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Team Nutrabaits Bags a Ton of Carp in February by Richard Logan

The Winter Series of Elite Carp Matches by Barry Oconnor

The Legends of The Sanatorium by Craig Jon McEvoy

A Magical Campaign by Rick Golder

Return to Grenville by Roger Bacon

The Bulldozer by Adam Reed

Quarrystyle by Bobby Don

Secret Diary of The Urban Myth – Rob Maylin talks to Terry Dempsey

White Swan Monster – Syndicate Short by Kristian Jenkins

Can't Put a Foot Wrong – Syndicate Short by Scott Lloyd

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BC

ISSUE 335

LATE SPRING LUNKERS

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Late Spring Lunkers

More rain! Heavens above as I sit and write June's editorial in the last week of May' it's tipping it down again outside my office. I heard on the weather forecast this morning that certain areas of the UK have had a months-worth of rain in one day just recently! Unbelievable. In fact, it feels like it's been raining since about October last year.

I certainly cannot remember many days when we did not get any rain at all. Let's hope we get some fine weather this summer. Not that the fish seemed bothered about it, quite the opposite in fact as this month's catch reports will show. Some incredible catches again this month.

We have a bumper issue this month as you probably saw on the cover, another 25% of the UK's favourite carp mag, and all free too! Can't be bad.

I have a fantastic issue for you this month, some recent monsters, some 'off the beaten track', some classic catches, a huge haul from Brocard and even the first of two articles on carp matches.

So, let's kick off with this month's cover star Roger Bacon. Roger has been contributing to Big Carp since the start. His early articles are absolute gold dust. Only eclipsed by his recent hauls of Big Carp from Grenville and the Colne Valley. The numbers of massive carp defy belief. Multiple forties, fifties and even a sixty.

I know Grenville is an outstanding venue, but you have still got to catch them. Not everyone is catching to this extent. Roger has certainly re-written the record books just recently.

Also, amongst the fish recently, consistent catcher Rick Golder, another Big Carp regular who sets his targets and relentlessly pursues them to the end.

I promised you some 'Off the Beaten track' and Craig Jon McEvoy delivers it. An unusual venue and some monsters that time forgot, what more could you want? Well, what about a ton of carp from Brocard? Richard Logan and company did just that and in February.

Bobby Don and Adam Reed bring us some classic captures while Big Carp favourite Barry O'Connor entertains us with the first of two articles about the Cottington carp matches. What a venue this is. Stunning carp.

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 Maylin

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BIG CARP 334

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Front Cover

Roger Bacon – Biggest at 59lb 12oz



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ShockLeader

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

Angling Trust on the UK Government's Proposed Ban on Wet Wipes Containing Plastic

The Angling Trust welcomes the UK Government's announcement to introduce long overdue legislation banning the supply and sale of wet wipes containing plastic. This decision marks significant progress in tackling the scourge of plastic pollution within our waterways, reflecting the urgent need to address environmental pollution which threatens aquatic life and water quality.

While we strongly support this initiative, as expressed during the consultation phase, we maintain that this legislation is only one small step towards addressing the broader environmental impacts of wet wipes. We wish to highlight several concerns and recommendations that need addressing to make this legislation truly effective in preserving our environment.

Continued Risk of Non-Plastic Wet Wipes: The proposed ban focuses on plastic components yet does not address the environmental and infrastructural issues caused by other types of single-use wipes, such as those made from lyocell and viscose. These materials, often labelled as biodegradable, still pose risks for blockages in our sewage systems and can persist in the environment. We urge the Government to ensure rigorous environmental impact assessments of these semi-synthetic fibres and to be prepared to extend the ban to these products if they prove harmful.

Clarification and Standardisation of Disposal Information: Current labelling standards are inadequate and often misleading, with terms like "flushable" encouraging harmful consumer behaviour. It is crucial that all wet wipe packaging includes clear, standardised instructions stating 'do not flush' prominently. This will help reduce the incidence of wipes entering and harming our aquatic ecosystems.

Promotion of Sustainable Alternatives: Finally, we advocate for broader systemic changes beyond banning



single-use items. The introduction of this ban should coincide with efforts to promote a circular economy, emphasising the development and use of sustainable, reusable alternatives to single-use products. Government support for initiatives that increase the accessibility and affordability of reusable options is essential to reduce overall consumption and waste, aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals and commitments by all devolved nations.

Stuart Singleton-White, Head of

Campaigns at the Angling Trust commented: "True sustainability will require comprehensive solutions that address the root causes of environmental degradation. The Angling Trust is committed to working with the Government and other stakeholders to ensure that our waters and their biodiversity are protected for future generations. We look forward to continued dialogue and action that will lead to effective and sustainable management of all types of wet wipes and other similar products." ■

Farnham Angling Society News

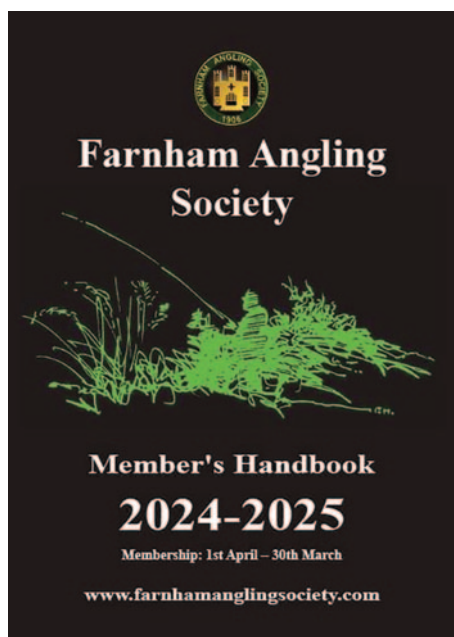
Renewing or joining Farnham AS for the 2024 - 2025 season Please remember that although all applications are turned around within 48-Hrs of us receiving them, all handbooks are posted using 2nd Class stamps and we are wholly reliant upon the Royal Mail to get them to you.

As such, the sooner you apply, the better chance you have of ensuring you receive your handbook.

Please remember to renew by 1st May 2024 or you will pay the £10 Late Fee and before 1st June 2024, or you will have to again pay the £55 Joining Fee. Online: Members may apply via our website: <https://www.farnhamanglingsociety.com/join-us/> In person:

This is only available at Gold Valley, Gold Lane, Government Road, Aldershot, Hampshire, GU11 2PT. This will be between 10:00am – 4:00pm on Fridays & Saturdays until the end of July 2024, starting Friday 1st March & Saturday 2nd March. Postal applications:

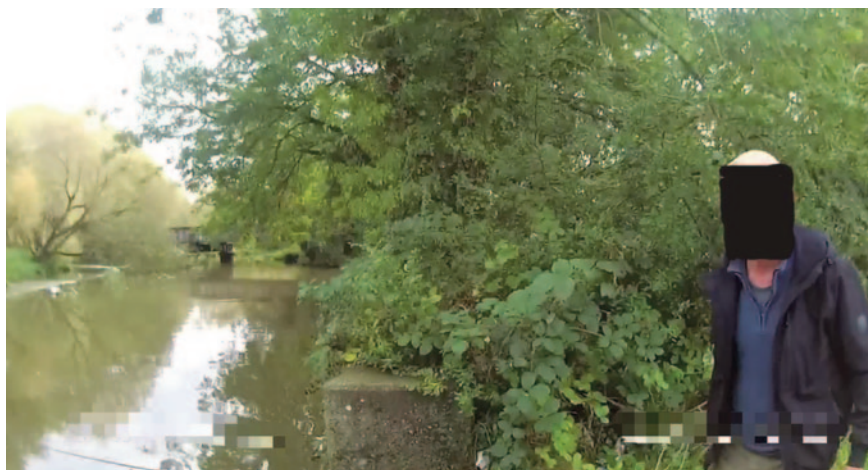
These may be made using the Renewal Form on Page 89 of your 2023 – 2024 handbook or by downloading an Application Form from our website:



<https://www.farnhamanglingsociety.com/membership.../> Please note: Applications for membership of the BCAA (Basingstoke Canal Anglers Association), have been stopped as unfortunately the decision has been taken by the BCAA to wind up (close down), due to the BCAA's ability to undertake any maintenance being so limited and with them receiving very little support in seeking to bailiff the 32-mile length of the canal. All those who bought BCAA membership for the 2024 - 2025 season will be fully refunded. ■

Environment Agency Fenland and Great Ouse

Another above average fine. The angler pictured below was found fishing on the River Great Ouse through Bedford in October 2023 and not only was he fishing without a valid licence, but also with multiple rods with the distance between the outermost rods exceeding the three-metre national rod fishing byelaw limit. On the 16 April 2024 at Hastings Magistrates Court, Benone Balota, of Fenlake Road Bedford, was found guilty and received a fine of £751. For more information regarding the national rod fishing byelaws, see link below: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-rod-fishing-byelaws-for-england-freshwater-fishing-with-a-rod-and-line>. ■



Anglers Lead Charge Against Litter in UK Waterways: A New Data-Driven Survey Initiative



I hope this message finds you well. I'm contacting you to share a new environmental initiative led by the Angling Trust that I believe would interest your readers.

Since its inception in 2020, the Angling Trust's "Anglers Against Litter" campaign has mobilised over 1,370 volunteers across more than 147 clubs to tackle the escalating issue of litter in and beside our waterways.

This year, we're expanding our efforts with a structured survey that

will help us understand the specific challenges posed by riverside rubbish. The data gathered through this initiative will not only provide insights into the types of litter affecting different regions, and waterways, but will also track trends, such as the recent surge in disposable vape litter. This information is crucial as we develop targeted strategies to reduce pollution and advocate for cleaner, healthier ecosystems. ■

Carpy Humour





Monthly Newsletter

JUNE 2024

GET FISHING



WATCH: What we do about Participation

Inspiring the next generation of anglers and ensuring that fishing is a sport that is enjoyed by a diverse range of people are among the Angling Trust's key aims. In this film we take a look at how we work with clubs and fisheries to inspire people to get on the banks and Get Fishing!

This April to June book a free place for Spring Into Fishing beginner events where tackle, bait, instruction and a one-day fishing licence are all included FREE on the day. ■

COACHING

Orvis back Angling Trust coaching qualifications for fly anglers

Angling Trust partners Orvis have re-affirmed their commitment to inspire the next generation of anglers by including a new junior competition as part of their Saltwater Fly Fishing Festival. Their team of guides who will be running the event were keen to stress how important it is that those working directly with juniors are fully licensed coaches.

Michael Rescorle, Orvis Saltwater Festivals Guide, said: "The Licensed Coach Scheme run by the Angling Trust is a superb way to get into coaching and the Level 2 Lead Coach award, which covers essential skills such as first aid and risk assessment, is perfect for those wanting to operate independently." ■



MEMBERS OFFER



Save fffs on day and season tickets

Did you know that Angling Trust membership gives you exclusive discounts on a wide range of day and season tickets – including access to our portfolio of "Angling Trust 10% Club" fisheries? There are currently over 90 fisheries the length and breadth of the country offering great savings on tickets for members! ■

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!

ANGLERS AGAINST POLLUTION



Join a pollution rally and stand up for your waters!

In this general election year, the Angling Trust's Anglers Against Pollution campaign, supported by Orvis and Angling Direct, is supporting rallies around the country to highlight the fragile health of our rivers, lakes and coastal waters.

Recent events in the Test Valley and Newbury were successful in presenting anglers at the centre of the debate and received huge media attention. But there's more to come - we're supporting a protest in Yorkshire this May and organising an anglers' block at the Restore Nature Now protest in London on 22nd June. ■

River Wye Action Plan shows lack of co-ordination



The government's £35 million action plan for the River Wye is small compensation for the size of the task needed to clean up this majestic river that flows from the hills of mid-Wales to the Bristol Channel. The plan, announced by Defra last month, shows a complete lack of co-ordination with their Welsh counterparts.

Stuart Singleton-White, Head of Campaigns at the Angling Trust, said: "If both the UK and Welsh governments were serious about sorting out the Wye's many problems, they should be coming together to ensure proper investment and proper enforcement of the regulations." ■

PREDATION



RSPCA suspend release of seals at Sutton Bridge

The RSPCA have agreed to suspend the release of rescued seals into the tidal River Nene at Sutton Bridge following concerns expressed by the Angling Trust that some have become resident in the waters around Peterborough, causing significant damage to freshwater fish stocks.

In a letter to the Angling Trust's CEO Jamie Cook, the RSPCA said they were implementing a pause to "focus on gathering data and evidence concerning released seals and release sites, consult on alternative options and speak with relevant partners."

The Angling Trust had written to the RSPCA on 28 March following evidence from Peterborough & District Angling Association and another 24 clubs in Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk, that an increasing number of tagged seals released from the animal charity's Rehabilitation and Rescue Centre at East Winch had travelled upstream instead of heading out to sea. Currently, there are five examples of tagged seals living around Peterborough, some 30 miles from the coast. ■

MEMBERS OFFER

Save £££s on day and season tickets

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FISHERIES ENFORCEMENT



Tell us your views on fisheries crime

The Angling Trust is seeking your observations on crime that relates to fisheries and the environment within your area. The survey takes around 10 minutes to complete and it will help our Fisheries Enforcement Support Service team and their work. ■



Have you followed our FESS Facebook page?

The Angling Trust have stopped using the Regional Facebook pages to share news and updates, and instead will be focusing on the main page. We do have a new dedicated Enforcement page and would encourage all Facebook users to click the link below and follow the page now. It will contain posts relating to fisheries enforcement news, updates and stories. ■

WATCH - Penn Sea League Final 2024

Enjoy a full highlights video at the grand final of Britain's biggest shore fishing competition – the Angling Trust Penn Sea League 2024. Fished on a blustery Weybourne Beach on Norfolk's picturesque north coast, the big event was a showdown for 50 of the country's top shore anglers who had been invited to go head-to-head after a year of point scoring matches.

Up for grabs was the honour of winning the prestigious title, the famous trophy, and £1,000 of tackle from sponsors Penn Fishing. Conditions were far from perfect but saw the competitors master the beach with big catches of bass, whiting, dabs and dogfish.

We were able to access all areas at the final and deliver some incredible tips, tricks and insight from the best anglers in the business, including the winner - England international and match fishing legend Saul Page. ■



Huge Increase in Fish Kills Linked to Sewage Pollution

The Angling Trust is urgently calling for an immediate government intervention following confirmation of a huge increase in fish kills linked to sewage pollution in UK waterways.

Environment Agency (EA) data from the past four years shows an alarming rise in the number of fish deaths linked to sewage pollution, with figures escalating from 26,690 in 2020-2021 to a staggering 216,135 in 2023-2024. Southern Water and Thames Water stand out as being responsible for the majority of fish kill incidents linked to sewage pollution in 2023-2024.

This drastic increase, which is likely to be a significant underestimate, highlights the growing environmental crisis in UK rivers that demands swift and decisive intervention. 2023 saw a 54% increase in the number of sewage spills – from 301,091 spills in 2022 to 464,056 in 2023.

The reported fish kills over the past four years are as follows*:

- 2020-2021: 26,690
- 2021-2022: 27,824
- 2022-2023: 42,070
- 2023-2024: 216,135

Conversely, the number of prosecutions brought against water companies by the EA have seen a significant decline. From 2018 to 2022 prosecutions commenced by the EA against water companies reduced from 166 to just 33. In addition to the number of prosecutions declining, the number of investigations following a report of sewage pollution has also declined. Previous studies by Fish Legal have shown that fish kill investigation reports are not provided for over 50% of incidents.

The Angling Trust and Fish Legal campaign against water pollution and are at the forefront of combatting fish kills through a series of robust legal actions aimed at holding polluters accountable. Fish Legal has initiated numerous lawsuits against water companies for discharging sewage and harmful pollutants into waterways. The Angling Trust also works with local communities and environmental groups to join forces in reporting and combating sewage pollution.

Stuart Singleton-White, Head of Campaigns at the Angling Trust, expressed concern over these findings, stating, "We can't let these mass fish killings continue. This unprecedented increase in fish kills caused by sewage pollution is a clear indicator of the deteriorating health of our waterways. The public is quite rightly horrified by the huge environmental damage being done by sewage leaks in the name of water company profits. If pollution from a private company

were to kill over 200,000 birds, there would be national outrage. The water companies responsible for these sewage leaks – many of which are illegal – need to be brought under special measures immediately before our rivers, the fish and all the life in them are irreparably damaged."

"While the Angling Trust campaign to promote and develop angling, and protect fish, the health of our rivers is a wider public health and community concern," Singleton-White emphasised. "Water that kills fish threatens other life and carries a significant risk for anglers themselves, as well as other water users, pets, and all river life. We need to see many more EA inspections and prosecutions following sewage pollution incidents to help restore our waterways to a state where fish and other wildlife can thrive."

Penelope Gane, Head of Practice,

Fish Legal, commented, "These fish kill figures are likely to underestimate the true impact of sewage pollution on wildlife. We've found through our own enquiries that the Environment Agency rarely follows up with a fish survey to assess the full impact of pollution, relying instead on counting dead fish when their officers do attend or reports from water companies when they don't.

Of course, counting and recording dead fish can only happen if there are any fish left in the river to kill. We recently took legal action against Anglian Water with anglers in Peterborough after sewage killed tens of thousands of fish on the river Nene system. Weeks after the water company paid out, the angling club were hit with another fish kill. It's heartbreaking for them to see the river wiped out again, just as it was starting to recover." ■

TRADE PARTNERS

The Insurance Emporium - proud supporter of the Angling Trust's Anglers Against Litter campaign

The Insurance Emporium is proud to be a supporting sponsor of the Angling Trust Anglers Against Litter campaign. Having become a Trade Association member of the Angling Trust in 2023, the extended partnership marks a positive step in both organisations' commitment to the conservation of the nation's waterways.

Who is The Insurance Emporium?

The Insurance Emporium is an award-winning insurer based in Thorpe Underwood, York and has over 90 years' experience in the insurance industry. During that time, they have helped bring certainty and security to millions of UK residents by protecting the things that really matter to them.

Customers benefit from personal lines insurance on specialist products such as pet, caravan, horses and trailers, fishing equipment, camera equipment, and more. In short, The Insurance Emporium protects the things you love. ■



Loei Jungle Fishing Lake

New Season Opens June 1st 2024

Lake Extended for 2024

New Species - Extended Lake - Refurbished Accommodation

END OF SEASON CATCHES



Last angler on the lake was newcomer Steve from England in April. The lake then closes down until June to give the fish a rest and for us to do some work on the fishery, extending the lake and for Pond and I to make some improvements on the accommodation. Steve had a cracking time around the lake catching some real beauties and new species! The platinum Mirgal carp has double in size since we put her in, and she has only been caught a few times as well. One of the super rare specials the Rock Bacu has come out lately and we have two of them, the different colours on them from the Ripsaw family are fantastic.

Total amount of fish = 52. Total amount of species = 27. New species = 15. New PB = 1

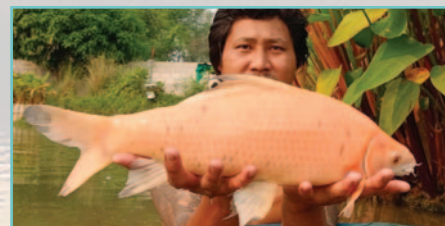
NEW SPECIES FOR 2024



Introducing the Albino Channel Catfish another new species added for all you anglers out there to come and catch. We try to be different from other lakes in Thailand and are always on the hunt for new species, that are different and that no one has.



Introducing another new addition to the lake - The Giant Indonesian Gourami. We're excited about this particular species as when they are both bigger they will look absolutely stunning, just like many of the other species of fish in the lake.



Introducing the Albino Black shark minnows another new species added to our lake "Labeo Chrysophekadion" I have been after a large one ever since I saw Mr Graham Wall catch one in a lake down in Bangkok, now we've got em! Yip pee.

IMPROVED ACCOMMODATION FOR 2024



Contact Details

Addresss: Loei Jungle Fishing Lake.351 Moo 1 Ban Thakham, Tambon Chayaiphuk, Amper meung, Loei 42000

Phone: +66 96 532 4426. Or +66 86 349 6267

Email: contact@loeijunglefishinglake.com or jezhibberb@hotmail.com

Website: www.loeijunglefishinglake.com

Our monthly reviews on products currently on the market

In this issue:

- Petromax
- HayMax

Petromax unveils new menu of outdoor cooking products for 2024

As the camping season approaches, Petromax has launched a range of new outdoor cooking and storage products. From portable, durable and compact cookware to versatile storage, the latest additions to the extensive collection are designed to enhance the camping, van life or bushcraft experience, in whatever form that takes.

Stockists: www.berryuseful.co.uk

Atago Gas Grill, £194.95

The Petromax Atago Gas Grill is the ultimate companion for outdoor enthusiasts. With its space-saving design and quick setup, this grill is perfect for campers seeking convenience and efficiency. Crafted from stainless steel for easy cleaning and durability, it features foldable legs and a dishwasher-safe drip tray for hassle-free use. It has a generous grilling surface, so multiple campers can cook at the same time without having to wait, and has a maximum heat output of 3.8kW. The Atago Gas Grill measures 19 x 38 x 38cm with a 34cm diameter grill and weighs 3.7kg.



Dimego Camping Oven, £79.95

The Petromax Dimego Camping Oven is a reliable choice for outdoor culinary adventures. With a compact design and a generous 2L capacity, this oven is ideal for creating a wide range of alfresco meals. Features include triple air circulation for even cooking, a high-quality ceramic coating for non-stick performance, and folding heat-insulated handles for safety. Designed for easy storage and transportation, the Dimego Camping Oven is a practical solution for adventurers on the go. It measures 14 x 27 x 27cm and weighs 1.44g.



Dimego Camping Cookware, £89.95

Petromax's Dimego Camping Cookware is tailor-made for cooking on-the-go. Featuring a special coating, the pans cater to campers, bushcrafters, anglers, festival-goers and other outdoor enthusiasts alike, offering a lightweight, space-saving design with foldable, heat-insulated handles. The scratch-resistant coating ensures perfect cooking results, while built-in measuring scales and pouring aids enhance convenience. The Dimego Camping Cookware comes complete with a transport strap for secure storage. It measures 10.25 x 21.8 x 21.8cm and weighs 1.45kg.



Stove Cup, £39.95

The Petromax Stove Cup is a compact and simple all-in-one solution for outdoor cooking. Ideal for campers, bushcrafters and backpackers, this 2-in-1 set features a 750ml cup with lid and an integrated stove, perfect for hot drinks or small meals, using firewood, a spirit stove or other fuel. Its space-saving design and stacking feature make it easy to transport, while the rapid cooling stainless steel is great for a quick clean up and get-away. The Stove Cup has a measuring scale for easy fill level determination and comes with a handy transport bag. It measures 10 x 11.5 x 11.5cm and weighs 321g.





Catago Box 50, £89.95

The Catago Box 50 offers the perfect storage solution for camping essentials. Tailored for campers with plenty of cooking and dining gear, the Catago features robust side walls and dimensions based on standard Euroboxes, and there's a water-proof base, keeping the contents dry wherever the Catago is used. Its flexible divider securely accommodates multiple combinations of camping cookers, cookware, food, and percolators, while side handles and a shoulder strap mean it's easy and comfortable to carry. The Catago Box 50 measures 27 x 50 x 38cm. ■

Nine Expert Tips to Help Stop Pollen Reeling in Anglers this Summer

Many anglers experience hay fever symptoms because of their allergy to grass pollen. For most anglers the worst months are June and July when grass pollen release is at its peak. The amount of pollen in the air affects your reaction at a particular time and varies according to weather conditions. Airborne allergens expert Max Wiseberg offers his advice to help stop hay fever leaving anglers reeling this summer.

"95% of people who get hay fever are allergic to grass pollen," says Max. "Hay fever is the result of our immune system's overreaction to innocuous particles such as pollen. The body's reaction is to produce histamines. Normal amounts of histamines are good – they keep us alert, attentive and awake. But, when there are too many, they produce symptoms including sneezing, a runny nose, nasal congestion, itchy, watery, streaming or swollen eyes, and an itchy nose and throat."

There are many ways to help overcome or prevent these symptoms. Max offers his top 9 tips to help anglers left reeling by the pollen this summer.

1. "Breathe in less pollen when you're by the river or lake. Apply a drug-free allergen barrier balm such as HayMax around the rim of your nostrils and bones of your eyes to trap pollen before it is breathed in through the nose or gets in your eyes – less pollen means less reaction, and for many, none at all. Apply before going out fishing and as necessary during the day. HayMax organic drug-free allergen barrier balm has been proven to trap over one third of pollen before it enters the body [1]."

2. "Create your own Hay Fever First Aid Kit. If your symptoms are particularly bad or nothing seems to work try combining one or more products – in other words create your own Hay Fever First Aid Kit. Many products are complementary to each other and can be taken together. My ideal combination is one (and only one) antihistamine, an allergen barrier balm, one (and only one) steroid nasal spray and one or more other natural products. It is advisable to check with a pharmacist or GP if you are combining products."

3. "Keep pollen off your body when you're out fishing. Wear wraparound sunglasses to help stop pollen getting in your eyes and a hat, cap or other head cover while you're fishing to prevent pollen getting caught in your hair."

4. "Wash away pollen when you return home. Wash your face or better still take a shower when you return home after fishing. This will remove pollen from your body and hair."

5. "Keep pollen out of your home. Remove footwear at your front or back door so you don't bring pollen indoors with you. Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible. If you have a pet keep it well-groomed and shampoo it regularly to remove pollen from its coat. Vacuum and damp dust your home regularly – damp dusting helps prevent pollen being dispersed back into the air."

6. "Eat and drink for your hay fever. Some foods such as red onions, kale, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, blueberries and apples, contain quercetin, a natural antihistamine. Avoid alcohol, dairy drinks and chocolate.

Beer wine and spirits all contain histamine, as does chocolate. Avoid mucus-producing dairy drinks; excess mucus is exactly what you don't need if you suffer from hay fever. Drink ginger, peppermint or green tea instead, as all are said to reduce hay fever symptoms. Ginger and green tea work as natural antihistamines whilst peppermint reduces congestion."

7. "Check the pollen count forecast. The pollen count measures the amount of pollen in the air and is the number of pollen grains per cubic metre of air. Pollen count forecasts can help you judge if your hay fever symptoms will be particularly severe on any given day. As a general guide, the pollen count tends to be lower on rainy days and higher when it's hot and sunny. Many hay fever sufferers start to experience symptoms when the count reaches 'medium'. Counts will be higher near to large sources of grass pollen including hay meadows."

8. "Try to time your fishing trip when there's less pollen. Pollen levels tend to be higher in the early morning and early evening. It is released by grass in the morning then rises during the day, before falling back down to head height as the air cools in the early evening."

9. "Check out the Allergy Guides on my website. There are many other treatments and remedies available for hay fever sufferers and simple lifestyle changes and practical steps you can take to help reduce the effects. Check out my website www.hay-max.biz/hay-fever/ for more help and advice." ■

Hay Fever? Dust or Pet Allergy?



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[†]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,

Holland&Barrett

Superdrug



Cocado

Boots



Chris Barnes catch report

And here it is, a very special fish, 40.08 linear that has turned up from Nursery Lake, not a fish I have ever seen before and I have been fishing the lake on and off for 12 years, a wild water with the possibility of anything being in there. Well, done mate.



Aaron Lam catch report

Aaron strikes gold in The Lea Valley:

"A solid block of gold" was how Aaron Lamy described this fantastic Lea Valley mirror, having ticked it off his most-wanted list over the weekend.

Weighing in at 42lb 8oz and aptly named Goldie, the mirror was Aaron's first forty of the year, succumbing to a PB pop-up on a Ronnie rig amongst a mixture of SLK mini dumbbells and tigers on a bloodworm bed at 23 wraps.

"You cannot go wrong with SLK mini dumbbell boilies mixed with tigers and a beautiful Ronnie over the top," said the 22-year-old from Cheshunt.



Dan Carter catch report

As promised, here's the larger half of Dan Carter's recent 86lb brace from Kingsmead 1, at 44lb 8oz. Well done, chap!



Cottington Lakes Catch Report

Robin Bain had a nice result last weekend. Catching a new PB at just over 44lbs. He was fishing peg 1 one old pepper and this wasn't the only 40lb that was caught that night. In fact, we had three over 40lbs caught this weekend so well done to all the lucky anglers.



Manor Magic for Ben Oakes!

Ben Oakes had a hectic trip down at Manor Farm at Linear Fisheries Official recently:

'I had these two yesterday, an 80lb plus double take fishing over a bed of chopped and whole Pro-Stim Liver and corn. They were part of a 350lb hit of fish in a hectic 18 hour feeding spell with 6 fish over 36lbs and two of them going 40lb plus. The mirror going 42lb 12oz and the common 38lb 8oz. Solid angling Ben, they certainly loving that Pro-Stim.'



Dave Smith catch report

Here she is, all 51lb 3ozs of her, never in my wildest dreams did I think that one day I would bag another 50, and a PB too. Something I will never forget is the moment I peered into the landing net, standing waist deep in the water, so relieved that the heart stopping battle was over, and muttered to myself "bloody hell, that's a chunk!"



James Armstrong on a Roll

A real gnarly one from an epic session last week where I ended a gruelling winter with a brace of 40-plus mirrors. Amazing how spring just changes your whole fishing outlook

This awesome-looking mirror is a rare visitor to the bank and couldn't help but be fooled by a bit of foam. Love the spring. Little size 8 Wide Gapes doing me proud as always.



Tony Reynolds catch report

Great weekend back at my syndicate lake, seeing some of the old faces, it's been too long. The fishery just keeps getting better and better. Had a great social, just what I needed. 3 fish for me, with this one going 40lbs 10oz, Mainline Baits Cell with matching smart liquid doing the do.



Einstein catch report

Einstein is smashing it. Shoulders at 44.04 from Long Lake.



Adam Honeysett catch report

A Session of UK 60s – Mega TRIP Last Week UK PB 61.08
Last week I did 6 nights down on Elphicks Pullens Lake which I was really looking forward to only having fished it for just 48hrs previous. We knew that providing the big'uns didn't get caught in the last month building up to our trip we had a shout at a 60lber knowing that 1 had already been caught at over 60. Little did I know that a little solid bag of Key Bait Solutions ASM goodies would see me holding one of them at 61.08 just a few hours in to the session & my good friend Tony Plummer was to catch the other 1 just 24 hours later at 61.02, both will be featured in my next vlogs, as the next one will be 2 parts. I ended up with 10 bites during my stay landing 9 - 3 x 20's, 2 x 30's, 3 x 40's to 47 & the biggun.

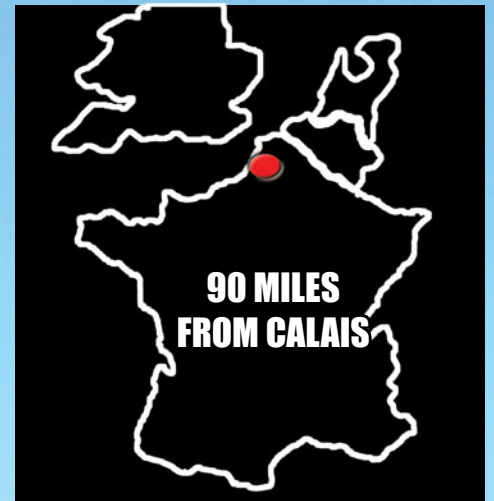
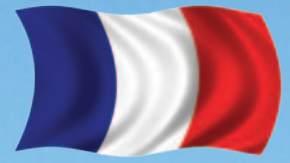


Gavin Seago catch report

Coking Farm Orchard – Lake Record at 45lb 6oz. Absolutely buzzing as anyone would be! Around 10:30pm Saturday night the bobbin pulled up tight and I was away the fish came in to easy but as it seen the net the fight kicked off wiping out my other rod. After a good 20 minutes looping around in big circles it was over the cord. Mad Baits pandemic 18mm/15mm and mulched boilie doing the trick as always!
Haulerz Tackle proving Strong once again cranking it up!

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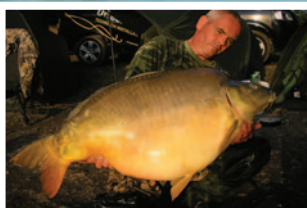
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Tom Maker catch report

Check this bad boy out, at a little under 41lbs this was the biggest of my trip from last week's session to Gaunts lake, I had made a mistake of going into a peg I had caught from at a similar time last year, but after hearing a few in the night and a move the next morning I managed to turn the session around!! This one made packing up in the mud and rain a whole lot better.



Stanwick Lakes catch report

What a way to get pumped up for the bank holiday weekend, Luke with one of the biggest known commons in Elsons at 43lb! Well done that man.



Gary Nottage catch report

Gary Nottage pictured here holding the treasured main prize from his Kent syndicate, currently the biggest fish in the lake, a new personal best and a lake record fish weighing a staggering 59lb 12oz! Caught on a custom ABS mix which has caught plenty of fish from this lake already this year. A massive well done to you, Gary!



Martin Brown catch report

Let's go BIG LIN ...first time ever down to Coking Farm Fishery. Lovely and friendly great café. Chris manager very helpful and wants to actually catch the fish in there. Blown away beats my past pb my 2lb dead. 46lb 2oz of just an absolutely belter of a carp. Had a 61 catfish also. Thanks Coking! Quads fish over 10mm essential cell & crushed iso sweet.



Cottingham catch report

Elite carp masters at Cottingham peg 1. Owen 44lb 12oz.



Perry Alabaster catch report

38 fish and counting in his past four sessions! – Monks Pit, Cambridgeshire

Perry Alabaster is absolutely tanking 'em on Monks Pit this spring, having recorded 38 fish in his past four sessions on the Cambridgeshire syndicate – and he's currently only halfway through that fourth trip!

So far this week, he's already had a 41lb 6oz mirror, known as Kenny, and two thirties to 35lb. Incidentally, the forty is actually Perry's 20th different 40lb-plus fish from the venue!

Perry said: "Since first using the new Crayfish Hydro Spod Syrup and the Amino Smoke liquids in conjunction with my usual tactic of fishing over Crayfish Maxi Mix pellets, chopped S7 boilies and hemp, my catch rate has gone through the roof, with 38 fish so far in my past four sessions!"

"The forty, known as Kenny, is my 20th different 40lb-plus Monks Pit fish, but luckily for me, there's still plenty more big 'uns to go for in this crazy place!"



Matt Easton catch report

Caversham complex is kicking off, Matt Easton with the BBQ at 48.10.



Lee Knobbs catch report

First fish of the year and it's a 40. After 2 nights on the north I moved onto the centre and was just about to move back over there due to it looking dead and my right had rod ramped off. My 9th UK forty hit the net. Mainline Baits 18mm cell did the bite, 5oz, dumpy distance leads and back leads from Bartons Leads and terminal tackle from IncredibleTackle.



Alan Harper catch report

Alan Harper with Sovereign at 46.10 from Long Lake.



Mark Jackson catch report

Just got home from a mega session on St Ives lagoon finally got Callum's at 50lb 12oz which was an intense boat battle after it decided on charging up my left hand margin when I got to the snag it then decided to make a run out in open water I had no way of playing it by my rod due to a branch wrapped round my branch so a hand lining battle was the only option It was OK until I got to see what I was into to be honest the hook hold was spot on and I had full faith in my tackle holding I must say a big thanks to Joe Morgan for his help and photos and Simon Sparks for photos. It was also first time out using jhbait klf and nutti b boilies and jh baits pineapple and butyric 15mm pop-ups fished on hinges.



Jonny Fletch catch report

Monday special... "I've known about this water for some time, but with other things keeping me busy, I've never had the chance to fish it until now. I started at the end of March, just a single night after work. I never felt like I was in the zone but more for learning and seeing patterns. I returned the following week, arriving late afternoon and leaving mid-morning the following day. I started to see signs and areas that I felt would give me a better chance of getting that first bite.

A week later, I was in the zone! I positioned a rod and before I had got the second one out of the bag, it was away! Now, it's been a while since I fished - 18 months if I'm right. My legs shaking, my heart was racing and I was holding on. Towing me from side to side and getting stuck in the weed beds, I carefully went about my business. I could see it before she slipped into the net! She's big, I thought. A big scoop with the net and she was mine! I put the rod down and held on to that landing net pole, letting out a silent 'yes!' and clenching my fist. Weighing crook ready! I hoisted her up and she went 43lb 5oz!"



Simon Crow catch report

Crowy moans big 'un into the net! Moaning is a significantly more effective tactic than any wonder rig, according to Simon Crow! Having lamented his misfortune at not being able to get through to any of the big commons on his Lincolnshire syndicate, a day later Crowy was cradling one of the venue's larger commons at 45lb 4oz, which he backed up a few hours by another common of 35lb!

Crowy said: "Here's one of the big commons known as Henderson's (after the legendary Mick) from my Lincoln syndicate, caught last week at 45lb 4oz. It's not the best of pics, as I had a mare with my camera (long story).

"Typical of blokes my age, I'd been doing a lot of moaning the day before, not just about my camera but also about my lack of 'decent' commons from the lake. I've caught plenty of nice mirrors, but only had a couple of commons to 29lb-plus. When you know the ratio of good commons in this water, I hoped the moan might pay me back somehow, and whad'ya know, I also had a 35lb common a few hours later.

"The moral of this story is, moaning is better than 'wonder rigs' because I used my usual braided 'tangle thing' with a size 6 hook and an SLK Corker wafter."



Andy Sargent catch report

Calling the shots on Monks!

Monks Pit, Cambridgeshire – We're losing count of the number of big carp caught on the Monks Pit syndicate this year by DNA anglers!

Andy Sargent topped a four-fish catch on the Cambridgeshire venue with the mighty common, known as Arnie at 43lb 8oz, which he backed up by Nemo at 34lb and a lovely 34lb scaly.

Andy fished on the deck with the new yellow and orange Bug Half Tones wafers over a bed of mixed-sized Bug boilies soaked in BetaStim, Calanus Hydro and Salmon Oil that he dusted in Insect Meal and Krill Meal. He also used zig soaked in Bug Intense Booster.



Paul Wake catch report

Another one from the other week the box common 40.2lb and a new PB.



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Tom Dove catch report

I first stepped foot on the Wrasbury complex over 12 years ago, bombing down very early one summer morning to take pictures of a 39lb linear for Adam Penning, this was when there were just a handful of carp in there and the idea of catching something from Wrasbury was an idea for the elite. We went on to feed King Fungus pretty much by hand, just 3 feet in front of us off an island snag - I was gobsmacked. I now find myself fishing the same water, it's obviously a different prospect now but it still very much has that carpy feel! Gin clear water, established bank sides and few swims for the size of it, carp fishing heaven. I completed my second trip this week, 8 bites across the two trips and this mint 43lber topping the lot. The 3rd pic is a nice 27lber.

Caught on pineapple pop ups over sweetcorn and @mainlinebaitsofficial new Iso Fish. I can't wait to get back over there. We've filmed a "Dovey and Spooner VS" this week that should be out on YouTube sometime in May! I hope you enjoy. I first stepped foot on the Wrasbury complex over 12 years ago, bombing down very early one summer morning to take pictures of a 39lb linear for Adam Penning, this was when there were just a handful of carp in there and the idea of catching something from Wrasbury was an idea for the elite. We went on to feed King Fungus pretty much by hand, just 3 feet in front of us off an island snag - I was gobsmacked.

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A new UK PB of 55.13lbs for new RG user Marcus Alexander

Having recently ventured over to the dark side, it seems Marcus cannot decide on his favoured bait from our stables. So, he gave them a good spread of 'Vita-lac', 'The Formula + Arctic Crab' and 'Red Sea Squid'. A big enough buffet to get the big girls feeding on his Somerset syndicate 'Turbary'. The big girl known as 'Lumpy' sets not only a new PB but a lake record as well! A massive well done to Marcus from the whole team, we cannot wait to see what comes your way as the season unfolds.



Prime Baits Catch Report

The Big Dinton from Yateley Car Park lake at 41.8lb, captured with the help of the Hydro bait range, Hydro T1, Hydro NF, Hydro CGR, Hydro SF.



Callum Catterall catch report

What a fish, not in my wildest dreams did I think I'd have a welcome back to Mallard session quite like it! New UK PB caught yesterday at 45lb 11oz, was an absolute beast! Not had many numbers wise but six takes five landed so far 2x 30+s this monster and two smaller ones.



Darrell Tilling catch report

Bank Tackle Team Member Darryl Tilling... "Well, here she is, my new UK pb from my syndicate at a whopping 56lb 10oz. A moment that will live for a long time Caught on a Ronnie on the new Bank Tackle Gripper Hook from the specialist range. An awesome hook and they really hold their sharpness. Happy days." What an incredible capture Darryl! Well, done on your new PB. That will take some beating. Another PB to the Gripper Hooks as well.



Miranda Brown catch report

Absolutely made up with a New UK PB of 41lb 1oz. Great to share it with some special people on Gaunts too. A cracking bunch of guys.

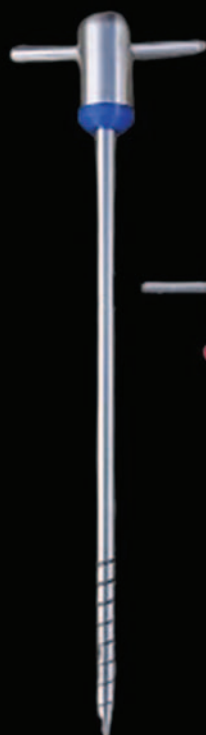


James Sherer catch report

One is rather enjoying himself on Wraysbury this season! Today's alarm clock @ 42lb 8oz!

TNT

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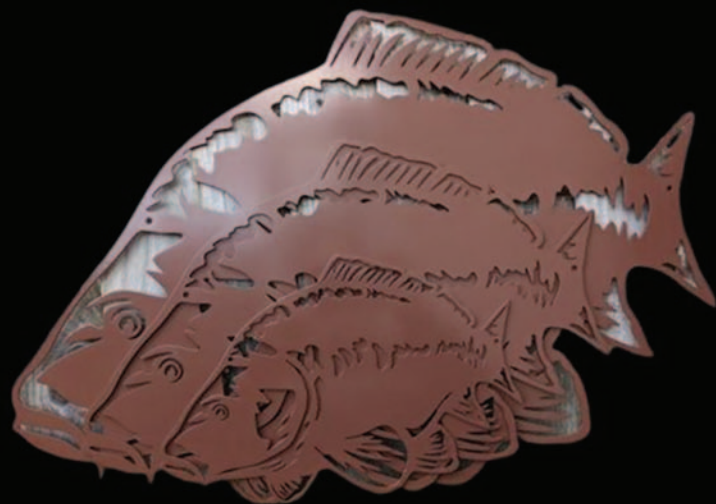
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Return to Grenville

By Roger Bacon

Having not fished the big lake (Grenville) for months, I decided it was time to get back. I had a plan to set up on the west bank and wait for the forecast easterlies to arrive and hopefully the carp would follow.

But after a good look round, I was not at all confident the fish would follow the cold forecast winds. So decided to set up on the back of the wind instead.

Fortunately, Paul the owner, had given me permission to do a long session on account I had not fished the lake for many months.

Rods soon out, and the action started pretty much straight away. Over the trip I had periods of hectic action followed by 24 hours of quiet spells. Fishing long 38 wraps was helped with the wind behind.

I used DNA Baits Bug boilies (8mm 12mm) and Barrels that all had had a two-day soak in the matching Foid Liquids. I think the small baits defi-

nitely kept the fish grubbing/feeding on my area for longer.

I ended up with some mega linears, scalys and the odd common.

Total was 32 fish with 9 over 40lb (Pictured) and the biggest going 59.12 (Cover).

All caught on my Long Blow Back D rig on long 14-16 inch hook lengths popped up 2-3 inch and set to very slow sinking with a Pink Peril pop up! That's it for myself and Grenville for a year or so now. Time to move on? ■



Biggest at 59lb 12oz.





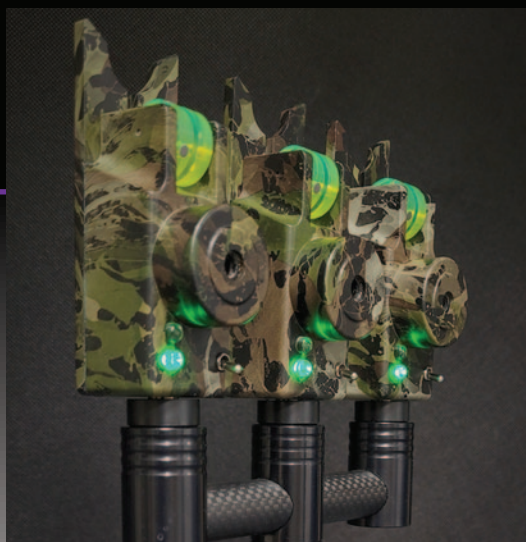
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Great week on Willow 1, B3 last week for Mark Anderson and Leigh Horwood who was celebrating his 70th birthday. Leigh couldn't have had a better celebration of his 70th with more fish than years in La Belle France with Mark Anderson. Thanks for showing him how to winkle more than just the garlicky snails from their shells. Happy birthday Leigh.





Did somebody say Social Night? Champions league night at Bounty. It's not ALL about fishing eh!?



Oliver with some chunks last week on barn bank post 2 b1. With a new 50lb common for b1 a 44lb and 46lb common. As well as the big mirror at 51lb 5oz. And lots of others, good angling.



Little Owen Elvidge, the bailiff's bought him his very own rod.



Jordan Daniel and Steven had a great week on b2 posts 5, 6, 7 resulting in some big carp at the top spawn weight. 2 x 49lb commons 1 x 47lb mirror, plus lots of others and a big cat at 130s. Well done gents!

New website coming soon



It's not all about monsters, 24lbs of stunning mirror for Stuart Cox.

Contact us via the Bounty Lakes Facebook page, or by email at bountyloisirs@gmail.com

Team Nutrabaits Bags a Ton of Carp in February

By Richard Logan

On a recent team social over at Domaine de Brocard, located in the beautiful champagne region of France the lads from Nutrabaits managed to catch a astonishing total weight of 2495lb 3oz.

Team member Richard Logan tells the Story.

Initially we had all chosen to fish on the large lake at the Brocard complex, before arriving we all picked a numbered ticket from a bag, to depict which order we would choose our swims, I took out the first ticket and took a sneaky peak, I had chosen











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Storm Free Fishery

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Mark Gibson



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number 1, this gave me first choice.

On approach to the large lake, we drove alongside the small lake which was 28 acres in size with only four pegs situated around the lake, as we passed peg 2, I saw what I thought was a bit of movement along the tree line on the far bank.

After arriving at the large lake, we took a walk around, it was cold and windy and I saw nothing that gave me any hint of where the fish might be, so I made the choice to fish on peg 2 on the smaller lake where I thought I'd seen some movement, it was much more sheltered and out of the wind.

After setting up, I received notice that Battista Melis (the Italian team member joining us for the week).

Had some logistical problems and wouldn't be arriving until late, so I decided not to fish the first night as the spots I would be fishing were around 170yards, and I would need to bring in the rods to collect Battista from the train station.

My peg partner and fellow team member Ian Kent wasted no time in getting his rods out, and in no time at all he had he's first fish on the bank,

he continued catching into the night as I watched in envy while waiting for the phone call to collect our Italian friend.

The phone call never came. The next morning I awoke to a message to say that he had arrived and I now had to drive a 2hour round trip to



collect him.

There were 12 fish caught between our group over the first 24 hours, I couldn't wait to get back to the lake and get a rod in the water, after all it was February and I couldn't help feeling that this feeding window might not last temperatures were dropping and the forecast didn't look great.

By the time I had finished running around and got myself back to my swim the light was starting to fade, so it was 3 pub chucks, at least I had a rod in the water I thought to myself, the night passed I was woken a couple of times during the night, but only to take photos of Ian's fish.

Monday morning I woke early there was no signs of fish moving but I put my rods out to the spots I had chosen, it wasn't long before the first one was away, and I slipped the net under a looking mirror of 37lb.4oz now I could relax the pressure was off and I could enjoy my fishing.

Reports were starting to flood in

from the big lake behind us Mathew Bloomfield had caught a few fish, his peg partner Matt Farr was also catching, Greg Caron (French team member) was off the mark. Slowly but surely, we were gathering pace, and the fish were coming thick and fast, Dean Parker had caught, then news came that Dutch Team member Jeroen Van de Broek had a large common on the bank, a fish that would eventually lead to Jeroen's victory in our team social with the largest capture of the week.

By Wednesday the weather had really changed we had torrential rain followed by zero temperatures overnight, the bites stopped. Was that the fishing over I thought to myself?

But it certainly wasn't, the next day we caught more fish than the previous days, it was relentless at times I couldn't keep a rod in the water! Matt Monteiro and he's brother Josh were also now onto fish after moving swims, what a trip this was turning

into, 10 team members from 4 countries, all using different tactics and different baits from the Nutrabaits range, the carp could not get enough of it!

Trigga ice, Code, Trigga pineapple N-butyric, and the latest to the range Banana nut crunch, all proving irresistible!

Thanks, Richard. ■



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Exclusive

The Legends of The Sanatorium

By Craig Jon McEvoy

01 A heron perched on the fried up rock pools. Note the big factory in the background.

It was many moons ago when the sanatorium first caught my imagination. I was a young boy and I had heard many stories about this rather frightening urban pool. To a young boy it was a scary place and my parents used to warn me not to go down there due to the unsavoury reputation it had. The sanatorium is a 3-7 acre pool no more than a 10-15 minute walk from my parents house. 3-7 acres I hear you ask? It must be one or the other surely? Not so as like many things at the sanatorium it has its own set of rules! It is in the grounds of the old sanatorium hospital that has now been demolished thankfully. The sanatorium was a hospital for the gravely ill, who had contracted a contagious disease. It was very secure for obvious reasons as it was a containment unit to stop the spread of serious viruses that posed a risk to human life. Usually when people were admitted there, they never came out! The pool in the grounds was used for all sorts by the hospital

and this included all kinds of medicines and vaccinations being disposed of within its dark depths, along with needles, bodily fluids etc...not a nice place. Legend had it that the fish had mutated into monsters within its depths and that the place was haunted by the lost souls of the old sanatorium hospital, who had either lost their battle against the viruses or unfortunately couldn't take the pain any longer and took their own lives in a bid for peace and drown in the sanatorium pool.

The pool itself is an incredibly difficult place to contemplate fishing for many reasons. Its depths vary frequently and not by a few feet either. When it is full it covers up to 7 acres and has depths up to 40 feet in places. However I have seen the water drop drastically to a mere 3 acres but even then it still has depths of 16 feet! The pool itself will fill and flood the surrounding landscape, filling the rock pools and creating an island that is linked to another small pool. This small pool is called the banana pool,

by the locals, due to its banana like shape. There is a small channel that leads from the main lake into this pool that can be 6 foot deep when full, but also dry land on many occasions separating the banana pool from the main lake. Now this is one element that makes it so difficult to fish, you see the banana pool is just a deep 1 acre bomb hole with depths of 30 feet and the bottom is littered with trees, so much in fact that it is an underwater forest and completely unfishable! But this of course doesn't stop the carp visiting and very often they will stay in this pool indefinitely and you have no chance of catching one!

The main pool itself is a deep abyss littered with snags including two corners of the lake being underwater forests. There is a submerged car, probably someone's pride and joy once, but now its final resting place is on the sanatorium floor. Huge iron ore boulders, mopeds, bikes, shopping trolleys, logs...you name it and it's in there! As if this wasn't difficult enough when the water level fills to



A view across the urban jungle.

its maximum capacity the surrounding area floods and the water seeps over the flood plain swim into the rock pools behind. These are pools where huge iron ore rock are present and are filled with trees. With depths of 10 feet or more the carp are soon to investigate and find yet another hiding hole to hold up in. The stock itself consists roughly of 10 carp of which there are 3 main A listers which include a near 30lb common called the "SCAR COMMON" and near 30lb mirror called "POT BELLY". Then there is "JOHN BOY" That is around 25-27lb and the rest are mainly upper doubles. There are rumours of a huge humped back common that has never been caught, I haven't seen it but have been assured by the locals that it is in there. The carp are also reputed for fighting like stink and if you are lucky enough to hook one, the carp usually end up smashing the anglers tackle to pieces leaving the angler shaking and cursing his luck. Now if

all of that didn't make it hard enough there are other factors that conspire to you failing completely. The locals do not like you fishing "Their" water and even though my mom and dad only live up the road, I am still classed as a foreigner! The pool is flanked by several really rough estates and is in the middle of a factory industrial estate. The water is abound with the local youth in the day especially the summer. The local youths use the sanatorium pool as their own personal swimming pool and in the summer they have many outrageous, drug fuelled parties and the pool perimeter is alive with bonfires! So summer really is a no no for an outsider like me lol! Then you have the druggies, it is abound with druggies ranging from glue sniffers to smack heads. There is the local foreign contingency who would mainly pike fish but take any fish they catch for the frying pan! You had fixed lines tied to trees going into the water that you have to regularly

search for and discard! It's also bloody weedy in the margins and on top of the shallower plateaus and bars. Finally you have the dog walkers that let their dogs jump into the lake and then run in your bivvy!

In all fairness the place is a complete nightmare and really isn't somewhere you would target, well not if you're sane anyway! But for me it is the memories of a child that lured me back in the winter of 2015. You see I had always wanted to catch one of these wily old residents but had never had the time or resources to do it properly. It was in October 2015 that my brother mentioned that he had spotted one of the A listers next to one of the giant weed beds and he commented that it looked bigger than ever! My brother had fished the place for many years and had caught the scar common 5 years earlier at 26lb. I had the call at 2am to go and photograph his then new PB and to be honest it was a great achievement for him



Ross with the scar common.

and the fish did capture my attention but I just didn't have the time to put the effort in required. To be honest I had forgotten about the place for a while as I was busy on the day tickets and then syndicates. But now this had really stoked my brother's fire and he asked if I would be interested in giving the place ago? You couldn't fish the place on your own due to the potential trouble with the locals. However with two of you and both being "tooled up!" you could take the risk. It was still highly risky though and I wasn't keen but he reminded me how I had always wanted to catch one of the big two ever since first hearing about them as a young lad.

I gave in and we made a plan to begin baiting 3 times a week with the ever faithful SQUIDO from Tor baits with a view to fish it the beginning of November. I booked a week off work as I knew we would need to fish it mid week to minimise the presence of the locals. We both baited regularly 3

times a week, every week putting in a kilo or so each visit. We baited late at night to ensure no one saw what we were doing and on occasions when there were locals present, we wouldn't bait at all!

It was mid October and my brother couldn't wait any longer and he told me he was going to do a session. I didn't mind as he had done most the baiting to be honest and so he went with his mate who probably has more weapons than the TA! lol! I told him to ring me if he managed to nab one, never really expecting the call..... RING! RING! "BRO! I'VE GOT THE SCAR COMMON IN THE RECOVERY SLING!" I couldn't believe my ears. I was just pulling off the motorway at Junction 9 of the M6 and told him that I would get my Reubens, camera and tripod. My brother's PB common was still 26lb set by the scar common all those years ago. He was adamant that it had beat that as it looked big! I made my way down to the sanato-

rium and met him on the canal. His mate was watching the fish in the recovery sling and my brother had gone into excited child mode! He was jibberish recounting the tale....Here in his own words is what he described:

"Ahr Kid I can't believe it! I just can't believe it! It's F---ing massive! I was sitting there rolling me a ciggy talking shit to Spam when out the blue the right hand rod just ripped off at 100mph! I slid down the bank and noticed the rod hooped round to the left screaming for my attention. I lifted into it and really had to clamp down as it was heading for the submerged island. I knew if it made that, that I would lose it so I clamped the spool and I really thought the rod was going to give way. My poor fox warrior was well past its test curve when suddenly 20yds out, just short of the island, this great big common swirled on top. I bloody went to pieces but managed to turn it and then it ripped



Ross with the scar common, other side.

off on another 30yd run into open water. I played her hard because you just never know what's on the bottom in this place! Eventually I coaxed her to the net and Spam netted her first time! I kept saying to Spam It's the scar common! It's the scar common! I just can't believe it!"

We arrived in his swim and I got the mat, tripod, camera etc ready. He brought her up the bank with the help of Spam and rested her on the unhooking mat. As he unzipped the recovery sling I must admit I was blown away. There in front of us lay a beautiful, ancient creature that looked as though it had been painted by Mozart. Golden antique browns and reds, it looked like it had been around forever! I lifted her onto the scales hanging on the tripod and we watched the scales settle at 29.10. A new PB for my brother, he was ecstatic and I was so pleased for him. I fired off some cracking shots for him and watched him return the magnificent creature to its watery home.

Never once did my brother stop smiling and I am sure he must have had jaw ache! I wished him well and made my way home as I was late for tea but hopefully her indoors would understand.

That fish had really lit my fire and all I could think about was the big mirror! I knew if the bait kept going in, it would make a mistake soon. My brother did another few nights and managed to catch "JOHN BOY" at 27lb. Another great achievement! I asked my brother not to fish it for the next week as I was fishing with him next week and I just knew the big mirror was due. He agreed and we continued baiting for the next week and made plans that the coming Sunday would be the day that I would finally wet my line in the Sanatorium. We baited up on the Friday before the Sunday and on our way to the pool, through the woods, this bloke on a mountain bike came riding out the trees. Now bear in mind that it was pitch black and this guy had no lights

on it seemed a little strange. I mean who on earth would be riding through the woods at that time of night? As the bloke rode off he shouted something but we didn't quite catch what? Anyway we continued walking and then this same guy could be heard ranting and raving on the canal. He must have been as high as a kite! We baited up and returned to the car only to find that someone had kicked in the side panel! This is the downside of fishing these places and I commented to Ross that maybe the locals have cottoned on to his captures as he had put them on facebook! Bloody facebook....The evil of the world! Lol!

We planned to do 3 nights and leave mine at 2pm on the Sunday. Well I was so excited that I was ready by 12pm and arranged for my brother to meet me at Mom and Dads around two, as it was only down the road. He phoned me at 1230pm to say he was running late and so I decided that I would pop round the local pub "The Oak" to watch my Dads Sunday



Ross with John Boy.

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Exclusive The Legends of The Sanatorium



Unloading the car and the journey along the canal towpath. no driving to the swims here!



The canal towpath walk to the sanatorium.



A view to the rods from the bivvy.

morning darts team. The missus wasn't impressed as she kept moaning that I could have spent an extra hour or two with her! Bloody women eh?! I dropped the van off at my old mans and walked round the corner to the Oak. My brother Ross could drive as there was no way I was leaving my van on the canal towpath. I decided I would pass the time by having a pint or 10! By the time Ross came for me, the beer was going down a treat and I really could have stopped their enjoying the banter with my mates all night. But alas it was fishing time and after two more pints for the road (got to be done) we left the pub and the banter behind. As we left the lads were taking the piss that I was going to fish the "Sana" as I wouldn't catch anything except a cold!

By the time we got down to the

Sana the light was going quick. We quickly unloaded and put everything on the barrows. It's not just a simple case of barrowing your gear around the pool...Oh no! This is the sanatorium after all, where nothing is easy! You unload outside the factories on the canal bridge. You then have to make your way down the steep canal bank to the towpath, which is more than a little bit perilous as too much speed and you're in the canal! Next you have a 50yd trek along the towpath and then up a steep slope onto a narrow walkway bridge to go across the canal. This is where the fun began. My barrow was a little too wide for the bridge and coupled with 9 or 10 pints of lager, the barrow tumbled over at the entrance. We had to unload everything and then take the barrow across empty, all this time we

had caused a traffic jam as joggers and dog walkers waited to cross. You could tell they weren't happy and my sarcastic beer induced grin probably didn't help! Upsetting the locals already! Then it's down the steep slope the other side and then a 10 minute push through the woods until finally you come to an overgrown stinger and hawthorn covered hill, covered in mud. By the time I reached the top I was knackered. I must have sweated all the alcohol out of my system as now I didn't even feel tipsy just tired. We began getting everything set up when I asked Ross for the bait so that I could get my rigs tied up. "SHIT!" He exclaimed. Yep he had gone and bloody forgot it! This is the norm for my brother and if he was any more laid back he'd be bloody horizontal! He left me to set up the rest of the gear whilst he dashed home to get the bait. It was pitch black by the time he arrived back and I said that I was just going to fish the margins for tonight. He agreed that this sounded like a good plan as he had been baiting them anyway. We had to set the bivvy up 20yds up the bank as this was the only safe flat area. This involved a 15foot descent on a treacherous muddy path. It was difficult enough making your way down slowly so God knows how difficult it was going to be if we had a run in the night?!

Rods were flicked out in the margins and Ross went and got us a pizza for tea. He had ordered some spicy chicken pizza with extra onion, chillies and Jalapenos...I just knew my arse was going to suffer in the morning! He arrived back and we tucked into our pizza and my tongue was quickly set on fire by this bloody thing. I was that hungry though that I carried on eating the thing, knowing that I would suffer tomorrow. I doused my mouth with milk and we both hit the sack early. It was the 2nd of November and the nights were drawing in fast and this coupled with beer, pizza and mass exercise saw us catching Z's by no later than 7.30pm.

I was awoken at 9.30pm to a one toner on the right hand margin rod and I quickly jumped out the sleeping bag and skied my way down the bank, sliding past the screaming rod. I slowed just before going for a swim and quickly grabbed the rod. It was nearly ripped out of my hand as the



Sky.



The now submerged island plateau when the water was low....what a mega feature.

rod took on its full battle curve! You have to play them really hard here as it's full of snags. I cupped the spool and commented to my brother that I could feel the line going through something. We flicked on our head torches and looked at the line, it was pointed towards the large weed bed up the margin. It was obvious that the fish was ploughing through the weed so I clamped down hard on the spool and this had the desired effect. The fish bolted out into open water and I was back in direct contact. Several nervy minutes ensued and eventually we caught sight of her in the torchlight. The water here is crystal clear and you can see down a fairway, we didn't recognise the fish and finally I drew her over the net and Ross did the honours. We peered into the mesh and the fish looked to be over 20lb but was full of scattered scales. It wasn't one we recognised and we quickly unhooked her and took her up to the unhooking mat. We put her on the scales and they read 20.12. First night

and I had done it! After all those years I had finally got me one of the Legends of the sanatorium. Now I know 20lb these days is not a big thing, but to me it was of massive importance. As a kid I had dreamed about catching one of these monsters but never did I think I would actually do it! The fish was an unknown entity to so I got to name it "SKY" after my youngest daughter. This made it even more sweeter as all of my kids now have a fish named after them! Ross took a few night shots and we returned her to her home. I was on cloud 9 and me and Ross high fived each other and stayed up late in the night drinking tea and talking all things carp!

We awoke to an eerie morning. The lake was enveloped in a bank of fog and we couldn't even see the rods. We made our first brew of the morning and looked through the photos of last night's fish, on the iphone. I must say that the iphone 6S plus is absolutely spot on for taking pictures of your catch. What a strange place this

is to be fishing, you could hear the hum of the overhead electricity cables and the morning dew had a rather unique smell of slurry oil from the local metal factories! A unique urban paradise! Eventually after a bit of left over pizza for breakfast warmed through with my ridge monkey, the fog lifted and we were able to go about sorting our rods. Due to the nature of the lake bottom and its massive depths, I had bought along a bait boat with attached echo sounder. I sailed it out on the mirrored surface of the sanatorium and was amazed at the different depths and snags present! We spent the next hour researching every inch of the lake bed and we found several raised areas that we decided to present our baits on. If you didn't fish one of these raised areas you were fishing anything between 16 and 30 feet. The water was 10 foot down and the channel to the banana pool was less than a foot deep and choked with impassable weed. I commented to



Now that's what you call snags! these are now underwater!



A true urban warrior.....the mighty pot belly!

Ross that I hoped that the big mirror hadn't got trapped in the banana pool as it wouldn't be able to make its way back into the main lake now until it filled back up.

knew about some of the plateaus and bars that were present due to visiting the pool several years ago when the water was very low. This had exposed several plateaus and bars and I knew of one long bar in the middle of the lake that I wanted to fish. I quickly found this with the echo sounder and found it to have 12 foot of water on top, surrounded by 25-28 feet of water! I placed a SQUIDO snowman rig on the left edge of the bar along with 20 or so baits, whole and crushed. I flicked the margin rod out and interestingly we found this to be a 5 foot plateau with a 16 ft drop off next to it. We also found a submerged island that was quite snaggy and several ramps / roads that lead away from the bank, sloping into depths of 20 feet. Probably the most interesting thing we found was the snags on the

bottom in the deepest water. Every so often the graphical echo sounder would spike to show a large snag. We already knew about the snags and so had geared up accordingly with 16lb Tiger line and we had only just pushed on the tail rubbers, lubricating them with saliva, so that the lead would come off on the take and hopefully see the fish come to the surface, giving us a decent chance of landing something. Drags were set quite tight and we knew that if we hooked something off one of the plateaus and bars at distance, we would have to play the fish hard to prevent it diving and finding a snag.

The day passed quickly and I was amazed at the amount of wild life present in the area. We watched herons, kingfishers, birds of prey, foxes and oh not to forget the biggest rats I have ever seen! It was 3pm and I had to make an important call. I was halfway through the call when my receiver let out a few bleeps. I knew I was in as I was locked up tight. I cut the phone

call dead and ran down the slope. Ross was sitting by the rods whilst I made the call as I was fishing locked up. He had lifted into the fish and the rod was bent double not giving an inch. He passed me the rod and commented that the fish felt big...real big! It was the far rod that had gone, the one on the distant bar on the edge of an underwater forest. I could feel the line grating down the back of the bar as the fish dived for sanctuary. I never gave her an inch.... I couldn't otherwise the outcome would have been certain disaster! I held on for dear life, the rod creaking in my hands, the line singing under the pressure. Suddenly I felt something ping and I managed to gain some line. The line had obviously pinged free of the bar and quick thinking I walked backwards up the slope, the rod held high and then I saw a big swirl above the bar. I kept her coming and she sank back down our side of the bar. I piled on the pressure desperately trying to keep her up in the water out of

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harm's way as there really was no way of telling what lay beneath her in those dark depths. I got her within 20 yards and she was just below the surface. She showed incredible power and speed as she continually powered off, stripping 20-30yds of line at a time. I could see every detail of the fight as she fought like a demon just feet below the surface. She tried to kite round the submerged island but excessive side strain bought her my side. She was now 10 yards out and moving lots and lots of water. I caught glimpse of her....It was the big mirror...."POT BELLY!" My heart raced as I now knew that I was attached to my Nemesis, a true legend of the sanatorium, one that I had heard talked about in hushed tones as a young boy. But here I was doing bat-

tle with this great creature. The world seemed to stop momentarily as I was oblivious to anything else. She swirled heavily on the surface as her big black ancient back rose through the surface film like a submarine. Again she dived, this time for the marginal weed cover. How could this fish fight so hard? I was shaking and swearing I must admit but finally up she came and Ross scooped her in first time! I dropped the rod and looked into the net and there she lay.....POT BELLY WAS MINE!

I punched the air with delight "YEAAAAHHHHHHSSSSSSSS!!!" I Shouted jumping up and down on the spot like a young excited school boy! I now knew exactly how my brother had felt when he had landed the common. Ross looked after her in the net

holding her over deep water for 10 minutes or so. She had put up such an incredible fight that I wanted her to rest for a while. I set up the camera, tripod, mat, scales etc and then we both carefully carried her up the bank in the net and sling. As I unzipped the sling I was quite simply blown away. There lay an ancient creature, dark black and looked as old as the hills. She wore her healed scars proudly, a testament to her previous battles in years gone by. But now for this moment she was mine and I lifted her for the camera and smiled as I now realised that I had fulfilled a childhood dream.....I had caught a true Legend of the Sanatorium.

That night we decided that it would be our last as we had now caught all of the known A list Legends and also one unknown. It was a really strange night almost as though the sanatorium knew we had held one of its legends and destroyed its mystery. Firstly there was an occurrence with my brother's phone. It was on the bed next to us and we sat talking when out of the blue the phones backlight came on, then the screen swiped across and then three digits were pressed on the password screen. I hoped and prayed it wasn't 666! Both me and my brother were nowhere near it and nothing was next to the phone either! This is the gospel truth and to be fair it spooked both me and my brother! Then in the early hours Ross managed a 12.08 common that fought like its life depended on it. It was scale perfect and still had the curtain in its mouth. It had probably never seen a hook before. We returned her and it was now about 3am and I can't explain it but Ross will vouch for this. You know when you just get that weird eerie feeling like you're being watched? We quickly made our way into the tent and sat on our beds gripping our tools tightly in our hands! Sounds well that but you know what I mean! A short while later we heard banging behind the tent, followed 20 minutes later by voices of some description. A scout of the area revealed nothing and we spent most of the night awake. The last I remember was looking at the phone and it being 5am. At some point we must have drifted off to sleep as we awoke starkly...there in our tent was a great big black dog! Ross opened his eyes and nearly shit himself! It was like a



Dogs enjoying just another day at the sanatorium.

scene from hound of the baskervilles. At that we heard its owner apologising profusely, she must have thought we were both nut jobs as we both simultaneously burst out laughing.... I mean come on there we were two grown men shitting ourselves and then this woman shouts "Tiggles! Tiggles!" The great hound in our tent seemed to lose our respect from that moment!

We were just thankful that morning was here and that we survived the night! We fished for the rest of the day but the Sana being the Sana continued in its bizarre fashion. Dogs ruined Ross's prospects as they leapt and frolicked in the water over his baited area. My area was ruined by people of foreign origin deciding to lure fish over my baited areas. Then the locals appeared all 7 of them and we could

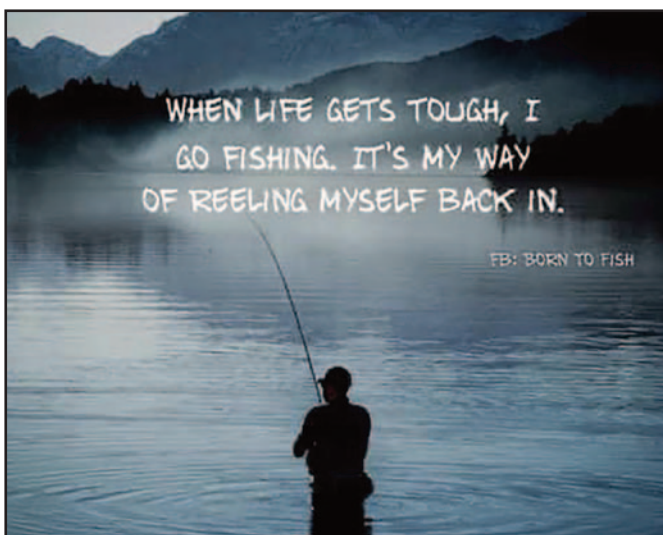
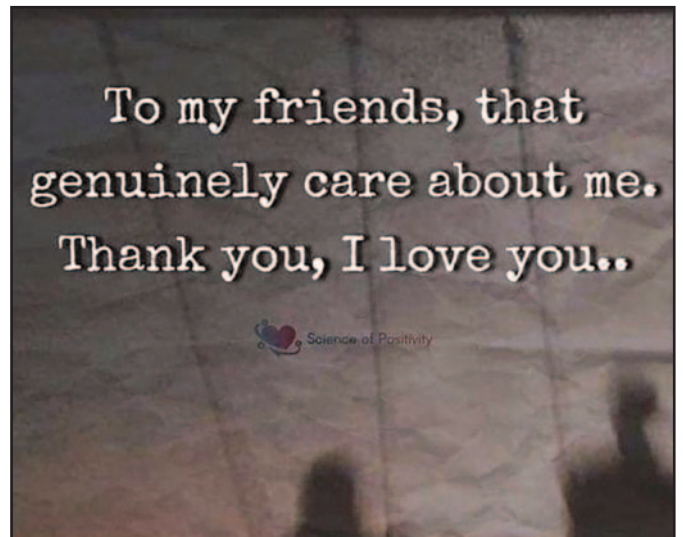
hear them talking as they all sat opposite us "Bloody Darlo lot here because the waters dropped! They should fish their own waters!" It was obvious they didn't want us there. We were packing up anyway but I said to Ross that we should hold on a while to show a show of force. Ten minutes later a couple of the locals came round and said to us "You won't catch anything from here. There's nothing left in mate as they've all been nicked. There's the odd one but they don't feed on the bottom. I've fished it for 30 years and never seen anything decent caught. Anyway did you do any good?" Me and my brother just looked at each other and turned to him and I said "Nah mate not really.

"Told you day I? No one can catch um!" They replied and departed with a smirk on their faces.

At that we loaded the barrows me and my brother couldn't help but smile knowing that our baiting campaign had paid off big style. Never did I envisage us catching all the known big fish in such a short space of time and it just goes to show what correct bait application can achieve. We began pushing our heavily laden barrows on our merry way when SPLADOOOOOSSSSSHHH! A sound that sounded like a hippo had fallen in! Out the corner of my eye I just caught glimpse of a huge... ..Humped backed common! I stood there in disbelief.....maybe just maybe one day I will return to catch the real Legend of the Sanatorium... Thank you slack lines and screaming buzzers

Daddy Mac (aka Craig Jon McEvoy). ■

Carpy Humour



Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



26lbs 4oz for Mark Sinclair. Lovely night-time catch.



Twisted Scale landed weighing 40bs 8oz by Darren Harris on Pipe Lake.

Scott Banter Rainey kindly sent us these photos of his recent day ticket lake session which he enjoyed very much. In order the carp weighed 11lbs, 17lbs 9oz, 17lbs and 19lbs 7oz with two more that scraped double figures not photographed. Thanks for these Scott, nice to see you here again. Come back soon.



New fish for Richard 'Buddha' Draycott not had this one before. 24lbs 8oz. Absolute stunner (the carp that is!).



30lbs on the nose this absolute stunner for Gary Brennan on Pipe Lake.



The big Ghostie caught by Steve Greenwood weighing 34lbs 7oz. Absolute stunner well done Steve.



28lbs 4oz and 24lbs for Niick Omar fishing swim eight on the day ticket lake. Very nice.

Lake Prices

Day ticket lake – Oak Lake

– £10 a day and £20 for 24 hours.

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

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

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.

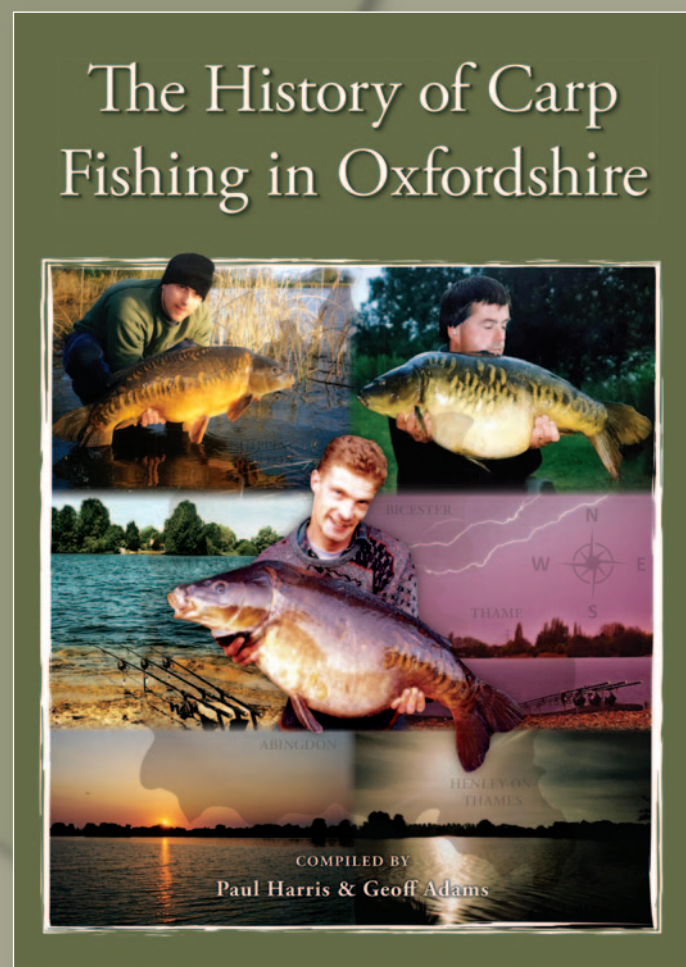
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing 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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A V A I L A B L E N O W

A Magical Campaign

By Rick Golder

So, this week my time on this particular lake has come to an end with the capture of my winter target fish. From starting on there in mid-November I've been lucky enough to have had 11 fish in total from this small and tricky lake, with a fairly low stock. I had a plan to keep bait going in regardless, and hopefully keep the fish awake and on the feed throughout the cold months. Every third day I would go there, with my bag of green beast and put it in, whatever the weather. I don't think I missed a week of this light baiting throughout, apart from the days it was frozen. However, from when I started, I was battling high water levels that completely













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Exclusive A Magical Campaign

flooded one bank for the entire winter bar one week. I started off in walking boots, then wellies and finally waders, just to get to my rods that in the end were sat on 4 foot plus storm sticks in the rising water. Twice I woke in the morning with water under my bed-chair which had come up seemingly from nowhere!

Things started well the week after the thaw in the new year with a recapture of a stunning linear at 41lbs, and the following week a 32 mirror and one of the new stockies. A couple of blanks followed and by now I was virtually restricted to one swim due to the water levels, but I stuck with it, and with the steady baiting. last week I changed my days to be there for a huge pressure drop, and had 4 bites from the spot, including an ancient common and another one of the rarer visitors to the bank. However, I wasn't sure that was the best thing, as still the lakes big one eluded me, and, as with all small waters, a capture would often follow with a quiet spell as if the fish were on edge.

I was back this week and after getting the rods onto the spot by 07.00, I saw nothing at all until I had a slow take that early afternoon. Within 30 seconds of picking the rod up I knew it was her, deep slow heavy runs left me in no doubt, and once I saw her roll and the distinctive scales, my legs were shaking! She wouldn't give up though, and after an arm aching battle she went over the net cord. I'd worked hard for this one but it was all worthwhile!

She weighed 47.10lbs, and even

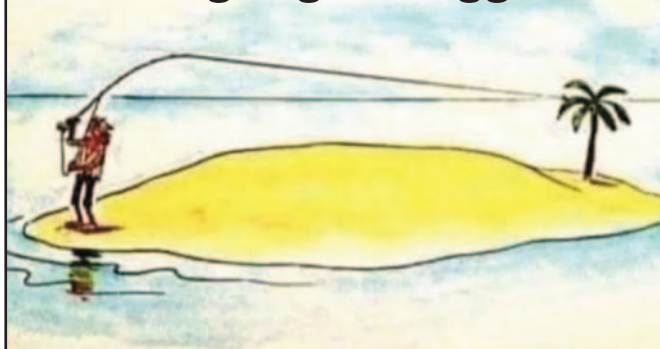
though I was supposed to fish on for two nights, after I watched her swim off, I had a slow pack up and closed

the gate behind me for the last time. The conclusion to a magical campaign that I will always remember. ■



Carpy Humour

When there's literally only one thing to get snagged on.



Perfect days start like this.



SECRETS OF THE THAMES

**Price
£29.95**

Secrets of The Thames

By Rob Maylin and friends

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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The Bulldozer

By Adam Reed

Well, as I sit here writing this, and I'm pleased to have completed my goal for this year a lot earlier than I expected. Being lucky enough to have caught a stunning 43lb-plus common last year, called the Bulldozer, from my syndicate, the aim was to catch a 40lb mirror this season.

With limited time, I wanted to give myself the best chance possible, so looked for a venue that wasn't easy, by any stretch of the imagination, but held a few over the magical mark. The venue of choice was found by chance as I work as the South East account manager for Trakker / Aqua and Cygnet products, and in doing so, have to visit all the shops and accounts we supply Fryerning Fishery is one of them.

I remember driving through the gates and seeing the lake for the first time and immediately thinking, I've got to get a ticket! It's got everything you need in a carp lake, from pads, islands, overhanging trees, range

work and margin fishing. In my opinion, the complete package.

After the work stuff was out of the way, I chatted to the owners, Chris and Charlie who were kind enough to fill me in on the details and history of the water. This only fuelled my fire!

I was also able to flick through the album in the on-site cabin and realised, not only are they big carp in Fryerning, but some of the best you will see. And the so-called A Team carp were immense. I drove out the gates having made arrangements to re-visit outside of work commitments, to speak with Chris and Charlie about obtaining my ticket as soon as possible.

I was due to start in November on Fryerning, as it runs a year from day of purchase. This suited me perfectly as I could get straight to work in what was my favourite time of year. My fishing plans were to be either quick nights between work, or at weekends. I am lucky enough to get every other weekend for fishing, but as we all know, life gets in the way, and this is not always possible.

The first few trips were enjoyable

and I was learning the water, but no fish to report. This pattern continued on through to January.

I had done seven 24hr sessions when we arranged a work party at the fishery. This was to enable Chris, Charlie and the guys to build a path between two smaller lakes on the complex, so I thought this was a good time to sneak in another night of two. There were very few anglers on the complex, and after walking round a few times, I noticed a fish high in the water, cruising up and down a reed line on a far margin. I had watched the fish from the opposite side, where I couldn't get a bait to, so would have had to fish at range from the other bank. My plan was simple, I was going to fish three rods, on zigs, at slightly different depths and fairly close to each other. I also hoped the lovely winter's sun would warm up the far bank during my session.

The swim of choice was named the Lodge Swim and the spot in which I was fishing was 118 yds-121yds. After a bit of jiggling about to make sure the zigs were not going to tangle. Zigs of 2ft, 1.5 ft and 2.5 ft were cast



January, where I lost the fish

**The morning after I caught the mirror.**

on the money and I retired for the night.

I woke early, about 5-30am. It was cold and the northerly wind had a harsh bite to it. At that point, I resigned myself to the fact it was not going to happen this season, and probably after the work party, I would be off!

It was just after 8.30am, just as the Sun broke through, my right hand rod

pulled out the clip and a slow take followed. I picked the rod up and even at that range, the fish was slowly taking line. My heart was in my mouth... Not only my first take on a new water, but clearly a very big fish.

I must have been playing it for 20-25 minutes, when the owner, Chris spotted me and came over. Having not done a fish for some time, Chris, like me, was eager to see which fish it

was. I had got the fish back from the far bank, but with only a size 8 Korda Choddy hook and a 12lb hook link, I was playing it very carefully. I was also unlucky as the lead hadn't discharged. Something that I knew could have caused me problems.

The fish was just in front of us but holding bottom, slowly taking line whenever it wished. Chris and I bounced ideas off each other about



27th August, 2015.



which one it could be. Fatal I know, as a couple of minutes later, the hook popped out just 3ft from the bank without me even seeing the fish. It's a feeling we have all gone through, and after a pat on the back of condolence, Chris left me to ponder that I had probably just lost something special.

It took me a while to get over it, but we need the lows to make the highs more special. I managed a few more sessions in the winter with no action. I also had a couple of sessions in May but it wasn't until my 12th night that I finally had what I was after and justice for my lost fish back in January.

It was 27th August, again just on a quick overnight session between work where I dropped in a swim I had fished the week before. It was called the Royal Box and I baited a spot about 50 yards out. It was just before dark and a good common had shown only 10ft from the bank. I noted this as I had seen it once before on the same line when fishing the opposite bank, so I had put two rods back on the spot I had baited previously and fished a

zig a foot under the surface on the short spot. I had trimmed down my favourite 10mm pop-up. It was Raw Baits nutex flavour. I am a big fan of foam as a rule, but with the lost fish on foam back in the winter, I wanted a bigger signal. My personal opinion with foam is that it is taken just in passing by mistake probably, or just sucked in if right on the carps line, which is great but having lost the fish in the winter, I wanted the fish to purposely hone in on my pop-up, giving me what I hoped would be a better hook hold.

This might all sound silly, but at the time, it made perfect sense in my head. Just before 9pm the take of all takes happened. A slow powerful fish was hooked and away! The buzz of both hooking my second fish and tripping one up on the short spot was amazing. After a really good battle, I slipped the net under my first Fryerning carp.

The light had vanished so after securing the fish I ran to get my head torch. I remember shining the torch in

the net and thinking, "Jesus Christ" or words to that effect. I could not believe the size it was, having caught the big common the year before, this was obviously bigger and I was not going to deal with this on my own. I transferred the fish into my XL retention sling, reeled in the other rods and ran round to the bailiff who happened to be fishing at the other end of the lake. He was over the moon for me and couldn't wait to see which fish I had caught.

Before long, both Chris and Charlie were with us, cameras at the ready.

We soon identified the fish as The Boss, a truly amazing carp, and much sought after. The scales tipped round to 46lb 3oz – a new PB. Amazing!

After a few lovely snaps under the now full moon, it was back on its way to give another angler a moment to remember. It's sparked a real fire for me now, and I will be trying my best to get a few more Fryerning gems in my album for the rest of the year.

Thanks for reading and good luck for the rest of the season. ■



Carpy Humour



Exclusive

Quarrystyle

By Bobby Don

Currently one of the most talked about venues The Quarry needs no introduction, it screams Carpy water!! It is a beautiful lake set in a remote quiet peaceful area. Surrounded by trees it possesses great features from islands overhanging trees a shallow bay weed beds soft silty areas plus lots more.

Having heard and read numerous brilliant things about the lake I have been itching at the chance to get down there.

So when work was cancelled with the weather forecasting dull and overcast conditions on a late August day I jumped at the chance to get my rods out.

Being a booking only lake I made a quick phone call to see if there was a spot for a day session and to my luck there was a space, I made a quick and easy payment over the phone to confirm my booking and feeling like a kid at Christmas I went to bed excited.

Up early in the morning I made my way to the lake making a brief pit stop

to fuel up with snacks and drink for the day ahead.

So I drove through the gates and pull up half way down the road side bank. After putting my boots on I took a stroll to have a quick look around to hopefully see some sort of sign of feeding fish. Viewing no more than four pegs I spotted some fizzing at about 90 yards range followed by fish showing their head and shoulders. This was enough for me, I walked briskly back to my van and parked it next to my swim.

So I quietly moved my tackle into my peg where I got comfortable on my bed hair and prepped my rigs. Using my ever faithful combi rig with 15mm mainline hybrid bottom bait tipped with a 10mm white pop up I slid a thin crushed boilie pva stick down my rig imbedding my hook in the end I placed it in a pot of hybrid glug.

Whilst letting that soak I had a quick lead about (2 casts) and found a lovely silty patch just off the weed where I'd seen some shows, so I clipped up reeled in attached my rig

to the quick link and put it out on the spot. After doing the same with the next rod I sat back and watched the water making mental notes of where the fish were showing.

An hour or so went by and the fish were still showing but yet no bite I thought something maybe up so I reeled a rod in and changed my tactic slightly. I decided to go with a double bottom bait instead of the bottom bait tipped with a 10mm pop up. So a new glug soaked stick went on and straight back out on the money.

WhackTickWeeeeee

After a brief phone call to a mate 3 more shows directly over the bait and instantly the bobbin whacked the rod the line ticked out of the clip and weeeeeeeeeee off she went. So excited that I got my first run on a new water I grabbed my rod and instantly felt the fish kiting left on me so stepping in to the water I started guiding her back my way and after an epic 15 minute battle my first quarrystyle Carp graced my net I could







see it was a pristine looking common. So with the help of some other anglers on the lake who had come to see what I had in my sling we

weighed her and took some great pictures before releasing her back home.

At 29lb on the nose it was a great way to start my quarry quest and to

catch an original that could be up to 40 years old made it even better.

I can't wait to get back down and do it Quarrystyle. ■



Exclusive

The Winter Series of Elite Carp Matches

Part 1 by Barry Oconnor

Having taken part in many carp matches on various venues up and down the country and abroad over the years we decided to run our own matches. We named them The Elite Carp Masters or Elite for short. They're very successful and we have a long waiting list of anglers to come in them. We started with one carp match per year then because of demand we progressed to doing two. They became so popular that anglers asked if we would run some carp matches in the winter months. This we did, again starting with only a couple and by popular demand we now run six winter matches. These run from October to March and they keep us very busy organizing them. The winter matches all take place on Cottingham's New Pepper Lake. There are places for eight pairs with Ben and I taking up the ninth place. The duration of our

(Top right) A small bag or stringer was attached to the hook.
(Below) 42lb 10oz for Chris Fuller.



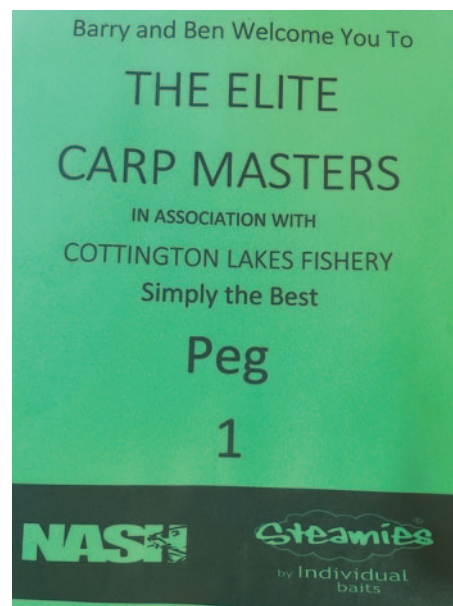
winter matches is normally 48 hours but we do start earlier if everyone has arrived. There are no eliminators in our matches so one weekends fishing could win you some serious money.

The October match is called The Champions League. This was because only the top four pairs in the

April and August Main Elites could go into it. As with the other winter matches Ben and I make up the ninth pair. The Champions League will finish in October 2024 but will be replaced in 2025 by The Super Elite. We will be expanding the Super Elite to cover all of Pepper Lake. There will



Exclusive The Winter Series of Elite Carp Matches



be seventeen competitors taking place in it. Ben and I will not be taking part due to the time needed to run it. The format for the winter matches is nine pair's fishing for three places and it's the total weight of carp caught that counts. First gets a £1000.00. Second £700.00. Third £350.

The main Elites in April and August are on two lakes Pepper and Christine. Pepper has about 200 carp in it including 16x40s, 60x30s, and multiple 20s and doubles. Christine has about 120 carp in it including 3x40s, 25x30s and multiple 20s and doubles. As you see there are many big carp to fish for. These two competitions are much bigger than the winter matches and they are well established. We have a free BBQ the night before the

match which includes free food and beer. The BBQs are a chance for the competitors to get to know each other. Talk of tactics, bait and swims can be heard throughout the evening. Some of the competitors walk around the lakes at several intervals to see if they can find any carp. They are well attended and the competitors enjoy them very much. There are 22 competitors taking part in each of the main events and only their three biggest fish count. It used to be the top overall weight that counted but we changed it to the biggest three fish to count. We don't take part in the main Elite events as we are too busy weighing, scoring, filming etc. The main Elites prizes are First £2000.00. Second £1000.00. Third £500. Nash Tackle sponsors both events and supplies a bivvy for the biggest carp caught and a chair for the smallest carp caught. There are other prizes as well including bait and a 48 hour ticket for two on Pepper Lake. We've been running these matches for eleven years now such is the popularity of them. Anglers come from all over the country to take part. A fish of a lifetime is waiting to be caught on both Pepper and Christine.

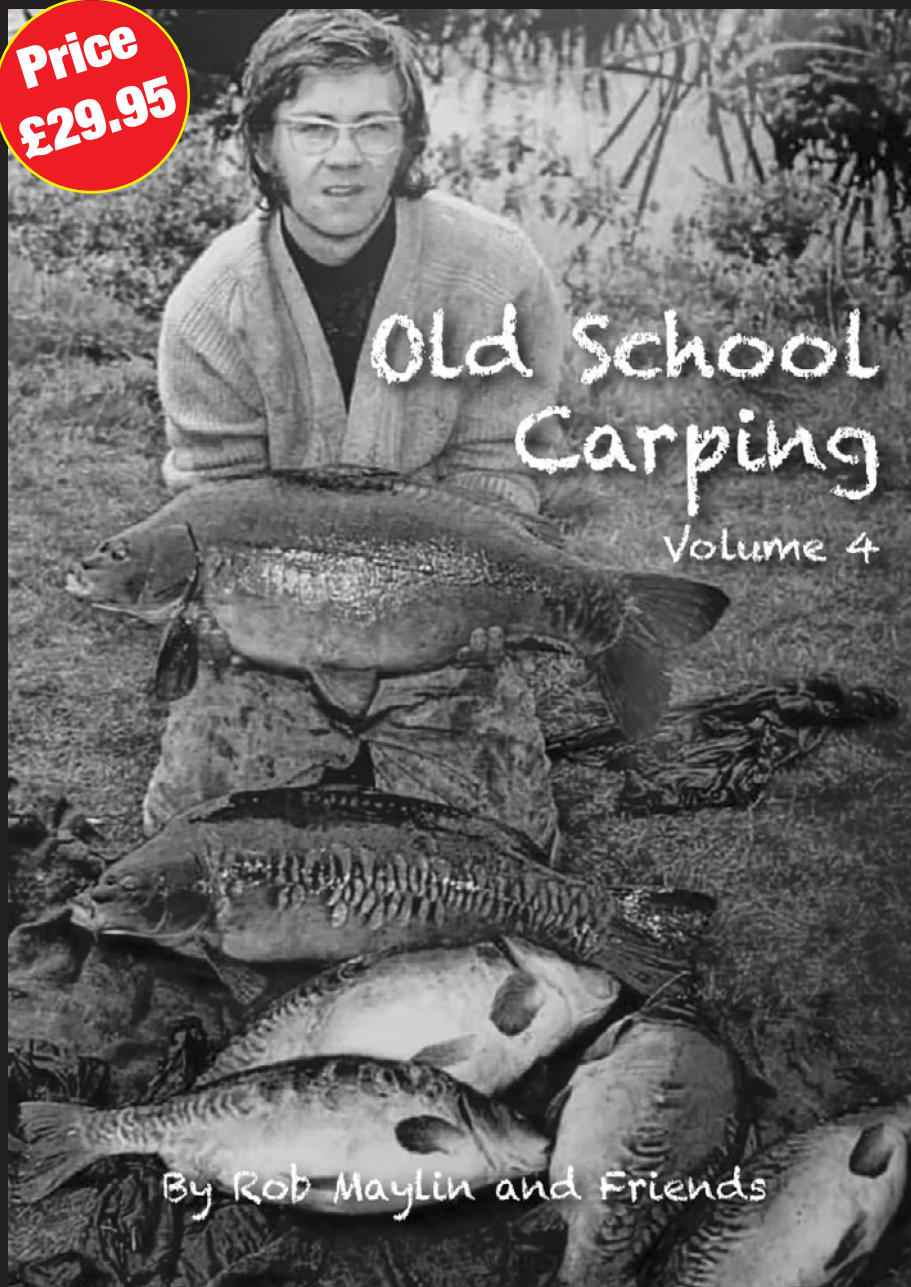
The first winter match of 2023 was The Champions League in October. We came out way down in the draw (that's not unusual) and got into peg 2. The peg numbers are our numbers



(Top left) Castaway everytime.
(Top right) The muddy swim.
(Centre) Steamies Bait.
(Bottom) Island in Peg Two.

OLD SCHOOL CARPING VOLUME 4

Price
£29.95



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

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

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

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

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

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

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Exclusive The Winter Series of Elite Carp Matches



December 18lb 7oz.



December 19lb 12oz.



Curtis on Peg Six with an 18.3 Common.



The James Gang with their 31lb 4oz.



November 6th.

and not Cottington's peg numbers. Well, we sat there all weekend watching carp jumping in our swim but do you think we could buy a bite, not on your nelly. We threw everything at them without success. It was so frustrating. One carp over 24.06 would have secured us a place on the podium but it wasn't to be.

The next winter match was in November. We came out second in the draw and chose peg 9 (bailiffs). The winter matches start at 10.30am and by 11.00am in this one we'd caught a carp. When I say not a big one I mean not a big one. In fact, it weighed a massive six pounds. Just above the minimum weight in the rules of five pounds. Well, it wasn't until around midday on Saturday that another carp was caught. It was a real beauty of a Mirror at 31.04 caught by a pairing of James and James. By the end of the match only two carp had been caught and we had one of them albeit a six pounder. That six pounder won us £700. First place had won a grand. Third place was won by way of

a draw because no one else had caught. One carp six pounds in weight gave us second place. How fortunate was that. It just shows you one fish in a winter match can bring its rewards.

Now we come to the December 2023 match. We came out sixth in the draw and got peg 1. Peg 1 at the time was one of the muddiest swims on Pepper after a deluge of rain down there. It was thick mud. I think it put some competitors off. Sometimes the muddiest of swims can be the best ones as they are well used. Nevertheless, we got stuck in, in more ways than one and set about the task ahead. With four rods for each pair, it gives you the chance to search out the swim.

Margins, troughs, gravel, overhanging bushes, islands and reeds are all spots where a bait can be presented. It never ceases to amaze us how many competitors don't use a marker to find features in their swim. They just fish blindly on. That brings us to the subject of bait. It's no secret that

Ben and I use Individual Baits by Steamies for all our fishing and have done for a couple of years now. We always take a selection of Steamies boilies with us on our fishing expeditions including TNT, Hydro Squid Liver and Krill and Bloodworm. Added to this we would take Wafers and pop ups too. In a match we like to try a different boilie on each rod. If we catch on one bait more than the any other then we would change all rods to that bait. It's a tactic we've used for many years in carp matches and have been very successful doing it.

The match began and it wasn't long before we were hurling our baited hooks in to the water. These consisted of a hook bait with a stringer or small bag attached to the hook. The stringer/bag was made with Castaway Mesh PVA. This PVA is the best I've ever used it doesn't leave any residue around the hook when it melts. Fantastic. After casting out the hook baits a few boilies were scattered around them. On the first day the first fish to come out was a

42lb 10oz Mirror but not to us. It was a carp called Pawprint and was caught by Chris Fuller one of our regulars. What a fish to start off with! Well done Chris. A couple of hours after that we had a 19lb 12oz Mirror. It came to one of Bens rods and he played it very carefully to the net. It put us on the leaderboard in second place.

On the second day I caught a carp a Common at 18lb 7oz. Again, I was being very careful getting it in. I didn't want to lose it. This strengthened our second place with a total of 38lb 3oz and only four pound or so behind first place. Both these carp were caught on Hydro Squid Liver. The places remained the same until Sunday morning when a 20lb 6oz Mirror was caught by Murray Brett and Martin Coombes and put them in to third place.

No more carp were caught and the places remained the same. We had come second once again and won £700. Pleased, you bet we were. Fishing in winter can be very hard going. The fish don't want to play ball so usually not many come out. This makes the competition much fairer in that everyone is in the same boat no matter what swim you are in, whether it's the flyer or a not so popular one.



The rules at Cottington insist on the use of tubing.

This concluded the first three winter matches. We'd had a second and first place. We were very happy with that. We'll that's the end of the first

part of this article. To see how we got on in the other three matches you'll have to read part 2. The second part will follow at a later date. ■



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Also available this month,

Big Carp Issue 335

Miss it and miss out!

TC Conservation Group

The Legacy Project has supported the Legacy Project Young Angler Support initiative



We have seen amazing support from Oxford anglers and The Tackle Tavern - New & Used Tackle. As with any project like this there is 'overspill'. I am very proud to be able to say that we have also used your generosity to support Dave Peacey and Tunnel Barn Farm. Their collaboration provides access to fishing for kids who otherwise might not be able to access this resource. They also use fishing to support individuals with more complex issues. It is my absolute pleasure to be able to show you what you made happen. These rods and reels are what are required and these will enable a great number of individuals to participate in this project. So please support Dave by following and sharing his page. 'Thankyou' to ALL of you that has donated and 'put back' into local angling. You have made a tangible and measurable difference to so many of our young anglers.



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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.

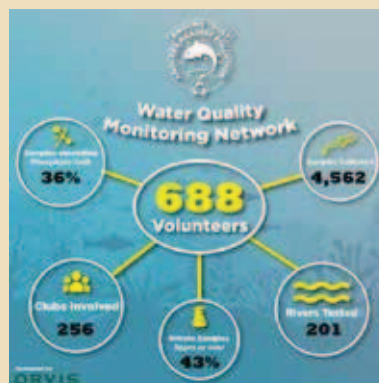
"This AIF round is likely to be over-subscribed and therefore only the best submissions can be supported. If your club or fishery is considering applying, make sure you answer all the questions, ensure your project is ready to go with all

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...

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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

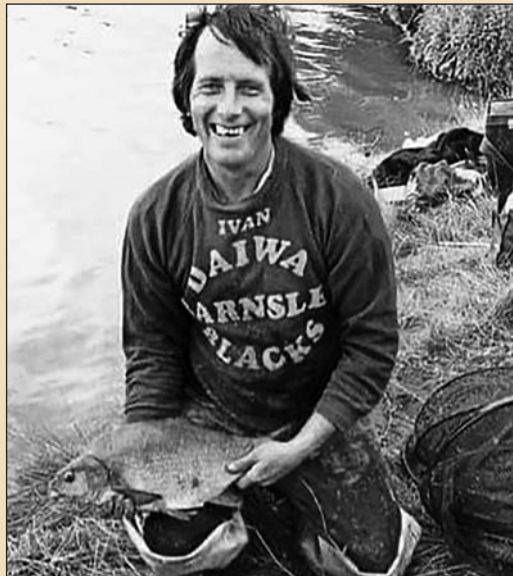
to be returned to fund environmental improvements is pitifully inadequate."

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."

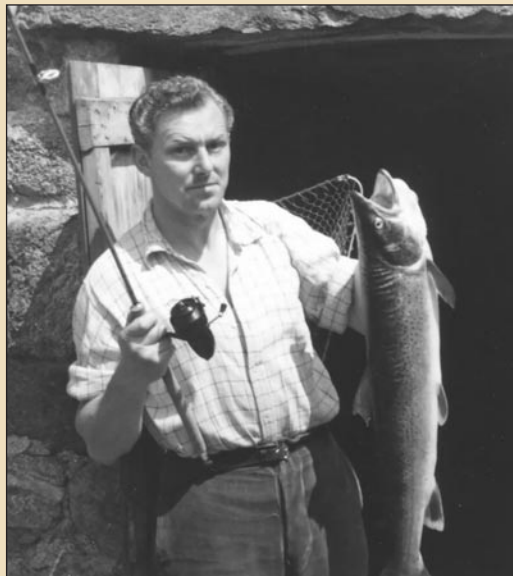
JOIN ANGLING TRUST & FISH
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POLLUTION ■

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



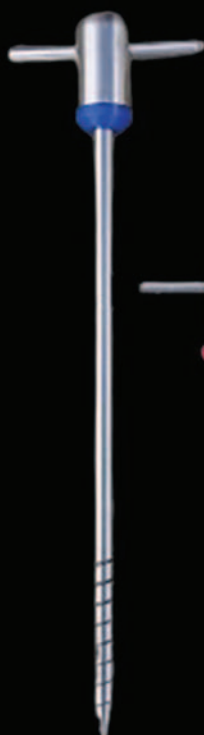
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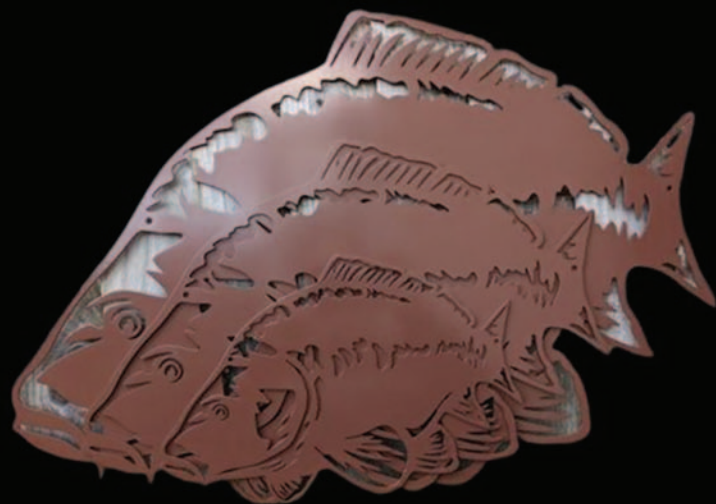
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Wide-Fit Ladies Wellington Boots

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

About Jileon:

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

Website: www.jileon.com ■

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

Linch Hill

By Ben Turley



I arrived at the lake for gates opening, and off I went to locate the fish. After a quick lap of Willow, I sighted two fish pop their heads out on the back of the northerly wind. That was enough for me, so I got myself set up. More fish continued to show across on the wind line against the side of the island. In preparation for this session, I had already soaked 10kg of SS4 16mm Food Baits in the SS4 Liquid Fish Protein. I started on a single chod GS4 16mm White straight out to showing fish and both other rods on a simple blow back rigs and 14mm red SS4 fished helicopter style. I stuck a few handfuls of 16mm SS4 freebies in the general area. At 6.30 that night I had my first take, a beautiful 22lb mirror. I kept the bait going in on a consistent

basis and managed another two fish that night. As morning broke, it was easy to see the fish had backed off me due to the previous evening's commotion. I swiftly moved swims in order to stay on the fish. Within one hour I'd got my first take, a stunning 16lb common, which confirmed the move was the right choice. I stayed in that swim for the remainder of the trip. I went on to bag a further seven fish including some stunning commons and scaly mirrors of all colours, ranging from 16lb to 26lb.

On the last afternoon I put out my remaining 2kg of bait on the spot and briefly rested the swim ready for the last evening of the session. I put all three rods out on the first cast, bang on the money, using two blowback rigs comprising of a size 4 Pinpoint Wide Gape to 20lb N-Trap fished on

ESP leadcore and a chod size 4 Atomic Chodda on 25lb Mouth Trap fished naked, all by this time being fished very tightly on the spot (a small cruddy patch at the bottom of the island shelf).

At 4pm, not long after casting out, my right rod (simple blowback SS4 hookbait) pulled up tight, and the second I hooked it I knew it was a better fish. Although it was not a long fight, it was definitely a hard one. I didn't see the fish until it went in the net, but when I did see it, I knew that it was a proper jewel in the crown that is Linch Hill, and I was over the moon to see the perfect zip line across the fish.

After a quick call to the bailiff, I readied myself with mats, water and weigh bar. On lifting it out of the water, I immediately knew that this





carp would exceed my British PB of 36lb. It spun the scales to 40lb 2oz, giving me a new PB. The shouts were heard at the back of Christchurch. The bailiffs shot down to do the pictures, and Julie confirmed the follow-

ing morning that it was Tango's Lin at a good weight. Thanks to all that helped photograph and soaked me through to the skin.

On the last morning I was lucky enough to bag a last fish, a common

at 19lb 14oz, making it a total of 12 fish in all and a session I will never forget. I also returned on the following Tuesday (16th) and managed to catch a further two commons of 36lb 4oz and 15lb. ■



Hay Fever? Dust or Pet Allergy?



Helping Anglers
Catch the Pollen



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Suitable for children & pregnant & breastfeeding women



Organic



Proven[†]



60+ Awards



Drug-free



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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.

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Marston Madness

By Chris Thripp

Steve Frogerly and I decided to set up at the deeper end of the lake – after all, it was the obvious place to start at this time of year. The lake is ten or so acres with many features above and below the water. Homework needed to be done for this one, as there are sunken trees, pump houses etc. It really wasn't pretty as we arrived in late January.

There was driving icy rain and lots of mud, deep mud – this really was madness. We elected for a massive

double swim so that we could cover the whole area in front of us. The swim is known as Double Muddy, and as it's name suggests, it got extremely muddy. It took us forever to set up, trying to mop up the mud with leftover tree bark chippings, but this just made it worse. We were freezing our tits off.

Marston is a lovely lake. I had never fished it before, so it was a good time of year with the weed down to get a clear idea of the topography of the lake – marker out then. It didn't take long before I knew what we were

looking at. So all plumbed areas sorted, we found a 30ft hole with an average depth of 14ft. Obviously with Thripster Pearl doing such an amazing job on Brogborough (see Big Carp magazines articles, special editions and/or the book Urban Carping, Gold In My Hands page 190 for my accounts on there), bait choice was a fishmeal that I had developed along with the Pearl. I called it Cobra.

It's now available, and many fish have since been caught on it, but Marston was its first test outing. It would have been so easy to have



Chris, 23lb, Marston.



Chris with a lovely Marston common.



Chris – another winter Marston mirror.



Chris, 24lb, Marston.



Chris – Marston.



Chris – Marston common.



Chris – Marston common.



Luke Marvin, 28lb, Marston.



Snow bivvy.



Chris – Marston.



Chris – Marston mirror.



Chris with another mirror.



Chris – mirror.



Chris Thripp – Marston.



Chris with a welcome winter mirror.



Luke Marvin, 28lb, Marston.

used the tried and tested Pearl, but I am just not made that way. I love to test my mixes in the worst conditions. We faced a barrage of rain, northerly sprawls and very strong winds, but I absolutely loved every minute of it. We got battered and soaked, and it was a crazy four or five long sessions. I planned to do ten-day stints until the end of March when I had a new syndicate lined up.

So we were on our well-researched spots. I'm not going to bore you with the details of every capture, but on the two-month winter test, we had an amazing 71 runs. I had well over 20 20s, and Steve had the biggest at 34lb. Enjoy the pics. Marston has some of the best-looking pristine mirrors that I had ever seen. Fish don't come out very often, and there were much bigger fish to be had. It was just getting through all the 20s that are in the lake, which wasn't a bad thing considering the condition of the fish. We had the lake to ourselves for much of the time.

You can drive right around the lake and park your motor right in your swim, which is very helpful, especially when you are being pounded by icy rain. Whilst Steve and I were there, Luke Marvin came down for an overnigher and had a lovely 28lb mirror falling to the Pearl. I enjoyed my brilliant season with the summer and autumn on the mighty Brogborough and the winter on Marston, and to top it all, I won the Ampthill Angling Club Carp Cup for the Brogborough Lake and club record. From about November onwards, all the fair weather boys flock to their living rooms in front of their fires.

Marston is a lovely club water, looked after by a very well organised club. The swims are very well laid out, and the lake is a pleasure to fish, with friendly, helpful bailiffs.

Thanks for reading. ■



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Great week on Willow 1, B3 last week for Mark Anderson and Leigh Horwood who was celebrating his 70th birthday. Leigh couldn't have had a better celebration of his 70th with more fish than years in La Belle France with Mark Anderson. Thanks for showing him how to winkle more than just the garlicky snails from their shells. Happy birthday Leigh.





Did somebody say Social Night? Champions league night at Bounty. It's not ALL about fishing eh!?



Oliver with some chunks last week on barn bank post 2 b1. With a new 50lb common for b1 a 44lb and 46lb common. As well as the big mirror at 51lb 5oz. And lots of others, good angling.



Little Owen Elvidge, the bailiff's bought him his very own rod.



Jordan Daniel and Steven had a great week on b2 posts 5, 6, 7 resulting in some big carp at the top spawn weight. 2 x 49lb commons 1 x 47lb mirror, plus lots of others and a big cat at 130s. Well done gents!

New website coming soon



It's not all about monsters, 24lbs of stunning mirror for Stuart Cox.

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The Last Of The Big Five...

By Wayne Iszatt

Early October 2015, as I gazed in awe at the blood moon eclipse in the early hours, within a blurred flash, I found myself knee deep in water doing battle with an angry carp and a one-noter still ringing in my ear. I had endured a fairly lean summer down at St. Ives Shallow Lagoon, only managing to catch a couple of carp, firstly as I hadn't had a great deal of angling time, but also because I couldn't get my head into another water properly whilst there were still a couple of fish from this old haunt I still really desired to be in my album, so I found myself back on this large Cambs gravel pit. I wrote an article for BC magazine a couple of seasons ago about the pit that peaked with capture of a 41-pound common called the Silver, but there were still a couple missing from my wish list, namely an old randomly scaled mirror called Pete's, and also an old dinosaur that had been bought from a nature reserve netting many years previously that had inherited the unfitting name of the Stockie, the last of the original

big five I had set out to catch.

Could this be one of them? I wondered as I hung on to the rod as a powerful fish gave it tail! The spot itself wasn't a swim as such, just a quiet tucked away cove, fringed with thin reeds, a one-rod assault, fishing at my rod tip on a spot that I had been prebaiting to get cleaned off. This little area of the lake never saw any angling pressure, as it's cut off by another shallow reed bed from the nearest swim, so it got ignored, but it was perfectly safe to fish it from the position I had chosen. I had to show this fish a little resistance, as it neared that reedbed about 50 yards away, but I had plenty of time to slow it and turn it, so all was going to plan.

A little bit of tug-of-war later and I had the fish close in front of me. It was here that it began circling round and round in the deep margin in front. A few minutes passed, and I felt powerless to get the fish up from spiraling in the depths. It dawned on me then that it had to be a good fish. Minute by minute, I got the fish higher in the water, and eventually it bobbed up in front of me on the edge of the reed

line, seemingly beaten. All I had to do was manoeuvre my net through the thin reeds and scoop, but my net was snagged on something in the margin behind me. I had lost my contact lenses to add to the difficulty, so I reluctantly flicked my headtorch on to free the net from a rogue branch, and then through blurred vision I briefly saw the fish there, inches from the net cord. But before I could get the net quite under it, she bolted off on another run.

I had seen enough of the fish to know it was a big mirror as long as the net cord, and I saw the white inners of scales as it turned – could it be Pete's Fish? Now I was shaking as the adrenaline pumped. The battle ensued once again, with the fish going on another run, but it was tiring. She turned, and as I was easing her back towards the waiting net, I could feel her shaking her head as it broke surface. As she was gliding towards the cord and her big head came into view, the hook popped out! For a slow motion split second we were face to face in the maroon moonlight glow, with the rig still



White Tips.

bouncing in the air between us, before she realised she was free, and disappeared without a sound. I was stunned; in fact I felt really, really sad. It had been a very testing summer, I wasn't at all happy with my results, and then I go and lose the fish that was going to save the season and put me on cloud nine. Whichever fish it was, it was definitely one I hadn't caught and one I had needed to land – there are no words of consolation.

I spent the next day still feeling pretty sick, and just kept thinking to myself, "Why did I have to see it?" It was definitely a night time bite spot, so I went stalking on another pit for the day. The trap was reset the following night, and again in the early hours I had a bite and, without any drama, landed a lovely dark common with white tips to the fins and tail. This cheered me up to some extent and was a little compensation.

The third and last night of my session they didn't visit again and the bait remained uneaten. It can often only take a couple of bites on a low stocked pit from a spot before that spot has 'blown' in my experience, as

I'm sure the body language of caught fish will let the others in the group that patrol that zone know that it is not safe to dine there, but I planned to keep baiting and monitoring it whilst I gave other spots a go. The pit itself is 30-odd acres, gin clear, rammed with weed and naturals, with around 30 originals left and some younger stocked fish dripped in over the years. I felt it was too late in the year to try and get something going at any range with such limited time, so my plan was to ambush them as they patrol the margins, as they often did at night, and prebait various spots as far away from the busy swims and as often as life allowed, and then fish them on rotation according to weather conditions and feeding evidence.

Blanks were standard on the lake; these fish see regular pressure in the clear water and often ignore bait, so I felt a one-rod assault under the cover of darkness away from the circuit swims was my best chance. There was another spot I had been priming with bait along a deep, reed-fringed margin. It was one of the few

stretches of bank that didn't see much human noise or lines, so I had a feeling it would produce at night, and the spot was certainly growing due to my prebaiting. It was in a bay, which rarely seemed to do many captures from the Bay swim. I had a feeling fish were still getting in there at night though, but would easily suss out an angler's lines cutting across the mouth of the bay, therefore would be reluctant to feed, but I figured that if I tucked myself on the other side in the trees and fished close in, this may fool them into a false sense of security and I may have a chance. I called this spot the Shingles due to the gleaming clean pea gravel starting to shine through.

The next opportunity I had to fish was a Saturday night. My band was playing just up the road, so the plan was to drop some bait in the Shingles at dusk, go and do the gig and be back and have a rig lowered for bite time. All went to plan, and at some point in the early hours I had a bite. After a hard fight, I landed a mint 27lb common. I popped it in the retainer and awaited first light, but when I went to retrieve the fish a couple of hours later the sling was empty! Having always been an old skool sack user, I was new to retainers, and it turns out it was a crap one, as the floatation bars could be pushed apart, which teased the zip down! I had not heard a thing as it had slipped out. I was slightly annoyed that I had managed to play a gig and catch a carp in the same evening yet I had no photo. Oh well, here's to the memory! But I was happy my new spot had produced.

One thing that was becoming apparent was that bite time in the margins so far had been between 1 and 3am, so I had the day to kill, mainly resting up from the heavy evening as I anticipated the dark hours again. I didn't want this spot to blow quickly and wanted to stick to my plan of rotation to prolong that from happening, so I actually applied a hit of 'free' bait before moving back on to the Cove spot for another go, as conditions looked right for it up there. But by dawn, the spot hadn't been fed on again, and I had to pack up for work. I checked the Shingles to rebait, and it had been smashed! Oh, hindsight!

I had a busy work diary from there,



The Shingles spot had grown from the size of a saucer to this from my baiting.

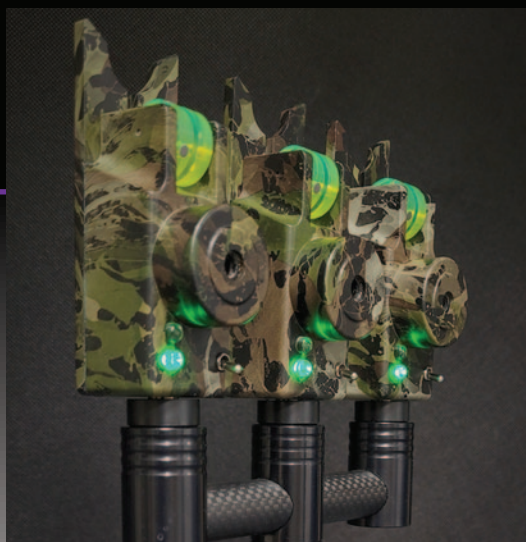
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A strapping Common from the rod tip.

and with the nights drawing in and my daughter staying with me a lot, I was limited to about one overnighter a week. These margin spots were very weather dependant, so it was hit and miss. We had lost the warm winds, so basically if it was cold or wet I found the margins would not get visited, and with winter approaching, I called time on my spots in November after managing one more 24lb common just before the cold set in.

The winter dragged, as they always do for me. The pit has no winter form, as I believe the fish generally push out to the middle and shut down, some 200 yards out, so apart from the odd night on there to keep my sanity, I fished other, more likely lakes on my winter overnights. We had a very cold snap in February, but I started back on the pit as planned regardless to begin tuning into it again. It was too cold for the margins, so what time I did have was spent fishing out into the main body of water, as close to their 'safe zone' as I could reach, which was still maybe 100 yards away from the shows that were starting to occur. I still only had one night, or two if I was lucky, per week to fish, so March rolled by. It was just a wait-

ing game, waiting for the warmer weather to invite them to visit areas within my casting range again. Hope began when I saw what looked like a definite carp show in the bay from the other side of the pit early one morning. It was only on an overnighter, so I couldn't fish on it, but it was time to start baiting the Shingles again, and I did so before I left.

The following week I headed straight there for my night's angling. It was the 1st April, and the wind was trickling in; it looked probable. My excitement was heightened when I heard what was clearly a carp lump out in the bay after dark, only a few yards away, so they were using the bay at night again. It was one of those nights where I was mesmerised by the anticipation of a bite and sat on my hands as quiet as a mouse. Then out of the blue, my rod burst into life, and I was into a powerful fish. A long fight in the deep bay ensued, but eventually I netted an original, a corking 30lb common – the margins were back in the game! I'm sure those that saw me with the shelter up behind the reeds with one rod out must have thought I had had lost the plot, but little would they know what a killer night spot it was turning out to be.

My grandad was very ill in hospital at that time, so I had to walk away for a while and free some time to see him and be around family. A mate, Dan, fished the area the following night – he was the only one I told about the whereabouts of the happenings. Two sets of eyes and ears on the job was better than one, and I wanted him to have a few too, so I showed him another clean spot from up a tree not far up the bank that I had caught from the previous year and had in mind as a back-up for when the Shingles had blown, and I suggested he put a rig on it. He didn't get a bite, but the cunning fish had managed to get rid and chuck the rig off the spot without so much as a bleep at some point in the night before cleaning him out. He also informed me that the bait I had dropped on my spot before packing up had all gone, and he had heard carp rolling in the bay. So they were still getting in there and feeding – my next night down there couldn't come soon enough!

I had planned to do an overnighter the following weekend, but I knew my grandad was close, and he passed away the following night. There was only one place I could be on the next night and that was at the pit – I didn't

fancy sitting in at home. Dan joined me; we pitched up in the same swims, and we raised a few glasses to him that night. The anticipation of a bite grew the later the evening went on as we were starting to hear rolls in the bay. "They're here," I muttered to Dan before we retired to our shelters early, as it was a work night. In the early hours I found myself pouncing on my rod that was melting off in a frightening manner that only margin anglers will know of. My god did this fish fight! It must have been knocking on half an hour when I finally shuffled him in the net. Any other night it would have dropped off, but I had a feeling all night that my grandad would make sure I had some luck – it felt quite magical actually, and a belting rare mirror unknown to me as well. At dawn when I got to open the sling I was met with the sight of blacks to chestnut browns to deep orange that inked an old, leathery flank. He had a few white koi-like flecks on his tail too. It was a torpedo of a carp – what more could I want? It was an emotional capture during a difficult week.

Over the next couple of weeks I carried on with the Shingles, managing another 24lb common and a couple of small stockies, and Dan caught two nice mid 20 originals from the other spot. It was a great area for quicker overnights, as carp would often patrol the bay at night, and no other members had yet seemed to have cottoned on to this. You could fish the same spots from the swim opposite, but you would need to fish locked up, and that would mean spooking lines cutting through the mouth of the bay, so I really doubted we would have got the same results, hence why I would sooner be over there and fishing in the edge on a slack line.

I hoped the Shingles would eventually throw up a big fish after hearing some units show in the bay, and I felt close to a special one. I also wanted to stay one step ahead of my own game, so I started baiting another spot at the other end of the lake, not too far from the Cove, which I did so before I left. It was a good job I had back-up plans going really, as on my next trip I checked the Shingles spot only to find

it had been carpeted in a foreign bait. That's the problem when your margin spot grows big; it is in danger of being hijacked by another angler, who in all fairness maybe didn't realise anyone had been fishing there. The bait looked strange; at first I thought it was pellet, but after making a scooper out of an empty tin tied to a fishing rod, I managed to obtain some for a closer inspection and it was maize, but not great looking stuff; it had gone dull and brown. I doubted it would get eaten, and I didn't fancy fishing over it and was slightly gutted at the realisation that the spot had rotting bait on it now, so it was out of the game for a while. I checked my new spot, and there was a gravel circle just the size of a dustbin lid from where my first bait hit had been eaten – proof that this area was also on their night time patrol map.

There was a small reedy bay close by, and I now had two full days ahead of me to watch the area, and by afternoon, carp were starting to show up in the May sunshine. They were mostly small stocked fish, but one or two bigger originals were amongst



A gift from my Grandad I'm sure.



My preferred rig for fishing close in on a gravel bottom. A coated braid D-rig, with a drop-off 4oz Inline to a fluoro-carbon leader, with 8 inches of rig tubing threaded onto the leader also for its anti-tangle properties.

them, in particular a large sparsely scaled mirror that I never got a close look at, but could this have been Pete's fish, I wondered. I then briefly saw a glimpse of a huge common that by its colouration, had to have been the Pale Common at around 40lbs, a fish that is thought to have been moved in from another pit on the complex and was growing fast – another to add to my wish list. It just appeared unexpectedly through a gap in the reeds and disappeared into the glare towards the main lake, only a few yards from my spot. It had to be worth a shot, and I got a rod settled on it before dark and sat back out of view.

Sure enough, in the early hours I had a bite. It was a bit of a hit-and-hold spot due to a reedy finger bay close by that the fish headed for, but it turns out a little common was responsible for blowing my cover, and I soon had him back on his way. Night turned into day, and again I had the

day to watch over the area and saw quite a few fish venturing in and out of the reed beds to hold up in the fine sunshine. My jaw dropped again as the big old Pale waddle in and out of that same gap in the reeds – it looked colossal. Night time couldn't come soon enough, and when it did, I quickly got a bite at dusk, and this time a small stocked mirror of about 12lbs was responsible. I slipped him back and sat up late, hearing the occasional roll in the area.

I must have nodded off maybe around midnight and was disheartened when I woke at first light having not had another bite, or so I thought. On inspection of the spot, to my horror I could see my line poker straight and disappearing several metres off and into the reed bed. What's worse, on picking up the rod, it was heading directly into that gap that I had only seen the Pale use! First priority was to make sure I didn't have a snagged fish. I could see my leader, but it was clear the fish had gone, so I pulled a little harder and the rig came free along with a hooked-up reed, so the fish must have shaken the hook out pretty quickly. How could this have happened? I pained. On closer inspection of my buzzer it all came clear, as the wheel was jammed stuck, so line was passing straight over it. I could have left this bit out of the story, as it's obviously a bit embarrassing, but that's carp fishing, and sometimes equipment lets you down or you just get bad luck, and this is hopefully a reminder to check your kit constantly. It was a rare incident and thankfully no harm was done, but it scared me. I was left to ponder on the thought that it was likely I had lost The Pale.

I watched as carp started to show up again after a patrol into the main lake, and no sign of the Pale this time, which reinforced my concerns, nor did I see her there on the next couple of overnights, in which I managed hook two more smaller carp, which both dropped off. I wasn't snag fishing as such; in fact from my vantage point I had better odds at controlling them than fishing from the nearest swim called Foxes and casting down to the area as some anglers do. I had a few metres from my spot to the reed bed to put the brakes on the fish, but I still had to play them harder than I liked, so I decided to walk away from

the spot, as I didn't want to be losing any at all nor risking mouth damage, and instead concentrate on fishing from Foxes, and I started baiting a couple of new spots from there in readiness for the next session.

When it came around, I headed straight for the area to take a peek over the reeds, and sure enough carp were present. I decided there and then I would fish in Foxes corner, only as I gazed over to the swim, I noticed what looked like a rod. I walked round and the swim was taken, but the angler was keeping the shelter and tackle out of view up the bank. I apologised for nosing in his area, as I hadn't seen him. We chatted some more, and it turns out he had been there a few days and had caught a couple of fish including the Pale! My name really wasn't on that fish, it seemed. I congratulated him, and I didn't know where to put myself then and ended up fishing at the other end of the pit with no joy that night. Upon leaving, I thought I would check the Shingles again, and thankfully the brown maize had found its way to the bottom of the shelf, and I had the spot back, which I filled in with bait in the hope of building their confidence back up... if they were still visiting that area.

So next session I was back in the Shingles with the traps set for the evening. There was a nice northeasterly on, and it looked spot-on for it. As the night turned into the early hours, I was awoken by a couple of bleeps on one rod. They were randomly spaced apart, not like an ejected pick-up, so I knew it had to be a liner on the limp line hanging from the rod tips, so there was carp literally at my feet. Only a minute or so later the rod burst into life as a one-noter pierced the silence. I picked up the rod to find myself connected to a slow and strong culprit. I soon realised by its deep, powerful lunges and ability to just hold its position in the water under full battle curve that this was no little stockie. After a few minutes of slow plodding left to right, it started to wallow close in. I thought I might have a chance to net it, so I flicked the torch on so I could get my bearings on its position, and my eyes caught a glimpse of a deep bodied large mirror at which point I became very nervous.

She wanted to fight some more, and

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as there was not much weed yet present, I just let her do what she wanted, transfixed on not putting any pressure on the hook hold and hoped she would tire herself out. Eventually the moment came where she popped up in front of me, slowly shaking the head, and thoughts of the fish loss from last October were flashing back to me as she neared the mesh, but a big deep lunge with the net and she was in! After the recent losses, the relief felt amazing. I shone the torch at my prize and uttered a few colourful words of excitement as I looked down on very hefty mirror with scales to boot. The light was starting to appear on the horizon as I slid her in the retainer and removed the net without lifting her from the water, removed the hook, and she was then properly secured until I got myself together. With an inkling of which fish it was, I struck up a coffee and waited for the perfect dawn to break.

She looked incredible when I unravelled the sling, just a proper looking old fish, with a few scales here and there and classic pastel brown colour tones. It was indeed the very elusive Pete's Fish, and the grandmother of the pod I had been following up and down that bank the previous few weeks – I was rather stoked!

Over the next couple of weeks, I carried on fishing my random overnights in the Shingles, Cove and another new spot in a different swim and caught a few more stockies, but bites were drying up again in that area, and I was keen to make a start in Foxes. I had been hanging back, as I didn't want to drop straight in after the angler had just caught the Pale, but it appeared to have been vacant for a while. So when conditions were right for the swim I dropped in there, and there were still plenty of carp getting in the little

reedy finger bay. As it is a corner swim, my spots were still practically margin spots, only I was casting over to them from the swim. I started catching from the first night in there, and over the next few weeks I had some of the most consistent and enjoyable action on the rods I had experienced for many years. It was a bite or sometimes two a night in there, which for a relatively low stocked pit was enjoyable, and most importantly I wasn't losing many from my safer spots.

Work was quiet at that time, meaning I could be down the pit three or four nights per week, practically every night I didn't have my daughter or a gig, and with the regular bait going in, I really got that swim rocking all through July. I ended up with 19 more captures and one hook pull before the action stopped. I was hoping the Pale would show up in my net one night, but they were mostly younger,



Pete's Fish.



An original from Foxes corner.



Foxes was rockin' - these future fish are knock out!

A few of the younger fish caught from Foxes Corner





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stocked double figure fish, with the exception of a nice upper 20 original mirror and also my old friend White Tips again, along with many tench, a couple of mallards and a coot due to the shallow topography of the swim, which reminds me, I must submit that capture to Coot-Talk.

I then had a holiday abroad and

worked either side of it, so I got a bit out of momentum. I blinked and it was September, in which month bites slowed right off and only a couple of younger carp turned up. I had caught around a third of the pit's stock that season by that time, so it was to be expected that they were getting cagey to my style.

Carp can be quite territorial with certain groups feeding in the same areas, and I felt I had thoroughly searched out those areas. It was time to change tactics and swims and concentrate more on the main body of water if I was ever going to bank that last dinosaur. Of course, by that time in the year, the weed had engulfed the pit, so finding clear spots at range without a boat or echo sounder was not easy. I was kicking myself a little bit for getting so wrapped up in margin fishing that I hadn't got any spots going at any range, but I guess I did what I could with the time I had, and I was happy with my results. Try as I did with my limited time in the Autumn, I only caught one more at 80 yards' range in October, and also heard the news that the dinosaur had been caught, which took the drive away for me, as that was surely her done for that season, so that was my last fish from that pit for the year.

Pic 11 – Last bite from the pit that season.

Another old, scaly carp had caught my attention from another little pit on the complex. The fish was a battered old linear with a raggy tail that could



A common from the Shingle.



Last bite from the pit that season.

tell a tale or two – my kind of carp, so I suggested to a mate that we have an end of season Halloween social on there, and that he brought his fire pit and we sink a few Hobgoblin Golds. I knew the fish had hardly been fished for, and it is believed the pond only held five carp, so I figured a little maize and some smelly, oily ground-bait and pellet may work for a quick bite. I only had settled the rods for a couple of hours when one tore off with that very fish on the end, and as quick as that I had Raggy in my album.

Again, I ventured off to higher stocked pastures in the colder months, but couldn't wait to get back on the dinosaur hunt, and when this spring came around, I was determined to outwit her. She is such a beast, with a wrinkly old leathery and scarred flank, and no doubt older than me – a proper one, so I just couldn't walk away. I spent the whole winter thinking my approach over and over. The lake is fairly pressured these days, so I needed to step up my game, as this carp usually only gets caught once or maybe twice a year, and usually to a bait boat angler who can reach further out into the pit than I

could. This year I was not going to get preoccupied with margin spots and mainly concentrate out in the main body of water.

An early start was needed if I were to stay in the game, so I began baiting and fishing overnights in February. Because I work in the building trade as a draughtsman, spring is always the busiest time, so I mostly only had single nights between work to get down to the pit. My primary objective was to push my casting range and lead around thoroughly at distances I had not reached before, applying bait from the off on decent feeling areas. I had narrowed down three areas of the lake by her past known captures that I guessed would be her favourite feeding grounds and began creating spots. I was looking for those soft thuds of a lead landing on low weed with a hard deck below. I wasn't looking for blatant, large, clean areas that would go down with a crack, as this would likely have been somebody else's spot from the previous season that may have 'blown', so I wanted to create my own hard drops on fresh dining tables. I must have looked a bit crazy Spombing out bait in February when the carp were clearly holding

out in the middle of the pit, still in their winter slumber, but my idea was to feed the tench.

The lake is rammed with tench, and at a guess they outnumber the carp maybe ten to one. It is also very weedy, so my plan was to use the tench as Hoovers to clean spots off, so when the carp did wake up and other anglers started to turn up again then I would hopefully have an advantage that I could get in one of the primed swims and present hookbaits in the area without too much fuss, on rigs I am confident in, knowing I was fishing effectively.

By mid March it was apparent that the plan seemed to be working, as I was getting lovely 'cracks' on the new spots and began catching tench. I had thought long and hard about baiting strategy, and I guessed by that dinosaur's lack of appearances that she wasn't the type of character to go storming in on a bed of 18 millers, gills blazin'! So, when the day came that the carp did show up, I needed to get their feeding confidence high, and this is where small baits came into play. Tiger chops were a key ingredient in my mix, as the carp know they won't get

snagged on a little chop of tiger, right? So they went into the feed, along with Dynamite's Complex-T boilies that were mostly crumbed and chopped. Added to this was betaine green pellet and amino groundbait that would blend in with the bottom but leave a lot of smell, lots of hemp, salt, and finally some corn and maize, firstly because bright baits work well in the spring while the fish are still in a docile state, and secondly to take the suspicion out of my half a bright fluoro hookbait, which was balanced with a half a tiger to create a wafting hookbait that settled gently, hiding the hook, I nicknamed it The Fluoro-Nut. It is small enough not to scream danger, but still durable enough to withstand a tench ejection or coot pick-ups. Anyone that fishes clear pits will know that the birdlife can be a right mare, and this lake is no exception, so I didn't want to be worrying my hookbait had been pulled off and winding in to check.

As we was nearing the end of March, I caught a carp amongst the tench, albeit a small stockie, but I was happy to know the carp were waking

up and some were finding my spots. All I needed was time, and it was driving me crazy being stuck working with little free time whilst that early warm weather was coming upon us, but I kept on persisting with the overnights and kept topping up the spots with my 'carpet' bait mix. Whilst I was at work, the lake then started to go off for a couple of other anglers on sessions, and carp were getting caught, including a couple of the bigger ones. I knew the one I wanted was due out, and I also knew the swims I had been priming were now getting attention by other anglers now. The overnights were tiring due to the tench, but I persisted with as many nights as a busy life allows. Weekends were also tricky, as I sing in my band most Saturday nights.

Finally I had a window of opportunity in my diary for a session in early April that coincided with a full moon, or to be more honest, I told my clients I needed to put the jobs back a few days, and took some 'compassionate leave' just in the nick of time before I imploded! So it was session on. The



The fluoro-nut.

forecast was good, an unusually fine weekend for April with clear blue skies and sunshine, and temps hitting mid 20s by the Sunday when I arrived on the complex. I initially couldn't decide what swim to start with. The forecast was due for an evening wind spin to start hacking down to Foxes



Raggy!

Welcome to

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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

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We look forward to welcoming you to Creedence Fishery!

corner. But for some reason, I was drawn to one of the swims I had been priming on the east bank of the lake. I ummed and ahed for a while, but in the end I chose to take that gamble of the new wind forecast.

Nothing occurred that night, and I didn't hear or see any shows. The wind was much colder than I had hoped, and I knew carp wouldn't turn up on it as I sat there shivering over the first brew of the day, so a move before breakfast was needed, and I shifted over the opposite bank on a more central swim on the back of the wind with a good view of the pit, hoping for a show, and got three singles settled. My eyes kept fixing over to that same swim on the east bank, and a niggling voice in my head kept saying, "Get over there!"

Then, only maybe 60 yards in front of that swim, a huge back dolphined out of the water with a big white spray of water around it, right where I was gazing. The first thought that

popped into my head was, "That was her!" Either way it was clearly a big carp, and I necked my coffee in one and was swiftly winding in. Just as I was putting the rods in the motor, another member passed and stopped for a quick chat. He had just arrived, and had been up that side of the pit, only to be turned away by contractors who had just started work on the otter fence an hour earlier and had shut the entire bank to anglers until further notice. My heart sank. I was straight onto the phone to the bailiff, pleading he has a word with the fencers to see if I could blag access to fish a swim on that bank as long as I kept myself and vehicle well out the way. He even rang them from abroad to discuss this with them, and they kindly agreed, so I was over there in a shot.

I wouldn't normally hassle the bailiff nor dream of fishing a swim with all that noise going on with a JCB up and down a few yards away

as they banged posts into the ground. They were also intending to fish the swims along that bank at night, so I knew there would be pressure on too, but with carp-shaped pupils in my eyes, I was obsessively insistent I got that swim. A full moon was due that evening, which heightened the atmosphere. I don't personally think that a big moon seems to produce more bites because of any spiritual forces! I believe it is simply because they can see more, they can find the bait easier and have more confidence in feeding with the added visual aid. I got the rods settled, Spombed a little bait over each spot and began catching tench pretty quickly.

This went on into the night, and by 3am I was feeling pretty tired as I lifted into another twitchy bite. I played it pretty hard, as my patience was wearing a little thin, and those tench can dive deep into weedbeds given half the chance. This fish was banging its head all the way in from



She was finally mine.

the spot, typically tenchy, and then a big push of water swirled on the surface as it was about 20 yards out, then it began to kite. "This must be one of those doubles," I thought, in my half asleep, dopey state, as I kept the pressure on hard, not allowing it any ground. The fish then erupted on the surface close to the net, and it started to dawn on me that I may have been mistaken!

I reduced the arc on the rod and loosened the clutch a little, as the fish circled about close in for a minute or so, then popped up to the surface in front of the net, and I could see then under the light of a full moon it was no tench. Straight in the mesh she went, and I peered in to see the outline of a big fish. I fetched my head torch and could see the back of a big leathery mirror, clearly a forty. It could have been one of two fish, so I reached down and ran my hand across her flank and felt a little cluster of scales towards the tail much like the scales I had been looking at on the photo for all those years. My heart began to pound at the realisation it

could be her. Sure enough, as I unravelled the net as she lay on the mat, I saw that stubby tail, and she was finally mine. I would have played her more carefully if I had known what was on the end – lucky boy! Quickly and safely, she went into the retaining sling, and I was dancing around my swim like a madman, laughing a lot. The couple of hours' wait for first light was electric; I was like a child on Christmas Eve, eagerly waiting to open the best present ever in the morning. A truly magical night's angling and one I hope I never forget.

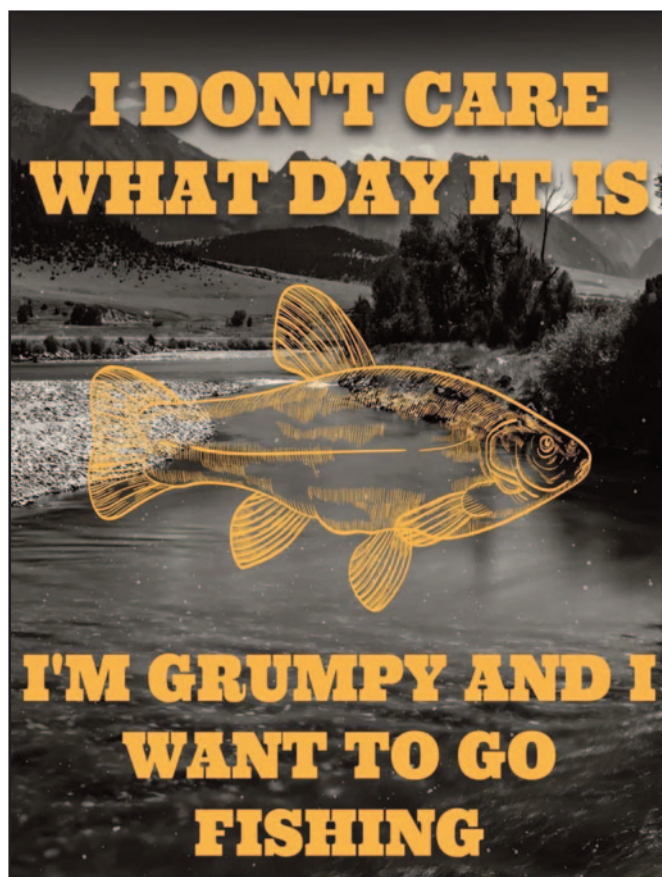
In the morning light, as I lay her on the mat, I could see the striking colours of her old leathery skin that an artist could only dream of replicating, and her scars talked decades. She weighed an irrelevance of 42lbs 4oz and looked immense as I lifted her for the self-takes, a very special carp and long may she live to beat another decade. The capture really is testimony to what effort will return you in the end, doing both your legwork and homework, the power of prebaiting in the right areas really can pay off. She



Waiting for dawn was electric.

finally gave herself up, and now I am free to open another chapter of memories in my angling... but I might just have one more cast for the Pale... ■

Carpy Humour



Floppy Tail

By Craig Runham



It was a dark grey morning as I peered out the bedroom window. It was 10am, and I had just awoken after a long night shift at work. I hurried downstairs and proceeded to load the car, and after a quick breakfast with the wife, I headed off to the syndicate lake at Wasing. As I unlocked the metal gate, I had a gut feeling it was going to be busy. And as I pulled up in the first swim, my suspicion had been proved right. There were only two swims free on the lake, the two I fancied the least. I parked the car up in the first car park and grabbed a bucket from the boot.

As I strolled around, I noticed how quiet the lake seemed; it was as if there wasn't a single fish in the lake. After a few pit stops in people's swims, and after I had had a few teas of course, I had soon worked out who was due to leave. Unfortunately, none of the main swims were to be coming free till the following lunchtime. I decided to check out the two swims that were currently free and see which one felt best. After looking at the first swim, which was devoid of fish, I felt rather dejected. The second free swim is one known as the Record swim, named for obvious reasons. I

climbed a nearby tree, and from my vantage point in the tree I could make out some dark shadows gliding across the weedy forest that lay before me. I couldn't believe my luck – there were more than a few fish here and a few were decent ones too. I climbed down the tree, dropped my bucket in the peg and raced to get the car.

I pulled the car into the swim and decided to have another look from up the tree and learn where was best to place a rig. As I climbed the tree, I could make a large lobe of a tail stuck out the water. Suddenly I got exited, as I knew which fish this could be. I climbed a tad higher for a better view, and there before me only twenty yards out lay the Parrot – over sixty pounds of scaly mirror. The big mirror wasn't doing a lot, simply soaking up the dull rays of sunshine. There were a few clear areas nearby, and I wanted to waste no time in getting three rigs into position. As I readied each rod I felt myself shaking, as I knew this was the best chance I had at this point since starting on this lake.

After what seemed like an age, I had got three rods out in the zone on hinge soft rigs with neutral colour Maxinut pop-ups on. A few baits

were catapulted over the rods as quietly as possible. The traps were set, and I could still make out the top lobe of the tail in the weedbeds. It seemed like the Parrot was sat in that one position for all of eternity. The light began to fade, and as with the fading light, the Parrot, with one swoop of its tail, glided out of the weedbed and away from my carefully placed rigs. Damn, I was gutted! I prayed it might return under the cover of darkness, but it simply wasn't to be, and I awoke to a stunning sunrise.

I knew I would have to move early if I were to get a decent swim. I knew given the weather change that the Parrot most probably wouldn't return to the swim I was currently installed in. By 10am, I wound the rods in and went for a lap to see what had been occurring. No angler on the lake had had any action except one bloke who had managed two fish in the morning feeding spell. It was clearly visible that a large volume of fish was within the swim, and to my luck the angler was leaving at around midday. I claimed the swim by moving my car in behind the swim and went off on another lap whilst the angler packed away. With still only End Beat looking good and the only swim with fish



clearly visible, I was happy with my choice.

I wasted no time in getting the rods out in end beat to the areas I had seen action followed by plenty of Key Bait-solutions Maxinut mixed sized free offerings. By 7pm, the move had seriously paid off. I had managed six bites, losing only one fish due to a cut off over the shallows. All my bites had come from all three rods, and the spots were still rocking. I was having the best session I had ever had – the fish seemed to be throwing caution to the wind today. Something was telling me something special was going to turn up. It was simply a matter of time, I was sure.

At 7.30pm, I had a slow take on my left rod, so I ran down and picked up the alarming rod. The fish instantly found sanctuary in thick weed. I applied steady pressure to the rod, and after a few taps, I was back in direct contact. The fish was repeatedly shaking its head, and I thought a small common might be the culprit. The fish stayed deep and came in fairly easily, but still the unseen fish decided it didn't fancy a trip to the bank. Suddenly the rod was pulled over, and the fish powered off across the shallow confines of the margins, sending a spray of water high into the air. Suddenly I realised I was connected to something a bit more substantial.

After I managed to stop the fish, once again I managed to get it head-

ing back into my favour. Around fifteen yards out, the fish once again weeded me up solid. By this point my legs were shaking, and the adrenaline pumped strongly through my veins. I concentrated as much as possible and applied more pressure onto the rod that was at full test curve. I felt a lunge coming through the blank, and suddenly once again I was back in contact. A large back bobbed up to the surface before powering off once again. I so desperately wanted this fish in my net. I decided to jump straight into the margins, as it would make netting the fish much easier, as the swim is slightly elevated. Through the crystal clear confines of the margins, I caught a glimmer of large apple scales as it turned once again, powering off on a steady run.

The fish was getting tired, and I could tell I was winning the battle. Suddenly the fish rose up in the water, facing my position. I instantly caught sure of the size six choddy firmly embedded in the bottom lip. I knew there was no way the fish was shaking that out. I pulled a bit more towards the outstretched the net, willing the fish to roll over into the folds. With a final bit of strength, I lifted the net up and engulfed a fish that I knew was the biggest I had caught so far during my campaign. I dragged the net towards me, and like a kid at Christmas, I reached into the net, instantly noticing the large scales along its perfectly formed flanks. I

reached for the tail, and my suspicions were proved right instantly, as the bottom of its tail had a telltale white mark. It was Floppy the linear. The shout instantly went up, and I felt a sense of achievement run through my body. I was simply buzzing, and stood there for a few moments, simply soaking in the buzz of the moment I had waited so long for.

Floppy is a fish I had so dearly wanted to catch, and there in front of me lay the incredible creature. I rolled it over in the net to take a quick sneak peak of its beauty. It's a simply incredible creature and a very sought after fish. I couldn't wait to have my moment with the fish on the mat. Today it was my turn to hold up the incredible carp. I secured the net in the margins and called Will who was a couple of swims down. He had heard the shout and was reeling in to come and help with the incredible creature. I called up another longterm friend who dropped everything at once and drove down right away to witness this special moment. Cheers, Andrew Smith for that. With the sling and mats sorted, we hoisted the incredible carp onto the waiting mat. Right away we could all see she was rather plump and had grown immensely since her last capture. Her body looked rounded and full, and she looked incredibly healthy. After we admired the carp, Will hoisted up the scales, which read 47lb 8oz. We couldn't believe the weight, so we double-checked the scales with me lifting and Will reading the weight. "47lb 4oz," he read out. I was happy with that, as the weight was really irrelevant to me.

The fish was incredibly well behaved for the shots, and as Will and Smithy fired away the shots, I simply took the moment in savouring every second, as I had worked as hard as possible for this moment. Floppy Tail Linear was mine, and as I watched the dark mirror glide away, I punched the air in happiness and said, "Tell your big brother I'm coming for him!" As the light faded that evening, I sat under the brolly with a beaming smile across my face, knowing I would never forget my moment with Floppy Tail.

A special thanks to Will Zeke and Andrew Smith for sharing a special moment. ■



Loei Jungle Fishing Lake

New Season Opens June 1st 2024

Lake Extended for 2024

New Species - Extended Lake - Refurbished Accommodation

END OF SEASON CATCHES



Last angler on the lake was newcomer Steve from England in April. The lake then closes down until June to give the fish a rest and for us to do some work on the fishery, extending the lake and for Pond and I to make some improvements on the accommodation. Steve had a cracking time around the lake catching some real beauties and new species! The platinum Mirgal carp has double in size since we put her in, and she has only been caught a few times as well. One of the super rare specials the Rock Bacu has come out lately and we have two of them, the different colours on them from the Ripsaw family are fantastic.

Total amount of fish = 52. Total amount of species = 27. New species = 15. New PB = 1

NEW SPECIES FOR 2024



Introducing the Albino Channel Catfish another new species added for all you anglers out there to come and catch. We try to be different from other lakes in Thailand and are always on the hunt for new species, that are different and that no one has.



Introducing another new addition to the lake - The Giant Indonesian Gourami. We're excited about this particular species as when they are both bigger they will look absolutely stunning, just like many of the other species of fish in the lake.



Introducing the Albino Black shark minnows another new species added to our lake "Labeo Chrysophekadion" I have been after a large one ever since I saw Mr Graham Wall catch one in a lake down in Bangkok, now we've got em! Yip pee.

IMPROVED ACCOMMODATION FOR 2024



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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!

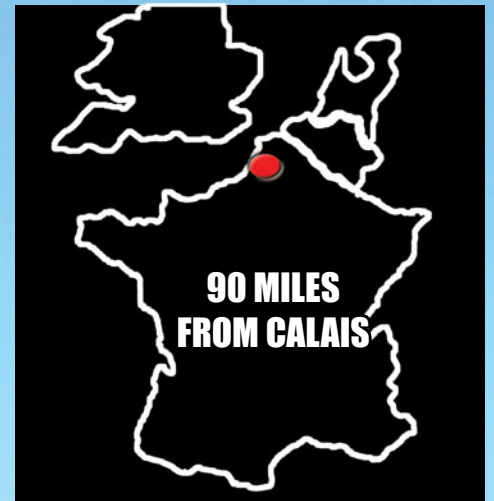
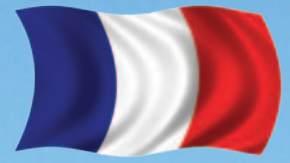
This was my new PB! It was still dark, and I had to go to work, so I just took a picture of it on the mat and went to work, as happy as Larry. My first Horton fish had taken me 50 overnight sessions.

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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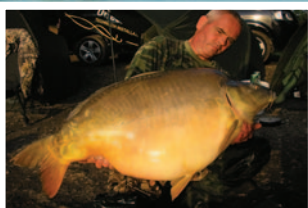
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64lb Tash – I've been lucky enough to fish Echo Pool. This fish is only the fifth biggest in the lake. This was on my second visit to the lake, and I've also got another trip later on in the year.

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.

Storm Free Fishery

A great challenge, stealth required!



I am proud to announce the opening of a new and exciting venue called Storm Free Fishery! The lake is located near Limoges, France and It is steeped in history, dating back to the Napoleonic period. It is approximately three acres in size, set in a beautiful and remote wooded valley full of beech, ash and oak trees. Please feel free to contact me with your enquiries. Kind regards,

Mark Gibson



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Secret Diary of The Urban Myth

July 2017 – Rob Maylin talks to Terry Dempsey

Rob: So it's the end of June, and I'm meeting up again with one of Big Carp's favourite anglers, Terry Dempsey, this time at his empire just this side of the Dartford Tunnel. It is the first time I have been down here, and I have picked a good day to come down because they are actually moving.

Terry is going to tell you all about that in a minute. They have bought some new units and new offices, and it all sounds very, very good for Urban Baits. When I last met up with Terry several months ago, we were still in the cold weather, and we haven't caught up with Terry for his spring fishing down on his syndicate water. We will be hearing about that, and of course he also has his Savay ticket

now, so I am expecting some big fish from there sooner or later. The bait is absolutely taking the waters apart at the moment, especially the Tuna and Garlic. I've heard of some huge fish, so we will be hearing about that and other things from Terry. Anyway I will pass you on to the man himself.

Terry: Hi, Rob. Good to see you! It doesn't seem like it has been six to seven months, but it probably is. I



Tomo McFahn Last weekend at Myths Pool Fishery in Essex. Caught on 14mm Nutcracker topped with a 12mm washed-out yellow Nutcracker both over a bed of 3kg of 15mm bottom baits.



22lb scattered lin.



3kg of Nutcracker spodded tight in the middle stopped this ancient mirror in its tracks. A washed out yellow pop-up did the rest!! Get on the Nutcracker!!



Brian Jorgensen, 27th June, with a right old character at 26lb from his syndicate in Denmark, taken on Urban Bait Nutcracker



Harry Willats and a 31lb mirror from a club water in Essex. This was his new PB, caught on an Urban Bait Tuna and Garlic pop-up with matching freebies spread in a large area around the hookbait.



Dean Mason, Raker Lakes York with a fish of 20lb 4oz. Urban Bait used was Nutcracker freezer bait 10 and 14mm boilies, whole and chopped baits, fished to a marginal tree line. Hookbait was a critically balanced snowman rig with a Nutcracker 12mm washed-out pink pop-up trimmed down. Length of session was 48 hours.



Urbanist Louis Cuomo with this 34lb carp taken on the ever-deadly Nutcracker. He used a snowman rig inside a solid PVA bag with crushed boilie.



Danny Stanmore with a 45lb Italian mirror taken on the Red Spicy Fish!

haven't done as much fishing this spring as I would have liked to. I have had a few personal problems that I have had to deal with. The times that I have managed to go fishing, I have enjoyed.

At the beginning of April it was really cold, and I decided to get back on my syndicate lake in Kent. When I went down there, I was happy because it hadn't done a fish in the last six months. It had fished really hard, but at least I knew that the few target fish I was after would be fresh and hadn't seen a rig for ages.

The first time I went there, I took my son, Daniel, with me, as he loves it down there. We spent two nights fishing in one my favourite swims down there. It has a lot of features in front of it – a big island running up to the right, two or three big gravel bars and so many good spots.

We set three rods out, put a bit of bait out there and we got hammered by the ducks. The water is so clear over there that you can literally see the bottom out in the middle from the bank in places. The birds just kept coming in diving, diving, diving, and that was that trip.

A couple of weeks later, we went back again, probably mid-April, and again the lake hadn't done a fish. But a friend of mine was down there, Bob MacGregor, and he caught a 36lb common out of the corner. So that gave Daniel and me a bit of confidence. He had some time off school because of half-term, so we sat it out. I think it was on our third night when we saw one fish swim out of the middle, so we put 5 or 6kg of bait out there.

The birds were diving on it, but we kept putting more bait in all the time.

I have been using the pop down rig over there, and I feel really confident with it. I had pop-down on all three rods, and at two o'clock in the morning I got a belting take.

Playing this fish in, I was shouting out to Daniel, "Chuck me my slippers!" because all my feet were wet and cold in the mud. Anyway, we have two beds in the bivvy, and he woke up and threw the slippers out to me. Then I shouted, "Throw the torch out to me!" It was quite a foggy night, and I don't know what time it was or what I was playing. The next thing, he shouted out, "Dad, leave me alone! I am going back to sleep!" So I never got the torch. I got the fish in, got it in the net, and I ran up to the tent, jumping up and down with joy and shouted, "Daniel, Daniel! I've got a fish!"

His eyes lit up like saucers, and he



Dave Coward, the Beauty Queen at 39lb 8oz.



Louis Cuomo had a brace of thirties and a 29 from Waterside Fisheries in Chesham. 14mm Nutcracker hardened hookbaits topped with a 12mm white Nutcracker pop-up fooled two of the more elusive residents, which hadn't been out for over eighteen months. Whilst photographing the brace of 30s, the remaining rod ripped off – a morning that'll never be forgotten.



Dave Coward, 37lb 4oz.



Here's the lovely Louise Bowes with a recently caught 33lb 2oz common that couldn't resist a bright Nutcracker pop-up placed along a patrol route!

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

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David "Bank Tramp" Prictor, 35lb 5oz, to a yellow Nutcracker pop-up over a big bed of Nutcracker.



David "Bank Tramp" Prictor, 35lb 2oz, to a yellow Nutcracker pop-up over a big bed of Nutcracker, both from a local club water.

put his boots on and ran as fast as he could to the net, because he knows how hard it is to catch a fish out of my Kent syndicate. To see a fish, after doing a few nights' blanking was great. It was an absolute belter; it was netted and with only a couple of hours till daytime, I said we would leave it in the net and do a couple of photos with it as it gets light because my flash wasn't working.

He would not leave me alone though! I said, "Come on, let's have an hour's kip; we will put the alarm on and wake up when it is light," but he drove me mad... "Dad, let's get it out! Come on, Dad! Let's get it out!" Anyway, we got it out, and it was an absolute belter, a 33lb linear, a beautiful fish, and that was it for that trip. We did not get any more action, and to be honest it was fishing quite slow.

The following trip, I went down there and fished in the same spot where I had caught the linear. I sat there for a night and didn't see a

thing. On the second night, I moved round to the shallows. It was freezing cold easterly wind blowing right in my face, and it did not look good, but because I blanked, I thought I would try the shallow water. So I went there and fanned three rods out. There are lots of bars running along in that swim, and I put them right on top of the bars in the shallow water all along this bay. At two o'clock in the morning, I got a belting take, and I struggled to get out of my sleeping bag. My mate said the line was going for ages, but I was just battling to get out of my bag.

Anyway, I played the fish and got it in, and it was a beautiful fully scaled just under 30lbs, an absolutely stunning carp. I was well happy with it, and as it got light, we did the photos and stuck it back in the water. A lad called Jay came down to the photos for me. He was fishing another lake just up the road. I got the rod back out there, and we were sitting there hav-

ing a cup of tea when all of a sudden, the same rod just melted off with an absolute belter of a take, literally ripping the rod off the buzzers. Jay was standing closer to the road than I was. I was about to lose the rods when he caught the butt. I picked the rod up and it just flattened in my arms. You know, there are some big fish in this lake, some 50s, and it just ripped 40 yards of line off me even though I was just holding onto the spool, and the spool was quite tight as well. That is how powerful it was, and then all of sudden it stopped and went solid. I was giving it little bit of pressure, and nothing, but then the rod started going off again and the fish was moving at speed, and it cut my line.

Even after catching the fully, I went home totally broken, and since then Rob I haven't really done a great deal, mainly because the bait has been doing really well. We are really busy, and we have lot of anglers all over



Richard Mills – 34lb 8oz, London reservoir.



DM Dean McLeod, Monks Pit.

Europe who are catching on the bait, so we are getting lots of different orders from all over. It's not just the Nutcracker catching – now the fish-meals have been catching really well. Even though I knew all the time that

they were just as good and would catch just as many fish, it was harder for me to encourage others to use the fishmeal. The Tuna and Garlic are not used enough in my opinion, because of how good it is has been doing lots

of big fish, including fish out of the Colne Valley up to 54lbs this spring including a 49 and other 40s. So with the Nutcracker we don't need to push it, as it is doing 50-40lbs catches in the UK all the time.



Nutcracker – 36lb 4oz.



Daniel Scranage just shy of 29lb 4oz, north Manchester, on the deadly Nutcracker and a washed-out pink pop-up.



Urban's ever-consistent Louise Bowes strikes again with this 29lb 8oz mirror caught on a Nutcracker pop-up coated in Liver Cracker powder.



A 50-plus caught on the deadly Nutcracker – Daniel Scranage.



Kai Richards, 35lb 10oz from New Forest water park.



Kai Richards, 36lb 8oz from New Forest water park.

We just had a message this morning to say a guy has just had an 86 on our bait. He was only here a couple of days ago, and he went off to France with a big order for himself and his friends and got an 86lbs, so yeah the bait is doing really well still. The fish are monsters over there, aren't they? I have a couple of options myself: I have an Austrian guy who orders off me, and I have got to know him quite well.

He has a lake booked out in Croatia in the middle of July for a whole week, and the fish in there are colossal – 80-90lbs – and he is begging me to come, as it is very hard to get on this lake. So that is an option, but the only thing that keeps holding me back from all these great trips that I am being offered is Savay.

It is so hard for me to have this Savay ticket and find the time to fish there. It's a priority really, because you know those old Savay fish ain't gonna be there forever – you are talk-

ing about some 50-year-old carp, and it is such a great lake to fish, so that is my main priority this summer. I plan to do as much as I can on Savay, and I would love a trip to Croatia. I have been offered to go to Rainbow with different people too. I am getting offers all the time to go to these amazing lakes, but I just have to save my time up and try to go to Savay. Anyway, that's how I feel at the minute, Rob.

Rob: What about moving factory?

Terry: Well, we have been in this place here for four years. As you all know, I first started Urban Baits from one freezer out of my back garden. I had so many people knocking on my door that in the end the police were knocking on my door wondering what we were doing. Even the neighbours were knocking on my door wondering what we were doing! I was selling half a ton of Nutcracker out of my back garden. We had half of the foxes of south London showing

up in my back garden trying to pick our locks because they knew the Nutcracker was there. We started in here with one container.

A friend of a friend got me this yard and one container, and as you can see now, we have five containers and an office, and now we are moving to much bigger and better premises, much cleaner for the girls who work for Urban Bait, so we are looking forward to the next stage.

Rob: Well it is onwards and upwards, Terry. It was always going to be a winner for you. You know about your bait, the Nutcracker is amazing, and I myself have used it on different waters and outside of the UK and never failed to catch on it. I've recently been using the Red Spicy Fish, and I have been catching just as well on that.

You have some excellent bait. Thanks for doing the stuff for Big Carp as well, and I will see you again next month. ■



Urban's Nigel Sharp has been out recently putting the Red Spicy Fish through its paces, and one of the rewards was this cracking common.



Nice Kent Fully scaled mirror from earlier in the year. Just minutes after I put it back the rod was away and a big fish stripped 50 yards off me before cutting me on a bar, but that's fishing!



Nice mirror from early April.



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Porky

By Derek Ritchie

What can I say about Monks Pit that most won't know already? I've spent time on this weedy 16-acre lake in the past, but the atmosphere just keeps me coming back. There's a massive head of fish topped off by Porky, a 50lb mirror that I hoped would grace my net at some point.

Anyway, that was the past, and my angling took me to other waters in search of other fish and other experiences. Three years ago, I made a conscious decision to get back over to Monks Pit and chase the residents about a bit. I wasn't fishing the whole season on Monks, but tended to fish two nights a week from January to March and then move on to my other waters.

This year was different, and for some reason I felt the urge to carry on fishing there and planned to move on later in the year than usual. I really wanted to get my hands on the 50-plus mirror, Porky. There are a lot of

stunning fish in the pit, but it was Porky that was really in the forefront of my mind. When you have a carp of that stature in a water, you can't help dreaming of seeing it slip over the net cord – catching the dream is harder than thinking it!

At the start of the year, I was feeling super confident, as I was getting lots of fish during my 48 hours, and surely it was only a matter of time? One trip that will stay with me till I sleep for the last time was when I set up in a swim called the Swamp. I'd just turned up, and the wind started to swing round until it was pushing into the water out in front. Looking out at my water, the wind was chilling me to my bone, and the thick fog that covered the water soaked my clothes. I didn't feel confident casting the rods out without seeing where they were landing, so I decided to set up the Tardis Bivvy first and wait till I could see what I was casting into. Once the house was up and everything was feeling homely and comfortable, I was happy with what I could see out in front of me.

On went the ever-faithful Essential Cell, and out went the three rods, bang on the spots, and as I sat back on the bedchair, I felt mega confident, and I was sure I'd get a carp or two that session. What happened next was what I can only describe as chaos. One hour after casting the first rod out, I was standing there in an absolute state. I had fish in both my nets and three slings. I was wrecked – 65 years old, sweat dripping from my brow and not able to keep the rods out in the water. Five stunning carp up to 34lb, and I hadn't managed to get any photos yet due to the carnage. After that madness, I thought I might be in for a busy old session, but the swim had done enough that day, and I had to wait till the next day before I saw a carp grace my net again, ending the session with seven fish in 48 hours. What a great trip – one of my best sessions in my angling life!

My success carried on for a while, and I couldn't help but catch every time I went over there. I'm a simple angler when it comes to rigs, as I



Upper 30lb.



Hertford fish 41lb.

believe some rigs are just too complicated, and although they might work, it takes as much time to construct them as it does to find the carp. I'd rather find them and then get a bait to them before they move off.

I was really enjoying my trips over there, and I am filming it all for my diary piece on Carping Around's YouTube channel (give it a look, and bear with me, as I'm just getting used to filming myself, but I think you will enjoy it). I'd managed about 24/25 fish, and I felt I was doing everything right and on the right track. Then, as carp fishing often does, it kicked me in the dangle. Things started to slow down, and I often found myself fishing swims I didn't really fancy due to anglers being on the fish and in the swims where the carp were. It wasn't all bad because I got to find out more about the different swims around the lake, and on one occasion I fished a swim called the Double Point and managed to have another bumper session, landing seven fish in that trip up to just under 30lb.

A few blank sessions saw me getting a little despondent, and I started

to wonder what I was doing wrong. I hadn't changed anything and just couldn't get my head round it. It was during one of these blanks that my season turned around, and I had a second wind. I was sitting in the Swamp, watching the water for fish giving themselves away, just waiting for that one slip that could turn a blank into a great session. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a bloke walking towards me, and when he got nearer I could see it was Justin 'the Chef'. He was coming over to let me know he'd just landed Porky from a few swims away. That was it; the rods came in, and I made my way round to witness the beast. Luckily, I was doing a piece with the Anglers Mail, and we were able to get some great photos and video footage. During the filming and with the cameras clicking away, I walked up to Porky, touched it on the nose and said, "I'm coming for you – you are gonna suck my steel!"

A few weeks later, I arrived at the lake and noticed they had cut the weed, so I went and fished the Little Point Swim. That evening as I sat in the Tardis on edge, the weed that had

been cut was drifting up the lake towards the Swamp. Three times the weed wiped my rods out, and I felt the disturbance of recasting so much had ruined my chances of a fish. I was seriously considering moving to No Carp Corner (there's always a swim with No Carp in the name). As I sat there thinking, the night got dark, and before I knew it, the clock read 11pm, and as much as I don't mind moving if it gets me on the fish, I decided to give it till morning and make the decision then.

At 4:30am the next morning, I was deep in the land of nod, dreaming of scaly warriors, eager to give me a hug. A single bleep on the middle rod woke me, and I walked over to have a look at what was going on. The line coming from the reel was tight as a drum skin. I picked the rod up, and I was in. At first the carp didn't put up much of a scrap, and I was able to gain line and bring it nearer to the bank. That didn't last though, and once I got it about 20 yards from my feet, it started its merry dance. I was almost knitting with the rods as it kited from one side of the swim to the

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other, under one rod over the next, and then back to square one. Eventually I got the net under it, and as I looked in the mesh I was buzzing, as it looked a good fish over 30lb – result! I had spoken to the Chef and listened well. After our chats, I decided to start fishing over 5kg of chopped boilies and pellet. I was cutting up the boilies and mixing them with Mainline Response pellets and Bait-Tech's Krill pellet on 8ins of Avid Carp's Captive Coated 15lb hook link using a size 4 WDG hook with a little bit of putty to pull the 15mm wafter a little further down in the water.

Unhooking the carp in the net, I left it to recover and got that rod back on the spot with the first cast. That's one of the reasons I swear by distance sticks; they take the element of guessing out, and you're able to get as close to spot on as you can. While I was there, I decided to recast the right-hand rod that I felt was going to be the hot rod, so to speak. I was fishing toward a big bed of kelp but staying a couple of rod lengths away to limit the chances of the fish getting into it and causing me no end of trouble. I put the rod on the buzzers and was sorting the bobbins out when the

line pulled up and a fish was taking line. I hit it and instantly I knew it was a good'un. The fish hit the surface as it blew the lead off and made its way into the kelp – so much for staying away from it. There was nothing for it other than to jump in the boat and make my way out to where it was stuck at the bottom of the kelp. By the time I'd got there, the fish had buried itself deep in the weed, and I had to resort to trying to handline the fish to the surface. Every time I managed to get control of it and into clearer water, it would power off into another patch, and the handlining had to resume. Four times this happened and I finally got to see the fish clearly – PORKYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYYY! My mind was in overdrive; I couldn't lose this carp! I had to get everything right... I carefully played the creature until I could see it was too tired to give me any more scares, and I slowly, purposely slid the net under the wallowing shape and lifted the net to trap it. COME ONNNNNNNNNNNNNNNNN!

I couldn't believe it – only a few weeks previously I warned it that I was coming, and there it was lying beaten at the bottom of my net. I was so eager to get the pics done, I almost

forgot about weighing it. As I was getting the camera sorted, I remembered that I should weigh it, and I got the fish into a sling. There was only one other angler on the lake, so I made my way round to ask him to do the honours for me. As I walked around, something deep in my mind convinced me to start chanting, "PORKY, PORKY, PORKY, PORKY, PORKY..." As I approached him, I think he'd already got the message. He reeled his rods in, came around with me and did the magic. With it all photographed and footage for my diary done, I sat back soaking it all in. 50lb 8oz and a new PB – WOW!

I couldn't keep it to myself much longer, and at just before 6am, I rang Blanko to let him know I'd done it and relive the capture once more, a story I could tell till the cows come home. I'd like to thank the guys at Monks Pit for making an old man's dream come true, Kev and Steve at Mainline, Hayley at Bait-tech and the Avid Team for all their support, and of course Rob at Big Carp magazine for giving me a platform to tell my story yet again.

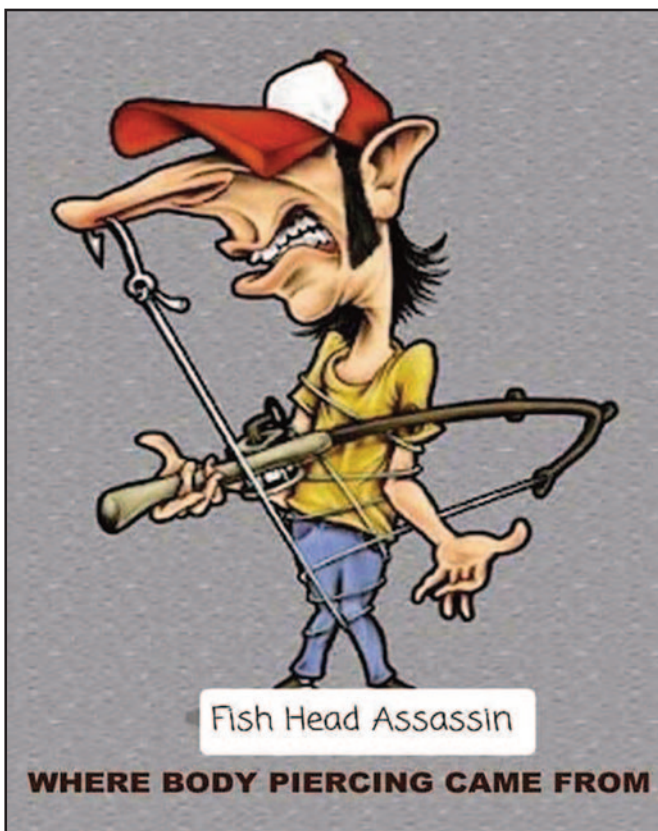
Come onnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnnn! A proper "WANGER ON THE BANGER!" ■



36lb fish I caught before Porky.



Carpy Humour



Oxford Memories

By Baz Lloyd

The lake hadn't done a bite for 11 days before this capture, as it's a notoriously tricky lake this time of year and usually shuts up shop for the winter. I positioned four rods along a silt gully 20 yards short of an island at 160 yards range where fish

had been harvesting the last of the lake's naturals. Here I spread 100 chops over each rod. I sat back, brew in hand, as the early night drew in.

What happen next was absolutely crazy. A shooting star fell from the sky above the island, and the wish was made for the Millwall Fish, a fish that had evaded capture for 16 months

and one I really wanted. 7.30am the following morning one of the rods was away, and after an absolute beasting, the culprit was finally in the net.

I peered in and could hardly believe my eyes – the Millwall fish was mine! Wishes do come true, so be careful what you wish for! ■



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White Swan Monster

By Kristian Jenkins

I recently did 24 hours at White Springs fishery, peg 8 being the choice. I arrived at the lake at around 11am, and before I managed to get the rods, I had the great pleasure to take some pictures for a friend, who at the time was fishing opposite me. He managed to land one of the A-team residents named Bailey going 37lb-plus. His capture filled me with confidence, showing early signs of fish being in the area. However, with rain smashing down all day, I had a nice SW wind on my side. I had a lead about and clipped my right hand rod up at eight wraps on to a gravel bar feature, with my middle rod being clipped up a foot off an island feature

straight in front of me. I then opted to place my third down the left hand margin of an inlet pipe. With these spots picked out and the rods on the money, it was time to sit back with confidence and wait for a screamer.

Two hours into my session, the right hand rod, which was placed on the gravel bar, absolutely ripped off. As soon as I hit into it, I knew it was a good fish. It bolted across into open water with urgency, giving me the fight of my life. After an epic battle of 20 minutes, I finally slipped it into the net, and what a relief it was – an absolute bar of gold big common and also one of the A-team known as Bruno. I then realised it was a target fish I had been after all year. At this

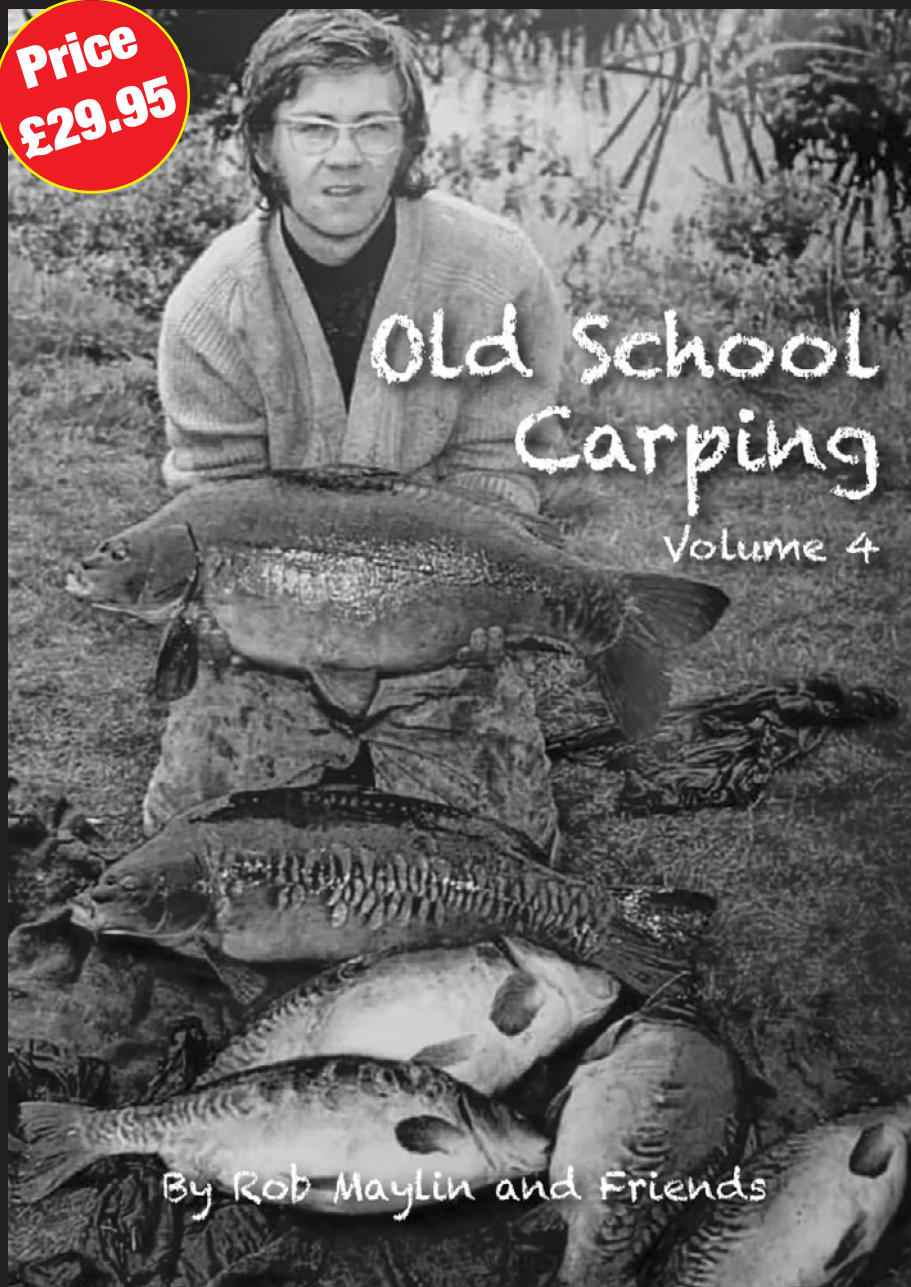
point, my heart was beating, knowing I was well in with a chance of a new PB let alone capturing a target fish.

After verification from the team at White Springs, the common went 39lb 7oz, this being a new P.B. I managed another three takes, this time off the middle rod and also the marginal rod, these were 23lb and 27lb mirrors, but sadly I lost the third due to a snag. All fish fell to a single Banoffee bottom bait from Burton Bait Rollers, fished over a bed of 14mm and 16mm mixed Banoffee bottom baits. My rig of choice was a 6in blowback rig made up using the Nash end tackle and neatly presented with the Godmans Versacasts ensuring the right presentation for the situation. ■



OLD SCHOOL CARPING VOLUME 4

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

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

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

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

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

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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Mr Pink

By David Summerfield

Arriving at the gates of Kingsmead 1 on a Friday afternoon, I was shocked to see so many anglers on considering the lake had been fishing fairly slowly. After a quick lap and a chat to a few of the members already fishing, it was apparent there wasn't much going on, and the fish that had been seen were all in areas where there was someone already fishing. I opted to jump in a swim that commands a big chunk of water, the plan being to spread the rods out over a large area and see if one came past.

Whilst barrowing to the swim, I noticed a big, dark cloud coming over the horizon, and before I knew it, I was being hammered by hailstones. I was soaked through and all the gear was soaked, but I was fishing. Once I finally got to the swim, I quickly went

about clipping my three rods up at 70 yards to a nice firm spot and attached three hinged stiff rings baited with live System cork ball pop-ups. I had already decided to keep the baiting to a minimum and just put two Midi Spombbs of 10mm and 15mm Live System boilies over each spot, which I felt was just enough for a bite, as I was only down for 24 hours.

The rest of that afternoon passed without seeing any shows, and I was starting to wonder if I had made the right choice, but just as it started to get dark, a good sized fish rolled over the spots. I sat up watching and listening for any more signs of fish rolling, but it wasn't to be, and at about 11 o'clock I headed off to bed.

At just after 3am, I received two single beeps on my middle rod. A quick glance at the tip that was bent round to the right indicated that there was a fish on. A very slow and typical

big fish battle commenced with the fish just holding its depth, but eventually the fish was safely retained in the net.

A quick glance in the net, and I knew it was going to be over forty pounds and a possible new PB. I popped next door to wake my mate up and get him to help me with the weighing and photos. With the fish now in the weigh sling, we hoisted her up, and I couldn't believe it when the dial settled at 46lb 2oz – a new personal best.

With a few pictures taken and the fish checked over for any marks, back she went. The rest of that night and the following morning passed with no further action, but I didn't mind, as I was still buzzing.

Before leaving I contacted a bailiff to find out which fish it was, and it was confirmed to me that it was Mr Pink. ■



SECRETS OF THE THAMES

Price
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Secrets of The Thames

By Rob Maylin and friends

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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My Obsession

Christopher Elden

I recently achieved catching my obsession in the form of a 48lb 2oz common carp that I have been pursuing for four years. I arrived at Catch 22 syndicate lake late one evening after work and eagerly barrowed my gear to an open area swim I fancied. I only had ten hours ahead of me, as I had to pack away early in the morning to head off to work again. I found a nice deep hardened off area at the bottom of a plateau and instinctively decided to spod out a tight bed of boilies, around 2kg of 15mm Nash 4g Squid. This is a method rarely used on here, but I figured that this would produce a better

feeding response based on how the carp have been acting as of late due to angling pressure. I cast my rod just off the edge of the baited spot, feeling it down with a sweet thud on the end. The other rod was chucked down the margin to try and nick a bite.

At 4am the baited rod rattled off with the clutch hissing in the background. I fell out of my bedchair in an attempt to tame what was on the other end. Straight away the fish rose up in the water and continued on top in the margins. It suddenly woke up and dived straight down deep in the margins, hugging the edge where it entangled in some deadly tree roots. A few hairy moments later and the

fish was surfacing ready for netting. Once in the net, I peered over and couldn't believe my eyes! There lay a carp I have been chasing for four years, which has avoided me with its presence until now. It was the big common, and I was shaking with disbelief. The scales tilted round to 48lb 2oz and a new PB. The size didn't matter though, as all the effort and determination had paid off – all the sweat, tears and hours of hard work had all come together at that one moment. This was one capture I will always remember.

The fish was caught on an 18in blowback snowman rig presented on a lead clip system with a 5oz lead. ■



The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

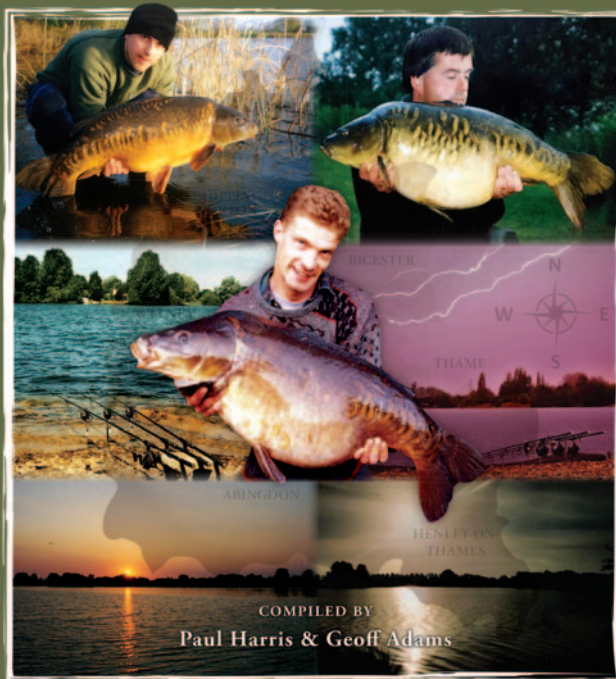
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

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

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

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

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire



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A V A I L A B L E N O W

Can't Put a Foot Wrong

By Scott Lloyd

It seems I can't put a foot wrong on Stoneacres at the moment, but it's not all as easy as it seems. The fish are really making me work for them, and I'm just giving it my all and constantly on the go finding the fish and hatching plans. This particular session was due to be my last big trip down south, so I wanted to end on a high. I baited a few areas on arrival and set up in a swim I found the fish in. This proved to be a blank night but no time on the bank is wasted time. It was no surprise the first night was a blank; I was the only person on the lake, and it's really hard fishing on there like that. It responds well to pressure, so I knew I had my work cut out.

The following morning I found a group of fish feeding on a deep, silty area I'd baited on arrival, clearly loving a free helping of the Krill. I got a move on in there and left the fish to it all day until they were done eating before I got some rods fishing. The first fish came the next evening it the shape of a 29lb 2oz linear. The next day was bonfire night, and I couldn't help but think the fireworks would kill it fishing wise, but I was clearly wrong. Before dark the fish were on me, I'd seen two fish show consistently on my spot and felt confident for the night ahead. An hour after dark, I received a vicious take, but the bobbin then hit the deck sharply, and I'd been done good and proper. I still had two remaining rods, and just

before midnight one of them was away resulting in another linear of 32lb, which I've decided to call "Jill" after my mum because she has always supported me and my fishing since day one, plus it's a really pretty one that deserved a name.

The next day I applied the same tactics: two rods on the silt spot and one off to my right on a shallow bar I've had some luck on during the daylight just recently (Noodle Bar). I lost a fish off the bar rod within an hour of the rod being out, but I quickly put it behind me and got the rod back out in the now hacking wind and pouring rain. I had an afternoon nap and woke up to my all my alarms letting out beeps. A huge weedbed decided to wipe all of my rods out. I had to take

29lb 2oz.



32lb 4oz.



to the boat to retrieve each rig and ended up wrecking all of my line. I was running around trying to get sorted before dark, respooling my reels, retying rigs and getting the rods back out, all in the pouring rain. I just

about did it and got an early night's sleep.

I awoke at 7am to my right-hander melting off. It turned out to be another stunning linear of 32lb 4oz. It's hard to put into words just how hard I worked

for these fish, but I hope this gives a slight insight. I drove home a happy man after landing three November linears in very challenging conditions. It's certainly a first for me... not sure about anybody else? ■

32lb.



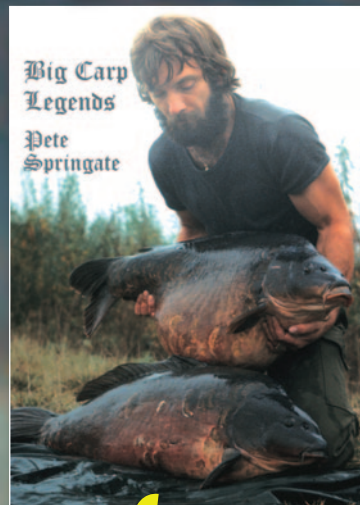
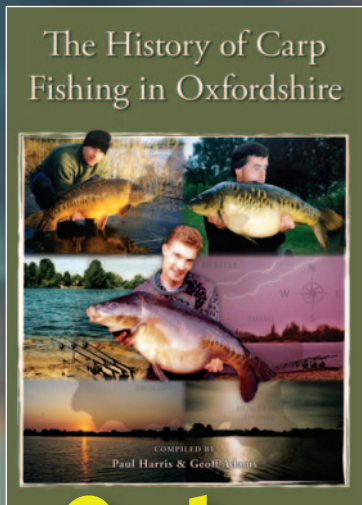


FISHING RESORT

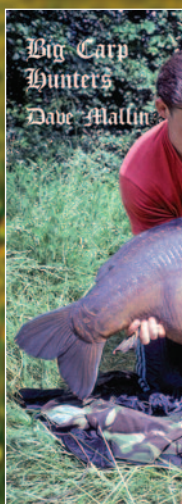
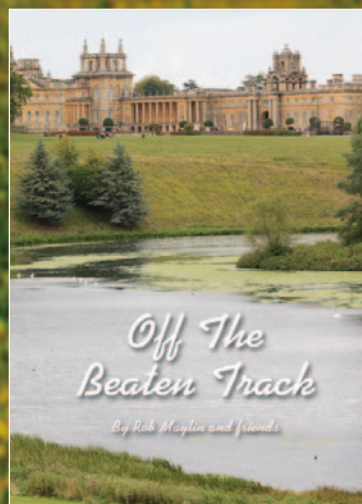
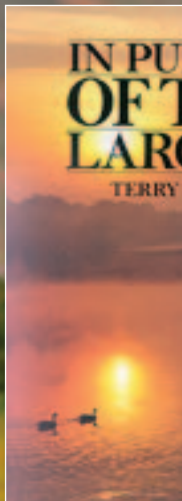
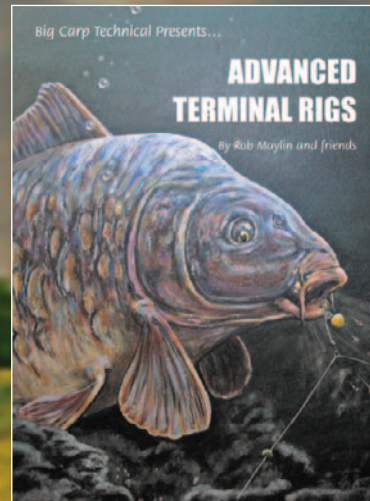
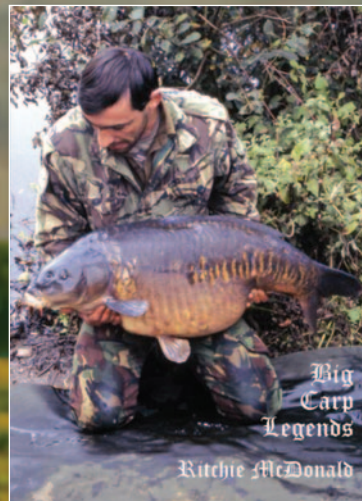


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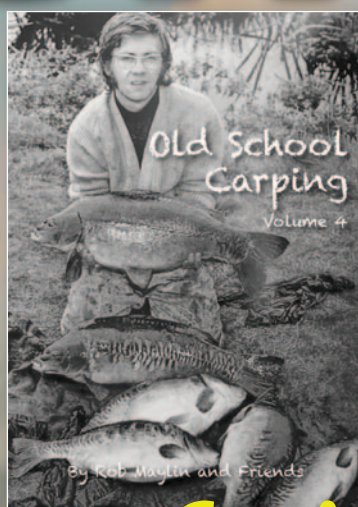
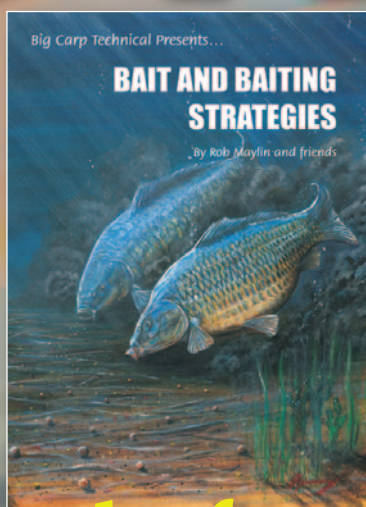


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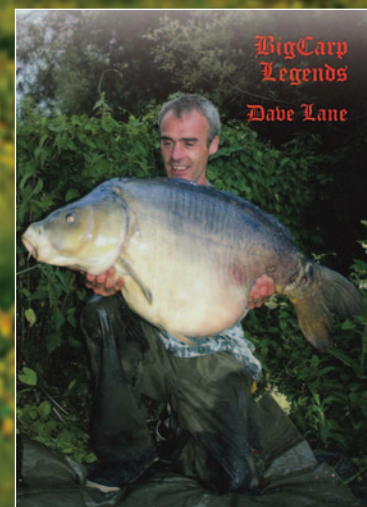
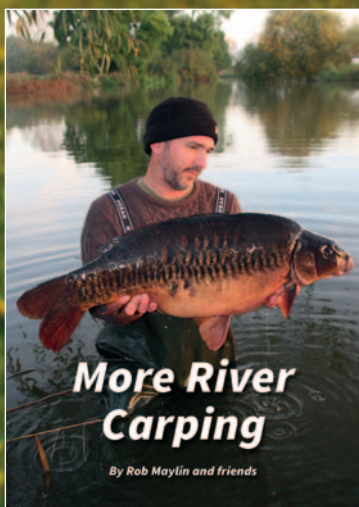
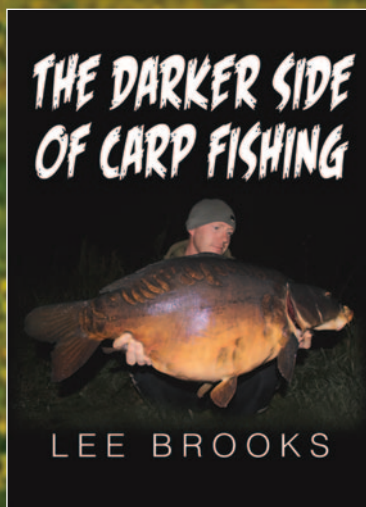
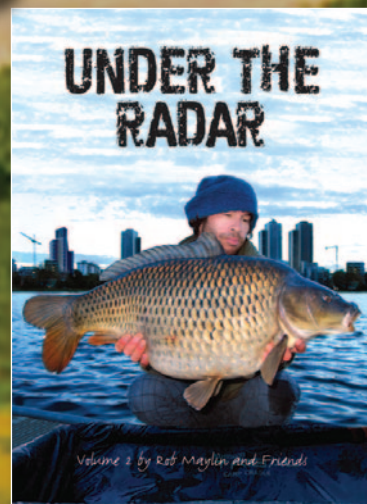
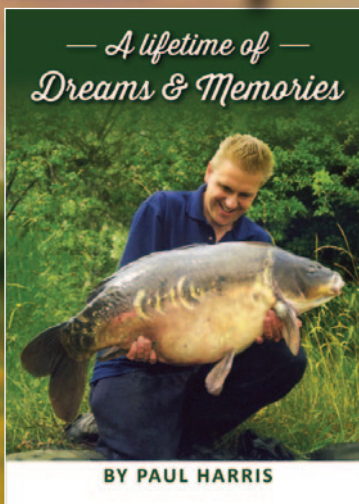
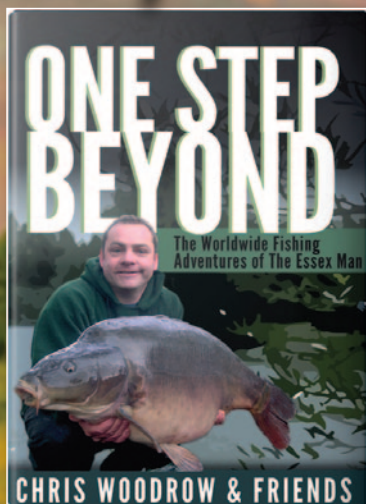


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