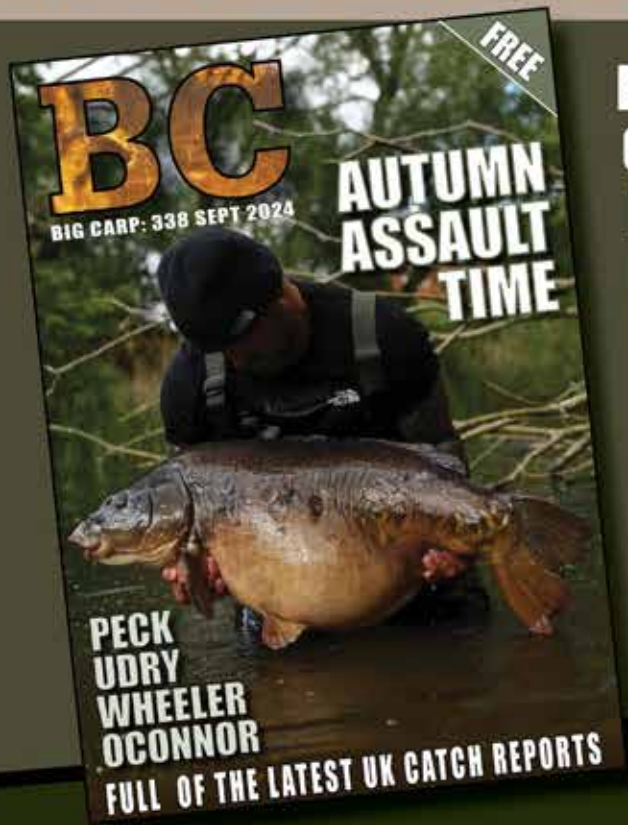


# AUGUST ISSUES OF **BIG CARP** AND **FREELINE** MAGAZINES - FREE HERE:

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**Carl Udry - Farnham Flint**  
**Darrell Peck - Attention to Details**  
**Ed Banks - Northey Park**  
**Elliott Gray - Fishing in Weed**  
**Lee Wheeler - Markering Masterclass**  
**Scott Sweetman - Overnighters**



**AJ Tharratt - Weybread Pits**  
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# BIG CARP

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

## Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

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

## Top 10 Bait Companies

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

## Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies (Terminal)

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

## Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies

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

## Top 10 Carp Shops

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

## Top 10 Iconic Carp Waters

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



*As voted by Big Carp readers!*

# BC

BIG CARP: 338 SEPT 2024

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## AUTUMN ASSAULT TIME



PECK  
UDRY  
WHEELER  
OCONNOR

FULL OF THE LATEST UK CATCH REPORTS

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September 2024

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Publications 2024



Front Cover:  
Oz Holness cradles a  
cracking mirror.



Well, it looks like the 2 weeks of summer has past and the nights are noticeably drawing in. Autumn is just round the corner. Traditionally it's peak season for big carp as they pile on the weight for the winter. With that in mind we bring you loads of tips and advice for maximising this time of year. If you're looking for a new rig to try we have info on both the very popular 'German' rig and also one of Terry Hearn's favourite rigs the 'flipper'.

It's not all about rigs though and so the master himself, Darrell Peck brings you a few tips to squeeze the best out of your angling. Scott Sweetman details some handy tips if you're limited to over nighters. Backing them up are Elliott Gray with some handy advice on fishing in weed and Lee Wheeler talks through being as accurate as possible.

## 4. SHOCKLEADER

News from around the fishing industry.

## 12. TAC-TEC

Our look at some of the best fishing products around. Are you looking to tart up your set up or a new bait to try out?

## 20. CATCH REPORTS

Check out some of the biggest carp to be caught in the last few weeks including A 68lb common.

## 46. ALEX GRICE

Alex takes you through his Autumn approach for banking those carp feeding up for the winter.

## 52. ANDY MURPHEY

Andy had one of those magical 'red letter' days. where everything goes right.

## 58. BARRY OCONNOR

Barry takes a trip down to the prolific Oak Lake at Coking Farm Fisheries. See how he gets on with the big residents.

## 76. ZEE GERMAN RIG

One of the most simple yet effective carp rigs going. No bells and whistles here and it's caught some colossal carp.

## 78. CARL UDRY

Carl turns his attentions to one of Berkshire's best waters in search of a 50 plus carp. How does he go about tackling this sort of venue?



## 86. DARRELL PECK

Darrell puts a lot of his success down to his attention to detail. What could you improve on to increase your success?

## 90. ED BANKS

Ed banks a cracker of a carp from the tricky Northey Park in Cambridgeshire. Find out his successful method.

## 94. ELLIOTT GRAY

Elliott is a master at fishing very weedy venues. See how he goes about approaching this type of venue. It can be hard work but the rewards are worth it.

## 100. LEE WHEELER

Lee puts a lot of faith in his marking skills to know exactly how and what he's fishing on or in. Could your skills do with brushing up?

## 104. LUKE VALLORY

Luke takes you through his favourite 'Flipper Rig', which has caught him a string of stunning carp. Find out why it works so well.

## 108. SCOTT SWEETMAN

Scott may be on limited time but there are a few things you can do to make fishing overnights much more productive. Follow Scott's advice and start banking more carp with less time on the bank.

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Team member John Paul McCusker was back on Monk's Pit after a couple of months off earlier this week and back with a bang. Straight into two lovely old 40s. Going 41-2 and 43-3. Great angling John.

Team member Scott Johnson has sent us his report after catching a couple at his syndicate this weekend. "Friday night after work on my syndicate, I managed two fish on Saturday afternoon. They are starting to get bigger, after losing a better fish in weed.

The best 2 of 7 from a 24hr session on Naesby Reservoir for team member Gary Wadsworth. Gary used our Scorpion Curved hooks to make sure they came in over the net cord. Well done Gary.



Team member John Paul McCusker sent us this update: "Had a lovely couple of weeks off, one week in France with Jamie B Evans and a week in the Cotswolds with me Julie McCusker. Quality over quantity was how it ended, new French PBs for us both landing fish up to 45lb and a 53lb 7oz common for myself plus a nice hat trick of 30's up to 35 from the Cotswolds caught on various methods using Carponline size 4 ready made Ronnies and size 6 scorpion for solid bag work. Plus, various Carponline End tackle components"



After a break from fishing, Rob Langley managed to get straight back on em' at his syndicate with this cracking mirror. Rob used our size 4 Scorpion Crank hook with our Tungsten Kickers.

**TEAM  
MEMBERS  
WANTED  
GET IN  
TOUCH  
NOW!!**

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**COMING SOON!!**  
The NEW Longcrank has the same offset point as our most popular hook, the Crank, but has the added advantage of having a longer shank. Our competition team has been using these to devastating effect.

**WATCH THIS SPACE**



**SHOCKLEAFER**

## **TOTAL ANGLING BECOME PART OF ANGLING DIRECT**

For customers and the team, nothing has changed but is a substantial milestone that secures the future of Total Angling. We are thrilled and confident this move will be hugely beneficial to you and our team, as it enables us to continue to provide a local tackle shop run by anglers for anglers and deliver the ever-increasing range, better prices, depth of product and choices, demanded in today's rapidly changing retail world.

Going forward, we will be combining our teams, websites and changing our social media pages. In doing this we can continue to deliver you the best possible service and price, including MyAD membership, and the Angling Direct Price Checker promise. We're stocking items we could never stock before, price matching making us even more competitive than ever before, and our store is undergoing a monumental refurbishment which will make it one of the best out there.

As you are already a valued customer, we are thrilled to bring you this exciting news



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and look forward to welcoming all customers old and new back into store. For those customers that have loyalty points and gift cards, don't worry we have records, and all will be honoured. In the short term, the store is open as usual, with our big

open day and full refurbishment set for early September, but as of today our communication to you, will be as Angling Direct plc.

Thank you, from all at Total Angling.

Dean Watson

# Peck Returns To Mainline



After what has been a very brief time away, I'm delighted to let you all know that I have rejoined Mainline Baits. Firstly, and very importantly an apology to both Sticky Baits & Kent Particles. I approached them both with the intention of a long-term collaboration and my return to

Mainline has nothing to do with them as company or the bait itself. Good companies, and good bait. I am extremely grateful for the support and faith they showed in welcoming me, so sincere apologies to both Sticky Baits & Kent Particles.

Since my early 20s all I have ever

wanted to do is to earn a living from carp fishing; and through social media, and appearing on Korda's YouTube films that dream has become my very fortunate reality. Throughout the whole journey Mainline had supported me, and ultimately that means something; furthermore, Korda and Mainline have been working together for a very long time, and the last thing I want is to be pulling in the opposite direction of those that have been so supportive.

Obviously, I am expecting a bit of mud to be slung my way on this, and as the old saying goes.. "If you've got nothing nice to say, don't say anything at all" Please just move along and save us all from the negativity.



## Northern Powergrid hooks up with the Angling Trust to tackle fishing safety



Every year in the UK there are cases of fishing equipment coming into contact or too close with overhead power lines, causing horrific burn injuries or even death. With power lines on wooden poles carrying voltages up to 132,000 volts, anglers are being urged to always plan ahead when fishing, and tackle safety before they set off.

# The Farriers Cup Results 2024



Well, another year done the Farriers cup ! 24 is over .....

Thanks to all the anglers that fished it In such a wonderful way , plenty of smiles just enjoying what we love to do best ! So firstly well done to all This year the fish didn't want to play ball so it was tough going for 16 anglers out of 22 that kept their nets dry .... But that's fishing hey ! 1st was Robert Saunders (head ballif )

Who sat in first place from the off out of the unfancied peg 3 .. his face said it all when he pulled it out the draw bag! Very very well angled there. 2nd place to our resident funny bloke from Wales our John Flewin who pulled peg 17. Another look of anguish when he pulled that out of the bag .. but he got to work. (As we all know work and Jon only kidding mate ) starting raking like a dog of heat ...



last couple of hours. It certainly paid off ! Not only taking him to 2nd place but landing the biggest fish at 42lb 4oz - the only Farriers 40 to come out I might add. Brilliant mate all genuinely pleased for you .

Just like to take this opportunity to thank the Boss our Miles Carter & the superb The Carp Society for letting us do the farriers take over - Until next time, tight lines all.





# Sponsored Fish

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Biggest Mirror Carp Caught**



**POSTER MAKER**

# ANGEL OF GRACIE SPONSORED FISH IN

This years sponsored fish for An Angel of Gracie Charity (1195868) Raising money for pallative care children & bereaved families Deposit link is (£20 to hold your space but remainder must be paid by 1st september to keep your place). Go to: [www.an-angel-of-gracie.sumupstore.com/product](http://www.an-angel-of-gracie.sumupstore.com/product). Full payments must be in by 1st September to the charity bank account which is on the forms.

A go fund me will be ready to use later today, if you don't have your forms please let me know and I'll send over to you as i need the first form back for health and safety. Also has your sponsor forms. If we raise over £10,000 this year the person who has raised the most will have the choice of 2 to gigantica or £1000 cash. There will also be lots of other prizes and a raffle.

## BCAC FINALISTS ANNOUNCED

And here they are the final 15 who will be battling it on on 7th September!2024 will see brand new British Champs! We're really excited about this one!

1. Steven Coe & Finley Todhunter
2. Graham Mabey & Jamie Viney
3. Ste Alford & Dean Crust
4. Mark Brett & Scott Bowden
5. Matt Went & Wes Cole

6. Wayne Fearon & Liam Morgan
7. Lee Simms & Sean Dulson
8. John Bowman & Ben Moore
9. Ash Taylor & Rob Julyan
10. Amy Emery & Aimee Eaton
11. Phil Bury & Marc Crowther
12. Jack Meyer & Lewis Swift
13. Josh Steer & Ben Hunt
14. Jamie Taylor-Card & Jon Button
15. Carl Rimmer & Perry Webb

# Checkout What's Been Going Down at the Carp Society this Past Month



Miles' latest Fisheries update is available now on Youtube





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# CARPPUNK WRAP STRAP

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safe storage. With 16 foam discs which you can pull the hook into the foam and wind the Zig line around the discs and space for 2 (or more) zigs on each disc you can carry many zigs tied to multiple depths.

- Price: £10.55
- [www.carptackleonline](http://www.carptackleonline)



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# CARP PUNK

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# GEOFF ANDERSON ROXXO SHORTS



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- [www.geoffanderson.dk](http://www.geoffanderson.dk)



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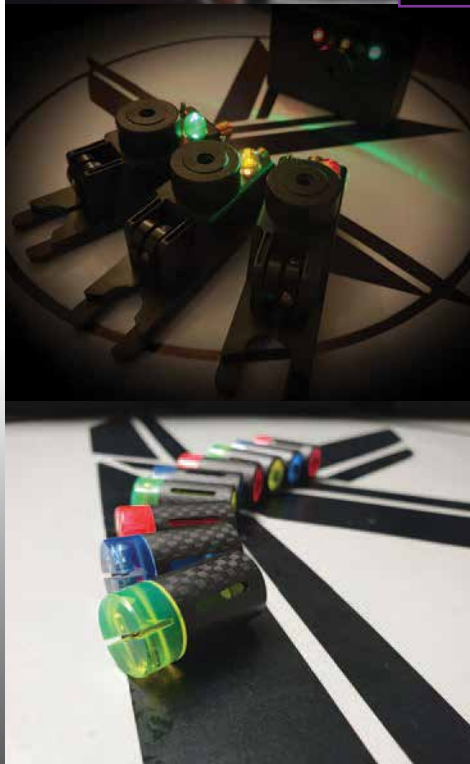
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# UK'S BIGGEST COMMON



Send in your catch reports to [info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](mailto:info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)  
Got a story to tell? Send us an article with as many pictures as you can to support it including venue, rigs, baits, scenics etc

Massive congratulations to Chris Lines who yesterday banked the Waterside Common at a massive 68lb using the awesome Essential Cell. Chris said: "What a morning on Waterside Fishery the biggest common in the country and I've caught it. It's not sunk it yet. What a fish, what a fishery." Brilliant, Chris great angling.



## NEW PB FOR NATHAN

Heavy baiting with Link and Essential Cell saw Nathan Collins land this immaculate Grenville mirror. "A new UK PB of 46lb was in the net after an epic battle pulling me all over the swim." said Nathan

Thing of beauty!! Not quite the 40lb I hoped for but what a creature and my new PB 39lb 7oz. Caught off the surface at Cottingham Lakes Fishery



## SUPER SURFACE SUCCESS



## MARTHA MAGIC

MARTHA, another one of the bigger fish from the lake at 46lb 2oz. The session couldn't of gone any better so far totalling 5 takes 4 landed.

# 96lb BRACE



96lb UK brace  
for Mark Wallace.  
A new PB mirror  
45lb 8oz and new  
PB common 50lb  
8oz - my first Uk  
50

## MASTERS RESULT



Elite Carp Masters at Cottington produced this fine mirror for Dave and Scott - 45lb 8oz

## NICE ONE LAD



Apparently, the biggest Mirror in Kingfisher "Slow Harris" at 48lb 2oz to Neil Ladkin

## WONDERFUL WELLY COMMON



Jason Massey was absolutely blown away AGAIN - almost as old as him and one of the originals, Welly's Big Common

## WORTH BOASTING ABOUT



Mathew Boast had a new PB in the shape of 'Fenners' from Barham Lakes at 40lb 8oz !!

After 3 months of blanks and figuring the place out bit by bit, Lewis Jackson hooked and lost a small common unfortunately! Then, 6 hours later, after resetting all 3 rods due to a complete whip out by the common. He never thought he'd be saying this but a UK PB of 42lb, THE BIG MIRROR, hit the back of my net this morning!!!



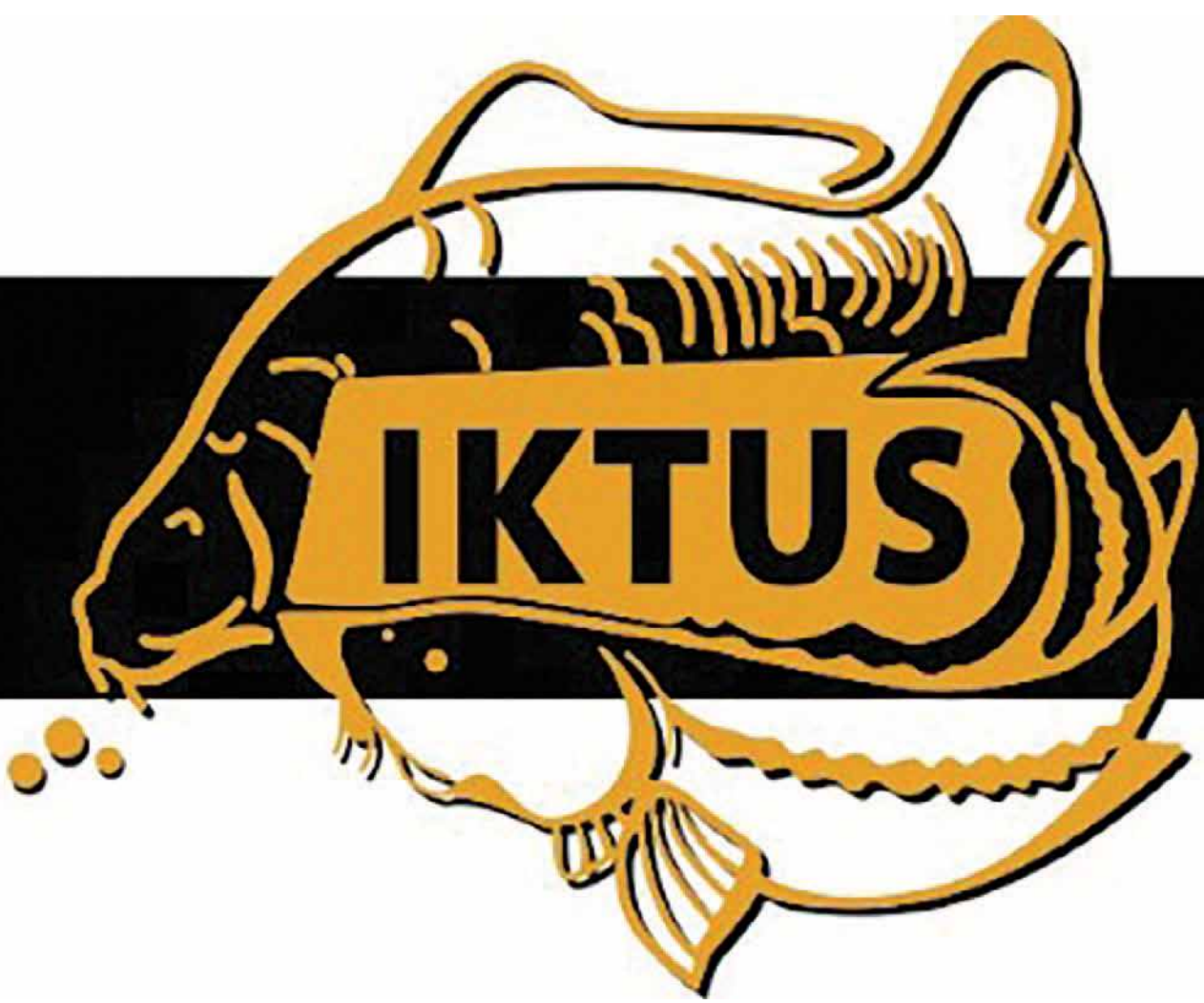
## 3 MONTH BLANK FOR BIGGUN

## DEEPINGS MIRROR TOPS 50



Now that's a UK 50LB+ bruiser. Cory Green lands his third UK fifty in the shape of Deepings 'Small Mouth' mirror. This fish has come through the ranks, stacking on the pounds and now at a huge weight.

Cory used 18mm 'The Formula + Arctic Crab' to get the carp feeding and it certainly did the trick!



# FISHING RESORT



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

## CATCH REPORTS

**100th  
UK 40**



Gary Kimbell caught his 99th and 100th UK 40lb plus carp ...

In 2 nights, he landed 19 carp, 8 of these being over 30lbs with 2 over 40, the biggest going 49lbs. He stated, "I'm absolutely over the moon achieving this personal milestone and the time spent with many a new friend made over the years whilst catching them."

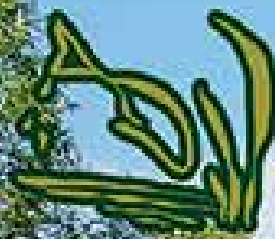
**BIRTHDAY  
BANGER**



NEW LAKE RECORD OF 40LB 8oz FROM MILLHAYES AND CAUGHT ON HIS BIRTHDAY!!

What a carp just look how black this carp is - unreal. What a capture and at 40lb 8oz and caught on my birthday it was an extra touch birthday present ,





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Coole Lane, Nantwich CW58AY



## CATCH REPORTS

### RAGS TO RICHES



Well, he's only gone and had her!!!!  
One of the finest in the country, totally spawned out but still over 50lb. What a creature, and soooo made up for you mate... mega Rags Rob

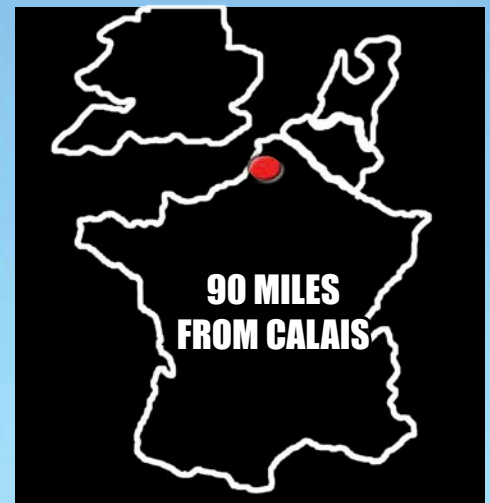
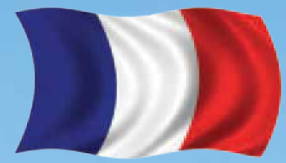
### JEZ'S LONG LAKE BRACE



Jez Hancock with the VS Scattered Linear at 43lb and the Little Dink at 30lb 2oz, another new thirty for Long Lake.



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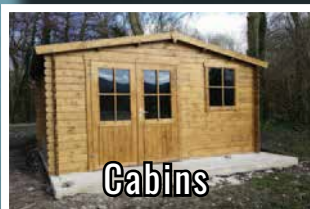
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## CATCH REPORTS

First trip to the syndicate of the new season and only had the rods in 3 hours before this lump came my way! A fish known as Decker. She just missed the magical 50lb mark by a couple of ounces but I will take that all day long!

# FIRST TRIP SUCCESS



Einstein with a new lake record at Long Lake, the BBQ Zip at 53lb.

# EINSTEIN'S PB



# FLOATER BELTER



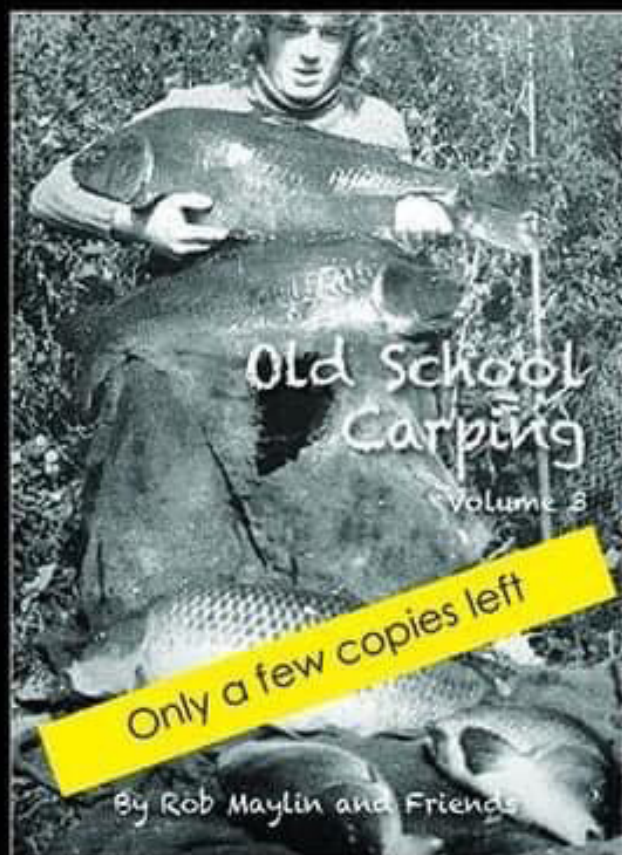
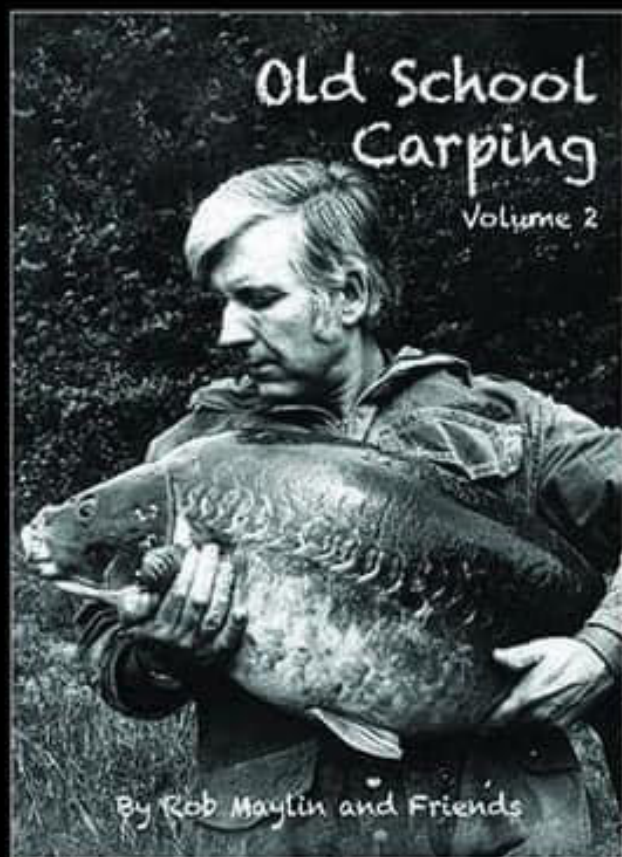
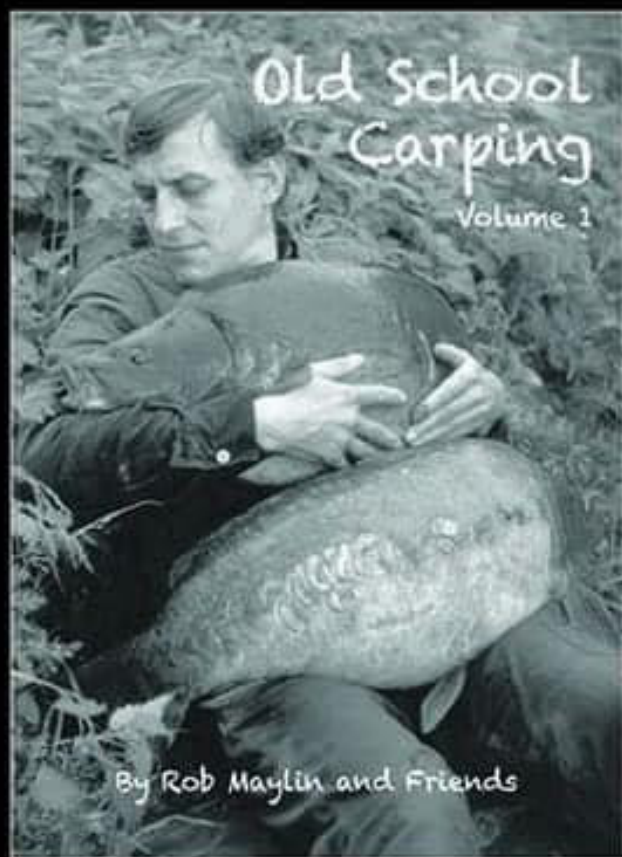
One of my biggest ever UK surface caught carp at over 42lb, now named 'Jimmy' after the bailiff told me it wasn't one that he recognised from Bluebell Lakes.

# BELL OF THE BALL



Here's a huge congratulations to our friend Jamie Bell. Regular baiting on the 96-acre lake resulted in a string of fish including the lakes big common. The penultimate bite came after upping the antis, baiting his chosen spot daily, seeing the end to an incredibly successful campaign Well done mate!

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# MARGIN MONSTER



April Chiverton fished tight to a marginal spot, baiting heavy with Dave Mallins Pungent Squid, resulted in this lovely 40lb 10oz mirror!

Checkout this perfect 41lb common for Jamie Harris from a recent trip to a tricky lake in Surrey. He introduced a 50/50 mix of 10ml freebies consisting of Cell and Link to a small channel between weedbeds and as the old cliché goes, the rest was history! Well done, Jamie.

# SURREY CELL MUNCHER







**DAN'S  
THE  
MAN**

Buzzing another 40 for Daniel Bradley.

Congratulations to Sean Fretwell who banked 'The Big Plated' from Frimley Pit 3 the other week at a mega weight of 48lb 5oz. Brilliant, Sean

**PIT 3  
PLATED**



## SEAN SADDLES UP



Just check out this shot of Sean Lamey cradling supreme Dinton royalty... The mighty Saddleback linear weighing 53lb! Hydra K the bait of choice, for both Sean and many others across the country.

## ALEX STRIKES GOLD



The Golden Common. Super stoked to have ticked this one off the list! At a little over the magical forty-pound mark, it was great to see her in pristine condition and looking majestic in the early morning sun.



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## THE MISSING MIRROR



After wading through copious amounts of bream, Kenneth Wiessenberg knew that if he kept persevering then the result he wanted could come.

Well that result came, and in monumental proportions when this incredible mirror rolled into the net at 52lb 6oz! "A once in a lifetime carp!"

I managed to do 14 days and nights this spring and on the lucky 13th day caught this very special carp!!

A new lake 40 at 45lb 2oz and a fish that hadn't seen the bank for at least 11 years making it mean so much. I certainly feel privileged to be able to fish such a venue.

## WHAT A CARP!!



# HARRY'S HAPPY

On Hardwick  
Smith's, Harry  
Cottrell had a great  
session landing 2 20's  
to 29lb and a very  
long 36lb 8oz mirror.



Max Paine  
with the cut tail  
linear at 34lb 10oz  
from Farlows

# NO 'PAINE' FOR MAX



# BIG BAD BARRY



Ian Rogers fished swim 10 at the Islands Carp Fishery and had a great session catching 6 lovely carp, The pick of them being the awesome (BBB) Big Bad Barry at 30lb 12oz. Good angling

# SAM'S THE MAN



Sam Gentry fished a tough French lake to land this beautiful mirror whilst fishing over a bed of Urban's Fully Loaded.

The stunner came part of a 6 fish catch on the bait which is packed with Liver!

# 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.

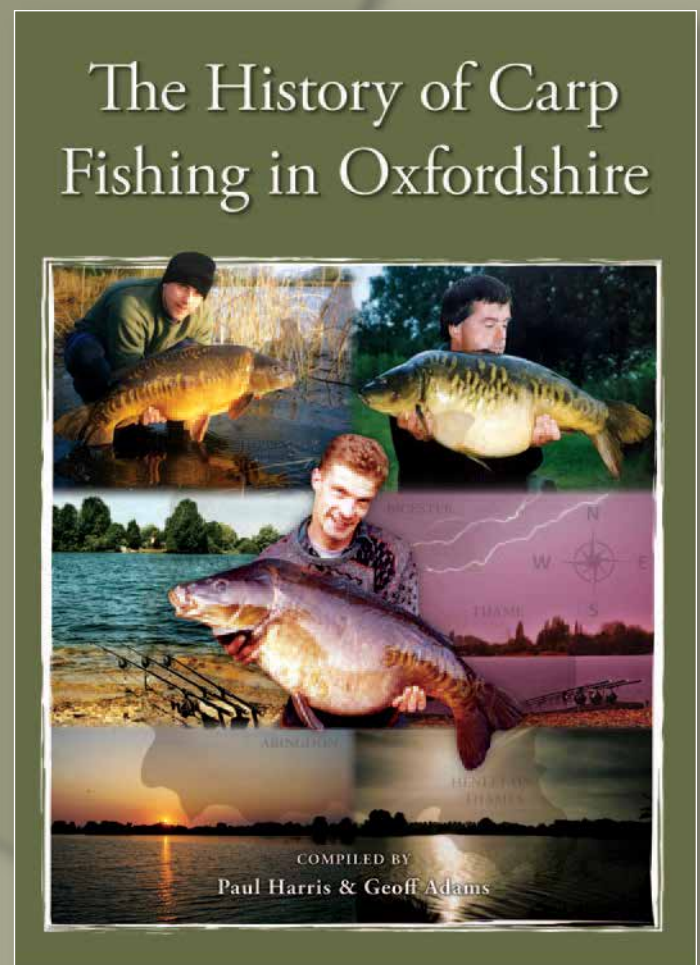
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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



**ALEX GRICE**



# AUTUMN ASSAULT

Autumn can be particularly tricky and certainly over the last few years with the increased level of angling pressure, the fishing on many lakes has become more difficult. I have always enjoyed my autumn carping, but have noticed the need to switch up my tactics in order to get those bites when many

conventional methods simply don't produce the goods!

I have always been a big fan of adding a natural element to my approach and this trip was no different over the small pit. I had found some fish lying up in the snags and positioned myself on a bank that gave me access to an area close to where they



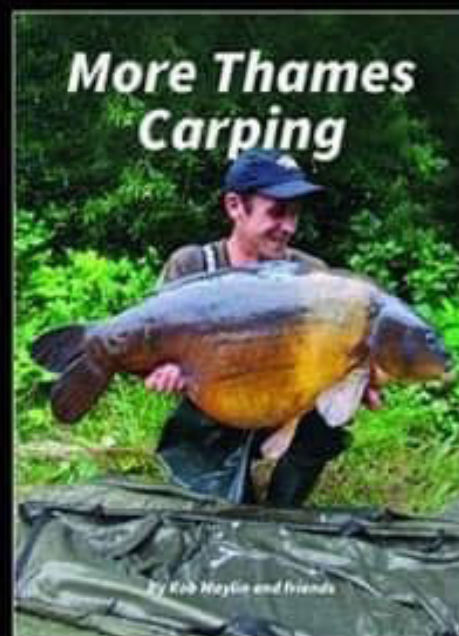
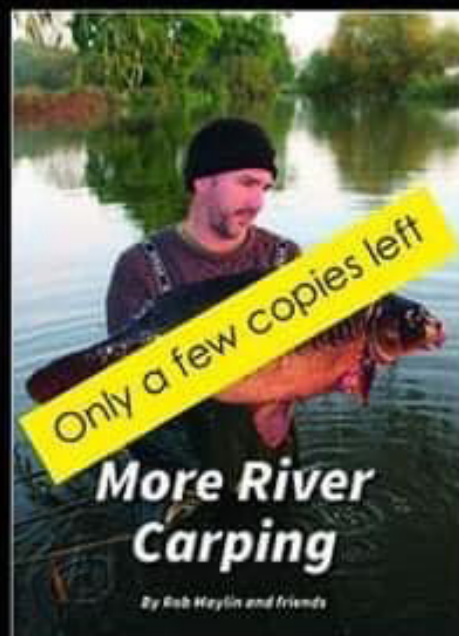
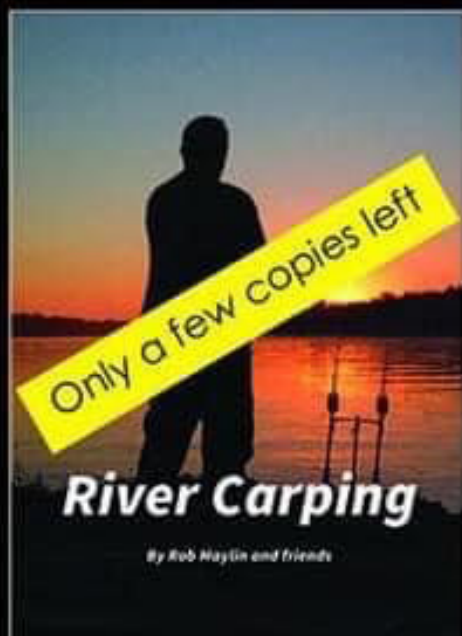
were held up. I baited with a mixture of crumbed boilies and bloodworm, presenting my trusty autumn specials 'whites' over the top; a tactic that has served me well in the past, contrasting well against those siltier spots that I choose to target. These areas close to the last of the lakes weed present are always a good bet during the autumn; find the weed and naturals and the carp won't be far away...

Depending on the spots I fish, I opt for two different presentations, based on how 'clean' they are. Both the multi- hinge and combi I use feature beaked points; size 6 chods or wide gapes for absolute certainty those holds will stay secure! This lovely mirror came after freshly prepping an area with my chosen mix and was certainly one of the lakes residents I wanted to catch!



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**ANDY MURPHEY**

# RED LETTER DAY

A red-letter session on his new Northamptonshire syndicate culminated in the capture of a brand-new UK personal best for Andrew Murphy.

Stockies dominated his initial bites on the venue, but it all came good on his most recent session, when he got through to some cracking scaly mirrors and rounded off the trip with a PB-busting mirror of 42lb 12oz.

Andrew said: "After giving up my winter ticket on Abbey and finding a decent syndicate

water closer to home, a good friend of mine did the honour of offering me a ticket on a complex he bailiffs. With a bundle of absolutely truly stunning carp present, I couldn't turn down the offer!

"After putting few nights in between work and family life, I started to map out swims and take notes, learning where they like to be in the day and at night, and their feeding zones, so I started to target certain areas to put some time in.



“My first nine bites resulted in six stockies, with me unfortunately losing a good fish in the weed, but I kept my chin up, having so much faith in my bait combination of the Bug and S7, all coated in Hydro Spod Syrup and Insect Meal, which in my opinion gives me a massive edge due to the

attraction levels going through the water column.

“I turned up with my partner for my next session. I had a wander around, spending pretty much half the day looking for them and baiting a few spots, targeting a close-range firm, silty area close to a weedbed. I introduced



five Spombs of the good stuff, whilst the rigs were absolutely bang on the money.

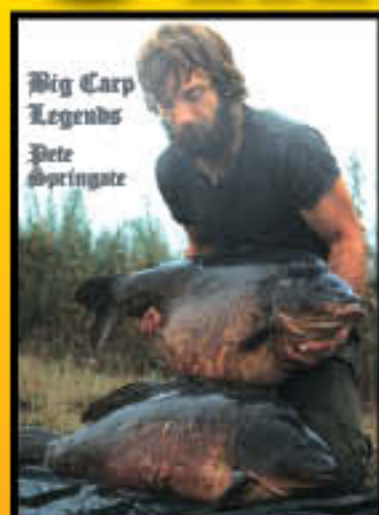
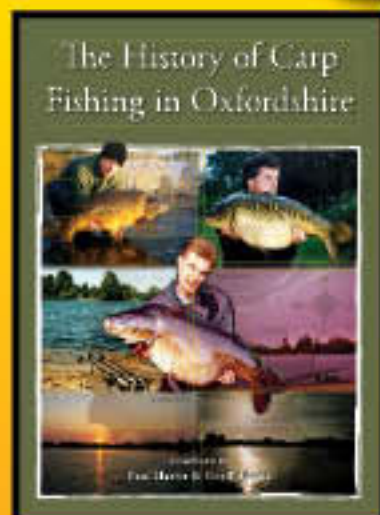
“Before long, I had an absolutely belting one-toner, resulting in a 20lb mirror. I was chuffed to have finally got into a decent fish! I quickly put five more Spombs out and got fresh rigs back on the money and within an hour was away again with a fully scaled mirror just ounces under the

30lb mark.

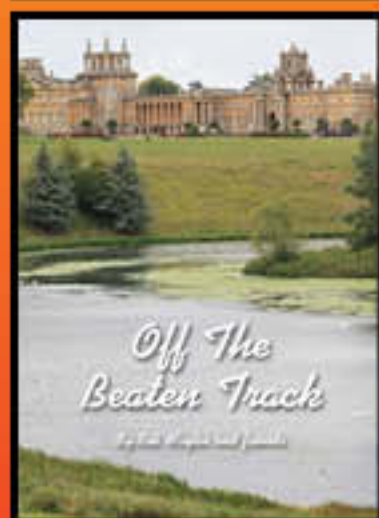
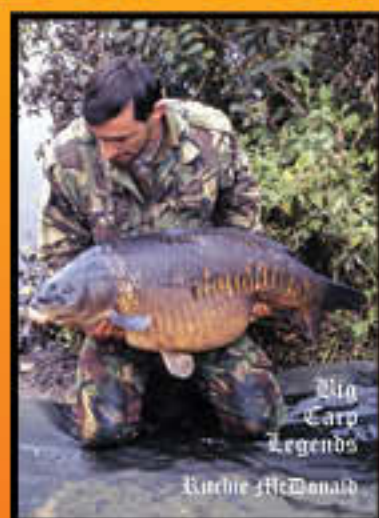
“I repeated the process once again and went on to tempt mirrors of 18lb+ and 27lb, before finishing off with something a bit special! The bite came out of the blue, with the fish finding weedbed after weedbed. Eventually an absolutely cracking mirror popped up, a fish that turned out to be a new UK personal best for me at 42lb 12oz!”



# SUMMER S



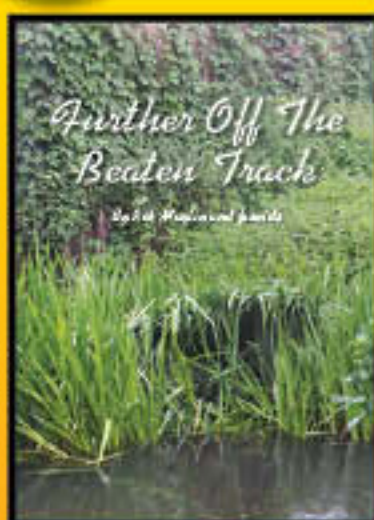
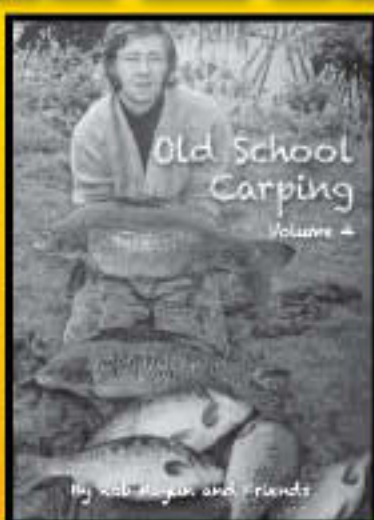
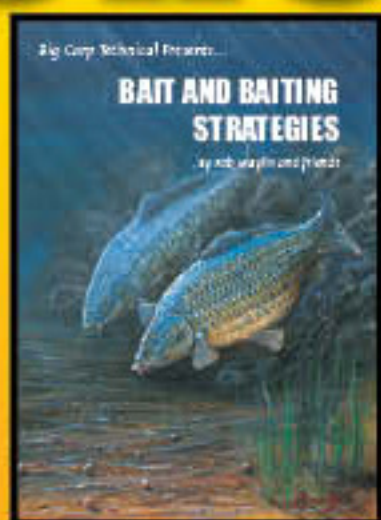
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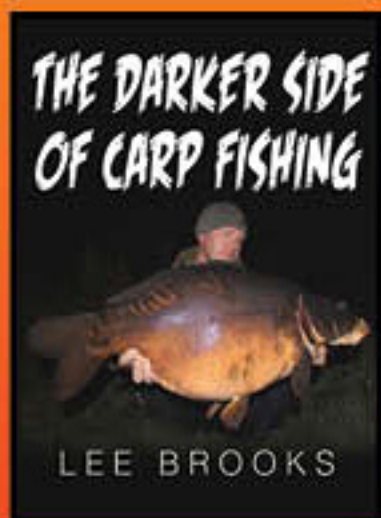
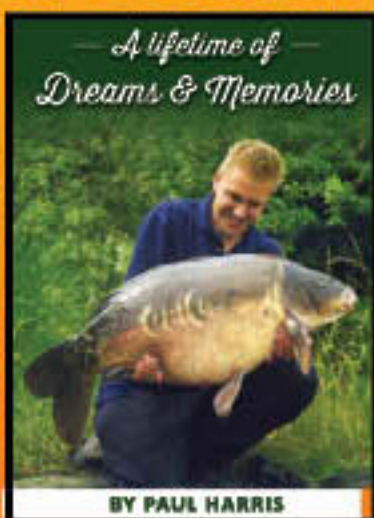
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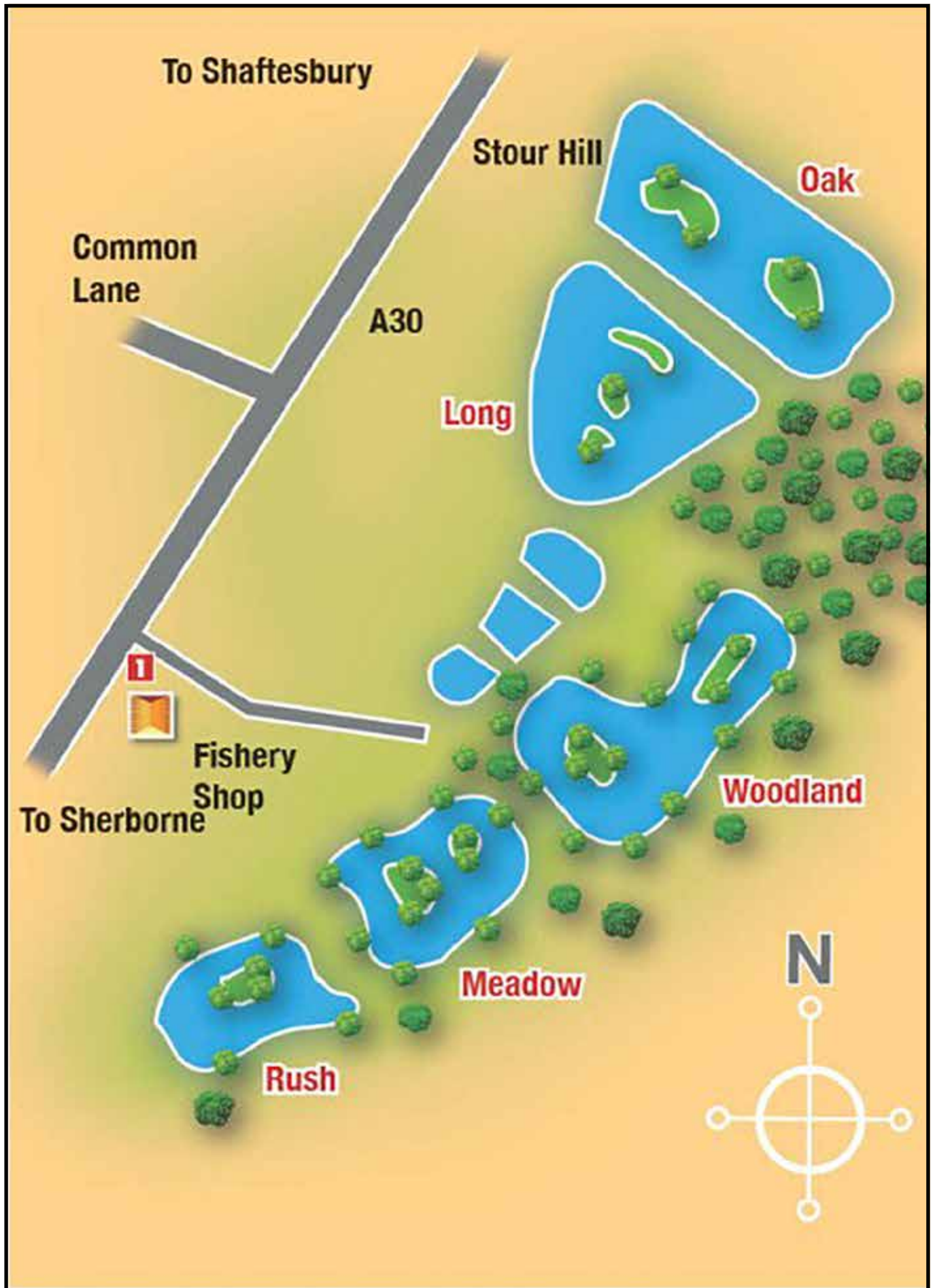
# BAGGING UP AT COKING

**BARRY OCONNOR**

It's always exciting when you start fishing a venue you've never fished before. How do I fish it, what bait do I use, when is the best time etc. These are some of the many things that run through your head. Of course, phoning friends who have fished there will help so will reading and gathering as much information you can about the venue. You can never have too much info. After learning as much as I can about the venue it was time to prepare everything for a visit.

Now for me preparation is very important. Ben and I do a lot of preparation not only for our fishing but for the carp matches we've entered too. It will always pay dividends if you do. If you fail to prepare then prepare to fail. This visit was no exception.

I was soon on my way to Coking Farm Fishery in Dorset. I'd fished Coking once before during winter and blanked. This visit was in September and I was there for a week. I'd booked peg 25 on Oak Lake. It's a swim I've



never fished in before but as I said at the beginning of this article always prepare ahead of your session. Knowledge gained can be priceless. The journey to Coking took nearly two hours. I usually travel early in the morning to avoid the traffic. Anyway, I pulled into the yard at Coking but now had about an hour to wait before I could go to my swim. When you book a swim here you have to give a time from when you want to start and finish fishing. In my case it was a ten o'clock start. The booking system here is

brilliant. A swim can be booked and paid for in advance. Great if like me you're travelling a long distance because your safe in the knowledge that your swim is secure when you get there. No rushing around trying to beat everyone else putting a bucket in a swim. A much more relaxed atmosphere here. The bailiffs at Coking Farm are very friendly and helpful.

There are eight lakes on the fishery and all have big carp in them. As I said I was booked on Oak Lake. Now Oak Lake has some serious carp in it all



swimming around in a lake of Fishery rules require barbless about 4 acres. At the time of hooks to be used. At Coking writing the lake record Common you can drive and park your is 42.12 and the lake record vehicle behind most swims on Mirror is 48.00. There are two the complex. Great for us carp islands with reeds adorning the anglers who carry everything. banks and overhanging trees Also on site is a brilliant café and bushes. The depths range that not only does breakfast from a couple of feet to about and dinner but also delivers to six feet. Three rods max can be your swim. There is also a well-used. Bait boats are allowed. stocked tackle shop on site





which sells everything.

I set up camp in the knowledge that there was going to be some gale force winds during my time here so I pegged my bivvy out with extra-long bivvy pegs. As an extra precaution I also tied my bivvy down with ropes. On my previous visit my bivvy took off in high winds and ended up in the field next door. I didn't want it happening again. Once I was set up I put in some work using a marker rod. I was trying to find some hard spots or gravel anything

that would induce me to put a bait on. I found some spots for my three rods in depths ranging from three and a half feet to just over four feet. It surprises me how many anglers turn up for the first time at a fishery and don't use a marker. I cast each rod to its chosen spot and before I clip up I take a few steps backwards letting out some line as I go and I mark the spot where I stop with a bivvy peg. Only then do I clip up the rod. The peg is my marker for where I stand to cast or put the rod



out in a bait boat. I do this so I've got some spare line to wind back on my reel after I clip up. I then walk forward winding the spare line on the reel and put my rods on the rod rest and set them up. Now if I get a run I've got some spare line on my reel that can be pulled off by the fish causing the alarm to sound before it hits the clip giving me plenty of time to get to the rod. Each rod is checked how many wraps it is to each spot from where my bivvy peg is with my wrap sticks. This is duly written down for further reference. Two rods were ten wraps and the other was eleven. The targets I used in the distance for casting references were prominent trees on the skyline. Obviously if I use the bait boat they won't be needed.

My method of fishing was going to be with solid pva bags. The lead was an inline flat pear from SM Leads. You



are allowed to use lead free leaders at Coking. The way I set it up is I tie the mainline to the leader. If the mainline breaks for any reason the swivel will pull out from the lead insert and the leader will pull through the insert thus losing the lead. The carp will only be trailing some line and not a lead. I use a short coated hooklink with the coating taken off. I like the braid that's beneath it. The hooklink is about four inches long tied to a size 4 Barbless Hook.

The hook with the bait on is placed in a PVA bag first and partly filled with pellets covering the bait. The lead is then placed on top of the pellets and more pellets are put in to just cover the lead. Now is the time to pour in any liquids you might want to use. I don't do this at this stage but continue to finish the bag. Any air is squeezed out of the bag and the open end of the bag is twisted around the bag stem. Wetting your fingers before you twist will help to hold it in place around the stem. I then take a pva cable tie and loop it around the stem and pull it tight. These pva ties make bag making so easy. I wouldn't be without them now. With this method of constructing pva bags I can make up several bags in advance. When I reel in I cut the line and tie a new bag on. I put my liquids in the bags as I am about to replace the pva bag. I have bottles with different flavored liquids in that have pointed spouts. The bag is easily pierced by these spouts and any pva friendly liquid can be squirted into the bag without any mess. If you have trouble piercing the bag then pierce the bag with your scissors. You can squirt the liquid in the bag long before you need to use it. This way the pellets have time to soak up the liquids. Unfortunately, I've found that the bags can go a bit saggy if the liquids are put in for long periods of time. The

bag goes out of shape a bit and loses its aerodynamic shape. Ok in a bait boat but not if you want to cast a long way. My rods are bagged up and ready to go out in the bait boat. I've already clipped the rods up for the spots they're going on.

My first run came on the second morning which I lost close to the bank through a hook pull. It looked a good fish. Later that morning I had another run and this time it stayed on. Because the lake is shallow the carp tend to stay near the surface when you're playing them. This one was rolling and pulling until eventually he gave up and came to the net. It was a Common caught on Steamies Krill and Bloodworm and was well hooked with my size 4 barbless hook. It went 33.10 on the scales. I was well pleased with it as it was my first carp out of Oak Lake and it was a thirty. Not long after re-doing the rod another of my rods was away. This was interesting

because unbeknown to me the battery had died in the alarm. It was just sheer luck that I happen to be watching the rods when it went off. Nevertheless, another scrap ensued and this time it was a Mirror of 26.02 on the end of my line.

The rain and thunderstorm promised by the weatherman arrived with a bang. It absolutely poured down and there were gale





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force winds with it. I was really glad I'd tied my bivvy down and used long bivvy pegs. Day three and there was still some rain about but the winds had gone. One of my alarms called out for my attention. I picked up the rod and pulled into something that pulled back. It darted all over the place and didn't want to come to the net. When using barbless hooks, I worry that the hook might pull. The longer it goes on the more I worry. In this case I needn't have worried. I engulfed the carp in the net and could see it was another good one. The scales recorded this Mirror at 33.08. This carp was soon followed by a 21.03 Mirror.





I had now caught four good carp. Another day passed without any carp. I could see some but they weren't near my baited area. I decided to put new bags on all three rods. As I said earlier it is an easy task tying them onto the mainline. Each hook was baited with one of three hookbaits. I used Steamies, Wafters in Krill and Bloodworm, TNT and Hydro Squid. These hookbaits had been soaked in their respective liquid boosters for some time. On the fifth day as I was having something to eat, you guessed it, I had a run. I was quickly onto the rod and doing battle with another carp. The rain was lashing down and unfortunately in the excitement I'd run out of the bivvy without putting on my waterproof coat. I stood in the rain getting soaked and played the carp hoping it wouldn't take long to get it in. The carp had other ideas though because it decided to go round the lines on my other two rods. All I could do was open the

bale arms on the reels and hope for the best. This worked and I managed to net the culprit. I unhooked it in the net because all the lines were tangled up. It looked a good Mirror and the scales confirmed it at 28.06. I managed to get some pics and after returning the carp I set about untangling the mess.

The sixth day and the rain had finally stopped. The rods had new bags put on them and out they went to the spots. I'd been squirting hemp oil, Hydro Squid and TNT liquids into the bags before casting or boating them out. Night time was now upon us and I wanted some well-earned sleep. I slept as best I could but was rudely awoken at the crack of dawn by an alarm. I fell out of bed and grabbed the rod. As I was playing the fish I could see a healthy bend in the rod. Whatever was on the end was giving a good account of itself. As it got nearer to the bank I could see it was a Ghostie. It kissed the spreader







block and was mine. I put it on the scales and the needle went to 32.11. Another thirty to add to my tally.

After having the Ghostie I went the whole day without a bite. My next bite came at night. The fish was trying to get into some reeds to free itself. I managed to keep it away from them and guided it to the net. It was a Common that went 28.08. Not long after I was at it again. I pulled, it pulled but eventually I won and what a prize. This was a Mirror of 32.08.

Early morning and the sound we all want to hear when carp fishing was an alarm ringing in my ears. Another of my rods had burst into action. As I picked up the rod it was nearly wrenched out of my hand. Something very angry was on the end and wasn't about to come my way. At first I thought it was one of the cats that live in Oak Lake. I managed to gain some line only to have it pulled from the reel. Whatever it was it wasn't

about to give up anytime soon. It seemed like I had it on for about an hour but in reality was about fifteen minutes before I got it to the net and it was a lump. As I unfolded the net a massive Common appeared. I put it on the scales and the pointer stopped at 38.03. What a carp. It was huge.

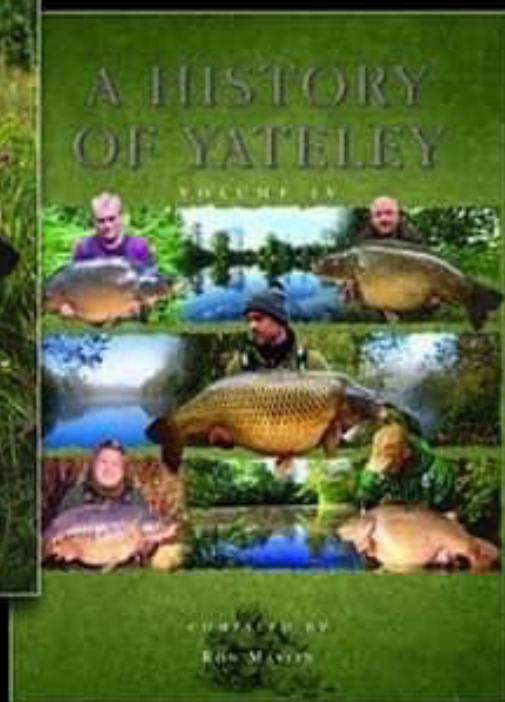
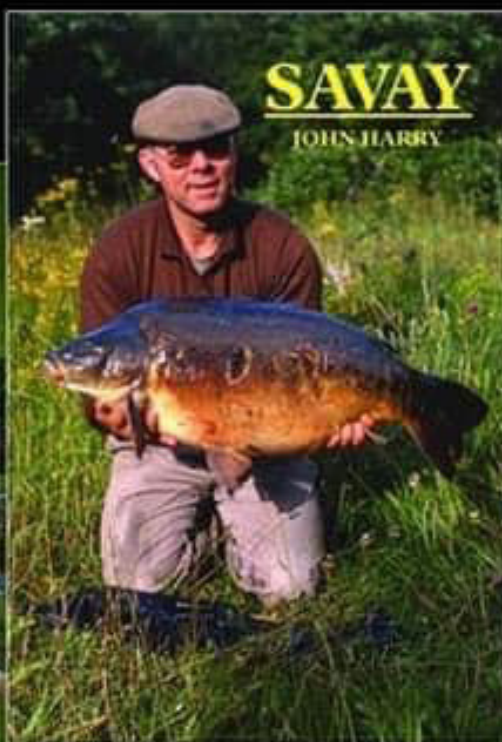
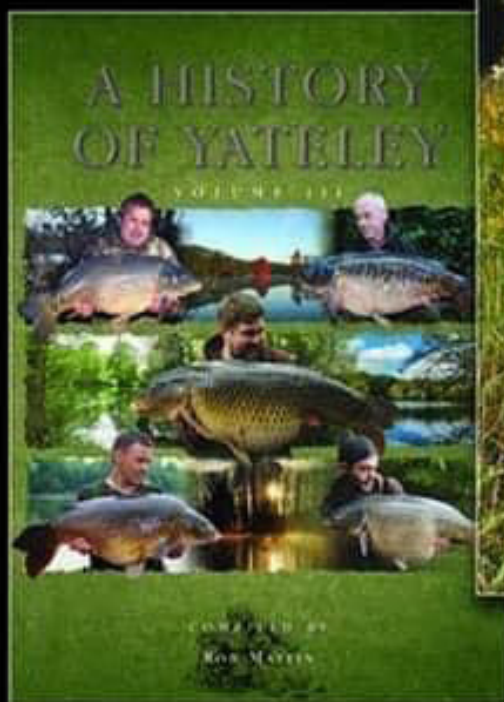
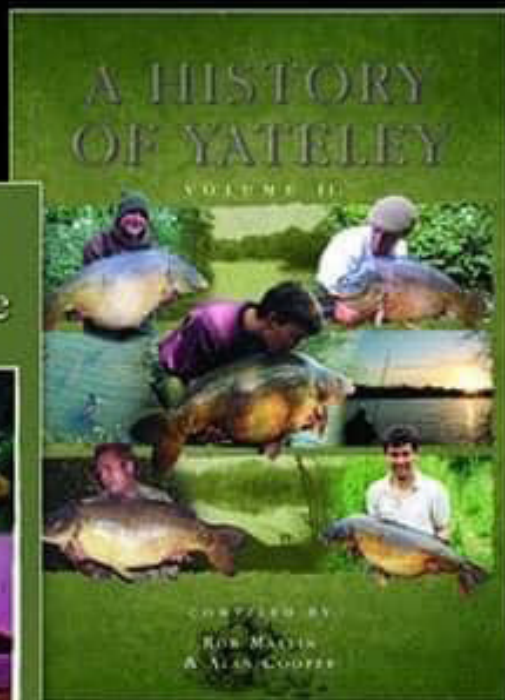
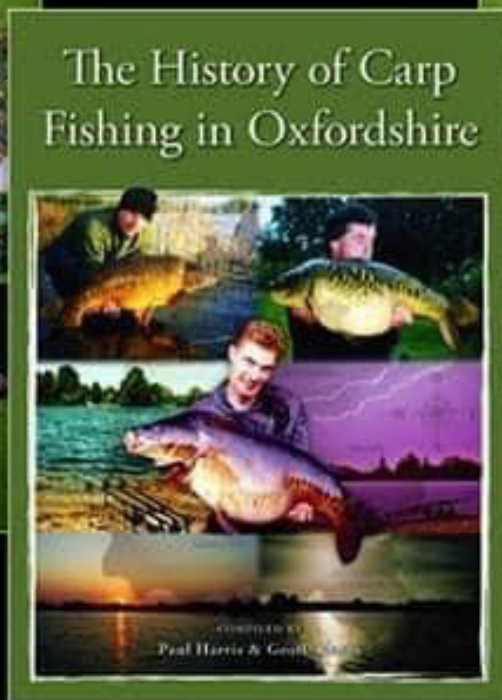
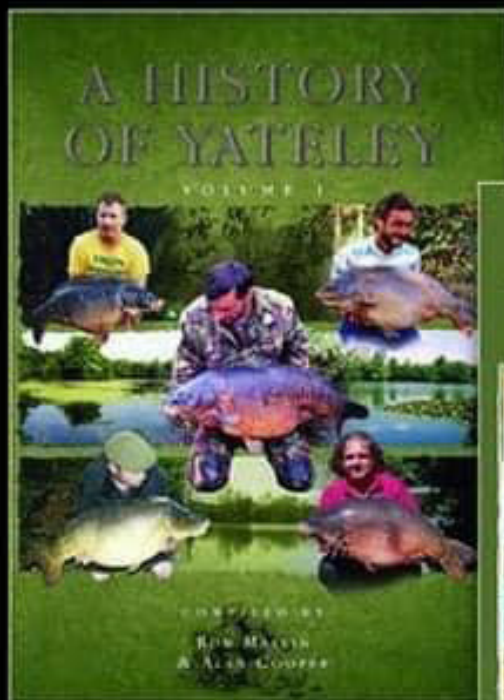
Well, that was it I didn't have anymore. The final tally was nine carp, five thirties and four twenties. What a session this had been. I can't wait to get back. I filmed the session and it will be out on YouTube. If you look up The Oconnor Angle you'll find it and other sessions that I have filmed. I'd appreciate it if you would subscribe to my channel.

If you would like to fish at Coking Farm ring them on 07759090881 or 07789003044 to get yourself booked in on Oak Lake or any of the other lakes at the fishery.

Until next time be lucky.

Barry Ocionnor

# THE HISTORY SERIES



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# Oak Lakes Fisheries



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

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



18lb 3oz



26lb 6oz



26lb 8oz



27lb grass carp



One of our regulars has been showing off his skills to his daughter. This month he's had the Long Common at 30lb 10oz (above left), next to that is a nice 25lb common with his daughter. Then he's topped it all off by banking a common known as Jenson's at 35lb (below). We think she was suitably impressed with her dad. Good angling



28lb from Reed Finger on Oak Lake



22lb on the nose



# ZEE GERMAN RIG



**BONESY**



**Start by cutting 10 inches of our Semi-Stiff Coated Hooklink, Bones favours the 20lb version.**



**Then take a Size 6 Wide Gape Hook**



**Begin to tie a knotless knot without stripping the hook link**



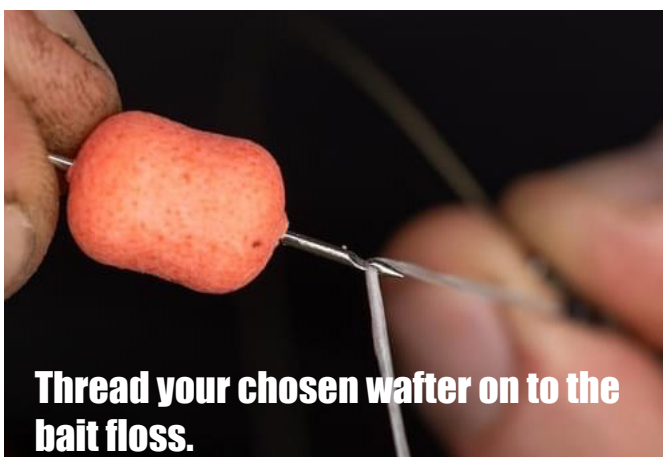
**Carefully trim the tag end with a pair of sharp scissors and slide on a micro ring swivel**



**Place one of our NEW Supa-Grip hook beads onto the bend of the hook.**



**Cut a piece of bait floss, thread through the ring swivel and swivel.**



**Thread your chosen wafter on to the bait floss.**



**With a lighter carefully blob the end to secure the bait into place.**







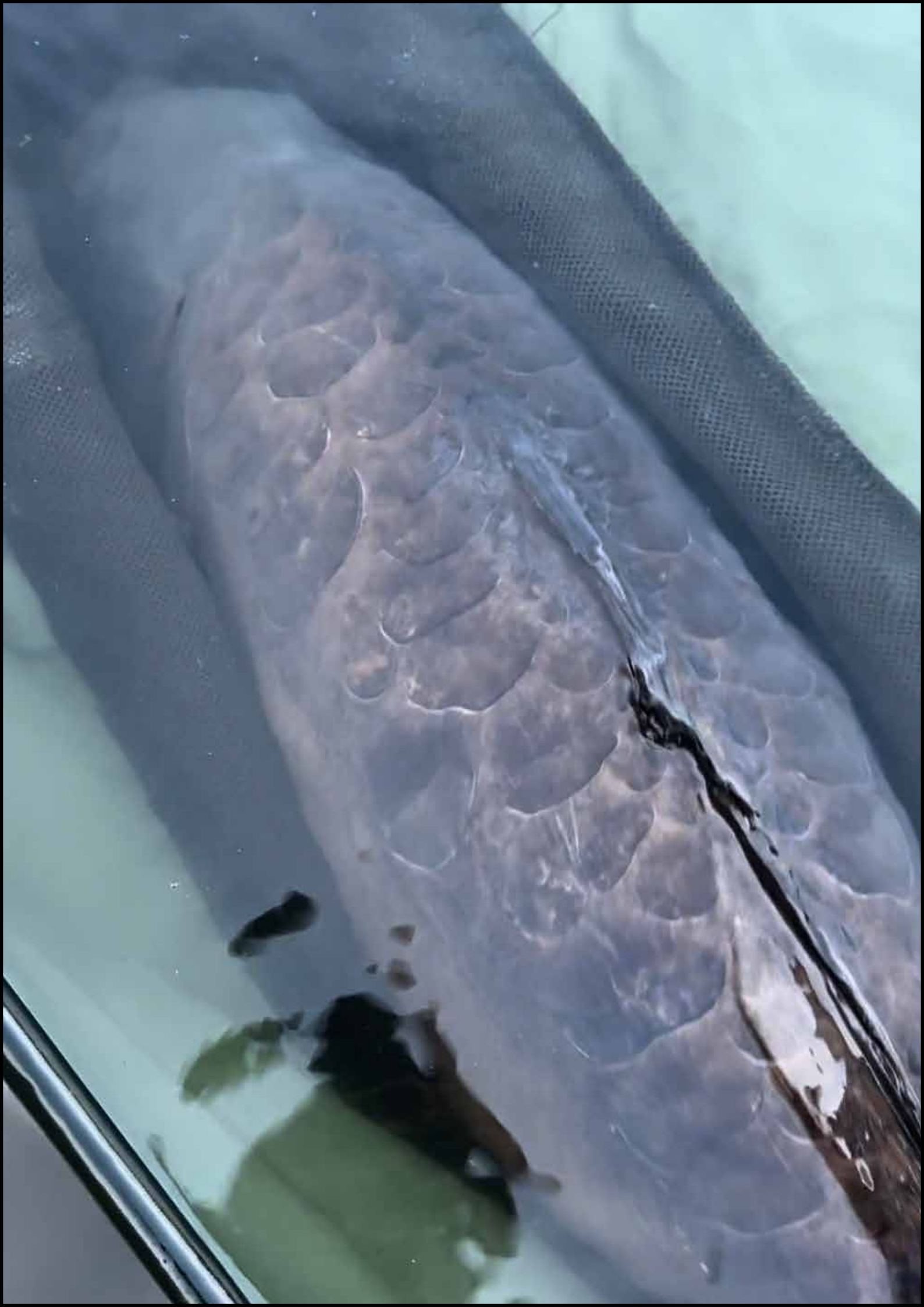
# TIME TO EVOLVE

**CARL UDRY**

In my thirty plus years carp angling, like many of us, I have seen a massive evolution of end tackle components. The majority of it has been revolutionary and aided the capture of many a carp. But there is a reasonable proposition now that has become over engineered, and just gimmicky. There is only so

many times you can reinvent the same wheel, right?

Carp angling for me is an addiction. As an addict, I am constantly processing thoughts and engineering ideas in my head on how I can outwit the carp. Since becoming a dad 13 years ago, my preparation and attention to detail is significantly more



important to me so I can maximise every minute from my next session on the bank.

We all know, building up knowledge, watercraft, good bait, weather and good ole lady luck all count towards a photo album of well earned carp. But end tackle and the presentation of it, is a vital and key component. We all want every edge, to ultimately

put those percentages and marginal gains in our favour.

In life, I am a 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' type of guy and I will only change or tweak things if I can see the obvious advantages staring straight at me. I have no problem changing things up, but that initial lightbulb needs to go off first. Like I said, my time on the bank is precious



to me and I will only take calculated decisions with that invaluable time.

After six fantastic years representing Gardner Tackle, it was time to move on after seeing my closest friends Lewis and James both moving on. That period of my life, I will remember fondly but I was becoming inquisitive to explore what James was up to. I knew him well enough to know, for him to leave GT it

must be for something special.

James slowly walked me through a pandora's box (aka a cardboard box) of Evolves initial end tackle range and that lightbulb was bright. Not only could I see this was no gimmick, I could instantly see how those important percentages were going to aid my angling and derive end results. A shake of the hand and a sample pack of bits was entrusted in to my possession.



My rig presentation does and has varied over the last ten years while angling on waters such as Welly, Wasing, and a variety of RDAA waters. I do angle to the situation in front of me, but I have become a loyalist to the helicopter and inline drop off systems. I didn't mind a lead clip, but I just didn't historically favour it. A lot of my waters during this 10 year period, have been very weedy so the versatility

of the helicopter suits me.

I am currently in my second year on RDAA Farnham Flint. The 25 acre pit is divided up by an array of islands, bays and channels. Every swim offers different depths, distances and features. You could literally place a bait in so many carpy looking areas it's crazy. Year two is always more productive than year one, for obvious reasons. Patterns in captures, fish habits and



just general knowledge from lessons learnt.

My first session after the James handshake and a midweek play with the new Evolve bits, was the imminent weekend at the end of March. I was really keen to apply the new bits immediately, so opted for stiff hinges on the helicopter set up as I would be casting 100+ yards within the particular swim I opted for. The swim itself was caked in deep mud and my bivvy had to be positioned on a tiny peninsula to avoid the majority of the mud. But, I had seen two fish at range and had to endure it.

After a quiet night, kettle was on and the first coffee of the morning consumed. It was a lovely crisp morning, everything looking perfect. Then, a subtle roll, then another. Then another subtle roll and the odd liner. Then 7am ish and my middle rod signalled a one toner. After

a fairly brutal fight, I safely landed a beautiful scale perfect mirror at 35lb 2oz.

That was my first trip out for 6 weeks, and first this year back on to the 25 acre club lake. Not an abundance of carp in the lake, and first time out using Evolve Tackle. Absolutely buzzing and already brimming with confidence.

After I pushed pics of this special looking carp on the socials, it was suggested I enter it into RDAA fish of the month which I did go on to win. Martin Salter, former MP for Reading West, kindly presented me a nice plaque and a gift voucher which I donated to a friends cancer charity.

I love being surrounded by likeminded, and just good humans. That is the DNA of Evolve Tackle and long may it continue.

Be lucky,  
Carl





**DARRELL PECK**



# ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Hooks have always been of great importance in my angling. Way back to my teenage years and when I first walked onto the Yateley complex as a young 20-year-old, one thing has remained the same since in my angling – Hook point.

Even back then, I used to give a huge focus to my hook points, going through packets to pick the best ones. Size 6 Wide Gape is the hook I've used most in my angling, developing so much







confidence in them through the years. It's still my go-to hook for my combi-multi rigs, and I'll even use Wide Gapes on my hinge rigs.

Each hook, be that a Kamakura, a standard packet or beefed-up X version, I'll study each hook, feeling it in my fingers and staring at it through my magnified glass. Having this attention to detail not just with my hooks, but with every element of my angling, be that rigs, leaders, mainline, spot finding or baiting. Spending time to think and getting it perfect is what catches fish. Rushing and getting things done half-heartedly is going to cost you fish. When I'm sat back with the rods out, I want to be in complete confidence that the rigs and baiting has been done perfectly, and all I'm relying on is the carp to do their thing. I've done all I can to secure a bite, no it's down to the carp.



**ED BANKS**

# ED BANKS BEAUTY

Ed Banks is already enjoying life on his new syndicate water and it didn't take him long to get his hands on his first forty from the venue. Fishing the idyllic Northey Park in Cambridgeshire, Ed got through to one of the lake's most-coveted mirrors, a lovely old mirror known as Crater, which tipped the scales at 40lb 1oz. "After seeing plenty of fish on arrival the previous day, I was expectant of a quick bite, but that never materialised," said Ed.



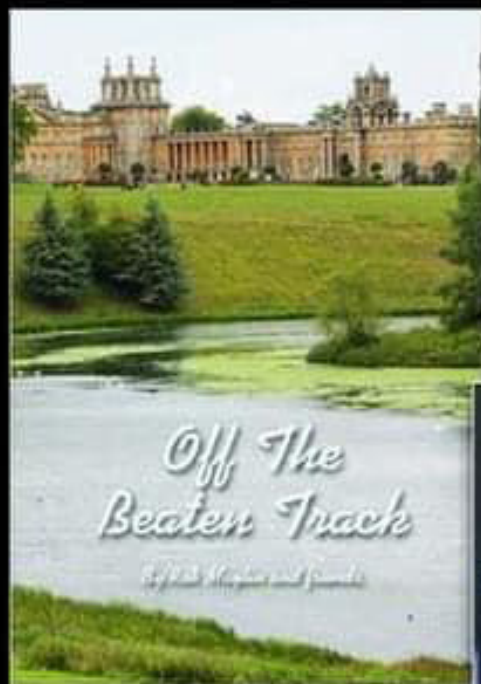
“Come the next morning, I was getting itchy feet and decided to have a mooch round the lake, but didn’t see anything better to move to, so decided the best course of action was to stay in the original swim. With the rods back on the spots, I sat back, watched the water and before long they suddenly appeared again! “Then, at round 9pm, the rod wrapped around and ripped off

on a tight clutch. After an uneventful fight and pulling the fish in through the thick weed, I netted it, recognising it straight away as one of the old gems, Crater!” An ever-faithful 15mm Bug Corker waffer on a combi-rig did the business for Ed, presented over a mixture of 18mm Bug and Secret 7 boilies, all covered in Sweet Cayenne Pepper liquid.



# OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

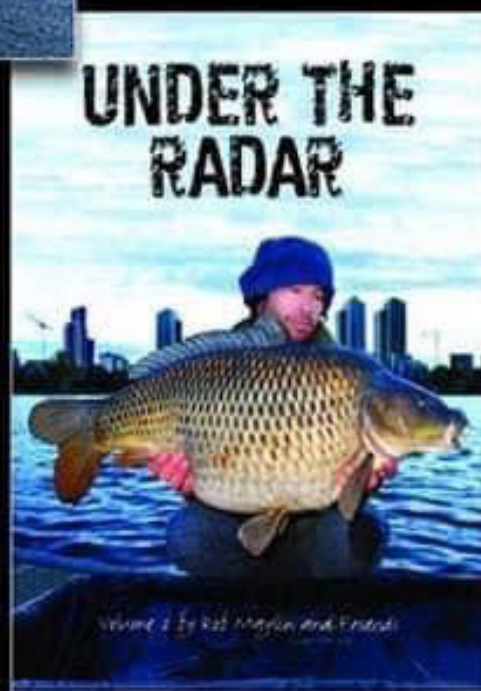
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**ELLIOTT GRAY**



# TIPS FOR LANDING WEEDED CARP

'My advice would be to go strong with your tackle, use a braided mainline (20lb SubBraid) if you're allowed to or a strong monofilament (20lb Carp Line), use leadcore, big hooks (size 4 Wide Gape X) and strong hook links (20-30lb N-Trap). Take no chances on a weedy lake as it's more than probable that you'll have to apply some serious pressure

at some point. When a fish makes for the weed you need to be able to keep the pressure on and prevent them from burying.

I always use drop-off leads, and losing the lead will help with bringing the fish up in the water and above the weed, which will aid in landing them. Beyond that, it's tight clutches so they're unable to





bust off and into the weed, and steady pressure throughout the battle.

If your lake doesn't allow boats, try not to give them any line unless you have to, until you've got them away from danger. Keep the pressure on as you aim to pump them through the weed. Give them an inch and they'll take a mile. If everything grinds to a halt, keep the rod bent and pressure on until they kick themselves free. It sounds simple right? It's not always that easy, but that's my rule of thumb. Keep direct and steady contact from the off.

If you find yourself in a situation where a fish has weeded you, you've kept applying pressure but it won't budge, then try putting the rod down and letting the line go slack. This can cause the weed to relax again and get the fish moving, this is always my last resort though as it can lead to the fish burying deeper





into the weed.

I'd like to think most weedy venues have a boat on site these days and even if you're not allowed out in it yourself, a phone call to the bailiff should solve the problem. It's really surprising how easy a weeded

carp is too free from the weed once you're above it in a boat.

As I've alluded to, it's not always going to be easy but you have to learn not to fear the weed and instead understand and capitalise on what makes it great'.





**LEE WHEELER**

# MARKER MAGICIAN

'The marker float is a tool I feel has become somewhat under used and is a bit of kit I always take with me in my angling.

It's been extremely beneficial this particular campaign, where I've found myself fishing to small clear patches amongst the weed, spots that can only be seen from the trees.









From the height of a tree, I can establish the spots and then cast my float to these zones from the swim and then get back up the tree to ensure the float is bang on the spots. I can then get all my baiting and wrapping done, knowing I'm super accurate and bang on the clear patches.



When seeing fish bubbling or showing, it can be quite disorientating from different swims, so by putting a float on these zones (after the fish have moved off) you can then pinpoint from various swims, exactly where the activity was and be super accurate in your angling'.



**LUKE VALLORY**

# FLIPPIN' 'ECK

Luke's go-to rig for his bottom bait fishing, fished with an 18mm (or bigger) bottom bait straight from the bag and generally fished over pure boilie.

When fishing super clean spots, safe in the knowledge he can present a bait on the deck, this would be Luke's chosen approach, a rig that's helped him catch some super tricky carp including both 'Rosie' and 'Strawberry' from Woolpack's 5&6.

Set up with a size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape X, Luke likes to fish a reasonably long hair, with the hair trapped around the hook's bend by

a small piece of silicone. A knotless knot locks the hook in place, with a small section of Shrink Tube steamed to help close the gape of the hook.

Dark Matter braid is used as his hooklink, nice and supple yet heavy enough to keep things pinned to the lakebed.

A small pva bag of pure crumb helps prevent tangles, essential for this rig given the longer supple hair.

Fished in conjunction with a Hybrid Lead Clip, this is a simple yet mega effective rig, with the silicone around the hook's shank adding weight to the hook, causing it to quickly flip and catch hold.







**SCOTT SWEETMAN**

hoping they will arrive; I need to go to bed knowing that I'm on them.

When I work out the swim I'm going to fish, I will be as quiet as I can, whether that's me on the bank or the leading around, I'm ultimately trying to get rods out with as little disturbance as possible, giving me the best chance of getting a bite by the morning.

Lastly, I'll always be on the lookout for quieter areas that I feel the carp will regularly

visit. I can then concentrate on that area, cleaning spots, creating line lays and potentially, if rules allow, start baiting. If you can get these areas working it really does make the overnighters, feel easy. Dropping rods on areas you've already prepped, you're fishing quickly and effectively on spots the carp already feel safe eating. It really can be a devastating method, done in the right way in areas without affecting other anglers







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# Big Carp Magazine!

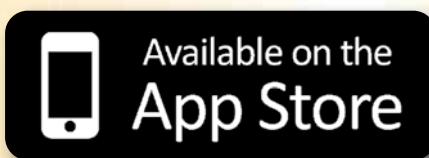
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# BC

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# Rob's Ramblings

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Design & Production  
James Harrison

Also available this  
month Big Carp issue  
338.



Front Cover:  
Rob Allan with the  
Tatton Common..



## TC Conservation Group - The Legacy Project

Your support for the project is nothing short of humbling and the manner that the 1.3K of you conduct yourselves reflects 'Oxford'. We have produced an outstanding proposal for the site and this is submitted as part of our response to the recent sale of the site.

I have personally supported this proposal with a cash offer matching the asking price of £100,000.

So.... please share - please follow our page - and please support the best management proposal for TC that has been developed by a partnership with the TenchFishers and the Regional Pike Organisation - RA34. WE represent 'Oxford'.

We support the communities that the site embraces - and unlike any other interested party - I have been to the existing community personally, and we have talked.

And it was a very pleasant experience, with huge trust established.

**6. CARP CHAT**

**16. CARP SCENE**

**24. AJ THARRATT**



**32. ROB ALLAN**

**34. MARK BAXTER**

**60. PAUL BENNET**



**70. RICH  
BEARDMORE**

**78. MARK HOGG**



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Team member John Paul McCusker was back on Monk's Pit after a couple of months off earlier this week and back with a bang. Straight into two lovely old 40s. Going 41-2 and 43-3. Great angling John.

Team member Scott Johnson has sent us his report after catching a couple at his syndicate this weekend. "Friday night after work on my syndicate, I managed two fish on Saturday afternoon. They are starting to get bigger, after losing a better fish in weed.

The best 2 of 7 from a 24hr session on Naesby Reservoir for team member Gary Wadsworth. Gary used our Scorpion Curved hooks to make sure they came in over the net cord. Well done Gary.



Team member John Paul McCusker sent us this update: "Had a lovely couple of weeks off, one week in France with Jamie B Evans and a week in the Cotswolds with me Julie McCusker. Quality over quantity was how it ended, new French PBs for us both landing fish up to 45lb and a 53lb 7oz common for myself plus a nice hat trick of 30's up to 35 from the Cotswolds caught on various methods using Carponline size 4 ready made Ronnies and size 6 scorpion for solid bag work, Plus, various Carponline End tackle components"

I'm made up with these. Fishing size 6 Scorpion Wide Gapes with the tungston kickers in soildbags"



After a break from fishing, Rob Langley managed to get straight back on em' at his syndicate with this cracking mirror. Rob used our size 4 Scorpion Crank hook with our Tungsten Kickers.

# TEAM MEMBERS WANTED GET IN TOUCH NOW!!

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Choddy Crank Hook



Aligners



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Swivel Deal



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Scorpion



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Shrink Tube



Hair Stops

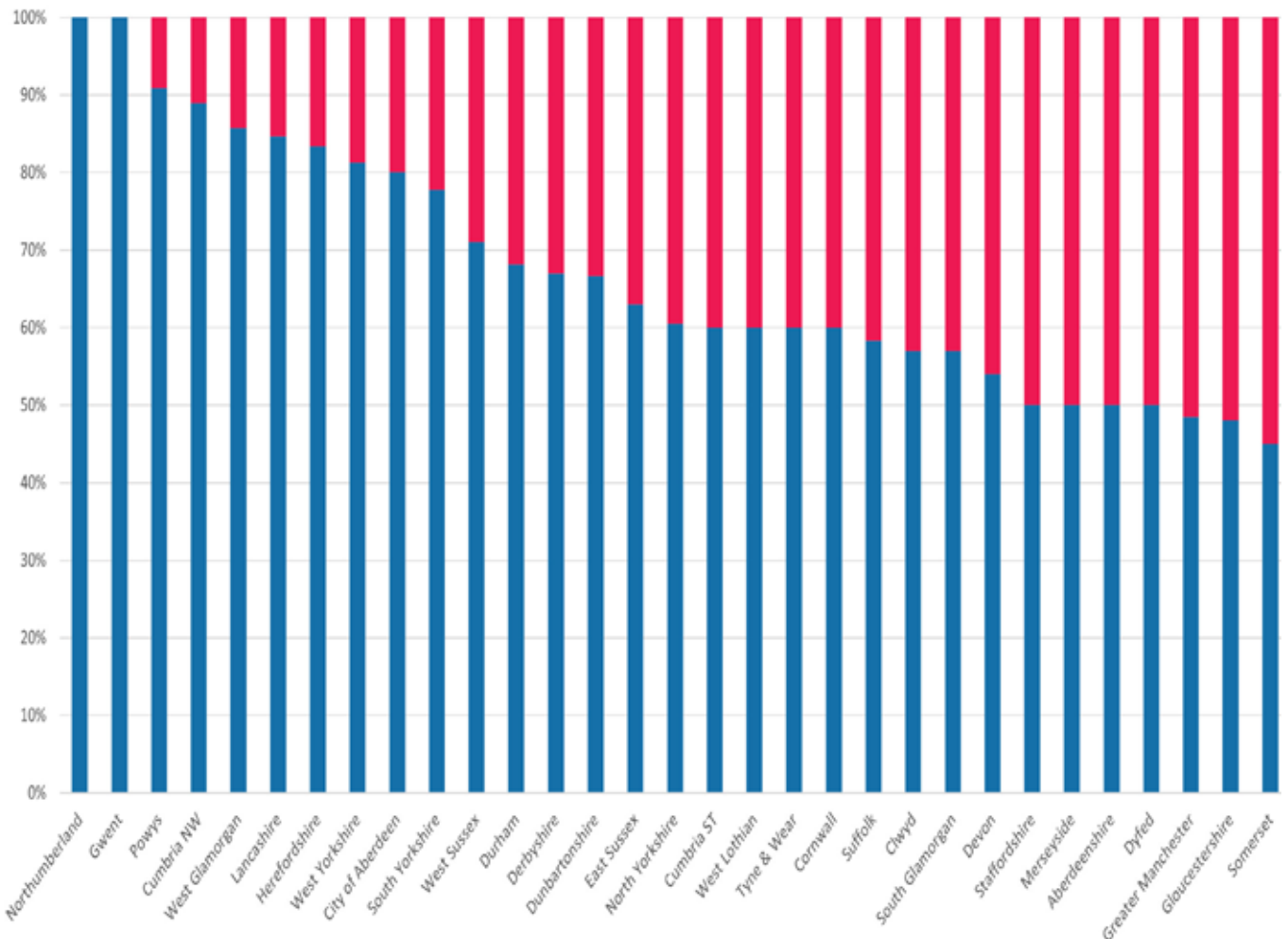
**COMING SOON!!**

The NEW Longcrank has the same offset point as our most popular hook, the Crank, but has the added advantage of having a longer shank. Our competition team has been using these to devastating effect.

**WATCH THIS SPACE**



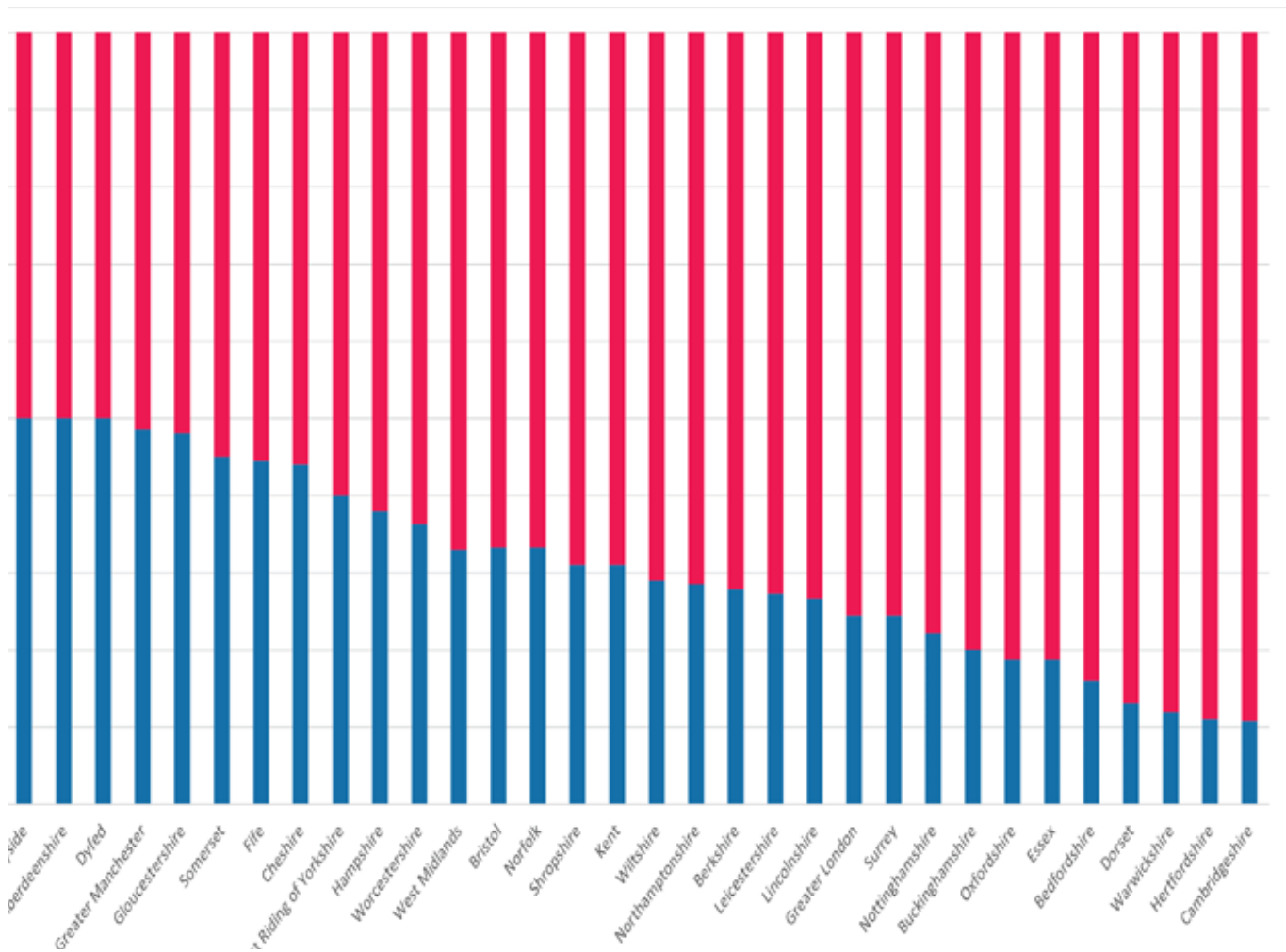
# UK'S LARGEST CITIZEN SCIENCE WATER TESTING CAMPAIGN FINDS 75% OF RIVERS IN POOR ECOLOGICAL HEALTH





A new report by environmental charity Earthwatch Europe has found that up to 89% of water samples taken from UK rivers show poor ecological health. During the weekend of 7-10 June, thousands of people across the UK measured their local water quality as part of the Great UK WaterBlitz, collecting over 1,300 datasets. The results paint a bleak picture: across the UK, 75% of tests showed the rivers were in poor ecological health. In the Thames and Anglia regions, this rises to 89%.

This report highlights significant regional variation in water quality. Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire had the worst water quality with 89% of data points showing unacceptable levels of nutrient pollution. Gwent and Northumberland had the least nutrient pollution, with both counties having 0% unacceptable data sets.



Participants in the Great UK WaterBlitz, organised by environmental charity Earthwatch Europe, measured the levels of two polluting nutrients: nitrate and phosphate. Nitrates and phosphates are commonly present in domestic and industrial waste and sewage, as well as in the fertilisers that wash off farmland. High levels of nutrients cause excessive plant and algal growth, high levels of bacteria, and decreased oxygen levels in the water, killing plants and animals. The worse the nutrient pollution gets, the less able the river is to support aquatic life such as fish, insects and mammals like water voles.

Dr Sasha Woods, Director of Science and Policy at Earthwatch Europe said: “These results are truly disturbing – there are no parts of the UK unaffected by nutrient pollution. The picture around London and the Thames’ river basin is particularly dire. Our rivers have been historically stressed by farming, and we’re seeing this being made worse by inappropriate or limited sewage treatment. There is a pressing need for both improvements to wastewater treatment processes and reductions in agricultural pollution to reduce threats to vulnerable freshwater systems. The Government has committed to protect 30% of land for nature by 2030 – that will be meaningless if the rivers and streams running through the land, the arteries of life, are diseased.”

Freshwater is essential for ecosystems and key to survival on our planet, but the new report clearly shows that the UK’s rivers are in poor health. The overall results from the Great UK WaterBlitz, the largest-ever water quality testing campaign in the UK, mirrors some of the outcomes from a recent report by the Office of Environmental Protection (OEP), which found that ‘most of England’s water bodies are in an unsatisfactory state’. The report showed that the Government is not on track to meet environmental objectives set under the Water

Framework Directive, and highlights “Gaps in monitoring” as a key barrier to progress in meeting objectives.

Sasha continued, “This report would not have been possible without the support of people across the UK. The response to the Great UK WaterBlitz has been fantastic. As a nation, we clearly care deeply about the health of our rivers. This event has enabled people to better understand the health of their local rivers and catalysed grassroots action. We want to see more citizen-science testing and better use of this data by bodies such as the Environment Agency to help build a more positive future for our rivers. The next Government must commit to a national strategy for freshwater that includes all forms of pollution and is backed by a properly-resourced organisation that makes use of rich citizen science data.”

The Great UK WaterBlitz is part of Earthwatch’s FreshWater Watch programme. FreshWater Watch trains communities and individuals year-round to test rivers and freshwater habitats for nutrient pollution.

# **Angling Trust and SportsHotels.com announce new partnership**

The Angling Trust is pleased to announce a major new partnership with SportsHotels.com, an online accommodation booking platform with access to over one million hotels and other forms of accommodation in almost 200 countries.

As part of the agreement, SportsHotels.com will become the Official Accommodation Partner of the Angling Trust and will support the organisation with accommodation requirements.

Angling Trust members and supporters will also be offered



exclusive hotel deals and discounts as part of the partnership, whether that be for an upcoming Angling Trust event, a fishing trip, or personal sports holiday or trip.

SportsHotels.com provides a complete accommodation service for sports people. They work with professional and amateur sports teams, National Governing Bodies and Sports Associations across all sports and all levels to help streamline sports accommodation needs.

Their core service is to arrange suitable hotel bookings, and their extensive hospitality experience of working with sports groups at hotels helps to ensure a stay that is both comfortable and hassle-free.

John Cheyne, Angling Trust's Head of Marketing, Membership and Communications said, "We are delighted to welcome SportsHotels.com as our Official Accommodation Partner and look forward to working with them to provide a service for anglers and the Trust for years to come.

“Whether you are looking to book accommodation as a match team, a fishing group holiday, a family get away or just for single night booking for one, SportsHotels.com can offer you a great deal. We will be actively promoting SportsHotels.com to our members and supporters, so please take a look at their website, check out the accommodation on offer, and contact them to discuss your specific needs.”

Stephen Carlin, SportsHotels.com CEO, said, ‘We’re thrilled to embark on this journey with the Angling Trust. As a specialist sports accommodation provider, we’re aware that the travel requirements for anglers and angling teams can differ greatly from other sports organisations. This is where our best-in-class Sports Desks steps in, underpinned by the latest technology and backed by 24/7 support, we offer a bespoke, tailored experience from start to finish.

“There are many opportunities from this partnership, and we are glad to be supporting the Angling Trust with its efforts to protect fishing and water environments and develop the sport for future generations.”.

# **SNAP Charity Carp Match September 2024**

The Support continues to flood in for the SNAP Charity Match in September. It’s not only the tackle companies but also the anglers which are taking part, the volunteers, the people behind the scenes helping me organise the event, Suffolk water park and SNAP themselves. Events like this do not happen without the support of everyone. To see an idea starting to take shape and gather momentum is truly amazing. Only a few weeks to go

# Carp Chat

Thank you:

Suffolk Water Park

Alex Luscombe

Nash Tackle

Gardner Tackle

ESP Carpgear

Korda Developments

Rod Hutchinson

Halobaits

Carp Addiction

Baitmonkey

Elmstead Fishing Tackle Ltd

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Phil Milson

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KORDA SOLID BAG TACKLE BUNDLE RRP £75

**ESP**  
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**SPEERO COMPACT RUCKSACK BLACK CAM**  
RRP £103.95

**GARDNER**  
GARDNER 3X ATT & RECEIVER RRP £299

**ROD HUTCHINSON - DMX LN FIXED 42"**  
RRP £115



# Little Havens and Great Ormond Street Fish-in at Sandhurst Lake

Well what a great couple of days that was. Sandhurst Lake you didn't disappoint, such a beautiful lake. 15 of us attended for a 48 hr competition for the last few months we have been raising money for Little Havens and Great Ormond street. Yesterday we hit the grand total of £6500 !! What an achievement by everyone. Massive shout out to TCM Tackle and Craig Deeley for organising the event the raffle prizes and the BBQ. On the fishing front Bazza was second out of the draw and managed his second choice of swim. Fishing the left hand island swim I found popular spot and fished two rods on it, as the fish hadn't long spawned I guessed they would be hungry so 10k of Eclipse Baits Cherry Virus and 5 kilo of Chilli Maize went straight out, these had been soaked in Eclipse Hot Oil and a new liquid I hope Dave brings out. First 36 hrs bought plenty of shows and fizzing which would have been fish mopping up bait from previous anglers, roving a bag rod around to shows didn't work, I held firm on the baited spot and topped it up with 30 more spombs, and off to bed. This morning I was awoken by a ferocious take off the spot and after stripping some line and a plod about a crack red bellied old mirror was in the net setting the scales around to 25lb 10oz. This was enough



to land me the second-place trophy. 15 anglers and five fish was hard going. Would like to thank everyone who's kindly donated, Tony and Craig for a great event and Dave Poxon and Kyle Poxon for keeping my freezer topped up with good quality bait.



**All these anglers are now saving 70% or more on their end tackle.**

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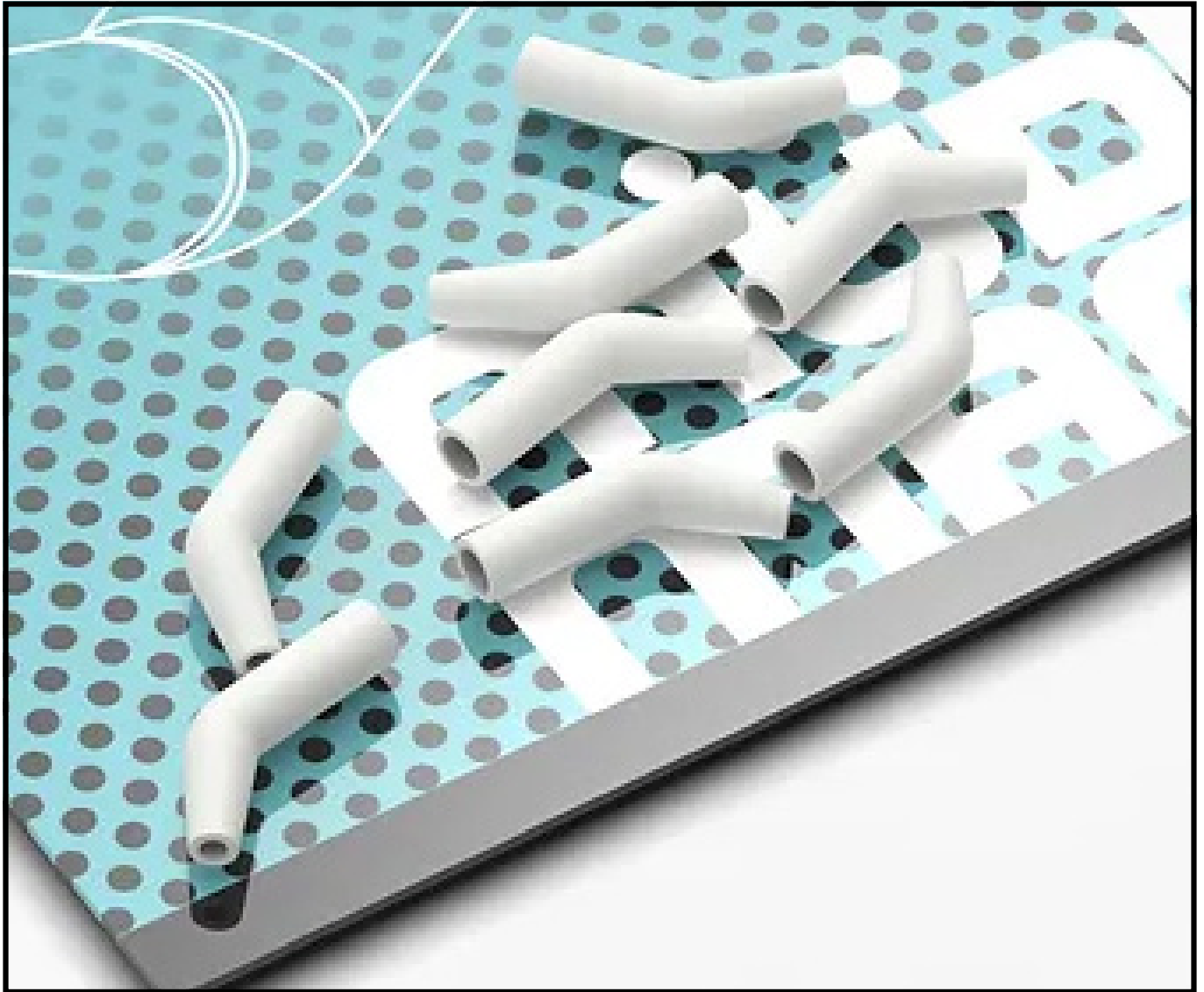




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**W**hen this superb beast turned up on our Facebook feed, we had to find out more, so we contacted AJ, and this is what he had to say: “I have been after this one for about four years now and managed to bag it. I was using Mainline bait over a bed of particle, and it gave me a good fight, as it took me 35 minutes to get it in my net. I’m well happy with it.”

Mainline Baits said: “AJ Tharratt netted this 41lb 6oz Norfolk mirror on a Milky Toffee pop-up. It was a new PB for him and is called Rhino.” AJ has been catching some minters from Weybread for the past couple of seasons, as this photo gallery will prove. Well done, AJ.

**AJ Tharratt**

**31lb 4oz at Weybread No. 1 Pit.**



Another from Weybread No. 1 Pit.



Another minter for AJ.

**AJ Tharratt**

**Single Scale at 37lb – what a result!**



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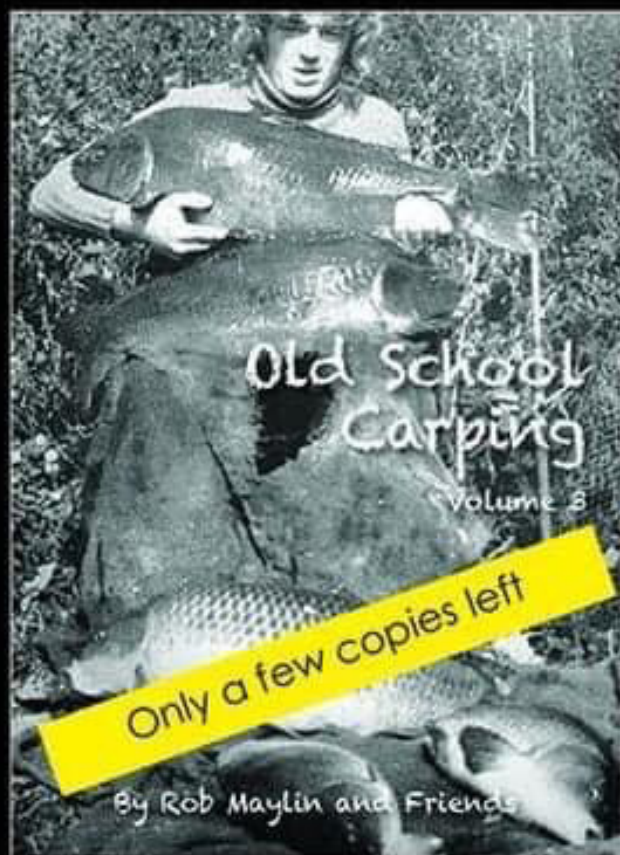
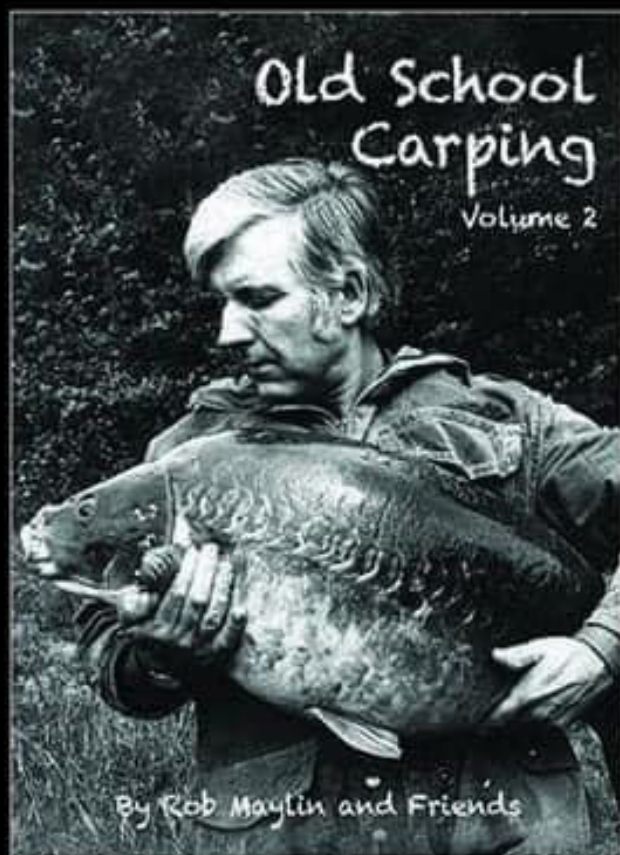
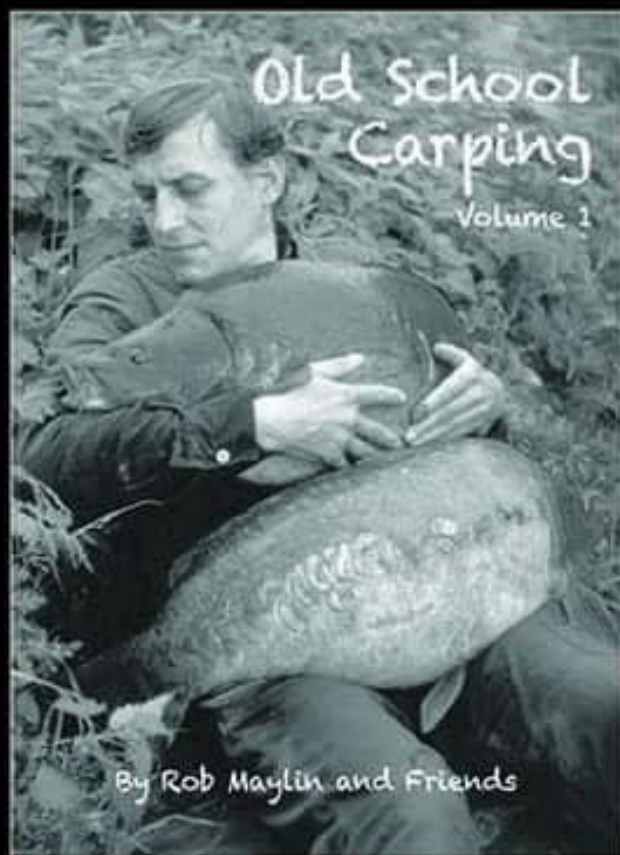
**Morse at 40lb 4oz**

Big Weybread common.



Another Pit 1 cracker

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# THE TATTON PARK COMMON

**A** few week's back after silent alarms for months on end, my right hand rod was in meltdown and I was definitely not connected to a tench, bream or a hybrid. This brute of a common was my prize... just look at it! It blew me away and was most definitely a season maker for me. It took me back to fifth gear and led me to believe my prize was just around the corner... and it was – literally six days away... This fish had pecs the size of saucers – I've never seen anything like it in my life – they were a good 130mm wide, so I was contemplating calling it Pecs. But after speaking with one of Jim's good friends, I have decided to call it Baby Jim's, as it's a nice gesture to keep his good name going for as long as possible!!!! So here he is, Baby Jim's at 32lb 8oz and a future lump... a mark left, and on to the next chapter...



In August 2017, long standing Big Carp supported Rob Allen ended a two-year quest for the North West's biggest common carp from Tatton Park. A massive well done goes out to Rob for his determination and effort. Here's what Rob and his pals had to say about this historic achievement:

Absolutely blown away!

Two years ago I set out to achieve something I thought would never happen... Two months in, I was following this fish around, and I was totally blown away!! Nothing mattered – only this fish, and I will say it almost broke me... I racked up 87 days and over 170 hours parked at a closed gate!! And the story goes on... I've caught fish that I once dreamt of, seven fish in total, smashing previous PBs in tench, bream and mirrors, and now the mighty Jjim's Common has just took me to a place I'll probably never go again, at an all time colossal top weight of 57lb 4oz and a new northwest record!!! Massive thanks to Jack Louis Swindells, Jake Wildbore, Andrew Weston, and



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Marcus Howarth for sharing the moment and doing the pics.

Jack Louis Swindells to Rob Allen

Oh my god what an achievement this is! I have seen this lad put all this effort into catching this fish. I knew Rob would be the next person to catch this fish, and he has put time, effort and dedication in. I've never seen such an epic fish on the bank, and don't think I ever will unless I catch it. Congratulations on catching one of the best fish in the country in my eyes. He's only gone and smashed his PB and had the biggest fish in the northwest. I've shared some epic moments with Bob and hope for many more to come. See you in work tomorrow, and don't be late. Big up! Dad.

Bait sponsors Sticky Baits said: "Rob Allen ended a long-standing quest for one of the toughest challenges in carp fishing, catching the big common from Tatton Park. Fishing day sessions, he finally landed the one he wanted at a staggering 57lb 4oz!"



A Krill snowman fished over a prebaited area of both Krill and Manilla mixed with particles helped him get the bite he wanted. A huge well-done to Rob from everyone at Sticky!”

Rob also said: “It was the toughest challenge you could ever imagine and almost broke me mentally and physically, but it was worth every minute now I’ve caught the northwest record and the finest-looking carp I will ever set my eyes on – incredible!

It almost brought me to tears – actually, I won’t lie, there were a few when it went in the net. I used massive amounts of bait over a two-year baiting campaign. On August 10<sup>th</sup> I set out for a run of four day sessions, as the weekend before had seen me bank my first fish of the year after months and months of silent rods. What a fish it was too – it was the finest-looking common I’d ever seen, tipping the scales at an impressive 32lb 8oz. It was a season maker, and it made me believe I was very close to achieving my goal, so the following weekend couldn’t come quickly enough.”

Bait sponsors Cheshire Particle said: “We are astonished and proud of Rob Allen and what he has achieved over the last year and this last week where he has pushed himself to the limits and beyond over this period. Working closely with Rob, we have created and put together a particle combination that Rob insisted on for his needs for the quest of targeting Tatton Mere and the one and only Jim’s, the magnificent common, over the last year with a combination of particle and boilie to attract this stunning fish at a record 57lb 4oz. Rob has committed himself fully to the task of catching this beautiful creature without sleep, thought, or anything else but Jim’s. A task, a quest... two years of relentless work has now paid off and rewarded Rob with this amazing creature, and what a fish this is, a once in a lifetime fish, a fish of beauty and stature. Here at Cheshire Particle, we thank Rob fully for everything he has done for us and the effort, will and desire and the continued support of us, which we truly appreciate.”



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# The Castle Lake Part 2

**O**ver the next few sessions, spanning the next month or more, I had some good results from this area, running alongside some equally good results from the Cambridgeshire pit. Consistent captures from both lakes including some decent fish meant that confidence was sky high, and my new relaxed method of choosing the lake more suited to time scale, rather than rushing about, really helped me get the most out of my limited fishing, as well as keeping me in a good mood. One particular session that stands out was in mid-May when the mighty Quasi, queen of the lake and one of the two big old Italians, graced my mesh... and not only that but the lake's biggest common... and second biggest common too, all in a mad morning spell. At the time, the dreaded rota was on no-go for the next couple of weekends at least, so the only way of getting down whilst it was going off was after a two till ten shift midweek. I would be set up for around half 11-ish on these trips, and gone for the same time next morning. I'm not going to say a quick or cheeky night, so I'll call it a 12-hour or less stint, if that's allowed.

After an uneventful night, I awoke from my slumber to the buzzing of my phone alarm at 5am, surprised at the fact that it wasn't the old Neville that woke me. I'd not had much sleep during the night, as for most of it I was being bleeped from my bed due to slow, steady liners, and hearing lumps



crash out all over out in front of me. Looking out over the area in the morning light confirmed that the action was not over yet, as plumes of bubbles fizzed in several different spots around the baited rigs. The kettle was filled, the stove was lit, and slowly I began to wake up to the morning song of the birds as they cheerfully went about collecting their breakfast feast of critters. It seemed everything was on the munch...

Three sips into my brew and thinking I should eat something too is when it all kicked off, starting with the left hand bobbin smacking the blank with an almighty crack, followed by the sound of the reel over the Neville, as the tight clutch strained to hold line... Oh, and me spilling my brew! I eventually gained some kind of control, and it was soon apparent that I was attached to one of the big'uns, heavy, powerful heart-stopping runs and defiant in every way, certainly living up to all the stories I'd heard of them beating up their captors in the past. They are right goers for old girls! After a lot of

praying, swearing, pleading, and getting stuck in the weed aplenty, I slowly won the battle, and was soon pulling weed from around this beast that was now imprisoned within my net. Then it hit me... I couldn't believe what I was looking at. I was totally in awe of the thing and shaking from top to toe, I stood fixated on what lay within my net in a hypnotised state... I'd just caught blooming Quasi, a 40lb-plus Lincolnshire mirror said to be over 50 years old.

After pulling myself together a little, I set about acquiring some help. When you catch a special Lincs fish like this, I suppose you need a special Lincs legend to help... so the leg-end that is Lippy got the call... and he's said to be over 200 years old! That's a lot of history in one photo shoot, I tell thee! After weighing her at 40lb 8oz, I carefully transferred the great fish into my best sack, awaiting the arrival of Lippy. The rig was hung on the ring of



the rod and left on the rest, and I was just about to sit down on my bed to roll a fag when the middle rod was away! The Walnut Common, the second biggest common in the lake was the culprit, another one of the oldies. Lippy turned up just in the nick of time and was able to assist helping me weigh and photograph her. She went 26lb 10oz, another lovely old fish, and a fine Lincolnshire brace...

She was carefully slipped back into her home none the worse for wear, which was more than I could have said for myself. I refilled the water bucket for the next set of photos before heading back down to the water's edge to prepare Quasi for the mat. In the water alongside the fish, I began untying the tangle of knots from the strangled bank stick. Slowly I began to raise her bit by bit towards the surface, allowing her to express her anger with me from the safety of the water. After she settled... and about the 1001 times I checked her fins were good to be lifted... I carefully took the strain of the



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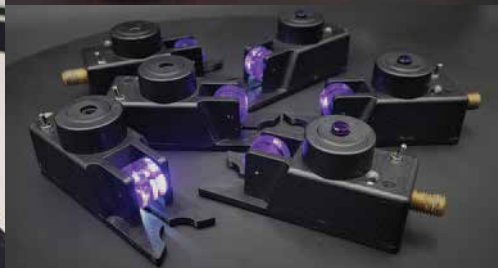
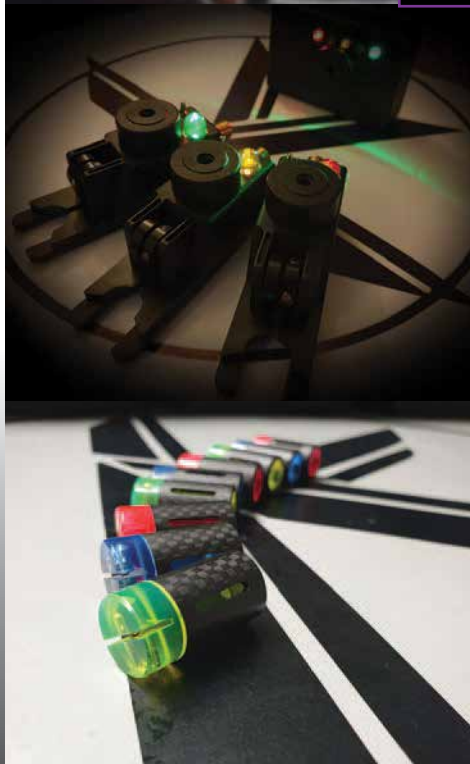
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fish, and I was just about good to go when the remaining third rod burst into life! I would like to say she was lowered just as gracefully back down, but it was probably more of a dunk in the panic as I threw the sack cord to Lippy to stand on, grabbing the remaining rod with my other hand from what was now head height!

Another good tussle was endured alongside some chelp from Lipstick – something about being a jammy little hobbit... The third and final fish was safely netted. The final rod produced the lake's biggest common, the Peach, at 30lb 8oz. What a morning! A bite on each rod and a 20, a 30, and a 40lb Lincolnshire gem. OK then, "jammy little hobbit" was probably right. We commenced with the photos of the Peach straight away before the main event of Quasi. She was a fine fish, not one of the oldies, but handsome all the same and somewhat overshadowed by what was to come... With no rods now left in the water, I could calmly repeat the process of preparing the fish





without the interruptions of last time, and we could FINALLY see Quasi!!!

Once on the mat, opening the sack was a real treat for both of us. She looked... Jurassic! Every inch of her wrinkly old skin was etched in character and detail, with scarring from over the years on her flanks that told stories from way before I was born, and all this in the massive frame of its shoulders and gutbucket belly from which she gets her name. Lippy had caught her when he was younger than me at around 18lbs... probably a couple of days after the Jurassic period actually. He said it was the same shape even back then and was still a big fish for the time. The photos were done, the congrats were made, and I set about making a brew for me and the old fella after all that hard work, bless him. I was then contently sat listening to his old stories of the local pits before he got off and I packed up for home after this incredible little session.

Great results were had from both lakes over the coming months, flitting about in my happy-go-lucky kind of way. Late autumn was looming, and just like last season, all the time I had would now be spent at Castle rather than Cambridge, as like I said before, it had no winter form whatsoever. Castle, on the other hand, being the strange old lake it is, never read the rulebook on fairly low stock weedy winter fishing. It had even thrown up fish from an iced-over state in the past! Luckily it was far from this weather-wise, and another mild autumn meant that there had to be more chances on the cards. My hopes over the coming weeks from the end of October to mid November became reality, as another flurry of these amazing fish were enjoyed. During a few quick nights... I mean 12-hour stints or less... I had Quasi for the second time, amongst other special old fish, and capped off by another incredible session just like that one in the spring. Again, a session after a two-til-ten shift midweek saw me bank four fish of 26-plus, 30-plus, 32-plus and 33-plus in an incredible six hours' fishing including one of the lake's two beautiful big fullies – nice!

The fishing came to an end that year, not because of ice, but because the

# Mark Baxter





‘development’ was due to start sometime that winter. I carried on doing the odd night here and there until they began work, until one cold crispy Friday morning when I arrived after a night shift at the beginning of December. With it being still dark, and rather foggy, I got the brew kit out of the van and sat my tired ass on my trusty bucket and made myself a brew and fag whilst waiting for the sun to rise and fog to lift in the most open area of the lake for the best possible view. Even when the sun did pop up, I still couldn’t make much out. Everything was hidden from view in the ghostly mist, and I couldn’t even see the Castle.

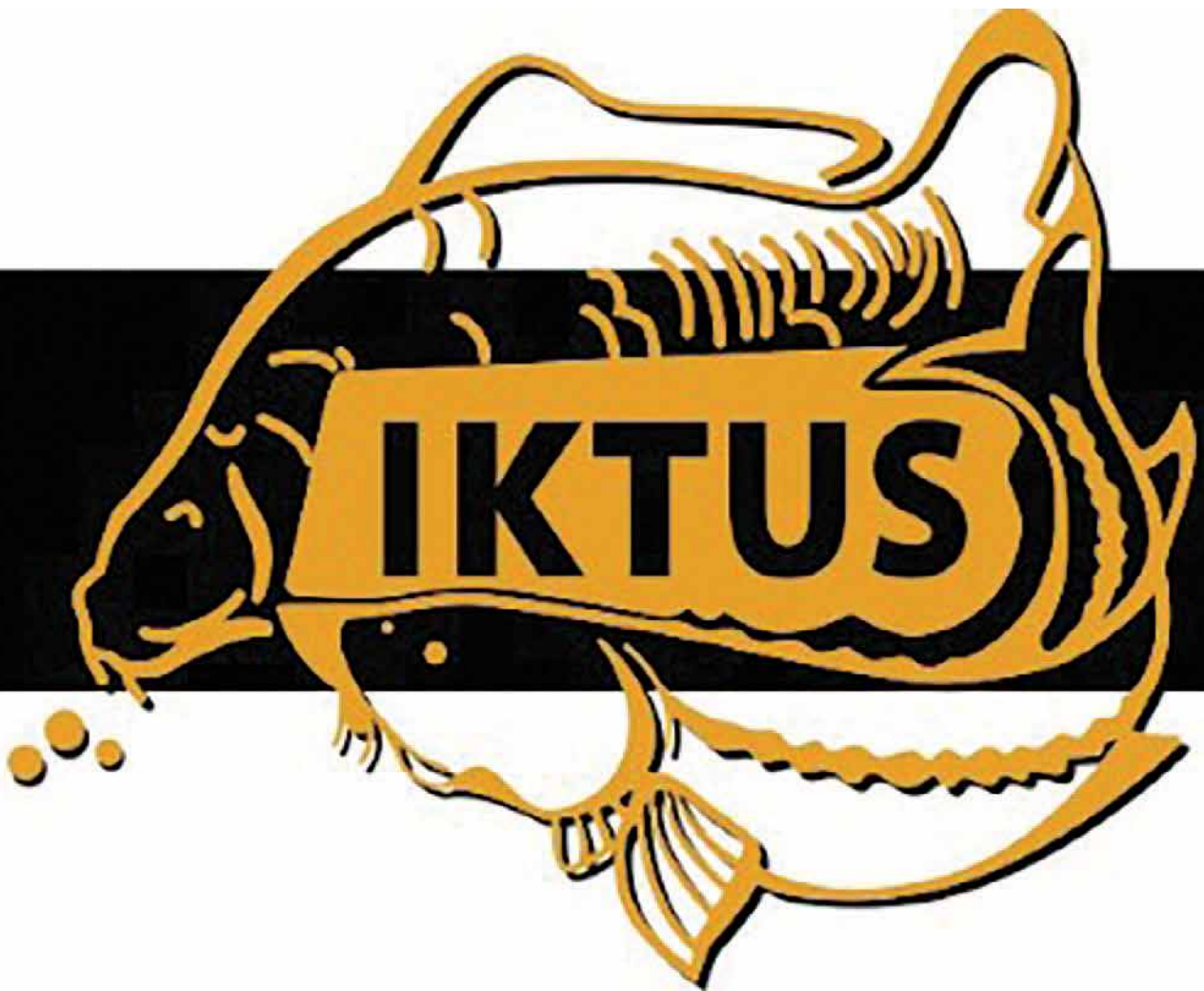
Eventually I started to make out silhouettes and shapes of the lake around me, apart from one bank, I still couldn’t make out the row of six massive poplar trees that towered above the Castle itself. Still, putting this down to poor visibility in the fog, and me being half asleep at this point, I slowly finished my brew and carried on my wait, until it became apparent that

## Mark Baxter

in fact it was not my tired state of mind – the blooming things had GONE! Every bit of fog that lifted revealed more devastation. They'd pretty much bulldozed one whole bank. Not just that, but the point was flattened and the opposite corner, which housed the snags at the shallow end, had been chopped out too, leaving nothing but an empty hole in its place. Totally gutted at what they had done, and obviously not being able to fish, I got back into my van and headed off home to bed, all the way thinking of how this once so beautiful lake was being destroyed.

I didn't return to Castle until the following late spring. I got the go-ahead to fish much earlier than my first night, but I just couldn't bear to see what they'd done in my absence. I was also told that we could only fish three swims from now on too – High Bank, Bars, and House Corner. They are three goods swims, but basically only cover one third of the lake. This also meant that the areas best known for the other big mirror, the Italian were now in the out-of-bounds side of the lake, just to make it even trickier.





# FISHING RESORT



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## Mark Baxter

My first night back at end of May, again, after a two-til-ten shift, I arrived after dark to the now barren High Bank swim. Being the last area I'd caught fish from, it was a good a place as any, and it also meant the view from the broolly was a lot better too, looking towards the only untouched bank on the far side come morning. The new dawn didn't bring the perfect view I had intended though, as when I woke next morning I was greeted by a string of green buoys that that now divided the lake. As I peered round the broolly more surprises were in store, as one by one I counted eight ramps set out all over the other part of the lake, and where the Point and Snags once were, they were replaced with two huts, decking, and four scaffold like towers that protruded from the point to where the snags were that held the pulleys and cables to all this monstrosity. Plus there were load of colourful banners dotted here and there... OMG! What a mess, and in what was the scenic side of the park as well... Such a shame, and more was to follow...



The allocated swim space was to change as well through the course of that year too. The original 13 swims from the syndicate days went to three, then to two, followed by strictly nights only, because they started to have paddle boards on 'our' side of the lake in the day. Eventually we were only able to fish one swim, House Corner, and that was nights only. It was quite apparent that the noose was being tightened, and again at any moment the fear of losing the Castle was becoming more and more likely. My fishing all of a sudden had become a lot more difficult, but not necessarily for bites, as consistent baiting with the Formula was keeping the bites coming no problem. The difficulty I had was how do I now catch the fish I wanted, from one shared swim that was not particularly known to harbour these specific residents... and on strictly nights only? I know most of my fishing was predominantly nights, but even if I wanted to fish the morning through when they seemed 'on it' like I would have in the past, I now couldn't!



# Mark Baxter



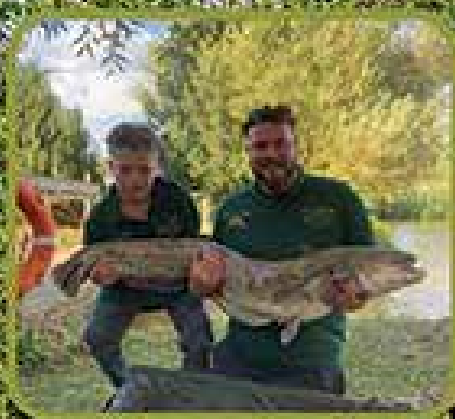


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My fishing that season was very randomly spent on the Castle, but only when that's all I could get when the dreaded rota said "no go", mostly just an odd night in the week, sparsely dotted over the course of the year. It just kind of lost its magic, just sitting in one shared swim squeezed into the corner, sometimes knowing full well you're not near the ones you wanted. Looking at the same old view, and now catching the same old fish, it was becoming an unenjoyable routine, rather than actual fishing, especially when it had so much more to offer. With me fishing it very irregularly, six cabins were erected during the times away from the lake, in a neat little row on the flattened-off ground the High Bank once was, replacing the massive poplar trees that were once a beautiful backdrop to this bank.

And that's just how it was from then on... It seemed every time I came back, something would be different – more cabins, more caravans, more ramps, more rules... They even had a giant inflatable playground on the water now, and they had also started to dye the water in an effort to try and kill the weed off to accommodate their activities after a failed attempt to clear it by machine. All this destruction so someone could be pulled around on a wire whilst their other two lakes, equating to over 150 acres with cabins already present and plenty of open grassy space so as not to destroy anything established, weren't big or suitable enough? So, the once so tranquil, beautiful and picturesque old Lincolnshire lake was now indefinitely quite the very opposite. It's beauty was scarred and its tranquility lost forever.

I had a good think about Castle whilst away fishing in Cambridgeshire again... in my sulk... how it had all changed, where and when we could fish, feeling how you weren't always on them, waiting for some weather change or dealing with the increasing disturbances and generally feeling down about the whole thing. Then it hit me! "It's just like any other place, Markie boy, they're all different, and you have to adapt!" If I was serious about trying to catch the others, more fine-tuning to my fishing on there for the remaining time left was what I needed to do. If a certain condition or wind

pushed other residents into the area, wait for those conditions. I'd use the disturbances to my advantage, like doing nights after the busy days on the ramps and inflatable thingy, which I noticed would also often push different fish into the area too in past sessions. So that was it – a slap in the face and one last tactical push, and my plan of action was in place. Of course, being in full time employment, a dad of two, way behind on my duties and in trouble with the missus, my cunning plan was easier said than done. But I made regular trips out (taking the kids for walks) and kept the bait going in, whilst always keeping an eye on the goings-on like some crazy nosy neighbour, and I was forever checking the weather to the extent that a weather boff would be proud. I stuck by my method...



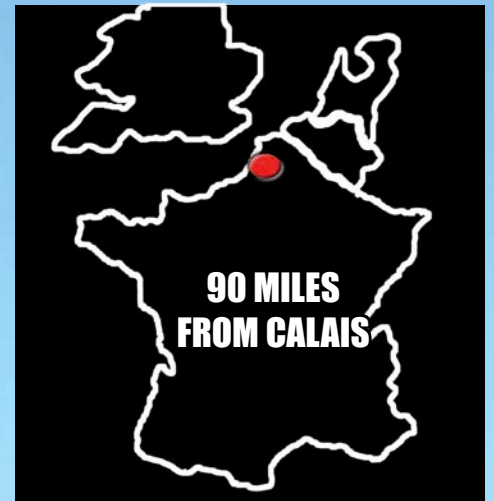
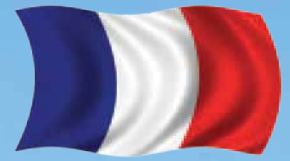
I would love to tell you that all I caught was different fish from then on, but this was obviously not the case, and being a fairly low stock, repeat captures would be imminent (Big Dave being the main culprit, the greedy boy). But do you know what? To a certain degree, it worked! Over the coming carefully planned sessions of prime conditions, I caught several fish that I hadn't before, including the other half of the beautiful scaly duo that I so dearly wanted to catch, and another sought after fish by way of a stunning koi that hadn't seen the bank in 11 years, amongst some other stunningly beautiful old fish. But the other big mirror, the Italian, still avoided capture, which she was incredibly good at. When my best bud Cookie caught her, it was her first visit to the bank in seven years. Then she went on a little mad spell for a year, and then as I write this, she's on another five-year stint of being uncaught. She only came out twice when the syndicate was run!

That pretty much brings us up to date with my time on the Castle. At any moment the plug will be pulled, and fishing this beautiful place will end for good. I've shared some special times, caught some special fish, all captured on film and in my mind as special memories, and for that, I am grateful. I suppose that's the point to all this... Sometimes things change, even when we don't want them to, but to be ready to accept, adapt, or to see things from a different way of thinking or perspective is how we succeed in life or fishing, and the same applies to how we move on from things too. Losing the Castle in this way was not easy to see or accept, but when the time that looms ever closer arrives, I can still smile, whether I catch the other big mirror or not, knowing the old girls will get their retirement... maybe a noisy one and not as perfect as it could have been, but a retirement nonetheless.

A big thank you goes to the lads that made it possible for me to spend the final years on this special old place... You know who you are!

Mark "The Hobbit" Baxter.

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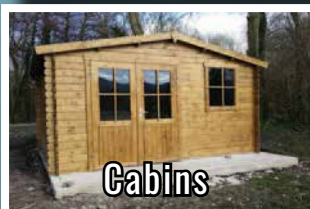
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# GRENVILLE GOLD

**W**ell, it was time to load the car again and make the 320-mile round trip for my fortnightly trip to the lake of dreams and my little piece of heaven on earth, Grenville Lake, the home of monsters. Now this was only my second visit since she reopened, my first visit at the beginning of August resulting in a no show from the carp, so as you'd expect, I was eager to get back on the bank again. On this occasion, it wasn't going to be my usual early start, as I'd opted to leave midmorning with a view to arriving at around lunchtime. With the drive down from my home in Cheshire being a nice leisurely traffic-free journey, I duly arrived just after 1pm.



Now on arrival, I was pleased to see that the areas of the lake that I had in mind were free of other members, which meant that I had a choice of two swims to set up camp on. I set on my walk around the 72 acres of gravel pit to say hello to the members already present and to see how they were doing, but more importantly to hopefully spot one or two fish. After exchanging pleasantries with a couple of the members and having the conversation with regards to how it's fishing, opinion was quite slow considering how it had fished in the last couple of weeks. Yes, things had definitely slowed with the weather being almost certainly a factor, however there was a low front on its way with big southwesterlies and rain due to come in during my stay, so decisions decisions... Do I go with the wind as I normally do or go comfy and go on the back of the wind? Now drawing on my experience of this very special lake, the winds on here can be very big, so if the forecast is for 15-20mph winds, you can double or even triple it on Grenville – in fact sometimes I think this place has its own ecosystem.





I had two swims in mind and both were free – one that would mean I would be in the teeth of the wind and rain when it arrived, and the other being on the back of the wind, both of which I knew very well and had done well in, so consulting my weather app on my phone, again to make sure that things hadn't changed, I opted for comfort, and a comfortable angler is a far more efficient angler.

Now for most anglers it's a case of find your spots bait up and get the rods out! Not me I'm afraid... for me it's house up first, get everything sorted then find my spots, as I was in no rush! Anyway, once I'd got myself organised and everything where it should be, I set about checking the swim with just a lead on the Spomb rod to lead around to locate any points of interest. No need for a marker float, as depth is irrelevant, as I know the swim very well and know that the fish regularly spend time in this area, so all I was looking for was a nice donk and a clear area amongst the weed. It didn't take me too long to find what I was looking for, so I clipped up on the distance sticks at 38 wraps – it was 152 yards. I did a few more casts to make sure it was clear, and it was! Then I got the fishing rods all clipped up at varying distances with my left hand rod at 38 wraps, middle rod at 39 wraps and my right hand rod at 40 wraps.

As for my rigs, well, that was my go-to rig at the moment, the multi-rig with a twist tied with the new Fox Edges wide gape micro barbed hook in size five,

# Paul Bennet





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## Paul Bennet

which, I might add, are extremely sharp. This was then baited with my Mainline Baits special 15mm pop-ups, so for my first night all three rods were baited the same with white, yellow and pink pop-ups and cast to their respective spots followed by a good spread of Mainline Essential Cell and Hybrid boilies in various sizes – 5kg to be precise – just to get the ball rolling.

The first night of my 72-hour session came and went without occurrence, and night soon became morning, so kettle on and a spot of breakfast then prep another 5kg of Mainline's Essential Cell and Hybrid mixed 70/30 in favour of Hybrid ready to top up the swim. Now rather than wait until so-called bite time was over, I decided to top up the swim mid morning, not for any particular reason other than gut instinct, and boy did it pay off, as having almost finished Spombing out and as I was just ready to make another cast, my left hand rod was away.

On picking up the rod and leaning into the fish, it felt very solid and gave all the characteristics of a good fish as it held firm, holding deep and taking line off me at long range. At about 80 yards in front of me was quite a large weedbed that I was desperately trying to avoid whilst gently guiding my prize towards me – simple, yeh! Well guess what? This fish had other ideas and decided that if I



was going to guide it into my net, I was going to have to work for it, as it powered off, taking lots of line on several powerful runs before rolling at the surface some 60 yards out to give me my first glimpse and confirm that it indeed was a bit of a beastie, possibly a big thirty.

It was another ten minutes and several more powerful runs, as well as a bit of a hairy moment with a marginal weedbed, before I finally managed slip the net under my prize.

On closer inspection this was a good fish – a very good fish indeed – so I quickly unhooked her and placed her into the recovery sling whilst I sorted the rod out, rebaited and got it back on the spot. Then I sorted myself out, got the camera ready, scales etc and made a phone call to Paul Ward, Grenville's owner, to inform him that I had a good fish.

Some twenty minutes later my good friend and fellow member Iggy arrived to help me with the weighing and photographs. The scales were zeroed, and it was time to see that all-important weight. The scales settled at 46lb 7oz confirming



## Paul Bennet

my seventh UK 40, and what a stunning chunk of Grenville gold she was. Photos done and back she went, and then it was another quick phone call to Paul Ward to confirm the weight and savour the moment before putting some more bait out. This resulted in another pick-up some two hours later, which unfortunately dropped off even though I'd done the hard bit and navigated the weedbed yet again, only for what felt like another good fish drop off! How does that happen really...

Alas, there were no more pick-ups for the remainder of the session, but I wasn't complaining, as yet again the lake of dreams had delivered, blessing me with another one of her jewels.



# 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'.

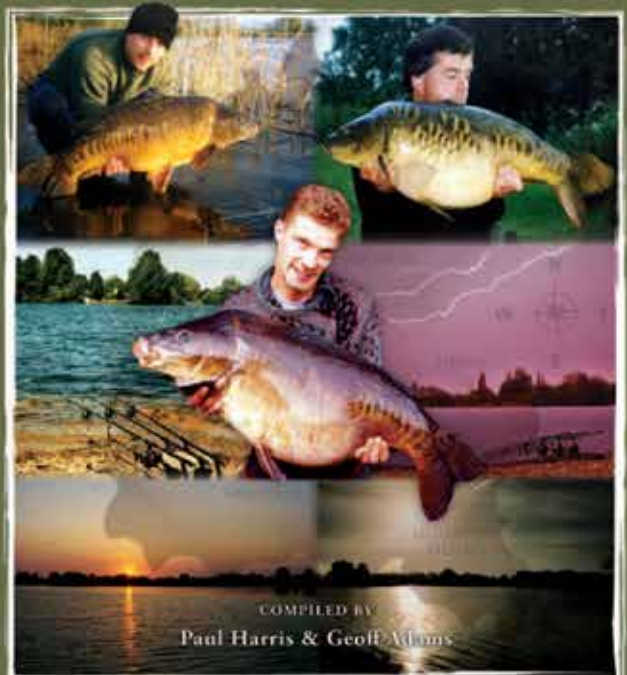
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

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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# BADEN HALL BEAUTIES

I have been carp fishing for the last 18 years, and I mainly target my local water, Baden Hall's Quarry Lake, which I have fished for the last seven years. It took me eight long months till I managed my first bite from there, a stunning 22lb common, and then the fish kept on hitting the bank, catching carp regularly to 30lb-plus and knowing there is a lot bigger in there with carp to possibly 50lbs.

At the start of the year, I set a target of catching a 40lb-plus fish from the lake, and on my second session, which was in March, I had my first bite of the year, a 41lb 10oz mirror, which set my new PB. I could not believe it, getting the tactics right so early on in the year, and from then on the bites kept coming from the 24-hour sessions I was doing. After this, I decided to target a 40lb-plus common, as it was early on in the year, and I started by doing a longer session over Easter – five nights for my 30<sup>th</sup>, knowing the big common was due out this time of year.

## RICH BEARDMORE



I did my first night without a bite, but seeing the fish show further down the lake, I decided to move into peg 5 and saw they were on the hatches, so I put some zigs out and had a few fish to 29lbs. on the day before my 30<sup>th</sup>, I saw a big fish show closer than all the others, so I cast to it. 20 minutes later, the rod rattled off, and I was shocked to see the big common in the net. It was a dream come true with her weighing in at 47lbs and another PB. After that I kept fishing, knowing there were some other big fish in there and some stunners, and I was catching carp most sessions to 30lb-plus.

The lake started to get busier with the fishery being a day ticket water, and I struggled to get on, as I only fished weekends. Towards the end of July, the bailiff phoned me, saying there was a cancellation, so I dropped on for 24 hours and chose peg 2, which I had fished before and had a lot of fish from. I cast a lead out to make sure the spot was still there, and it was,



## RICH BEARDMORE

so I put quite a lot of bait out and sat on it and watched all the fish lump out the opposite end of the lake. Not feeling that confident, as I'd not seen any signs of carp near me, I sat back, as the lake was full, and I got an early night.

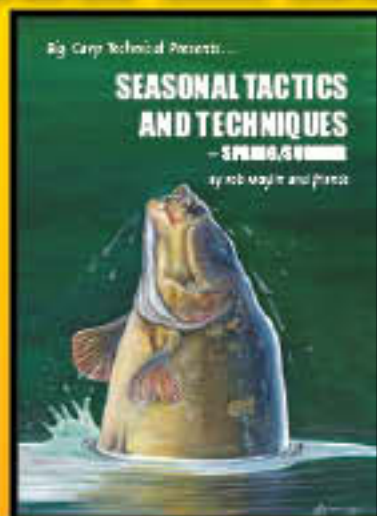
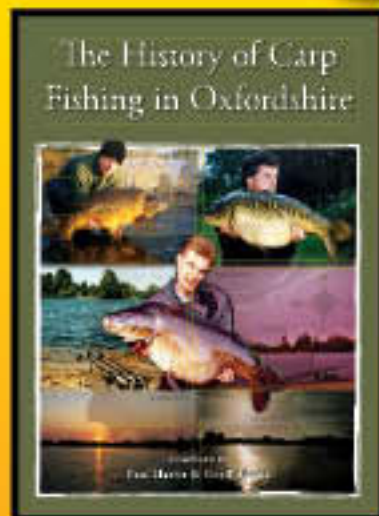
Just as it was going dark, my left rod went into meltdown, and after a half-hour fight, I saw the huge mirror in the net and what a fish it was! It weighed in at 46lbs 15oz and was another PB mirror for me. I was yet again speechless and could not believe the year I was having. I still continued to fish it and still caught a few over the sessions I managed to get on the lake. There are still fish I'd love to catch in the lake no matter what size they are, but this season will be one to remember.



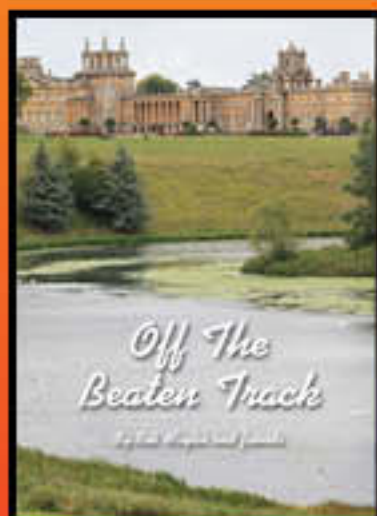
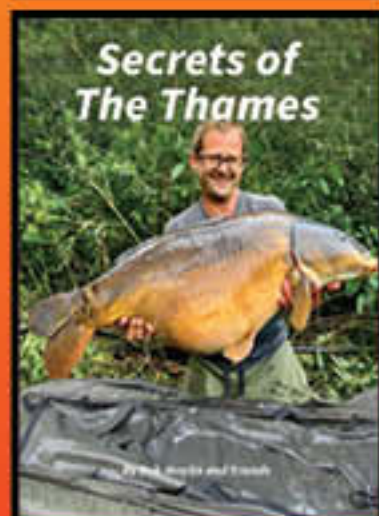
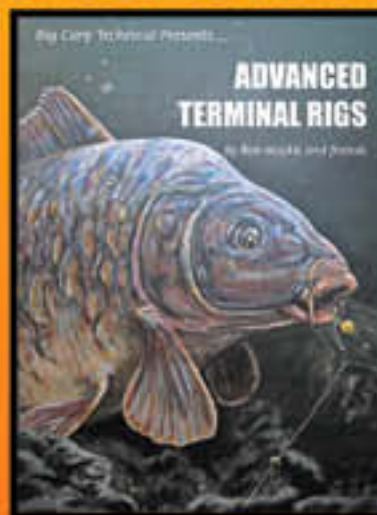
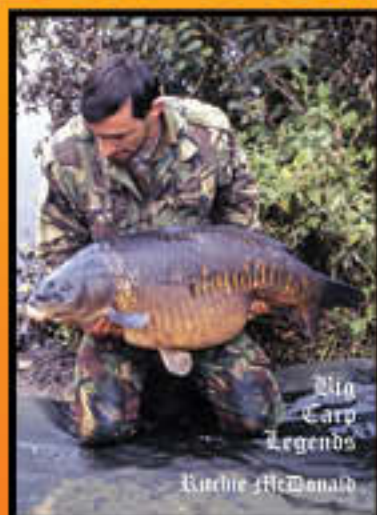
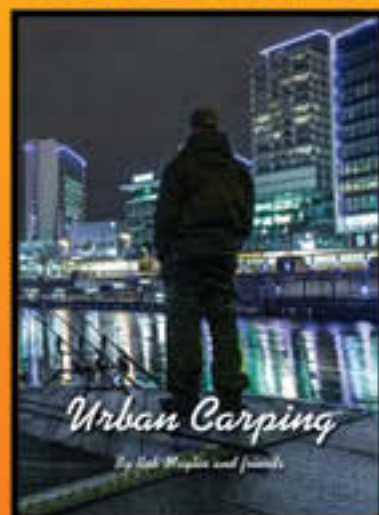
# RICH BEARDMORE



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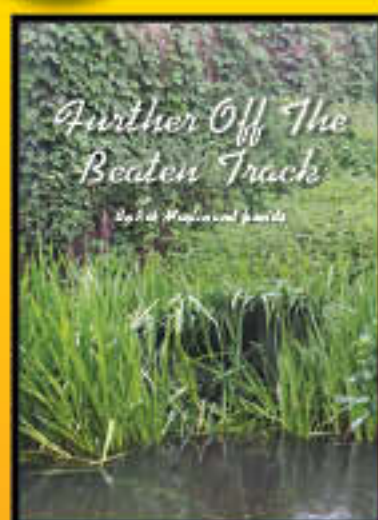
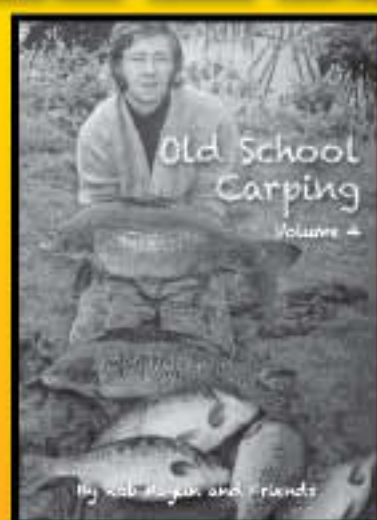


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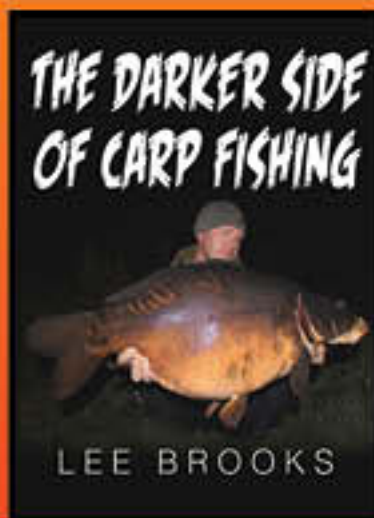
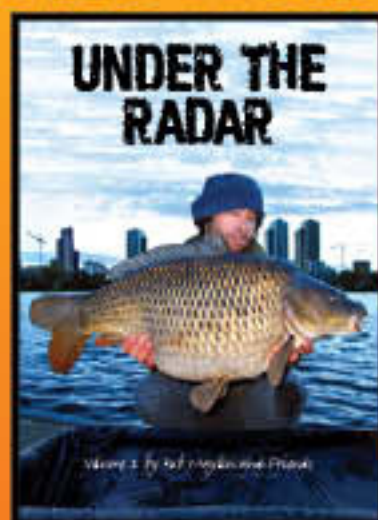
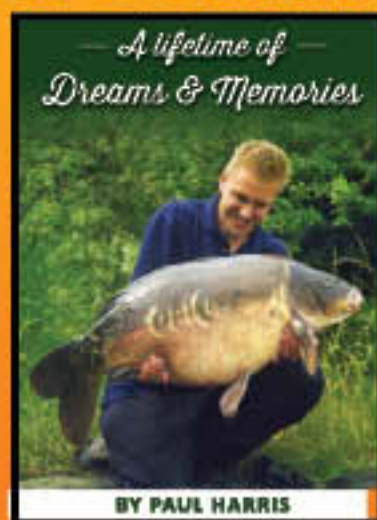


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# IN SEARCH OF THE WARRIOR

**W**et through, on my knees at the water's edge with an empty landing net and the rod laid on the floor by my side. Deflated, dejected and emotional, I looked out into the lake with my hands clasped behind my head trying to accept a fish loss, unfortunately I had seen the fish at very close quarters before the hook pulled and had identified it as one of the most sought after mirrors in the lake. Little did I know that I was about to begin an obsessive journey that would take up four years of my life, a journey that would play with my mind, the lows seeing me so close to madness and a high that would eventually see me succeed in my desire to land that ultimate carp.

The well known saying that "time heals all wounds" applies in angling, and a fish loss eventually becomes just another distant memory. Seven days had passed, and my wounds had healed but were not forgotten. Revenge was now at the forefront of my mind.



The Warrior would have been a special capture of an elusive mirror that would have ended the relentless run of commons that the Back Pit was renowned for. Don't get me wrong – the commons were all cracking fish that were large, and each one belonged to a group of three or four different strains, but they weren't mirrors. The weekly sessions after the loss saw the ritual upon landing a carp of looking down into the net and seeing another thirty-pound common. In all honesty it was becoming boring, and the task in hand was beginning to hit home as to how hard this could actually be.

Some readers may think that my comments are stupid and ludicrous, and that's fair play... It was a little sad that these fish didn't really mean anything any more. They were fish that like tench and bream had scuppered my best laid plans to catch a mirror. I think the bounty hunters of the carp world adopt this attitude, and the longer it takes to capture a target, the more tunnel-visioned and selfish you become.

Whenever an angler goes through a barren patch the masses always shout, “Don’t change anything,” “You’re not doing anything wrong,” or “It will come good!” The exact same thing was now happening to me, but in a different way. I was getting bites but off commons and not mirrors, and I was starting to question why. Was I fishing the wrong areas of the lake where resident commons outnumbered the mirrors? Was I fishing bait presentations that stacked the odds in the commons’ favour? The mental madness had begun, and these thoughts in hindsight should have been thrown from my mind, but I think it’s only natural to question things, and maybe it can sometimes have a positive effect.

I conferred with a good friend of mine on the lake. Kyle Stainton was one of the most consistent anglers on the Back Pit and had caught the Warrior twice and numerous other mirrors yet was still after a thirty-pound common

even after a few years of fishing the Back Pit each week. I found this unbelievable, as I had notched up literally dozens including two that would have been definitely over forty pounds if I had weighed them. We exchanged information, and the only difference between us was that Kyle was fishing pop-ups and I was fishing snowman presentations. I spent hours scrolling through information as to where previous captures had come from, but no patterns emerged. I studied many photographs of the fish to check on the anatomy of the fish’s under-slung mouth and came to the conclusion



that it would be far easier to hook the Warrior if, like Kyle, I was using a pop-up presentation.

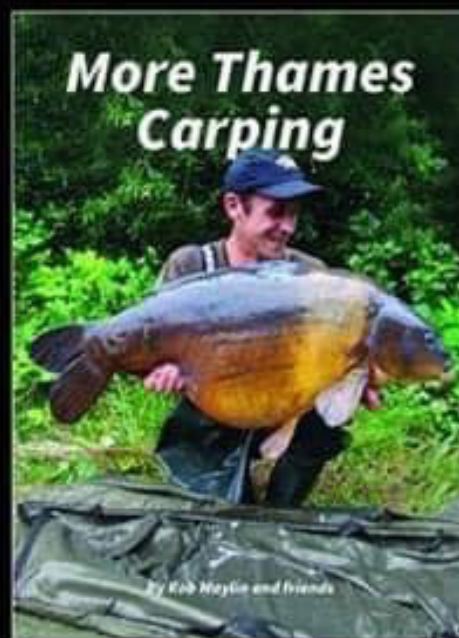
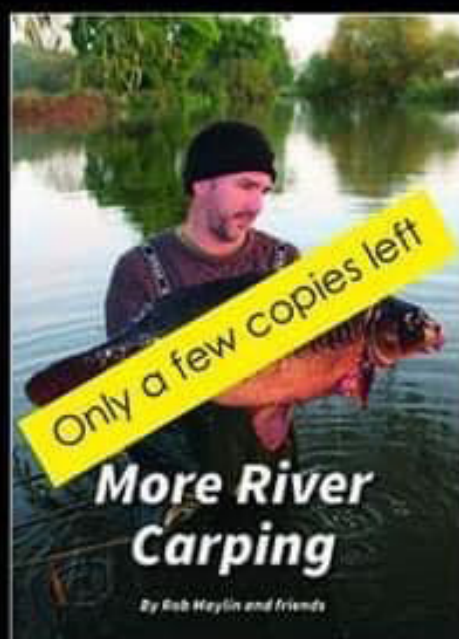
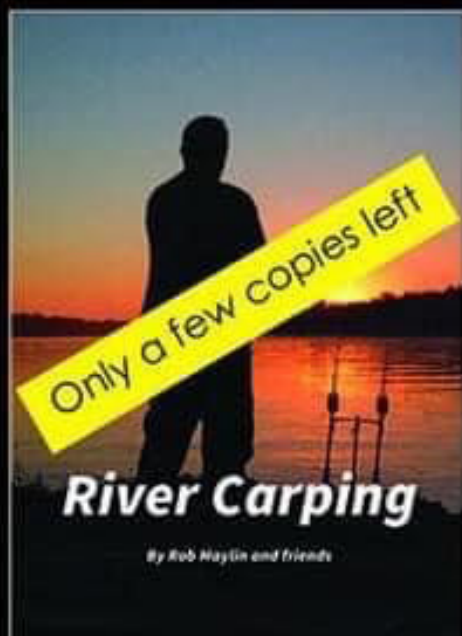
I made the changes with the rigs and fished locations of the lake that I'd never really fished before, and after a month or so, it became apparent that my conclusion was total and utter crap. It was like saying a hungry monkey wouldn't eat a banana on the floor and only from the highest treetops or that commons don't have fins and can't swim to other areas of the lake. I repeated numerous common captures from the new areas. I did however catch a couple of the smaller elusive home grown mirrors, but was this from adopting the new approach or simply through luck or chance...? I think the latter.

The pop-up rig wasn't dismissed, but I decided on a percentage theory where one rod would be fished with pop-ups and the other two rods would be fished back on the snowman rigs that had accounted for the majority of my Back Pit bites. The season was quickly passing, and I felt as though I was no closer to catching the Warrior than when I first started on the pit; it felt as though it was never going to happen, and at times I felt as though I could easily walk away from the Back Pit and rid myself of the monotonous head-banging that each Friday brought.

I was driving past pits on the complex that also held good fish, and I decided to take time out, get my head together, catch a few fish then head back over to the Back Pit with a fresh outlook. The following months on the Front Pit saw me catch the fish I wanted from there – some stunning mirrors. It was an intimate water, and the spots were all close marginal areas where the ability to bait up and watch the fish feeding and reacting to bait was mindblowing at times, but the more times they were fed and left alone, the more their confidence grew, and it was then simply a case of picking them off one by one. The spot had longevity, and I repeated captures of a couple of the larger mirrors. Eventually I'd had the ones that I wanted apart from the big common that resided in there – the Floppy Tailed Common. This was

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apparently the easiest A-Teamer in the Front Pit to catch, as it was a fish that loved bait. It was caught a silly amount of times whilst I was fishing, but yet it still eluded me. I'd seen it feed on the spot on numerous occasions, but the other fish must have luckily beaten it to the hookbait.

Autumn was now passing, and I was left with the decision of which fish I really wanted, the Floppy Tailed Common from the Front Pit or the Warrior from the Back Pit. We were coming into winter, which the Front Pit had previous form in, but the Back Pit did not. The only angler I knew through research who had had a successful winter on the Back Pit was a guy named Rob Curtis. He'd caught a few, but this was some ten years previously when the fish were smaller. Since then no one had really given it a go due to the cut up grass in winter, and the problems of getting stranded in a bogged-down



vehicle was off-putting to a lot of the lads. So it was a bit unknown on how it would fish. The thought of the Warrior in winter appealed even more, and I decided that I was going to go for it. I had resigned myself to the fact that I would most probably be the only one on there apart from the odd piker, but I was strangely buzzing for it. Each year I always tell myself that I'll never do another winter for carp; if I'm honest, the colder months and the lack of light don't really float my boat, but this one was different; the challenge had been relit, but winter dictated that the goalposts would be reduced by a considerable margin.

I sat on the bed looking out through the letterbox opening of the bivvy door, every morning, every evening, every day... wondering where that fish was within a lake that looked devoid of life, a lake that was only a short time ago brimming with the vibrancy of summer. It looked sorry for itself, and I knew that any bite that came in the next four months would be a bonus. I fished different areas each week and baited other areas in order to move onto them the following session. To cut a four-month story short, I saw one fish show three times early one morning. I moved onto it, but never caught a thing all winter, and I knew I'd given it my best shot. I was back in the depths of despair, but pulling me out was the thought that spring was here and a full season of angling in warmer temperatures was just around the corner.

My first fish that year came in early March, a common taken from an area I had been baiting through winter. I had another two bites from the same spot in March, but the area was a popular swim in the summer months, so I decided to look for a lesser fished area where my chances of getting back in there the following weeks would be increased. I was always the last to arrive on a Friday night due to work commitments and the travel time it took to get there, so choices of swims were limited and had to be taken into account.

An area that interested me was reachable from a swim known as the Royal Box. The swim used to be one of the most popular on the lake, but I'd noticed for some unknown reason it had fallen out of popularity with the lads on the

**Mark Hogg**



**FREELINE 86**





lake. The chance of getting something going in there was a possibility; the narrow pass through around the back of the island was always used by the carp in order for them to get to a tree line that was inaccessible to the angler that was unable to wade due to fishery rules. This was a safe area, and the carp were seen on a regular basis under the tree roots and away from angler pressure. It also gave access to the silt area that I named No Man's Land due to it being on the borders of three swims, and the possibility of an argument or shouting fest meant that the lads were careful with their distances. But on days when the other swims were unoccupied, it would be fishable. The under-slung dark mouth of the Warrior screamed silt.

For four consecutive weeks, I found myself in the Royal Box. The island spot I was fishing was producing bites, but the silt spot had yet to throw a fish up. I'd continued to bait it each week quite heavily with around 5kg of

the formula. The bait was producing on other spots but not on the silt, and I was beginning to think the spot should be dropped... Maybe one last week...?

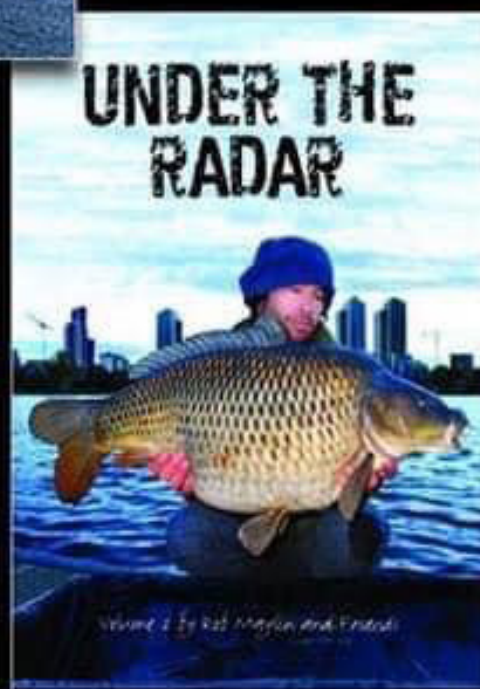
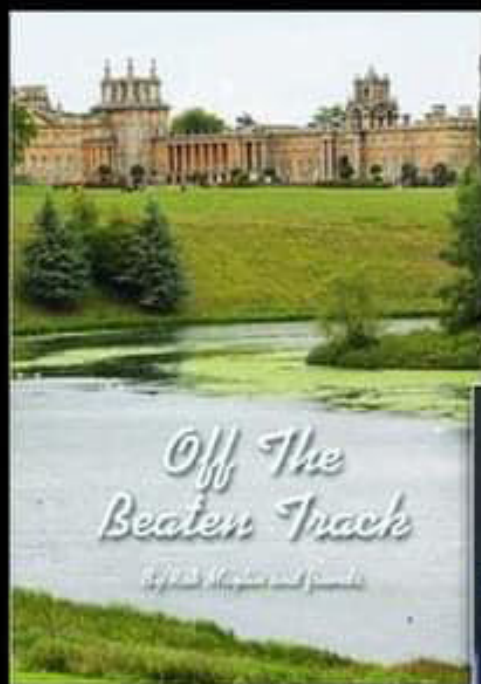
The lads on the Back Pit are a great bunch, proper anglers who are there for the whole enjoyment that comes with angling, each one taking note of who's where and where not to tread, so to speak. Thursday night arrived, and I was itching to get back in the Royal Box on Friday evening. I posted on Facebook that I thought I had a spot rocking from the Royal Box and that I'd hopefully get the chance tomorrow. It was a gentle reminder to the lads in the hope that they would see the post and hopefully leave me to it. I arrived on the Friday around 6pm, and driving onto the Back Pit, I noticed it was busy. The first couple of swims were taken, which were usually ignored. I drove around the corner towards the Royal Box with my eyes virtually shut fearing the worst, but I opened them to see the swim left vacant. I think every swim was taken apart from the Box, so the post on Facebook had obviously worked, and a great set of lads had given me the chance to make a dream come true.

An hour later and the rods were on the spots – two on the island margins and one rod on the silt spot. I sat on the grass and enjoyed a well-earned bottle of Tiger beer after a hard week at work before retiring into the fleapit for a night of sleep. Morning arrived along with the first bite – one of the island rods was away with an aggressive fish which I lost mid-battle. It had made the tree line and cut me off on a branch. Every time I lost a fish, I always used to think that it was the Warrior, and the thought of putting the rod back out was surely a waste of time, as I'd just lost it. The more aggressive the take and the fight, the more likely it was to be the Warrior. I gave the Warrior the utmost respect in that he was the one that had eluded me for the longest time. In my mind he was the boss of the lake – the fittest, the strongest, the most cunning.

That afternoon my mate Stu Cobb called in to have a brew. I hadn't seen him in ages, as he was now fishing somewhere else. We enjoyed an afternoon

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## Mark Hogg

chatting, and obviously the topic of the Warrior came up but was rudely interrupted by another bite from the island, which turned out to be what looked like an upper thirty common, one of the long, dark strains. Stu did me and the fish proud with the photos and later headed off home, leaving me to rethink.

I sat thinking after he had gone that the silt spot was dead and the island rods were the ones I should concentrate on, so the silt rod was brought back in, in the hope of finding another spot in the margins. I rested the rod against the broolly, still baited with 24-hour baits that were tainted by the smell of silt.

Usually casting at showing fish on the Back Pit is a big mistake; it will nearly always send them fleeing the area. I sat looking out at the lake and hoping the two rods I'd got fishing would keep producing the goods. I glanced toward the silt spot and noticed some fizzing. I could have kicked myself up and down the bank! Two minutes later and a big mirror



crashed out over the spot, and then again. I thought, shit or bust time, picked up the rod and clipped it up to the spot, wrapped a nugget of foam around the tainted hookbaits, put it back to the silt spot and rested it back on the alarm.

Ray had just arrived at the lake and was doing the rounds deciding where to drop in. We sat having a beer and chatting when the receiver let out the sound of a one-toner. I immediately looked towards the island rods, thinking it would be one of them that was away, but the bobbins were motionless. I turned to the silt rod, which I still hadn't set the bobbin on, and the spool was flying, I lifted up and felt the solidity and stubbornness of a heavy carp that didn't want to lose the momentum it had already achieved on the take. The slowing down of the fish seemed to last for hours until it found a weedbed. Constant pressure, and a few minutes later, it was on its way again with me now being in some sort of control. Around 20 yards from the bank, the fish kited left and found the line of one of the island rods. Ray opened the bail arm of the island



# Mark Hogg



rod, which seemed to do the trick. Ray was now in the margins with his trousers rolled up and waiting with the net. I started walking backwards, keeping the fish on a tight line until it eventually made its way over the net cord. Ray turned looking at me some ten yards away... and I'll never forget the grin.

The moment of looking down into the net at something you've wanted so badly for so long was immense. I walked away, having to take a moment on my own to give myself a pat on the back. Emotion got the better of me for the next five minutes as I stood starrng out into the meadow behind the swim. I couldn't take it all in.

Upon returning. Ray was still stood there, trousers rolled up and looking down into the net. We laughed, and I shouted at the top of my voice. "Freedom!!"

Everyone on the lake obviously heard the war cry and started filtering into the swim to take a look at the Warrior.

Over my time on Bainton, I'd always taken notice of which lads knew their photography, and I'd logged that information ready for this moment. My good friend Jaye was called, and he was at home some 40 minutes drive away but said to retain the fish, as he wouldn't miss this moment for the world. He did me proud with some stunning photographs and also brought along a bottle of bubbly he'd been saving for the occasion.

People often ask me why I don't weigh fish, but the personal battle between an angler and a targeted fish needs no weight attached in my eyes. The chase, personal mind-games and respect between the two is enough.

Good luck,

Hoggy.

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