

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



The Next Chapter by Mark and Emma Rose
Close up Close in by Mike Madeley
The Carp4Kids Academy 2024 by Rod Bird
Wonderful Winter Time by Carl Udry



Syndicate Fishing by Barry Oconnor
Spitfire Pool's Wood Common 50lb 8oz by Ben Jeffery
My First Season at Wellington Country Park by Carl Udry
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The Burghfield Common at 62lb 8oz!
April 12th 2017 For Scott Lloyd
Syndicate Waters by Steve Briggs
Horton Island Lake The three-year battle
for the full set by Dan Leney
Quest for the Big Fully by Mick Christie
Overnighters by Tony Owen

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BIG CARP

Top Tens!

Top 10 Day Ticket Carp Fisheries

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

Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

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

Top 10 Bait Companies

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

Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies (Terminal)

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

Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies

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

Top 10 Carp Shops

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

Top 10 Iconic Carp Waters

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



As voted by Big Carp readers!

Big Carp Magazine! *a history of excellence*

BC

ISSUE 334

**BRITAIN'S
BIGGEST
COMMON**

**Colossal 66lb 8oz
Monster landed
by Kieran Duff**

**Carl Udry – Wonderful Winter
Mike Madeley – Margin Magic
Rod Bird – Tackle Boxes Not X Boxes
Mark and Emma Rose – Spring Campaign
Country Wide Catch Reports 20+ Page Special
Still the proper carp angler's favourite read**

UK COMMON CARP RECORD SMASHED BY KIERAN DUFF



**INCREDIBLE
66lb 8oz
COMMON
NAILED ON
RIGWORX
X RANGE
BEAKED
WIDE GAPE
HOOK**



Kieran made UK carp fishing history this April at Waterside Fishery in Buckinghamshire.

RIGWORX is here to provide top quality tackle at the lowest possible prices! As working class family men we know the hit your wallet can take on necessary end tackle. We've spent months sourcing end tackle at the lowest prices we can get it at, without compromising quality and reliability!



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Our natural work ethic is to supply you with good quality, reliable end tackle in hope that we can build a trusting relationship with our customers in which they can rely on us for their tackle needs!

We aim to supply top quality tackle at the lowest prices without the 'Carp Tax'!

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Email: rigworx@hotmail.com

Website - www.rigworx.co.uk





Britain's Biggest Common

Kieran Duff made UK carp fishing history in April by catching the biggest ever common carp ever to be landed in this country. The huge common was caught from Kingfisher Lake at the Waterside Fishery in Buckinghamshire complex. This fish is well known, gradually going up through the ranks but had gone uncaught for almost a year. At an incredible 66lb 8oz, it's the largest UK common ever landed! See our 20+ page catch report section for more details.

Our cover shot this month features another massive common caught in April, this time our great friend Martin Locke was the captor. The 62 pound giant was landed from Martins local syndicate. Could our UK record fall this year and be the first common to take the crown since Richard Walkers' Clarissa from Redmire Pool many moons ago.

Also, this month the welcome return of consistent Big Carp catcher Carl Udry. Carl had a great end to last year catching some very special carp. his exclusive tale is here in BC for the first time. Speaking of welcome returns this month, Mark and Emma Rose also are back after a very successful start to this year, the regular husband and wife team will also feature next month with part two of their campaign. Some lovely scaly crackers, just up our street.

Mike Madeley makes this his 3rd month in a row with his latest contribution. This month a favourite method of his at this time of the year, fishing in the edge. AS we all know the margins become the carps most frequented area as they wake from their winter slumbers and prepare for spring time spawning.

Rod Bird joins us this month too with his Carping4Kids Academy, their moto being 'Tackle Boxes not X Boxes' some great images of happy kids, out in the fresh air enjoying carp fishing at its best. Something we should all encourage.

Add to these some 'carpy' humour, the latest news and reviews and I think you would agree that for FREE it's another fantastic issue of Big Carp.

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

Now I need your help! Filling two magazines each month means I need twice as many articles, some people say they want to write, but never do. If you have had a successful start back, we would love to hear your tale. There are no picture or word limits. Simply Email your article to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk. If you would like to join our FREE subscription list to be sent the mags as soon as they come out Email FREE SUBBY to info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk WITHOUT YOUR INPUT THERE WILL BE NO MAGS! Have a great Spring friends, catch a monster and send us the story, be part of the UK's fantastic carp angling history!

Rob Maxlin

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Martin Locke 60+ UK

Common



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ShockLeader

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



Angling Trust Presents Fox International Tackle Donation To Army Veterans' Group Phoenix Heroes

The Angling Trust has presented a fantastic bundle of carp fishing gear kindly donated by Fox International to Phoenix Heroes, a not-for-profit community interest company supporting army veterans through outdoor activities.

The presentation of rods, reels, bite alarms and a huge amount of terminal tackle and accessories was made by John Cheyne, the Trust's Membership, Marketing & Communications Manager, to Phoenix Heroes' CEO and founder Gary Stockton at The Big One fishing show.

Fox International are Trade Associate partners of the Angling Trust and supportive of our work to promote the health and wellbeing benefits of angling to the wider community.

Phoenix Heroes was founded six years ago in Colchester, Essex, and has grown to become a respected provider of support to army veterans in the UK, primarily through outdoor activities such as fishing, football and allotment gardening. The organisation is committed to helping veterans overcome the challenges they face when transitioning from military to civilian life and provides opportunities for veterans to come together and build a sense of community and belonging.

John Cheyne said: "Gary and the team at Phoenix Heroes do an amazing job providing support for ex-service personnel and introducing them to fishing. As Angling Trust Trade

Associate partners, Fox International are hugely supportive of the work of the Angling Trust and I'd like to give a particular thanks to Harry Charrington at Fox who arranged this generous tackle donation. It's wonderful when the angling community comes together to do such good work!"

Gary Stockton commented: "The fishing tackle donation received from the Angling Trust on behalf of Fox International is a great help to us. This act of kindness will give one of our veterans a purpose allowing them to join our angling community and spend time in the outdoors. This is a great example of the angling community coming together to make a difference." ■



£150,000 Available To Help Tackle Fish Predation As Angling Trust And Environment Agency Reopen Angling Improvement Fund

The Angling Improvement Fund (AIF) has reopened for applications for funding towards projects tackling the impacts of predation by mammals and fish-eating birds.

The AIF is administered by the Angling Trust and is just one of the ways the Environment Agency is reinvesting income from fishing licence sales in projects which benefit anglers. As all the funds come directly from rod licence income collected in England, only projects in England are eligible.

£150,000 is being made available in this latest round of funding and applications for up to £6,000 funding are invited from clubs, fisheries and other angling-related organisations.

Andy Petch, Angling Trust Funding Manager, said: "This initiative represents a vital effort to safeguard our fisheries against predation pressures and ensure the health and sustainability of fish populations for future generations. We urge clubs and fisheries to consider how they might contribute to these efforts and take advantage of this funding opportunity.

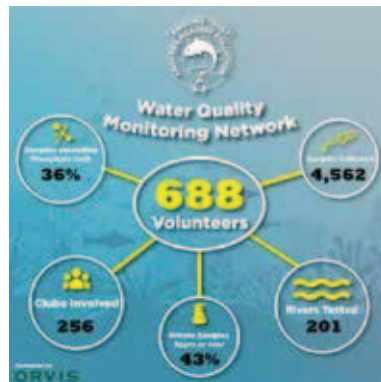
"This AIF round is likely to be over-subscribed and therefore only the best submissions can be supported. If your club or fishery is considering applying, make sure you answer all the questions, ensure your project is ready to go with all

permissions in place, and you have secured as much match funding as possible."

Closing date for applications is Friday, 17 May, at 5pm. Applicants requiring further assistance should email Andy via andy.petch@anglingtrust.net

Information about other funding opportunities can be found at www.anglingtrust.net/funding/ ■

New Milestone As 200 Rivers Now Being Tested



Our Water Quality Monitoring Network (WQMN) initiative reached a new milestone last month with over 200 rivers now being tested by our army of volunteers. It's a remarkable achievement since we



GB Spring Clean 'Best in Business Award For The Anglers Against Litter'

A joint initiative run by the Angling Trust and Shimano, has been honoured with a Keep Britain Tidy, Great British Spring Clean 'Best in Business Award'.

Shimano, a global leader in fishing tackle, has been the main sponsor of the Angling Trust's "Anglers Against Litter" campaign since early 2023. It was designed to tackle the escalating issue of litter around Britain's waterways, but the initiative has since engaged with anglers and angling clubs nationwide to organise and promote litter picks, responsible fishing practices, and the importance of preserving natural habitats for future generations.

This has resulted in 122 clubs receiving kits and an estimated 4,000 bin bags of litter being collected in 2023. ■

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. ■

Spring Into Fishing Is Back For 2024 With Beginner Fishing Sessions From The Angling Trust



Have-a-go family fishing events this may and June 2024. Come and learn to fish at beginner angling events nationwide. Spring into Fishing at entry-level events for the whole family to try fishing, with tackle, instruction and next-steps info included on the day. Spring into Fishing beginner sessions are quality assured by the Angling Trust to provide the best possible experience of fishing to children and families. Funded by the Environment Agency and Sport England, Spring into Fishing gives everyone the chance to get outside again after winter, try fishing and learn new skills.

Spring into Fishing events are happening all over the country from April right through to June with friendly, helpful coaches and volunteers to show you and your children what fishing is all about.

Clive Copeland, Head of Participation at the Angling Trust said, "Spring into Fishing is the perfect time for families to get back outdoors, learn to fish, and have some fun when the countryside is bursting back into life."

Find events and subscribe for Spring into Fishing news and offers: www.anglingtrust.net/springintofishing. Don't forget to share your fishing adventures this spring. Use #SpringIntoFishing #GetFishing

Going fishing is one of the nation's most popular pastimes

because people who go fishing fall in love with the way it combines being in nature, healthy activity and proven mental health benefits – it relaxes you, gives you a reason to get off your screen and a chance to forget about the challenges of daily life and the rising cost of living.

Fishing is a low-cost activity that only needs a small amount of money and time to do. It's easy to get into with a few bits of fishing tackle and a fishing licence. Children under 13 do not need a licence, and licences for children aged between 13 and 16

are free but you still need to register and receive a licence to go fishing. You can get a licence for the full year, for 8 days (ideal for holidays!) or just a day's fishing. at www.gov.uk/fishing-licences.

There is a close season on rivers which runs from 15th March to 15th June (inclusive). A close season may also apply on some stillwaters, drains and canals. Please check local rules and local fishing byelaws.

8 million people live within 5 minutes' walk of somewhere to go fishing and 11% of England's population live just a 10-minute walk or 2-minute cycle of somewhere to go fishing.

A OnePoll survey for the Angling Trust revealed that a quarter of people (26%) have enjoyed spending more time outdoors because it gives them 'a sense of freedom' and allows them to entertain their children (17%). A third of them (33%) are looking for an opportunity to spend quality time with family and friends.

Fishing licence sales pay for the environment to be protected – in 2022/23 the Environment Agency and its partners opened up or improved habitats for fish on 72 kilometres (km) of rivers and enhanced 152 hectares (ha) of stillwater fisheries. See more at the Fisheries Annual Report 2022 to 2023. ■

Carpy Humour

As I age, it is true about what I was told...

Fishing never, ever gets old



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✓ 60+ Awards

✓ Drug-free

✓ It Works^{*}

✓ Vegetarian

[†]Proven to trap over 1/3 of pollen, plus dust & pet allergens, National Pollen & Aerobiology Research Unit, 2012.
^{*}80% said HayMax works, 134 of 166 respondents, Allergy UK survey, 2016.

From Independent Health Stores, Chemists & Pharmacies, haymax.biz,





Angling Trust Criticises The Government's New Water Restoration Fund As Inadequate And Demands More Robust Measures To Deter Polluters

The Angling Trust has described the government's recent announcement of a new Water Restoration Fund as inadequate and tokenistic. The new scheme is intended for waterway restoration projects and is to be financed by just £11 million in penalties for environmental breaches by water companies, yet this is only a fraction of the fines handed out to law-breaking water companies.

In 2023 alone, the water regulator OFWAT announced it was expecting to levy £70 million in water company fines for breaches of environmental targets, while the Environment Agency claims to have secured £141 million in fines from the sector spread across 56 prosecutions since 2015. Individual water companies have been forced to pay record fines for pollution and misreporting in recent years including £90 million by Southern

Water in 2021, and £20 million by Thames Water in 2017.

Since January 2022, the Angling Trust has been at the forefront in advocating for the creation of a 'National River Restoration Fund' to ensure that fines directly aid the ecosystems they've damaged, rather than be swallowed up by the Treasury as a windfall tax. However, the Trust's proposals were for all water company fines to be included in the scheme.

Angling Trust Head of Policy, Martin Salter, who first raised the proposal with ministers two years ago said: "The polluter pays principle is not a pick and mix concept. Of course, polluters should be fined and made to put right the damage they have caused wherever possible. But this half-hearted approach, allocating just a fraction of the money collected by Treasury in fines, is at best tokenistic, and the amount

to be returned to fund environmental improvements is pitifully inadequate."

Jamie Cook, CEO of the Angling Trust, commenting on the establishment of the new Water Restoration Fund, said: "While this announcement represents progress, the amount allocated barely begins to address the extensive damage wrought by water companies. Anglers, who witness first-hand the devastating effects of illegal sewage pollution on our waterways, have long-awaited measures that not only deter harmful practices but also facilitate the restoration of our rivers and still waters. Ideally, such a fund would be unnecessary if the water companies did their jobs properly and stopped polluting our rivers with their sewage."

JOIN ANGLING TRUST & FISH LEGAL TODAY AND HELP US FIGHT POLLUTION ■

Just for Fun

The Angling Trust Asks...



If you could spend a day fishing with an angling great who is no longer with us. – Who would you choose? Izaak Walton? Richard Walker? Hugh Falkus? John Wilson? Ivan Marks? or someone else?



SAVE THE DATE



Lucy's Bowl 2024

Are you ready for Lucy's Bowl 2024?
We are pleased to say this years event will once again be held on the prestigious RK Leisure Wraybury Lakes.
Make sure to mark your calendars and check your inbox for your invite!

9th - 11th August



Aaron Fisher – Lord of the Manor

After years of carp fishing words fail me to describe the feeling of seeing a British sixty (61.06lbs) roll over the cord this morning. A newly released RG Baits Red Sea Squid pop over pellet and crumb was its downfall. I have seen so many photos of this fish but to see it in the flesh is another level. A huge thank you to Justin of JC Fisheries and Jack Bazeley for all the help and photos plus the gents who came to celebrate with me.



Matthew Smith catch report

Done a 36 hour on bluebell lake and at half 4 on Friday morning this was in the net and weighed in at 48.5.



Swarkstone Syndicate catch report

Well, what can we say apart from WOW!!!! Joe has ventured down for his first session this year and within no time at all he was cradling the biggest fish in the lake at an incredible 48lb... a huge well-done mate and still plenty of time for some more.



Rob Crowson catch report

A welcome return to the pit for Rob Crowson last week, going on to land four thirties & a forty on varied tactics. This incredible carp couldn't resist a mouthful of Robs PVA bag mix, consisting of aminomarine pellets, crumb & liquid with a handful of 12mm boilies over the top. Nicely done mate.



Dave Acreman catch report

Photo spam coming up, dream start to 2024! 44lb 8oz.



Steve Heylett catch report

My new UK pb - Blackspot @56lbs 8ozs! Mega moment and still buzzing. Big shout out to Rory Mills for your help & pics mate! This really capped off a memorable 3 days on the bank landing 3 x 20s to 26lbs, 2 x 30s to 37lbs and of course 56.08. Great times.



Daniel Smith catch report

Wow have had a piece of Ringwood's finest this morning Jamie's fish at 41.02 buzzing to say the least an amazing fish.



Stu Saunders – Brace of forties!

Stu Saunders has been in touch recently with a Grenville brace of 40's backed up with a 26lb fully!! Unbelievable result. Stu used his faithful Pineapple N Butyric pop up over a big bed of GLX and BMX boilies!



Mark Taz catch report

Three hours on Sand Martin, two fish and a new PB 48lb on the nose.



Martin Locke catch report

Lockey's just had a UK 62lb Common!



Jamie Smith catch report

Starting off your Easter bank holiday with Jamie Smith, who landed this lovely old Kent carp this morning weighing a huge 42lb!



Jamie Bacon catch report

After last week mirror just touching the needle under 40lb, this common settled the score at 41 and ounces. Mega end to my winter fishing on orchid.



Steve Butters catch report

42lb 8oz common (mallard). Finally a new PB.



Mike Jones catch report

Proper buzzing with this one taken over a big bed of Cell and particles.



Anthony Marrs catch report

Chuffed to bits with this weapon of a fish this morning at a smidge under 48lb, Gave me the right run around in the rain but well worth it. Happy Friday peeps.



Ashley Dale catch report

46lb on the from Kingfisher. I believe it is called "Phethead"? Great session, amazing fish and new PB for myself. 1st time on there and will 100% be back. Also managed a 18lb common.



Darren Towers catch report

Darren Towers a regular in Rosie's Retreat has just had a new PB of 43.12 with the Friendly Fish just 4 hours after setting up. Caught on a 12mm essential IB wafer in a solid bag of cell pellets and cell crumb. Congrats CL.



Benn Oconnor catch report

The mighty big linear at 47lb 12oz from coking farm oak lake, what a trip and what a complex, ended up with 10 fish multiple 20s and 30s, steamies hydro squid liver and TNT doing the damage as usual, the new video will be out in two weeks time. So subscribe to Benn's angle to watch plenty of videos on coking farm, big thanks to Chris, Matt and the team really enjoyed my stay, see you again soon.



Nick Osbourne catch report

In a short 30-minute flurry of bites I was fortunate enough to land one of the A team last night from my winter syndicate! I'm truly overwhelmed and it's took all night to sink in! When I started out here, I initially caught quite early on thinking this was going to be nice steady fishing, however it couldn't be further from the truth! I put in a lot of overnight fishing arriving after work and heading off early morning, with the lake doing mainly day bites it was gruelling for me to the point where I'd really started doubting myself!! But I guess the old saying hard-work pays off! Here she is the Queen of the lake white tips at 42lb and a new English PB for me? I'm off to work with a huge smile on my face this morning, remember this people never give up!



Jamie Bacon catch report

After last week mirror just touching the needle under 40lb, this common settled the score at 41 and ounces. Mega end to my winter fishing on orchid.

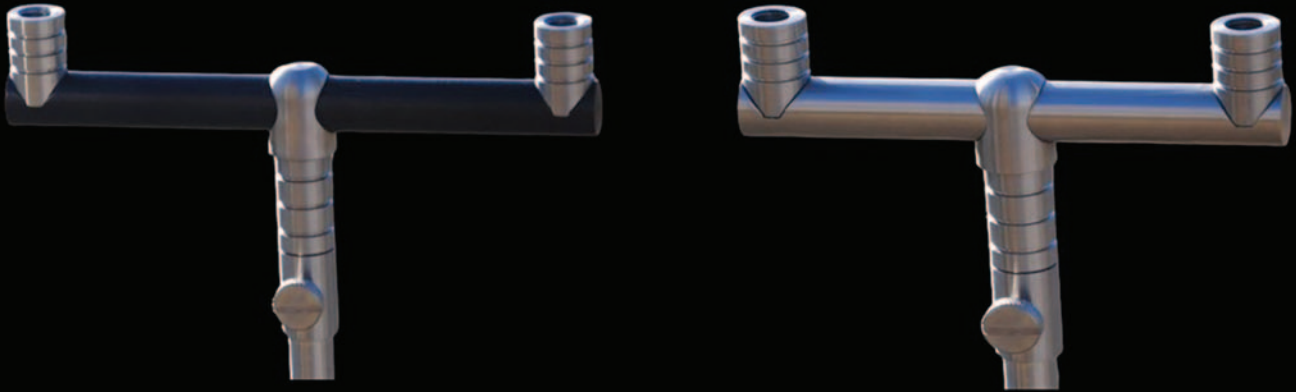
TNT

TOP-NOTCH TACKLE



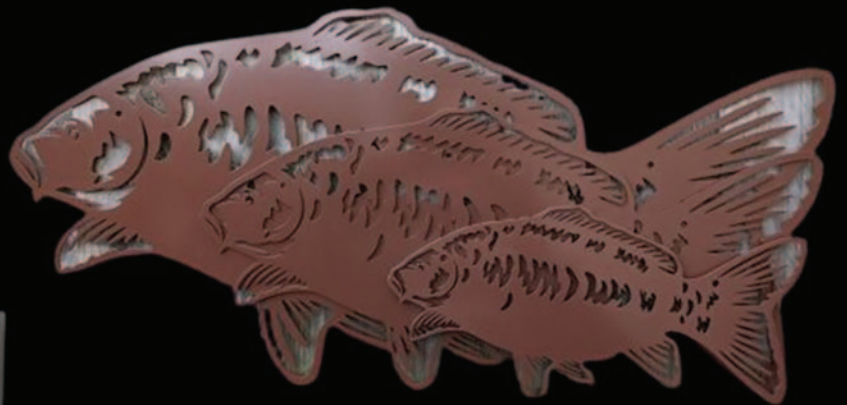
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James with a monster from Berners Hall @totalfishingtackle

James said "I had the pleasure of visiting Berners Hall Fishery for the first-time last weekend when I was invited on an exclusive by a few friends for a social. I have got no previous experience or knowledge of the lake, apart from knowing that it holds a large amount of very big carp so it was an exciting prospect.

On arrival it was absolutely belting it down with rain and extremely windy. Berners Hall is quite high up and very open so what would seem a breeze on a sheltered lake feels like hurricane style winds at Berners.

After completing a lap and seeing nothing we then done the dreaded draw, the draw of anxiety. True to form, I never have much luck during draws and once again I came out last.

Having not a lot to go on and having seen no fish during the walk round I opted to go in peg 1 which gave me a lot of water and plenty of scope for choosing my spots.

I opted to go quite small with my bait after I found a few likely areas in a central zone. I spent the first 24 hours seeing nothing and there were bites coming from the other end of the lake so I decided to go a bit bigger with the bait, I the hope I'd have more chance of attracting any passing residents. I crumbed up plenty of my favoured winter bait that I actually use all year round, Pro Seed from the Tails Up Pro Boilie range, mixed with some tinned Sweetcorn and some 10mm Pro Seed Boilies.

I decided to apply around 2kg of bait over one rod to see what happens and within the hour the rod was away. It was an intense battle with what felt like a nice fish and as it went over the cord, I knew it was a good one.

Luckily for me it was one of the known 40's called 'Average Joe' which spun the scales round to 46lb 2oz. I was absolutely delighted. It happened to be the biggest fish of the trip.

I have so much faith in Pro Seed especially through these colder months. My hook bait of choice was 2x Super Corns soaked in some of the new Super Shots liquid on a Ronnie Rig." James.



Bob Goulde catch report

Bob Goulde continues his run of rather large carp this year, with this being the latest biggun caught on his custom ABS mix weighing 45lb 8oz.



Ian Dawson catch report

New English PB 44lb 4oz at Bluebell.

Welcome to

CREEDENCE FISHERY

your exclusive premium carp lake

Located in Essex, Creedence Fishery hosts one of the finest fishing lakes in the area. Created in 1922 and opened in 2020, the fishery boasts a stunning two acre carp lake, stocked with fish up to 44lb, with at least 30 x 30lb carp up to 39lb and at least six different 40s, backed up with another 30 x upper 20s. A handful of other 30lb fish and some fast growers to back them up. We are proud to offer you an excellent fishing environment and with accommodating facilities to help you get that new personal best!

THE FACILITIES



Four purpose built cabins adorn this beautiful hidden carp lake in Essex. Bookings available via the website. (Four Swims) Whole lake bookings available.

Creedence Fishery: A Year of Remarkable Growth In the few years since its inception, Creedence Fishery, located in picturesque Essex surroundings, has quickly distinguished itself as a premier destination for carp angling enthusiasts. This two-acre modern carp fishery has seen a flurry of activity and development over the last 12 months, significantly enhancing the angling experience and bolstering its presence within the community. At the heart of Creedence Fishery are its unique offerings that cater to the comfort and convenience of anglers. Each of the four meticulously designed swims (one of which one is a double) houses a wooden cabin equipped with modern amenities including heating, a fridge, TV, power, and Wi-Fi.

This innovative approach ensures that anglers can focus on their passion without the hassle of setting up bivvies, regardless of the weather conditions. In order to prevent unsightly angling tackle hanging from the trees along its margins, and to protect the cabins and wildlife, Creedence Fishery is a bait-boat only venue which adds to the excitement and challenge of catching big carp from its waters. Furthermore, the inclusion of essential carp care equipment, along with toilets, shower and vending machine, underscores the fishery's commitment to both angler satisfaction and fish welfare.

A pivotal development this year has been the introduction of a communal BBQ and social area, fostering a sense of community among visitors. The integration of the 'swimbooker' app for easy online booking has also streamlined the booking process, reflecting the fishery's embrace of technology to enhance user experience. The stocking program represents another significant milestone, with the addition of over 15x 30lb carp and

3x 40lb carp to the lake. This initiative not only promises thrilling challenges for anglers aiming to catch these magnificent specimens, but with the recent nettings removing huge numbers of smaller fish, allows for the backup stock to grow through too.

The impact of these developments is evident in the surge of anglers flocking to Creedence Fishery, drawn by the allure of its massive specimen carp and the enhanced fishing experience. The attention from mainstream angling media further validates the fishery's growing reputation as a premier destination. Looking ahead, Creedence Fishery plans to continue its trajectory of growth with a focus on nurturing huge specimen carp.

A scheduled netting at the year's end aims to curate the lake's population, ensuring that only carp above 25lb remain, alongside the introduction of even more 40lb carp. A testament to the fishery's appeal is a special feature by 'AJ Spooner' of swimbooker, whose YouTube session capturing multiple 30lb catches in a single winter outing has captivated the angling community.

This event, emblematic of the fishery's potential, can be easily accessed through the QR code link, as we invite you to witness the thrill of angling at Creedence Fishery. As Creedence Fishery continues to evolve, its blend of comfort, community, and carp sets it apart, promising memorable experiences for all who visit. With bookings already matching last year's total by February 2024, the fishery's future looks as bright as the reflective scales of its prized carp. Every new booking also includes 3KG of free feed pellet for every angler! Check the live availability of Creedence Fishery via the swimbooker app, and, if you're looking for a comfortable place to target huge carp in Essex, get it booked!



swimbooker

CONTACT DETAILS: 07882 083160

Creedencefishery@gmail.com

creedencefishery.com

See us on Facebook (Creedence Fishery) and Instagram (@CreedenceFishery)



We look forward to welcoming you to Creedence Fishery!



Richard Cox catch report

A 42 mirror from this morning and 26 from last night made horrible conditions worth it. Revisit to using ASM chops and crumb with pc2 hook baits.



Crowy's Second 40 of The Year!

Three fish in a session got things moving for Simon Crow again on his Lincolnshire syndicate, topped by his second forty of the year. "The lake has been a bit moody recently, but with a low-pressure front moving in, I had a feeling there was a chance of a bite or two," said Crowy, who is very rarely wrong in these situations. A chunky 40lb 10oz Simmo was backed up by two other mirrors, all coming over a light scattering of SLK freebies and matching pellets in the early hours.

A little inspiration for the Easter weekend ahead?

Adam Spiller is currently at Sandhurst. He still has one more night to go. He's already landed 'Niges fish' at 44lb6oz, that's the biggest of seven banked so far. All caught on our 13mm GPB1 crushed cork pops, fished over sweetcorn. Well, done Adam, superb angling mate. This is the second time this fish has been banked on our hook baits in the past four months now. The sheer number of big carp being reported to us today is truly incredible. If you are out on the bank tomorrow good luck.



Seven on the Smoke!

Perry Alabaster incorporated our amazing Amino Smoke liquid into his fishing on his latest trip to Monks Pit and came away having recorded a seven-fish haul! Perry noticed the fish seemed to favour pink hookbaits this week, with Secret 7 Half Tones pop-ups inside bags of Crayfish Mini Mix pellets, all pumped with S7 Amino Smoke, working brilliantly well for him.



Carl Goulsbra catch report

Lovely evening to catch a 40lber, thanks for the photos Adam, up the mainline Arkwell Foelley.

AQUA LILIUM CLOTHING

FROM THE DARK DEPTHS OF WINTER



As we break from the dark depths of winter, we quickly start to see longer daylight hours and the sun starting to warm our cheeks.

Although the banks are a lot quieter through the colder month's you can't deny it's a nice feeling to put away the winter clothing and to slip into something a bit more comfortable.

The Aqua Liliium team have already been very successful in there start of the spring campaign, with a recent trip resulting in 7 takes.

Consultant Steven Quinn travelling light and casting to showing fish, managed to land 3 fish all around the mid-20 range.

The fun did not stop there with Aqua Liliium owner Mark Quinn fishing over a handful of bait, managed a stunning brace of 30s one of each.

A beautiful common started of proceedings followed by a 20-pound mirror in the early hours. Mark was then woken up by the alarm one toning at first light and



A FEW RECENT CATCHES





after a short battle the line unfortunately fell slack with the fish doing the off. Why does it always seem like the ones you lose feel enormous. Oh well you can't win them all lol.

The rig was put back on the spot and 3 hours had passed before the rod was away again, an unbelievable battle took place and it felt like an eternity had passed but lady luck was on my side and a big, framed mirror was sulking in the bottom of the net.

We are lucky that the venue we fish allow dogs on site and this happened to be my dog Fudge first encounter with a big carp. He was natural and very excited to see what was going on.

Unfortunately, Monty the carp catching spaniel is not very well at the moment and is side lined for a few months, we thought we only had one lucky carp dog, but it turns out we have two.

New products

As we move to the warmer months, we are excited to announce the release of the new spring and summer cargo trouser. Not only are they lightweight, but these unique bottoms also offer U.V protection to boot.

The cargos are also designed with the angler in mind, allowing free movement meaning the material will also have a cooling element for your skin to breath. With an elasticated waist this helps you sit comfortably ensuring the waist band does not cut into.

The upper pockets have robust zips to ensure your valuables are safe and the two side pockets are buttoned. We also plan to bring a shorts version of the cargos as well and plan to have these on sale by the end of May.

If you have not browsed through the website lately then please do, we have some great bargains to be had with items up to 40% off.

Also, although the days are warmer the nights are still chilly.

Especially if you're lucky enough to take your dog, with this in mind we have a great deal on our 'full monty' bivvy jackets a must have for your furry best friend.

As usual, none of this is possible if it wasn't for you guys and here at Aqua Liliium we will always be in debt to our faithful supporters which is growing larger by the day.

Just a quick reminder, any pictures you may have of yourselves in any of our products, please send to aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com to be in with a chance to feature in our next add and also win a T-Shirt.

All the best, Aqua Liliium Team

Aqua Liliium

Website: www.aqualiliumclothing.com

Email: aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

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

**April Chiverton catch report**

Being the bank holiday weekend, the lake was very busy, so I settled for a quiet corner swim, I proceeded to bait up, with a generous amount off Dave Mallins' Pungent Squid! At around 2am my rod was away, resulting in this 43.10 mirror!

**Martin Butterfield catch report**

Martin Butterfield smashed his PB with this awesome mirror at 40lb 14oz. Huge well done.

**Carl Goulsbra catch report**

41lb mirror for the old man on his new syndicate first session top angling, up the mainline, Arkwell Foelley.

**Roger Bacon catch report**

Three of the biggest fish from my last trip to Grenville 48+44+38+ all part of a 6 fish catch before I was struck down with what we call the bank bug. 24 hrs of sickness in my bivvy. DNA Baits S7 and Bug in mixed sizes all soaked in the new Sweet Cayenne Pepper liquid, Fishing long range with my Long Blow back rigs, Pink Peril pop ups on long hook length set to very slow sinking

**Chris Reilly catch report**

Great start to spring landing this 42lb 2oz mirror from my syndicate and getting off the mark early cheers Ryan Hyde for coming over to do the pics.



Stu Saunders catch report

Still on cloud 9, a brace of 40's on the 1st night (45.5 & 42.1) and then capped off with another at 41.14 on the last night. What a place Grenville is, it can be brutal and frustrating at times but you just have to keep chipping away and when things like this happen all is forgotten and can turn your season into one to remember and will never leave you. A massive thanks to the guys who came and congratulated me. And also, to @halobaits for supplying me with a bait I have full confidence in from the off, (Pineapple N-Butyric 15mm Pop ups, the soon to be released GLX boilies and the ever-trusty BMX boilies 12's and 15mm freezers) check out their ranges and you won't look back. @jprecisionhooks for making sharper than sharp hooks (advanced widegapes) and @mpleadshed for distance leads that don't disappoint.



Welcome to **CARP ADDICTION**

The Story so far...

Bryan and Kierran are lifelong friends with over six decades' carp fishing experience between them. They have manufactured their own baits for a combined fifty years. What started as a hobby born of necessity for quality bait, has grown into a full-blown Carp Addiction. As quality bait has become more readily available over the past fifteen years, we have concentrated increasingly on the manufacture of hook baits.

Through hours of experimentation and field testing, our catches soon proved that we have a superior quality product, one that we came under pressure to share with friends and colleagues. Their results both within the UK and abroad have been the encouragement and endorsement needed to start sharing our product more widely within the carp angling fraternity. The filthy hookerz range

of hookbaits have been specially formulated to contain palatants, attractants, amino acid profiles and in-house blended flavour combinations, these baits offer a unique composition which sets them apart from generic "off the shelf" products.

Carp addiction and the filthy hookers range was just an idea. In November 2023 we decided to give it a go with the intention of getting ready to launch the brand in spring at THE BIG ONE SHOW. It was an absolutely crazy time frame but with long nights, plenty of help and encouragement as well as hours upon hours of graft we managed to make the idea a reality.

The idea came about after we rolled a large batch off bottomed baits for ourselves and a few select friends along with matching popups. This was the lure that had us hooked upon following a dream. We know this combo is a winner but what we did not expect was the reaction these received. This ignited the whole thing.

To bring you up to date, the stand at THE BIG ONE SHOW was a great success. Carp Addiction is in its first retail outlet. The website is now up and running www.carpaddiction.co.uk so, watch out for deals and limited run special editions!! Also, watch this space because terminal tackle will be released soon!!

And finally, a big shout out Mark from AQUA LILIUM CLOTHING for all his help getting the business started.





Really excited about our first stockist and a great way for people to experience our baits first hand. Our first stockist is Jon at 'The Rig' Tackle Shop in Chelmsford. Jon has a wealth of experience and being championed by someone held in such high regard is great for us. He's on Facebook under 'The Rig' and 'Essex tackle shop' and online at www.essex-tackle-shop.com



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CARP ADDICTION



Innovate Baits catch report

A great week for Innovates Midland rod Simon. A week after banking a 49lb+ he popped back to his syndicate for another overnighter and managed to slip the net under a 38lb+ and 44lb+ brace! RNM doing the business for Simon big time! Great angling!



A day for big commons, this time Jon Taylor being the happy captor

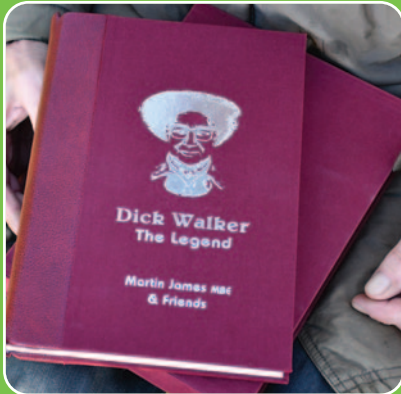
The immaculate common of 40lbs and ounces known as Swirly being one of the lakes more elusive residents. Classic spring tactics of light spreads and reacting to shows working for Jon. Our Beaked Chod hooks and OGX mainline being 2 key components in Mr Taylor's spring set-up.



Suffolk Water Park catch report

THE BOX is out! Well done to Glen for banking the biggest carp in the lake at 42lb 6oz.

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Draw dates are moved forward if all tickets are sold.



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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

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Fin Mitchell catch report

What a session me and my mate have had got to the complex late Sunday night opted to go on Kingy and after a move to the point swims I managed 5 fish in total with 2 new pbs and a new lake 40lber which I have called Moo.

40lb 15oz common – Moo – new pb second pb of the session, 18lb mirror, 25lb common, 36lb common – first pb of the session 14lb 8oz mirror.

Richard Eyles catch report

Fifty Years Old – Last year Richard had an incredible year on his chosen water. After a great run of fish his time was running out so he gave his campaign one last push. Ironically on his last session he got the take he'd longed for, eventually scooping up his prize to reveal a huge, pale mirror. He knew it could only really be one fish, the big ghostie. The one he really wanted, an ancient old carp of over 50 years old and the biggest of the pit. He quickly weighed and retained her and sat there watching the sun coming up knowing it would most likely be my last on the lake. In the end he'd done 42 nights for 30 fish, topped with this 47.12lb mirror. The old pit has some real history behind it having been stocked by the old Kent River board back in 1962, and around the same time a batch of Redmire fish were stocked in the lake next door and found their way into the pit. A handful of these old originals still exist in the pit and he was lucky enough to catch a few of these along the way and a couple of the 2nd generation lennys too. A massive well done again Rich, mega angling as always.



Mark Wozencroft catch report

Images 1-9

Mark Wozencroft had an absolute session of a lifetime on his syndicate last week. Wuzzy ended up catching 20 carp and had a few of the A team including a 41lb which is his 4th Welsh 40 from 4 different waters. That in itself is an amazing achievement. The impressive haul included 1x 40, 7x 30's, 8x 20's and 4 doubles, that's some session by anyone's standards! Here's a sample of some of the mega fish that graced the net.





Chay Hawkins catch report

Our man Chay Hawkins has been in touch after breaking his PB with this immaculate mirror at 41lb+ using our ever-successful Bugs Nuts boilie range.



Max Rush catch report

51lbs of prime Cambridgeshire mirror for Max Rush on his 1st night back this year to his chosen spring water. A light scattering of the AminoEster followed by a yellow Ester pop up and a couple of later that was all she wrote. Long Reaches STARBURST at a colossal weight to kick off the spring in fine style Max, mega stuff mate.

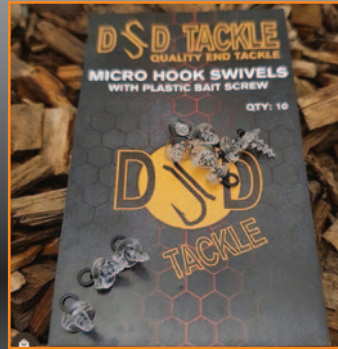


Kieran Duff catch report

Whilst the nation slept overnight, Kieran Duff was creating UK carp-fishing history at Waterside Fishery in Buckinghamshire, landing the largest common carp ever recorded on these shores. Residing in the venue's Kingfisher Lake, the Big Common as it is commonly known is no stranger to the circuit, having grown gradually in size over the years to be regarded as the largest open-access common in the UK. However, after going uncaught for the past nine months, the fish has slowly put on weight further still, until giving itself up to DNA team member and Waterside bailiff, Kieran, at an incredible 66lb 8oz, making it the largest UK common ever landed! We'll have further details about the capture to follow, but in the meantime, let's just appreciate this incredible fish and an immense achievement for both Kieran and Waterside Fishery. Well done, guys!

DSD TACKLE

DSD Tackle is a carp fishing end tackle brand, bringing high quality end tackle at affordable prices to the market.



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Coking Cracker for Craig

Craig Birch's first session on a new venue saw him tempt one of the largest fish on the complex and a massive new personal best to boot. Having decided to target Coking Farm Fishery's Meadow Lake for the new season, the 38-year-old couldn't have hoped for a better start. On his first weekend session, he landed the big mirror known as Dave. Weighing in at 46lb 14oz, it was a new PB for Craig and his second-ever UK forty. A PB wafter attached to D-rig did the business for Craig, fished at 70 yards over a mixture of mixed-sized Bug freebie.

**Just Terry Hearn
Doing What He does**



Marsh Is Packing It On At Orchid

It's all go-go-go down at Oxfordshire's Orchid Lake. A string of lake residents have come out well up in weight - in particular Marsh has pulled Archie Bizzle's scales round to 42lb 14oz!! Marsh is now the 5th 40lb+ common swimming around the hallowed waters. Last out on the 9th August 2023 at 34lb 14oz - what a weight gain for this gem of a carp! 17 months ago, the lake had no 40lb commons. The place is really going from strength to strength.

The CMCS feed team that took over running Orchid Lake after the previous legendary owner Marsh Pratley, who the common is named after, sadly passed away, have done wonders with the stock. The hard work they've put in to keep Marsh's legacy growing from strength to strength is finally starting to pay off.

"This lake is breaking the long-standing records weekly now" said a spokesperson for Orchid Lakes.

Time to be on the bank.. it's on!!

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Tim Thornton



The man is on FIRE! Team member Tim Thornton with another couple of Somerset stunners; "Two nice carp from Durleigh reservoir in Somerset. The common going 37lb 6oz, mirror 21lb 4oz. Both taken on DNA baits Bug boilies, size 4 Scorpion Crank hook IQ2 D rigs as usual." Well done Tim, awesome angling.

Stuart Sturton and Juan Betacourt



Carp tackleonline competition pair Stuart Sturton and Juan Betacourt smashed it at the BCAC on B2 at Linear Fisheries. Both Stuart and Juan used a variety of our end tackle including a new test hook which performed amazingly well; "Amazing weekend on Linear Fisheries Official b2 for the British Carp Angling Championships qualifier we had a total of 38 fish for 945lb for 2nd place, great angling by the winning pair good luck in the semi until next year."

Congratulations to you both.

John Paul McCusker



Team member John Paul McCusker is at it again in a BIG way with his first UK 50lber!! It's not the first time she has been caught on a Scorpion hook either: "Finally having one of those dream sessions. Buzzing with this fish this morning. First UK 50 and what a beauty she is at 56-07, after three fish yesterday up to 40-05 who would think I could top that. One of the A+ team called black spot Caught using #carptackleonline #scorpion hooks and end tackle."

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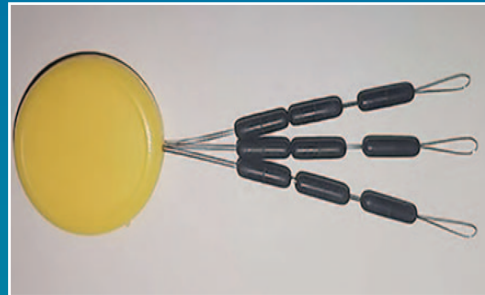
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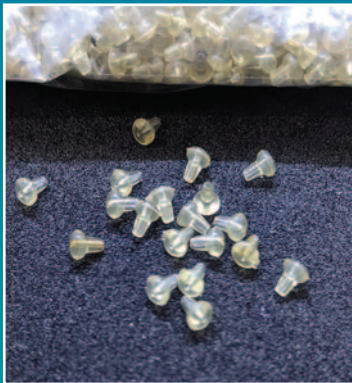
Swivel Deal



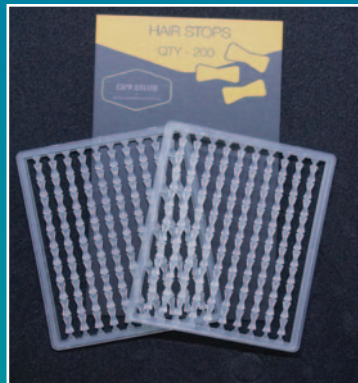
Tungsten Hooklink Sinker



Chod Filament



Hook Beads



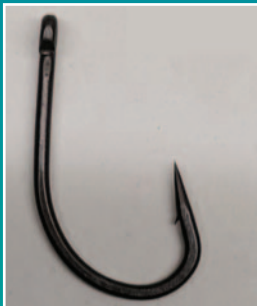
Hair Stops



Shrink Tube



Tungsten Putty



Scorpion Snag Hook



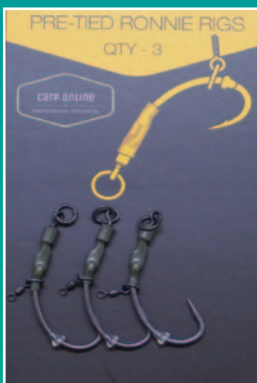
Swivels



Scorpion Crank Hook



Scorpion Chod Hooks



Scorpion Ronnie Rig



Composite Leadclips



Choddy Crank Hook



Hair Aligners



Tungsten Kickers

New Lake Record For Farlows

Farlows' regular Shel landed a 44lb 6oz mirror known as Leadcore. Huge well-done Shel and congratulations on your PB. This is now the complex's biggest mirror in the lake.



@ig:jackj had an epic weekend over at Orchid Lakes. He landed 3 fish over 30lb, topped by 'No Name' at 43lb 11oz, a new PB. A fish Jack has been after for years, fell to a Zig soaked in our Blakes Baits Plum Bait Spray.



Richard Lofthouse says, "It's spring 2024 and without upsetting family or work, I plan on making the most of it. You never know how many you have left". @ashbury_fisheries orange spot at 41lb



Alan hasn't been using Halo Baits very long and he's already caught his first 40lb carp of 2024 at 46lb 8oz! A Skunkz pop up over The Nuts and BMX boilies proved deadly for Alan!



Feeling very honoured and privileged to be able to write this. She needs no introduction, "The Big Lin" at 47lb 5oz. Outstanding fish! Absolutely buzzing. Used Parker Baits OG fish for first time - certainly won't be my last, quality bait





Andy Cole with mirrors of 40lb 2oz & 36lb 4oz both caught on the same morning on only Andy's second night fishing of 2024. The bigger of the two was landed on a 16mm S2 balanced boilie, the other on a 16mm TC1 balanced boilie.

Andy scattered 20mm freezer baits, made at home with John Baker bait ingredients with a throwing stick for both fish. Well, done



Lightning Can Strike Twice

What do you do if you catch a winter 40 but you weren't happy with the shots of it? You go and catch it again obviously.



Chris Bromley, with an impressive Woolpack brace from last Sunday, weighing in at 44lb12oz and 34lb4oz. Both caught the new Specilised Hookbaits (the cheese) TC1 16mm balanced, fished as single hook baits. Outstanding angling as always Chris. He's a strictly weekend angler, working hard five days a week like so many of you reading this. He still does the business, time and time again.





After a difficult winter, things are already looking up for Andy Sargent now that spring is upon us, with two Monks Pits lumps paying him a visit on his latest session.

Lots of smell and attraction were the key to Andy's baiting approach, with Calanus Hydro, BetaStim, Salmon Oil and Hot Hemp Oil all used over his baited area of mixed-sized Bug boilies and pellets. PB wafers fished over the bait yielded the Sovereign at 42lb 8oz and the Big Fully at 37lb.



On a roll Another one of the 'A' team slips into Michael Savage's net. Zigs doing it again!!



Sam Bingham has opened up his 2024 campaign by landing the same 40-pounder he caught for his last fish of 2023. it fell to a zig, snaffling a piece of foam that Sam had soaked in Sticky Sweet.



Cracking 40 LB + mirror for Luke Shephard. This lovely big carp was caught on Luke's recent session at the Specimen Lake at S&R Fishery. Katran products used: Mainline: Wild Carp Camo 0.371mm Hooklink: Enduro 25lb



My first Lincolnshire 40 gave a really brutal scrap along the tree line. Big thanks to Steven Hamer on the 42lb 4 oz on the Joseys.



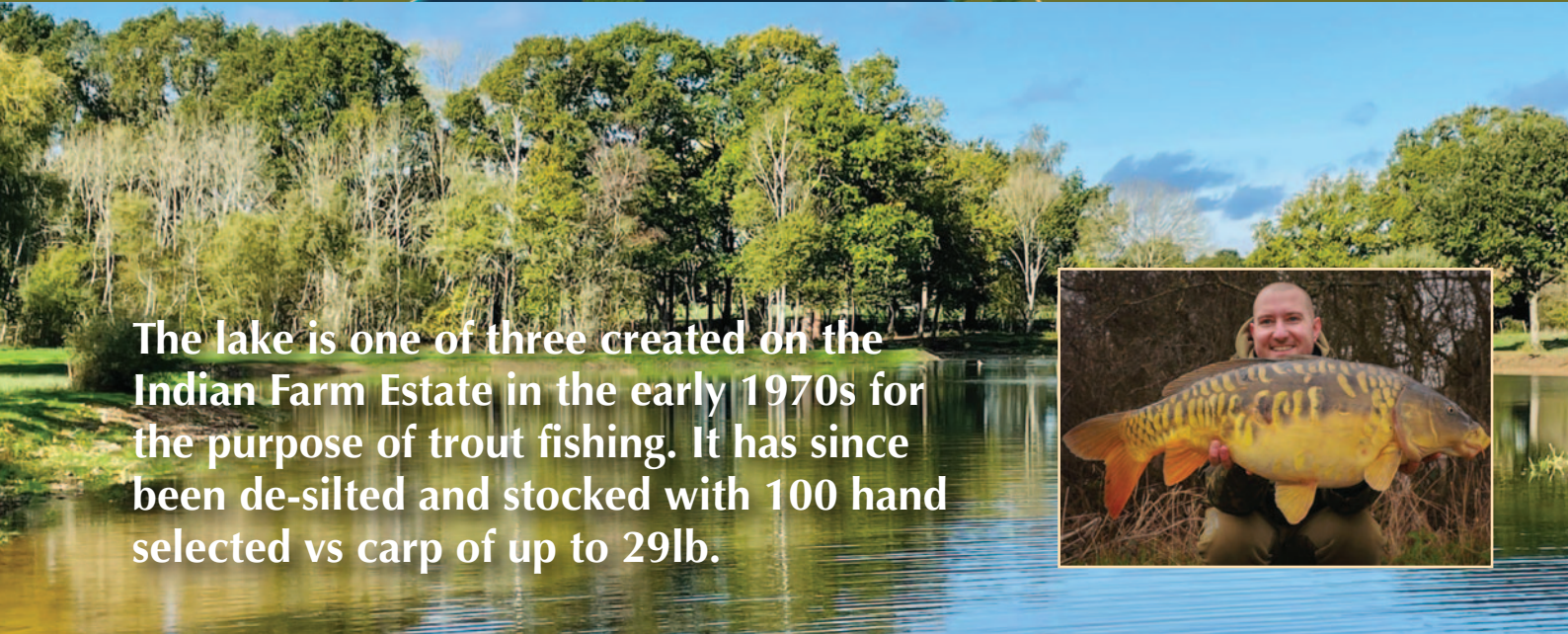
Des O'Sullivan with The Small Scale Fully at 41 lb from Roach Pit. This is a new forty for the lake and the first fully over the magic mark on any CWA venue.



My first carp of the 2023/24 season was a 40lb from Horton Church Lake so it was quite fitting to end the season with another one, unfortunately the Little Leather was a recapture but a bites a bite as they say.



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4 Year Quest Is Over

Big shout out to our man Dan Impey on the capture of the magnificent common known as "Shoulders" from his syndicate water at a huge 42lb 2oz!

Dan had been steadily applying Ultramino boilies on the lead up to his first session of the year on the big pit. It didn't take long for the fish to tune into the fact. This amazing result was the culmination of a 4-year quest to catch the big common that took a distinct liking to the 14mm Pumpkin Spice pop up presented over his baited area.



Had a blinder down at The Woolpack. 10 fish on the bank up to 32lb in 48hrs, including 'The Camel' a real old original. With the hump?



Well, after my big hit at Woolpack, I went to Barham and bugger me if it didn't happen again. Nine fish including the biggest one in the lake at 45.12.



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JPs Jon Brooker with a new PB and first UK 50. Mike's Pet at 52lb 8oz - the biggest of a 6 fish haul with 3 x 30s and 2 x 20s. All taken on the Precision Point Widegape 4s and The Nuts Bait.



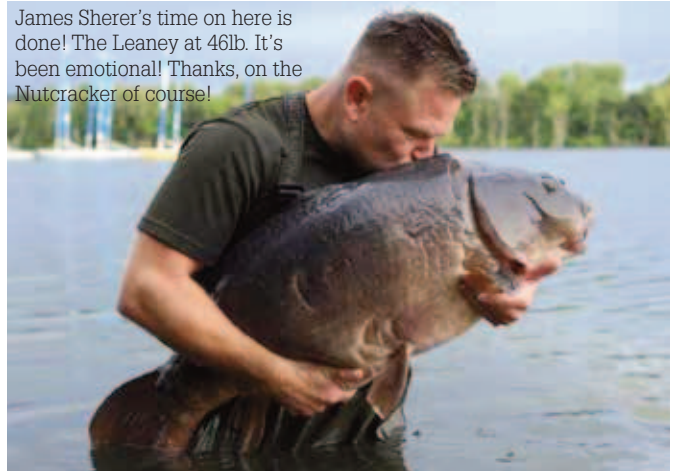
Back down Oxfordshire this weekend and wasn't disappointed with this cracking 42lb 2oz mirror.



The Birthday Fish for my birthday - 43lb of Horton Mirror. Absolutely buzzing to get my first one of the year and on my birthday too!



James Sherer's time on here is done! The Leaney at 46lb. It's been emotional! Thanks, on the Nutcracker of course!



Great end to my first season on the Mere!!!! Unfortunately a recapture of the big common but at it's biggest weight of 44lb 6oz and backed up with 3 x 30s and a couple of 20s.





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Popups



Mary's Syndicate member Dan with 'The Train' at just over the magical 40lb barrier.



Plenty for Anthony Marrs to be smiling about here.



A couple of Simmo bangers from Milton Abbas for Wiggy with the Widow Common at 38lb and Stewpot at 41lb 12oz. Milton's producing a ridiculous amount of Simmos over 30lb in recent weeks!



Rigmaroles' Darren Harries has been targeting Old Mill Lakes' Birch Lake for 5 years in search of one of it's 3 elusive big girls. His persistence finally paid off with this cracking 61lb 10oz common. Fluoro D rigs fished with the Rigmaroles' camH2o hooklink material proving succesful.



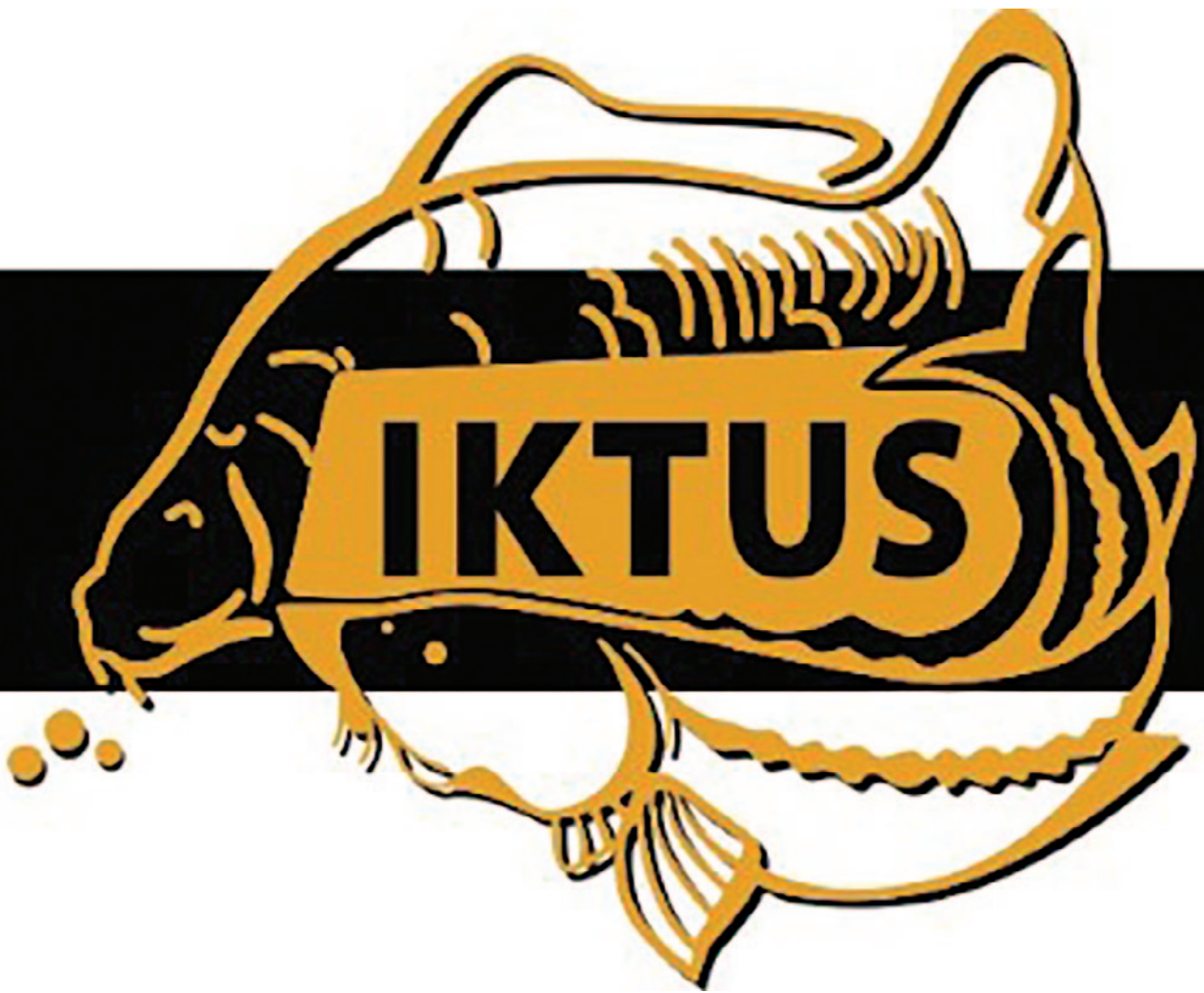
Dan Trowbridge fished Grenville with 8mm and 12mm Bug freezer boilies pre-soaked in Bug Liquid Food and then loaded up with Bug Hydro Spod Syrup. He was rewarded with this 51lb mirror, backed up by a common of 38lb.



Tom Maker had a mega few hours angling with the first bite coming at 3am and the last just before he packed up at 9am, 1 x double, 1 x 20 and a trio of 30s weighing 33lb, 36lb and 38lb was more than enough to get his weekly fix



Carp Punk's James Harrison slipped the net under a new PB common of 31lb 12oz at Newbury's Carptonik Trout Lake. A Ronnie Rig utilising CarpPunk Aquaskin and size 4 SCX hook and A Bait Triple S pop up the winning combination



FISHING RESORT



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Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

- Warma
- HayMax
- Woods Precision Engineering

Easy Outdoor Fire-lighting Can be Bagged and Boxed Off



Love the vibe of sitting around a campfire on an outdoor getaway or fishing trip, but hate the nasty odour that lingers on your fingers after using a firelighter? Well why do it? Just chose a natural solution and you can escape this pain point and operate a super-efficient fire.

Having a fire that combusts in the optimal way is the secret to reducing emissions. To achieve this, you need a great outdoors double-act – a non-petrol-based firelighter and Ready to Burn wood. Throw in some top-quality kindling and you have everything you need for a great experience.

Luckily, Logs Direct has some brilliant firelighters to help make outdoor fire-lighting a breeze. Its brand-new and very innovative new natural firelighter, – the T-Lite – takes its inspiration from a teabag. This easy-to-light, dinky paper bag is made from clean, recycled waste wood, recycled candle

wax and plastic-free paper – all designed to get the fire well on its way, the minute a flame is applied.

It is completely chemical-free and offers a burn duration of 10 minutes – plenty of time to get your fire roaring. You only need one at once and you will get a box of 20, all housed in a fully recyclable cardboard box costing just £5.

If you want an alternative non-petrol-based firelighter, the Warma Eco Natural Wood Wool Firelighter from Logs Direct is another star. This is formed from softwood from sustainable forests, with small strands wound into a rope format. This is dipped in hot wax and then subdivided, to form lovely natural firelighter-sized rounds.

Being very dense inside allows these little gems to give you a great length of burn, which is accompanied by a charming woody aroma. Again,

you will get 10 minutes in which to really get your fire on the go. The cost is just £3.50 for around 30.

Whether you are using these for an open fire, stove, bonfire, fire pit, barbecue or pizza oven, either of these natural firelighters is a great ally. They also won't taint your food, leaving that bacon, or freshly caught fish, tasting as it should.

Being able to get a fire started quickly really does also make a difference. Not having lots of smoking and failed attempts at lighting can also help keep emissions down.

Let your firelighters take some of the strain and pair them up with

Ready to Burn wood and top quality kindling that will make things super-easy. The great news is that Logs Direct can supply it all, so just head to www.logsdirect.co.uk and get yourself kitted out.

If you want to make life even easier, you can choose the Warma Kiln Dried Starter Box, which contains kiln-dried hardwood logs, kindling and some eco wood wool firelighters. All in one handy box, with recyclable packaging, this considerably packaged product costs just £13.95 and is ready to go. All you need do is pop it in the boot of the car and set off for your escape into nature. ■



Helping Anglers Catch the Pollen this Summer

HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balm can help anglers catch the pollen as well as the fish this summer, before it can cause a reaction, with its pollen blocking attributes. Hay fever symptoms can be a complete distraction when fishing in summer, with constant sneezing, runny nose and sore eyes. HayMax works as a prevention, helping stop or lessen the symptoms, so you want to go out fishing again without worrying about the nightmare hay fever symptoms. And as HayMax is drug-free with no drowsy side effects it won't affect your concentration either.

Hay fever is an allergic reaction to pollen and other airborne particles. Most people who suffer from hay fever are allergic to grass pollen, whose season runs from May to August with peaks in June and July.

Common hay fever symptoms 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. Itching around the face and mouth, including an itchy mouth, a burning sensation in the throat, headaches and wheezing can also occur.

Other symptoms include an overall achy feeling, or build-up of pressure in the face; the sinus area is often the most painful. Constant nose rubbing and blowing can cause skin irritation and sensitivity. All of this can lead to tiredness, fatigue and exhaustion. Hay fever can also affect how you sleep and cause sleep disturbance and difficulty getting to sleep. These symptoms can in turn zap your energy levels leaving you feeling low and sluggish.

Most hay fever treatments and remedies deal with the symptoms of hay fever. HayMax is different as it works on the prevention principle. It seeks to catch the pollen before it gets into the body where it can cause a reaction, rather than attempting to treat the symptoms or the effects of the pollen once they occur.

HayMax is a simple idea, is easy to use and so many people find it works and love it. That's the magic of HayMax.

Everyone can tolerate a certain amount of pollen in their body before they react – known as their 'trigger level'. When the 'trigger level' is exceeded, hay fever symptoms start. When an allergen barrier balm catches enough pollen that the trigger level is not reached, symptoms don't start. Less allergen, less reaction (and for many, none at all!).

HayMax is applied topically with a finger (or cotton swab), to the rim of the nostrils and bones of the eyes. HayMax is not invasive, is incredibly easy to use and can be applied as often as necessary throughout the day and at bedtime. Apply it before

you go out fishing to trap pollen when you're by the water. As HayMax is drug-free with no drowsy side-effects it won't affect your concentration and angling abilities.

Independent university studies show that HayMax traps all types of grass and tree pollen [1] and that HayMax traps over a third of pollen before it enters the body, in addition to dust mite allergens and pet dander [2]. 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].

So net some HayMax today! HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balm has an rrp of £8.49 per pot and is available from independent chemists, pharmacists and health stores, Holland & Barrett, Ocado, selected Superdrug and Boots, on 01525 406600 and www.haymax.biz. ■

Situation Vacant

We are looking for a general workshop assistant to join our team at Woods Precision Engineering Ltd in Stotfold. Full-time hours – 40 hours a week Monday to Friday or part-time hours could be considered. A keen interest in engineering and sheet metal is a must. Perhaps will be suited to a younger school/college leaver. If interested please email your CV and details to: accounts@woodsprecision.com

Exclusive

The Next Chapter

By Mark and Emma Rose

After a very stop start 2023 to my angling, (more stop than start in fairness) I was pleased Winter was finally approaching which meant only one thing: Winter Ticket time.

At the end of November I decided to leave Bait Guru, and settled on using the very tried and tested bait from the 'Baitworks' stable.

A couple of weeks before my last trip of the year, I received a number of deliveries from 'Baitworks' HQ and I have to say I felt like a kid at Christmas.

The range was immense and as I overran the kitchen, (not sure Emma was best pleased) with little testing bowls of water, and various concoctions going on. I have to say my smile said it all. A definite, much needed confidence boost, before even hitting the bank.

In advance of my planned trip, I started soaking a couple of batches of 'Baitworks' 'CreAmino' and 'Monster Red' (my chosen Baits for my Winter Campaign) in their matching Glugs and Oils, along with a helping of the 'Festival House Pellet, coated in 'Baitworks' 'Edges' Liquid - This Liquid is definitely of another level and has to be seen, to be believed.....

Fast forward a few days and being my last night at home, I found myself like I do before most trips, wide awake, wishing the time away before my off the next morning.

I soon found myself, loaded up and heading down the all too familiar road to 'Festival Fisheries' near Glastonbury. Since My Winter Series articles, at the back end of 2023/2023, I've also





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become a Bailiff there, which definitely helps when it comes to keeping in touch with the lake and its residents.

After doing my Bailiff rounds, I set up in my chosen and pre-booked peg. Peg 2. As always I didn't put the rods out until late afternoon, just before dark. With the high pressure and a bitterly cold wind, I wasn't expecting too much, especially as the fishing had been rather tricky over the last few weeks.

With just over an hour since putting the rods out, as I sat in the bivvy doorway, watching the water with my customary cold beer in hand. I had to do a double take as my bobbin lifted and the receiver went into overdrive.

After a very short, but spirited battle. A Mirror of just over 15lb, that had obviously taken a liking to the 'Baitworks' 'Monster Red' Hard Hookbait, wrapped in matching Paste, over a small 'Carp 'Craze' PVA Mesh Bag of Pellet and about 6 boilies halved, graced the net.

With photos done and the fish safely returned, I quickly got the rod back out onto the spot, just as the final glimmer of light faded into darkness.

I really couldn't believe what had just happened and even though it wasn't a monster, a fish mid December definitely counts, and as for my decision to move on to new pastures, they were certainly vindicated.

First light was soon upon me and

with no further action during the night, I sat watching the Starlings impressive flyby, which is certainly an amazing sight to see, (not so keen on their pooping skills mind you) with my first brew of the day.

I decided that with the forecast being pretty similar to the day before, to continue with what I was doing. After all there was nothing telling me otherwise. By 2pm, I decided to freshen up the Hookbaits and spots, but again baiting very lightly, just to try and buy a bite.

As darkness descended, the heavens decided to open, which certainly wasn't forecast. To top it all off, the wind, (which was also not forecast) decided to turn direction and I found myself, in the early hours holding onto my bivvy as 50 mph plus winds hit me head on. It was definitely one of those





nights, when as an Angler you start to question your sanity, when at half 3 in the early hours, I found myself pulling the rods in, to run down to the car and grab the 12 inch pegs.

After replacing the pegs and getting the rods back out, I returned to the comfort of my bivvy, albeit a little windswept and soaked to the core. Note to self: 'As a Seasoned Angler keep long pegs with you at all times'!

Sometimes in these situations, it's so easy just to sit back and not get the rods back out onto their spots. But effort equals reward, and by making your bank time count, is to me, what it's all about. This proved to be the case, just as first light began to creep in. With my middle rod releasing just a couple of small beeps, my bobbin lifted slowly but only slightly then holding firm in its place.

I quickly lifted the rod and soon found myself attached to my 2nd of the trip. A slow battle entailed with the fish holding deep. However, I soon managed to gain the upper hand and as its flank broke the surface, I knew that this Carp was of a better stamp.

With everything going to plan and the scales zeroed, the needle finally stopped dead at 26lb 2oz. The down-

fall of this immaculate Mirror, being the same as the previous, 'Baitworks' 15mm 'Monster Red' bottom bait wrapped in paste.

With my left hand rod fishing only a couple rod lengths away, I decided not to put the rod back out and wait till a little later, so as not to disturb the

water. After all, I couldn't complain. Two fish in under 36 hours in some pretty horrendous conditions. What a result!

By mid morning the wind was slowly starting to ease and with no more signs or indications, I decided to pull my two remaining rods in and go





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down to the shower block for that much needed refresh, as well as to grab some supplies from the car.

Feeling half human again, I was eager to get the rods back out onto the same spots, with only one small change. My left hand rod baited with 'Baitworks' 'Monster Red' Round Wafter changed to a Barrel....

After letting the lines settle for 20 mins or so, I clipped on the bobbins and sank back into my chair, with a piping hot brew in hand.

I must have dozed off briefly in my chair after finishing my brew, as the next thing I was aware of was my receiver going into full meltdown which certainly brought me back to my senses.

With the rods only being back out for around two hours, I was over the moon, when I found myself attached to my 3rd Carp of the trip, especially as it was on the rod I had recently made the subtle change on, in the shape of the Wafter.

With the fish now on the unhooking mat, I pulled back the sling to see yet another stunningly chunky, 23lb 2oz Mirror staring back at me.

With everything sorted and back out and with a nice stir fry on the go. It was time to sit back, enjoy the

beautiful sunset in the sanctuary of my surroundings after a very successful day.

But little did I know that the very next day was going to follow in a very similar vein!

After a very cold night, that dropped just below zero, with not even the slightest signs of life. I was yet again surprised when the left hand rod burst into overdrive, at just past 8am...

This fish was certainly more lively than any of my previous captures and after trying to snag me in the left hand margin a few times, I finally scooped up my reward. Another Winter Mirror Carp at just under 28lb, with 'Baitworks' 'Monster Red' Barrel Wafter doing another bite.

With the rod back out yet again and a Chocolate Porridge consumed (what is that all about)? I tied up a few more of my simple Wafter Rigs, ready for a little more action. Anyone who knows me and has read my previous articles, knows I like to keep things simple.

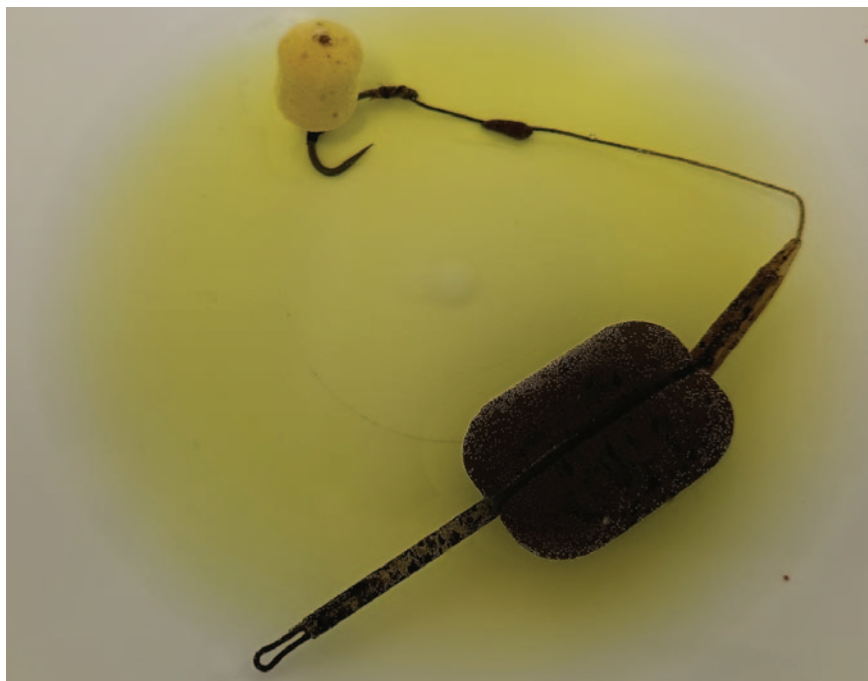
My go to Wafter Rig consists of a



'Terminal Tackle' Size 6 Snag Curved Hook with a Coated Braid, slightly stripped back, incorporating an Anti-tangle Sleeve with a figure of 8 Loop Knot. I like to use a Micro Swivel on the hook with a Hook Bead, as I prefer to attach my baits in this way, with the floss and lighter blobbed method.

It was just before 1pm that my middle rod, armed with the 'Monster Red' Hard Bottom Hookbait, wrapped in Paste sprang into life once again. Straight away I knew it wasn't as big as this morning's capture, but nonetheless it was the 5th fish of the trip and another Mirror of 18lb 4oz. Another small change had paid off as I'd dropped it a little shorter of the far margin, as I'd seen a couple signs of the odd fish moving through.





Just shortly after, the silence was shattered as I was in again, and this time it was on my left hand rod, which was baited with the 'Monster Red' 'Barrel' Waffer. Another strange bite with very little indication or movement. Again a bite, I genuinely believe that I would have missed, if I'd been zipped up in my bivvy, watching movies.

After a quick back and forth the fish was netted, weighed and photographed and a Common of 24lb 4oz was added to my 'Carp' Journal....

Going into my final night, I couldn't have been more ecstatic to have opened up 'The New Chapter' in my Angling, using 'Baitworks'. My confidence was certainly flying high!

The night passed by uneventfully and even though I had told Emma I'd get some rest, me being me, I couldn't quite do it, lol.

As I had to be off the swim by lunch time the next day, I wanted to push those final hours.

Just after 5am, I spread a small handful of Pellets with a dozen or so broken 'Monster Red' and 'CreAmino' over each spot, so as to get some liquids moving through the layers, for that one final push.

Out of nowhere, at around 7am, I was in again. Sadly the joy was short lived as after a few minutes this fish had got the better of me. Oh, the highs and lows of fishing.

I quickly got the rod back out and with another coffee devoured I car-

ried on with my slow pack down.

With just the bivvy and the rods left to go, the forecasters yet again got it wrong and after drying everything off all morning, that was all to be undone in about 10 mins with a couple of 'Mother Nature's' finest downpours.

With 30 minutes left till I had to be off to allow the weekend Anglers in, I genuinely thought it was game over.

But this trip had one final twist! Soon I had my 7th and final fish of

the trip, netted and photographed. A lovely Mirror at 22lb.

To say I was "like the cat that got the cream", would be an understatement. What a trip, what an accomplishment. I couldn't quite believe!

The weather conditions were certainly not prime for a bite and temperatures were definitely against me. But to land 7 fish in under 4 days. 5 being over 20lb in the middle of December, was definitely a result!

'Effort' certainly does equal 'Reward'. With topping up small amounts of bait during the hours of darkness and being up for first light everyday, in my opinion it certainly pays dividends.

I never have my door down so I can constantly watch the water. Yes, at times my family and friends think I'm mad, and sometimes I probably agree. But at the end of the day, if I'm not going to fish as hard as I can, I might as well be sat at home with my feet up watching TV in the warm.

With such a great start on the 'Baitworks' range.

Was it a fluke?

I can safely say it wasn't! As you will find out in Par...

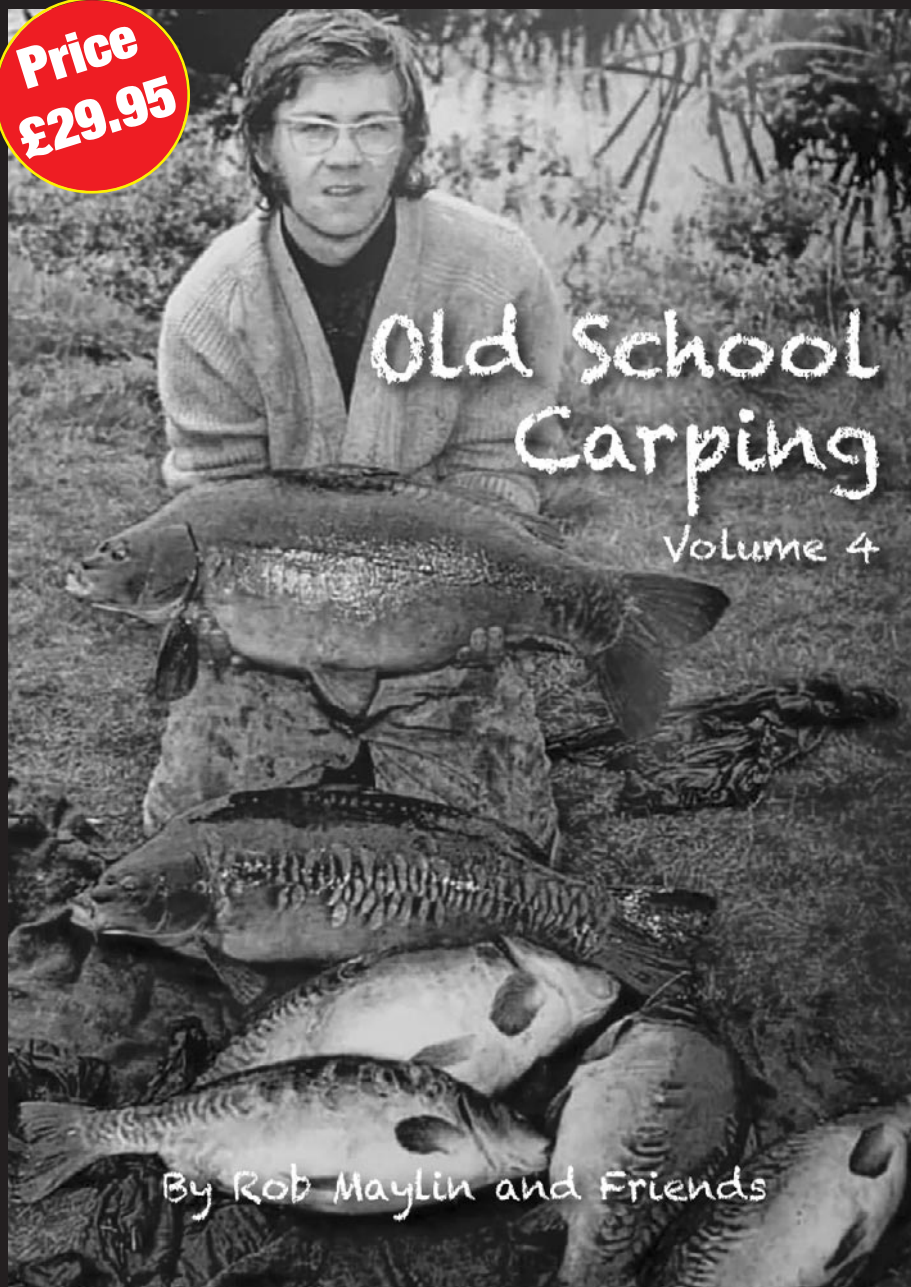
Thanks for reading and I hope you enjoyed it. Be lucky, and as we say at 'Obsession Carp', "Believe in your Dreams!

Tight Lines, Mark Rose ■



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

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

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

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

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

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

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Close up Close in

By Mike Madeley

I enjoy fishing smaller intimate lakes, to be honest they make you think a bit more as there's a lot to take into consideration and being stealthy as possible is one and im not!

Carp can be easily spooked in small bodies of water so trying to keep the noise down and keeping back when walking to the swim can help, especially if there in the vicinity.

Sometimes you may have to pre book swims in fact this pre booking swims is getting quite popular and this was what i had to do on this particular session this meant that stalking unless within your own boundaries was limited.

Now that i was in my swim, it was a matter of sit back and look for potential areas where Carp might visit, potential areas i was interested in were over hanging trees, Lilly pads, cut ins etc. I had a small island with a

decent over hang that looked no more than 15ft away, until I viewed it from the other bank and it looked at least 30-35 yds very deceiving indeed but within catapult range.

Due to it being a 2 rod limit I hatched a plan to cover areas that looked promising., before anything else I rigged up an Enterprise Plum Ezz float on the spod rod so I could find the depths quickly and quietly as possible causing very little disturbance. It's also a good way to find drop offs. Depths were around 6-7ft and the lake bed was quite uniform and seemed a good shout for a stiff hinge rig.

I set up the bivvy as far back into the swim as possible, being wary that it was also not going to obstruct casting. And got the barrow un loaded and gear in place.

The Stiff Hinge is my favourite pop up rig with its re-set capabilities if







coots or smaller nuisance fish start having a go.. The boom and D Section are made from Katran's Fantom Fluro-carbon, i find it really nice to work with and it knots down nice and small this is used in conjunction with Katran's Enduro braid, this formulates the hinge. Your probably saying "Ronnie" however I believe the braid hinge reacts better than a swivel, and making a Ronnie doesn't give me the satisfaction. Anyway, I use a size 4 Curve with an RG Baits 13.5mm pop up this time I tied on a lovely Seapex pop up.

Now this will be a shocker I had on my spools the latest 25lb Katran Crypton line, everyone sinks their lines on this particular lake, but buck the trend I was fishing a tight line to the left of the Island under the overhang. Just before I carry on, a little bit about Crypton line, it uses light refraction technology, it has a Chameleon effect to it whereby it will change colour depending on the light.(near enough) and as you no doubt already know, shine the Katran Blue headtorch on this line at night, the days of not knowing where the line actually is are over!

Lead wise instead of using Dumpy pears I was using the Stone leads from Riverside leads. They are as described and the thought process

was, they would look a bit more natural in these surroundings. A very quirky well- made lead from Riverside.

I set my 2 rods well back so that the tips were not overhanging the edge of the swim (The Carp know the shadows) and I knew they were in a good position, I knew the rigs would be presented perfectly so sat on my hands.I like to fish with the tips up to keep line out the water and a tight line to the lead.

As time passed, I started to introduce bait little and often, to be honest not a lot was in my favour weather wise, strong easterly cold wind, heavy rain with a helping of hailstones but always confident.

Just as I was making a brew the left-hand rod showed a little drop back followed by a nice steady peel of line. I lifted into a nice steady carp and once in the net a stunning Mirror.

That was it for the session and I was very pleased with how everything went...Close in fishing has a lot of rewards and I think a lot of anglers do say, the smaller the venue the harder it can be!

Mike Madeley, Member of the BCSG, International Consultant Katran line, Consultant Enterprise Tackle/ Riverside leads, Consultant Fishguard Fishing. ■

Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



A busy 24 hour ticket on Oak Lake the day ticket lake for one angler including two carp over 30lbs.



34lbs 12oz out of Pipe lake Cracker.



26lbs 3oz carp from day ticket lake. It's fishing really well at the moment should be a good spring into summer season.



36lb 6oz for Buddha fishing on Pipe lake. He looks very happy. Great fish too.



Cracker of a mirror carp from the day ticket lake at 20lbs 6oz.



19lbs 4oz catch for Stuart Palmer on Pipe lake. Nice carp.



Cracking 35lb 10oz catch on Pipe Lake, first time this beauty has been recorded as caught since 2020. Worth the four year wait for sure.



Dan Bull has kindly sent us photos of catches from a recent visit on day ticket lake. Nice fish biggest was 29lb 5oz. Nice photos.



Nice 21lb common from the day ticket lake.

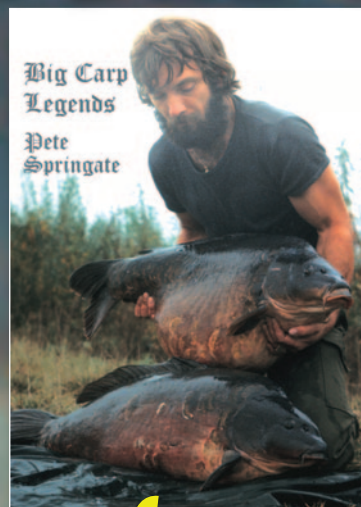
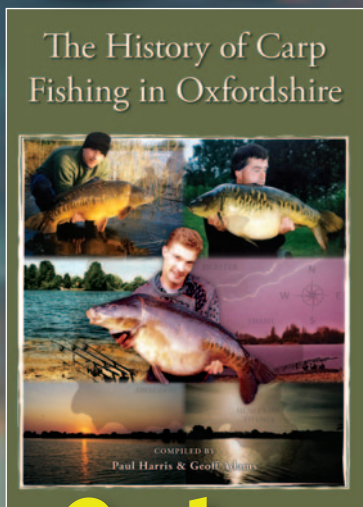


41lbs bang on Twisted Scale landed by John Newman on Pipe lake this morning. Cracker!

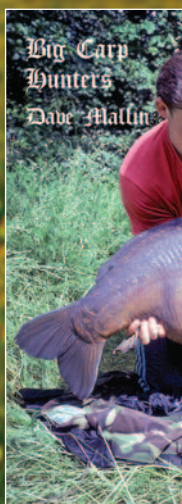
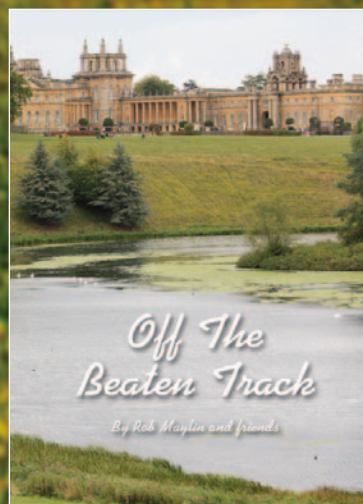
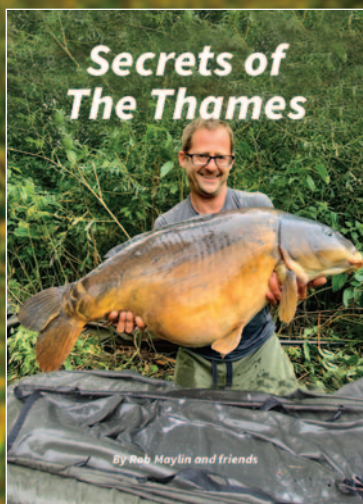
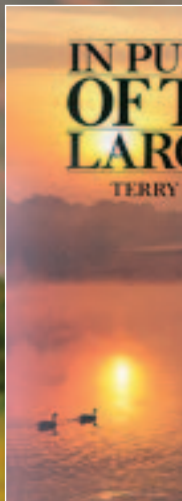
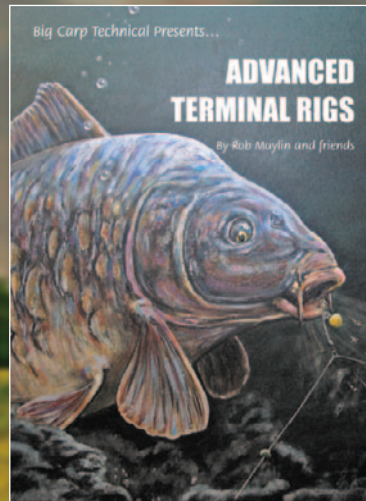
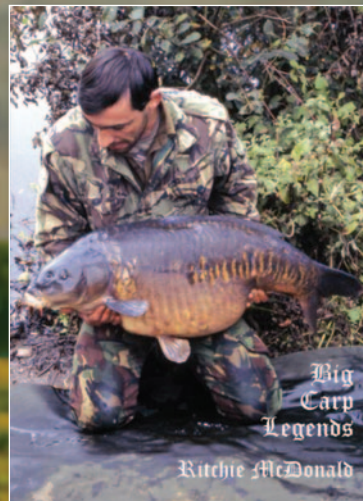


Nice carp for young Frank.

SPRING INT

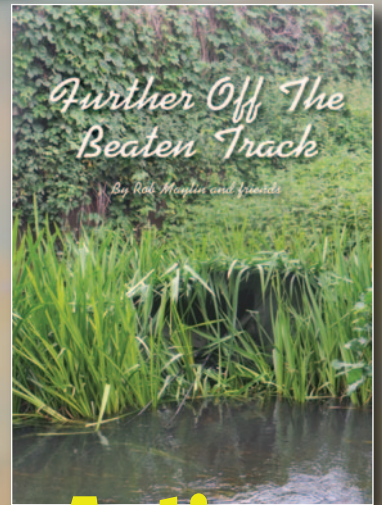
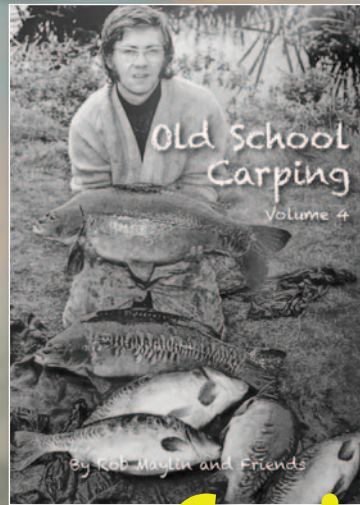
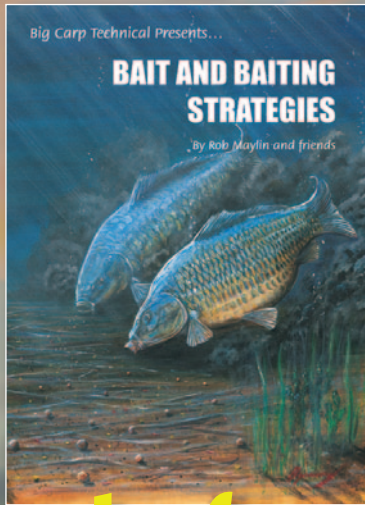


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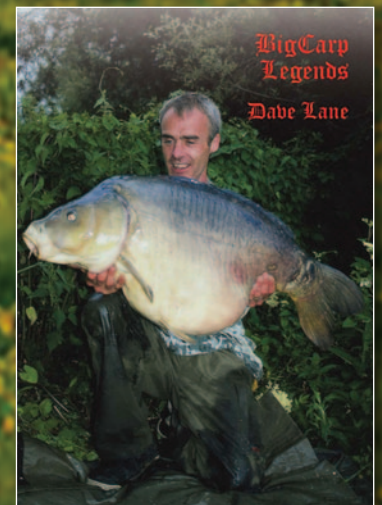
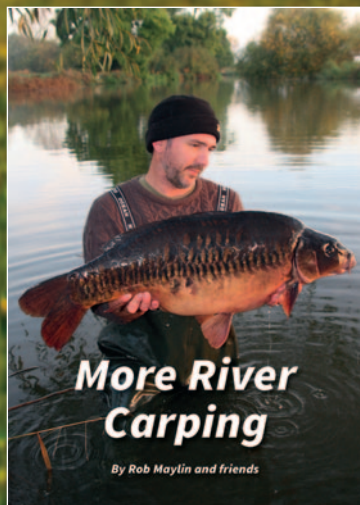
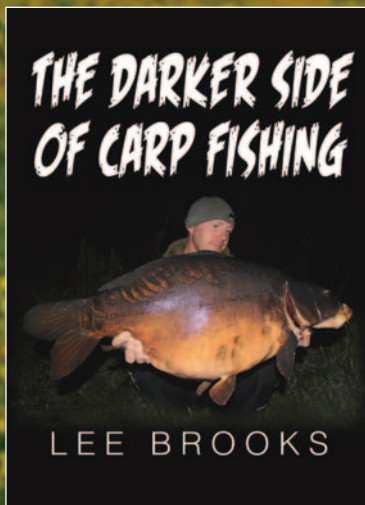
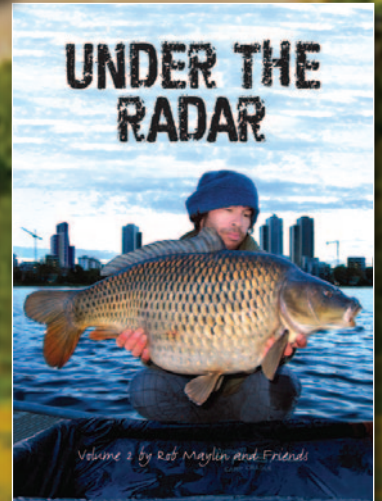
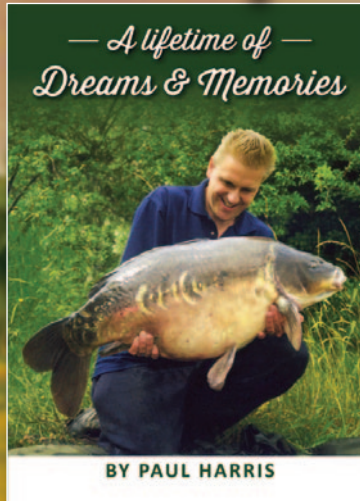
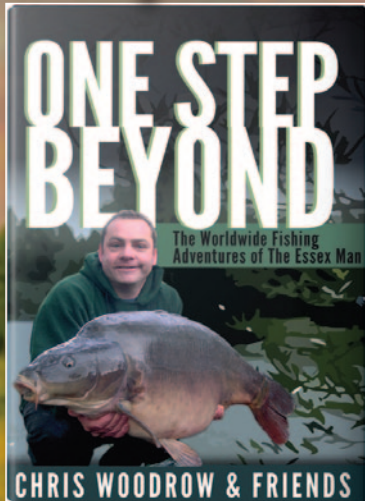


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The Carp4Kids Academy 2024

TACKLE BOXES NOT XBOXES by Rod Bird

What's it all about!

At the Carp4kids Academy, our aim is to ensure the future of carp fishing in the UK, by training carp mad kids between 5 and 15 years old to fish for carp safely and confidently, understanding fish safety, watercraft, bait application, bait rolling, rig mechanics and much more, but most importantly to have fun doing it.

The kids bring a parent with them, who are encouraged to join in the lessons and fish after the lessons each day, a perfect chance to bond whilst enjoying the event. You'd be amazed how much the parents enjoy the event, and they learn a lot too, the parents can also stay in their swim and fish all day if they like (a little bit of me time). If their parents don't fish, or are not overly confident, that's not an issue as the whole team are available after the lessons to spend time with anyone who needs it, we want you to catch carp, simple, and we will do everything in our power to help you do that, we already know the kids will catch carp!

We supply all meals, from a Full



Fried Breakfast, Packed Lunch, Evening Meal, drinks and snacks, all in your swim, more time for fishing. But if you feel hungry there is an onsite café.

We will supply a place to shower and there's toilets for you all, ensuring that pesky carp smell can be washed off, but let's face it, carp smell.....it's a badge of honour.

The lessons are conducted professionally with a lot of information and demonstrations, with the emphasis on getting the kids involved, we encourage talking, asking questions and every lesson has practical parts, from casting to using Bait Boats. Each lesson is usually planned for about 90 minutes, however they generally go over that, as the kids are lov-





ing life, enjoying using items of tackle that they have never seen before, or tying their own rigs, hey, the lesson finishes when the kids say so, but remember, as soon as the lessons are finished you all get the rods out for the night. We also give out the lesson plans so if things get a bit side tracked during the lessons (we have rods in the water during the lessons, so you never know when the alarm is going to scream off) you will still have the all the information to take away.

During some of the afternoons, we will have Guest Speakers and fun and games with prizes. The instructor's fish at night also, so we are never far away from the kids, and a film crew will be in attendance for the whole event, check out last year's video on YouTube (Carp4Kids Academy 2023 S&R Fishery Lillian May)

This year's event runs from Monday 5th August to Friday 9th of August, and is being held this year at Windsorview Lakes <https://windsorviewlakes.co.uk>

A little back story

The Carp4Kids Academy started back in 2021, with the idea being to give something back to carp fishing, and more importantly to ensure the future of our beloved sport.

The inaugural event was held at S&R Fisheries on the Sandpit Lake in August 2021, with a few carp anglers wanting to run an event that would encourage young anglers to attend an event that was just for them. The event was a complete success, so it was decided to do it all again in 2022.

My first event was in August 2022, once again at the S&R Fisheries Sandpit Lake, I didn't really know what to expect or what my role would be at the event, but it soon became clear that I was needed as an instructor, I already had my Angling Tutor Certificates so this was not an issue for me, and those that know me, know how passionate I am about my angling. That year I didn't get involved with any of the planning or





fundraising for the event, I just had to turn up on the Sunday before the Monday kick-off. The event was fantastic, all the kids and their parents enjoyed the lessons and the fishing, with loads of carp being landed. On the Friday afternoon, once all the kids and parents had gone home, tired and happy, I was asked if I would like to become a permanent member of the team, I of course said that I would love too.

I was asked if I would take over the social media for the Academy as a side roll, to revamp things a bit. I was already pretty good with social media, as at the time I was still the Customer Services Manager at Sonik Sports, and I was also running my own Angling page on Facebook, so it wasn't too much of an effort to get

things moving, with my understanding of trends etc.

It was also decided that I would be one of the main instructors from now on, with Miranda Brown being the other one, who has a wealth of angling knowledge, and with both of us fishing a lot, and competing to a very high standard, we were up to date with the current scene, understanding what anglers want to use, what rigs are the most popular amongst other trends.

John Glasscoe is our Chairman, with Shell Marriot as Secretary and Dicky Barton as Head of Administration, all great anglers in their own right. All of us are either serving or veterans of the Armed Forces, so you know that the

organisation is going to be on point. We also have Carp4Kids Ambassadors in the shape of Barney Ward and Mason Glasscoe, with Barney being promoted to Junior Instructor for this year's event.

We go from strength to strength, if you want to attend this year, please email carp4ourkids@gmail.com or check us out on Facebook and Instagram: The Carp4Kids Academy.

"Tackle Boxes Not Xboxes". ■

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The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

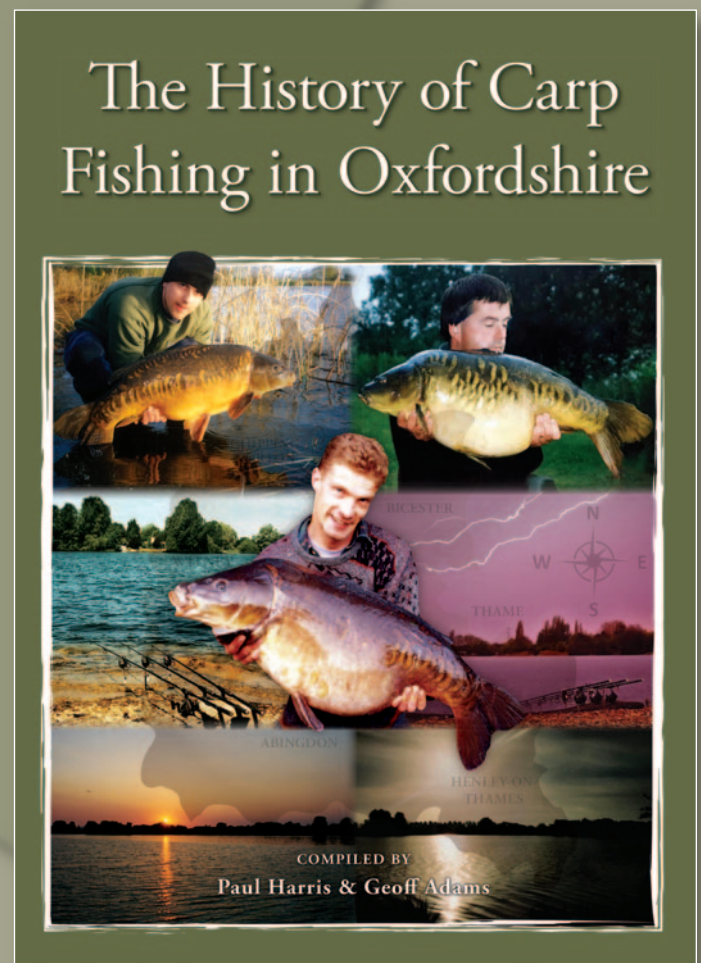
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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AVAILABLE THIS AUTUMN

EXCLUSIVE Wonderful Winter Time



WONDERFUL WINTER TIME

by Carl Udry

I collected my new winter ticket on the first Saturday of November. I had fished the lake once before, during a spring social six months previously, so it wasn't a completely new lake to me. However, on that first trip, I pulled a swim out the hat and was rooted for 48 hours. Inevitably, I didn't get much of a picture as to what the lake was really like.

On my first visit back, after a few initial flicks around with my marker, it was clear the 15 acre lake still had a significant amount of dead, thick rafts of weed lying on the lakebed. It was really dense in places and hard to gauge the depth of it, with no drop being felt back through the marker at all. Other areas, not so dense, were slightly easier to gain a feel for the thickness of it. I also found some really blatant clear spots relatively easily, at the expected 60-80 yards in front of a handful of the swims. Most likely common summer/autumn areas within an easy cast.

I spent most of that first day concentrating on locating smaller silt spots within the dense weed, where I had seen surface signs of carp. On that first Saturday, during the daytime, the carp were really obliging and they were not localised either. My plan was

to only fish 24 hours that first weekend, as I had to drop back on to my main venue the following day for some filming with Speero. That first night I opted for a peg that gave me a fantastic view of around 60% of the lake. It was well lit up by a backdrop of industrial buildings. Alas, nothing was caught that first night, but lots of invaluable information had been collected and logged away, ready for my next trip.

After 48 hours on my main venue, filming completed and I'd had a carp

to boot, I did pop back in to do a little more markering. Both ends of the lake offered different average depths. I focused on markering two centrally located swims where I could have options of presenting baits at different depths. Again, I was trying to pinpoint those smaller spots amongst the dormant, dead, weed beds. Once I located those spots, I decided to start trickling in the bait little and often. In the winter particularly, I spend extra time ensuring my spod rod is clipped



up perfectly, just past the marker float. It's worth the extra effort so that during future trips, no marker rod was needed. The far bank tree line marks were also noted to ensure accuracy. I'm always feeling mega confident then that the bait is bang on the spot.

I found five decent spots in total during 3-4 hours of marking - all offering depths of between 8 to 13ft. Three of the five spots had a lovely amount of silt and weed, but all five were fairly small with no gravel. Although I now had spots recorded in my phone for several swims, I opted to start trickling bait in to the central areas. Only two medium Spombs per spot to start with, just enough to tempt a bite.

With no nuisance fish or 'ronnie and reggie's' (crayfish) present, I didn't feel any limitation as to what my bait choice was going to be. When I use any bait, I need to feel like I have something the carp will crave - almost impossible for them to ignore. This winter I decided to put my faith in Handcraft Baits' 'Herb'. 'Carp don't eat fishmeal in the winter', apparently. Hmmm, I went on to find out they like the Herb, a pure fishmeal boilie, that's for sure.

My mix had been roughly 80% fresh Herb boilies put through a crusher, so it was in very small chops/shavings and crumb. Then 20% washed-out whole 14mm Herb boilies and 4mm carp pellets were added. It was then all hydrated with a decent dollop of Herb Primer. It smelt and looked very carpy!





This will most definitely be a mix I plan to use throughout the year. To make my frequent and often bait ups easier, I made up batches of the mix in 2kg freezer bags. It was then a case of taking a bag from the freezer 24hrs earlier, and away I went the following day.

My confidence with all my early winter preparation was complete, however, the early winter weather had plans of its own. Endless torrential rain caused flooding, including access to/from the venue and then a period

of sustained arctic air temperatures caused the whole lake to freeze solid. Thankfully I hadn't committed too much bait at that point, but just before it froze over I did double up to four Spombs per spot in that central zone, so I knew I had introduced some food under the now 1 inch thick, frozen lid.

The ice remained present for around 7-10 days, until a period of milder, wet and windy conditions were forecast and the lake was soon wobbling again. Unfortunately water temperatures were

now significantly colder than the outside air, so I was pretty shocked to locate signs of the carp pretty quickly. What was really satisfying was a couple of those positive sightings were over the central zone I'd been baiting. They were also elsewhere, but I noticed the activity was greater to two particular areas.

In the winter, when the water is gin clear, pinning down my fluorocarbon to the lake bed is paramount. When presenting small visual pop ups, a critically-balanced, multi-hinged rig



was my go to set-up. My multi-rig is made up of 6" of Gardner Tackle (GT) Ultrasink 25lb natural silt boom, to a size 4 GT BCR Rigga hook on 2" of 15lb GT Trip Wire. This is paired up with a helicopter arrangement on a short section of GT Camflex Leadfree Leader.

Baiting application remained little and often, but accurate and tight to my chosen spots. It was now early January and despite the endless amounts of rain, I was committed to baiting up with the two Spombs per spot, every 2-3 days. I always did it just after dark, to avoid drawing the bird life's attention to the area. They'd be ravenous if they could locate free food and my plan would be ruined.

After a couple more sessions of baiting up, I felt it was time to actually fish. January to early February was really kind to me. A cool mid 20, was the first one on the mat quickly followed a couple of hours later by another. That started to unlock the little run of luck I was about to have. The next trip I was rewarded with a 36lb 10oz mirror. A very welcome

capture it was too, during my little winter run. My short multi-hinged rig with a small match the hatch pop up doing the job perfectly. This carp was laced in leaches (that I removed and treated) and was like holding a block of ice.

The 9th February brought the last of my 7 fish hit in 6 weeks. It resulted in the largest carp of them all too. Considering how cold the water was, this one gave me a right tussle and it had no intention of making life easy. When it finally surfaced, and rolled over the net cord. I could tell it was 40+. It did indeed spin the scales round to 42lb 8oz.

All in all, we all know it's been a ridiculously wet winter. I spent more time in waders this year than in recent ones. But, I was patient, persevered and by being consistently accurate, ultimately it resulted in bites and carp or two on the mat.

Be lucky,

Carl.





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Got a world famous journalist booked in for a feature article with a worldwide audience. Magazine articles, a podcast a Youtube video and featured chapters in two Thames' books. Thank you for all the support from my family and friends, plus all the new friends I've made along the way.

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As summer draws near and slots fill up quickly, now is the perfect time to secure your place! If you've expressed interest or made inquiries, don't hesitate to reach out to me directly. We have availability from early August all the way through to Christmas, so there's plenty of opportunities to embark on your fishing journey with us. Don't let this chance slip away – join us for a fishing trip of a lifetime and create memories that will last forever!

Dan Lantz



Thames warrior experience

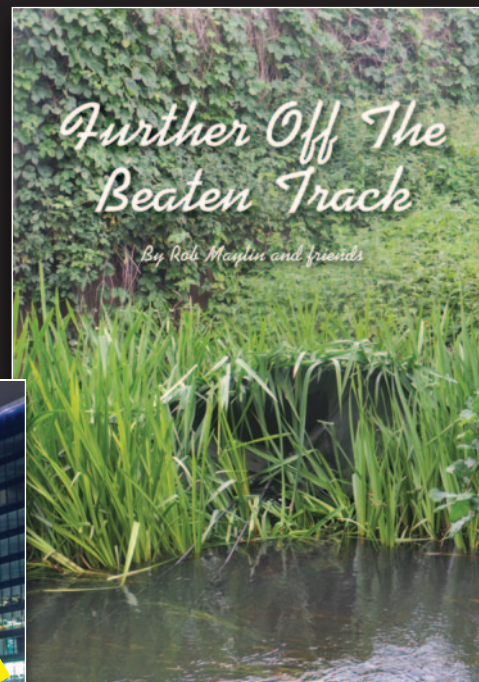
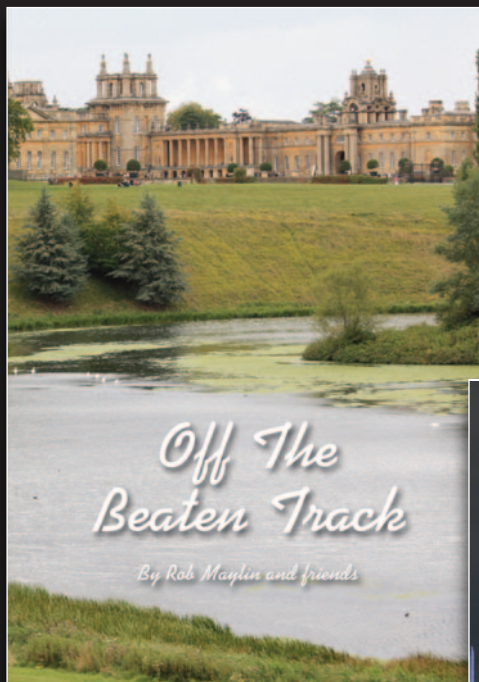


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By Rob Maylin and friends



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

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

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

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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Also available this month,
Big Carp Issue 334
Miss it and miss out!

The Legacy Young Angler Support - Dylan Harvey



The world has changed since I started fishing.... and those that donate, support and therefore help drive this initiative, are also 'older'...because we see the value. When I was a kid, it did not 'cost' anything to be 'part' of a group or organisation. But today - it does.

But the Legacy Project Young Angler Support costs nothing.

We, through donation, provide 'tackle, baits, reels - rods, barrows and boats' (almost sound like Mark Pitchers on his Challenge videos...!!)....

But these are donated and allocated to our young anglers - for FREE.

There is no 'price to pay' when you support the TC Conservation Group - The Legacy Project - even our mugs and stickers are sent out FREE of charge.

Enjoy being part of a 'principal'... help create exactly what the Legacy Project is designed to do...

Which is to preserve the values and principals of angling - the values that protect and conserve the Flora and Fauna that we as anglers, value so much.

We are supported by a number of local and national organisations - advice and where to fish are very common questions.

Due to the quality of our supporting organisations - our recommendations are a very easy decision to the young anglers we support.

Another great day of supporting our young anglers

TC Conservation Group - The Legacy Project and its initiative Legacy Project Young Angler Support providing equipment and advice for FREE.



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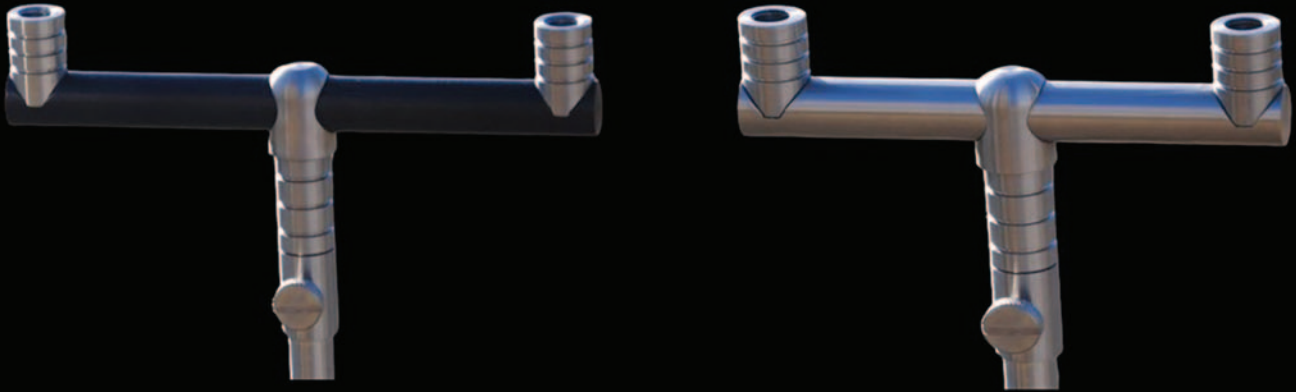
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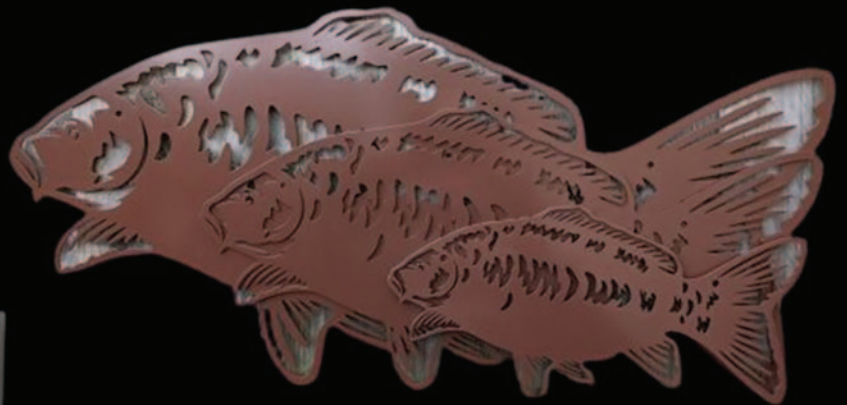
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Angling Trust wins new contract to grow fishing and support grassroots clubs and fisheries

The Angling Trust has today been awarded a new four-year National Angling Strategic Services contract (NASS3) by the Environment Agency following a competitive procurement process.

The new contract will commence on the 1st April 2024 and will run for four years during which the Angling Trust will be focussed upon the following key areas of work, which will be funded by rod licence money: Introduce more people to fishing to ensure our sport grows and flourishes and more people enjoy the health and well-being benefits that angling brings.

Provide expert advice to grassroots clubs and fisheries on club management and growth, protecting fisheries from predation, improving biosecurity, and issues around invasive species.

Administer a project fund to support the development of clubs around the country. Build effective enforcement partnerships with the police, angling clubs and fishery owners through the Voluntary Bailiff Service and Building Bridges project.

Jamie Cook, Chief Executive of the Angling Trust, said: "All anglers who buy a fishing rod licence deserve to have clarity on where that money is being spent and how it is impacting fish and fishing.

As a not-for-profit organisation and the national governing body for fishing, the Angling Trust is focused upon re-investing licence money back into grass roots angling.

"We are delighted to be able to extend our partnership with hundreds of community clubs, coaches and fisheries across England, channelling resources to where they can have the greatest impact and get more people fishing more often.

This contract will provide new resource for our incredible Reel Education programme which is taking angling into schools as part of the National Curriculum and creating a desire to try fishing in previously untapped communities.

"Our national club network and the volunteers who run them are the lifeblood of our sport.

We will therefore provide a much greater emphasis on clubs and fisheries, providing more professional support and funding opportunities to help them operate more effectively, deliver better fisheries management, and create real and lasting pathways into angling.

"The funding from this new contract will also allow for the doubling of the national voluntary bailiff network to help clubs and fisheries protect their waters from poaching and fish theft as well as resource to train

police forces nationwide on fisheries crime and prevention alongside EA enforcement staff.

"I firmly believe that as an organisation run by anglers for anglers, we are best placed to use this small portion of the overall rod licence income for the benefit of fish and fishing.

However, it does not prevent us holding the EA to account when necessary.

That's been the case many times in recent years where we have tackled the Agency on a number of issues, including pollution, over abstraction and habitat destruction, and our sister organisation Fish Legal have taken the EA to court on behalf of ourselves and our member clubs and fisheries.

"The current National Angling Strategic Services contract is due to end on 31st March 2024 and the new contract will be on a rolling 12-month basis for a maximum of four years, with £1.77 million of rod licence income being invested in the first year.

The NASS3 contract has a participation target in year 1 of engaging with 37,000 people and aims to increase the number of volunteer bailiffs to 1,400 after four years.

The contract builds on nine years of partnership work between the EA and Angling Trust which has seen a wide range of initiatives introduced such as the nationally recognised Get Fishing awards, the Voluntary Bailiff Service and the Angling Improvement Fund (AIF) which have helped to protect fisheries and promote the sport of angling throughout England.

Heidi Stone, Fisheries Manager from the Environment Agency, said: "Our partnership with the Angling Trust has been a key asset in bettering our fisheries across the UK and improving the sport of angling for existing and new anglers.

"We are delighted to award the Angling Trust with this contract, so we can build on our previous successes and secure the best future for angling by making fishing licence income go further." ■



Introducing newcomers to angling at a Get Fishing event, funded by fishing licence income in partnership with the Environment Agency.

Northern Ireland Carp Anglers Association **2023-24 Season**

As we come into the final weeks of our 2023-24 season, I thought I would do a quick update for our followers on what's been going on.

At the start of the season, we had JS fisheries across from England to net Milllodge which was a real eye opener and through up a few surprises.

We carried out another major stocking at our newest venue Tildarg which is growing from strength to strength and the fish are growing beyond what we ever expected. We have already seen 20lb+ fish on the

bank. This venue is going to be something very special in the future.

During the season we held a few matches which were fantastic craic including a pike match during the winter and we hope to carry this on next year.

We have carried out lots of significant infrastructure improvements across all 5 venues with a new carpark at Brookhall, new bridge and grills and all of the swims replaced at Glenvale, new swims on swanhole and swims at Tildarg.

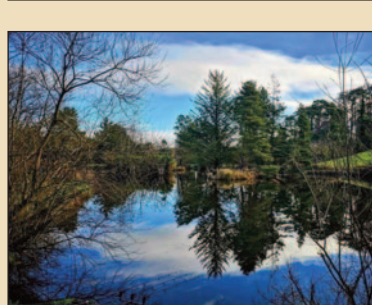
The new season 2024-25 will see

work start on Mill lodge where we have big plans.

The fishing has improved year on year and again we have seen hundreds of fish caught, loads of new personal bests for our members and lots of lake records being broken and probably more important, lots of people getting involved in carp angling of all ages.

With the winter being so mild this year the carp have definitely been on the move and they are feeding with some amazing fish being out already in 2024. ■

Few pictures from 2023-24



Do you remember your first few years of fishing?

The excitement, saving up your pocket money for tackle, going on adventures with friends?

Through our Get Fishing programme, Angling Trust introduces thousands of young people to angling every year.

Help us inspire the next generation to get out there and fish – join the Angling Trust today.

Your Membership will also support our work to:

- Help us fight pollution through our Anglers Against Pollution campaign and the work of Fish Legal
- Support our work to lobby Government on environmental issues



- Fight angling bans
- Introduce more people to our wonderful sport
- Promote the mental health and wellbeing benefits of angling
- Support grass roots angling clubs
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Your Membership will provide you with:

- Exclusive discounts on a wide range of fishing tackle, bait and much more
- Public liability insurance while you are fishing
- 10% discount at fisheries around

the country

- Access to fishing matches run by the Angling Trust
 - Quality annual magazine
 - Regular newsletters and updates
- Adult membership is just £30* for a whole year, senior citizen membership £26* And if you would like the youngsters in your life to be members too that Junior membership is FREE!

Please note – if the child involved is under 13 years of age you will need to contact the Membership team on 0343 507 7006 to give your consent and to add them to our records. ■

The Kracking Re-Opens For Exclusive Bookings



We are now taking bookings for exclusive fishing on the Kracking Carp Lake. This lake is home to some of Devon's biggest Carp!!

From the 1st of March bookings will run from midday Friday to midday Sunday, and midday Monday to midday Thursday.

Bookings are £250 for up to four anglers. All anglers will be vetted prior to the booking being confirmed (18+ only). Normal fishery rules apply.

We are taking bookings NOW from March to and including December by phone only 'strictly' during office hours 9am-4.30pm – TEL. 01409 221559. Do NOT call out of these hours

BOOK AS SOON AS YOU CAN to avoid disappointment!

Xanadu, Speci Cat, Fat Boys and the Trout Lake also reopen for day ticket fishing from the 01st of March. (More details to follow tomorrow).

Thank you for your patience whilst improvements have been made to the otter fence.

We look forward to seeing you soon.. ■



We need your help

Would you like to help raise money for charity? Well now is your chance! East Northants Fishing is holding a 48hr carp fishing match this year (dates to be announced soon) and we need your help to raise as much money as we can.

If you would like to donate prizes, sponsor the match/trophies or just donate to our chosen charity Cancer Research UK. please contact us via our Facebook page or by phoning Ricki Stokes on 07787522264.

Please could you like and share this post to anyone you think would be interested. Thank you from the East Northants Fishing. ■

UK COMMON CARP RECORD SMASHED BY KIERAN DUFF



**INCREDIBLE
66lb 8oz
COMMON
NAILED ON
RIGWORX
X RANGE
BEAKED
WIDE GAPE
HOOK**



Kieran made UK carp fishing history this April at Waterside Fishery in Buckinghamshire.

RIGWORX is here to provide top quality tackle at the lowest possible prices! As working class family men we know the hit your wallet can take on necessary end tackle. We've spent months sourcing end tackle at the lowest prices we can get it at, without compromising quality and reliability!



This is very important to us, which is why it has taken months to source and hand check every bit of tackle available to us to supply to our customers.

Our natural work ethic is to supply you with good quality, reliable end tackle in hope that we can build a trusting relationship with our customers in which they can rely on us for their tackle needs!

We aim to supply top quality tackle at the lowest prices without the 'Carp Tax'!

See us on Facebook  Instagram @rigworxcarptackle 

Email: rigworx@hotmail.com

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Keep Your Kit Fresh With STORM's DEO For Outdoor Gear

Perfect for outdoor
 and athletic footwear

A buildup of sweat from exertive training or getting active outdoors can leave footwear damp, stale and smelly. Restore freshness to your walking boots or training shoes with

STORM's spray-on DEO.

The easy-to-use pump spray deodoriser reduces the levels of bacteria in footwear, removing nasty odours hygienically and effectively for long-lasting freshness each time you get active.

As well as being perfect for footwear, STORM's DEO is also ideal for gloves and helmets. Shake well

and simply spray inside your item and allow to dry before use.

The DEO is available in a 300ml spray bottle for £15 or 75ml spray bottle for £7.50. ■



WOOLLY SOCK – is specially developed for use in waders

When you fish in waders with wading boots, you will easily tighten the boots hard – and then you will freeze your toes.

Our new Woolly Sock has extra width in the fore-foot – then you cannot tighten your wading boots completely tightly.

There will always be air on the outside of the sock – and therefore it is easier for you to keep warm.

If you have a wide foot, you will definitely love Woolly.

Woolly has an exceptionally high wear resistance.

They are made in New Zealand from the finest merino wool.

(For optimal comfort we recommend using Woolly in combination with a Liner Sock). ■



Woolly Sock Brown
 €34.95



Liner Sock
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Field Testers Wanted

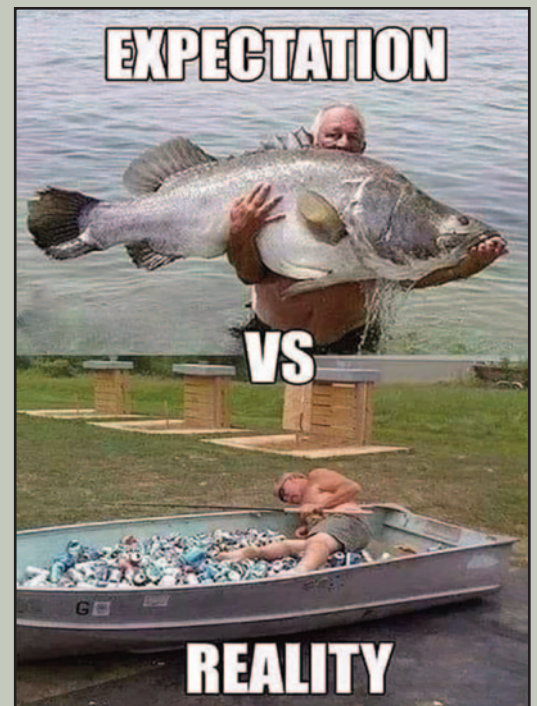
Target Baits are currently looking for new field testers to join our team. We are looking for anglers who have a genuine passion for their fishing and who want to be part of a company that puts the interest of the carp at the forefront of development. Successful applicants must have a genuine interest in new product development and ideally be able to roll their own boilies.

If you think you fit the description we would love to hear from you.

Simply contact Target Baits via email at info@targetbaits.co.uk to request an application form and for full Terms & Conditions.

Good luck!! ■

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Field Testers/Team Members Required Are you Active on social media?

Spend at least 48hrs a month on the bank?

If so here's your chance to join a professional bait company that's growing rapidly! We offer really good rates to all our field testers/ Team members. Please send us an email to kls.bait@gmail.com or drop us a Dm and we will get back to you.

KLS BAIT Join the revolution ■



KLS
B A I T

Field Tester /Team Members Required

Are you Active on social media ?
Spend at least 48hrs a month on the bank ?
If so here's your chance to join a professional bait company that's growing rapidly ! We offer really good rates to all our field testers/ Team members
Pls send us an email to kls.bait@gmail.com or drop us a Dm and we will get back to you
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Welcome to **CARP ADDICTION**

The Story so far...

Bryan and Kierran are lifelong friends with over six decades' carp fishing experience between them. They have manufactured their own baits for a combined fifty years. What started as a hobby born of necessity for quality bait, has grown into a full-blown Carp Addiction. As quality bait has become more readily available over the past fifteen years, we have concentrated increasingly on the manufacture of hook baits.

Through hours of experimentation and field testing, our catches soon proved that we have a superior quality product, one that we came under pressure to share with friends and colleagues. Their results both within the UK and abroad have been the encouragement and endorsement needed to start sharing our product more widely within the carp angling fraternity. The filthy hookerz range

of hookbaits have been specially formulated to contain palatants, attractants, amino acid profiles and in-house blended flavour combinations, these baits offer a unique composition which sets them apart from generic "off the shelf" products.

Carp addiction and the filthy hookers range was just an idea. In November 2023 we decided to give it a go with the intention of getting ready to launch the brand in spring at THE BIG ONE SHOW. It was an absolutely crazy time frame but with long nights, plenty of help and encouragement as well as hours upon hours of graft we managed to make the idea a reality.

The idea came about after we rolled a large batch off bottomed baits for ourselves and a few select friends along with matching popups. This was the lure that had us hooked upon following a dream. We know this combo is a winner but what we did not expect was the reaction these received. This ignited the whole thing.

To bring you up to date, the stand at THE BIG ONE SHOW was a great success. Carp Addiction is in its first retail outlet. The website is now up and running www.carpaddiction.co.uk so, watch out for deals and limited run special editions!! Also, watch this space because terminal tackle will be released soon!!

And finally, a big shout out Mark from AQUA LILIUM CLOTHING for all his help getting the business started.





Really excited about our first stockist and a great way for people to experience our baits first hand. Our first stockist is Jon at 'The Rig' Tackle Shop in Chelmsford. Jon has a wealth of experience and being championed by someone held in such high regard is great for us. He's on Facebook under 'The Rig' and 'Essex tackle shop' and online at www.essex-tackle-shop.com



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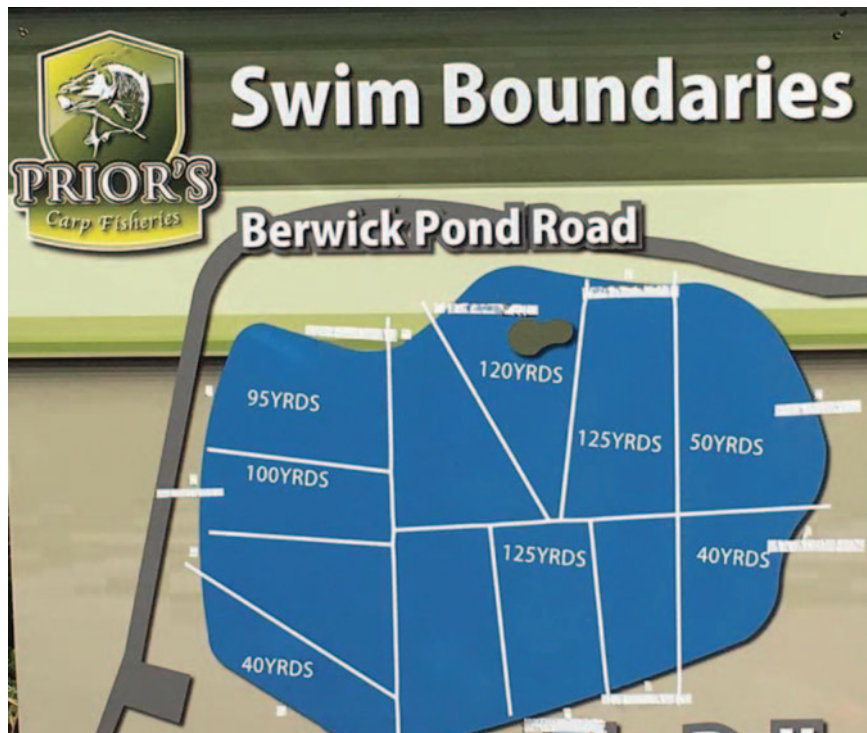
CARP ADDICTION

Syndicate Fishing

By Barry Oconnor



Over the years, Ben and I have experienced syndicate fishing on a couple of fisheries. Joining a syndicate usually means going on a waiting list until a place becomes available. When the invite to join comes, it will mean parting with a lot of hard earned cash. You can expect to pay anything from around a couple of hundred quid to in excess of a couple of thousand quid. The bigger the carp that reside in any particular syndicate lake, the more you can expect to pay. There's always a huge demand for syndicate tickets on lakes that hold big carp, hence most syndicates have waiting lists. Anyway, once you've handed over your money you're then entitled to fish the syndicate lake for twelve months. Unlike day ticket waters where courtesy often goes out of the window, you will usually find anglers are a lot friendlier on syndicate waters. This is because persistent offenders who break the rules will be expelled from the syndicate without a refund. The fishery manager and the bailiffs will keep an eye on any rule breakers and indeed so will the other members, which makes for a much friendlier fishery. What you have to be careful of when joining a syndicate is how many members are there. Some syndicate owners sell as many tickets



as they can without limit, making for a very busy fishery. It's all too late when you turn up to fish only to find all the swims are taken and when you return at a later date the same is happening. Usually in these cases refunds are not given, so beware.

This is not the case at the Dell Fishery in Essex. It's a well-run, secure fishery with an onsite fishery man-

ager. The previous fishery manager was our good friend Peter Breeze who unfortunately passed away in the prime of his life a few months before we began fishing there. We, and I'm sure many others, miss the big man greatly. Chris Allen, who incidentally was also a very good friend of Peter's, now runs the fishery and does an excellent job. The lake contains

(Top) The swims are clearly marked on this onsite map.
(Below) Coffee and chocolate – what more do you need when fishing?
(Right) These Jack Pyke smocks are the nuts.





numerous thirties and forties and a couple over fifty pounds. The swims are clearly marked, and there's an onsite map that shows the boundaries of the swims and how many yards it is to the furthest point, so no excuses. We started fishing there in April 2016 and knew very little about the lake. Like any new lake you're

about to fish, it's all a learning curve. We weren't exactly going there blind because we'd picked up some info from a couple of anglers that we know who were fishing there when we joined. Mostly though, it was going to be a trial and error start, but we were taking a wealth of carp angling knowledge with us, which hopefully

would help us out. On our first visit, we arrived early in the morning to find there weren't many other anglers about. After speaking to a couple of them, who we must say were most helpful, we settled on two swims. So how do you start? Well to be honest, fishing a syndicate water is no different to fishing anywhere else. Out went a marker, and for the next couple of hours we both mapped out our swims before even thinking of getting a rod out. Time spent with a marker is invaluable and will always pay dividends eventually.

Our approach was going to be similar to each other, which would be two rods on the bottom and one up in the water. This is a tactic we mostly adopt when going to fish a new water. It was all part of the learning curve. We had to find what worked best. We had a few tricks up our sleeves, and these would be tried as time went on. Our bottom rigs for this session would be our normal short

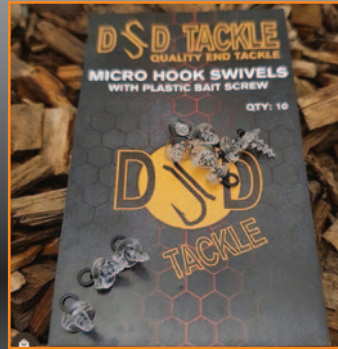
(Top) One of my first Dell carp at 13lb 8oz.

(Below) Ben's first carp from the Dell at 44lb 8oz.



DSD TACKLE

DSD Tackle is a carp fishing end tackle brand, bringing high quality end tackle at affordable prices to the market.



We have had some amazing results on our products to date, with carp to over 60lb being caught in both the UK and France.

15% Discount Code
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41lb 3oz.



The Pug, 40lb 12oz.



hooklinks with size 6 Deception hooks and 4oz leads. This setup has served us well for many years now. The zigs would be on our normal breakaway lead system. We'd been informed that Spombing worked there, so we brought plenty of spod mix with us. Once we'd found a spot to fish, the marker was clipped up and wound in. The line was then wound around our wrap sticks until it reached the clip on the reel, and the number of wraps was written down.

The rods including the Spomb rod were then wrapped at the specific number of wraps. This gave us an accurate guide to the distance we were fishing at if we needed to have a recast and also in case we had a line breakage. It's also useful if you want to fish each rod at a different distance. Trees, pylons, lights, buildings etc. are used as distant markers to aim at when casting back to the spots. All the casting and Spombing was done and the rods were on their spots, now

all we had to do was wait.

A nice cup of coffee was next up. On the point of coffee we have been asked many times where we get our in-cup coffees and chocolate drinks. These are vending machine drinks that come with milk and sugar in them. We find them very handy because we just have to add hot water. We get them from a company called A1 Coffee. You can find them on the net. Other than an aborted pick up on my zig rod, it was very quiet for both of us.

On the last morning of our first 48-hour session, I was awoken by the angler next door who told me Ben was playing one. He sure was, and what a fight he was having with it. Once it was in the net we could see it was big – in fact very big. A crowd gathered as it usually does on a syndicate water when someone catches. They all wanted a glimpse of this rather large mirror and gathered round in anticipation for the weighing of it. Ben's first carp from this lake tipped the scales at 44lb 8oz. What a way to open your account on a new water!

(Top) Orange Spot, 45lb 8oz.
(Left) Orange Spot going home.



As the year went on, we visited the Dell as much as we could between matches and other commitments and caught several carp along the way. My opening account produced a couple of small carp much to Ben's amusement. Later in the year though, I was blessed with a capture of a big carp, which according to some members had died a few years ago. Well, this carp certainly wasn't dead because it gave me one hell of a row getting it in. It was a mirror of 40lb 12oz called the Pug or something like it. Apparently it was supposed to be buried under an oak tree on site. The mind boggles! In the summer, the weed can be very abundant, and you have to fish with rigs suited to this kind of situation. A drop off lead type rig is essential if you are to have any chance of landing any carp in weedy conditions. At any good syndicate water they will have a boat for retrieving weeded fish, and the Dell is no exception. A phone call to Chris the fishery manager, and he's out in the boat in no time at all, day or night.

During the summer, we decided to do a week on the syndicate water. Unfortunately the week we chose turned out to be one the hottest weeks of the year. Undeterred by the heat, we soldiered on. I wouldn't say our hopes were high, but we felt we had a chance. Ben went in a swim on one side of the island called the Ramp, and I went in a swim on the other side of the island called funnily enough, the Island Swim. The weed was up to the surface in places although there were some areas that didn't appear to have any weed in them at all. That was until we put a marker in them and found it chocka with weed. When the weed is prolific on any lake, it pays to spend a fair bit of time finding some clear spots. We'd rather lead about with a marker float for hours if need be just to find a clear area. It gives you so much confidence when you know your presentation is spot-on and your hooklink isn't caught up on some strands of weed. Our wrap sticks are an invaluable part of our kit for our visits to the Dell, and elsewhere for that matter. There are some commercial ones you can buy,

(Top) We were topping the baits with these Icorns.

(Right) Looking out from the Island Swim.



or you can use some old banksticks or broolly poles, which will work just as well. Ben and I tend to stagger our rods if possible on the Dell, usually fishing at between twenty and twenty-five wraps. We feel this maximises our chances.

The heat was relentless, but our swims did offer us some shade, and we had a plentiful supply of cold drinks. It wasn't until the late evening as the sun was going down that I had a take – not a screaming run, but a slow pull until the bite indicator hit the alarm and then it stopped. It was a “Do I or don't I?” moment. I looked at the line and it was tight, so I lifted the rod and pulled into it. Something pulled back and a tug of war began. With so much weed about, there is always the chance the carp will get weeded up. In this instance I was lucky, and I managed to inch the carp

towards the net. It went in without any dramas, and it looked a lump as it lay in the net in the water. I got Ben round to weigh it for me. The scales settled at 42lb 10oz, which was my PB mirror, my previous one being 42lb 8oz. The fishery manager came round to see it and informed me it was a carp named Charlie's Mate. Well that was one of the A-listers chalked off. Was I pleased? What do you think? The next morning, Ben phoned to tell me he had a good one in the net. I reeled in and went round with the scales and camera. Sure enough, hovering in the net was a nice mirror. Ben had a grin on him like a Cheshire cat. The scales were zeroed and the carp was weighed. It went 45lb 8oz and was a carp known as Orange Spot. Two forties in a day and a bit can't be bad.

As is normal with any carp fishing



We're not cheap - it's everyone else that's expensive

WWW.CARPPUNK.CO.UK





Charlie's Mate at 42lb 10oz.



Pretty One, 36lb 12oz.



session, a pattern appears – whether it's day or night when the carp get caught or certain times like midday, sun up or sundown. On this session, nothing was coming out during the heat of the day, but anytime from the evening to 10am the next day we could expect a run or two. Sometimes we brought the rods in during the day to rest the swims. Throughout our session we would be Spombing and casting new baits out from around mid-afternoon in readiness for the evening. Over the course of the week we probably Spombed out around twenty kilos of Hooked On Baits spod mix each. Unbeknown to the other anglers on the Dell, we were putting maggots in our spod mix, which was definitely giving us an edge. We intended to use a lot of maggots during the winter on the Dell. Unfortunately we made the mistake of telling a friend what we were doing. Well, you can guess the rest. Now everybody uses them. Oh well, lesson learnt. The moral of the story is, if you've got an edge, keep it to yourself for as long as you can.

**(Top) Last fish of the week at 27lb 5oz just as we were packing up.
(Right) Enjoying a pint in Mango's pool.**

Our session continued, and we continued to catch. Ben ended the week with five carp, and I had six – not bad when you know the Dell is not an easy water. The last carp came to me just as we were packing up. It weighed 27lb 5oz. We thought the rules stated you could only do six days maximum in a row on the Dell and then you had to be off, so we left. We'd misread it. The rule is you must move swims. We didn't know this, and because we still had a few days

left, we headed off to Cottingham to have a go on there. When we got there we met Mango, one of the bailiffs, who lives on site and just happens to have a swimming pool in his garden. Well, what with the heat, it would have been rude not to jump in the pool, wouldn't it? He got us a nice pint of beer, and we lazed around his pool until later when it had cooled down. We set up on Pepper in the cool of the evening. How did we get on? Well, that's another story... ■



AQUA LILIUM CLOTHING

FROM THE DARK DEPTHS OF WINTER



As we break from the dark depths of winter, we quickly start to see longer daylight hours and the sun starting to warm our cheeks.

Although the banks are a lot quieter through the colder month's you can't deny it's a nice feeling to put away the winter clothing and to slip into something a bit more comfortable.

The Aqua Liliium team have already been very successful in there start of the spring campaign, with a recent trip resulting in 7 takes.

Consultant Steven Quinn travelling light and casting to showing fish, managed to land 3 fish all around the mid-20 range.

The fun did not stop there with Aqua Liliium owner Mark Quinn fishing over a handful of bait, managed a stunning brace of 30s one of each.

A beautiful common started of proceedings followed by a 20-pound mirror in the early hours. Mark was then woken up by the alarm one toning at first light and



A FEW RECENT CATCHES





after a short battle the line unfortunately fell slack with the fish doing the off. Why does it always seem like the ones you lose feel enormous. Oh well you can't win them all lol.

The rig was put back on the spot and 3 hours had passed before the rod was away again, an unbelievable battle took place and it felt like an eternity had passed but lady luck was on my side and a big, framed mirror was sulking in the bottom of the net.

We are lucky that the venue we fish allow dogs on site and this happened to be my dog Fudge first encounter with a big carp. He was natural and very excited to see what was going on.

Unfortunately, Monty the carp catching spaniel is not very well at the moment and is side lined for a few months, we thought we only had one lucky carp dog, but it turns out we have two.

New products

As we move to the warmer months, we are excited to announce the release of the new spring and summer cargo trouser. Not only are they lightweight, but these unique bottoms also offer U.V protection to boot.

The cargos are also designed with the angler in mind, allowing free movement meaning the material will also have a cooling element for your skin to breath. With an elasticated waist this helps you sit comfortably ensuring the waist band does not cut into.

The upper pockets have robust zips to ensure your valuables are safe and the two side pockets are buttoned. We also plan to bring a shorts version of the cargos as well and plan to have these on sale by the end of May.

If you have not browsed through the website lately then please do, we have some great bargains to be had with items up to 40% off.

Also, although the days are warmer the nights are still chilly.

Especially if you're lucky enough to take your dog, with this in mind we have a great deal on our 'full monty' bivvy jackets a must have for your furry best friend.

As usual, none of this is possible if it wasn't for you guys and here at Aqua Liliium we will always be in debt to our faithful supporters which is growing larger by the day.

Just a quick reminder, any pictures you may have of yourselves in any of our products, please send to aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com to be in with a chance to feature in our next add and also win a T-Shirt.

All the best, Aqua Liliium Team

Aqua Liliium

Website: www.aqualiliumclothing.com

Email: aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

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

Spitfire Pool's Wood Common

50lb 8oz by Ben Jeffery

A couple of friends and I have been lucky enough to fish the beautiful Spitfire Pool once a year for a six-night holiday type trip over the last few years, catching a few of the lovely old carp between us along the way with the Wood Common being the dream fish we hoped to catch. This year we were lucky enough to be booked in to arrive on Monday 24th April. Up until now two mates, Vaughn and Ricci and I had fished the pool, but this year it was to be only Vaughn and me, as Ricci was away tarpon fishing! Alright for some!

We arrived at 10am after a trip to the supermarket and café, as we had done in previous years. We had a look about and flipped a coin for swims, which Vaughn won, and after another look around he chose to drop in the Point, as this area was tucked away from the horrible northerly wind that was set for most of the week. I set up

on the other side and fished singles with the intention to spend the week moving about, as I knew Vaughn had already seen the Wood near the pads to his right, and with the weather forecast he probably wouldn't move. Unfortunately Vaughn only had four nights due to family commitments.

After a quiet night I found a scaly mirror and the Little Common in the bay to my left and moved onto them, as any of the 15 carp that live in the pool are special. Vaughn had had the Wood and the Long Common, an upper 40, hanging around the area where his left hand rod was placed, so hopes were high. Following these sightings the weather really changed for the worse, and we had snow! Wednesday we had hailstorms on and off all day, and in the afternoon I moved back to the spots I'd started on the day before for the night.

I was up at first light Thursday morning after a quiet night and found a couple of nice mirrors in the edge on the east bank between where Vaughn

and I were set up. I moved and lowered a single balanced Perfection Groundbaits Spicy Squid boilie on the spot I'd seen them pass over, but nothing happened, and another quite cold night went by.

Friday Vaughn was off home, and after a look about I moved in behind him and fished the rods to where he had seen the Wood Common on a third rod across to the channel between the island and the far bank near to where I fished on my second night. All three rods were fished on Specialized Hookbaits corkball pop-ups fished over PGB C02 and Spicy Squid. I got an early night mainly because I was cold and bored, but at first light the third rod in the channel pulled up tight and I was in! After a good scrap the Old Leney popped up and went in the net on the second time of trying. I had already caught this one, which was the mirror I wanted to catch the most when we had looked at pics of the stock when we got the chance to fish there, but



having already got pics, I unhooked him in the net and let him go, as this is the best thing to do for the fish in my opinion.

I had a good look around a bit later, as the sun was out, and it was now warmer. After looking around half the pool, I came across the whole stock sunning themselves at the furthest point from where I had caught, and I was unsure whether to move or not. I didn't want to move straight on top of them, as it was just too obvious. Watching the Wood and the Long Commons this clearly in their home was quality!! After a while the sun went in and the wind got up and they moved off.

About 7pm, I was in my swim looking out and a fish stuck its head out in front of the main swim on the east bank. It was the Wood, I was sure of it! So I packed up all my mountain of gear and dragged it around there. As I was getting it all around there I

thought, well, at least it's near the car for when I pack up in the morning, as I had to be off by ten.

Once around there I tied on a SHB White S2, my favourite single hook-bait, and flicked it to where what I thought was the Wood had shown. I flicked out another single, but nowhere near the main rod! Joshua was to fight Klitchko that night, so I sat up, had a couple of ciders and then listened to the fight in my bag, as it was chilly... and what a mental fight it turned out to be!

I woke up on my last morning and decided to have a lie-in, but at about 6.30 a series of bleeps had me running to the main rod, which was pulled up tight! I picked the rod up and started to pull a dead weight towards me. Then about ten yards out, the Wood Common surfaced, and I properly panicked! As I led her like a dog on a lead to the net, I was trying to convince myself it wasn't the Wood, but

when it went in the net, the relief was unreal. I really wished Vaughn and Ricci has been here to see her, as she is an unbelievable character of a fish, and to share the moment with good mates is always nice.

I made sure she was safe, pegged the net out and sorted out my mat and retainer. Once she was safe in the retainer, I phoned Rich, and when he answered, I just said "I've got her!" He said, "Well done, and I'll be with you in a bit" in a sleepy voice. About 15 minutes later, he arrived, gave me a hug and a well done and got a couple of blokes fishing next door on Mustang Lake to give us a hand. We did the pics and when we weighed her I was at the back of the scales. Rich said to one of the other fellas, "Are you gonna tell him or am I?" She turned out to be 50lb 8oz of the cream of English carp!

I'd like to say thanks to Rich for the chance to fish the lovely Spitfire Pool.





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My First Season at Wellington Country Park

By Carl Udry



My History With Welly

My love for Wellington Country Park (Welly for short) all stems back to growing up camping with the Royal Berkshire Caravan and Camping Club with my parents and my two younger sisters when I was in my pre-teen years. Long summer school holidays pitched up in the deer park with many hours spent wandering the site after close. It's funny, even now leaving Thatcham (where I still live) and driving the short 45 minutes along the A4, M4 then A33, I still feel that eager excitement and anticipation of going on holiday. The first indication we were nearing the destination was always the first Wellington Country Park sign that is still there on the A33 indicating the Wellington Farm Shop. I still glance at that now 30 years on, and it still warms me in exactly the same way it did when I was a boy. Having parents who have now long since separated and one sister who has emigrated to New Zealand, this family period in my life I still regard as a very special and happy period.

Everyone has a happy place in life, and Welly has always been mine. Camping there as a young boy was ace for a combination of reasons. I think one of the main reasons was being locked in the park after close and being one of the privileged few to be able to play in the park without hordes of other kids to compete with. The lake back then was a boating lake with a large wooden boat house, which used to be situated where the current angler's lodge is, where you could hire a long wooden rowing boat and oars for long periods. When out on the water I remember my dad rowing from one side to the other and me just being fascinated with peering over the edge to see what I could spot down below. Back then the lake was not maturely tree lined like it is now. The banks were also not firm paths, but clearly the outline shape and walk around has hardly changed apart from growing in maturity and the fishing pegs being mostly man made. Welly is where my dad also first introduced me to fishing by float fishing for roach at dusk. I vividly remember walking back to our caravan after



The many park views are just truly magical.

dark carrying that infused roach slime smell all over my hands and clothes.

My Fishing Background

Those early days at Welly were the catalyst to my fishing, although my carp fishing really started from the age of 18 (early 1990s, when I wasn't raving in a random field somewhere). My induction was steadily working up from local club waters in Thatcham and Newbury until I moved on to the syndicate scene, and I have not looked back. My choice of venue has always been to go for the less fancied, less occupied and with an air of mystery or challenge. I have never specifically targeted fish weights before, being more into the challenge of finding and catching the biggest the lake in front of me has to offer. The venues I have fished have ranged from eight-acre pits with very low stock up to 350-acre pits with everything unknown. I always only tend to do two or three years per venue and move on. I always have put all my eggs in one basket and concentrated on one venue at a time. Looking back, I am proud of the fish I have accumulated along the way and do always find myself amongst the biggest fish in the end.

Work/Home Life Balance

With two young sons now – Ellis (six years old) and Zach (soon to be two), keeping my very supportive girlfriend, Maxine, and me very busy, my

fishing is now very prescriptive with dedicated weekends pre-booked weeks or even months ahead of time for Daddy to go fishing. This avoids the inevitable constant awkward conversations, trying to find the right home/fishing life balance. I also have a stressful and demanding job as a Lead Product Owner for Hitachi. Living and working locally and with Welly only a relatively short drive helps, but it still provides a constant challenge, and I couldn't do it without the support of my family. Ellis is now getting to the age where he wants to come night fishing with his dad, which is great.

Waiting List and Getting a Ticket

Returning one day to Welly to fish was always the plan, but only when everything felt right to do so. My appetite to fish there genuinely has nothing to do with the immense fish sizes; it is purely driven by the desire to go back to where fishing all began for me. In 2009 came an offer of a syndicate ticket, and it was an incredibly tough decision to decline at that time. The sole reason for declining was that our eldest son, Ellis, was due to arrive in early 2010, and my priority had to be at home. I remained on the waiting list and typically, the subsequent years with the popularity growing to be on the golden venue, not many were dropping tickets. Going into the 2015/16 season, I knew I was second on the waiting list and not one person dropped a ticket. Another 12 months

had to pass before I was to be given another opportunity, and then boom, a phone call came from the resident ground keeper and head bailiff last April, inviting me over for an informal meeting. After an hour talking, I was offered a ticket. The emotion I felt walking back to the car was indescribable. That day we had a family BBQ with close friends, and I spent most of that day and evening just shaking my head in pure overjoyed disbelief. I was going back to fish my happy place! OMG!

My First Session

17th June 2016, and the waiting was over – my first session at Welly had arrived. I managed to get out from work a little earlier than expected that Friday, so I was on the road just after 3pm. The van was already fully loaded, having spent the last I don't know how many weeks preparing and refining all my gear at home. Fishing Welly is a long walk from the car park to most of the pegs, so the barrow is key. I've done a reasonable job refining my gear, but now I am learning more about the lake, I am refining further.

I arrived, parked up in the private syndicate car park, and the barrow was loaded within minutes. One of the rules on your very first visit is to check in with one of the onsite bailiffs at the main reception. After parking my barrow up, soon someone had radioed, and I was to first meet Wayne, one of the two bailiffs. I was



Snags swim in August – dense greenery.

given a very warm welcome and brief chat, and shortly after I was introduced to one of the syndicate members, Ed, who was fishing the pads just outside the main entrance to the park. Ed only an hour earlier (while I was loading my barrow), he had landed a pristine 47lb mirror. Shame I missed seeing that, but still I had a very welcoming chat, and we exchanged mobile numbers. I felt settled almost immediately. Being a carp water of such epic proportions, I had no idea the syndicate members would be so friendly and warm.

My first 48 hours passed with no carp, but I fished four different pegs to start getting a rapid feel for different

areas of the lake. This is generally my approach with any new water – stay mobile, meet people and learn more along the way. I will always remember fondly the friendly and informative walk around the lake with a now sadly departed syndicate member, John Patterson. A firm handshake when I first met John, who then invited me for a walk around the lake, providing me his swim to swim insight of his knowledge. Ten months into the season, the insight John shared with me, although I fully digested and believed him at the time, has since been validated by others, or I have realised it myself. A true gentleman, John, and I will never forget that day. Thank you. RIP, mate.

Facts About the Lake and the Fish

Lots of articles have been written about this now famous water. It's around 35 acres in size with an average depth of around 6ft, which clearly means water temperatures can rise/drop within hours. It's made up of large open areas of water, bays, islands and tree lined snags and canopies. Just how these canopies transform from winter to spring/summer is truly a sight to behold.

The lake now holds approximately 100-120 carp with more than half of them being over 40lb, which includes 20 or so over 50lb, four of which (the Turtle, Little Big Head, Willow and Ulcer) are all now knocking the inevitable 60lb milestone. They are all home grown, which is simply amaz-



Snags swim in January – very sparse.

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ing and quite astonishing. Some pegs offer down the edge approach, but in others you could easily be needing to cast 120-plus yards to get near the holding areas.

My General Approach and Tactics

Although knowing the shape of the lake and what stock it contained, I refrained from digesting the many articles written about the lake previously. The main reason was that I wanted to learn firsthand for myself or from those closer to the current detail. I also know in the past a lot of weed used to be present. With no weed now in the water following the introduction of water dye, I knew the whole dynamic of the lake will most likely will have changed due to this alone.

It's a lake that really does offer everything, but using distance sticks, avoiding unnecessary lead and spod

rockets crashing around and feeling for the drop are almost mandatory. Having confidence landing on what is a predominantly silty chod lakebed for me feels like the key. Knowing you are presenting a rig to fish that have seen it all and to know it has the maximum hooking and reset values increases my confidence to leave rigs out for a longer periods. I was already a huge advocate of the 360-rig and all Gardner products prior to joining Welly. Therefore being introduced to the Ronnie Rig seemed like a very logical transition for me to take. The bit I have spent a lot of time at home refining was finding the right hook link material that provided me both the critically balanced and reset values. I now have two boom primary materials in my armoury, depending on the range and depth of silt I feel I am fishing into.

Boilies appear to be the bait of choice and I have followed suit and I have put my faith in the proven Sticky Baits Manilla that I was on before the formal launch, and which I literally watched carp on my other water fight over to eat. Using a throwing stick at Welly during last light or dark is a must, or the first 2 or 3 kilos are steadily consumed by the flock of resident gulls who can see you picking up the throwing stick at extreme range. Relentless.

My Results To Date

My results in my opening ten months have been steady, even slow in periods, but the learning process has never stopped. June and July were very slow months for everyone on the syndicate because from what I learned the spring had been very productive following the very mild winter. I started trickling a few out from



Pretty Sutton at 38lb 10oz.



Sunset in the Hole in the Bush after returning the Small Tail Mirror. Simply stunning.

August including the much sought after Pretty Sutton at 38lb 10oz, but sadly lost two very big fish – the first

one to the infamous Korda Swim, also known as The Snags. Then painfully, I am confident I lost one of the big

50lb-plus fish at the net on a 12-hour quick work night in October, in a swim known as Wides. It was to be one of those losses that would sit with me for a while. However, I took confidence that I must be doing something right, although it was very hard to stomach at the time. Although steady, I felt no pressure, as my approach was to move swim to swim and learn the lake with a longer term plan in mind.

Winter weather was very bleak, as it was generally across the country, and Welly had no bites between November and February, despite getting a few hardcore anglers plugging away. My pre-planned weekends I had planned to go, thankfully avoided the on/off periods where the lake had a complete frozen lid on it, which was a few inches thick in places. I chipped away, not expecting results; it was just an excellent time for me to explore new pegs, lead about and



Carl and his family with the Big Sutton at 54lb 6oz.

mark areas and ranges for the forthcoming spring. During a winter session at the end of February, I did manage a lovely pristine up-and-coming 26lb mirror from a cold winter suntrap on a set of reeds. The only thing that drew me to that swim was a slight water discolouration. It could have been just one of the many jack pike attacking the shoals of silvers, but with no sign of carp in 35 acres to go for, I figured, why not?

My Inaugural Five-Day Session

As a syndicate member, we are all entitled to one five-day/night session per season. After considering a few dates with home and work, my first choice of dates thankfully didn't clash with anyone else already booked (only one person can have a five-day session at a time). I booked in the first week of April, which historically had a good track record with being warm, and it also contained a run up to a full moon. The weather certainly lived up to records with very warm sunshine and no rain all week.

I planned to start of my inaugural

five-night session very early on the Wednesday to give myself a reasonable choice of areas to target. I arrived to witness the photos of the stunning Linear at 50lb to David Gaskin, who is the man on fire. Plus I assisted with photos for two 40lb fish only a few hours apart in two different areas of the lake. After four hours walking the lake and only four anglers on, I started in a swim known as Goose, as I had seen two or three good shows at range.

As the morning went by, another swim that had been very productive recently and historically was vacated, and two shows across in that area resulted in a swift move in to the infamous Hole in the Bush swim. Within four hours of casting out my new rig only field tested at home, I was holding up in the glorious early evening Welly sunshine my new personal best in the shape of the magnificent Small Tail Mirror at a jaw-dropping 53lb 6oz. Oh man, what a start and a lovely way to relax in confidence with five nights ahead of me.

I then picked up a fish every 24 hours or so by applying a reasonable

amount of freebies after dark and avoiding recasting unnecessarily. On the Saturday, midway through my session, my girlfriend Maxine and our two boys came over to visit me and to play in the park. After spending an hour with me on the bank, they went off to play in the park, and I decided to stay behind my rods because I felt my chances were 50/50, and they desperately wanted to see Dad catch a big fish. They came back to my peg around 4pm to say goodbyes. I kissed them all, and Maxine was literally about to start the walk back to the car when my faithful left hand rod let out a one-toner. I lifted into what went on to be a new personal best, in the shape of the Big Sutton at a colossal 54lb 6oz. This is one very special, very sought after carp that doesn't grace the bank frequently. But for my family to witness the whole thing from start to finish makes the whole experience ten times better.

To fish at Welly where I grew up as a child, camping in the deer park, really is a dream come true. But now to have my new personal best from this epic venue and with such a his-



Small Tail Mirror at 53lb 6oz.



Ken Steele's common at 36lb

toric and old fish has exceeded all my expectations. I love to think my boys can show the pictures I now have in years to come can say they were with me on 'that day' when Dad fished at Welly and had a 54lb'er.

The inflow of warm messages to congratulate me from other syndicate members was no surprise. Welly has many magical attributes that make it what it is. But being honest, what has pleasantly surprised me is just how approachable, warm and friendly all the syndicate members and bailiffs are and the ethos that creates makes being on the complex an absolute pleasure. I don't know what I was expecting, but as a new member along with Charlie (aka CCCC), we have been made to feel really welcome very quickly. Everyone is just open to share knowledge and to help everyone, which is just simply lovely. During my session, I had really sound members on the pegs next to me and was lucky enough to be ghillie and cameraman to fellow angler and friend, Gavin Carter, who caught the Big Common at a mind-blowing 56lb.

Then there was Ken Steele, with his well-earned 36lb personal best common, each of us taking turns to make sure we wore a bucket of cold water to celebrate our ripple effect of PBs – awesome memories, treasured.

My five nights came to a close with a 33lb common and quite simply even now to get a brace of 50s along with three other carp exceeded all my expectations. Wow – just wow. It still hasn't sunk in.

Wrap Up

Welly is just simply epic, simply lovely with plenty in the tank. Those that fish there today know, and we are often exchanging just how lucky a group we are right now. It might appear from the outside that big fish regularly just drop themselves into landing nets at will. Rest assured, all are absolutely caught on merit and hoisted up for photos with the utmost respect.

Be lucky, Carl. ■

My eldest son, Ellis, already showing natural watercraft at Welly. Beautiful.



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Tim Thornton



The man is on FIRE! Team member Tim Thornton with another couple of Somerset stunners; "Two nice carp from Durleigh reservoir in Somerset. The common going 37lb 6oz, mirror 21lb 4oz. Both taken on DNA baits Bug boilies, size 4 Scorpion Crank hook IQ2 D rigs as usual." Well done Tim, awesome angling.

Stuart Sturton and Juan Betacourt



CarpTackleOnline competition pair Stuart Sturton and Juan Betacourt smashed it at the BCAC on B2 at Linear Fisheries. Both Stuart and Juan used a variety of our end tackle including a new test hook which performed amazingly well; "Amazing weekend on Linear Fisheries Official b2 for the British Carp Angling Championships qualifier we had a total of 38 fish for 945lb for 2nd place, great angling by the winning pair good luck in the semi until next year."
 Congratulations to you both.

John Paul McCusker



Team member John Paul McCusker is at it again in a BIG way with his first UK 50lber!! It's not the first time she has been caught on a Scorpion hook either: "Finally having one of those dream sessions. Buzzing with this fish this morning. First UK 50 and what a beauty she is at 56-07, after three fish yesterday up to 40-05 who would think I could top that. One of the A+ team called black spot Caught using #carptackleonline #scorpion hooks and end tackle."

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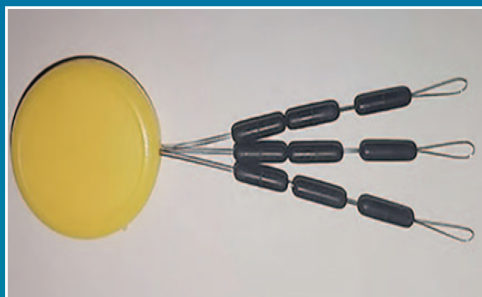


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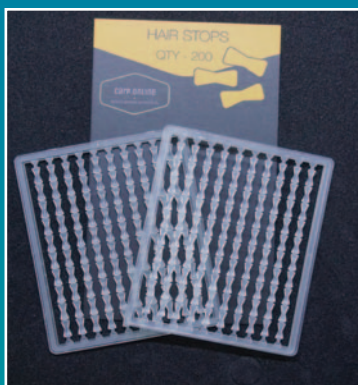
Tungsten Hooklink Sinker



Chod Filament



Hook Beads



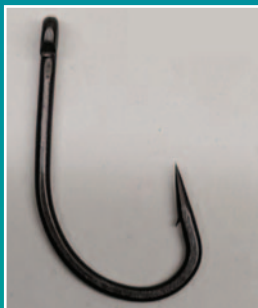
Hair Stops



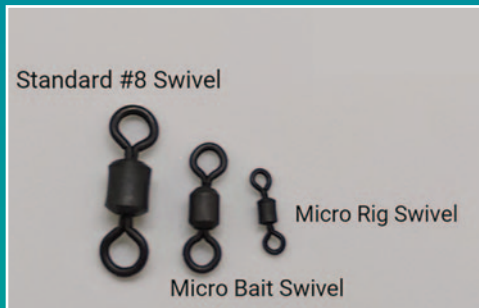
Shrink Tube



Tungsten Putty



Scorpion Snag Hook



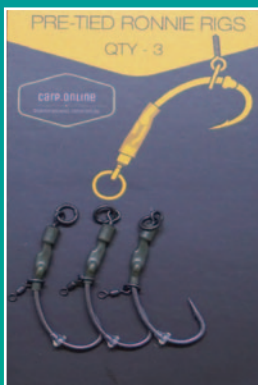
Swivels



Scorpion Crank Hook



Scorpion Chod Hooks



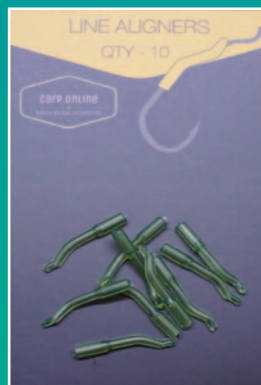
Scorpion Ronnie Rig



Composite Leadclips



Choddy Crank Hook



Hair Aligners



Tungsten Kickers

Shallow Pit

By Mark Kerridge



It was back in November 2010 when I first set my eyes on one of the St. Ives A-team. A recent photo of the Black Pig at 44lb, cradled in the arms of a good friend of mine, Lee Kemp. Kempy used to tell me at work about the St. Ives complex, and I remember imagining what it would be like to fish there. Back in those days it was all about the Lady, a big, fat mirror that topped the scales at 60lb 6oz, holding the British record before she died in July 2011.

It wasn't until August 2016 that I actually set foot onto the St. Ives complex, greeted by the old rickety gate on Longreach, which behind it swam myths and monsters. Straight away I knew this was going to be the place I've been looking for. For so many years I had pondered over this moment, a true carper's paradise. Walking between Longreach and Meadow, then onto Big Fjords, I was captivated, but where should I start? Nooks, crannies, dot islands, bars, bays and weedbeds galore; this place had it all. I met Gordy in the Shallow car park and paid my money, eager to get fishing, but with no idea where to start. I chose the mighty Meadow and Fjords, as I had to wait to get the Shallow Lake ticket.

The start of every trip to St. Ives started with a long walk around the 100-acre Meadow, Stake, Big Fjords and Little Fjords, but every time I walked round I would stop and pause when I got to the Shallow. I was itching to get on there, but I had to wait my turn for a space to become available. It was November 1st and in my hand was my Shallow Pit upgrade, finally my turn in the queue and I was one very happy carper. I had watched



YouTube clips to death, picking out any bits of info that might give me a helping hand in outwitting one of the awesome fish that swam the waters. I only managed one trip on Shallow in 2016 due to other commitments, and it seemed that every time I had an opportunity to get back, there would be something stopping me.

At last on March 11th I was back, and after leaving the house at 5:30am and arriving at 7:00 I was unlocking the gate and pulling into the Shallow Pit car park to start my campaign for the Shallow Pit carp. Bursting with anticipation, I started my lap of the

(Above) Big Fjords.
(Below left) Longreach gate.
(Below right) Longreach.

lake at the 'out of bounds' end of the lake looking in every nook and cranny searching for some sign of a carp. A quarter of the way round, I found myself stood in the End of Island swim, talking to one of the other syndicate members who had been down for the week. He hadn't had anything, and after a bit of a chat I continued my walk. I stopped off to chat with Lee "Tigernut" Tolly, and after exchanging thoughts on where the





fish might be over a cuppa, I found myself again looking for a sign. I stopped in the next swim along, the only swim I had fished before, and as if my magic a large mirror rolled out in front, then again. That was it; I had found one, so I rushed round to where I was parked, packed my barrow and got straight back to my chosen swim.

I already had some spots noted from my previous trip, so I wrapped

the rods to the chosen spots, and out they went, landing perfectly. I was quietly confident that I had seen a fish. A few Mainline Cell freebies finished it all off, and with traps set, I could now concentrate on watching the water. It was almost dusk, and the fish had started showing to my right, closer to Lee next door to me. Had they moved out of my swim? Had I missed my opportunity? That evening

Lee and I were stood there talking about the fish that were out there in front of us. Colin of course was mentioned a lot of the time, not surprisingly when it comes out around mid-fifty. The conversation went on to The Sheffield Linear, a truly stunning fish that was a rare visitor to the bank. At around mid to upper 30s, it was another one of the impressive stock of fish we both wanted to tick off the wish list. As the evening got later, it was time to hit the sack, and as I lay down I heard another carp roll back out in front of me. I went to sleep with a smile on my face, wishing I was going to be woken up by one of the fish we spoke about.

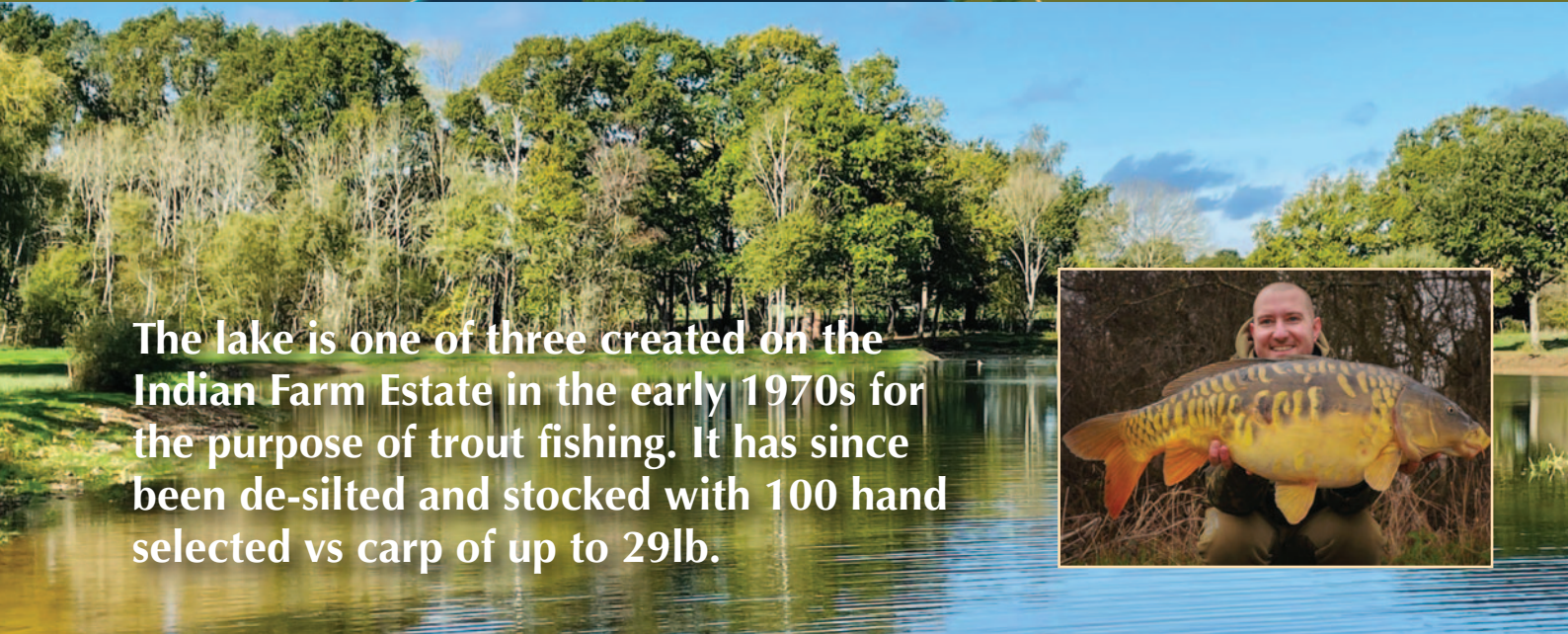
First light came and nothing, not even a liner in the night. I got up and made a cuppa, sat down by my rods and watched the water, wondering what went wrong. After going to sleep so confident, I was puzzled as to why nothing had happened. Out the corner of my eye a fish rolled, then another and another – they were still

**(Top) Stake Pit.
(Below) The Pig.**





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there! I picked up my phone and tried to record them rolling out over my rods while I waited for something to happen, but again nothing happened. Completely confused as to why I wasn't getting a look in, I waited for them to stop a bit with a plan up my sleeve. After about half an hour, I brought

two rods in, and I was greeted by two perfect rigs – nothing wrong with them, but they hadn't worked. Plan B was put into action, and back out went two zigs. The fish were there, but they weren't feeding on the bottom. Traps set again, I sat back and waited to see what they did next...

(Above) Sheffield Linear.
(Below left) Camera shot.
(Below right) Checking photos.

nothing, not even another show. I thought I had blown my chances and I was gutted. All those fish in front of me, and I hadn't had a sniff. I popped into Lee's swim next door to see if he





had any joy, but he hadn't. We stood there wondering what went wrong when all of a sudden I had a liner, then another. I rushed back to my swim, and as I got there my bobbin pulled up tight! Fish on!

I lifted the rod into a heavy fish. No line was being taken, and I could feel straight away that it was a good fish. Lee rushed into my swim and gave me a hand getting the chesties on, so

I could wade out a bit, as it was fairly shallow in front, and landing the fish on a zig would have been tricky. Out in the water I went, and the fish started kiting to my right where a big tree was overhanging the water. With my legs turning to jelly, I dipped the rod under the water and prayed the small hook and light hook link were going to hold. After a bit of a battle, into the net she rolled... "Get in!" I was relieved and over the moon, I had caught my first Shallow Pit carp. Still unsure which fish I had, we lifted it onto the mat, and lying there before me was the Sheffield Linear in all its glory, perfectly hooked in the centre of the bottom lip. A quick check, and into the sling and up onto the scales to reveal 36lb 4oz of rarely caught glory! I put the sling back into the water and secured it while Lee phoned Mark "Boots" Johnson who was over on the Lagoon to help with some photos.

While we waited for Mark to arrive, a few texts were made and a quick phone call to my very understanding fiancée Louise, who was equally over the moon for me. If it hadn't been for her, I would have probably still been deciding if I should join or not!! Mark was soon in the swim as eager as Lee and me to see my prize, especially as

it was still on his hit list, and this was the first time he had seen it on the bank too.

The camera clicked away with Mark and Lee taking some impressive photos and even a video of the whole thing too. A few were taken in the water too, and then it was time to release the Sheffield Linear back into its watery home until the next lucky angler had the opportunity to do battle. The kettle was put back on for a celebratory cuppa while we flicked through the many photos that had been taken.

I owe a huge thank-you to Lee Kemp for introducing me to St. Ives in the first place, Lee "Tigernut" Tolly and Mark "Boots" Johnson for the amazing photos, Gordy for letting me join what can only be described as one of the best fishing complexes there is, and finally Louise my fiancée, who never gives me earache for wanting to get on the bank, and unfortunately missed out on seeing my prize.

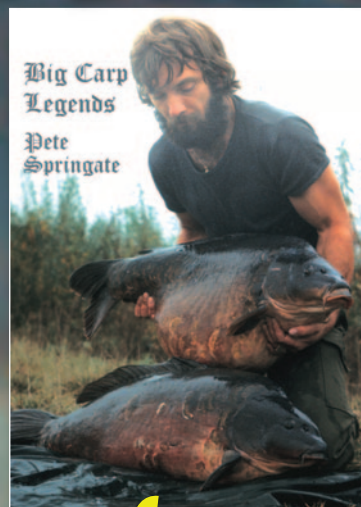
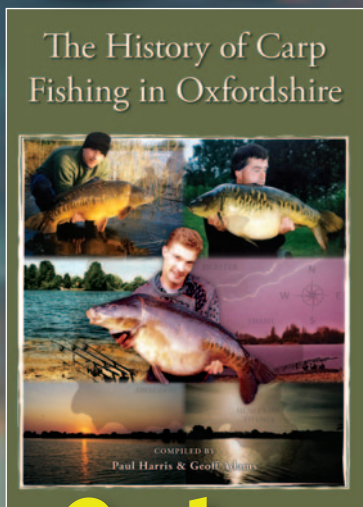
If anyone is serious about trying their luck for one of the superb fish that reside in St. Ives, get on the website www.stiveslakesfishery.co.uk and contact Gordy. You won't be disappointed!

Until next time, tight lines! ■

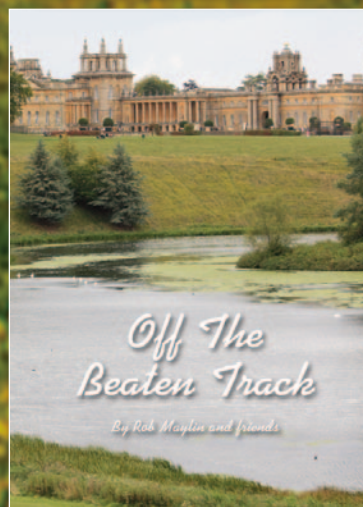
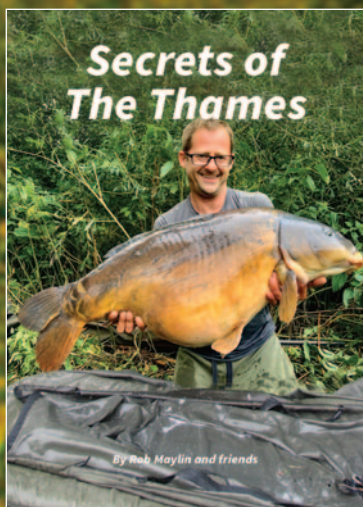
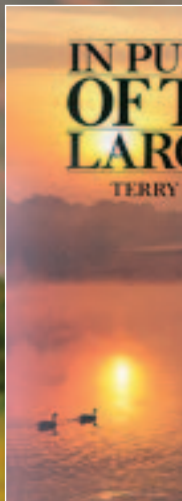
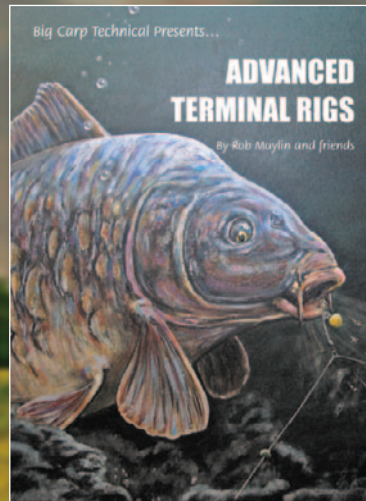
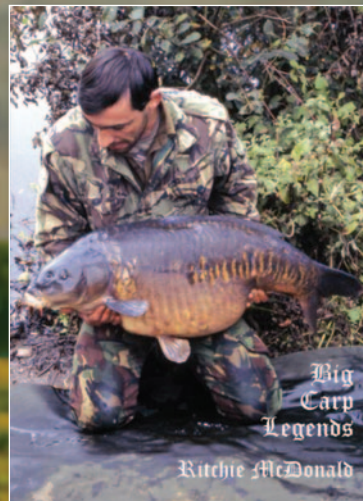


**(Top) Water shot.
(Left) Safe return.
(Right) Eureka.**

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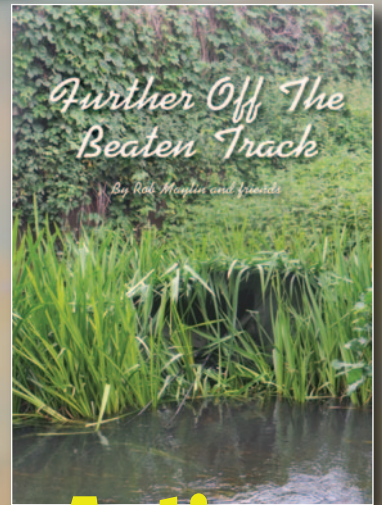
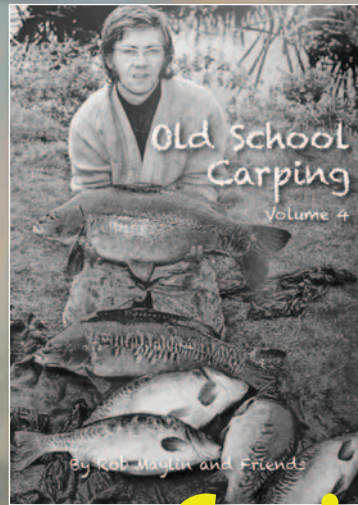
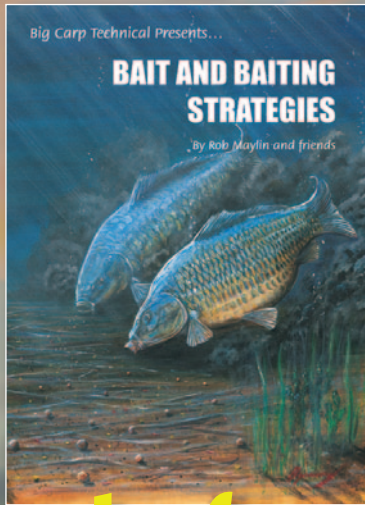


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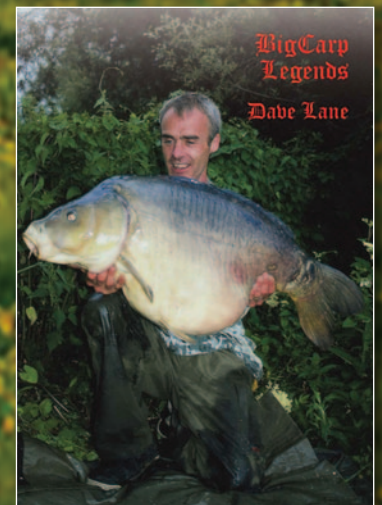
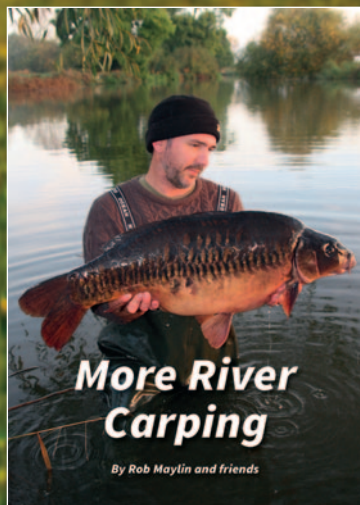
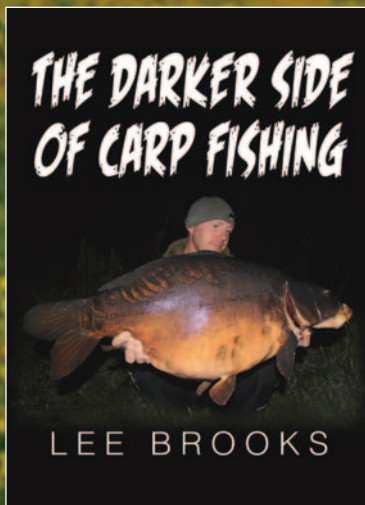
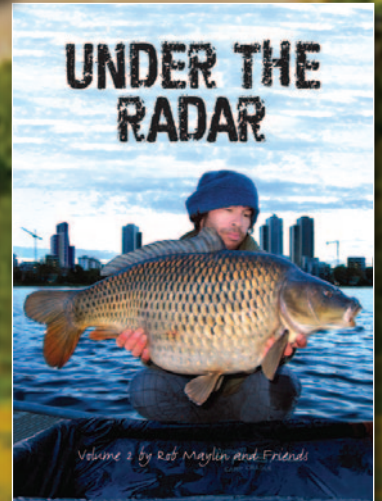
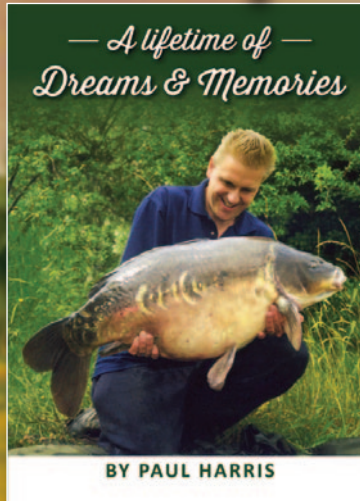
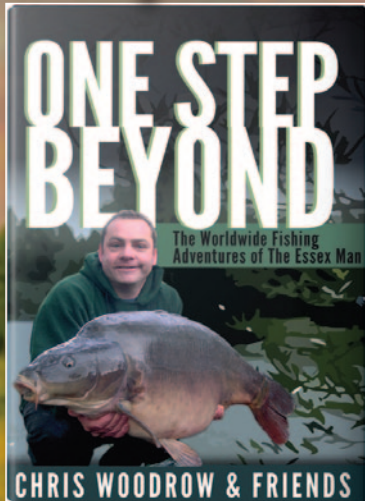


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The Burghfield Common at 62lb 8oz!!

April 12th 2017 For Scott Lloyd

On the 12th April 2017, another chapter opened in the Big Carp record books when Scott Lloyd banked the ever more incredible Burghfield common at a staggering 62lb 8oz. Here's a step-by-step look at how the session all panned out...

24 hours before the bite from the Big Girl, I was lucky enough to land this 42lb 10oz banger – a really cool carp with a spotless mouth. It wasn't the one I was after but more than welcome!!

Just minutes before the bite from the Big Girl, I had a take on the left hand rod of the two on the spot. As soon as I put this one in the net, I immediately knew it as one of her little mates that I had seen her with numerous times the previous year. The Big Girl was definitely a loner, and after seeing no shows on the rods all day, to then receive a bite from her little friend, I knew she might not be far away. Needless to say, I got the net



set back up quick time and didn't bother putting that rod back out in case I spooked her off the spot. I'm sure you can imagine all the things that ran through my head the moment the second rod slammed into the alarm and began to strip an enor-

mous amount of line!

It certainly took me by surprise – something I tried so hard to do but never actually imagined would happen actually happened. I caught the Burghfield Common!!!! Words could never describe that special moment,





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which only a few have experienced – the ultimate challenge and the best carp in the land was mine, and at a colossal weight of 62lb 8oz!!!

Well, I don't know what to say! I'm blown away by everything from start to finish. I'm right up on cloud nine at the moment and don't want to come down. The messages and comments from everyone has been overwhelming. Please don't think I'm ignoring anyone if I haven't responded; I'm sure you will all understand. Big thanks too to all the lads who were there to share the moment: our kid, the Wildbores, Mr. Mundy, John B, Ben, Phil, all the bailiffs and even the AA man! Anyone I've forgotten to mention, you know who you are!!

It was an unforgettable moment

with a special carp and my lifelong fishing partner, my brother. To be able to share this moment with my partner in crime was incredible. We started out together, and to have him there with me to share the moment will compare to none other in our time fishing together.

This is what makes my fishing – anyone that knows me knows how much I love fishing and the people

that surround it. I'm not there just for the fish; I'm there to get away from the stresses of life and do what I love to do – catch incredible carp and meet people from all walks of life, socialise, make friends and have fun along the way! Bring on the next challenge and what it brings with it!

Here's what brother Baz had to say a couple of days after the capture...

"Well, what can I say? What hap-





pened a couple of days ago was absolutely incredible. The big carp scene was well and truly rocked by none other than my little brother, Scott Lloyd.

I joined Burghfield this year to fish alongside him, as we always have. This lasted all of two days. He only went and did what many people would perceive as undoable. He only went and caught the Burghfield Common.

To many it's just a fish, but to those who know, this is the ultimate prize, like a gold medal to an athlete, a WBC heavyweight champion belt to a boxer, or a Cheltenham Gold Cup winner for a jockey. This is as good as it gets. This fish has been held by so few but dreamt of by so many. It's impossible to put into words what it was like to share the moment with my brother.

What a day. The morning after the traditional celebratory beers and BBQ, just me and Lloyd (our kid) went for some brekky and a well deserved pint. We were buzzing, giggling away like two little school kids.

As we parted and I headed for home, the feeling was incredible I couldn't stop shaking, and I burst into tears. God knows how Scott was feeling. Special mention to Dan the man

Wildbore who absolutely nailed the pictures. The pressure he was under was immense. I'm so glad he took that off me! Hats off, Lloyd lad. BIG UP, BIG LOVE and BIG CARP!" ■



The Quarry

By Adam Penning

For the last six weeks, I had decided to focus on the Quarry for a bit of an autumn campaign. The target was to try and manage a couple of nights each week and see if I could work them out. From the outset, my most desired was a carp known as Orion. I had photographed him for a client of mine, Sam Croft, last

summer, spawned out at 31lbs. He was then one of the most impressive carp I have seen. His last capture was in April, and with that being the only capture this year, we all had a feeling he could be big and possibly break 40lbs for the first time. After a string of captures and a fair few repeats, I was wondering what I had to do to get one of the real units. The answer was, of course, keep going, keep

catching, and it will come.

At 6am Friday morning, the planets aligned, and the incredible fish rested, beaten in my net. Orion weighed 43lbs 2oz, my 40th fish was not only a forty pounder, but also the most desirable carp I have seen in a long time – perfect tail, sloping head, underslung mouth. Carp porn! I was, and still am, totally stupefied. Thank you, carp gods! ■



Orion 43lb 2oz.

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By Steve Briggs

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In the UK, we tend to look upon syndicate waters as the pinnacle of our carp fishing venues. They offer exclusivity, often better surroundings and they also tend to offer the bigger and better fish. For the most part, UK venues can be split in to two or three categories. There are of course the day ticket venues, which gives the angler instant access to the venue. Then there are club tickets, which could cover a number of different venues for a yearly membership and then the syndicate memberships, which tend to cover just one venue but normally with something special to offer the anglers. Although we are obviously brought up with this system and are very used to it, the way we do things isn't the norm across Europe. France for instance has very little in the way of syndicate waters, but they do have many public waters, which they see as their top waters, and the pay lakes, or commercial waters as we know them, are very much viewed as lesser quality venues – by them at least.

Carp syndicates have been around for a very long time. Redmire was of one of the very early examples. There were of course far fewer anglers around in those days, and you had Brooklands down in Kent, which was one of the quality day ticket waters going right back to the late 1950s and early 1960s and Billing Aquadrome, which was an example of a public water that was lightly stocked with carp and some that were very big for the time. But Redmire came on the scene, and I guess because of its size and location the owners didn't want it to be a free for all. At first it was the Carp Catchers Club who controlled the fishing on there for some time, but following that there was a period

when it did become day ticket for a while, although it was only for those deemed to be serious specimen hunters. But inevitably that led to some litter being left and undesirable people fishing the lake, and the fishing could have been lost forever, but it was Jack Hilton in 1968 who, with a bit of help made a deal with the owners to form a ten-man syndicate that he would be in control of. The total for the year was £500, £50 to be paid by each of the ten members, and the fishing would be done on a rota system with no more than four people fishing at one time. So even back in 1968, the popularity of a water didn't come without its problems, and the way to combat the problems was to form a syndicate and vet the potential members to ensure that the lake and the fishing was protected as much as possible and to keep the owners happy.

Looking back now, it seems almost ridiculous that somewhere like Redmire could have once been a day ticket water, but that's how it was. It is certainly one of the early examples of a syndicated water though, and over the years as carp fishing became more and more popular, more and more waters followed suit. Fast-forward to today, and there are syndicate waters the length and breadth of the country. They tend to be the most expensive form of our sport and £1500 for a year's fishing isn't particularly unusual nowadays. Of course some people say that it's too much to pay for carp fishing, but people were paying £50 a year in 1968, and that was a whole lot of money back then! It's the old story of getting what you pay for. There is a huge demand for carp waters these days, but at the same time there are lots of people who don't want crowded lakes and fishing



next door to people they don't know, and at the end of the day it means paying more money for the privilege.

The first syndicate water for me was Harefield Lake in the Colne Valley. Harefield was part of the Boyer Leisure portfolio, but you couldn't join it in the same way as any of the other waters they had at the time. Fishery manager of the time, John Stent, had a vision of creating one of the best waters in the country. At the time Savay was the water that everyone was talking about. Savay had attracted many of the major names in carp fishing at the time such as Rod Hutchinson, Rob Maylin, Bruce Ashby and Martin Locke etc. The Savay syndicate was split into two rotas – the Looney rota and the Toads. Each rota would fish the lake one week on and one week off to ensure that everyone had the chance of a decent swim and also the chance to move around and get on the fish. It obviously suited the people with more time at their disposal and the ones that could manage their working lives to suit – people who worked Monday to Friday would get just two weekends a month!

John Stent saw what was going on at Savay (it was actually just across the road from Harefield) and hatched a plan to make Harefield just as good or maybe even better. Harefield already had a limited stock of quite nice fish, but the fishing was very difficult due to the severe gravel bars,

(Top) All waters still have their rules and regulations.

(Left) Grenville Lake certainly offers more than just big fish.





which were coated in razor sharp mussels. Being a gravel workings, they had plenty of equipment at their disposal, so the tops of the bars were scraped off to make them more angler-friendly. But the next part of the plan was to actually drain two of

the other Boyer waters, Willow Pool and Rodney Meadow and stock most of the fish in to Harefield. For a period in the early 1990s, the plan worked perfectly, and Harefield became one of the most sought after venues in the country – even some of the Savay

members like Albert Romp and Phil Harper started to venture across the road. Even a young Kevin Nash, who was just starting out in the business, had a ticket back then!

Just like Savay, Harefield was fished on a rota system and at a time when 30lb carp were the dream for most anglers. It produced lots of them, and a few 40s followed. In the days when the season still started on June 16th, I can remember fishing there for the first time in July, and the lake had already produced seventeen different 30s – almost unheard of at the time! Nelson was the big fish in those days, coming out at weights around 37lb, but there were others not far behind. My first fish from the lake was a fish called Small Pecs; in fact it was my first two captures when I caught it two weekends on the trot at 34lb 8oz and 35lb. Also in the lake back then was one of the biggest fully-scaled carp in the country, one which didn't come out very often, perhaps most famously falling to the rods of Steve Alcott. Head bailiff was the imposing Dougal Grey, a big man

(Left) My first Redmirre carp. A syndicate was formed there in 1968 to avoid the fishing being lost forever. (Below) Right place at the right time – or just different tactics?



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Creedence Fishery: A Year of Remarkable Growth In the few years since its inception, Creedence Fishery, located in picturesque Essex surroundings, has quickly distinguished itself as a premier destination for carp angling enthusiasts. This two-acre modern carp fishery has seen a flurry of activity and development over the last 12 months, significantly enhancing the angling experience and bolstering its presence within the community. At the heart of Creedence Fishery are its unique offerings that cater to the comfort and convenience of anglers. Each of the four meticulously designed swims (one of which one is a double) houses a wooden cabin equipped with modern amenities including heating, a fridge, TV, power, and Wi-Fi.

This innovative approach ensures that anglers can focus on their passion without the hassle of setting up bivvies, regardless of the weather conditions. In order to prevent unsightly angling tackle hanging from the trees along its margins, and to protect the cabins and wildlife, Creedence Fishery is a bait-boat only venue which adds to the excitement and challenge of catching big carp from its waters. Furthermore, the inclusion of essential carp care equipment, along with toilets, shower and vending machine, underscores the fishery's commitment to both angler satisfaction and fish welfare.

A pivotal development this year has been the introduction of a communal BBQ and social area, fostering a sense of community among visitors. The integration of the 'swimbooker' app for easy online booking has also streamlined the booking process, reflecting the fishery's embrace of technology to enhance user experience. The stocking program represents another significant milestone, with the addition of over 15x 30lb carp and

3x 40lb carp to the lake. This initiative not only promises thrilling challenges for anglers aiming to catch these magnificent specimens, but with the recent nettings removing huge numbers of smaller fish, allows for the backup stock to grow through too.

The impact of these developments is evident in the surge of anglers flocking to Creedence Fishery, drawn by the allure of its massive specimen carp and the enhanced fishing experience. The attention from mainstream angling media further validates the fishery's growing reputation as a premier destination. Looking ahead, Creedence Fishery plans to continue its trajectory of growth with a focus on nurturing huge specimen carp.

A scheduled netting at the year's end aims to curate the lake's population, ensuring that only carp above 25lb remain, alongside the introduction of even more 40lb carp. A testament to the fishery's appeal is a special feature by 'AJ Spooner' of swimbooker, whose YouTube session capturing multiple 30lb catches in a single winter outing has captivated the angling community.

This event, emblematic of the fishery's potential, can be easily accessed through the QR code link, as we invite you to witness the thrill of angling at Creedence Fishery. As Creedence Fishery continues to evolve, its blend of comfort, community, and carp sets it apart, promising memorable experiences for all who visit. With bookings already matching last year's total by February 2024, the fishery's future looks as bright as the reflective scales of its prized carp. Every new booking also includes 3KG of free feed pellet for every angler! Check the live availability of Creedence Fishery via the swimbooker app, and, if you're looking for a comfortable place to target huge carp in Essex, get it booked!



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We look forward to welcoming you to Creedence Fishery!



with a big love of the lake, and few people broke the rules back then!

Unfortunately the great days didn't last; the lake suffered a few fish deaths and as the catches dwindled so did the interest in the lake. Perhaps even more sadly was the fact that one end of Harefield was used for washing and cleaning large amounts of gravel, and over time much of the lake has become severely silted up to the point where there is hardly any fishable water left – a sad sight to see after becoming such a great water.

The good thing about syndicate waters in general is that the standard of angler is higher than most other waters, and in the main the standard of bait used is better too. Good baits

are available to everyone now, but there is a difference between just aiming to get a bite and actually feeding the fish. On most syndicates I know of, the anglers are more likely to feed with more quality bait knowing that it will be beneficial for the fish and probably their own results in the long run. In the Harefield days, it was very much in the height of the fish-meal boom when most people used to make their own bait and for the first time started to make it in larger quantities. It was plain to see that the fish could gain weight quickly when fed large amounts of good bait, and with good bait more readily available now, the fish definitely get to see more of it. I would say though that in general UK

anglers still bait up far less than our European counterparts. Over in Europe, baiting up over a long period of time is quite often the norm and seen as the way forward if you want to see the fish reach their full potential. One of the syndicates that I've been a member of for the longest time is actually over in Belgium on a lake called The Surf. It's a large lake of around 70 acres and deep and weedy. For many years the guys on there have been baiting with good food source baits, and those carp have reached 60lb and even 70lb.

One of the most closely-guarded syndicates in my area is Summerleaze Lake. You don't hear a mention of it these days, as it's kept well under wraps, but going back a few years, I was part of the original syndicate that was set up on there. It's hard to believe now, but the lake hadn't been fished for at least a couple of years when we first went and looked at it. We could tell that because the grass was nearly waist high and there were no paths to any of the old swims. But within a day or two of us looking around, the trodden paths were clear to see, and they stayed that way.



(Top) Part of a big Grenville catch when everything went to plan. (Left) Syndicate lakes tend to see more quality bait, but a new bait can always reap the rewards.



Rumours had gone around that there had been a fish kill there, but we eventually found out that this had all stemmed from one guy from the yacht club seeing a dead pike! Sounds daft, but it was enough to keep everyone away!

There were about 17 carp in the 60-acre pit, all old Leney mirrors and stunning-looking fish. Between us we caught a number of the stock up to mid 40s, but as is often the case there were others in there that just never got caught. One of the guys who had fished it many years before told us about this big sandy-coloured mirror that he'd seen just once, but it had dwarfed everything else in the lake. Sure enough one spring day we were watching the carp grouping up in advance of spawning, and there

before us was this huge light brown mirror! Just like the stories we'd been told, this fish dwarfed the other fish that we knew to be mid 30s to mid 40s. We all spent many sleepless nights after that just dreaming of being the first person to catch that Sandy Mirror, but it never did get caught. Just like many of the mysterious big carp that seem to lurk uncaught around the country, they are the stuff of dreams but for some reason seem to be able to avoid capture with ease. But make no mistake, that fish was there, and I not only saw it with my own eyes; it hung around long enough for me to get a few pictures of it!

Summerleaze was a rare example of a lake that had just been left alone and the carp had been left to fend for themselves. The lake did get incredibly weedy in the summer, so much so that it was really unfishable for a few months of the year, but with the weed came the natural food in abundance, and the carp had nothing to worry about. Whichever way they turned, they were confronted with a natural feast, and they certainly didn't lose any weight by not seeing anglers' bait. In fact they can often be the most difficult of waters, as the carp simply don't need bait, but thankfully they did feed every now and then on our stuff. We tried all sorts of things during our time there: highly flavoured pop-ups, particles and maggots etc., but far and away the most successful baits on there were good quality boilies once again and especially the fishmeal-based baits.

(Left) Syndicate waters are often viewed as the pinnacle of UK carp fishing.

Sometimes finding a winning method can work against you after time. Many syndicate lakes have a slow turnover of anglers, and some are literally almost impossible to get on – 'dead man's shoes' as they are often referred to. In those situations things can often stagnate and people stick with something that worked very well a few years back because the same anglers don't know the next step forward or are reluctant to change all of the time, as they are still catching a few and no one else is catching more. Often it's when someone new turns up with their own ideas and methods with no real idea of what's gone before that they can show everyone else what they've been missing out on. It doesn't always have to be a superior method with superior baits – just something different. Even the best baits out there can become less effective after time if the fish keep seeing them and more importantly keep getting caught on them.

A prime example of that was down on the lovely Emperor syndicate lake in Devon. The Nash team have a good relationship with the lake owner, Dave Lidstone, and when we organised a trade fair or similar down at the complex, he would generally let a few of us fish the syndicate lake for a day or two. The lake is the pride of the complex there, and as usual it holds the biggest and the best fish, but they are certainly no pushover, and if anything quite difficult to catch. But we went in with our own ideas and methods and did really well. All I did was to fish single hinge-rigged pop-ups with yellow Citruz baits, and over a couple of days I had five fish up to 35lb 4oz. A few of the syndicate guys came down for a chat while we were there; they were surprised by what we'd caught, and I was just as surprised when they told me that five carp was as many as most could expect in a year from the lake! It wasn't just me that did well – Mikey Wilson caught three fish and John had a 35lb mirror – not to mention Dave Lidstone himself, who banked a 40lb common! It was a typical situation of presenting the fish with something that they perhaps hadn't seen for a while and perhaps in slightly different areas too, which is another thing... When a water gets fished by the same people over a long period,





they tend to end up fishing the same areas. I'm not trying to say we fished any better than anyone else, but we just came in and fished a different way and it worked.

A new bait can often work in much the same way. There are baits out there that have stood the test of time and work year after year, but for some reason the carp just have the ability to quickly recognize a good bait when they see it, and being the first on a water with a new quality bait can bring its rewards. I guess I'm in a lucky position working for one of the great bait companies out there in Nash. Nash have had several great baits over the years, and I'm in the fortunate position to have been testing the new Key Cray for quite some time before its general release. So on quite a few waters I've now been the first one to use it, and it's on the syndicate waters where I've seen the

**(Top) The Harefield syndicate was created to compete with Savay Lake just across the road.
(Right) I love the peace and tranquility that you tend to get on syndicate waters.**

best response. You see, day ticket waters get to see loads of different baits over the course of a year... well, over the course of a month in many cases. It can be the case with syndicates that one bait dominates the water, or at least two or three baits are seen regularly on them, and going in with something different often brings with it some great results!

If I had to pick a favourite syndicate lake, I'd be hard pushed to look beyond Grenville up in Cambridge. It's not a water I've fished a great deal

over the years, as my foreign fishing always gets in the way, but I always seem to get a couple of short trips on there every year, and I'm very grateful to the owner, Paul Ward, for that. I can enjoy fishing waters of all shapes and sizes, and really it's the feeling that the places give me that makes the difference. Grenville is big, deep and weedy. At around 72 acres, it was a huge project for Paul to take on, but he has almost single-handedly landscaped the whole venue as well as otter fencing the entire circumference of the lake! All that work has been worth it though, as he's created a real piece of carp fishing heaven. Being very open and windswept, it has a good turnover of water, and the oxygen levels are always through the roof. Because of that and the large amounts of natural food, the fish have done amazingly well. There are now numerous fish above 40lb with an increasing number reaching 50lb and above. Paul is a great believer in giving the fish plenty of good food too, so much so that he built his own bait factory on site where he makes his own bait, which I know to be of the highest quality. He feeds the carp with that bait, but the anglers can also buy it at a reasonable price. That ensures that the fish are getting the best possible bait and the anglers know they are getting it at a fair price.

All of that means that the fish will eat a fair bit of bait. It can be a tricky water; just the sheer size of it means that you won't always be on the fish, and they can soon move when they want to. But if everything goes right and a group of hungry fish arrive in front of you, then great things can happen. I've caught fairly consistently from Grenville, but I had one really good session when I was in the



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Cabin swim for three days. The fish were just moving in, and I had the bait to keep them there! Over the three days I banked 31 carp up to 44lb 8oz and lost a couple down to hook pulls. It was incredible action from big fish, and I was worn out by the end of it! Not all trips are like that of course. I fished the same swim more recently towards the end of November, and for 48 hours the only carp action I saw was right out in the middle of the lake way beyond any distance that I could cast. It looked like I was wasting my time, but I held on anyway right until the evening. Just when I was starting to gather my stuff together, out of the blue a screaming take saw me bank a lovely 46lb 4oz mirror, which is my best from the lake. It just shows that you never know what will happen all the time you have a bait in the water!

So those are a few of my thoughts and experiences of syndicate lakes. I get to fish a big variety of waters

(Top) Last knockings on the beautiful Emperor syndicate lake in Devon. (Below) A big Grenville mirror of 46lb 4oz that came just as I was packing up.

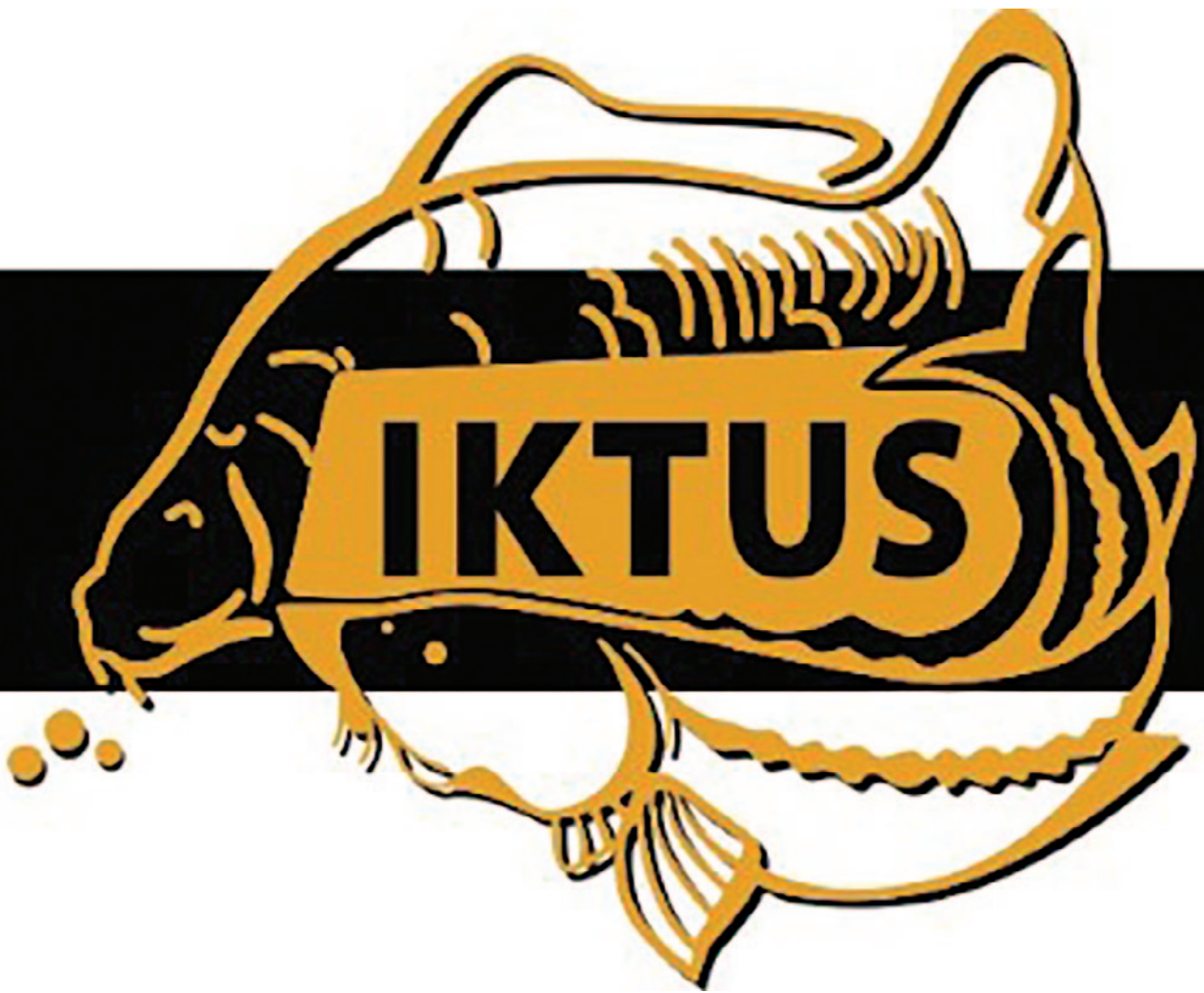


through the year, but when it comes to UK waters the syndicate-style of water are the ones I prefer overall. You might pay a bit extra for them, but you know what you are getting, which is generally quality fishing alongside people with the same sort of mindset. The popularity of some waters means that there can be long waiting lists, and some like to hand-pick their members, so some people

might not get the chance – I know from experience that sometimes if your face doesn't fit you don't get in, simple as that.

There are a couple of good waters not far from where I live that told me I wasn't even being considered for membership! That's how it goes, but thankfully I've got to fish some superb UK waters, and hopefully I'll get to fish more in the future. ■





FISHING RESORT

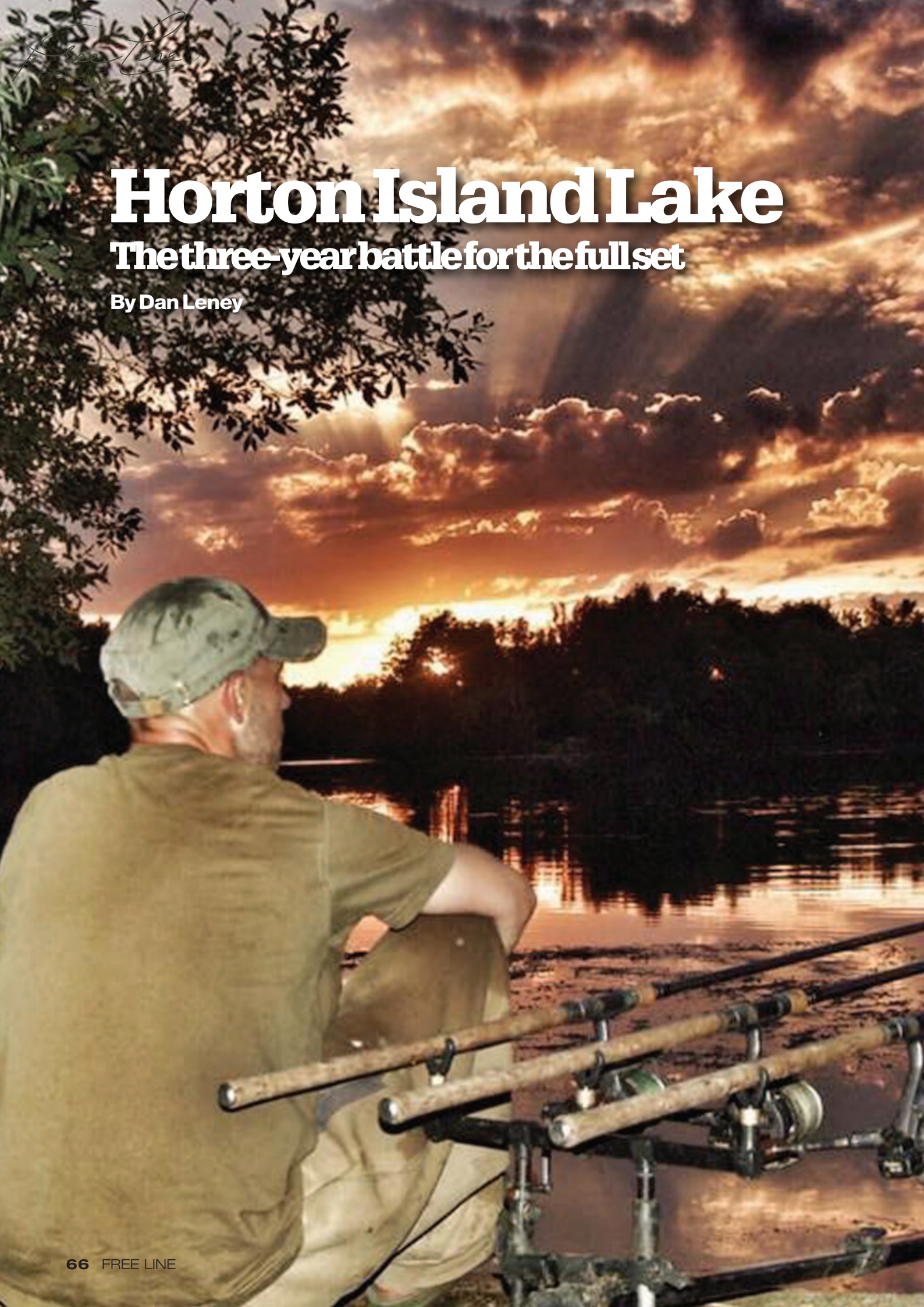


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Horton Island Lake

The three-year battle for the full set

By Dan Leney



The last three years have been full of excitement, trepidation and expectancy of dreams to be fulfilled and goals to conquer, but being fishing, it never really flows like that. This is going to be a piece about some of the big girls that I have landed over the past three seasons and what I reckon to be the best conditions and ways that I have found to catch them. There are quite a few weather patterns that look the same and times that I will always go to this boater's paradise.

Being school Easter holidays when my ticket started, I could pick and choose my sessions dependent on the weather, and when I noticed a huge low of 998mb coming in, I was back on the spots without hesitation of where to go and what to do. I had worked out by now that the white was doing it with washed-out pink. Asking a few questions, this had been made apparent by the eight fish caught this year and previous season's knowledge. Why was I losing the fish still stuck in my head, so I had a really good sit in the sun and came up with a plan. I wanted to fish a pop-up due to the lack of weight and that it would fly back into the mouth. My favourite hinge stiff rigs might have made a pop-up too blatant on the shelf. What I settled on was my version of a hinge, as a complete piece of



fluorocarbon would have the resetting property and allow the stiff section to cause trouble upon ejection.

I had in my bag some Northern Specials that had been soaking in booster liquid for well over a year and had neutral buoyancy. I extended the length of chod section to about 4ins and screwed on the White Special. I used the same lead arrangement to lead clips and a small section of fluorocarbon as a leader to the braid. When set up, this is like a chod that has fallen over with the point of the hook just touching the deck, so I had a pop-up that acted like bottom bait but had the 4in curved section to fly up and nail the carp on the take. 4kg was spread over the three rods from the snag margin and ten yards to each rod perpendicular from the first.

The second was on a lovely sand bar, which rose up from the deck, as the visibility was poor. That night just before dark the fish arrived. I was greeted with a breaching display, which resembled a pod of dolphins with just their heads rolling out along the margin when the middle rod bleeped. Staring at the spot, I saw a huge head rise out of the water and back down to the same spot, and between the waves more and more showed.

Suddenly the margin rod burst into life and arched over again, all locked up. This time there was no pussyfooting about, as I'd had enough of losing them, so back I went and really leant into her, and back I went again and then wound up the gain and back again to steer away from the snag. "BOAT!" I thought to myself, but no, this was my time. Ten minutes later after going up and down the margin and one run of 50-plus yards that flat-rodged me and set the jitters off again, I finally managed to get her up the slope. When she rolled, the knees went, and I could feel the vibration of my arm shaking as I knew what I was attached to. In she went, and the jubilation that erupted should have been censored, as anyone else about would have known something was afoot. There she lay in the net, not the common I wanted, but a mirror of humungous proportions. I put my hand into the net to remove the hook to find it nailed three inches back in the middle with the size 4 dug right in. This had to be the largest mouth I had seen, and my whole fist fitted in, so I was in amazement that a little 14mm pop-up did the job.

After a few calls were made, a pal came to do the pics and weights. "It's





Niftas, the carp dog

Mick's Pet," he said. I didn't have a clue about names and weights; all I knew was that a possible PB and chunk was mine, and it went 46lb 8oz on the scales! Wicked – a new PB and a 40 in the bank after only a couple of sessions. The rest of the day was a blur as the sun came out and so did the house tunes on the speaker, so it was party time. After this first 40 was in the bag, the mission turned to the other target, the 40lb common.

A few weeks later, I made it back down to the area I wanted to be in, but having had a few smaller fish to mid-20, I knew I had to be where I had seen the big girls a few sessions earlier. After an eventful night of marking my schoolbooks, it wasn't long before 4am came round and the phone alarm went off, signifying the

tea marathon to begin. When the bites come first thing in the morning or the night, I tend not to fish during the day but bait instead, so they are not done by the tight lines and totally unaware of my presence down there. This plan had worked on previous sessions, and I was sat buzzing with anticipation of a clockwork bite around 6am and made sure lifejacket was on and everything was laid out ready to go.

Wallop! cracked the stainless bobbin against my blank and the double beep was on. I was on it in a flash with the rod up, and I could feel a totally different creature on the end. All the others go in the weed and stop, but she just wanted to kite on the tight line, arching the rod. I had no choice but to slacken off to give me time to get in the boat and out to her before the line was through all the weedbeds now floating around the spot due to all the action down there. Luckily the light was just starting to shimmer through the far poplars bowing in the wind, with the whistle of the long haul flights coming in overhead. Another bonus was that it was a full moon that was huge so bright that most of the night I didn't use the torch to keep that end of the lake as calm as possible. Really charging out now, I managed to get to the first bed, and with my hand on the line, I got the bundles of Canadian and was ripping at it, trying my best to not let it all go slack, so the last thing I wanted was for the wind to pick up and blow

me back – cheers, carp gods.

I was trying to keep a tight line on all this with the boat, and the wind wasn't easy – have a look on YouTube and you'll see what I mean, as I had the GoPro stuck on my bonce. I told you I was ready for the inevitable run. Again it went through another bed, and more line was flying off the already huge pile at least the size of my little craft. Then she rose, quickly and methodically. You could see she wanted to come up and then bury back down, trying to use the weed as the angle, so I locked up and heaved her, trying stop the dive. Nope, that didn't work... The tip of the tail was into smashing into the water, so it looked like she had a plan, and I might have to go with it. since I was on 20lb X-line straight through, I knew the durability was there and the hooks were huge, so I was having none of it. The problem was I had seen the huge cod breach out the water and the huge size of her frame fall back through the weed, and that's when the knees go. Any angler will tell you that if you watch a fish and observe her for a long period of time, when that proximity of watching comes to the chance of landing it, you will all go at the knees.

Proper heaving, pulling and straining followed with the now effortless wind singing amongst the mess of weed and taught fluoro, and she rolled as I poked the net into the huge ball. She then rolled again, and as she chucked her weight over the weed, she fell straight into my net. Oh my god! The elation! I just went crazy out there on my own with what I could easily see was a big common. My dreams had been answered and the tears began to roll. Safely back to the bank and the fish straight into retainer in the water as quickly as possible, and I was really falling apart now. Trying to be a grown adult and a professional schoolteacher all goes out the window when your dreams are answered. All I wanted to do was call my dad, but I couldn't stop shaking to press the buttons, so I just collapsed onto the bank and stared up at the huge moon that was now behind me, just thinking of my sadly passed on granddad who I'm sure is sitting with the carp gods above, looking down, as every time a rig goes out he gets a mention.

Finally, after a few minutes of calm-



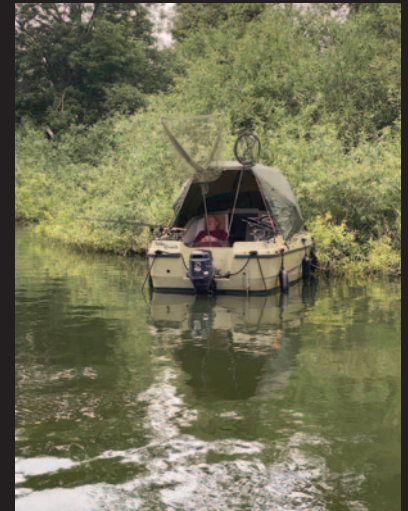
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By Rob Maylin and friends



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

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ness, again calls were made to Dad, the missus and best mates. Now how was I going to get a great pic done? This wasn't a self-take moment. As every lake has a bailiff team, some better than others, I thought a call to the head chap would do, as it always really great to see him, and he'd been helpful in the past. Half an hour later, a call came across that he had walked through all the brambles and crud on the far bank and was nearly with me, so it was back in the boat and in came my pal. With the cameras ready and mat sorted out, she went onto the scales. Since I hadn't had her out the water yet, all I knew was that she was huge common, but when the scales went round 43lb, I was gobsmacked. Knowing the weight of the sling, she came down to 39lb 15oz. Back she went after a few more water shots, and she didn't hang about, drenching me as she powered off into the depths once more, and I was left with a tear in my eye – grow up, Dan.

Just before dark, the rods went back out with new rigs and baits soaked in Betalin and Black with the hooks that I had been carefully carving all day making them ultra sticky. All went to plan and ready for the night ahead, I cranked open a beer and just sat there again thinking what might be about, but it wasn't long before one of the rods went off. I lost it against the weed before I could get to the boat – gutted. A bite off the spot, and they always feel good when you lose one, so I was sat fuming all night about what could have been, but with one rod left on the spot for the night was the best I could do due



to the rules of boating here.

I was up again up at 4am to the sound of the poplars at the far end really whipping over in what had developed into a minor gale. The reason I was back and had not pulled off after my dream fish was I knew they really had it on a low pressure and there were some real chunks here. Life jacket on and kettle going, it wasn't long before the early morning chorus was ruined by the Neville double bleep. I was on it like a flash, and with the rod up high trying stop it kiting off again on the tight line, but no chance – she was gone, line flicking up off the surface with all the drift weed laying over the line from the sunken fluoro.

In the boat and over her, well I thought I was, I pulled the weed away off the line, then she boiled ten yards away behind the boat – this was not good. The angle of the line through the weed was becoming a real issue, but luckily due to the experiences of the previous week I managed to get back in direct contact.

Then the Nantucket sleigh ride began with her powering across the lake surface, unable to plough down due to the taught line and huge arc in the rod. Finally managing to stop her, she just sat there motionless, a dead weight in the water, and I managed to crank the motor over and get beside her. One quick scoop and she was mine, as if she meant to be just sitting there. Oh my god! I couldn't believe it! Another huge common lay festooned in the Canadian with me chucking it everywhere just to see who she was. Then it was back to the bank and straight into the retainer off the edge of the boat and up onto the mat. Scales zeroed and dreams of a double of huge commons buzzed through my already crazy mind. The scales read 40lb 6oz after a few measures, and I had done it! A new water and a brace of 40 commons. 46 carp later with two over 45lbs! What a water! It was a place where dreams really do come true.

Now the funny thing was that the bailiff team had been having a social on the first island and hadn't invited



me, saying later they thought I would rather fish than party; they really didn't know me. So making a call to the party folk with rusty heads was a real treat. I told them I had another one in the net and they had better come over. Cameras at the ready and mats everywhere, I hauled out my prize to the open mouths of the now gobs-macked bailiffs who hadn't seen a fish let alone had a bite, and here was me with another forty on the mat – love it! I will party on my own! Pics done and beers opened, the elation was wicked, but this time I decided to get packed up and get back to the missus for a celebration in the boozier.

Sat in the pub, I looked at the newly downloaded pics when it all came together on what I had done. All the baiting hours and time spent before and after work following, learning and mapping out the movements of these big girls – maybe I had them mixed up and was following the wrong one, but now having caught both Leeches

and Baby Leeches, I realised that maybe I was quite good at this and smug enough to know when a plan came together. This lake had always looked a bit special and came as close to the memories of Wraysbury 1 filtering through every time I immersed the aqua scope into the shimmering surface, now knowing what dreams lay beneath.

Luckily this season a specific area of the lake called the Aquarium has been left totally alone, mainly because the majority of the anglers have been fishing the shallower water nearer the car park end, not lazy fishing, but more social, as the swims are closer together. The Aquarium is right at the other end of the lake and is normally fished from the last island, having total control of this bay. Great features lie all around the quieter area. Basically the main swims go from 10ft five yards out through 20ft and rising to two different shallow shelves on the far bank. The main issue with

fishing to the shallower water is that the line lay from the bank over 150 yards to the shallower area is very poor. You can see them there, but where the lines go in, they disappear very quickly. This is an area that honestly has had less than 50 rod hours this year. This was the area I was going to concentrate on when the summer holidays arrived, giving me the option to bait the shallower margins that never saw lines. I could see the bait going, carp milling, and a swim that I dug out last year was still overgrown and untouched.

You would have thought all these ingredients would have seen this area raped and pillaged long ago, but there was one thing the others anglers were not too keen on: the travelling folk that lived nearby. They would ride their bikes all day and night up and down this path, rabbiting, fishing, shooting, making fires and anything else that took their fancy. The back of the swim was a direct path for these



Leeches at 46lb.



Split Pec at 43lb 14oz.

guys to pop in, and when out on the boat that was not a scene you wanted to turn around and see. The option was to leave this area alone and not to touch, chop or clear anything in the area so the carp and the locals thought nothing had changed. The thing with the corner I had selected was that there was an old swim Chris Tarrant used to fish years ago, right in the far corner and well away from prying eyes. A tree you can get up to look straight down into a 7ft margin with carp always milling around is what we ended up with, but it never is as straightforward as that. The area itself had a very shallow covering of silk weed, which is one of the main holders of the tiny snails and shrimps that these carp go bandy for, so I knew from previous campaigns that big, blatant baits wasn't the one, as I wanted to catch these fish on my terms without the thought of them knowing they were being fished for.

The basis of the campaign baits was always the same leading up to the long summer break – SNAILS!

They are becoming more popular now, but imagine a mix of snails, chopped and whole hemp, crushed maple peas, whole bloodworm all lowered off the boat with a very pungent liquid. Natural and mixed into their naturals was the way to go. The option with the very small baits I use as prebait is that you don't need a huge amount, as the plan I have is to get the bait in amongst the weed that is there originally, only adding to, but not trying to replace their food source. After a few weeks of baiting this area with handfuls of bait, not kilos, the area began to become a haven for these beauties. No lines, no disturbance with the boat and a constant supply of nutritional food kept them hanging around waiting for the right time to do what they do in the calm summer days.

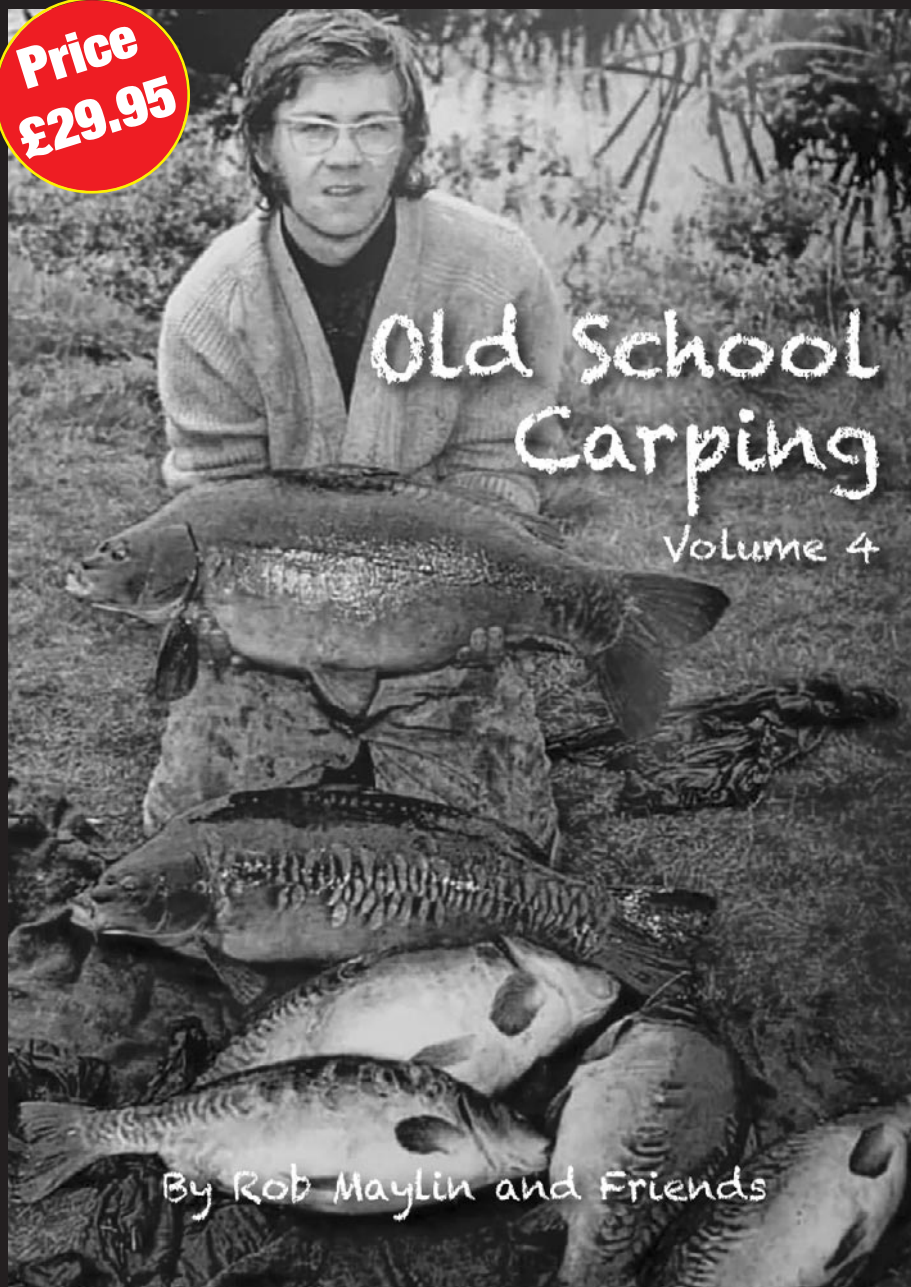
As you might have guessed, in the high atmospheric pressure of August the carp don't feed in the deeper water very well and only really have it on a low-pressure big wind. The area in the Aquarium is about 7-10ft on the

far shelf, crystal clear and surrounded by huge weedbeds, perfect for the days chilling out in the weed and happy to feed all evening in the shal-



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

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lows where the traps were to be set. This all began in June, baiting twice a week with a big spread of tiny baits, not all in the same area, so by the end of July the area was barren with just pit marks on the silt where they had been digging down to get more. With the use of the boat, I could spread the bait out then run my long oar around the bottom, covering the baits, but with the knowledge they were seeking it out, and the signs would tell you they had been in again. The funny thing is that other members had said to me, "Have you seen them up in the Aquarium? They are stacked up there!" "Why are you not fishing for them, then?" I often asked myself but put it down to premeditated ideas.

Very rarely would you hear "I'm off looking for the fish," mostly they would go to one certain area that had been producing fish. By August still no one had been up there, and this was going to be my chance. A final week of snails, hemp and crushed maples mixed in with kilo slabs of frozen bloodworm and we were ready to rock.

Eric, a mate from the lake, said on the phone there had been chunks launching themselves out of the water ten yards off the bank down in the Aquarium, so I gave the plan up and said what I had been doing, as he was one of the good guys. It all coincided with the sights he had seen over 1km away at the end of the lake and the previous day's sights of chunks milling about with no stockies in sight. The plan was to clear the swim out and fill in the path at the back to stop people getting in, using chopped branches, camo netting and with many a shredded ankle on the brambles. This gave me my platform to get a couple of rods down the bank to the right only ten yards off but hidden by a tree I could broolly up behind. This is not a big swim – one broolly and one yard's foot space to the water's edge, so it's very precarious,

but with netting draped over the front and the back, I would be hidden from view whilst I could see them patrolling all day.

I know fishing is all about watching, but this was a convert affair, so daytime sleeping and watching the iPad on the headphones was the course of action because if they were alerted to anything they would be gone. One afternoon just before a huge heatwave of more than 30 degrees with a pressure of 1025+ and no wind was far from the ideal conditions, but perfect for what I wanted because the area I knew is where they wanted to be. So swim cleared, netting down and a small handful of mix in the area, but this time with ten solid PVA bags of Tuna LO30 and Feedstim XP dropped in the area to get a real pungent aroma that would start them grubbing again. The plan was to get the bait in, rods done and netting down and sit there till the sun went down over my back, giving shade to the margin, which is when the rigs were to go out.

The afternoon of sweltering heat coming in and no wind but carp rolling on the spot was too much to take, but I knew this was a longterm plan, and I didn't want to spoil the



Mike's Pet, 46lb

chances that I knew would come. I'm not doing this article as a use this, do that, those hook patterns etc, I just used just simple D-rigs with chopped creamed tigers, Brazil nuts and tiny slivers of Pacific Tuna on 5in hook links on rigs that could be dropped into the silt, hiding the leads. These were proven rigs for here but unconventional – fluoro stiff rigs with no movement and fishing particles? I know, it's a bit bizarre, but trust me, it works. These carp have huge mouths, and the thought of small hook links and stripped braid flying around hopping for a hook hold wasn't the one. If it goes in one way then it has to come out the same way – no balancing of baits, just heavy on the deck, and if they want it, it will be taken in.

As the last rays disappeared behind the mass of brambles that I had strategically placed behind me, it felt more like the demilitarised zone waiting for the flanking travellers to come from behind. In the calmness of the mirrored pit in front, I was carefully sitting motionless with tea in hand as one after another slowly started rolling down the margin. The way the broly and netting was placed, all I had to go on were the constant ripples banging against the boat as they drifted down from the hot area. It was only going to be a matter of time before I knew all hell would break loose. The only issue was that the rods were under the water under a tree to get the angle needed to the margin spot, which meant that if that rod went off, I was straight into 5ft of water in the edge on soft silt and had to negotiate a way of getting the rod away from the tree and over to the boat. This might seem a bit over the top using the boat, but the weed in the pit is horrendous as soon as you're over the shelf into the deeper water. They head straight for this, hence the braid and the boat to get over the top – safety first at the end of the day; I don't want to be leant into a carp trying to pull its face off out of the weed – not good.

The evening passed and probably at about 11, I drifted off to a slumber. Unfortunately the high pressure had really come in, and it was over 20 degrees at this time, but I could hear the resounding noise of falling carp as if they were rooting in the trees, and I was waiting for the moment that I knew would come. At 5.30-ish it hap-



pened – the right rod under the tree let out a scream that the whole of Wraysbury must have heard, and the receiver was flashing away with a piercing neon blue and the shriek of the Neville. I ran down the slope and into the water, luckily still in my pants from the night and my Crocs – what a look! The rod was bent double round the corner as I stretched out into the misty glass covered pit. I tried to hold it, but she was hell bent on making the deeper water and the housing estate sized weed bed. No messing around now, straight into the boat, and I glided out into the lake on a slack line.

Knowing my hook holds were good, I managed to steer over to with ten yards of where she was, then I wound down onto her to get her moving again. Off she went with mental diving from weed bed to weed bed, really testing the little 10ft rods while the braid singing in the morning between the sounds of cuckoo and my mate the blackbird – this was epic. When you are on the boat, all feels so much more exciting because you're right over the fish on a tight line, not having to fight weed beds from the bank and watching every twist and turn in the crystal water. You never get tired of these moments.

Finally, with one last explosion on the surface, I leant out and steered her over the cord as the sun was just coming up. I knew it was a good fish, but not sure which one, so after a quick roll up of the net, I collapsed the rod and clipped the net to the side of the boat with a couple of clamps, and back I went, smirking to myself that

the plan had worked when BANG, another just crashed over the other rod only a matter of yards away.

The addition of one ingredient I think really makes this mix more natural, and which I should have mentioned before, is Dried Insect meal. The night before I fish, I make the mix, and the liquids really get into the shrimps and bug cases, giving much more natural attraction. Back to the bank and the decision was made – don't spoil it, get someone down to take the pics then pack up and have a scoot about during the day looking for another opportunity, knowing I had a back up plan. With the camp down, I took a trip down to the car park to get the RK boys over. I hoisted her out of the water checking all the important limbs, and onto the scales, she settled on 40lb 6oz. All I knew at this point was that she was a mirror. As we unfolded the retainer and cleared the area, I saw her front left pec was split, and I knew it was the one I'd had last November, Split Pec as I called her, at 40lb 2oz.

After checking and treating her hook hold, I released her from front the boat, really happy knowing she had spawned, survived the winter and dodged all the other rigs till she came to me again – happy days. The common I just released straight back out of the second sling, as it's not good form holding fish for no reason, and after just a quick recuperation, off she paddled, probably about 27lb but without a weigh. I wasn't bothered, as the plan had worked, and I now sat in the swim having a smoke and a tea at 7am, packed up and ready to travel

about. JOB DONE. This was the start of what turned out top be an epic few weeks' angling with the lakes empty and time on my hands – buzzing was an understatement.

Every Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday saw me at the lake and baiting up whenever I left my area, continuing to hatch my plan. I checked the weather report a couple weeks ago and saw a massive low coming in, the tail end of a storm in the States if I remember correctly. Pressure was dropping like a stone to 980Mb and big northerly winds – this was weather to be on the bank, and being a Wednesday, I could easily get to the swim after work and be back to school in the morning. It was the same trip as always, but now I had mastered attaching a new rig before I left the jetty and boated to my swim, one H-block carefully deposited at the back of the area with the three rods around it, one of which would go back to the back with all the gear still in the boat trying to keep the area as quiet as possible. Rigs where a little more developed now due to the topography of the sediment – soft bloodworm-filled silt beds with no weed anywhere to be found needed bottom baits, and certainly too blatant for a

pop-up, even a really short stiff hinge rig, so the decision was to fish stiff fluorocarbon to a D-rig on a size 4, balanced out with a homemade washed-out white wafter fished to a helicopter setup with 5oz leads. The lead would plug in the bottom and 3ins above would be the top bead, safely pushed onto shrink tube around 1m of unleaded leader.

20lb fluorocarbon is great gear for this, as when the leads plug into the silt, the balanced bait falls gently away from the lead setup, making a great resetting rig with the added bonus of when the hook goes in, it has to come out the same way, giving great hook holds. Three rigs had exactly the same with a scattering of Pacific Tuna around each rod, not too tight, but heavily dosed in Tuna LO30 and Tuna Extract. This would give that added pulling power for the carp and something they had been eating for a while. Another bonus was that I have been the only person on the water using this bait, so I could see what was going in the area, and it was only my bait. One thing I had learnt was that all the bites are at night-time, so as long as I had the rigs set by dark, then I could sit back on a semi tight line and wait for them to

move in. This was a definite night-only area, and you would physically see them roll in the pale moonlight as it rose behind my head.

When it was quiet in this area, you could get runs off all three rods during the night and off to school in the morning buzzing, but since I had had a few fish and with the power of Facebook (my fault), the area was getting busier. I was lucky that the pressure was so low and the heavy weather was in, hammering down that end of the lake and keeping everyone away. As soon as 10pm came round, the right hand rod was away with another drop back. Reaching to the rod and lifting into her, she kited right and out into open water. With the weed diminished, I knew I could play her from the bank and just stand in the end of the boat. Not the longest battle in the world, but it was a beautiful dark, lean 20lb mirror, and with two rods left in the area, I went off to sleep, tea in hand, safe in the knowledge the planets might align for me with this weather.

It wasn't till 5am the following morning, just as the alarm on my phone went off, that the middle rod gave a couple of bleeps and pulled up tight then back down again a couple



Two-Tone 45lb.

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.

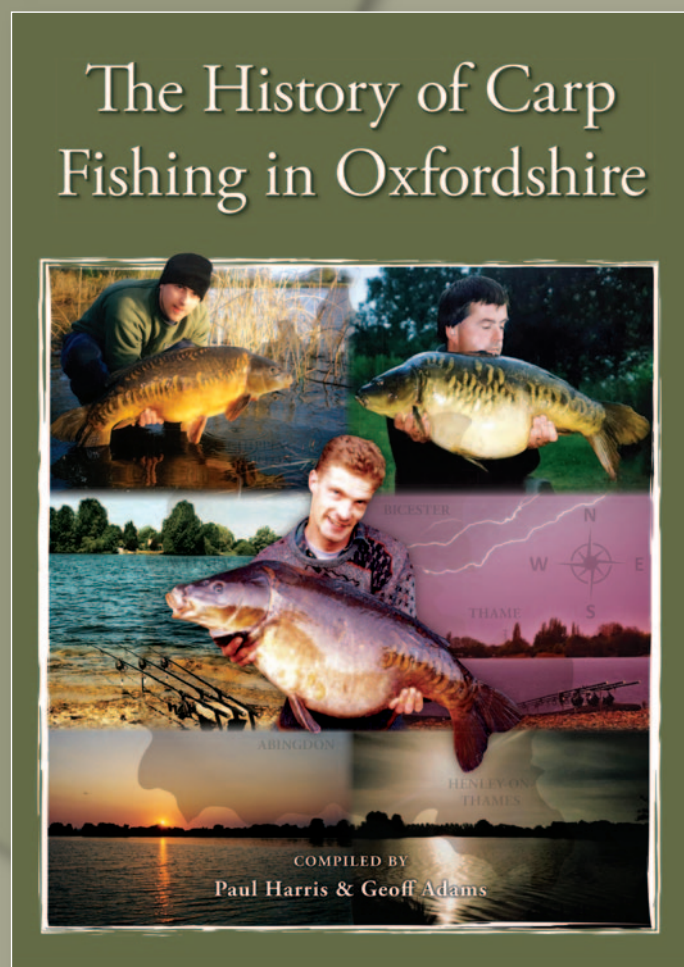
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing 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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39lb 14oz leather.

of times – drop back again! This was doing my nut in – nearly every bite from this spot was a drop back. To be honest, I was up most of the night thinking about running shocker lead setups or moving swims for a better line lay, as it was really getting to me. As I held the rod aloft and began to lean back, what felt like a tench slowly started coming towards me, not nodding, but just a weight on the end. Having had a few fish from this pit now, I knew this wasn't right and was just waiting for it when it happened. As if a pike had grabbed the little roach you are retrieving, the rod arched over and then off she went.

Life jacket on, and out I went in the boat, dark, wet, windy, kneeling down, hood up, rod down the side. Usually you can tow out to the fish, but this one was towing me with the clutch still slipping as I ploughed out into the dark. It was still taking line, but now over the weed beds I had more control. Every time I gained on her, she would plough down under

the boat again, up and down, violently shaking her head when then she erupted on the surface. My little 10ft Scope buckled over, clutch screaming so fast that hand lining the drag was the best option. You could see she was a chunk by the disturbance and boils shimmering in what light there was. I never use the head torch till they are in the net so as to not spook the fish, but this one was going mental. Finally she breached on the surface and luckily rolled into my waiting net. Switching on the red light before I went out gave me a marker back to the bank, and with net folded up against the boat and rig undone at the quick link, out she came, and what a chunk she was in the net. She went straight onto the rain soaked unhooking mat.

I had purchased the new Fox STR retainer sling the week before and had a 37lb mirror in that first time out, but now, feeling like a 40, in she slipped. A quick weigh, and she went round to over forty, but I knew as it

was only half hour to light and we'd had such a spirited fight, we both needed a rest. The call to my mate was made for pics, and then the call to work: "Hi, it's Dan Leney. I will be a little late this morning due to the fact I'm still at the lake in the rain waiting for photographs!" No answers came back, so I guessed I was ok for an hour. Upon my mate's arrival, we weighed her again, finally settling on 39lb 15oz and a fish called the Leather. With the pics done and a celebratory tea, it was back in the boat to the car and back to work. To say I really had a good day at school was an understatement since my completion of the near full set of the mirror, common and leather... just let down by one ounce... oh, well.

Well summer has come an end, and what a summer it has been. Having elected to sit on the one lake this year, I decided that the Island Lake at Horton would be quiet enough and hopefully get something going on an area that I could bait and no one would



really fish there. I have talked about the lake in previous articles and some of the captures I have had, but nothing could compare to the last month in this area. Right on the end of a northerly wind, this far bank didn't see much attention, and I had heard on the grapevine that they get down there towards the end of the summer/early autumn, but the lake had shut down. By this I mean no shows, no fizzing and definitely no carp caught, so what was I to do?

My mates pulled off and started fishing the Crayfish Pool next door, which left me the daunting task of 55 acres on my own. Competing with all the naturals would be a challenge, as there was so much of it in this massively nutritious water. Most of this year I had been fishing boilies, and the bites had dried up, so scratching my bald bonce, I knew a plan had to happen. Yeah, I had well over 30 bites from my previous two areas and came to the conclusion that once a chunk had come off the area, the troops would move away to a different area. This wouldn't be too bad, but this year the lake had been covered by a Canadian weed bed like no other. Put it this way – the sailing club had the

weed-cutter boat out in June, not even mid summer, so you can imagine how much weed was there. The one bonus I had was that the visibility was bang on 17ft straight off the boat so I could see, with time, what they were up to. Tunnels in the weed and rafts of floating weed gave the perfect cover for the covert operation that the carp had undertaken this year, and they were very happy under the weed stuffing themselves.

Thanks to my dear brother, I managed to get my GoPro on a loop, tied onto an H-block marker and lowered into a channel in the weed that had a softer silty bottom, not the hard deck I was used to on here, but thinking about the naturals, I put my plan into action. GoPro on the deck and a huge buffet of small particles and seeds spread around the area, I could begin to see what was coming in and how quickly certain visitors were coming. Soon I saw this end of the lake had one main patrol route, and by chance I had fallen upon it. Baiting up after school and collecting my camera, I could download the footage and work out really what was going on.

First light the next morning, and the first rig went down with the donk

I had expected after what the GoPro camera had shown me – bang on – that's one bite! Back to the swim, rod on rest and the rod rips off!! After the ensuing boat battle due to the amount of weed, a sprightly low 20 mirror graced my net. Proper buzzing now that I knew they were about, I got the other rods out as quickly as possible and proceeded to properly fill the spots in with at least 5kg of bits over each rod. Having that run had hit me for six, as I was expecting night action on these rods, not during the day. The conclusion I came to, being a confident angler, was that they were having it and didn't want to be anywhere else. The day was slow until right on dark when a mid double common tripped up, but it was still nailed with the fluorocarbon rig and the size 2 hook imbedded firmly in its lower lip.

This time rod back, out but only a handful went down. Knowing they were having it and a big hit might be on the cards, the planning for the odd bite went right out the window. Short hooklinks and heavy leads was the way forward due to the weed. I wanted them nailed and then discharge the 10oz lead on a tight line to a locked-up clutch. This would rise them up above the weed and out into the open water.

At 1.28am the rod was away again, this time ploughing through weedbeds till I managed to release it, and another starburst mirror was in – nothing massive, but sometimes you have to play the numbers game. With the rules of no boats at night, I managed to Spomb another 5kg over the spot ready for first light. I had this rod already clipped up so that when I was baiting up in the previous weeks, I could bait up in the dark with no one seeing where or what was going out.

Then it happened... just before 7am a swan had swum into the weeds at the end of my rod tips, and as I glanced round I could see the remnants of the Canadian hanging below its beak with my lovely new 20lb X-line draped across its beak. Having just put the rod out on bite time, I was gutted knowing that this bugger could damage my line, so I had no choice but to reel in and feel the line, but as I went to put my life-jacket on, she was away. Two beeps and then a massive drop back made me hit the rod and feel her charging

on a locked-up reel, so kiting left was the only option. Suddenly she locked up and stopped. I quickly put the GoPro on my head and got into the boat.

Winding out against the strong cold wind, which had now whipped up, all I could see was a housing estate weed bed moving across the lake against the wind. When I got over the top, arm straight out behind with the rod, and the other hand tearing the weed off the line, still unaware of what was on the end. Bunch by bunch, slowly I could feel movement. Then I took off probably the worst piece weed that was festooned all over the rod and boat. I had seen her golden eye staring at me with intent as she rolled to expose her monumental form, covered in golden scales, and then I knew I had Leeches, the biggest common in the lake, last time out at 47lb. I knew this was the moment I had been dreaming about, and for those that follow me on social media, I have been banging on about this common for a while.

A flick of the tail, and back down through the weed bed she went, putting more strain on the line with all this weed going one way and her underneath going the other. I had no choice but to really heave her back through the weed then remove the weed from her face and net her before she shot off again. A quick flick of the motor, and I was upwind and could now drift past, pulling and scooping the weed, and then she suddenly came up through it and rolled into the waiting net. I boated back, got the fish out quickly and straight into the retainer before I could really think what had happened, and this is when the tears and the shaking began. Unable to walk, talk or string a sentence together without swearing, I composed myself and made a call to the head bailiff to come and do some pics.

I picked my mate up on the boat, and coming back to the swim he asked how big it was. "Not a clue," I said with mild jest in my voice, as he knew it was a chunk of a common. Mats sorted, water bottles ready and a quick tea, we were ready to hoist her out and onto the mat. The scales were bouncing around, and I couldn't stop the bouncing, so a pole was needed and the steadier hand of the chief too. On the scales she went to

over 50lb, so I then knew my dreams had come true. After a final weight of 46lb 10oz being settled on, the biggest common in the lake was mine. All rods went back out, and I just sat there for the rest of the day in a bit of a daze after the morning's events. Still having the lake to myself on my own little island, the tranquillity of the day was perfect, and a smoke, a drink and some tunes set me up for a kip that I would relish for the rest of my days.

Suddenly the middle rod was away again – this time a quicker boat battle and a 30lb mirror was hanging off the boat while we made our way back to shore. This was number 42 of a season that I thought 15 carp would be good, but nearer to 50, this was unimaginable.

The new season 2017 started, and my second session saw me in the snags for a bit of a social with a man who had just put back a 54lb carp called Roids – wow! Never a sulker, we went back to my swim for a BBQ in good spirits. I put out two rods to the snags then forgot to tie up my boat – schoolboy – at which point it drifted through my floating lines and rigs dropped. A handful of bait over the top, and I returned to the swim, Coke open and fag in mouth and good company in the sun – all was good. Suddenly halfway through my fag the right rod lifted up out of the rest. "That's a bite!" I yelled! I went out in the boat, and early season weed

stopped her in her tracks, allowing me to get over her again and pull from a better angle.

My leader came up along with a big ball of weed, so under the water the net slipped and so did the weed and a blinded carp. I quite often like to play the game of driving back in the boat without sorting the weed and fish out. I snap the leader, roll the net and back I go. This time I asked the chap in the swim to have a peek and his face said it all. "Lump," he said, as I parted the net, and waving back at me was the perforated split pec of an old friend. For now the third time in three seasons there was Split Pec, or Dan's Pet, as a bailiff said, looking back at me. On the scales she went 43lb 15oz, well up on last year, but I was glad to see her fighting fit and looking awesome. So with the rods redone, half a fag, 15 minutes and a forty – nice! What a lake, and a place that will last in my angling dreams for many years to come.

I could go on all day about the journey or the moment, but these things I will always keep to myself, as some things should never be published, but enjoyed no less. Well, all good stories must come to an end, and this is the end by a long chalk. I still have one more year on this amazing water with three targets left: the Zanussi mirror, the Spacehopper common and the big man, Roids, at over 50.

So till the next time, keep your dreams alive and catch you on the syndicate sometime. ■



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Quest for the Big Fully

By Mick Christie

This journey I'm about to delve into didn't start one, two or even ten years ago... it began almost 20 years ago now. I first fished this little pit nestled in the Stour Valley in the 99/2000 season. When I was 15 years old, some friends and I used to fish all the pits local to the area whilst we were learning the ropes, spending all our summer holidays down there, dreaming of landing one of the mythical lumps; you know how it is! Anyway, we descended on the pond like we used to do and started catching straight away. Personally I

**(Right) Big Fully 17 years ago.
(Below) The Peach, the reason I went back!**





One of the small clean commons.

managed two cracking fully scaled mirrors, and how pleased was I? I had caught a few scaly ones on my travels round the pits, but nothing on this level before... These were the real deal, mate! Being young, I soon drifted away from the pond, deciding to focus all my attention on drinking beer and suchlike, as you do in those all important teenage years, and it wasn't until a few years ago that the pond was brought to my attention once more.

I saw a picture of a fish called the Peach; it was a winter capture, and her colours looked phenomenal! This was on top of her big set of shoulders, perfectly over-slung mouth and scales down her flanks the size of saucers – a right prize, and one of the real characters of the pond, but also a rare visitor to the bank. After seeing it, it was just too much to resist.

After I obtained my ticket from Mid Kent Fisheries, my first trip down was in early June. A friend and I turned up to find the lake completely empty, and we couldn't believe our luck! It was Friday evening, and there wasn't another bivvy in sight! I chose to fish in a swim called the Kushdys, and my mate set up next door in the Pads

swim. We didn't catch anything that weekend, but there were a lot of trees climbed and shapes were seen cruising round in the high afternoon sun, looking like what can only be described as fresh water pigs.

We returned a couple of weeks later to find ourselves in the same situation with not another angler in sight – result! This time I chose to fish a more central swim of the pond. The first night passed by quietly, and early the next morning, we reeled in and went for a good look around. We went about our business, looking in all the carpy spots, and when we got directly opposite to the swim I was fishing, we finally found what we were looking for. I couldn't have been more lucky, because there lying before me about 3ft from the bank was a dirty big common accompanied by the Peach herself! I waited for them to leave the area and shot back to my swim ready to set a trap for her. I cast a lead onto the opposite bank, went round there, clipped a rig on and lowered it in onto the spot using a PVA loop tied on to a spare rod.

Within half an hour it was away! My heart skipped a beat as I hit the rod, only to feel the blatant signs of a

tench on the end. This unfortunately repeated itself a further four times. It was a lot of work getting the rod into position, but it had to be done, as I'd seen her there in the area. I received no more tench through the evening, and I hoped the carp had moved into the zone and pushed the red-eyed monsters out. That they did, because at 6:30 the following morning the bobbin pulled up tight, and I lifted into a heavy fish. It didn't put up too much of a scrap to be fair, just using its weight to hold the bottom as I pumped it closer to the waiting net. As it popped up in front of me, I saw the huge scales down her flanks and immediately knew it was the one. With hardly any hassle, I scooped her up into the net, and she was mine! I couldn't believe my luck! Second trip in, and I had her in the bag! I went up to get my mate, and we weighed her and got some shots done in the early morning sun. I went home that morning happier than a smack-head at an all-you-can-eat heroin buffet!

I didn't have much time for angling after that trip but kept in close contact with some of my other friends who were fishing the pond. It was my mate Martyn who sent me a picture of



The pretty fully!

a big fully scaled mirror, and when I saw it, my jaw dropped! What a fish it was! I wasn't going anywhere just yet with this swimming around in there, and it wasn't just one – there were three, all of epic proportions! And to make it even more special, the big fully that I had fallen in love with happened to be the same one I caught 17 years ago! That was it; the fire was burning, and I wasn't going to stop until I had done everything in my power to catch it once again.

Now, I don't get a lot of time to go angling, being a full-time family man with a wife, four children and a busy job scaffolding and roofing. My wife works evenings, so I get home from work and she leaves for work, so overnights were well out the question. I just had to get out on what weekends I could and do as much homework as possible. The pond wasn't very clear, so sightings of the fish were rare, and by this I mean unless they were close in the margins or just under the surface, picking a particular fish out was very difficult,

so it was just a case of finding out the areas of the lake that it preferred from past captures and all that sort of thing. I had a few more frustrating trips down there, seeing plenty of fish rolling over my baited areas but just couldn't buy a bite off one! It was then I realised that they were a lot cuter than I once so foolishly thought, and the capture of the Peach really was a blessing.

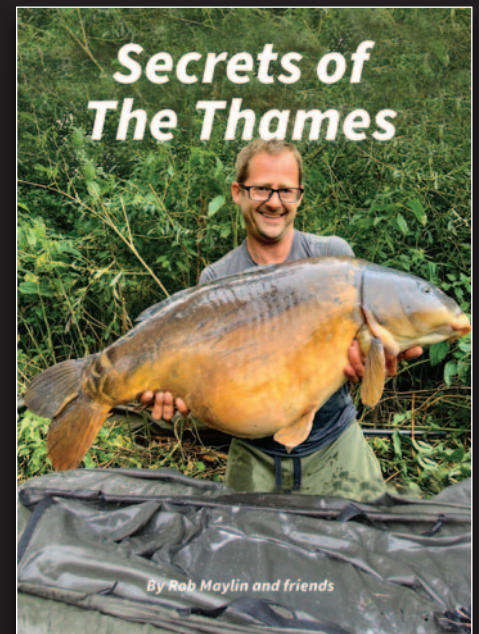
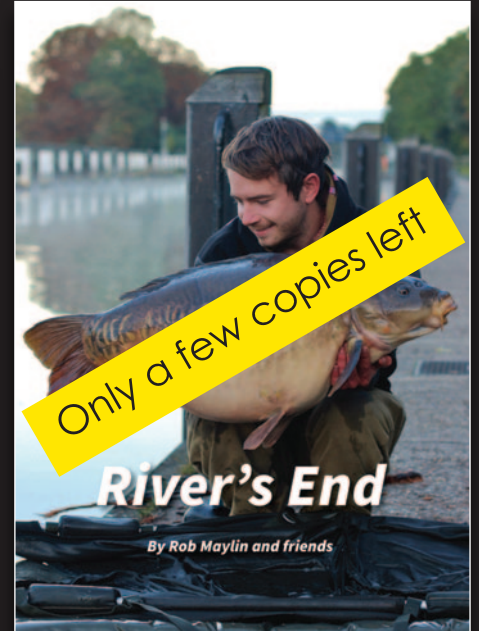
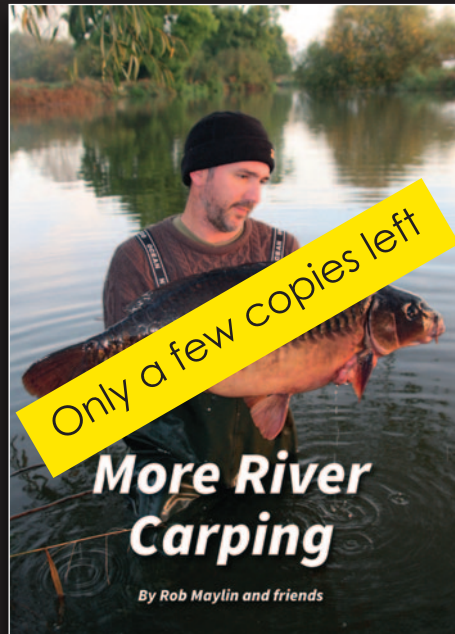
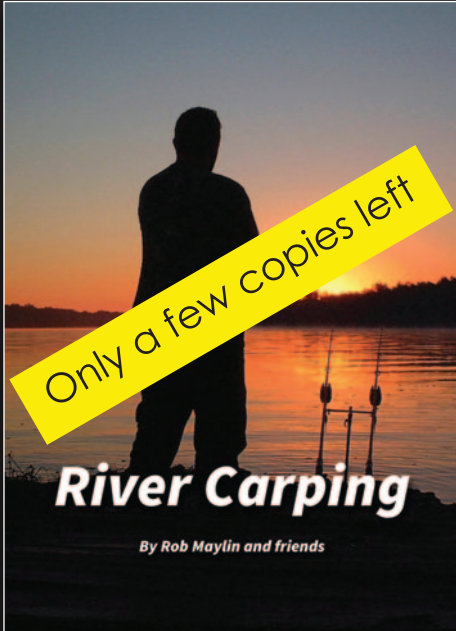
I wasn't back down there again until the following May, and on my first trip back down I only went and landed the Peach again!! I'm really not one for repeats, but I have to say I was happy to have her again. She was up 3lb in weight at 37lb and looking every bit better for it. My mate Joe came over from the opposite bank, kindly did some pictures, and we sent her off back safe and sound. On my final night, I landed another one of the lake's characters known as the Smiley Common, so all was good! My best mate Martyn was giving me his fish-meal, and they were obviously loving it! The big fully had done a few cap-

tures around my being there, but I wasn't downbeat about it; they were all pieces of the puzzle I could use in my long-term plan of maybe catching her once again.

I drew a blank on the next trip, and as luck would have it due to family and work commitments and me giving up my winter fishing, I wasn't to fish until the following spring again! But hey ho, that's how it goes sometimes. I always had my ear to the ground, logging captures and conjuring up a plan for the spring. By the time April came around, I was up and raring to go. It was finally time to get the cogs turning and put my plan into action. I now had a good knowledge of the areas of the pond she liked and a pattern of when she would hit the bank. Rigs were to be kept simple, and the bait was spot-on, so it was just a case of getting it all to slot together. It started off perfectly with a couple of the smaller commons coming my way. It was getting busy, and my time was still limited, but I was using it up wisely, only being on the

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bank when I thought it was prime conditions for the all-important bite!

My next visit was in May, which was a bit of fate really. I was due to be down on the Friday ready to fish the May full moon, but that week I had a bit of a falling out with the boss, so work was off the cards for a while just so things could cool down a touch! I was bang up for getting up there as soon as I could, but I'd have to wait for the wife to get home on the Friday night then set off well into darkness, so she suggested going on the Saturday morning and fishing through till the Monday, as I now had no work. As much as I wanted to get there asap, it was a better idea, as everyone would be packing up Sunday, and I'd have the pick of swims.

On the first night, I had one of the smaller stockie commons again. It was on first light when I was recasting the rod that I had the common on when I heard, BOSH!! I looked to my right, and through a hole in the trees no bigger than a dinner plate I saw a fully lift out the water and sink back down. I chucked the rod on the floor, legged it down the bank and lined up

exactly where the fish had come out. There was someone I knew fishing in the swim next door, and it was pretty much his water, so I couldn't go crashing down there straight away, but I gave him a call and asked him to let me know when he was leaving so I could go in the swim next door to him and make the cast to where I'd seen the fish. It was a mild day with fine drizzle, and that night was to see the best of the full moon.

I finally got the call, so I loaded the barrow and pushed it down to the swim in the steady rain that was now upon us. Once I was in the swim, I set the brolly up to keep the kit dry and then set about sorting the rods out. I cast the first rod out to the area where I saw the fully do the leap of faith, and it went down sweet as you like on a lovely silty/pea shingle bottom at the back of a bar in about 7ft of water, so that was that one on the dance floor. The other rod was fished on top of a plateau that ran directly out in front of me. They were both baited with around 50 free offerings apiece. Some of the lads were standing opposite the swim I was fishing and started

pointing out into the water. My spot up there was rocking! Typical! But I'd seen the fully up here, so this is where I had to be!

With that I walked a few steps further back into my swim, when the plateau rod went into meltdown, and I lifted into a powerful fish that was stripping line off me. I waded out into the water just in front of the reeds just so I had no hassles landing what was on the end. It was now charging about in the deep water out in front of me. Finally it tired and came up spitting water, and all I could see was the armour plated flanks of one of the sought after fully scaled carp. I soon sank the net under her and immediately checked the tail for the white trim that the big fully has, but it wasn't there. Del came round, as he'd seen what was going on from the other side, and we identified it as the Pretty Fully, and what a fish it was! It really was one of the best I had the pleasure of seeing on the bank, let alone catching... I was buzzin! We weighed her in at 35lb on the money, held her up for some shots and sent her safely on her way home. The



Odd Lip – things were looking up!



The Big Golden – an end to an unreal trip.

wife's idea of changing my days around was a bloody good one!!

Tom and Del who had come round to do the pictures for me had now gone, and I set about tidying the swim up. I just got everything sorted and made a well-deserved cuppa when the left hand rod at the back of the bar was away! A fight of the same proportions as before took place, and as this one neared the net, I could see it was one of the pond's big commons. She was soon kissing that spreader block, and when I peered down in the net I could see it was a fish known as Odd Lip. I couldn't believe it – to catch the Pretty would have kept me happy for a season, but to brace it with Odd Lip was crazy! I called Joe up who was angling on the lake next door, and he agreed to come down to do some pics. We then weighed her up at 37lb 2oz. We quickly got some shots done before the fading light disappeared and set the old fella free. Big winds and rain drew in that night, and the full moon was glowing like a good'un. I lay in my bed pretty cold; all my

clothes had got wet and the only thing I had left that was dry was a pair of joggers. I couldn't really sleep due to the amount of adrenaline I had rushing through me after the brace!

It was a little after midnight when the left hand rod pulled up tight and then dropped back again. That's got tench all over it, I thought, as it kept pulling up and down. I pulled myself from the warmth of the bag, slung my wet T-shirt on then hopped into the wet waders. It was pouring down, and my head torch had packed in, so I now had a smaller torch tucked into the elastic! As I walked over to the rod, it pulled up tight once more, but let me tell you it was no tench I was attached to! I pumped a heavy weight back towards me, then as it neared the deep water in front, it felt like I'd hooked the devil himself in the bottom lip!

Mad charges up the left hand margin nearly flat-rodged me twice, but after another ten minutes of mental charges, it was game over, and it was engulfed in the mesh. I could see it

was another big common in the bright light of the full moon. I flicked my new makeshift head light on to get a better look at my prize, and straight away I could see it was a fish called the Big Golden. I was gobs-macked! There I was standing out in the lake soaking wet just laughing to myself.

I couldn't believe what had just happened! I got sorted and got her sacked up and sent a few texts to friends hoping someone would turn up early doors and help out with some shots. My mate Shane was on a pit down the road and came down at around 4am. It was still fairly dark, but he had to be to work at 5:30, so it was now or never for the pics. Up she went on the scales, and the needle hit 39lb 2oz – get up there! Once again I had my pictures done with another real gem of the pond and set her free. What an unbelievable trip, and one I won't forget in a long time!

I had one more trip down there in the August, which was a blank for me, but Bill who was fishing in the area I

wanted to be in caught the Big Fully. He had been on the pond for a fair few seasons, so it was a well-deserved capture, and I was made up for him. Ok, I would have loved to catch it myself, but it still helped me in my quest for her because I now knew that the last three captures were from this area of the pond. It was now set in stone for me where I would spend my time angling for the mighty fish. I had a competition to fish with my mate Martyn in the September, and that was to be all the angling I had till the following April and a whopping eight months away from the pond, but that's just how things were, and I had to deal with it.

Work was flat out, and the winter months soon flew by. I was desperate to get back down there, and the Big Fully was on my mind at all times. I spent endless hours on the phone to Martyn talking about how bad I wanted this fish, and how I planned to pull out all the stops to make it happen this coming spring. The previ-

ous year she had had done a capture on the start of the ticket, so I booked the Friday off work early so I could make sure I'd be there if history repeated itself. I was buzzing for it and couldn't wait to get down there. All the kit was prepped and ready to go the week before when I got the dreaded news – someone had caught her four days before I was due down there! I'm always pleased for other anglers when they reach their goals, but I was heartbroken. I'd waited eight months for my chance to get back down and angle for her, but that's just the way it goes I suppose! At least I was still getting out on the bank after all.

I arrived at the pond on the Thursday night, and with only one other angler on, I slipped in just where I wanted to be. I checked the spots were still good and flicked the baited rigs onto them. My mate Shane popped down that evening for a chat, and I had a couple of Guinesses to celebrate the new season ahead. I let

the pond have a good glug as a toast, hoping she would be kind to me! The night passed quietly, and I sat it out until around 10am when the bite time usually dwindled and decided to recast the rods. I got the left hand rod that had done me so proud in the past sorted first and just sat it in the rests allowing the line to sink while I dealt with the other rod. With them both now sorted, I went to clip the bobbins on when the left hand banker rod pulled up tight in my hand, and I looked out at the line to see it slicing up through the water to my right.

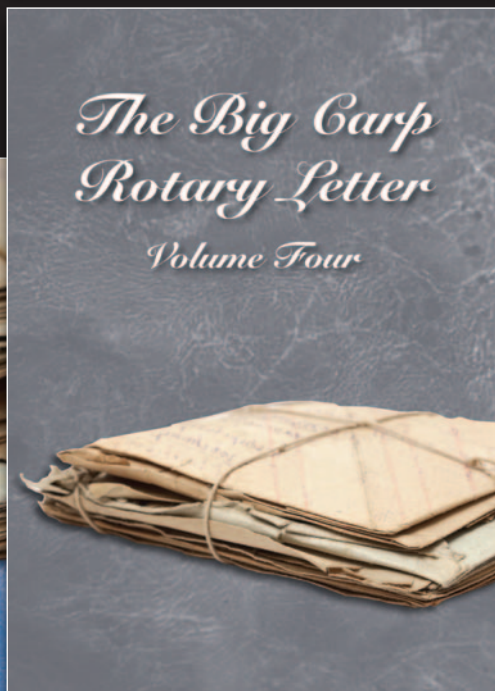
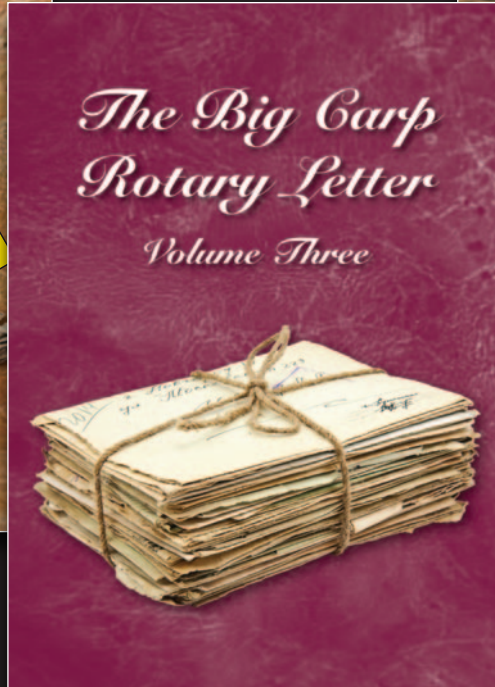
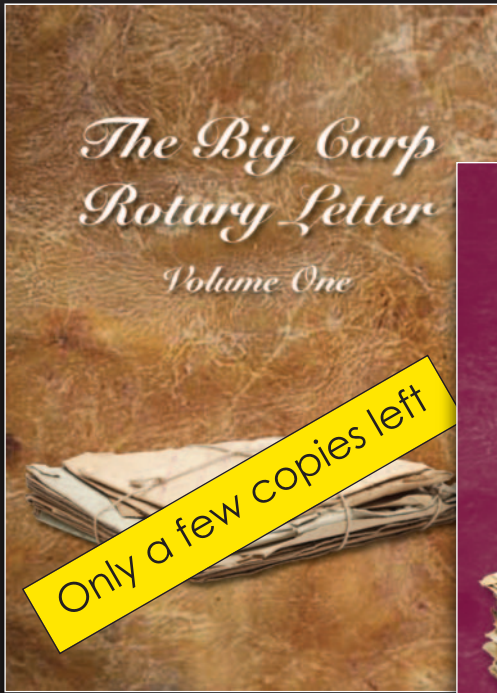
I picked the rod up in a flash and felt a fish charging hard down the back of the bar. It definitely felt like a good fish, so donning the waders, I slipped into the margin. After putting up a fine battle, it was now nearing me. I still hadn't seen it, but it was now only about ten yards away. When I finally see it pop up, I wanted to die – it was a fully! I went to bits; I really couldn't believe it. It was eyes down for a full house now, and I tried to



The Big Fully, immense in every way and a pleasure to hold again after all them years, it really did mean the World to me.

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Measles – the icing on the cake.

steer it to the net as calmly as I could. After holding my breath for what felt like a week, in she went! While all this was going on, I failed to see Pete standing behind me, a lovely old guy who walks his dog round the pond, a true gentleman and someone I always had time for a chat with. “You got one, son?” he asked, but by this time I was in bits, just shouting at him and jumping up and down saying, “This could be it!” at the top of my voice!

It was time to find out if this really was the one I was after, so I looked down at her tail, and there it was – the tail with the white marks – the same fish I’d caught 17 years ago!! I let out the “Big Fully!” roar to an empty lake, but it felt good nonetheless. I called my wife to tell her the good news, and I think she was just as happy as me, or happy I’d stop

banging on about this fish to her now 24/7! I called Martyn and Shane, and they were down within the hour to do the pics for me (cheers, boys!).

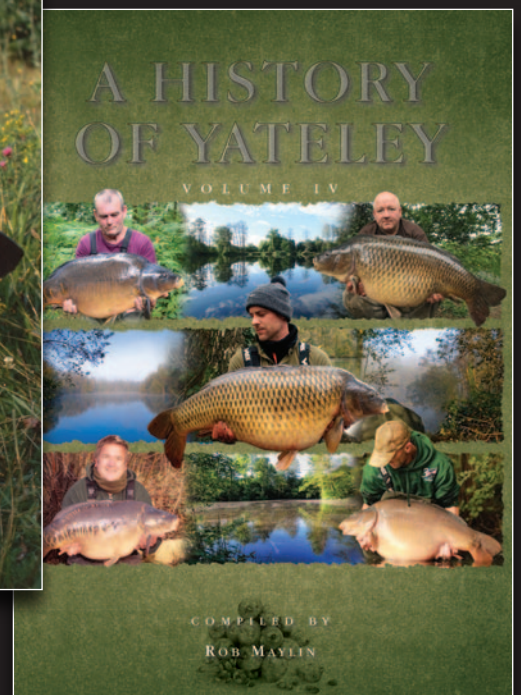
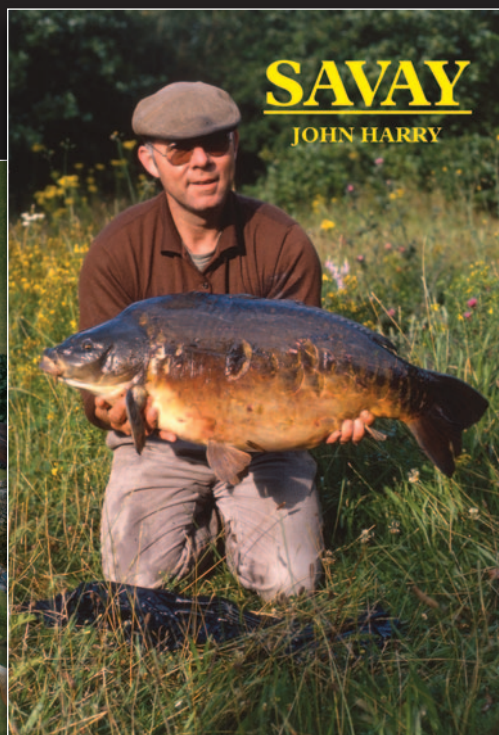
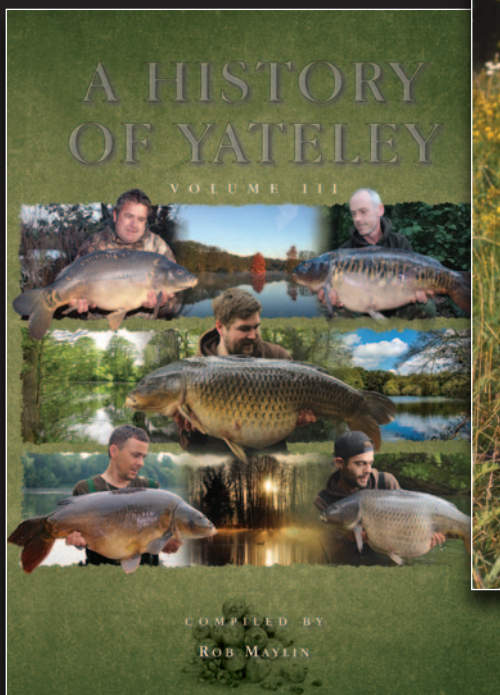
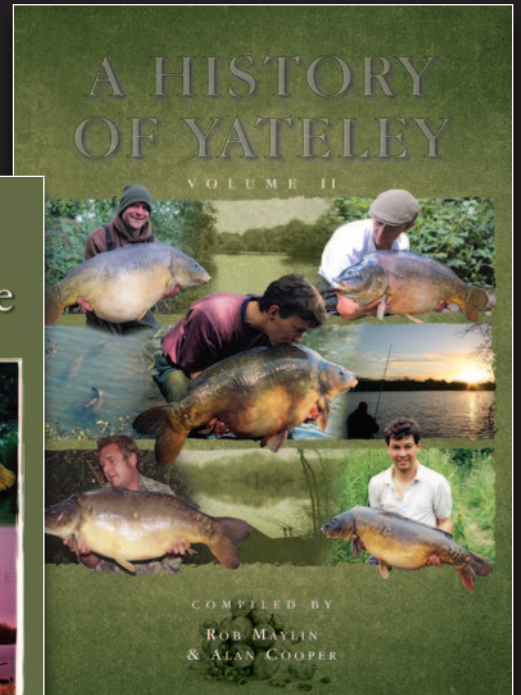
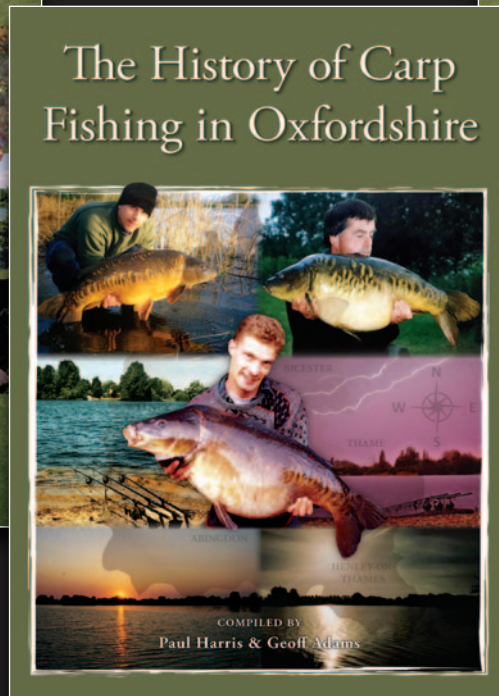
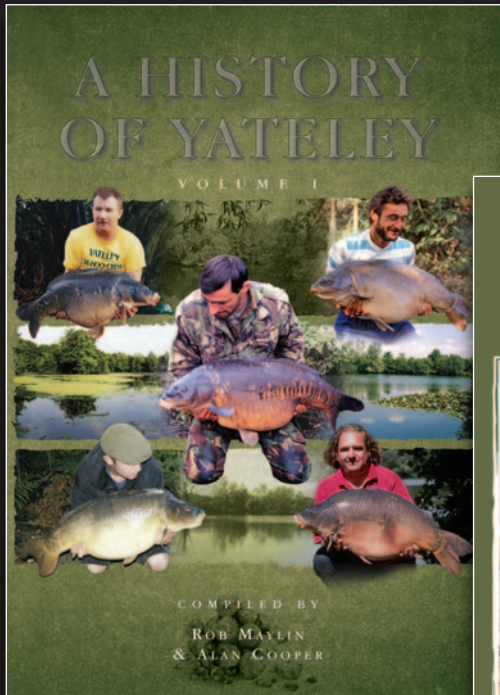
She went 39lb 15oz on the scales, a little down in weight, normally going over the 40lb barrier, but I didn’t care one shred! We all admired her on the mat with endless rows of scales like a blind cobbler’s thumb all over her and lovely chestnut flanks – she really was a force to be reckoned with! I held her up proud as punch for them cameras and then released her in the deep margins.

I’d finally done it! Eight months away, and on my first trip back, the job was done! Friends called in through the rest of the day, we celebrated like we always do on these occasions, and I woke up the next morning a little worse for wear! I had

breakfast and about five litres of tea, and all was good again.

It was around midday when the left had rod was away again, and after another tidy battle one of the pond’s A-team was in the net again! It was a fish called Measles, another real character and a really rare visitor to the bank to boot. I had to pinch myself to check I wasn’t dreaming – two trips and five of the lake’s A-team in the bag! Martyn, Liam and Tom came down and did the honours on the lens for me and even got some footage, which was awesome. It was a pleasure to share the buzz with these boys – big up! The old Measles went 32lb 6oz and was a privilege to catch. So that’s the story of my quest for the Big Fully. I hope you enjoyed reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it... Be lucky, brothers! ■

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Overnighters

By Tony Owen

My name is Tony Owen, I'm a roofer by trade, and I'm lucky enough to have a Horton Church Lake ticket. Most of my fishing is overnighters and pack up in morning to go to work. I work most weekends, which helps pay for my holidays, as I like to fish around the world. I've had good results in France, Spain, Thailand, and mainly South Africa. I got seriously into carp fishing very late in life, maybe eight years ago. I'm just your average half decent angler, probably just like you who is reading this, learning every day I go fishing.

I first started seriously fishing for catfish in my early days, having some great results when I went to Spain (174lb) and also in England (81lb, Boat Pool). I started carp fishing a small estate lake local to me, and I did reasonably well on there. After a couple of seasons, better anglers and new members started to join, and I became good friends with all these,



Roger the dodger at 45lb 8oz.

mainly a guy called Paul. I learned a lot from him, and he introduced me to the bait company I'm using for my fishing on now – Five Star Baits.

My PB at the time was 36lb on three different lakes (local, Cottingham and Rockley Park).

I fish most of the day tickets from Linear to The Monument. I moved from my local lake and jumped straight to the top of the ladder by joining Horton Church Lake, and to be honest, punching well above my weight. As most people know, the Church is a very hard water.

My campaign started three seasons ago on there. After a few times walking around, I decided to fish a swim called Right Hand Pallet. It wasn't a popular swim, but trying to fish the favourite swims means I might not get in there the next night, especially if I caught. I knew most nights I turned up it would be empty, so all credit to all the lads on the lake, as they left me to it, and I kept feeding the swim to try and build it up. The lake is very weedy, so it takes time to find the spots and get a drop.

I've been playing around with rigs to find which I think is best for me, and I always fish pop-ups on a stiff hinged with a chod section or mostly 360 style, but I have also been playing



My winter carp called Chunky, the first fish out of Horton since October. I moved to the north bank so when I do catch I can get a picture of the iconic Church in the background.



32lb, Sumo.



30lb, Loner.



44lb, Buddha.



26lb, Chilly.



36lb, Rockley Park.



66lb grass carp.



26lb, Groucho.



36lb, Cottington.



36lb, local syndicate.



49lb.

around with the Ronnie Rig. I like my pop-up to be popped up about an inch from the bottom, and I do believe this style is the best presentation over a weedy bottom.

Church Lake is known for doing bites from 7am until the afternoon, and night bites are very rare. This is not the times that I am on the lake, as I leave early for work, so I am fishing in a very small window of opportunity. The season started in April, and every evening session I would arrive at my swim, rods clipped up, and spod out a kilo of boilies and particles, trying to work the swim and form a dinner plate. I'd struggle all the way through spring and summer, sometimes leaving in the morning with fish showing over my bait as I went to work. Winter started to arrive, and I

still hadn't had a bite.

Far better anglers than me have had tickets for the Church Lake and have failed and not rejoined. I wasn't going to let it beat me, so I kept at it and kept the bait going in, just persevering and sticking with it.

On a cold October morning, I was packing up, with bivvy, alarms and everything packed away apart from the rods just lying on the platform. With my back towards the lake, putting my stuff in my bags, I heard my clutch ripping off. I ran over to my rods, and I had to look twice at my spool spinning. I couldn't believe it; I hadn't a bite for six months over there. I lifted the rod, but it didn't feel much, so I was expecting it to be a bream. However, I started to play a lovely 39lb mirror called Scully. Wow!

This was my new PB! It was still dark, and I had to go to work, so I just took a picture of it on the mat and went to work, as happy as Larry. My first Horton fish had taken me 50 overnight sessions.

At this time I was keeping myself pretty much to myself at the lake. Going back in the swim with a lot more confidence a week later, I had an uncaught stockie, which was hand picked and introduced the previous month. As this had no name, and with me being the first one to catch it, I had the privilege of naming it Owen's Fish.

It gives me a legacy over on the Church Lake, as I also slated the roof on the new lodge. So I had two fish... Well, that was my target for the beginning of the season. I said if I can

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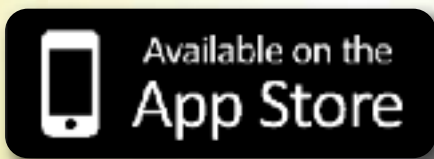
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64lb Tash – I've been lucky enough to fish Echo Pool. This fish is only the fifth biggest in the lake. This was on my second visit to the lake, and I've also got another trip later on in the year.

catch two fish out of the Church, I will be happy. Then things got better.

On a full moon on the first week of November, I was back in the swim for another overnighter when the rod ripped off first thing in the morning. I gently eased him through the heavy

weed that covers most of the lake, and that's when I looked into the net. "That's big!!" I phoned my brother and said, "I'm going to be late. I've got a biggie in the net, and I'm not going to let this one go until I get a picture."

With no one around, I packed

everything away and got the camera on the tripod ready for action. I weighed the fish, and the scales flew round to 45lb 8oz. I couldn't believe it – my first UK 40! The fish, Rodger The Dodger, is a stunning two-tone mirror, which is now Church Lake's second



43lb.



49lb.



174lb River Ebro catfish.



Jurassic Park.



Jurassic Park.



Gillhams.



81lb catfish caught from Horton Church complex Boat Pool.



70lb sturgeon from Valley Lakes.



Jurassic.

50. I was buzzing and on cloud nine. I entered the fish in the logbook as I left for work. Next time I went over to fish, all the lads on the lake said, "Well done," telling me I deserved that for the amount of effort and commitment I put in. I ended up with another stockie the following week. The next two seasons I've been steadily catching, but not as many as I would like, mainly due to not being on the lake at bite time. This year I was determined to get myself a winter Church Lake carp. Horton has a reputation for completely shutting up in the winter months, with only a few people trying. With the last fish coming out on the second week of October to me, a 32lb'er called Sumo, I fished all the way through the winter and the wind, the ice, the freezing

cold and the storms. I didn't even see any signs of fish all that time, but in the last week of February, the fish started to move and show themselves. I decided to fish the north bank to give me more protection from the wind and the storm that was blowing up. I settled in a swim called Scooter and started introducing a kilo of boilies every night I fished. Then the morning of 1st March, my rod roared off. It came in very easily, so I wasn't expecting it to be any size. I had to peel the dead weed off the top eye of the rod where it was sticking to my braid. As he came over the net, I could see the great colours and two-tone grey of the fish. I was very happy to get the first fish of the year from the Church and also a



This is the stunning fish that I called Owen's Fish after catching it at 14lb.

winter carp (Google says winter ends on 19 March). I thought it might have gone 40lb, but was very happy with 39lb, and the fish is called Chunky. I am very pleased to be fishing Church Lake. It's expensive but well worth it. You might not catch a lot of fish there, but when you do it is a proper prize fish. All the top anglers in the country have dipped a line in the Church Lake. I do believe anyone can up their game and catch the bigger, quality fish, if they're determined to put the time and effort and patience into doing it. Fishing new places and talking with other anglers is a massive learning curve. I feel I am lucky to take on this challenge and will continue to do so to improve my fishing. I can see better things for me this year. ■



Tiger, 34lb, Horton.



Shadow, 38lb, Horton. Tiger and Shadow were a brace I had last summer in the morning just before I went to work.

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