Never before had I had this happen to me with this style of net, and I don't suppose I shall ever have it happen again, but, at that moment in time, I was absolutely gobsmacked at what had just happened.

Fortunately, I had a net float attached to the spreader block, which made that end stay up in the water as the opposite ends of the arms sank down into the water and she made

well her escape, stripping around 30-40 yards of line from my spool in the process. By this point I was an absolute wreck, holding onto the rod for dear life, knowing full well what I was attached to, and at the same time trying in earnest to put my net back together with only Simon on the far side being too far away to call for any assistance.

After what seemed like forever, I got everything back together and took the chance to retreat back slightly to the brolly and retrieve my head torch to get some much needed light on the situation. I had been in contact for probably around 10-15 minutes at this point, and the fish was beginning to tire as I slowly made all that lost line back and coaxed her into the margin once again.

A few last ditch dives down to my right, and she was wallowing on the surface once again. Upon lifting the net around her for the second time, I dropped the rod and grabbed hold of the spreader as quickly as possible, but this time around she was beaten,

and as I secured the net she lay there in the margins looking rather large!

I readied the scales and camera before hoisting her up onto the mat to remove the Size 5 Arma Point SSSP from her bottom lip, and then it was time for the moment of truth. The needle on the Reubens flew round once and then settled on a weight of 50lb 10oz. I could barely believe what I was seeing, and she surpassed my previous best by just over 10 pounds. My first 50 and a new PB to boot... What a feeling!!

I secured her in the retention sling after doing a few quick self-takes and then ran round to get Simon to do a few more pictures before slipping her back to her watery home.

After a sleepless night, I ended up managing one more the following afternoon. It was another mirror, this time weighing in at 31lb 13oz, and it came from the little spot on the pads to my right. It was a session I will never forget and a capture that will forever be remembered as my first UK 50! ■



50lb 10oz Mirror - Harris (other side).





# FISHING RESORT



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# Three Carp in 36 Hours

By Mick Dukes

**M**y friend Richard Dixon (Wez) and I arrived at Kilthorpe Pool on February 27th at 10am for our 48-hour session. On arrival we met Jon and Liesa, the owners, who were very friendly and helpful. Jon told us the rules and explained where everything was, letting us know the deep and shallow spots in the lake. Wez and I then spent an hour watching the water to see if there were any carp showing or feeding, also using the time to find the features and the depth of the lake. We found there was a lovely gully of about 8ft deep, so I got my first rod ready making my own rig, which is like a KD rig with a ring swivel instead of a hair. Using IQ2 15lb with a Kurv Shank size 8 on a 6in long rig and inline lead is the best way of describing it, with Mainline Cell and maggots attached to the swivel. A PVA bag with crushed Mainline Cell,

proactive pineapple boilies and maggots was cast out to the far margin two rod lengths in from the margin into the 8ft gully. So my first rod was in the water by about 12pm. As I started to set up my other two rods, my alarm screamed off. Ten minutes later there was a 20lb 8oz common on the bank, which brought a massive smile to my face having banked my first carp of the session.

I then cast the same rod back out on the same spot. Rod two went to the far corner about three rod lengths in, and my third I just walked down the margin my side 20ft along the bank, all on the same rigs and bait, as I had my first take so quickly. I recast the rods every hour and a half to two hours. I had no more takes on Friday.

Saturday morning I was up and on it at 6am, kettle on and new rigs and bags made and ready for recast. From 6.30am to 1pm I recast each rod every hour. 1.30pm came round again, and my middle rod went off this time to a drop back. I struck into it and 15 min-

utes later there was a stunning 30lb mirror on the bank. Things were starting to look up: "Come on!" The same rod went straight back out on the same spot, and I brought the other two rods in to recast them. Again I was recasting every hour with the same bait and same bag tactics.

6.15pm came and my right hand rod went off, this time to a very, very gentle take like a tench bite. I waited and waited for the line to go tight and struck into it. "CARP ON!" As it just plodded up and down the centre of the lake, I said to Wez, "It feels like a 15-pounder not knowing where it's going." After ten minutes of going round in circles it decided to swim towards me, and for the first time we saw it. We knew it was bigger than 15lb! It saw the net and went flat out back to the middle of the lake. I still did not know the size or which carp it was of the 33 carp in the lake. Ten minutes passed, and I got it coming back to me. Wez netted it, and as we both looked down into the net. We looked at each other and said, "It's the same carp as before!"

Wez lifted the net out of the water saying, "If this is same carp I think it's put a lot of bloody weight on, mate!" When we lifted the carp to the cradle and opened the sling and net, we saw it looked like the carp we knew as Zeus. So I called Jon the owner who must have been an Olympic runner in his youth, as he was there in minutes! He confirmed it was Zeus. All I could do was jump around like a nutter shouting, "COME ON!" knowing it was the biggest carp in the lake. After weighting Zeus he came in at 41lb 12oz, my new UK PB. So 36 hours and three carp – a 20lb, 30lb and 40lb – what a great weekend, and I'm still buzzing from it now. I would like to thank Jon and Liesa at Kilthorpe Pool and my mate Wez. Thanks all for an amazing weekend to remember. Also big thanks to Mark Pitchers for the messages and support. ■



First carp, 20lb 2oz.



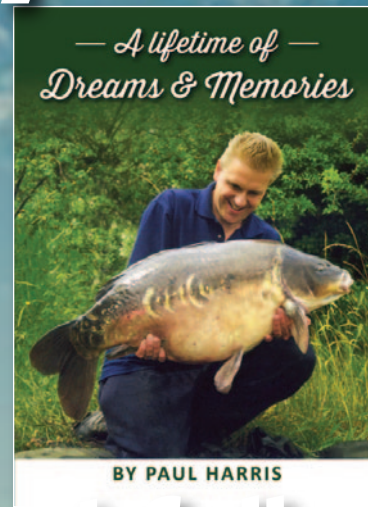
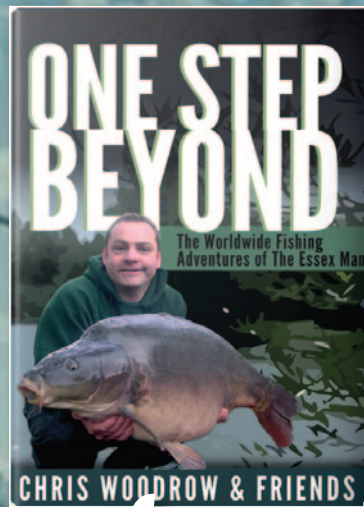
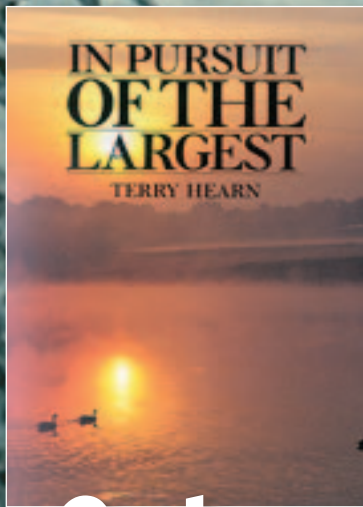


(Above) Second carp, 30lb on the nose. (Below) Third carp, 41lb 12oz, called Zeus.

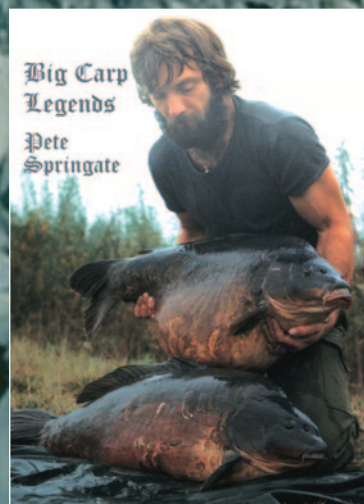
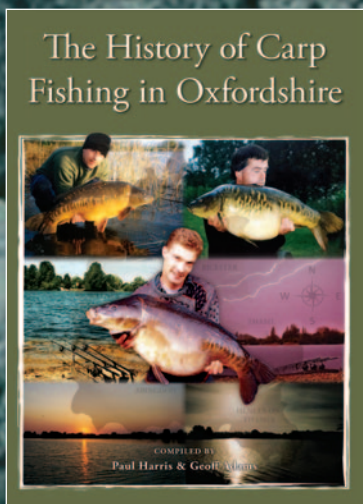
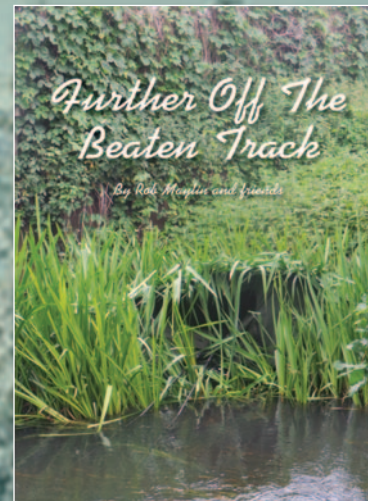
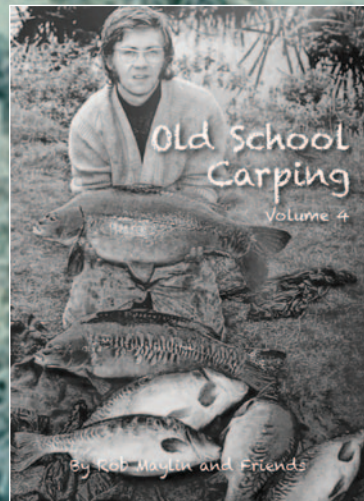
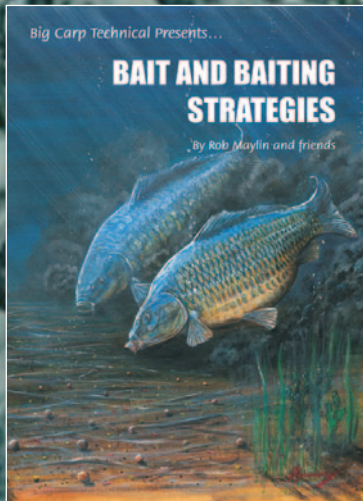




# Warm Away the Cold



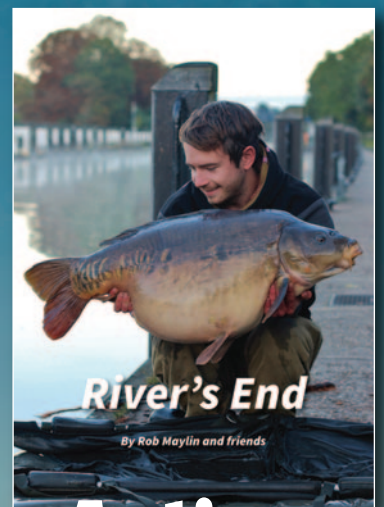
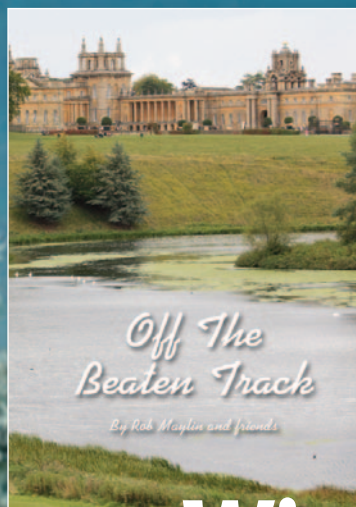
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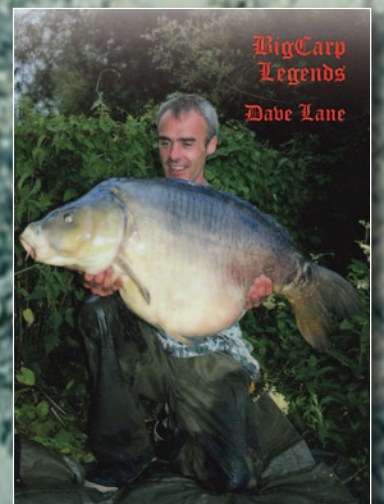
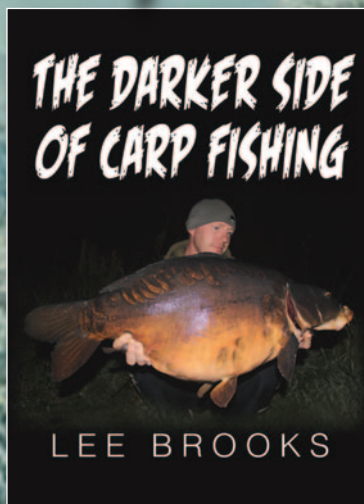
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A man wearing a camouflage cap and a tan shirt is smiling while holding a large, brown and yellow carp. The fish is resting on a green tarp. The background is filled with lush green foliage and trees.

# Looking Back

By Dave Lane



**A**s I sit here and look back over the decades that have passed me by, I realise how fortunate I have been in many aspects of my angling. I am not really referring to the carp that have graced my net though, but more the situations I have found myself in and the timings of these occurrences. If I could have mapped the key elements of my angling life, then the timeline would have probably run along a very similar chronology to the reality that transpired by sheer fluke.

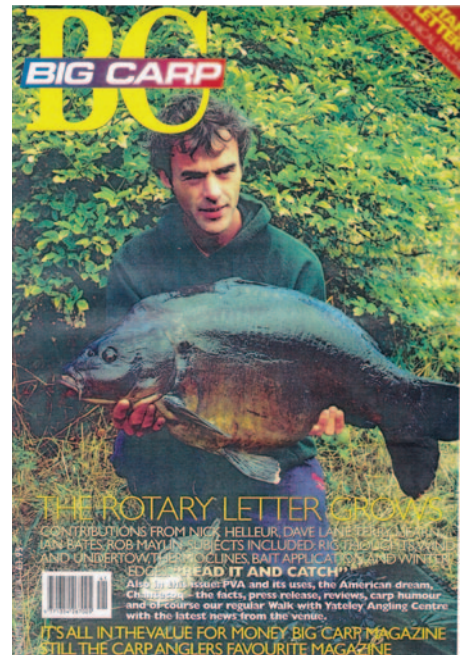
Way back in the mists of time when I first set foot onto Harefield gravel pit in the Colne Valley for example, I was massively out of my depth and thrust into the heart of the carp capital of the country without even realising it. Harefield was a complete accident that occurred when an application for one of William Boyer's other waters, Rodney Meadow, was unsuccessful due to the syndicate being full, and Harefield was offered as a 'by the way' or a compromise of some sort, and bang, there I was right in the thick of it.

If it wasn't for Harefield, the Colne Valley, the anglers I fished with, and, to some extent, the Horse and Barge pub and its famous clientele, then I

am not sure that things would have turned out quite the way they did. I coped well with the step up in trip to a big boy's water, or at least that's the way I remember it anyway. I caught a couple of thirties while I was there, both iconic Colne Valley warriors with pedigrees that far outweighed my own, and one of them had even featured on the pages of one of Rod Hutchinson's books for Christ's sake – heady company for a young hippy from Crawley to be keeping.

I think that those captures along with the aforementioned associations gave me the confidence to aim far higher than I would have normally considered. I realised then that all carp were catchable and all anglers, no matter how revered, were just a likeminded bunch of scruffy gits with a common goal, and there was no such thing as a 'carp god', apart from maybe Hutchie!

A few years later, when I joined Horton, it was not so much under a cloud as peeking out from the side a little. The fish had been transferred from Longfield, and there was an understandable lack of enthusiasm and support for this move. Their relocation into Horton was slightly tainted by this fact and the unbelievably ridiculous notion to open the water as a day ticket venue, which



was sheer madness when you took the stamp of fish into consideration. I have no idea how I came to know about the formation of a new syndicate after the day ticket enterprise was eventually scrapped at the end of the first year; I also have no recall of how I managed to wangle a ticket, but I did.

Nowadays I would not have even considered it because there was a 'no dog' rule, but, back then, I just joined and took the dog anyway! Luckily, she worked her way into the hearts and minds of the management, the fishery went from strength to strength, and the syndicate status reinstated the kudos that so deservedly went with every capture of those historic beasts. It was to be my finest hour; those first three years of the Horton syndicate were magical and timed to perfection. I caught everything of note that swam in those crystal depths, and I made friends that would last a lifetime.

As I said earlier though, it was the timing that was key, and this was more by luck than judgement.

There will never be a 'first' year of that syndicate again, and there will never be another situation that has no 'previous' members, no hierarchy of existing anglers over the new boys, and never again will that level pegged camaraderie exist, but it did for us

(Top) Big Carp through the ages.  
(Left) I had to make sure it was really happening to me.







back then, and we loved every minute of it.

Those glory days at Horton will always be special to me, and looking back at those crazy nights spent in the lodge-house in celebration of seeing an old historic carp on the bank were lovely times indeed.

Looking at headlines in the angling press such as 'First UK angler to land four different forties' and other such stuff did make me sit back and take regular reality checks. Was this really happening, and if it was, then how?

I remember reading Rob Maylin's wonderful Tiger Bay and then, unbelievably, he was asking me to write an article of my own for his new maga-

zine, this magazine, Big Carp. I didn't chase any of this; I didn't even want it if the truth be known. I was just a long-haired Artexer with an old set of rods, a faithful little hound and a passion for carp angling, but everything just fell into place of its own accord.

If Horton required a reality check, then my next port of call, Wraysbury, required independent witnesses to attest to the fact that yes, I was really awake and not dreaming of lands far beyond my waking reach. Again, I had arrived at the perfect moment in time, the lake was still the Wraysbury of old, it was so lightly fished it was a joke, and most of it had been left to nature who had run amok and

reclaimed as much as possible. Also, Mary would break the fifty-pound barrier for the first time and threaten the British record, eventually breaking it a few months after my second capture and my own first fifty-pound-plus personal best.

By the time that I moved on again, the lake had grown a lot busier, due in no small part to the results that I and a few friends had had during our time on there. Wraysbury did return, once

**(Top left) Fat Sam catching a bit of kip in Wraysbury car park.**

**(Top right) Wind piling into ski club.**

**(Below left) The Lady from Horton, a truly iconic carp.**

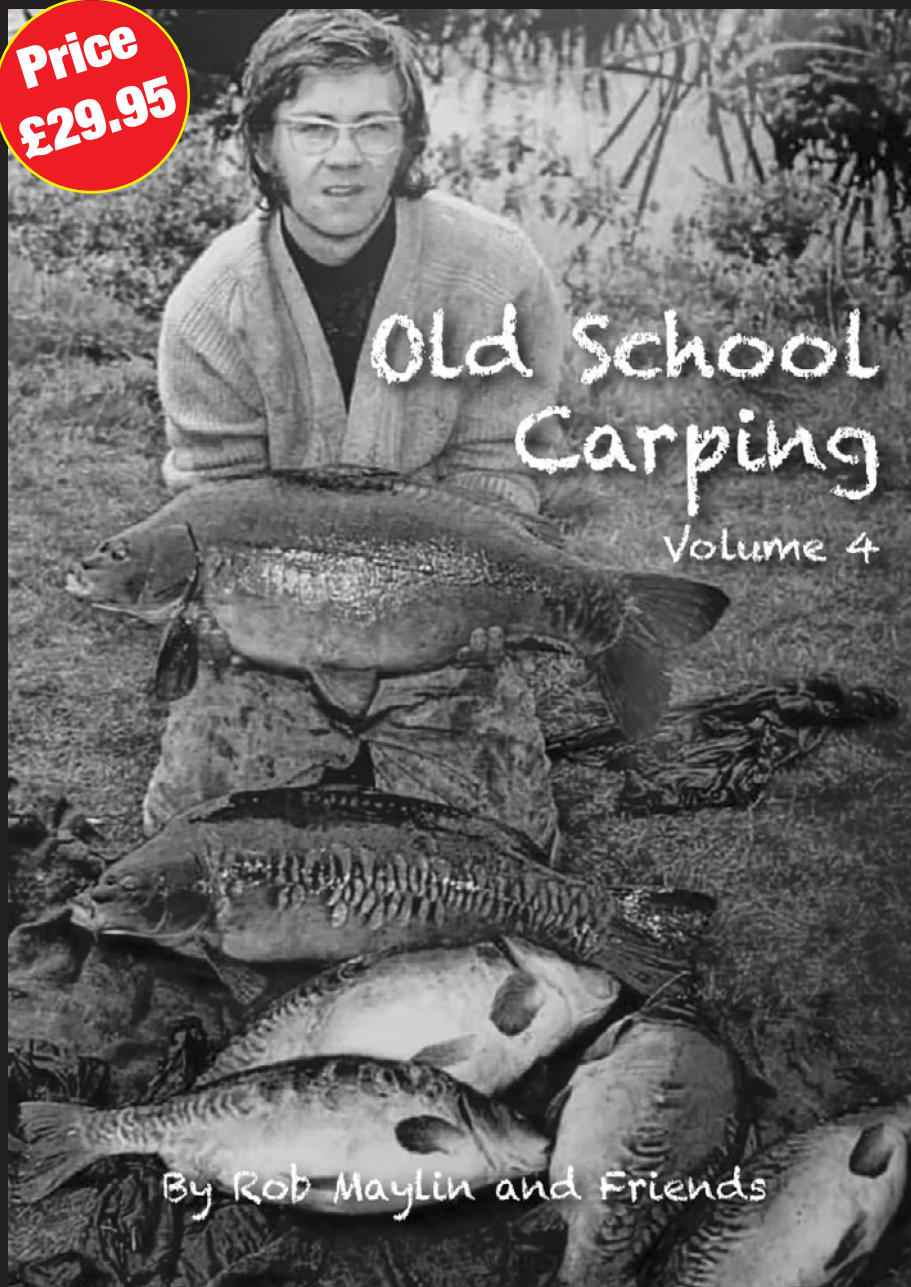
**(Below right) The incredible Mary.**





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

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

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

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

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

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again, to the neglected paradise that it once was, but, unfortunately, a lot of those old historic warriors known as Mary's Gang had passed away by that stage. I could not have imagined ever replacing Wraysbury with anything that even came close, but, as it transpired, close was exactly where the next paradise lay.

Just a few miles up the road and secreted perfectly in a twist of fate and a geographical anomaly was the Mere, a forgotten swathe of water that was hidden in plain sight. Sandwiched between three other pits and masked by impenetrable bramble and dog rose there lived the carp to end all carp, the ultimate mirror by which all others would be judged, The Black Mirror. While the timing of my arrival may have been perfect, the departure date was somewhat delayed due to the nature of the beast, and, somehow, seven years had disappeared from the calendar when I emerged,

**(Top) It had even been in Rod Hutchinson's book for Christ's sake. (Below) Elephantine and a personal best at 55lb.**



victorious, from the undergrowth like an explorer that had been trapped in a game of Jumanji.

There is an element of exaggeration in that last paragraph, however, because during those years I flirted with other notable waters, mainly to

reaffirm that I could still catch carp, and, occasionally, to make sure reality still existed out there in the real world. During one of these outings I made the acquaintance of the next British record carp, although at a lesser weight when hung on my







scales of course, and that was the mighty Two-Tone at Conningbrook. Again, some fortuitous timing put me right in the middle of one of the liveliest Kent social scenes during the halcyon days of Conningbrook history. I left not only with a photograph of that huge carp but yet more friendships forged along the way.

We had such a laugh at Conningbrook, and everyone was there for the long haul so the waiting was made more bearable by the huge parties and barbeques that usually took place

in or around Joe's house on the main point swim of the lake. That crazy Maltese fella sure knew how to throw a shindig, and some nights just finding your way back to the right bivvy was considered a major result.

The fishing there was hard, really hard, and I did well to capture her on the start of my second season having landed three carp prior to that, which was actually a major result for that place, although it may not sound very much.

It was unusual for me to spend so

much time on a lake with other anglers around it. After Horton, I had been angling in isolation a lot of the time and starting to fall in love with that 'pioneering' type of fishing. When Sonning rose on the scene, it was as if it had been tailored exactly to fit my skinny little body like a new suit. Two hundred and forty acres and loads of out-of-bounds and uncharted territory as well as one gigantic dinosaur of a carp – perfect.

After the initial rush and when most sensible anglers had realised that two hundred and forty was a very big number, the lake became a quiet paradise, and I spent two fantastic years wandering at will, and, eventually, tracking down that big, grey, elephantine carp at a new personal best weight of fifty-five pounds. Hiding in bushes like a naughty schoolboy, camouflaging my kit and creeping around at night was the winning formula in the end, just like going back to the Mere really. I had some hilarious times over there, hiding from helicopters, stashing ready made-up rods in reed-lined pools, transplanting a creeping vine weed to cover a bivvy set up in the bushes and all types of capers after dark. The hand of fate must have been guiding the timeline still though because, tragically, a year later, that big old Sonning Eye mirror disappeared and was never seen again. In fact I was the last angler to catch him.

With the big pit bug firmly rooted in my blood, I had a brief affair with St. Ives and the sprawling Meadows and Fjords Lake. Once again I was in perfect isolation and well before any of the crowds appeared, if they ever did.



**(Top) Burghfield, the ultimate big pit.**  
**(Left) Two-Tone with Joe's house in the background.**





I loved that lake, and, although I only caught three carp in as many years, I enjoyed every second of being there and witnessed some incredible sights up close and personal, sights that nobody else was there to share, and I felt privileged in a way to be part of it all. Part of that journey included the capture of the Fat Lady at fifty-two pounds from the other pit across the track, but it was really the Fjords and Meadows time that burns in my memory the brightest.

With a complete change of life and career in front of me, the next few years were interesting and well-travelled, but once I settled again it was with the longing for another great challenge, and none is quite so high on the list as Burghfield. If the Black Mirror is to be regarded as the mirror carp that others are measured by, then the Burghfield Common must hold that crown for the scalier variety, the king of the common carp. I had fished plenty of other waters along the way, but my first visit to those hallowed paths just seemed to make per-

fect sense.

The lake had just been taken over by a new owner, and a smaller and more exclusive syndicate had been formed. This meant far fewer anglers on the bank, but, unfortunately, far less bank for them to angle on, as a huge portion had been deemed out of bounds.

I had fished at Burghfield briefly about twenty years earlier, so I wasn't a total stranger, but I had a lot of learning still to do and most of this was done by walking the banks, miles

and miles at a time. The freedom of the place combined with the natural beauty and the sense of greatness all around you was awe-inspiring, and I could not get enough of it.

My story has been documented twice before, once here in Big Carp magazine and the full and unabridged version is currently being laid out for publication in my forthcoming book, *Fine Lines*, but however I tell it, it is hard to convey the actual feeling of angling at Burghfield and the magical buzz that you get as you watch the



**(Top) The king of commons.**  
**(Right) Making friends along the way.**



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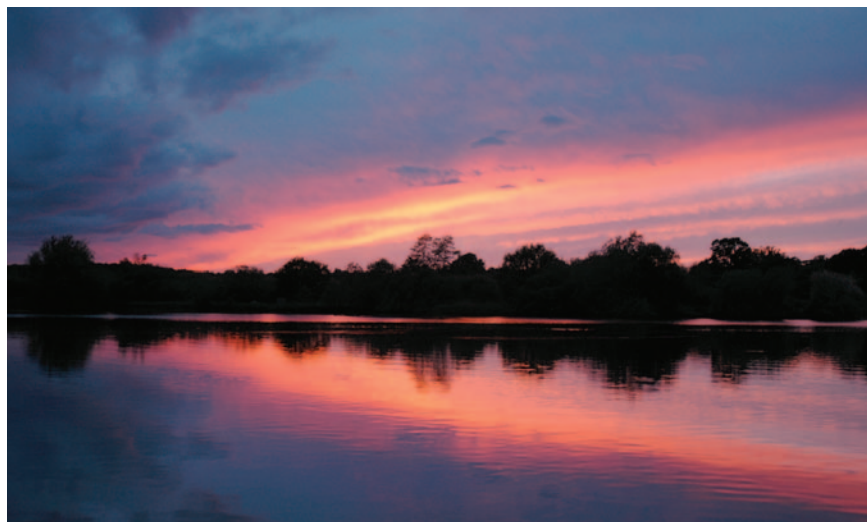


sun sink across its horizon and dream of the possibilities of each and every night ahead.

In some ways I almost felt a little robbed when the cards fell in my favour that early morning in June and the big common lay there in the bottom of the net. I know that must sound absolutely crazy, but I was going to miss the rest of the journey – two whole seasons of the year that I had planned to spend at the lake, the little secluded swims I had yet to fish and all the other daydreams that I hadn't had time to see through to fruition.

I certainly wasn't complaining, however... I had just landed the king of carp, and, once again, in the nick of time, as that entire bank is now an out-of-bounds area, and the fish has not been caught since. Burghfield was a very hard act to follow, but time passes, and I managed to land yet another fifty-plus common that same year, on my birthday in fact, at the beginning of December.

With no other big pits on the horizon, I returned to St. Ives for a couple



of seasons and timed my return perfectly with the rise of the huge mirror known as Colin in the Shallow Lagoon. He had been a high forty for a while and flirting around that magical fifty-pound barrier for a while, but, during my stay, he really made the grade, and I finally cradled my eighth fifty when he spun the dial to fifty-four pounds.

So what wonderful timing is still

ahead? Is fate manoeuvring the boundaries to let me slide through into another amazing adventure? Let's just say that I currently hold a ticket for somewhere that may well fit the bill. The bivvy is up in the garden and covered in green and brown paint, the camo nets are being repaired, and the canoe has had a new coat of paint... Watch out carp, here I come! ■



**The mirror that all others are judged by.**



# The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

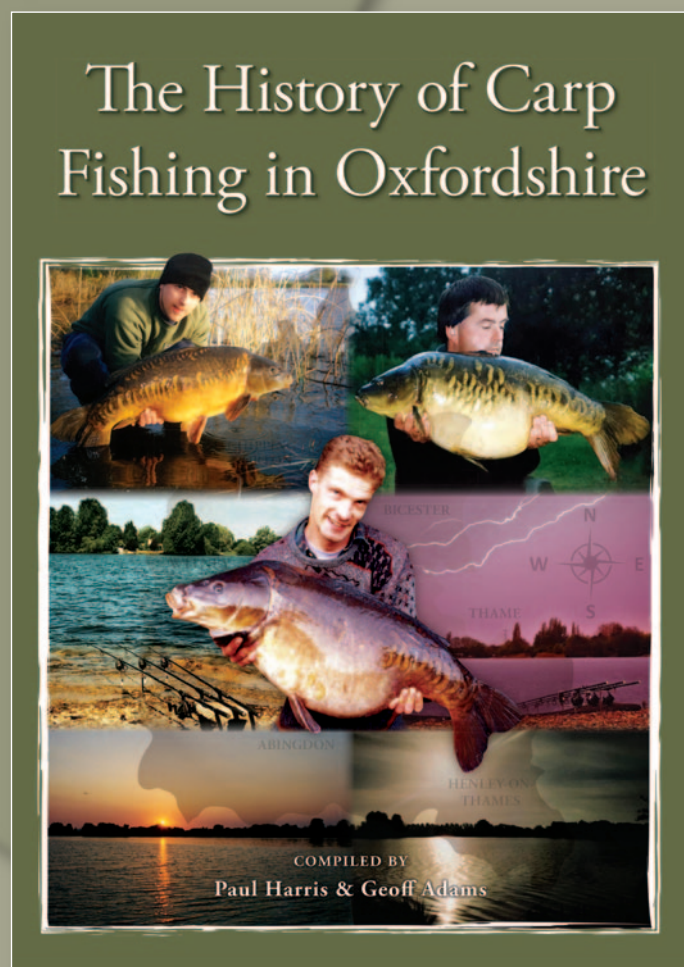
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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# Looking Back, Moving Forward

By Rick Golder

The lake was a daunting prospect with such low stock.



**I**n reflecting on the years that I have been carp fishing I can see how much it has changed and how rapidly. This has made for so much more to learn in order to keep pace with it all. There is an overload of information available now on social media, in magazines, and even when attending the numerous shows, and it is entirely possible to acquire a massive knowledge before even going fishing for the first time! However that said, if I was pinned down to one outlet from which I'd learnt the most, it has to be from certain individual captures and how they came about. These captures have taught me more than reading and gathering knowledge in that way, as often they were part of a pre-planned strategy that succeeded after thorough planning and preparation. In other words all the pieces of the puzzle came together as I wanted and worked for.

Don't get wrong; I've fluked plenty out too, and I've had quick results by using the mantra of finding the fish

and presenting baits to them. That said, I've often learnt as much from failing and coming out the other side with the experience to know what I did wrong! A couple of years ago I went through the most barren spell of my fishing life, in which I couldn't catch a cold, let alone a carp. To make it worse I was using the same approaches and tactics that had always been so successful for me, but I couldn't buy a bite. It got to the stage where people were catching around me, and I couldn't even use the excuse that the lake wasn't fishing and no one was having anything because they were! It was really tempting to change everything and totally lose confidence, but I knew my tactics worked; it was just a case of pushing through it.

Going back to the learning aspect, this spell really did help me, however bizarre that might sound. I looked and re-looked at everything so many times, and in doing so I could see why certain things worked well, and that all in all it came down to just a barren spell of bad luck. Once I got one fish, then the doubts disappeared and several came in quick succession, but as

strange as it sounds, I was glad I went through it, as I came out the other side better for the experience. Anyway, when the plan comes good it's a fantastic feeling, and I thought for this special magazine edition, I would look at some past captures in which a plan worked out and what I got out of that experience.

## **Big bait and big fish rig, Colne Valley Pit**

A few years ago I joined a special venue tucked away in the historic Colne Valley, part of an area deeply associated with carp fishing going way back to its early years. That alone was exciting enough, as my fishing path had never taken me here before. The beauty of the lake was special too, and from one previous visit when I had been taken as a guest, I knew immediately it was somewhere I fancied a crack at. It held an air of secrecy, which made finding out what exactly was in there difficult too, which again was all part of the challenge and excitement. What I did have was a picture of a stunning brute of a common in the mid 40lb bracket, and that alone was enough

**(Below) Colne Valley common on the big bait tactic.**







to go for in my mind.

There were a few other originals, but a couple of years before the club had stocked it with a large number of stockies in 6-10lb size, which from my understanding turned out to be far more than most people wanted. That said these were the outstanding VS strain, and destined to be the future, which I fully support. However these added in some serious competition for bait, and I knew this would make targeting the bigger fish a much more

difficult task. The one trip I had done before was a good introduction, as although I caught nothing, I could see the impact of these stockies, as they had been showing everywhere, and I heard stories of people having up to eight a night! Once my ticket came through, I knew it was time to come up with a plan, as with my fairly limited time, I really wanted to give myself the best chance of getting some of the better ones.

I was and still am a great user of the



hinge stiff rig, and it is always a big part of my rig armoury for a number of reasons. The stiff materials such as Mirage fluorocarbon give it brilliant anti-tangle properties, the big sharp chod hook in size 5 gives it aggressive hooking ability, and I have found it to be an out-and-out big fish rig. This last factor made it the first tactic on my plan, as I knew it would give me an edge in avoiding the stockie count. I've often thought about why it works better for bigger fish, and to be honest I've never been certain, but maybe its crude, thick makeup makes it easier

**(Top left) Fluorocarbon gave me a much better presentation.**

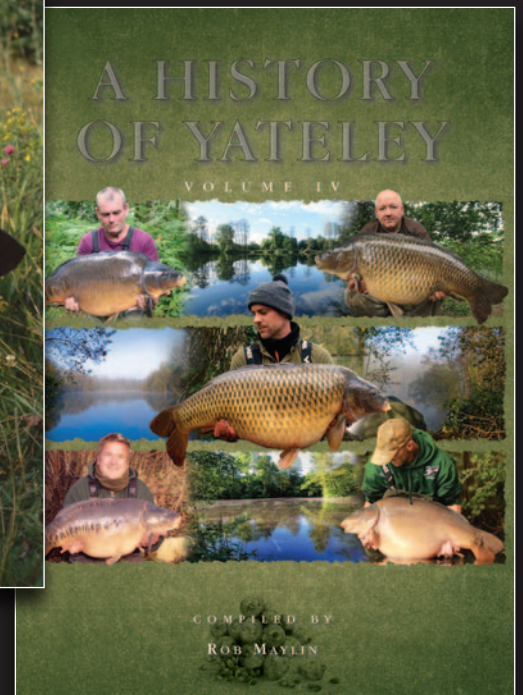
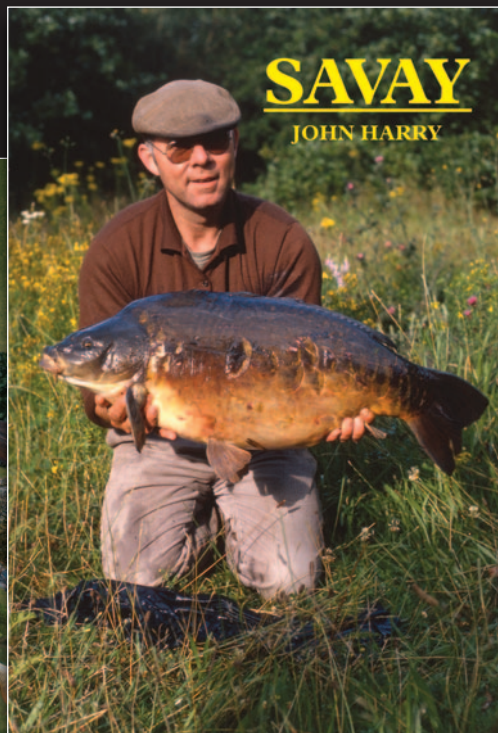
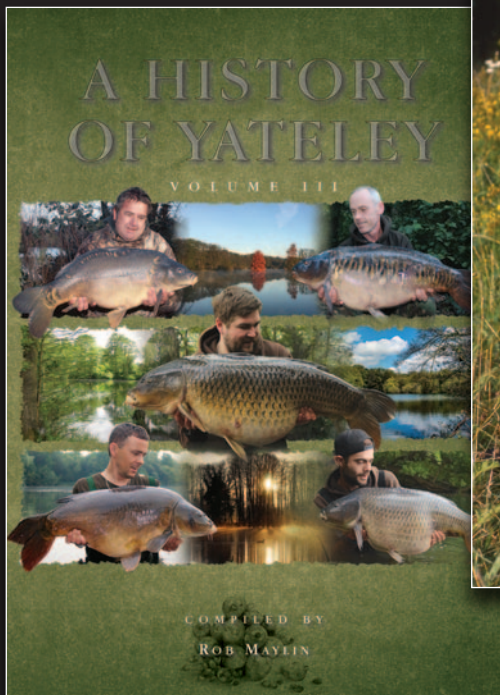
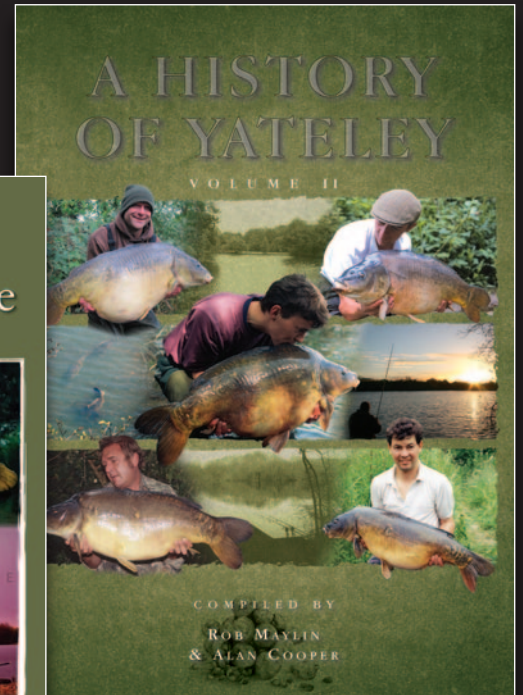
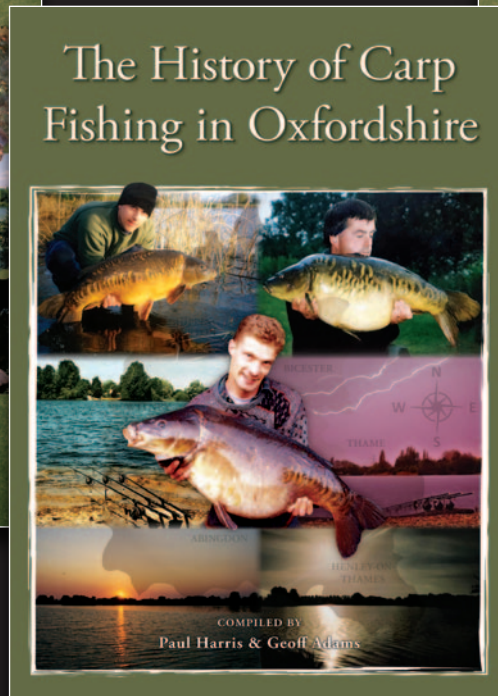
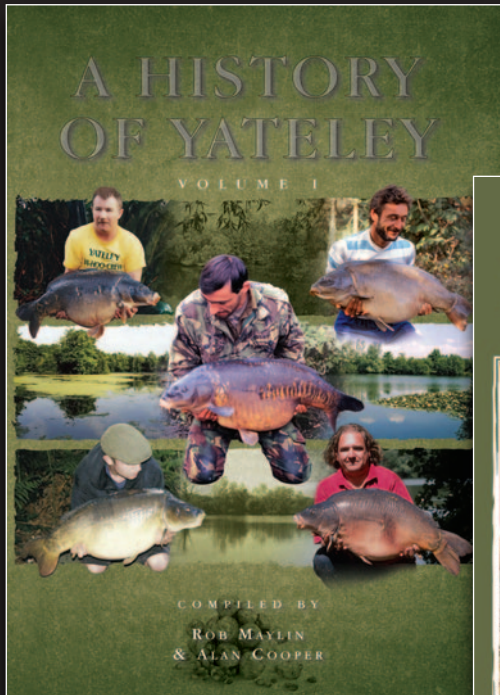
**(Top right) I needed the strongest rig components in the snags.**

**(Below) The pale fish tripped up as soon as I got the line lay right.**





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for smaller fish to reject. This thickness is different from being blatant though, as in modern times the materials used are far more covert than the old black amnesia etc, and I know I'm constantly refining mine as new products supersede the older ones.

My other plan revolved around bait, or more precisely, bait application. I have total confidence in Essential B5, a high quality food bait that works everywhere and has the advantage of being instant too, so on waters like this, where I had no opportunity to prebait, I had one less thing to worry about, as I knew it would be readily accepted straightaway. I checked the freezer, and its full capacity told me I could implement stage 2. I had done well before on another water using big quantities of boilies after reading about the results of a few guys who had really excelled at it. After reading this, I tried it myself, and immediately it brought incredible results. It is definitely a tactic that works well on account of two things: that it hasn't

been done to death before, and it isn't being copied by others at the same time.

The other time I had used it, I really had the monopoly on it, and it had never been done before. It really dominated, and it got to the point that the more I put in the more the buzzer would sound. It was instant too, and I once had an upper 40 within half an hour of putting in ten kilos on one spot, and putting a pop-up out in the

middle of it. I knew this was going to be the one for here, as it was a method to almost feed off the smaller fish and generate that greed factor that prompts confident feeding from the bigger fish. It goes along with the more free bait they eat, the more acceptable it becomes, and the less cautious they are in feeding. That is why it fails if it is too overdone, as then fish become wary of big beds of bait, and after getting repeatedly

**(Top) I was called lucky, but I think planning and preparation had a lot to do with it.**

**(Right) I needed a plan for best line lay in the snaggy bay.**







caught off them they soon wise up. I also have had good success by fishing a single hookbait off the main bait, on its own, and this has tended to pick out the bigger or more elusive feeders who are initially attracted by the greed factor of others, but more hesitant in feeding on the main spot.

I arrived at first light in late June, a lovely, warm, still morning, and as I made a lap around the lake with the mist rising off its glasslike surface, it wasn't hard to see where the fish were. As I stood in one of the end swims that looked out on a corner of the lake, lines of frothy bubbles broke the surface, punctuated by the odd back as a carp rolled. I watched for a while, and it was clear that the rolling fish were entirely the smaller residents, but at least the fish were there, and I hoped the bigger ones would be also. As the fish stopped showing as the morning progressed, I went in with the plan, and with a lovely silty trough found with a marker between two bars at about 50 yards, I turned to the Spomb and went for it. I was confident it would work, as I had the added plus that it was soon after spawning, which should make the fish hungry in any case.

At this time, I was glugging the frozen baits in GLM and squid oil from Essential, which was drawn into the coarse baits as they thawed and seriously boosted attraction over a much longer period. This was benefi-

cial here, as the bottom was very soft silt, and although not particularly smelly, these boosted baits avoided taking on the silt smell. I put in about eight kilos straightaway, coupled with some Essential B5/Betaine double action pellets. I hadn't used pellets much before, being more of a boilie angler, but I knew there were no nuisance fish present, and these could boost my quantity whilst still offering high-level attraction. I marked my lines and put two 16mm B5 pop-ups out on the hinge stiff rigs, one smack in the middle of the bait, and one a few feet outside. With the disturbance I had made, I knew it may well take some time, and I was a bit surprised when only a couple of hours later, the rod in the middle of the baited patch was away, and I landed an original 28lb common – a great start.

It carried on, as before dark I'd had another original after once again topping up with the bait. I was sure it hadn't all gone, but the tactic was working well. The smaller fish continued to show as darkness came, but as yet I was untroubled by them, bar a few savage liners. As dawn came, the liners continued, as did the steady rain, but with conditions looking perfect, the left hand rod screamed off, and I was attached to something that felt different, slower, and heavier with deep plodding runs stripping line off the clutch every time I gained a few yards. One roll in the edge showed

the golden scales of a big common, and when I pulled it over the net cord, a look inside revealed it to be the one in the photo that I had. As I held it up for the camera in the incessant rain, I knew I'd got the approach right, and that it had worked as I had hoped it would, which all made the capture sweeter. I added another 30lb common, and my one and only stockie before I left delighted, a plan made and put into practice, which worked perfectly.

## Planning, preparation and researching, Surrey Club Lake

In 2015, after chatting with two friends, I was almost talked into having a go on a notoriously difficult lake, again a historic place fished over the years by some well known and gifted anglers. I'd known about it for a long time, but I also knew of its deserved reputation of being seriously difficult. This was due to its low stock, comprising a handful of small fish, a couple of 20lb commons and the prize, an old mirror of upper 40s that carried some serious credibility on its capture. Around this time I had become more focused on targeting individual fish and found this challenge to be what really motivated me rather than numbers of captures. This certainly ticked that box, but deep down I wondered if I could succeed where others had failed.

After a walk round with a friend who knew the lake well, I began to think about how I was going to start. These fish are often creatures of habit, and I knew that doing as much research as possible would be a good head start. I spoke to several guys I knew who knew the fish well, and this information identified a clear pattern. Indeed, her captures were mainly spring and autumn, and she rarely seemed to make a bank visit in mid summer. I was sure this was due to the horrendous algal bloom the lake suffered every year from June until September, turning the water a green the like of which I'd never seen before. In fact on my first recce visit in August, I was put off ever fishing it by what I saw. Not only was it green and all the overhanging trees were stained, the algae had a putrid smell about it like something was rotting in there. However when I went back the following month, although still



coloured in places, it wasn't as bad.

My research not only revealed a pattern in times of captures, but also in the areas the fish favoured. It clearly liked one end, especially in the autumn, and that really helped me. I knew I only had a few sessions from mid September until the weather was likely to turn cold in November, but this too worked for me, as I knew how difficult it was likely to be, so this time frame wouldn't be enough for me to get despondent before I would be hanging up my rods for a spring return.

Once I'd found the area I wanted to concentrate on, I then began learning what was out there and what I wanted to fish to. I spent a morning with the marker rod in the two swims I fancied, extensively mapping them out. Both swims held an array of features, and I had to decide which were the best to concentrate on. The last thing I wanted to be doing was baiting too many spots or moving rigs onto different features and losing confidence that way. In each swim I chose the best three, and with my Cygnet marker sticks, I marked the distances up to lines on the far bank and wrote everything down. I decided to use this swim as my main one, and the other only if my first choice was occupied or I saw her show in there.

Every other day I began my baiting visits. I varied the times, as the bird life was savage, and coming early or late at least gave it a chance of remaining a while. It was exciting though, as the place had an intimidating feel about it with overgrown paths and narrow banks, but the more I visited, the more accepted I began to feel. I also had to avoid the attention of other anglers, and these visits in the early light of dawn or evening twilight gave me the chance to slip in and out unnoticed, even if there were others there. I never hung around long enough to see if there were any signs that the fish were onto the bait, but I was doing all I could, although I did worry the coots constantly diving would give the game away to others.

Two weeks passed before I had the time for a first session. Even though I was yet to cast a baited rig out, I had cast the marker so many times towards the spots, the rig placement was second nature almost like muscle memory as I swung the rigs out to the

identified spots. I now had done all I could, and again had to mentally accept that on a hard water it was now about doing as well as I could, getting everything right, and really being there at the right time. I had a terrific boost on that first session, as although I left the following day fishless, I saw several shows, one of which was definitely her, and although not right on me, still in the my favoured end of the lake. It was two weeks before I could return, but I stuck with the every other day baiting, and on to the same spots, confident in the work I was doing.

The next trip was totally different; by now we were well into October, and the weather had begun to turn, with shorter days and a cold NE wind, clear skies and the first overnight frost of the year. I saw nothing at all, and after a blank first night, I contemplated leaving a day early. However I remembered that the year before she had been caught by a friend, Wayne, following the first frost of the autumn. I stayed put, and redid the rods in late afternoon, the left hand one seeming to go down with a harder thump than ever before. Two hours later that rod was away, the tip pulling down and the line being ripped off the reel. Never before have I known so quickly that I was attached to a certain fish, but on this occasion I knew instantly. I then endured my most nerve shredding fight before she was mine, cer-

tainly one if not my greatest ever angling achievement. I heard people call me lucky for catching her after only two nights, on a water I could well have been trying to crack for years. But I like to think the work I put in, with the planning, researching and baiting were a big factor in my early success.

## Line Lay, Surrey Syndicate lake

In recent times I have become far more obsessive about line lay, and hiding my end tackle, to the point of paranoia. I have always believed that fish are far more wary of lines in the water and through spots than baits or rigs. A great deal is written about wonder rigs and the latest top catching bait formula, but in all honesty an acceptable bait, with a good basic hooking rig, will catch you plenty of fish, but what won't is having poor line lay and angles that can seriously affect your chances. I don't buy into the theory that when fish can see your line or rub against it that they are at ease, as I have witnessed many occasions where they simply won't tolerate it, however I still see many occasions when anglers have bow-string-tight lines running through their spots or directly over weed in an obvious way.

A few years ago I was fishing a local lake, but with the intention of catching a fish that I dearly wanted







but had never had, which lived almost all of the time in a small snaggy bay, off the main part of the lake. This fish loved it in there and wasn't had to find, as it seldom ventured out, and as it was the same place the syndicate boat was kept, every time I launched the boat this pale two-toned fish would follow me out. It wouldn't go far from the confines of the bay though, and as soon as I reached the main lake it would turn back, almost as if there was an invisible barrier preventing it from leaving. The main problem with fishing this bay, apart from its claustrophobic size, was the amount of snags that littered all the edges, and the middle area was choked with weed.

On one of my early visits, I found a lovely clear spot at the base of the marginal shelf, which had definitely been caused by feeding fish. I confirmed this a few days later when, after dropping some bait in on the spot, I returned after a walk round to find the one I was after feeding on it. The main problem was that it had to be fished from the opposite bank, as there were no feasible swims on its own side to fish it from. This meant I would be fishing right across the bay, through the weed, and then down behind that onto a tiny clear spot, which sloped quickly away. I also had to use strong tackle due to the snags, but yet be covert enough to trick the fish that was more than familiar with its enclosed surroundings.

At this time I was a keen leadcore

user, and it featured in virtually all of my setups, but I was starting to become more aware of how visible it was in certain situations. I had seen from above in a boat how blatant it looked when running through a clear sandy spot, and also how it sat up proudly on low bottom weed. The situation I was facing was almost the same as the experiences above, meaning it wasn't going to be my best option. I found out after two trips that I had clearly got it wrong, as on both occasions all my bait had gone from the clear spot below the shelf, but the hookbait remained, and yet I'd not received a single bleep. I had got some Mirage fluorocarbon, and as soon as I started tying this up as a leader in the 20lb, I could see the advantages. Not only was its clear appearance almost invisible, it sank superbly and was ultra strong, and on sinking, it hugged the bottom rather than sat up like the more rigid lead-core.

I quickly rigged up my rods, each with a couple of rod lengths of the Mirage on, and went a bit further by moulding a few big blobs of Critical Mass putty onto it at foot intervals above the lead, which pinned it all down really well. With this ready, I knew I could enhance my line angle even better by fishing the spot from the swim next door.

This gave me the option of coming at the spot from the side, and more along the shelf than directly up it, and although I had to come over the same

midwater weed, I had more distance between the end of the weed and the cleaned-up area, which meant I could get my last section of leader more pinned down.

The cast was trickier though, especially as my first two attempts hit the tree above, and it was only by getting onto my knees that I was able to avoid it. However I managed to slightly overcast and hold it back, feeling the lead hit firm bottom and in deeper water, at which point I could see the line sinking rapidly as the fluorocarbon did its job, and I managed to let it all settle before pulling off a few feet to further lay it out. I could use a fairly tight mainline in the knowledge that the last feet were right on the bottom, which was far better due to the snags and would give me earlier indication.

The following morning, I was woken by a ripping one-toner, and the fish was already running towards the dangerous snags to my immediate left. I held on, not giving an inch, until slowly the fish changed its plan and began to come back to the safety of open water in front. Almost at once it rolled on the top, its head covered in weed, and I scooped it over the net cord. The line angle and better presentation had obviously fooled it, as not only was the Mugga hook way back inside the mouth, the sign of a confident feeder, but most of the free bait remained on the spot, and it had clearly taken the hookbait fairly early on – another lovely result.

Keep learning to keep catching. ■

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# SECRETS OF THE THAMES

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## Secrets of The Thames

*By Rob Maylin and friends*

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

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

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

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

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

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