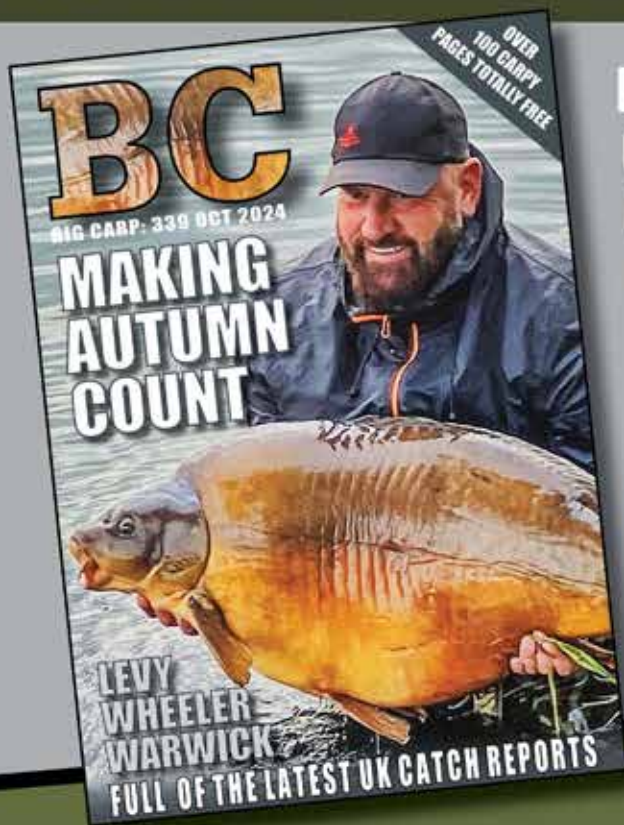


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Carl Udry - Leadclip Convert
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BC

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BIG CARP 338:
September 2024

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Publications 2024



Front Cover:
Gaz with a 60lb 10oz
mirror from Grenvilles.



It's well and truly autumn now and carp are being caught left, right and centre. Are you maximising your chances of banking something special? Check out the advice from the anglers inside this month. Carl Udry is having a great season on his Reading water and puts the success down to a new leadclip arrangement. Lee Wheeler has some great advice on line lay and concealment. These small percentages add up through a season and can make the difference. Scott Sweetman lays out why this is the time for a full on boilie approach.

Lee Thomas has been consistently banking carp from the tricky Essex Manor, while Liam Searle proves coming out last in the draw isn't always a bad thing. Michael Owen and Weeman Martin have both banked PBs this month

6. SHOCKLEADER

News from around the fishing industry.

16. 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 UK, the last few weeks.

54. CARL UDRY

Carl has converted over to a leadclip set up that he feels has been the key to his recent success.

66. DAVE LEVY

Dave has an awesome result on one of his waters. Find out how it all came together

70. FRANK WARWICK

The legend that is Frank Warwick has had a right result at his syndicate recently. Find out what he caught here.

72. KALYAN VIVIANA

Taking on a massive unfished venue is a big task. However, effort often equals rewards and Kalyan certainly proved that is the case.

76. LEE THOMAS

Turning his attention to the Essex Manor, Lee has had a string of fish carp already including Baby Stella.



82. RONNIE RIG

The rig of the moment and how to construct it

84. LEE WHEELER

Can't emphasise the importance of line lay when seeking out carp. See how he goes about it.

88. LIAM SEARLE

Coming last out the draw doesn't always result in a blank session as Liam was to find out on a trip to Sandhurst recently.

94. LUKE VALLORY

Luke likes to make a rig change for the cooler months as the carp really get on the feed prior to winter. Check out what it is and why he does it.

100. MICHAEL OWEN

Michael finally achieves his target by banking the Pristine Common at 57lb. The under used greedy pig rig did the damage for him - find out more.

104. SCOTT SWEETMAN

Scott says it is prime time for a full on boilie approach now. Carp are wanting the best food possible ready for the winter. There's nothing better than a bed of boilies.

108. WEEMAN MARTIN

Very rarely do you land a brace nudging the 100lb barrier. Find out just how close Weeman came to it in our final article.

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SHOCKLEADER

OPEN LETTER FROM THE DIRECTORS OF SPOTTEDFIN

Dear all.

It is with deep regret, that the directors have decided to close Spotted Fin with immediate effect.

We have always tried to do the right thing for the brand, first and foremost and sometimes we got it right and sometimes we did not. We don't apologise for that... but we hope it will have inspired others on their angling journey, to rise to the top and challenge the industry with new ideas and values just as we tried to do.

Our thanks first go to our staff Cameron Scott and Neal Baskerville. We got to here because of you.

We would like to thank Jaap Johnson, for delaying retirement to help get the brand going and good friend Lauren du Gard for joining us at the beginning to setup the admin.

We thank Russell Grimes and Simon Willsmore, who had great influence on our direction and success on the match world and Clint Walker and Jacob Stone in coarse and especially Simon and Sue Ward in Carp, who worked tirelessly from the beginning in building equipment, helping with shows and providing a supportive shoulder. You are both very special to us.



The following team anglers, who were ever loyal and supportive, through thick and thin, in the good times and the bad, we thank you.

Ben Townsend

Richard Handel

Matt Hollingsworth

Liam Willis

Barry Sherrington

We would like to thank the retailers that stocked us. Thank you for your trust in our brand. We know how hard this industry likes to make things for retailers bringing in new brands.

To the public that bought and used our products and caught PB's and had a thoroughly enjoyable time using them... we thank you.

Within 4 years of opening, Spotted Fin was shipping products to 15 different countries and had carved out a niche for quality, dependability on the bank and new innovative ideas backed up by exceptional service. For that, we are extremely proud.

Tights lines all.

The Directors,
Spotted Fin.



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PLEASE DISINFECT YOUR FISHING TACKLE

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- When you have set up and started fishing - leave your nets, slings, unhooking mats and cradles out in the sun, so that UV rays can sterilise your equipment.
- When you leave, treat your equipment again and ensure it is allowed to dry for at least 48 hours when you get home (if possible leave to dry in direct sunlight).
- Keep your tackle clean and dry!
- **DO NOT** leave rubbish in the Dip Tanks... Please use the rubbish bins provided



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2025 WINTER WEEKEND SYNDICATE TICKET	Active from 7 th November 2025 – 2 nd March 2026 Friday 10am – Monday 10am	£300

Fishing brothers receive awards for life-saving rescues four months apart



In a remarkable coincidence, Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiff Mark Longthorne and his brother Shaun were each involved in separate life-saving rescues just months apart. The brothers, who are bailiffs and members of the Doncaster & District Angling Association (DDAA), were recently recognised for their bravery with Royal Humane Society awards, presented by Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for

Energy Security and Net Zero.

In August 2023, Mark was on a routine patrol at Sprotbrough on the River Don in Doncaster when he came across an area littered with empty beer bottles before he spotted a drunken man face down in the water. Luckily, the man's head was resting on a rock, creating a small gap that allowed him to breathe. Without hesitation, Mark called 999 and waded into the river, holding the man above the water for a



considerable time until emergency services arrived. His quick actions undoubtedly saved the man's life despite the dangers posed by the river, renowned for areas of fast-flowing water and flash floods.

Just three days after Christmas 2023, brother Shaun found himself in a similarly perilous situation. While setting out to patrol a known illegal fishing spot, Shaun spotted a man sitting on a bridge, appearing ready to

jump onto the railway tracks below. After calling 999, Shaun calmly approached the man and started a conversation. When the man suddenly moved to jump, Shaun rushed forward, grabbed the man and pulled him back over the safety rail and onto the pavement. Despite a struggle, Shaun managed to restrain him until police and paramedics arrived. His decisive intervention likely saved the man's life.

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Miles' latest Fisheries update is available now on Youtube



TACKLING CANCER 2024 DATE



TACKLING
BREAST **CANCER**

As you all know this October 4-6th Carpin With Smudger are doing this charity Tackling breast cancer for Ashley Steward family.

If anyone would like to donate prizes and it don't have to be fishing related, we would be very happy.

We have a raffle tickets going on sale the Friday and Saturday at hinderclay lakes and also BBQ on Friday night and Saturday night for the carp anglers.

CARPERS FOR VETERANS SUPPORT 2024 MATCH



£3,170 raised for Blind Veterans by Carpers for Veterans Support 2024 in their 48 hour match on Oak Lake. Many laughs, great social BBQ, raffle, auction, home made cakes & sweets delivered, plenty of carp caught, Fat Boys breakfasts eaten and copious

amounts of alcohol consumed too, and a great WhatsApp group keeping all informed and lots of great banter. Another very successful event thanks to the organisers and the anglers. Now looking forward to next years event.

OAK LAKE BAILIFF SADLY PASSES

Many of you will have fond memories of Glenn Ellis our live on site bailiff who sadly passed away on 4th July 2023. Today his brother sister and three sons and other family gathered at Oak Lake to put this bench by swim 3 in his memory together with a solar light that has a picture of



him fishing in it. Forever in all our hearts Glenn. RIP.

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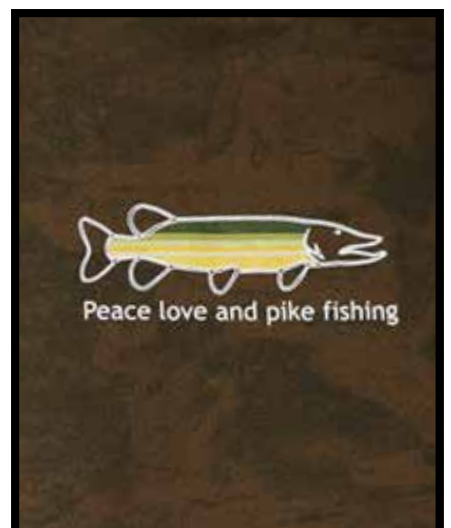
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PETER PERFECT



Peter Steven's and I quote; "This is the hook we have been waiting for..." Pete has gone and nailed a stunning new PB at 45lb 4oz from his local syndicate utilising the Fox Wide Gape Long Shank Size 5.

Send in your carp catch reports to 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



FULL MOON MONSTER

A mega full moon phase Cambs unit has made this trip a special one at 48 lb 4 oz for Stephen White

Bluebell Lake is still on cracking form as John and his son Liam found out last month catching the awesome Tilly at over fifty pounds



BLUEBELL FAMILY 50



OAK LAKE HADDOCK

Peter Haddock and Carpinterest did some filming last month on Oak Lake and he was Lucky enough to have the Big Lin at 48lb 4oz. Should make a great video, what a unit!

NELLY SMASHES PB

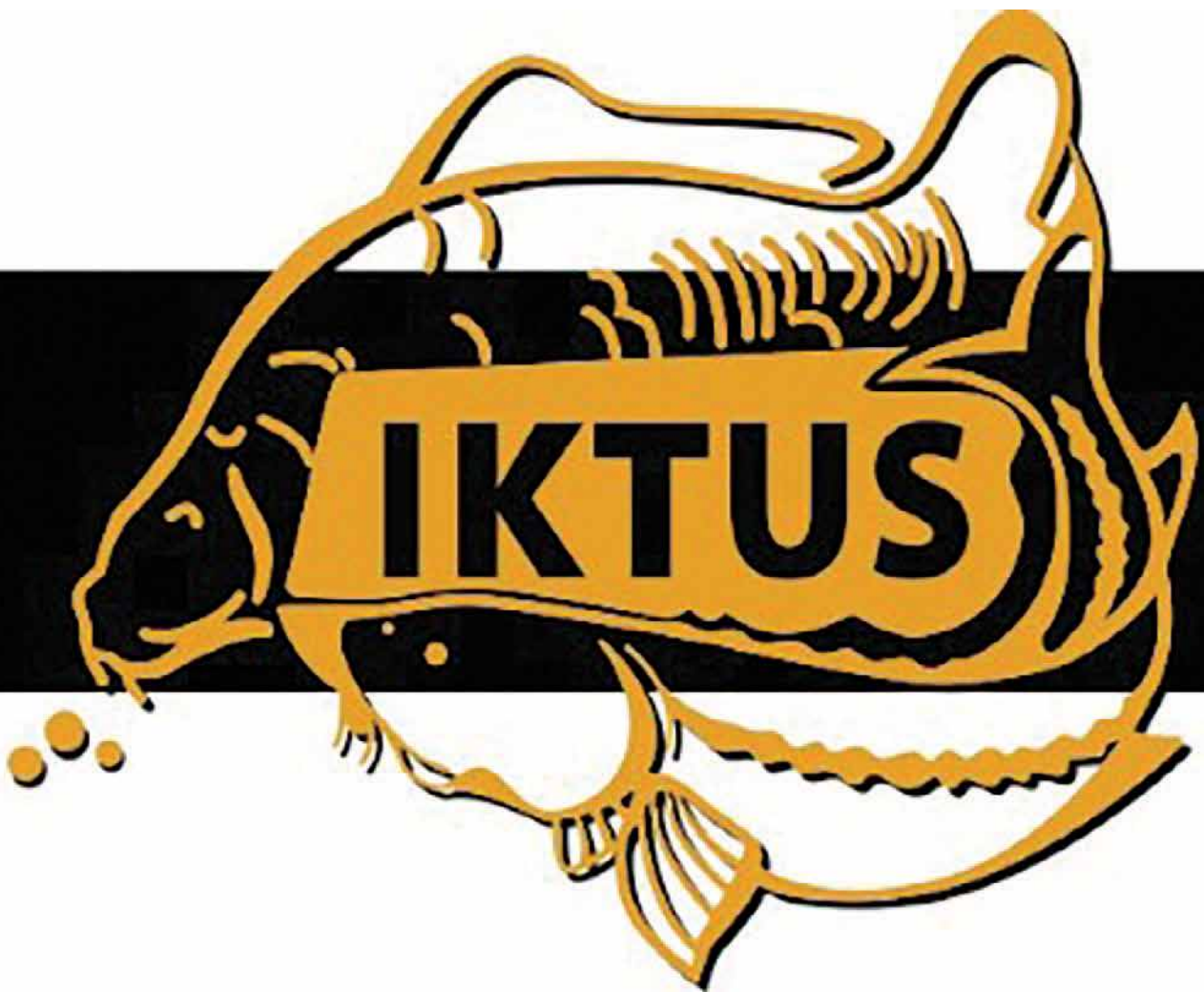
Brian Payne smashed his PB recently with the queen of the lake and absolute unit 'Nelly' who swung the scales around to 50lb 12oz.



SECOND TIME LUCKY

"I'm not familiar with the carp on the complex as it's only my second time on, but a passerby said it was a carp named Tilly. 50lb 8oz " said Keegan Flower





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

WELLY WHACKER



Carper Gaz had this superb, Sutton strain carp from Wellington Country Park, the 'small tailed mirror' went 53.8 lb

Mark Bagshaw landed 'The Grand' from Mary's last month at 49.4

A GRAND CARP



B2 BEAUTY



Steve Delk fishing B2 landed 3 carp with the biggest being "The Punisher" and his new PB at 43lb 3oz!

BEST OF A DOUBLE TAKE



Rob Drinkwater was absolutely buzzing to tick another of the A team off the list!! Scar at 46lb. 2oz and what a fish to end the day on!! for Rob Drinkwater. Totally blown away, Zippo at 40lb 12oz



GRIFFIN GRABS 40

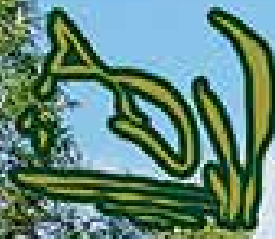


Jimmy Griffin landed a new PB recently catching this pristine common at 41.1. Happy days, indeed.

WESTMOOR RECORD



Westmoor Farm record for the Specimen lake record 'big scaly' goes 53lb 8oz



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CARLSBERG OF A SESSION



Well, he's only golf Carlsberg did carp fishing sessions, this would certainly be one of them! Kent based angler Andy Hooper managed not one, not two, but three of the lakes biggest carp, all in one trip. Using maple cream nut boilies, he tempted Blackspot - 56lb, the Leney - 49lb and Chestnut - 43lb, making it a hat-trick of carp to remember and three of the A-team ticked off in a single visit.





NO NUTZ MUNCHER

One of my biggest ever Adrian Holewell holding a ginormous 55lb13oz mirror from Wellington Country Park. Caught on a white 16mm S2 crushed cork pop up, fished over a large spread of No Nutz freezer baits.



BELLE OF THE BALL

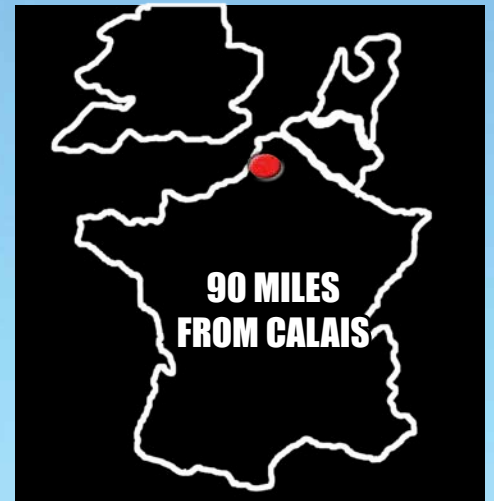
A big well done to Becky Bailey who banked the incredible 'White Lady' weighing 40lb1oz from Big Hayes a new personal best.

BRACE OF FORTIES



There aren't many times in our fishing lifetimes we'll have a U.K. brace of forties, some of us might not ever experience it. Sam Sheryn is one lucky angler who's done just that, and what stunners they are too. He told us: "Getting down to the lake late on I made the decision to get ahead of the heavy wind and storm coming in. After finding a nice clear spot I got 2 rods on the dance floor, then heavily baited with 35 spombs of ISO Fish boilies, with my 3rd rod in the margins 4 ft off the reed bed. The result was 2 amazing mirrors weighing 43lb 4oz and 41lb."

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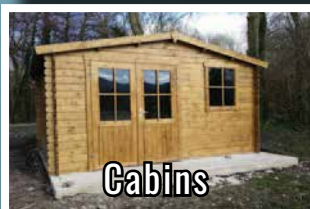
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CATCH REPORTS

BBQ BANGER



Jez Hancock with the BBQ Zip at 52.08 from Long Lake

Aaron Bartlett with the incredible Hampshire fully scaled weighing 59lb14oz. Caught on a Baitworks 13mm GPB2 crushed cork pop ups, fished over Baitworks Atlantic Heat freezer baits.

LORD OF THE FULLIES



COMMON GOES NUTS



Stuart Aldridge with another 40lb+ common from his Kent syndicate. Caught on the original Maple Cream Nut mix.

**NO BUTTS
FOR RYAN**

Well done to Ryan Butt who bagged this stunner during a recent trip. "I've banked one of the best carp you'd ever want" said Ryan as he lifted up this

cracker weighing 42lb. Cell soaked in Multi-Stim his bait choice for the session.



**PIT 3
PLATED**

"Honestly, I don't think I'll ever top those four weeks. If you had offered me one proper one on the opening day I would have taken it, so to end on two PB commons and a PB mirror of 48lbs, it was truly mind-blowing experience!"



ORCHID GEM



Jack's
biggest catch
of last weekend: Ruby
from Chris's bar at 40lb
10oz

BROOM BROOM



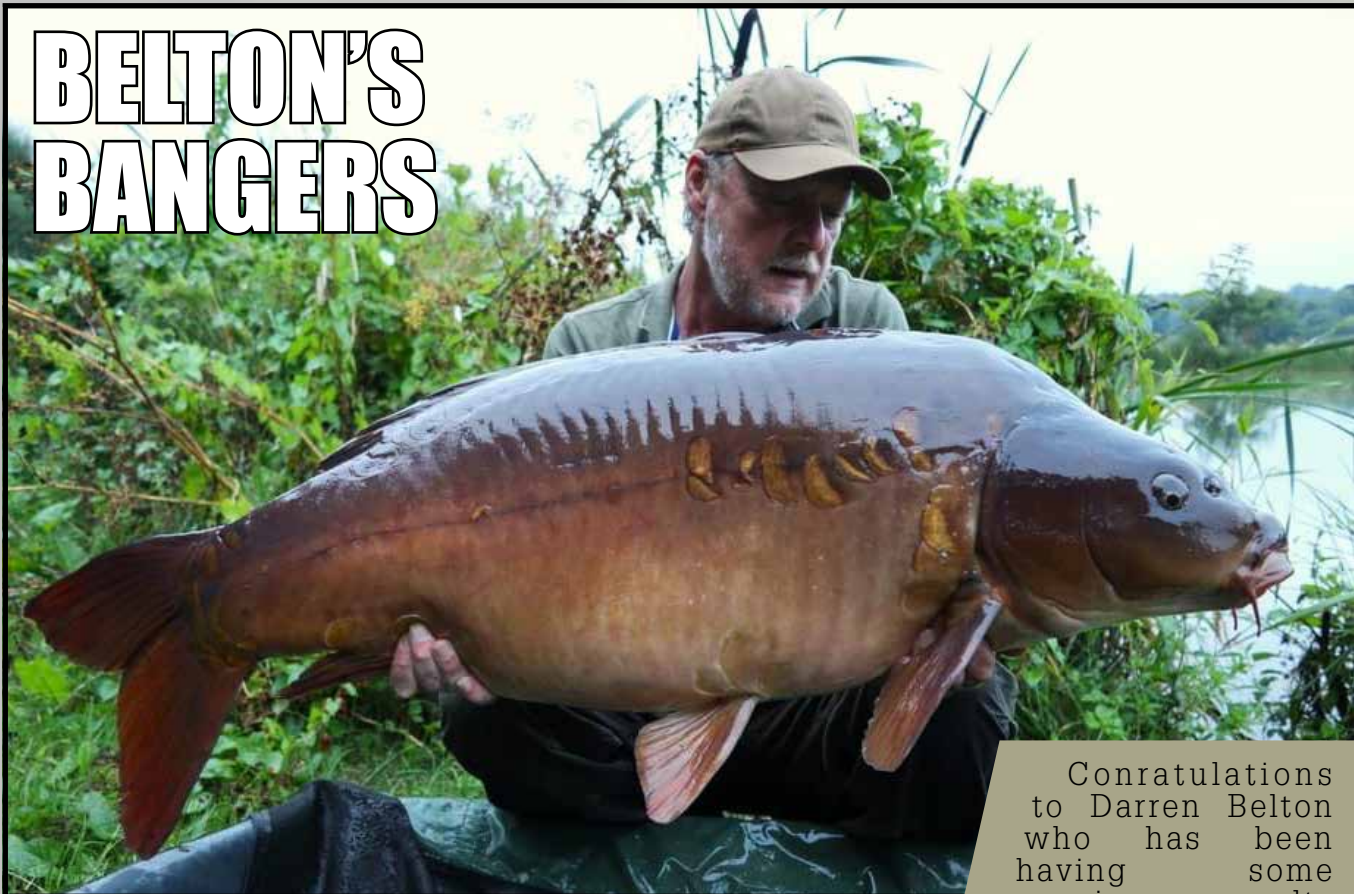
What an incredible start Ricky Angell has made to life on Embryo's Big Broom Lake, banking his very first UK forty on his first-ever session on the Bedfordshire syndicate. Weighing in at 42lb 4oz, the mirror gave Ricky a flying start on the venue, and he can now set his sights on some of the even larger fish the venue has to offer. Ricky fished his SLK Corker pop-ups over a mixture of 15mm SLK boilies and Bug mini dumbbells, along with some Crayfish Maxi Mix pellets, all of which he covered in SLK Amino Smoke.



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THROUGH
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BELTON'S BANGERS



Conratulations to Darren Belton who has been having some amazing results recently including these two weighing 37lb and 48lb 12oz both falling to the awesome ISO Fish. Darren told us: "The amount of fish this bait has caught me over the last year is incredible, it is quickly shaping up to be the best bait i have ever used."





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AWESOME SESSION



When you're on a run as good as the one Mark Gladwell is on, it can be no surprise when the lake's big 'un turns up in the bottom of your net! Mark was back on his Kent syndicate when he renewed his acquaintance with a fantastic common known as the Major, tipping the scales at 54lb 9oz. It was the second time in the space of 10 months that Mark has bagged the coveted fish, which back then weighed in at 59lb 8oz.

It was a Secret 7 Corker wafter that did the business in October 2023 and the exact same offering proved irresistible once again, especially when fished over a bed of chopped S7 freebies and hemp, all smothered in S7 Amino Smoke. The same tactics also accounted for fish of 34lb, 32lb, 28lb and 17lb on this particular session.

CATCH REPORTS



CAR PARK CRACKER

Alex McDonald
with Yateley Car
Park's '3 Scales' at a
monstrous 44lb 10oz



LIAM LANDS WARRIOR

Awaking to
a short burst
of beeps on
his receiver the
a battle soon
commenced with
what was clearly
a good fish. After
a frantic battle, he
soon slipped the net
under something
a bit special –
an ancient 41lb
Snaggy Pit relic



LIGHT MY FIRE



The most prestigious of carp can have a significant effect on an angler, lighting the fire and fueling their desire to hopefully share with it just a brief moment. Jack Ward is no stranger to such fish and recently had his opportunity to meet one of Oxfordshire's finest - 'No Name' at over 53lbs

Yay...my first St Ives forty and a new PB with this mid-day margin munching 'Fjords' 41-8!

Taken twelve years, but then grubbing around day fishing in the edge means bagging the big girls is tricky... all the more sweet and exciting when they come though!

FJORDS 40



CATCH REPORTS

40 FOR REECE

'The Twin' 40.04 from Darrow Farm Fishery
Big congratulations to Reece on setting a new lake record and a new pb for himself. Uncaught for over a year I have seen The Twin several times this summer and thought she looked big! This is now Darrows 2nd 40+ fish.



APPLES TOPS 51LB



Here she is in all her glory from the Blue and Green Lagoon complex. Congratulations to Darren Blunt on the capture of Apples at 51lb

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12 ACRES
3-12FT
CARP TO 78lb (10 OVER 60lb)
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
4-5 ANGLERS
SLINGS, NETS MATS PROVIDED



BRENNE CARPINGTON:

22 ACRES
2.5-6FT
CARP TO 60lb+
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
8 ANGLERS or 4-6 ON PENINSULAR
SHOWER BLOCK AND CABIN



CREUSE CARPINGTON:

11 ACRES
2.5 - 5.5FT
CARP TO 58lb
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
2-3 ANGLERS
CAMPER VANS WELCOME



MAUBRANT:

35 ACRES
2.5 - 10FT
CARP TO 60lb
BAIT BOATS OK
8 ANGLERS
DRIVE AND SURVIVE



CAMALO:

11 ACRES
2.5 - 10FT
CARP TO 70lb+
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
6 ANGLERS
LUXURY LODGE, SHOWERS



FURET:

25 ACRES
4-7FT
CARP TO 70lb+
BAIT BOATS OK
4-7 ANGLERS
VIP CABINS, SHOWERS



LA BERSONNIERE:

3 ACRES
9FT
CARP TO 60lb+
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
1-2 ANGLERS
COTTAGE SLEEPS 4



LA LOUBIERE:

37 ACRES
2.5 - 5.5FT
CARP TO 74lb
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
10 ANGLERS

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THE NOBLE CREED



Grant had a great session at Creedence Lakes banking 3 x 28s on the bounce then latched on to a 34lb fully which was one of grants target fish and topped off the session with a 42lb 2oz Personal best!!



HELLO MATE



Dan Stacey banked this mega one known as 'Charlie's mate' at just under 47lbs! A good quantity of Pro-Stim Liver and Pacific Tuna boilies doing the business for the consistent big fish man! Mega carp mate

SPOT OF LUCK

Luke Stevenson landed the awesome Black Spot a few weeks back at 44lb+, one of the best in the pit and one high on Luke's wanted list.



DRENCHED BUT BUZZING



After seeing the fish do me in the snags, during the afternoon was revenge! A lovely 46lb 9oz mirror goes over the net cord after what was an explosive battle in the hooping down rain!!! I'm drenched but buzzin!!!

LUKE BEATS TYSON



Luke Vaughan had a very productive session at Swan Valley Lakes, Yateley last month banking 19 carp topped by "Tyson" at 43lb 4oz Using a number of tactics and a good amount of Cell and ISO Fish washed out in lake water and a good amount matching Smart Liquids, Luke kept the bites coming with matching Dedicated Wafers doing most of the bites. Luke said: "The hot weather having an effect on the Swan Valley carp keeping mobile and floater fishing in the afternoons helped to put additional fish on the bank."

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CATCH REPORTS

TILLY TURNS 50

Luke Eyre
caught Tilly last
week at 50lb 2oz.



A d a m
Whittington
strikes again
on Frimley with
this 48lb 12oz big
plated mirror!

FRIMLEY FULLY



DAN'S DARK DELIGHT

Dan Stacey said he was "Well happy" with this stunning dark Cambridgeshire mid-40 mirror, part of a crazy haul..



Warren Tebb recently fished Manor Farm at Linear Fisher, Landing a UK 40lb 8oz Scaly banger!

MANOR MAGIC



HONEYSETT HAUL



Well I usually do a week long social on North this time of year but I couldn't do it this year but I joined the lads down there for 3 nights. I took a gamble during the draw that the fish would move once markers & soon a start going out down the deep end so I opted for the shallows, the gamble paid off as soon as we got back from breakfast I could see they had moved into the shallows, I got through 8 kilo of Maxinut/ ASM/ & Spice Pellets along with almost 10 kilo of ASM chops & crumb with ASM & The spice wafer hook baits producing the goods having 9 fish 4 x 20's, 4 x 30's of 30.14, 32.12, 35.08, 36.08 & the session was capped off by a real cracking Common of 40.14

CATCH REPORTS



WINDSOR WHACKER

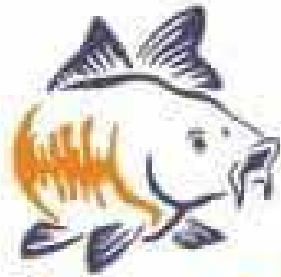
Windsor View Lake's first 40... Neil with petals and new lake record weight of 40.8lb always knew this fish would be big and what a milestone for not only the fish but the venue, she was 24lb in 2018 when it made its first appearance and 6 years later hits 40, not bad for an already aged fish.



MATT COMPLETES HIS MISSION



Mission complete for Matt! Having not fished the lake since spring Matt was welcomed back with the incredible 'Pristine Common' at 56lb 12oz



Fishing Show Winter Carp 2024

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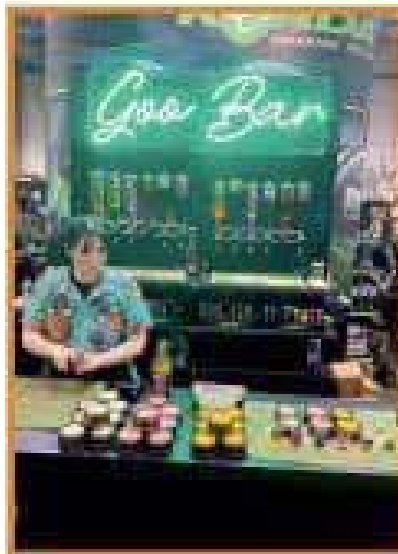
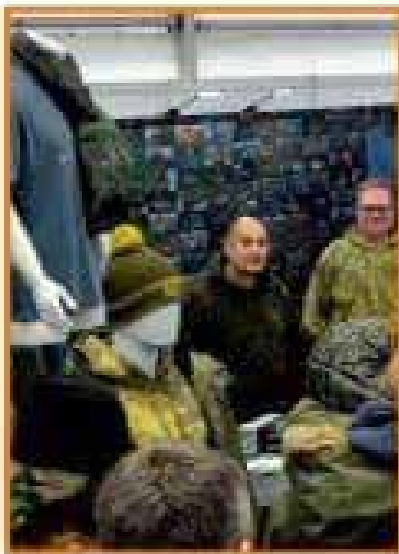
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CARL UDRY

CONVERTED

As I mentioned in my previous months article (Time to Evolve), my rig presentations have 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 system predominantly. I did not mind a lead clip, but I just did not historically favour it. Allot of my waters during this 10-year period, have been very weedy so the versatility of the helicopter has suited me and my style of angling.

However, despite catching through the winter and early spring on the trusted helicopter. After paying allot more attention to the new Evolve Tackle weight clips, weights, and other essential end tackle components I was very keen to specifically try out the weight clips. From mid-April, this exactly what I did and my bite and catch rate throughout May and June, has changed significantly for the better.

At Evolve Tackle we have been developing techniques to make fishing weights that are both lead free and superior to lead.



Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



17lbs 8 oz



28lbs 8 oz for Dean Paffey's misses



29lbs 9oz Delboy is out again



31lbs absolute cracker



36lbs 1oz Mickey the Mirror new PB for Mark Simkins great catch Mark happy for you



New PB for Jimmy at 17lbs on Oak Lake.

Being alternate to lead, they are slightly larger in size. But I have found this has aided feeling the lead down and, although marginal, the additional surface area when lying on the lakebed is offering more resistance and aiding optimum hook holds. I have always paid interest to hook holds, but while experimenting with this new set up for me I paid even more interest.

I have been using the Evolve distance swivel weights in both 3oz and 4oz. Apart from our non-lead weights being the best environmental option, the integral steel swivel is another key ingredient. This swivel minimises the height to ensure no additional connections and hinging. Meaning when a carp lifts the hook point and moves the weight clip, they instantly feel the resistance from the weight. Now it was a case of finding the optimum rig and rig length to partner with and capitalise on the new weight components.

First up, was the multi rig. A rig I already had huge confidence with. I love the versatility of being able to quick change the hook and a big fan of the agile rotation at the join between the stiff boom and the softer hook end section. The multi rig also aids me to ensure my chosen 20mm wafter would be close to the lakebed. It was then a case of locating smooth silt areas amongst the abundance of canadian pond weed, in favoured areas, and see what unfolded.

My first session early in May with the new rigs and components, and it was instant success. I started with 4" hook links and the takes, and subsequent hook holds were insane. Two long and lean cricket bat commons that I had one after the other ticked all the important boxes in my adjusted approach. It then became the start of a good run of carp from the 25-acre relatively low stock pit. I had no reason to adjust anything and to be honest, with



the number of carp in the lake I was starting to feel confident any carp that picked up my hook bait was going to be hooked.

I then went on to land twelve commons in a row to just over 37lb over the next three consecutive sessions. No idea why only commons, I guess that's just the way things go. All the carp didn't come from the same swim either. But my approach was consistent in terms of finding smooth silt and drop the same rigs. My free offerings were

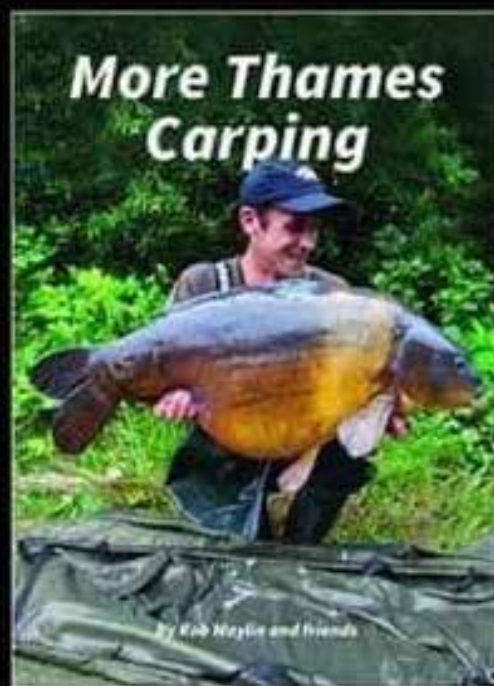
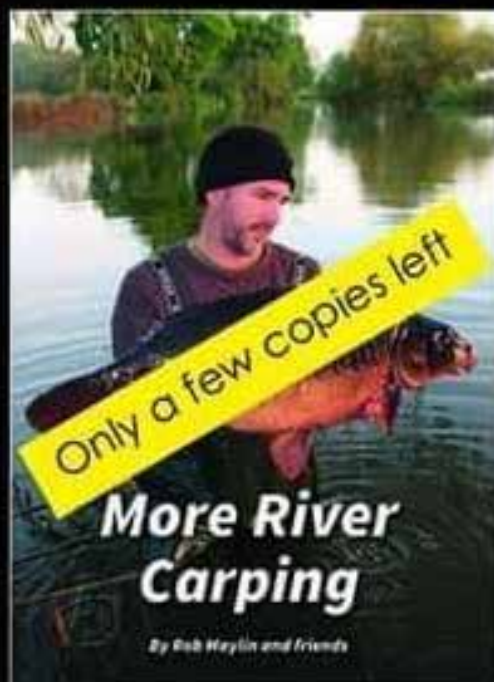
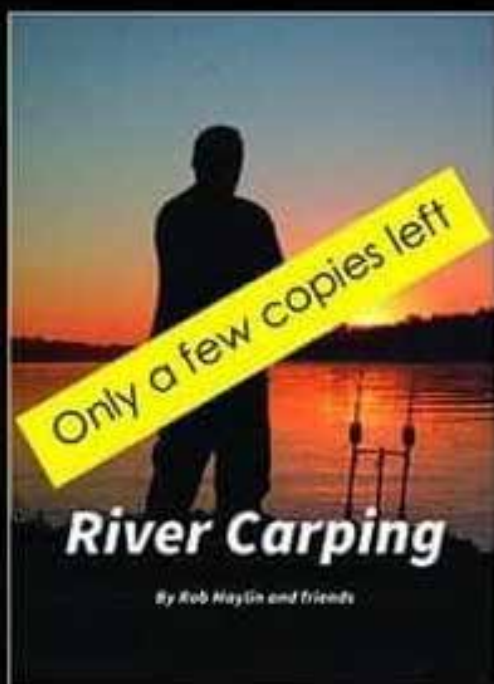
also consistent. Four spombs of mixed sized (12mm, 16mm, 20mm) handcraft baits 'herb' per rod. This mega fishmeal has the flavour profile and gives a spicy rich scent that is easily recognisable and addictive.

The reasons for opting for a 20mm wafer. The lake is populated with an abundance of tench, which since flipping to 20mm I have avoided. But also, during the spring, the lake is full of large water snails. With the carp clearly wafting these up regularly, it seemed like the



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right thing to do to match the hatch and mimic the size.

After a string of impressive commons, the inevitable mirrors starting to show themselves. One of them had to be one of the oldest in the lake. It looked as old as the hills. It plodded in like an OAP and was impeccable for the camera. At 35lb 6oz it certainly was a relic of a carp. Grey, wrinkled and few stories under its belt. Almost bang on the same time early the following morning and a jet black 36lb

brute of a common was in the net. Absolutely brutal fight.

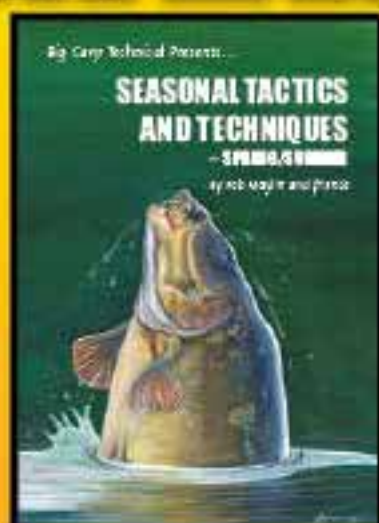
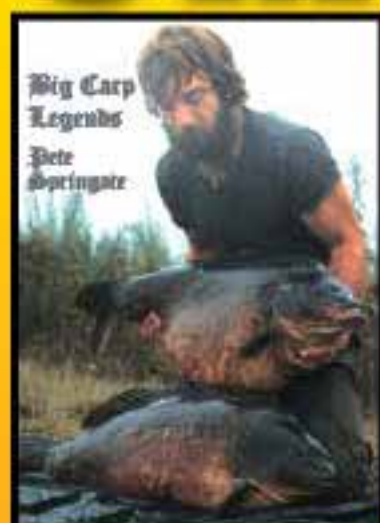
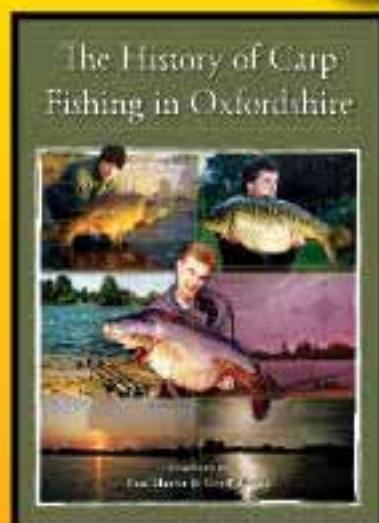
It was becoming obvious I was achieving the ultimate hook mechanics and the hook point was penetrating the skin with ample weight being applied. Evolve Tackle weight clips and weights have turned my head big time. 22 bites and 22 carp landed across May and June and no blank sessions.

Converted weight clip user.

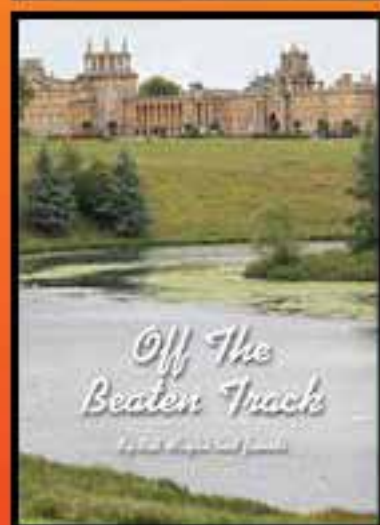
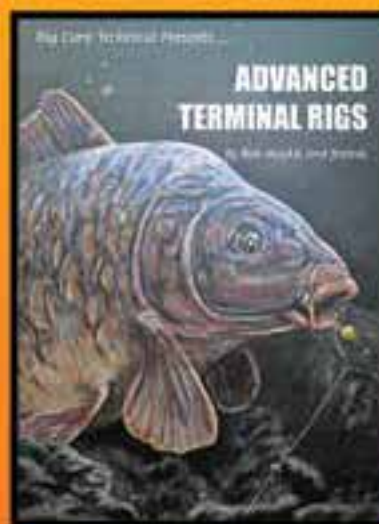
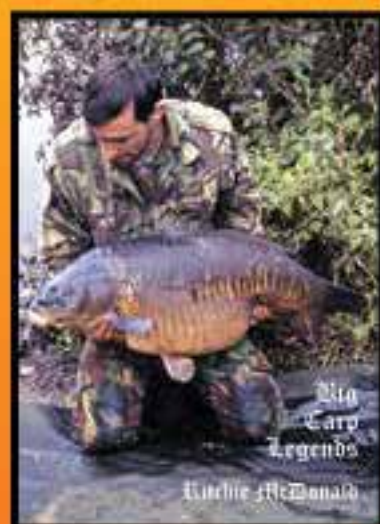
Be lucky,

Carl.

SUMMER S



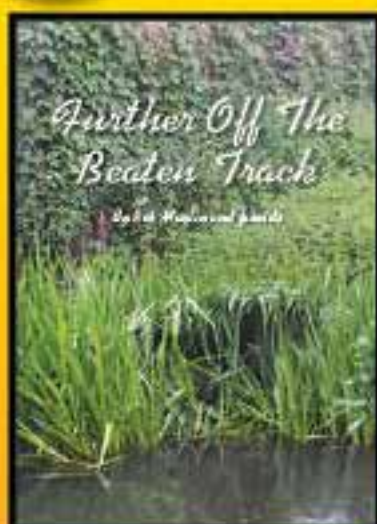
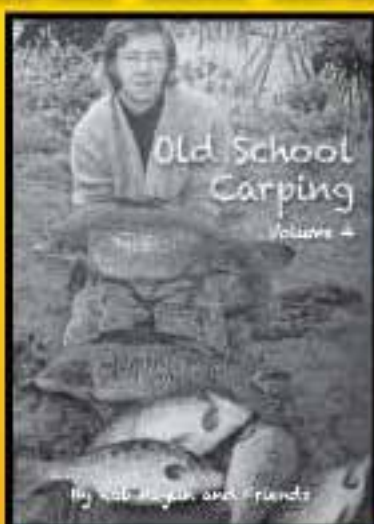
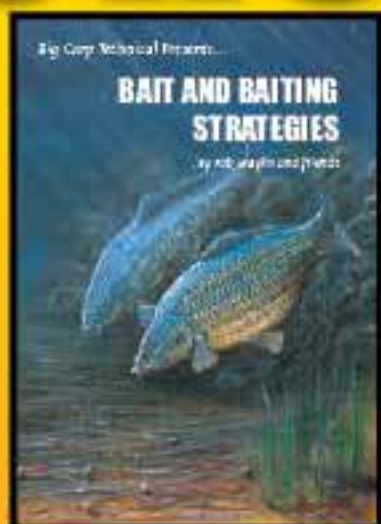
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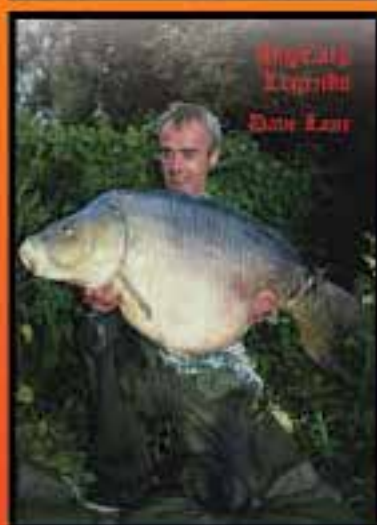
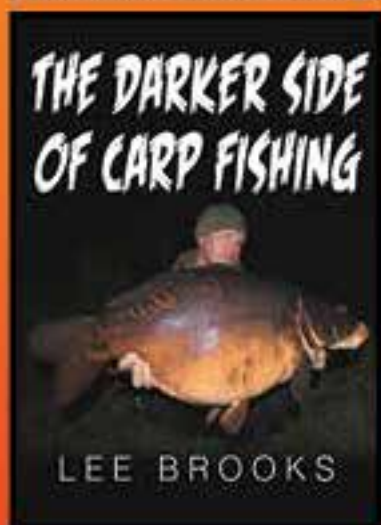
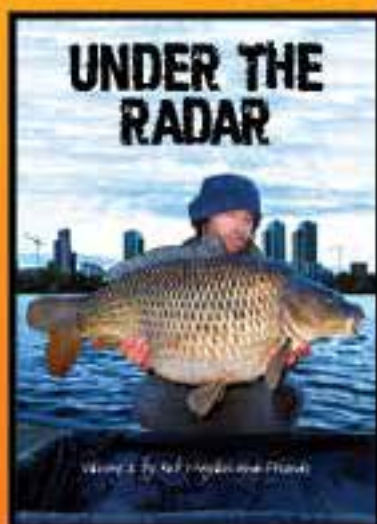
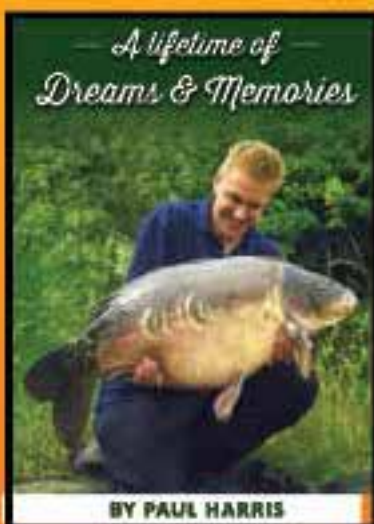
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DAVE LEVY

SMART MOVE

I did a 48-hour session on an Essex Club water and it was my first time there. The lake was fairly weedy so after a good cast about I found a really nice area at 10 wraps out. As it was my first session, I always just try to get a feel for the lake. So, I put two rods on the same spot and a good two kilo of ISO Fish out. This was covered with matching Smart Liquid. The rig was a simple anti blowback rig with a 15mm ISO Fish wafter. At 10:30 I got my first bite, always exciting on a new lake, and I wasn't disappointed, a lovely 36lb mirror. At 5am I had another this time a common of 31. The day was 30 degrees so I spent most of it spotting carp and hiding in the shade. I repeated the same baiting plan for the second night and had a few more but smaller carp. At first light I hooked a better fish and a few times it weeded me until eventually netted a big ball of weed. This time it was one of the lakes big fish at 41lb!







FRANK WARWICK

FRANKLY AWESOME

Managing to get 48hrs down his Cheshire syndicate, Frank set about baiting up 3 different spots, and with the noise of the spomb Frank suspected he had spooked the carp as it was unusually quiet.

With just a small 18lb stockie early the following morning the carp had clearly moved away from the commotion Frank said.

With the session nearing an end, a proper savage takes out of the blue led to a proper big carp battle with the head plunging and quick busts of sheer weight and power - "one of the best

scraps ever" as quoted by Frank.

A very rare one had indeed slipped up, one known as the BBQ tipping the scales at 40lb 10oz and just as Frank was doing self takes, another savage take and battle commenced once again.

Frank didn't quite realise at the time, but he had just bagged himself a new PB common and lake record, another huge common weighing in at 46lb 12oz. Both fish fell to Slip-D rigs on trusty Size 4 Curve Shanks and Trakker's Semi-Stiff Coated Hooklink.



KALYAN VIVIANA

UNTOUCHED FIFTY

Where do I start! After stumbling across a lake as a young lad, seeing a wild lake around 120 acres and what I could only describe as monster size fish, it's always been on my mind but due to my age it was really daunting as when I was a boy. I never tackled a water quite like it, fast forward 8 years and I have gained a lot of big fish knowledge and caught many Uk 40s from a lot of different wild lakes with the quest of finding a Uk real 50 plusses. There aren't many wild untouched waters left and I had a thought of the old big pit and what if the fish I seen as lad was still in there. After going up for hours on end in good light sunny conditions I seen yet again what I can only describe as a monster! Still in

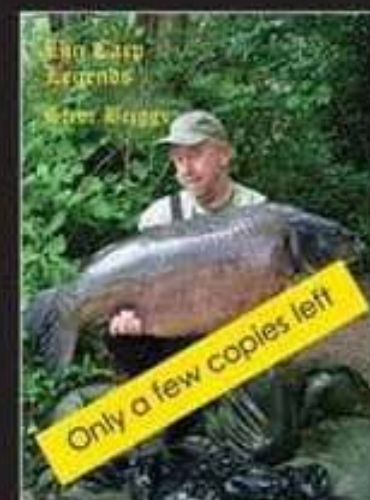
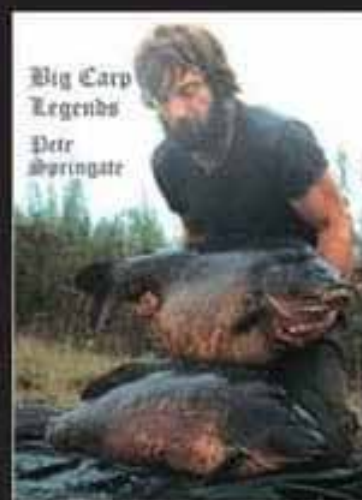
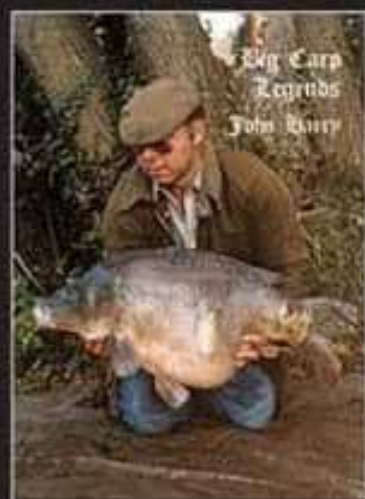
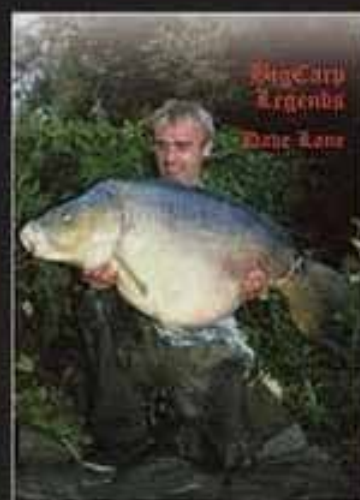


this wild lake so the campaign began... With pre baiting Sticky Baits Blood Worm and Manilla. Big generous amounts around 10 kg twice a week with 2 weeks of baiting done and the full moon out and conditions looking mega I could not resist doing a quick over nighter. With in 2 hours of the rods smashing off the spots I had bite and what I can only describe as carnage! Taking a good 80 to 100 yards of line and then destroying me under the rod tips for a 30 min battle in heavy

winds, in the pitch black a gold bar appears with the fish I had seen in the shallows!! I had the most overwhelming feeling of achievement as I netted it and catching the 1 fish from venue, it being the one I had seen as a kid. I had to reel in and readjust to what I have just achieved, not only the fish I wanted but the first uk 50 I had ever had! eating 53lb on the nose on 3 different sets of scales, it is my pb and most memorable moment of my fishing to date!

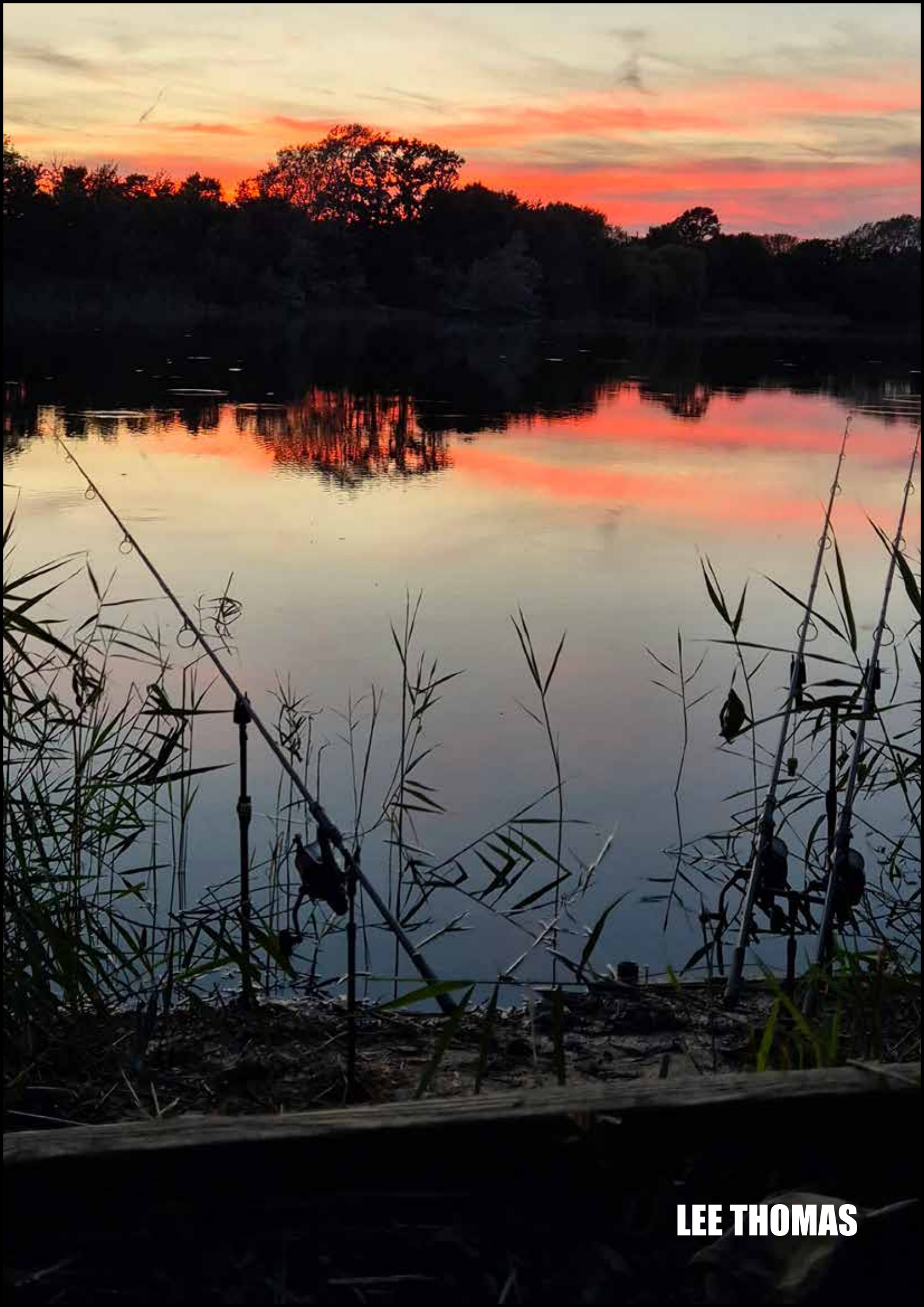
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The anglers that shaped today's carp scene



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LEE THOMAS

STOP!! MANOR TIME

So this year, I managed to get myself a ticket on the "The Essex Manor". A lake I feel is steeped in carp fishing history. A lake that many a talented angler has wet a line over the years. It's been on my radar for a while and a dream of mine if you like.

They are all a decent bunch of of guys and have made me feel very comfortable over the last five months. I did feel a little out of my comfort zone at first

after my first session, where I managed to land a 35lb mirror on a zig. After that, I struggled for the next couple of months. Then things started to change for the better, in the end, leaving me on a total of six, 2x 30's and 4x 20's. I had a bottle of lager that I brought every week, that I was going to drink to celebrate my first 40 but one weekend it was particularly hot. My milk had turned to yoghurt and so I drank my beer.



Fast forward to a couple of weeks ago. I checked the weather apps and decided to drop into "The Pump Swim" The wind had been pushing in that direction for a few days and although blanking in that swim the week before, I felt confident with the knowledge gained to have another go.

I have now been a team member with Sharp Tackle and Carp Punk for six to seven years now and at the beginning of this year, I received a message from

the owner, James, telling me that he was now going to give me an allowance for my end tackle. Firstly, thank you, James for doing that, it really did mean the World to me. Secondly, my confidence in the products has never changed, not once has it ever let me down.

Now, back to the session in question. Three fluorocarbon D-rigs were deployed to their own ares of the lake. Size 4 cranx, hook ring swivels, anti tangle sleeves, all on a lead clip



system with around 18 inches of tungsten rig tubing. On the bait front, I am testing a bait called "Primate" for the company that puts up with all my goods and bads. This company is called "Baitmonkey Baits" and would like to thank dean for his continued support. I am very fortunate that I no longer have to buy my bait anymore either. Anyway, I used 15mm wafers on 10" rigs that were working for me till this point. Mid to late morning, I had a funny kind of

take on my right rod. As I hit into it, something didn't feel right. After a short battle, the fish "a 30+ common" was under my middle rod tip and the hook pulled. I can't put into words how crushing this was for me but I'm sure you get the idea. Once I'd finished licking my wounds, sulking if you like, I made the decision to half the length of my rigs to 5". I rebaited the ares with a mix of primate and antarctic krill in mixed sizes, 10mm and 15mm. Then sat back



and wished for another chance. Light soon turned to dark and before I knew it, it was time for some shut eye.

The following morning, I was up an hour before I wanted to be (I work permanent nights) and actually said out loud “oh well, never mind” fast forward an hour, my middle rod area turned into a jacuzzi and suddenly my confidence sky rocketed. 15 to 20 minutes later, my middle rod went into melt down and picking

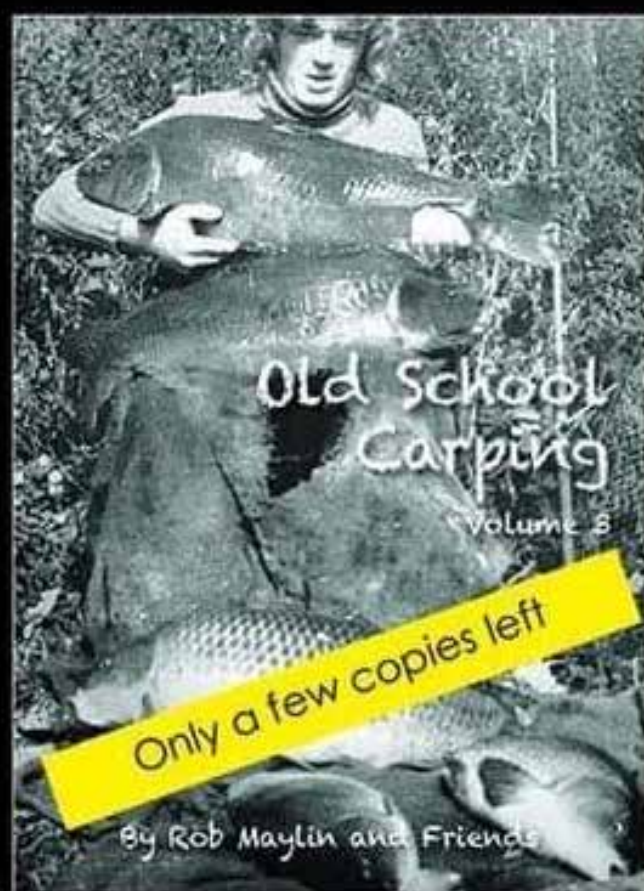
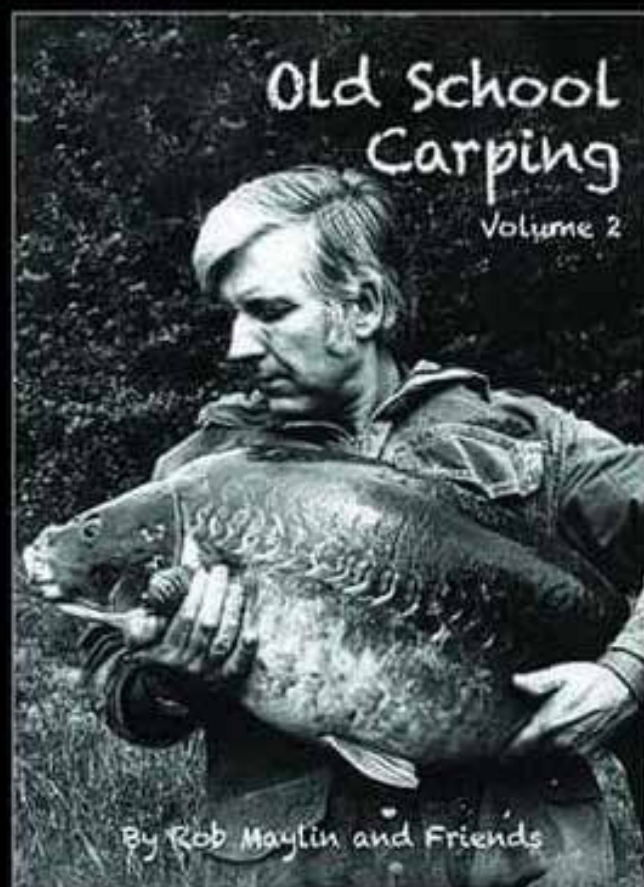
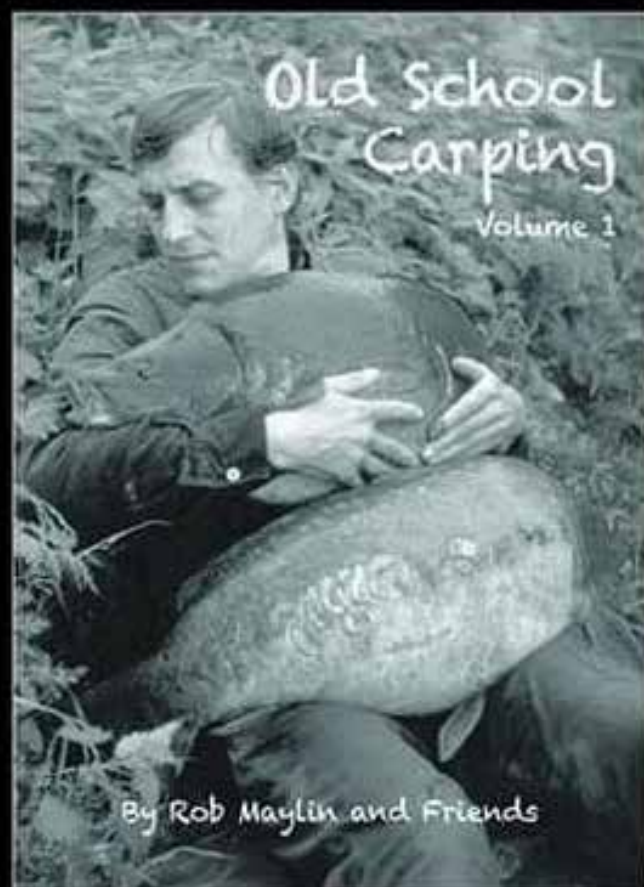
up the rod, I new this was something special. After a mind bending battle, she slipped over the cord and the prize was mine.

The dials turned to 45lb and her name is “Baby Stella” I did some self takes and returned her to her watery home. Then I went to drink my lager and realised I’d already drank it. It didn’t matter a bit, nothing was going to spoil this moment for me.

Thanks for reading,

Lee

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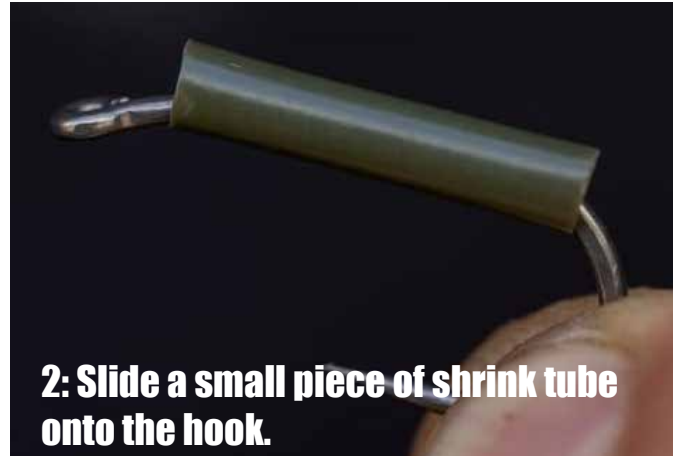
RONNIE RIG



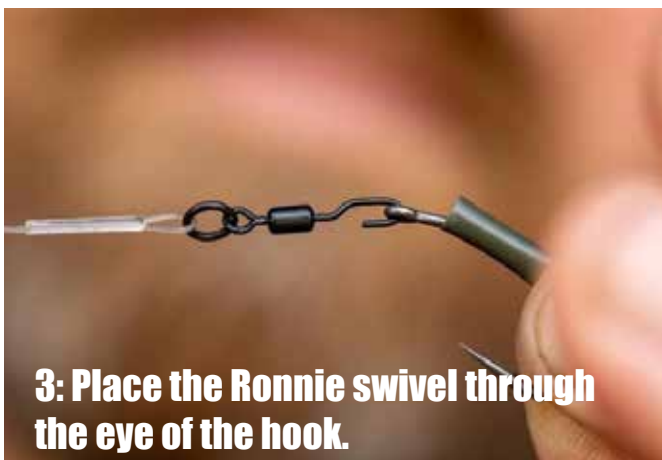
BONESY



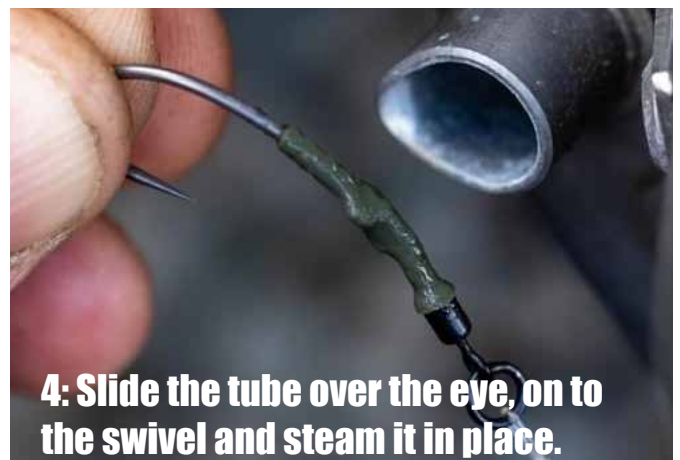
1: Take a Ronnie Boom and your chosen size of curve shank hook.



2: Slide a small piece of shrink tube onto the hook.



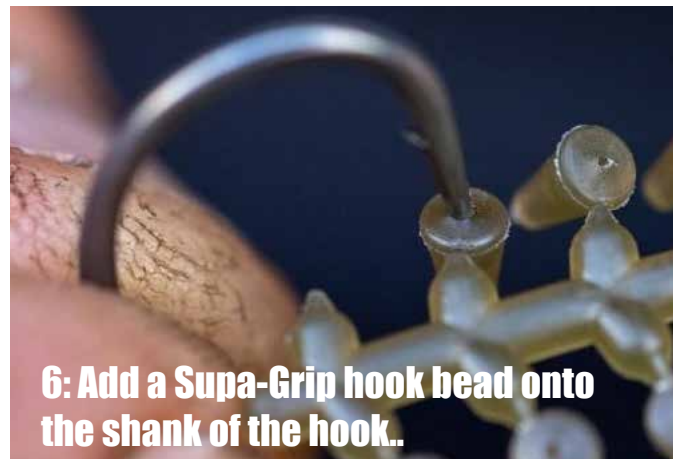
3: Place the Ronnie swivel through the eye of the hook.



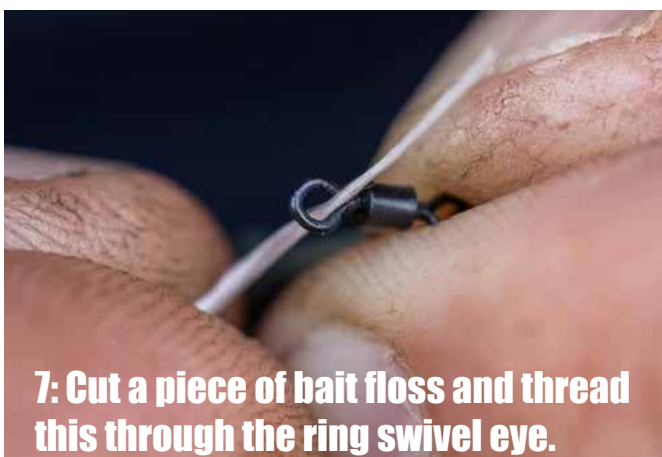
4: Slide the tube over the eye, on to the swivel and steam it in place.



5: Thread a micro ring swivel onto the hook.



6: Add a Supa-Grip hook bead onto the shank of the hook..



7: Cut a piece of bait floss and thread this through the ring swivel eye.



8: Slide your chosen pop up onto the floss and carefully blob the ends.



LEE WHEELER

KEEP IT DOWN

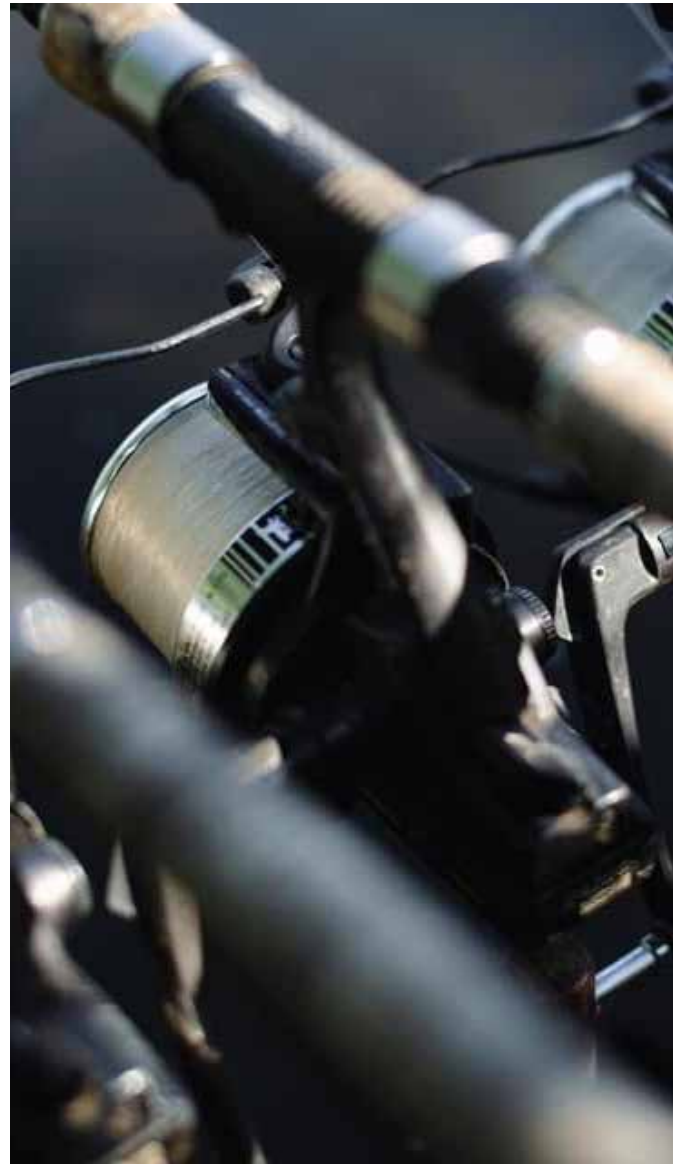
I never underestimate the importance of line lay in my angling. I'm often fishing for highly pressured riggy carp and line is one of the easiest things for fish to spook off.

I favour using a Kontour mainline, being pretty much invisible and sinking like a brick, it ticks all the boxes for me and I'll fish it as slack as I can get away with. As long as it's safe to do so (no snags etc) then I'll fish the slackest line I can get away with, often with the Kontour hanging straight down from the tips.

Once I've cast the rig and



I'm happy with the drop, I'll slowly and carefully hold the rod tip down, up wind and with my finger, just twitch gently to carefully sink the line, paying out maybe a foot or two of slack and letting the line naturally pin itself down. This takes time, but I want it to be perfect so I'm willing to invest several minutes to get it right.



As the Kontour is heavy and will all pin to the deck, you may need to let more line out initially, just to let all that line settle and lay flush to the lakebed. After maybe 10 minutes or so, when I'm super happy that the line is perfect, I'll clip on a lightweight black and white bobbin, safe in the knowledge I've done all I can to sink the line





LIAM SEARLE

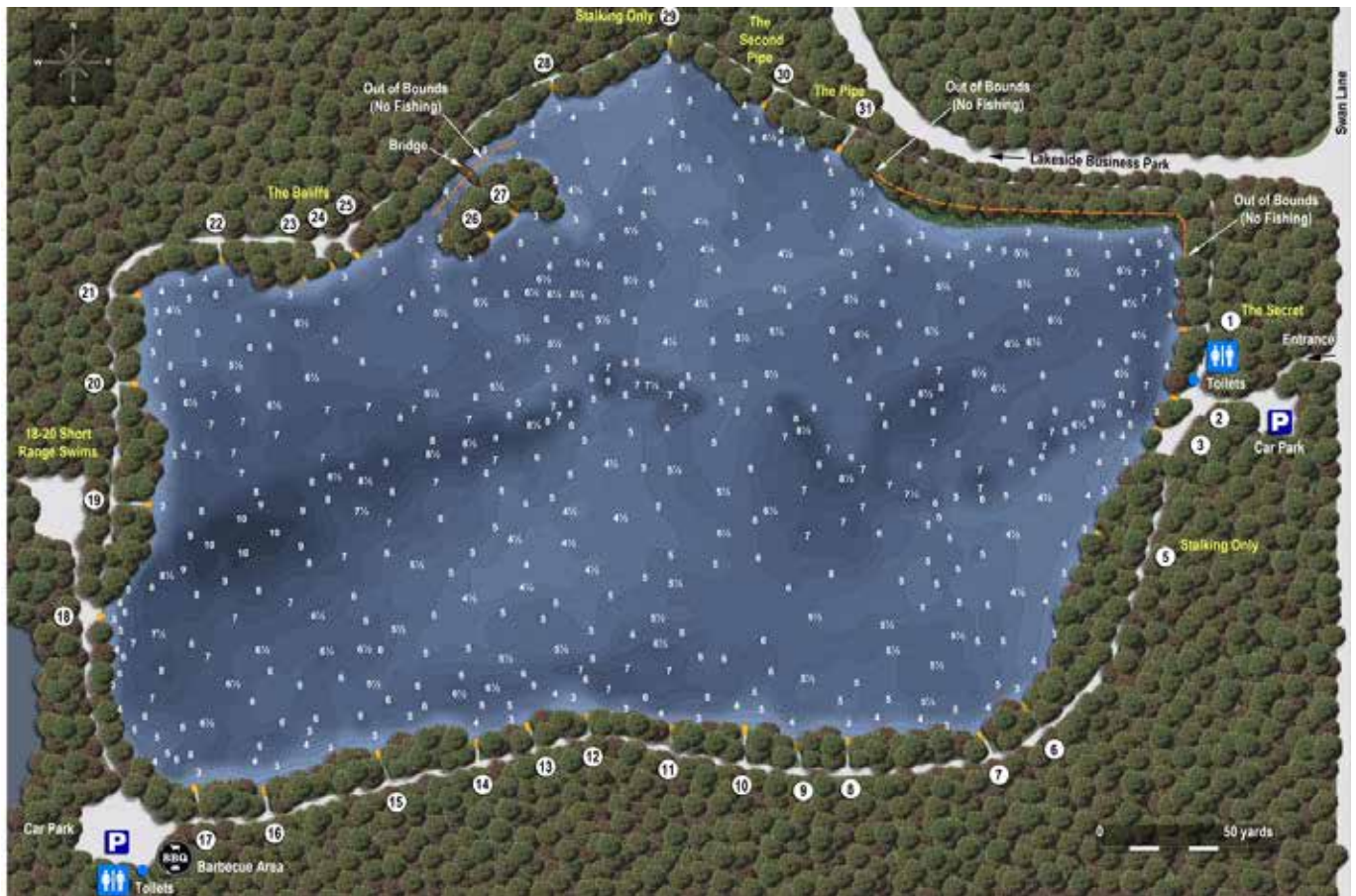
LAST OUT THE DRAW

When Liam Searle came out dead last out of 14 anglers in the draw for swims on his long-awaited Sandhurst Lake social, little did he expect to be cradling a new UK PB common a few days later!

Despite the shocking draw, Liam was relatively happy with the swim he ended up in, initially adopting a cautious and deliberate approach, which paid dividends on this pressured

venue. Liam said: "We arrived bright and early at the cafe for the dreaded draw. I wasn't all that nervous about it, to be honest, as even a top-10 draw would still mean a good peg, but I well and truly bummed out on this one, coming out dead last of the group of 14!

"I thought I was guaranteed one of the two end pegs, but to my surprise, Left-Hand Island was also left available. This was



what I went for, as it demanded a good chunk of water and the fish always seemed to be passing through in front of here.

“I left the swim pretty much pressure-free that first day, doing a little leading just before we all reeled in for barbecue. I found a nice area out towards the middle zone and applied 10 Spombs of a real smelly mix consisting of 12mm SLK boilies, Crayfish Maxi Mix pellets, Insect Meal and lots of liquid, namely SLK Hydro Spod Syrup,

Hot Hemp Oil, BetaStim and Crayfish Hydro Spod Syrup.

“Work had been manic over the previous few months, so I ended up having a good catch-up and social with the lads, deciding to leave my swim be for the night and get the rods out the following morning.

“I sent out two solid bags first thing to the area I’d baited the previous evening, then just roamed one around short. I spent a good amount of time watching that day, and it

became apparent the fish were patrolling and feeding a lot closer in than the area I'd baited. So, later that day I had a good lead around and found a much shorter area, where I decided to offer a small SLK Corker wafter tipped with a little bit of PB wafter, just to give it a fleck of colour. I decided to bait this one with boilies via the catty, as it was just in a nice range to give a create scattering of SLK 12-millers. The rest of that day and night passed quietly with

the odd liner.

"I was up at first light watching closely and could see there was plenty of fizzing and feeding activity present, some on the longer baited area, but much more closer in. I decided to give it an hour, then just fired out a few more baits over the short spot and within minutes they were back having a bit of a feed. Then it slowed up, so an hour later I did exactly the same. Then at around 8am, that shorter rod burst into life with





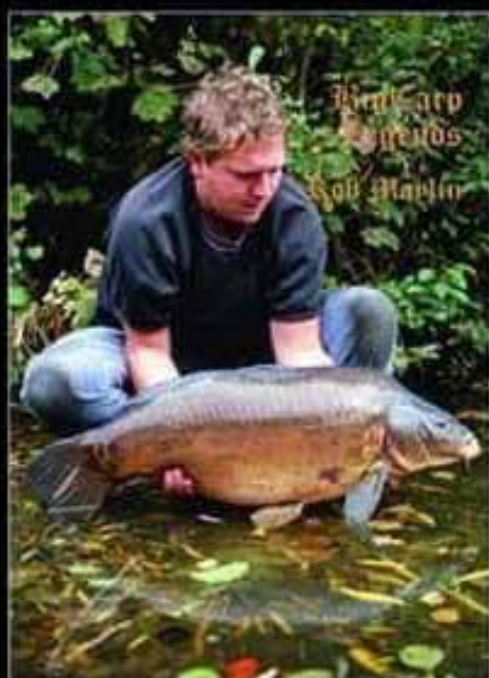
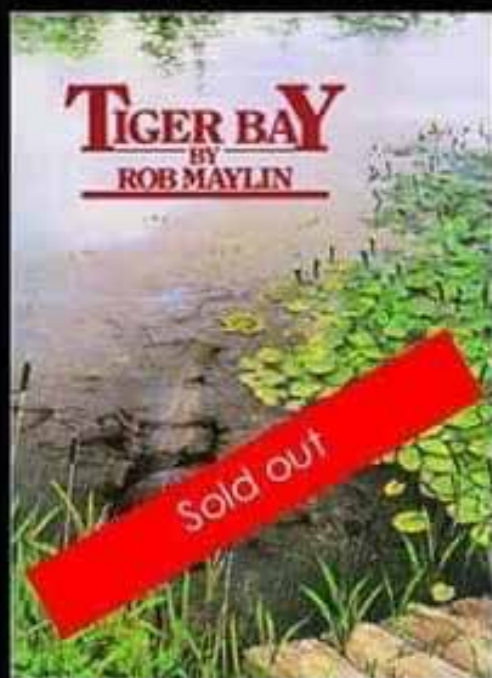
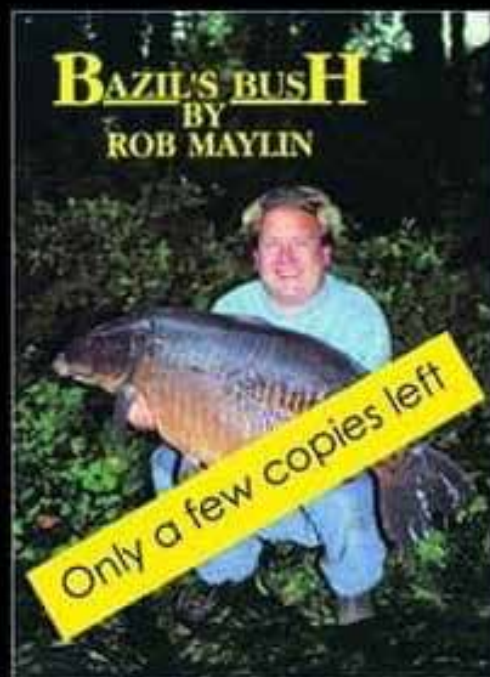
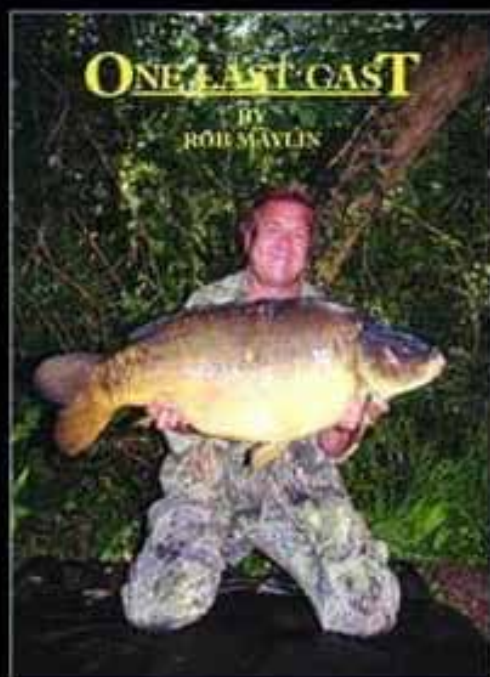
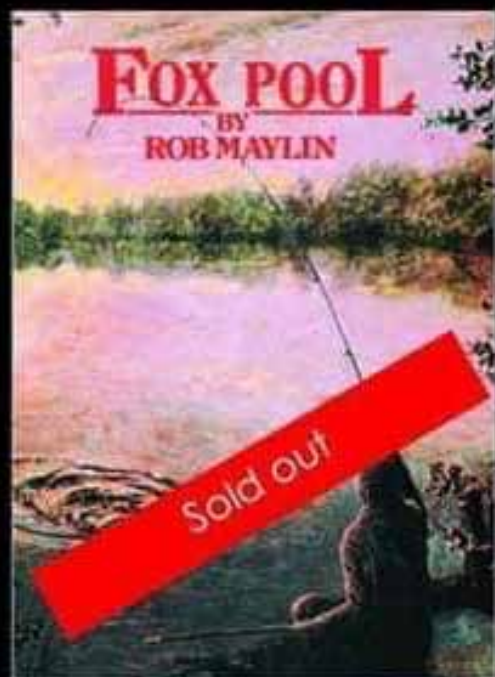
a steady take. The battle wasn't all that manic and after stopping it from trying to kite around a point to my left, I was convinced it wasn't all that big, and after a few more runs it was safely in the net. It wasn't until one of the lads lifted the net arms up that we realised how big it was! A huge-framed common just sat there sulking in the net with the small SLK wafter with that little

fleck of yellow hanging from its mouth!

"Lifting it over to the mat to get the hook out was when I realised how big it was. I'd already zeroed the sling, so I decided to give it a quick weigh, settling on 39lb 8oz, a new PB common for me! I was over the moon, and after my mate got some mega shots, I sat back and soaked it all up."

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LUKE VALLORY

AUTUMN RIG CHOICE

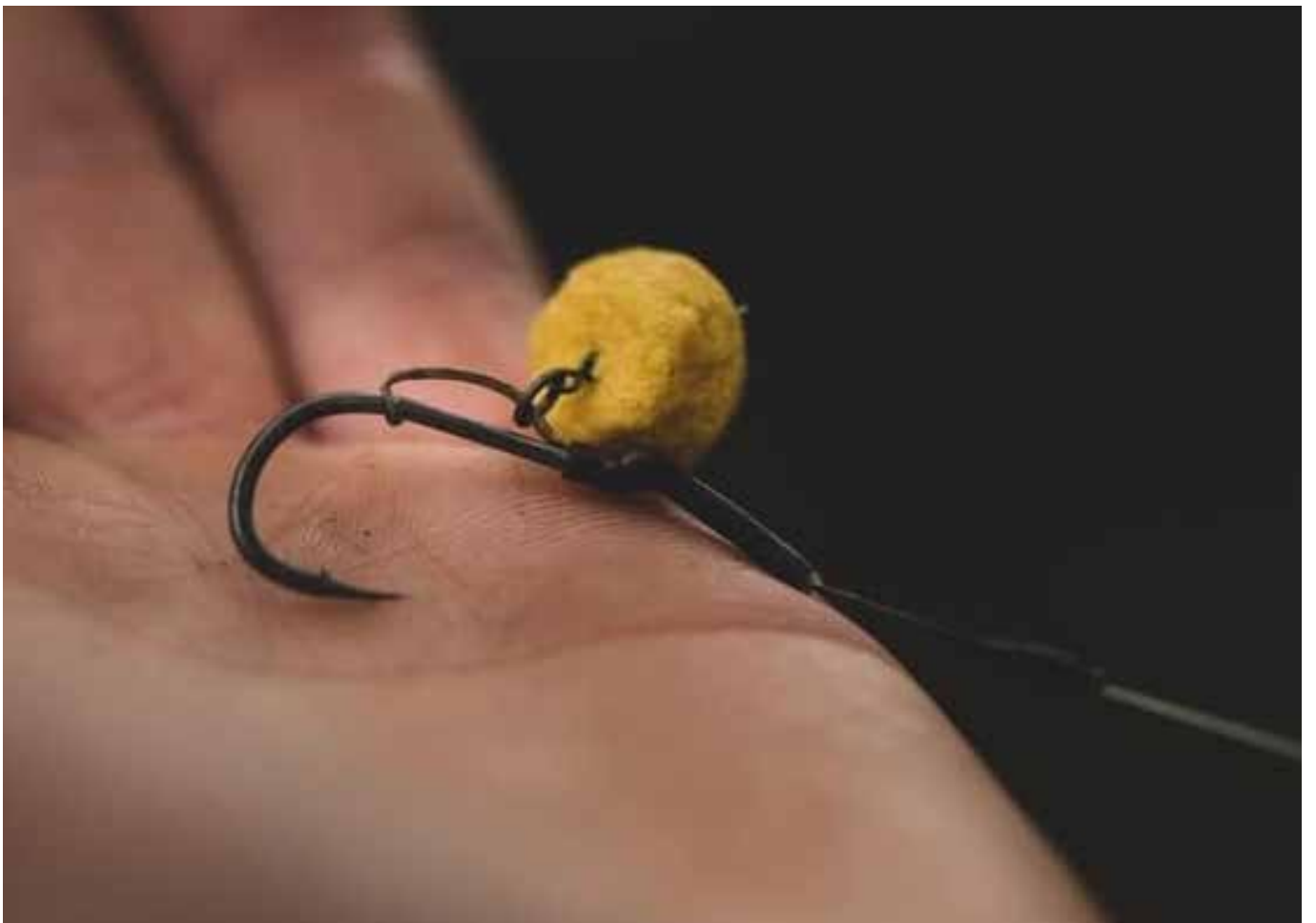
An old favourite, the combi-multi, a great pop up presentation and with the capabilities of a quick change hook, makes for convenient fishing.

I like to scale down my baiting as the temperatures cool, and that includes my hookbait size to match the 'bits and pieces' I'm feeding, so trimmed pop ups or Fake Food are great options, fished with a

Kamakura Choddy, which with the out-turned eye, creates a better rounded angle, as oppose to the more commonly used Wide Gape. Small details, which in my opinion, make the big differences.

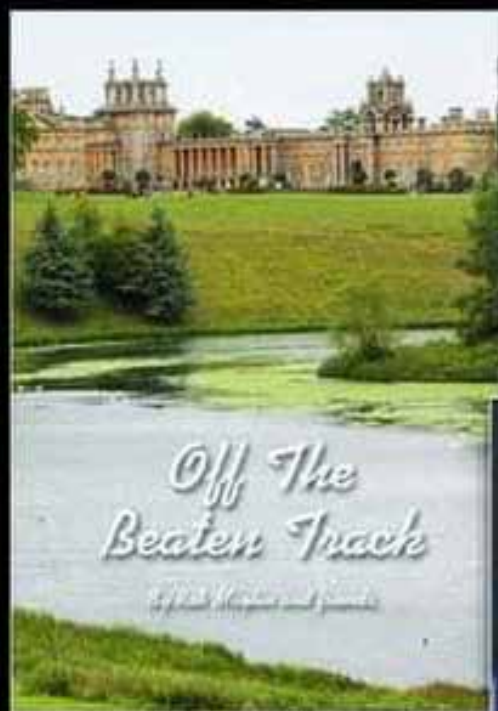
Nice supple sections of 18lb Supernatural, tied via an alright to IQ2, keeping things super discrete. A rig that's done me proud in autumn's past.





OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

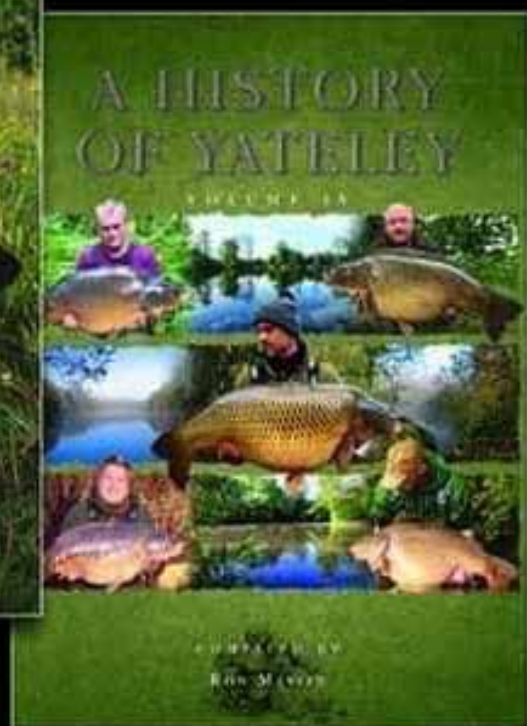
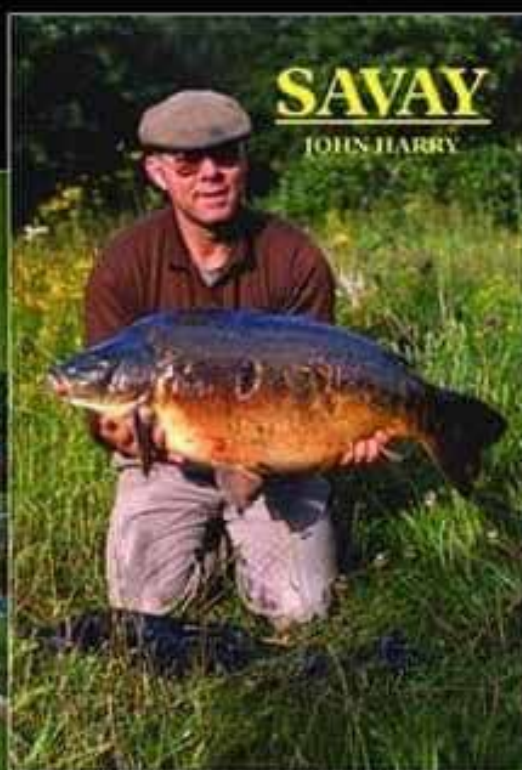
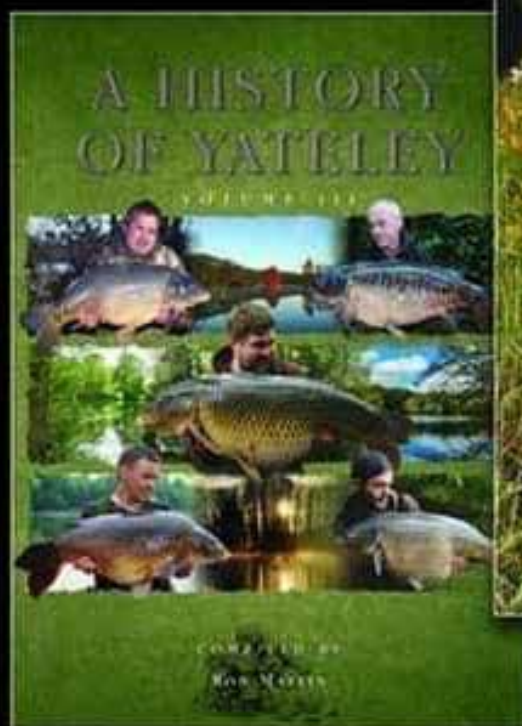
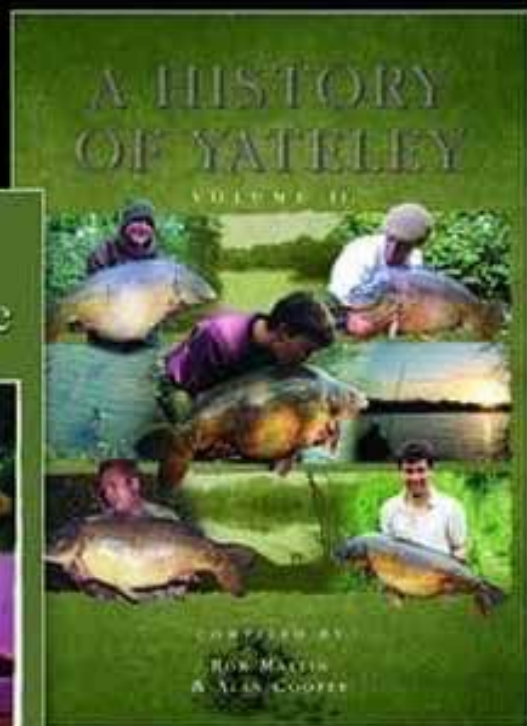
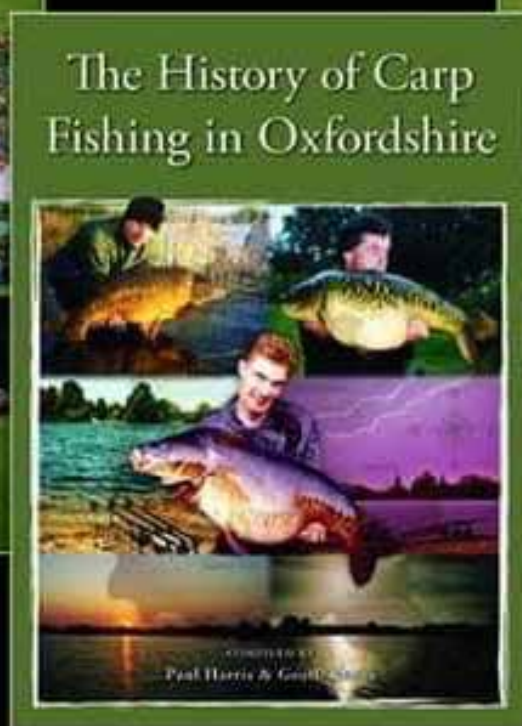
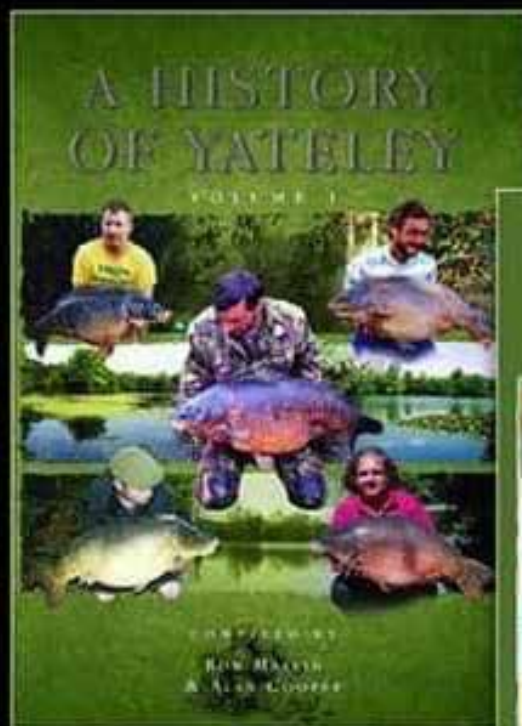
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THE HISTORY SERIES



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Hello!

so I haven't caught anything
I haven't even had a bite

Now Piss OFF

and stop bothering me!!!

MICHAEL OWEN

GREEDY PIG

So this happened yesterday, arrived Friday, first night at the lake for 3 weeks and on arrival it was rammed (nothing new) decided to tuck myself away in a little quiet corner as far from the angling pressure as possible, just how I like it , snag infested with weed and pads to contend with 2 #greedy pig rig's where plopped on a little gravel hump and baited with plenty of #ocbstench and a couple of handfuls of tigers, rods locked in the rests with a tight



clutch I sat back to soak up the atmosphere tea in hand, half ten the next morning and 2 bleeps had me diving for the right hand rod as the line whipped up out of the water, after a short but heart stopping battle over the cord he went, one look and I knew it couldn't be anything else but The Pristine all 57lb of him , BOOM , job done.

Massive thanks to Les Boler and Dan Chappel for coming down and sharing the moment as always.







SCOTT SWEETMAN

THE BOILIE APPROACH

Boilies play a vital role in my baiting approach all year, and the autumn is when I look to get spots going on those localised feeding zones by applying the bait.

I only bait when I know it's the one and only bait zones

I know the carp are using to feed. If I can, I'll try to pick more neglected areas, zones I'm confident I can get back on, so naturally, the lesser fished swims are areas I'm drawn to.

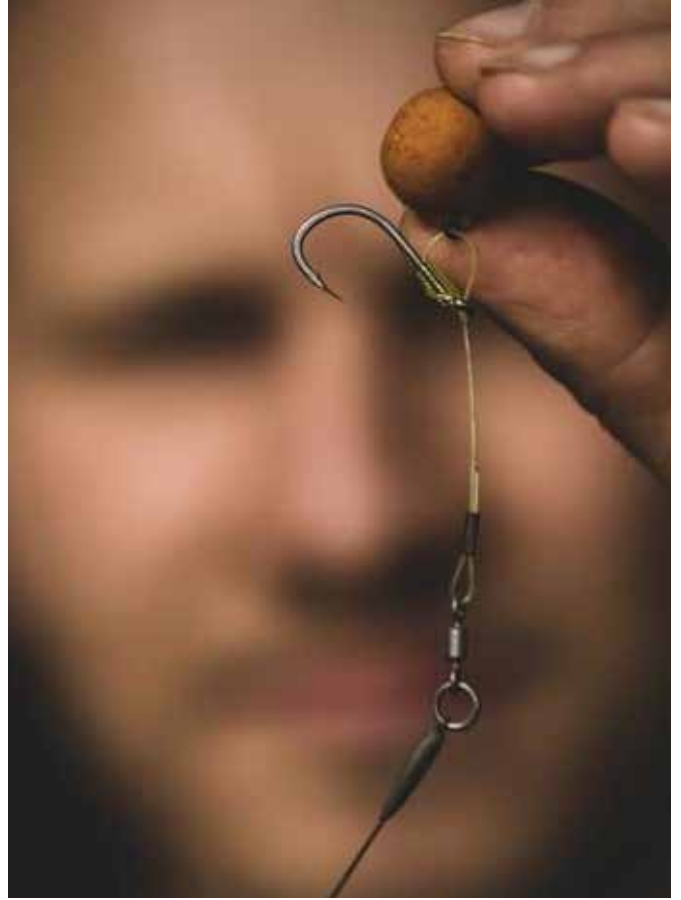
Putting in the work and finding them, often by looking through



the night and watching for sheet ups at dawn, I'll be able to pinpoint areas and that's when the baiting will begin. Hemp and boilie my go to as a pre bait, where I'll look to give them two or so hits of bait before fishing, with the final bait up three days prior to my trip. When it comes to fishing, I'll look to fish over just 50 or so baits giving me a greater chance of a quicker bite, rather than using the hemp in session. Giving a further hit of bait before I leave will

keep them feeding in the area, building their trust and often, you can get spots really rocking this way fishing them just a night a week.

By using boilie through the autumn and into winter, you can be versatile with your baiting, going from whole baits to chops to crumb as the water cools. I always take two size boilies with me, 20mm and 16mm when I'm over 100 yards and 12mm and 16mm on shorter spots where I'm baiting via the catty or by hand.





WEEMAN MARTIN

BRACE YOURSELVES

A day I shall never forget , a 99lb brace of UK carp. Absolutely smashing my previous UK PB from the previous day at 47lb, a PB that only lasted 24 hours.

As soon as I bent into it I knew it was big. On the scales "Green 123" went a massive 58lb 5oz and a new UK PB which is absolutely massive.

Crazily and Just moments before I also had this insane looking 40lb 12OZ linear, All fish caught on stiff hinges and Halobaits Squid and Octopus pink pop ups.

Massive thanks to Paul at Grenville, JPrecisionhooks, Halobaits, donk leads and Termintackleuk and all the other guys that support my fishing

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OCT 2024

FRESHLINE

CLINT'S AWESOME SEASON



RITCHIE BULLOCK OCONNOR



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Design & Production
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Also available this
month Big Carp issue
339



Front Cover:
Clint Bullock with a
big Welly mirror.



Latest Donations Via The Legacy Project Get Kids Fishing

Donations from Oxford's anglers enabling the Legacy Project to support our local families and their young anglers via the Young Angler Support Group initiative.

Dean Joseph and his family had suffered a house fire and providing tackle and equipment for their son Tommy was difficult so they contacted Dylan Harvey.

'Oxford' should be proud - because it is YOUR support and donations that made a huge difference today.

Not just a huge difference to a young lad, a difference to a father and son and a difference to a family.

This is the ethos of the TC Conservation Group - The Legacy Project

Thankyou to everyone who supports, including the Angling Trust.

6. CARP CHAT

16. CARP SCENE

**22. BARRY
OCONNOR**

35. CLINT BULLOCK

49. IAN JEAUVONS

56. DEREK RITCHIE

**64. LYNDON
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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 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.

Angling Direct
Getting Everyone Fishing

BREAKING NEWS!

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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.





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POSTER MAKER

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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.

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.



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Carp Scene

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Barry Oconnor

ISLAND OF GIANTS

Sometimes I, and I'm sure many others, like to incorporate a holiday with a bit of carp fishing. Whether it be abroad or in this country, a carp fishing holiday has a certain magic about it. This brings me to a gem of a place called Rookley Park on the Isle of Wight. I found it way back in 2006. I hadn't been to Rookley Park for about four years, so when a chance to go back came up, I jumped at it. Although I would be doing some serious fishing, it would also be a holiday for my missus and me. For those that don't know, Rookley Park is a caravan site on the Isle of Wight,



which has two small lakes on it. One is a pleasure lake and the other, which I was interested in, and no doubt most carpers would be interested in, is a two-acre specimen lake holding carp up to forty-two pounds with around twenty thirties and about eighty twenties as well. The fishing is ably run by Tim Oatley who has been at Rookley Park for many years now. He also has a well-stocked tackle shop alongside one of the lakes. The fishing is booked through Tim, and swims can be booked in advance.

Because my wife was coming with me, I booked a caravan for us to stay in, as she likes a bit of comfort, but I would be sleeping in the bivvy at night. The plan was to go out in the day, and when we came back, I would fish from about 4.00pm until about 10.00 in the morning. The caravan I stayed in before has now been sold, but I managed to find out who the new owner is, and sure enough he lets it out. It's a six-berth caravan, and the new owner has completely refurbished it to a very high standard. There is now a veranda along one

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8 ANGLERS or 4-6 ON PENINSULAR
SHOWER BLOCK AND CABIN



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11 ACRES
2.5 - 5.5FT
CARP TO 58lb
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
2-3 ANGLERS
CAMPER VANS WELCOME



MAUBRANT:

35 ACRES
2.5 - 10FT
CARP TO 60lb
BAIT BOATS OK
8 ANGLERS
DRIVE AND SURVIVE



CAMALO:

11 ACRES
2.5 - 10FT
CARP TO 70lb+
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
6 ANGLERS
LUXURY LODGE, SHOWERS



FURET:

25 ACRES
4-7FT
CARP TO 70lb+
BAIT BOATS OK
4-7 ANGLERS
VIP CABINS, SHOWERS



LA BERSONNIERE:

3 ACRES
9FT
CARP TO 60lb+
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
1-2 ANGLERS
COTTAGE SLEEPS 4



LA LOUBIERE:

37 ACRES
2.5 - 5.5FT
CARP TO 74lb
BAIT BOATS OK / BOATS ON SITE
10 ANGLERS

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side of the caravan where you can sit and look out over the specimen lake. With the caravan so close to the swim, there was an endless stream of coffee or cold drinks brought out to me. Anyway, we'd booked the caravan for seven days, and of course a week's fishing. We arrived on the morning of the first day to be greeted by Tim with a cup of tea and coffee, which was most welcome. The weather was extremely hot, and although the carp hadn't spawned, they were very close to doing so. The first evening I had a 21lb 8oz mirror and thought this was a good start. Unfortunately the hot weather took its toll, and the carp began spawning. Not really wanting to fish while they were doing their nuptials, I laid off for a while. I did a bit of tench and rudd fishing with a float to keep myself occupied. They stopped spawning after a few days, and I did try my hand once again, but to no avail. The weather was unrelentingly hot, and the water temperature was way up. There were several carp on the surface all over the lake, but nothing would interest them in feeding.



This gives me the opportunity to reminisce about previous visits that Ben and I had to Rookley Park. Over the years that Ben and I went to Rookley, we caught several carp, including many of the big girls. In the early days you were allowed to use zigs, and in one session lasting a week we caught fifty-two carp between us... not all on zigs I might add. I remember Tim saying at the time this was over a third of the stock in the lake. Unfortunately because of bad angling from a minority of anglers, Tim has now had to ban zig fishing. With people not using the right breaking strain of line and using dangerous setups, Tim had no choice but to ban zigs. This never deterred Ben and me; in fact we went on to catch some of the most sought after carp in Rookley Specimen Lake.

I first went to Rookley Park in June of 2006, but poor old Ben couldn't come because of work. My first carp on that

Barry Oconnor



session was a 15lb mirror. When the five-day session had ended, I'd caught fifteen carp up to 27lb 12oz, which included ten twenties. I was hooked (excuse the pun); I just had to get back, and soon. I booked a return session for September 2006, and of course Ben would be coming this time. Whilst on this session, we'd been catching regularly. Tim keeps a good record of

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Barry Oconnor

what has been caught from the Speci Lake and informed us that the next twenty-pound carp that comes out will be the 400th twenty from the specimen lake this year. He was going to reward the captor with a bottle of champagne. There were others fishing the lake, so it could go to anyone. I had a run that produced a 19lb 8oz mirror – close, but not close enough. Ben's next run however produced a 26lb 8oz mirror and got him a bottle of champagne which Ben, Tim and I devoured with ease. On this session we had fifty-two carp between us with 39 of them being twenties. We still hadn't connected with any thirties though. The biggest on this trip was a mirror caught by Ben at 29lb 2oz.

Our next visit was in July 2007, and it wasn't long before I was into one of the hard-fighting Rookley carp – it was giving me a right row. Eventually it rolled near the net, and we could





Barry Oconnor

see it was a good fish. As it went in the net, we thought it could be my first Rookley thirty. It certainly was, and it weighed in at 30lb 12oz, a carp named Dot. Ben however was still looking for his first thirty, and he wasn't disappointed. A bait placed next to some marginal lilies was snapped up, and his bite alarm went into meltdown. Eventually he got it into the net, and it was duly weighed. It went 32lb 8oz. Ben had now had his first thirty from Rookley Park. It didn't end there though. After losing the next two carp, his hookbait near the marginal lilies was once again taken, and this time it produced what looked like a bigger carp. It certainly was, at 33lb 8oz.

Little did I know that this session was going to be something special for me. Both Ben and I had caught a few carp already on this session. During the night I had a screaming run, which had me out of the bivvy like a shot. I grabbed the rod and closed my hand around the spool to slow the carp down. I tightened the clutch, and the battle commenced. This fish just did not want to come to the bank and sped off on powering runs. I



finally got it to the bank and netted it. I could see it was huge as it lay in the net. Because of my bad back, I left the fish securely in the net and went to get Ben who was on the opposite bank. When we got back we set about weighing the fish. Ben said, "It's massive!" The scales settled at 40lb 2oz. Ben smiled and said,



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“Dad, you’ve just had your first English forty!”

As we were weighing it, a guy appeared in my swim. Remember it was night-time, and he startled us a bit. The guy said he recognised the carp as Rosie, the biggest carp in Rookley at the time. He said he’d been trying to catch her for years. He even showed us a tattoo across his lower back with the name “Rosie”, although he said it was his daughter’s name. We did wonder though. I got a bottle of champagne from Tim to celebrate the fact that this was the first forty from Rookley Park. A couple of days later on the same session I was sitting chatting to an angler named Jason. I was showing him some rigs and bait and talking tactics, as you do. My missus and I were going to get some fish and chips that evening, so I asked



Jason if he wanted to look after the rods while we were away, otherwise I would have to reel them in while we went to the chippy. He was a bit apprehensive but agreed. I told him Ben wasn't far away if he needed help. As we returned from the chippy, I could see a lot of people in the swim and guessed Jason had caught something. Ben informed me that Jason had caught a carp named Lily on one of my rods. Jason thought I'd have the right hump with it, but nothing could be further from the truth. I was so pleased for him. His previous PB was 18lb. We became very good friends after that. This session ended all too soon, and our final tally was 46 carp including one forty, five thirties, thirty-five twenties and five doubles.

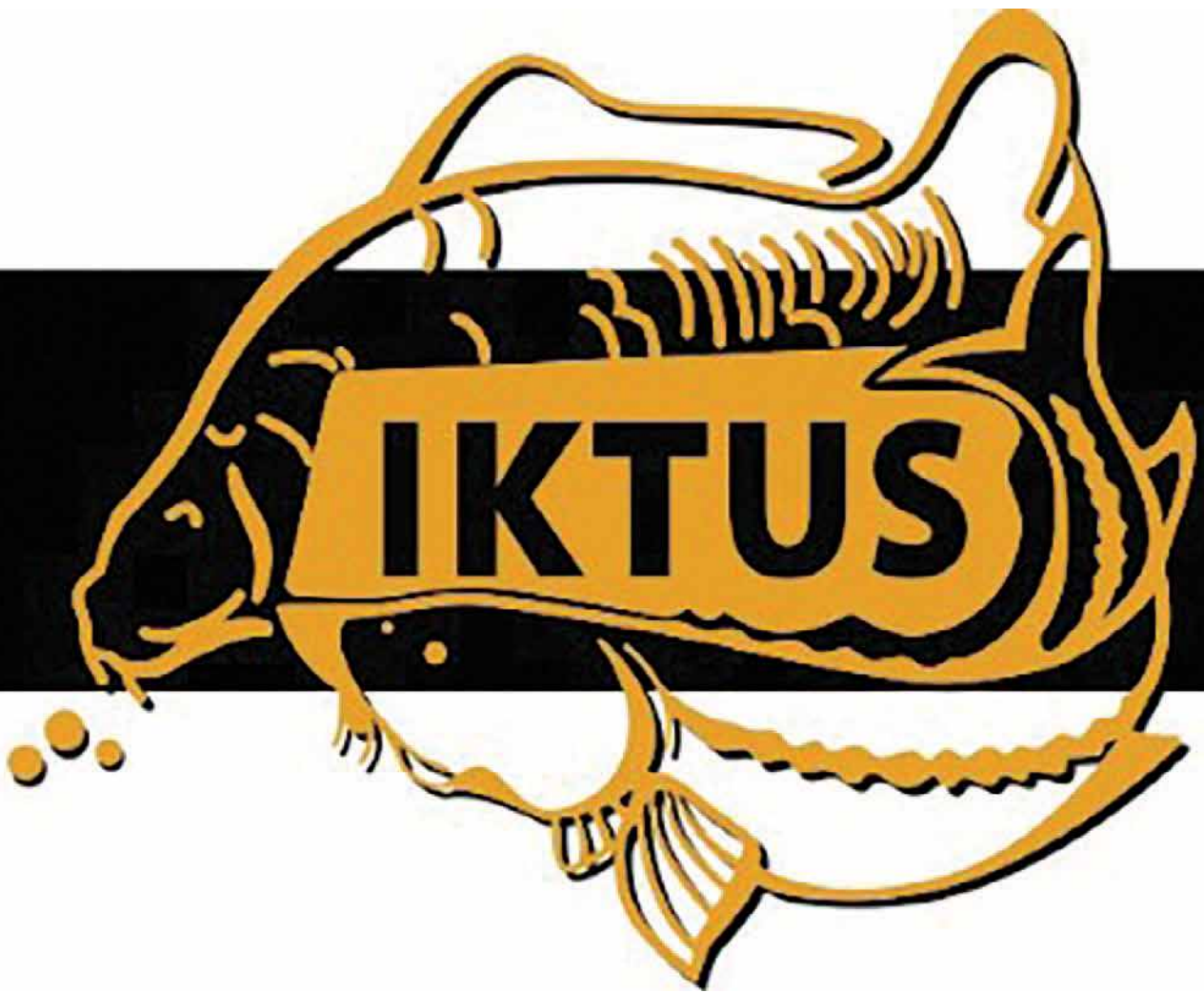
We didn't return to Rookley until November 2008. By now we'd certainly learnt a thing or two about catching the carp there. The margins always produced fish at Rookley. The carp obviously feel safe in these areas and will feed there. How many times have you changed your hookbait and thrown the old one in the margins? Many times, I would imagine – everyone does

it. Anyway, we tried our luck in the margins again. After a quiet night, which produced a 22lb mirror for me, Ben came round to see me and told me he had Rosie in his landing net. I didn't believe him, but after walking round to his swim, sure enough there was Rosie. Ben had



Barry Oconnor





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Barry Oconnor

a run from a bait he'd put close to some marginal lilies. The fish had shot off into open water but decided it wanted to go back to the lilies it had come from, only this time it went right into them. Ben was concerned at losing what felt like a good fish. He walked round to the pads and managed to get it out and into the net. We duly weighed her, and the scales settled at 38lb 8oz. Not content with catching Rosie, he went on to catch Rosie's Mate as well at 32lb 2oz. Apparently it hadn't been out for nine months. My biggest carp of this session was The Long One at 29lb 11oz. The tally for the session was 38 carp between 18lb and 38lb 8oz.

It was August 2009 that we managed to get back to Rookley, and I renewed my acquaintance with The Long One, up in weight at 34lb 2oz and also Rosie down in weight at 37lb. Ben meanwhile caught Rosie's Mate again at a weight of 36lb 4oz and also The Pet at 32lb. This session ended with a total of 50 carp. This included six thirties, forty-one twenties and three





doubles. This was the first time we used our Free Spirit rods and they performed excellently.

I returned to Rookley in June of 2010. Ben couldn't make it because of work. The journey to Rookley takes me two-and-a-half hours door-to-door, and that includes the ferry crossing. I had 13 carp on this trip including reacquainting myself with Rosie at a higher weight of 40lb 12oz. At the time it was the lake record.

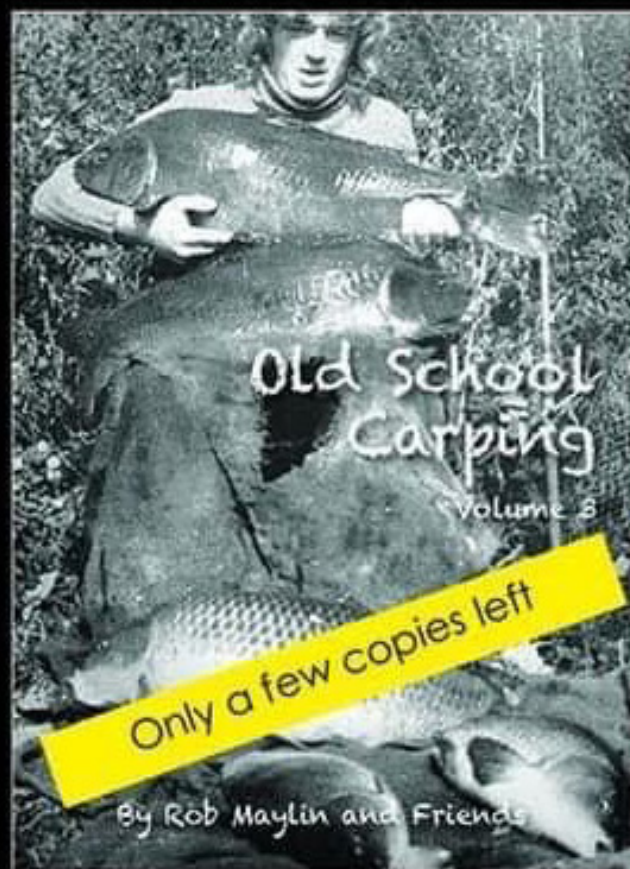
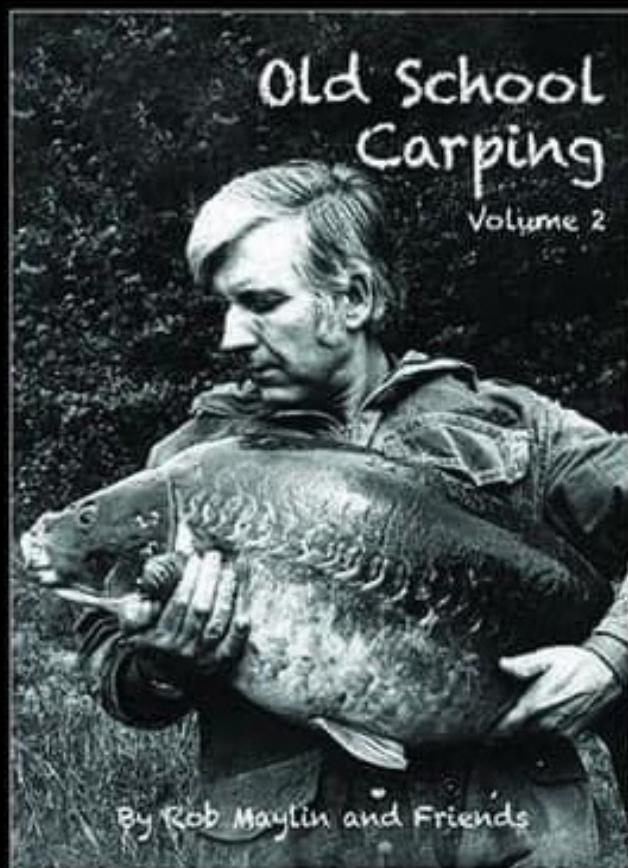
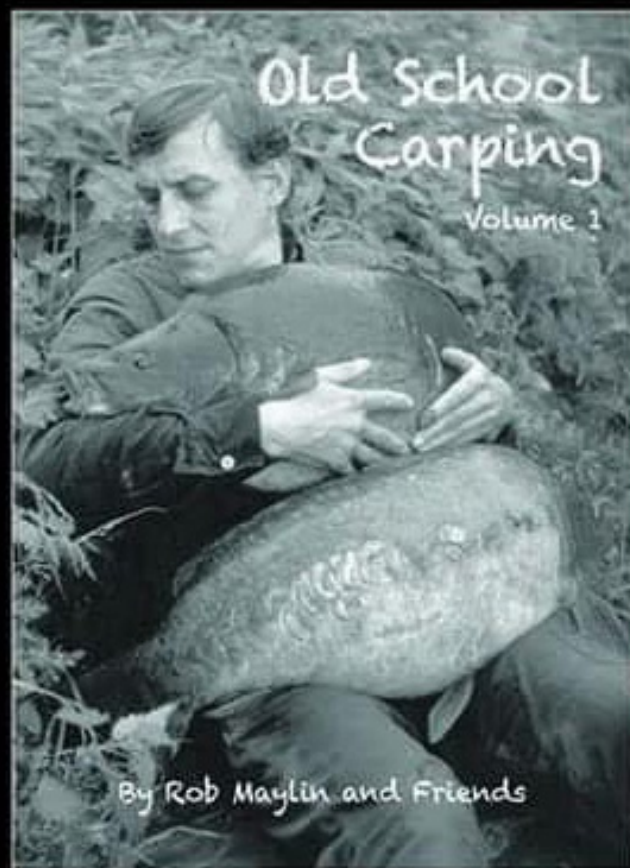
Another visit was arranged for October 2010, and I arrived to find the weather was decidedly wintry. With high pressure and a mixture of bright sunshine, wind, rain and frost, it was going to be hard going. The first 24 hours didn't produce anything, although I could hear some carp crashing in the night. I got up to look, and I could see them in the moonlight, but they were in another angler's swim. In case you're wondering, no, I didn't cast into his swim. The next night they were splashing in my swim, and I had a linear of 25lb 2oz. Despite temperatures reaching -2 degrees C and frost covering my bivvy, I managed to catch a few carp. Rookley wasn't fishing anywhere near its potential though, but there is always next time. Up to and including this session, Ben and I had accounted for 247 carp in what amounted to five visits for Ben and eleven visits for me.

The last time I went to Rookley Park before the 2017 session was in August 2013. Again Ben couldn't make it. After settling in, I once again put two rods next to some reeds with the third under a tree. My first run occurred in the early hours of the first morning. It was an upper double, which was quickly followed by another. As I said earlier, the missus and I go out during the day. I've always found that resting the swim at Rookley can be beneficial. A few days in to the holiday session, and I'd accounted for six carp up to 23lb 4oz. All three rods

had produced, so I saw no reason to change tactics. At first light on the last day but one, I had a screaming run from the rod under the tree. I had to dip the rod to stop the line getting caught on the branches that were touching the water. After a few powering runs it went over the drawstring and into the net. I could see it was the biggest of the session so far. It was a stunning mirror and took the needle on the scales round to 33lb 5oz. Tim said it was a carp named Bill, one of the few carp I hadn't caught at Rookley. The last day of our holiday arrived, and we started packing to go home. On this session I had accounted for eleven carp, the biggest being the 33lb 5oz mirror. Over the years, Ben and I have had some very good holiday sessions at Rookley Park. It's a shame that it is no longer there and the carp have been spread across the UK.



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CLINT BULLOCK

A YEAR TO REMEMBER

It all started back in February. The weather was getting better, so time to get the rods out and back down to Wellington Country Park to do battle with the lumps. I fished every weekend in February with no success, but still kept the bait going in with the throwing stick. I was using Essential Baits B5 boilies in size 20mm.

Thursday March 9th: I was feeling excited because a few fish had been coming out. I arrived down the lake at 7am, and I headed round with my barrow to the Hole In The Bush because I knew

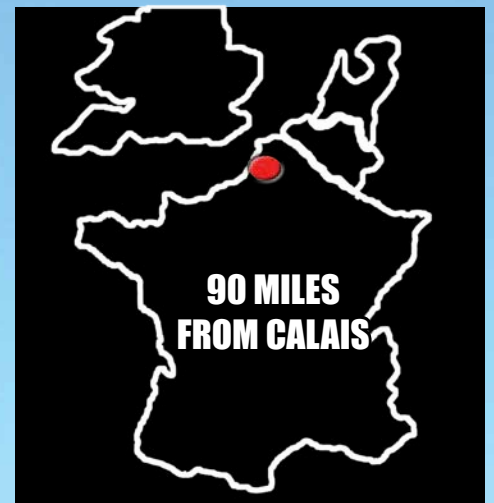
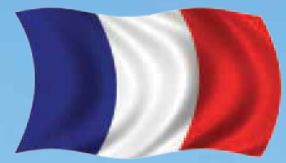


that it was coming vacant that morning, but the thing was the guy who was in Grassy was heading into Hole In The Bush, so I found myself pushing all the way round the other side of the lake and decided to drop in a swim named Goose Shit.

So after getting my gear sorted out in the swim, I cast my right rod and middle rod long over towards the island in the same area, and I scattered 3kg of 20mm over the area with the throwing stick. The left hand rod was put short at 80 yards, straight out in front of me with 2kg scattered over the area. It was now the next morning (10th March) 7am, and the right rod alarm sounded. I lifted into the rod, and I saw a bird on the surface – oh no, it was a coot! So after dealing with the coot, the rod went out back on the same spot.

At around 9am, Dave was down to do a few nights. He dropped in the Finger Arm, which is behind Goose, and I made us both

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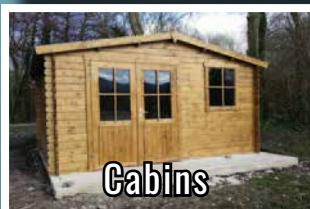
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a cuppa. As we chatted, a fish jumped out to my right in front of the Fisherman's Lodge 20 yards off the bank, so I reeled in one of the long rods and dropped it on the area where the fish had shown, but I didn't put any bait over it. Around midday the rod which I had been cooted on, and which I recast at 7am, just screamed off. After having a good battle with the fish, I managed to land it. I looked in the net and shouted, "Come On!" It was a lump! It was funny, but within a few minutes of landing the fish, loads of the guys that had packed up or were still fishing came over for a look and to help out with pictures and do some filming for me on my iPad.

Dave helped me get the fish out on the unhooking mat. We opened the sling, and there was a lot of discussion from the guys about which fish it was! Nick identified the fish when I lifted her up for the pictures, and he said, "It's Drop Scale," and she tipped the scales round to 51lb 2oz. I was well happy with that, plus she was my first fish on the Essential Baits B5. The rod was soon recast back to the area. At around 3pm, I rebaited on the long area with 2kg, and put out 40 baits on the spot where I had seen the fish bosh out to my right in front of the Lodge.

It was round 5pm, I was in the bivvy making some rigs, then to my surprise the right hand rod bent round, and I was away. I had to get in my waders quickly because where I was fishing there were snags to my right side and a drop off all round the swim, so off I went in the water, stepping over my pod, but the thing was I forgot to bring the landing net with me, which was back near my rods - nightmare! Luckily enough, I shouted to Dave to come with his waders. He was in the water now with the net, and after playing the fish for a while, it headed down the deep margins then came up onto the bar. It was well funny, and we



were both laughing like a pair of kids. Dave was trying to net it, but the water was as deep as the fish, only around 18 inches, and it swim out of the net on the first attempt, but then he landed it! Good skills to that man. Once we stopped laughing, I said to him, "Is it a good one?" He replied, "Yes it looks a big'un!" I walked over and peered into the net, and it was a lump of a common. It looked to me to be a fish called the Chestnut Common, but we weren't sure. We put the fish in the retention sling for a while, then Jamie the bailiff came over to help out. We weighed the fish and identified it as the Chestnut Common, which came in at 53lb 15oz and a new PB, plus a brace of 50s in an afternoon! I was blown away!! What a session!

Friday March 31st: I found myself in Hole In The Bush for the weekend. In the early hours of Saturday morning, I landed a nice mirror at 30lb 3oz from an area at 115 yards, baited with 3kg of

CLINT BULLOCK



20mm B5 boilies scattered over the area. At 11am, I had a take, but sadly lost that one due to a cut off, and the line was damaged whilst reeling in the slack.

It was now Thursday May 4th, and I was buzzing when I arrived at Welly, as Goose Shit was empty. I was beginning to love this swim, plus this was my first trip with my new set of rods. I basically fished the same areas as my previous successful session in this swim and cast out two rods long towards the island and one short straight out in front of me. After sticking 3kg of boilies towards the island area, I put out a further 2kg of Essential Baits B5s over the short rod. It was time to sit back, relax and hope something would happen. I was feeling very confident in the peg now.

It was now Friday, and just before 6pm, the long rod towards the island ripped off, and after a hard 15-minute fight, the fish



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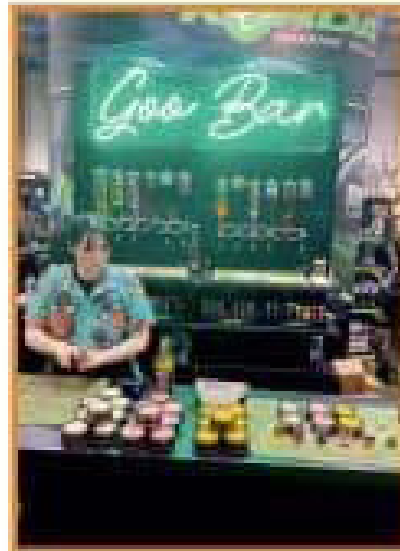
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was it was in the net, a nice mirror coming in at 46lb 4oz. I was well happy. I recast the rod back onto the long area towards the island and put out another 2kg of B5 boilies with a stick over the spot.

The next day at round 2pm, the alarm burst into life on the short rod. I lifted into the rod, and the fish went on a wild run, taking 50 yards of line off the spool. The fish slowed up, so I managed to get it back towards me. The fish turned on its side, and I identified it by an old ulcer scar on its flank – it was the Ulcer Fish! Jamie and Wayne the bailiffs came walking over, and I turned to them and said, “It’s the Ulcer!!” Jamie replied, “How do you know that?” I said, “I saw it side-on and the gap where it once had the ulcer on its side.” After another ten minutes of plodding about, she went in the net! I was shaking big time, as I knew it would be another PB, but how big was she? We got her



on the scales, and they went round to 57lb 12oz – WOW! A new PB, and I was overjoyed. Sadly at the time of writing, the Ulcer Fish is no longer with us – RIP.

19th May: This was my last trip of the 2016-17 season. I fished in a swim called the Finger Arm and did battle with an old warrior fish called Black Spot Mirror, which came in at 36lb 8oz. My first few sessions of the new 2017-18 season were fished without success, with no action through June and July, but I still kept the boilies going in. It started to come together midway through August, and my next capture was again back in Goose Shit with a nice 28lb mirror on August 18th. Then Hole In The Bush did me a nice 29lb 8oz mirror on August 26th. Both fish on each occasion were caught over a lot of B5.

Session Of A Lifetime: I started my annual five-night session on the afternoon of Thursday 8th September. As I pulled into the

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car park at Welly, to my surprise there were no other vehicles to be seen, so basically I had the pick of the whole lake. I decided to drop back into Goose Shit – after all, it had been very good to me over the previous months. I'd had previous captures in there, plus I finished in that swim a week earlier and had put in around 6kg of B5 on various areas. So I had my three spots: the left rod was at 80 yards, and the other two rods put out long at 115 yards over towards the island. The wind was coming over the top my head towards the island, and the boilies were going out like a dream in the throwing stick. After sticking out a good bed of Essential Baits B5 boilies, my traps were set.

The next morning at around 9am, the alarm sounded on one of the long rods. I had a good scrap, and the fish dropped over the

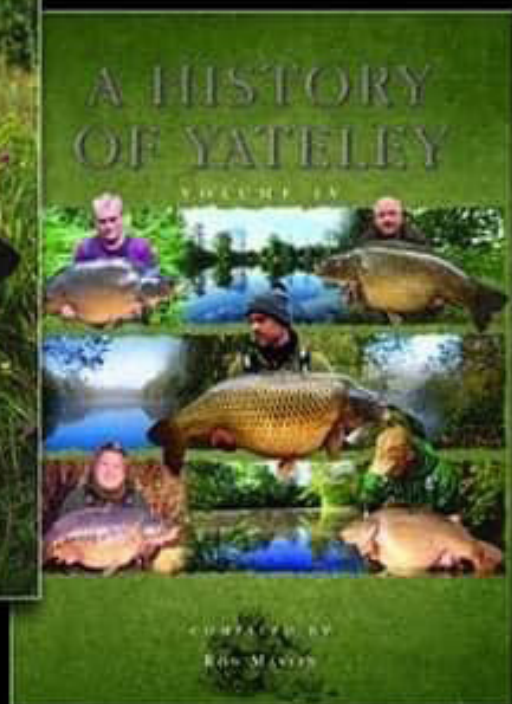
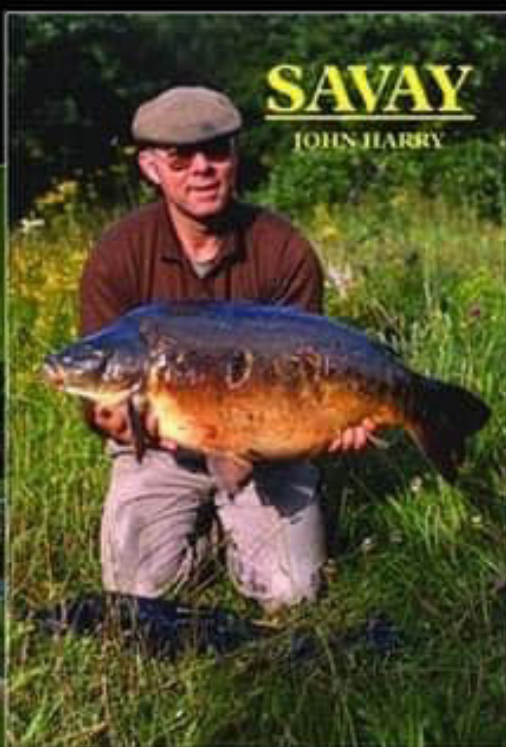
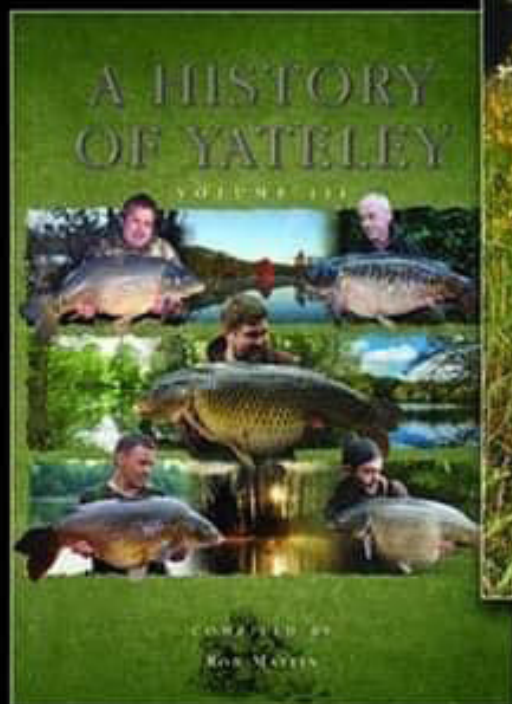
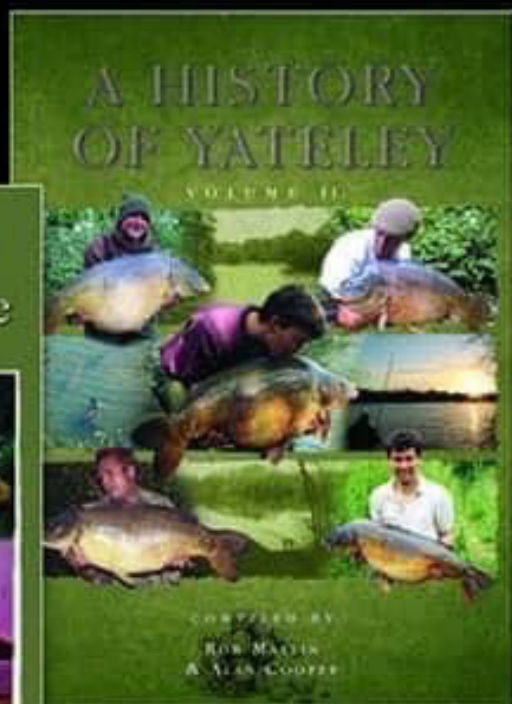
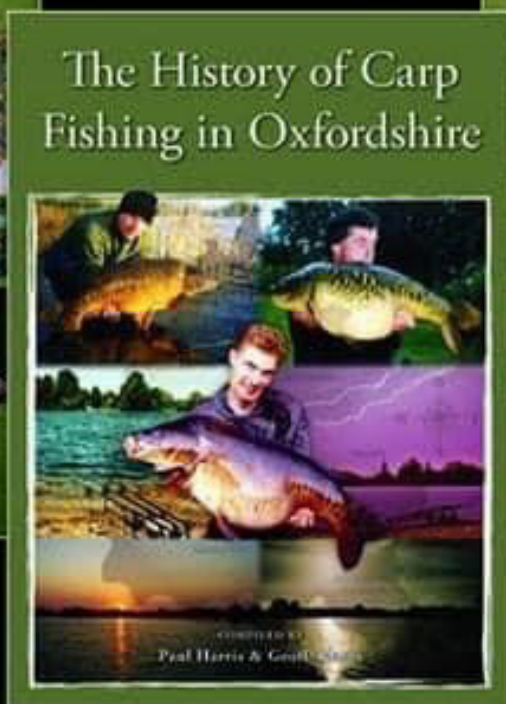
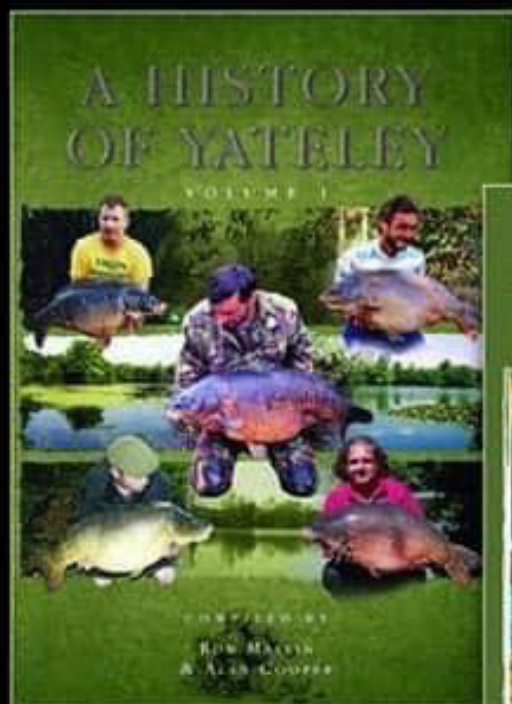




net. It was a ghost carp at 46lb 8oz, which was my 50th fish from the lake. I recast and rebaited with a few more kilos of the B5 –a great start to my five days. My next take came at 3pm, again on the long area, and after a 20-minute battle, my second fish of the day was in the net. I had a little look in the net and said to myself, “That’s a Lump!” The fish weighed 53lb 4oz. I had caught a carp called the Small Tail Mirror; I couldn’t believe my luck.

It was now Saturday morning, my alarm ripped off at 9am again, the same time as the day before, and I landed a 39lb 8oz mirror known as the Patient, again from the long area. This fish beat the hell out of me on the mat, and I’ve been told by Doctor Dave that its goes mad on the bank, and it did! Nothing happened on Sunday, but I still put some more bait back out.

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It was now 5am on Monday, and I had a one-toner on the short rod at 80 yards. I had a mad battle with the fish for 25 minutes before she dropped in my net. I said to myself, "That's one of the A-team!" I put the fish in the sling, and then I rang across to Ross who was fishing in a swim called Lorries. I said, "I have a lump in the sling!" He said, "Really?" and I said, "It's one of the A-team, mate." He came round 15 minutes later to help me out. We got the fish on the mat, unzipped the sling, and it was massive. I had caught a fish called the Clean Fish, and I just started laughing! I couldn't believe how this session was turning out. It tipped the scales at 52lb 10oz. I couldn't believe my luck – two 50s, and that's the second time this year I've braced two 50s and in the same swim – buzzing!

Crazy Five Hours: It was now the Tuesday, and at 7am, I only had five hours left of my session before I had to pack up. Spud



CLINT BULLOCK

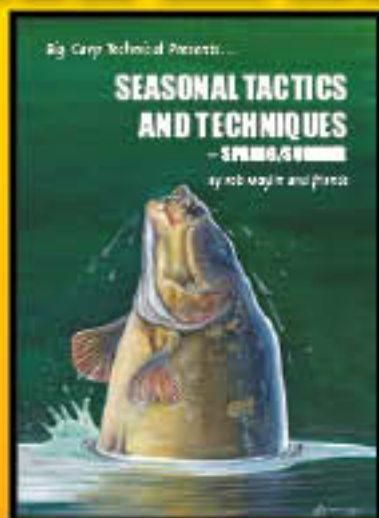


was round at 8am to move in behind me, so as always, the kettle went on for a cuppa. Not long after drinking the tea, the right hand alarm sounded, and I was away again with another good battle. It was a common, and another big fish was in the net. I belled Jamie the bailiff to come round, and Spud was there as well. We got the fish on the mat, had a little look, and I said, "It's the Small Tail Common." The scales read 48lb 8oz, and I was over the moon at this point.

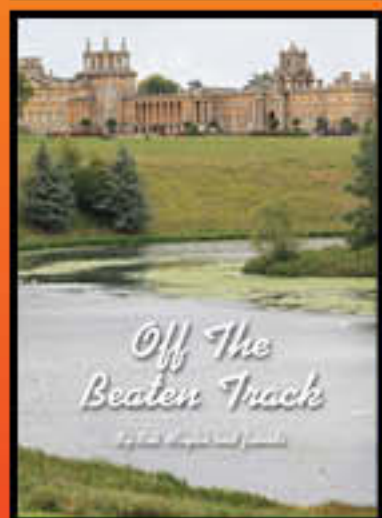
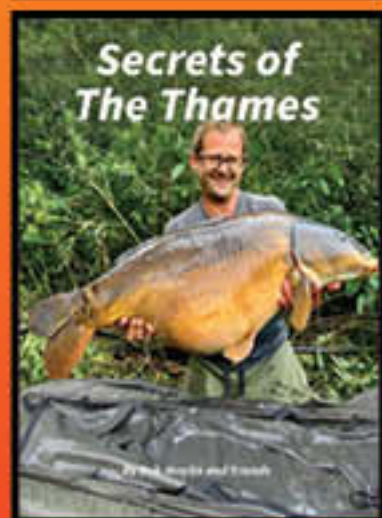
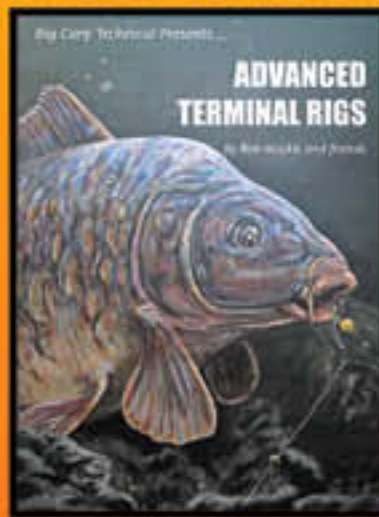
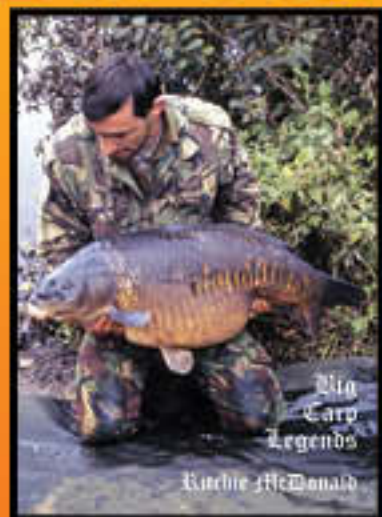
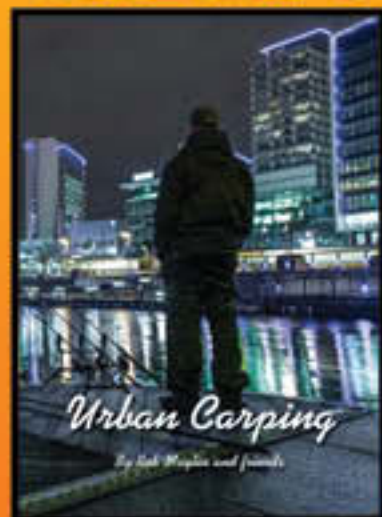
I got the rod back on the same spot, and at 10.30am, I was away again on the same rod! This time it was a 32lb 8oz common. After dealing with the fish, I quickly recast the rod back on the same spot. It went down so nicely, I said to myself, "That's a take." An hour later at 11.35am, I had a one-toner. I lifted into the rod, jumped in my waders, and the fish stripped off 100 yards of line from the spool. I knew it was another big fish, and Spud came over and pulled my waders up so I could get into the water and try and stop this beast. The fish slowed down, so I could retrieve some line. Meanwhile Spud was in the water with his waders on and ready with the net. I said to him, "This is a big fish - it's got to be another one of the A-team!" It was heavy and was just plodding around. After playing the fish for half an hour, I managed to get it close to the net, and bang - Spud swooped, and the fish was in the net. He said, "It's bloody massive!" I went over and couldn't believe my eyes - it was huge! We both lifted the lump on the mat, unzipped the sling, and boom - it was Scruffy Bob, weighing in at 55lb 8oz, an absolute brute of a carp. He was my last fish of my session of a lifetime and one that I will never forget.

What a year I'm having! Scruffy Bob is my sixth UK 50lb-plus fish this year and my tenth UK 50lb-plus fish.

SUMMER S



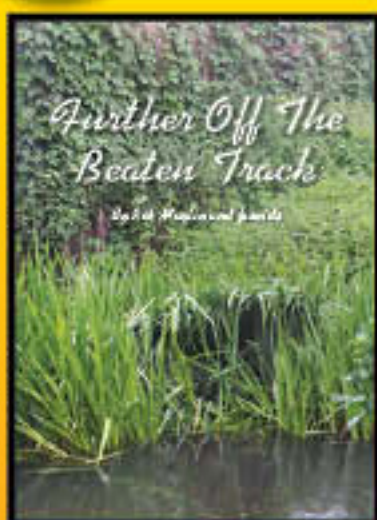
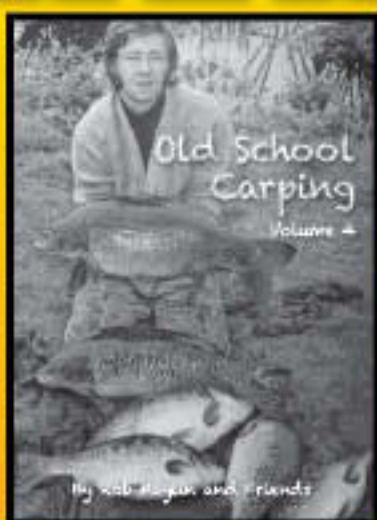
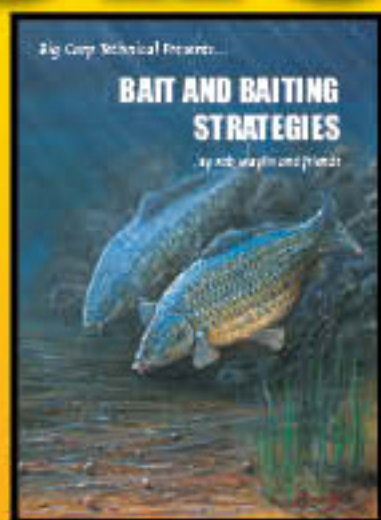
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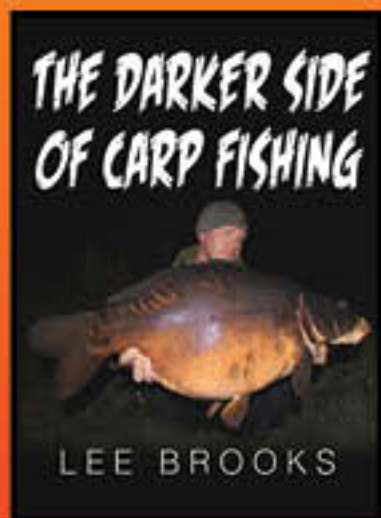
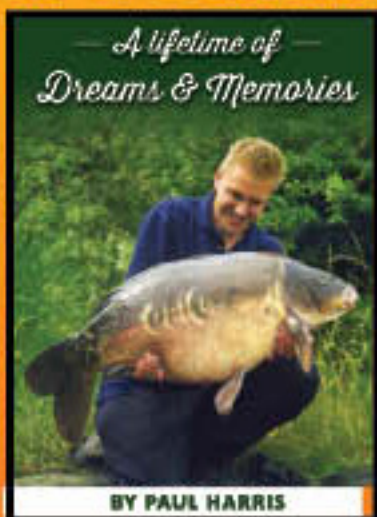
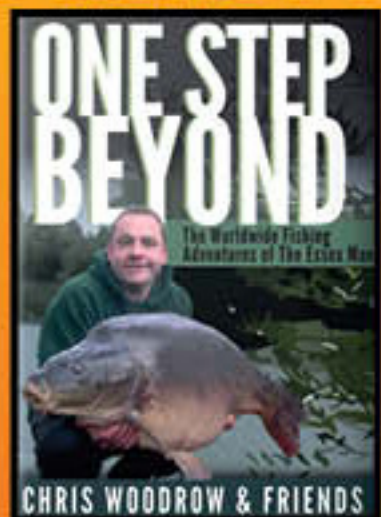
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COATE WATER CAMPAIGN

It was moving to Swindon a number of years ago, when a large park lake called Coate Water first came onto my radar. Looking back, it was a lake I'd already heard so much about, but at the time of hearing these epic tales of chasing monster elusive carp from a lake that challenged your nerve just as much as your angling, the name of the place had washed over me. I was a lot younger then, and travelling

great distances to pursue my quarry simply wasn't an option, no matter how much I pestered my dad. It was the lake's reputation that had stopped me from joining as soon as I'd upped sticks and moved to the southwest. The last few years, I have walked the banks after work, occasionally catching a glimpse of a wary old carp. This year I had decided that the temptation to test myself against these magnificent creatures

was too great. The itch just had to be scratched. The lake itself is a busy park lake of approximately 56 acres with a stock that is probably somewhere between 50 and 70 fish. It also abides by the traditional season, which meant that by the time the 16th June came around, I was well and truly champing at the bit.

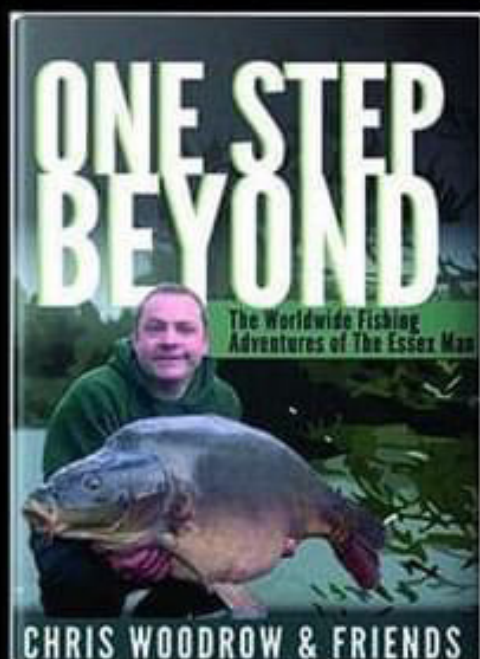
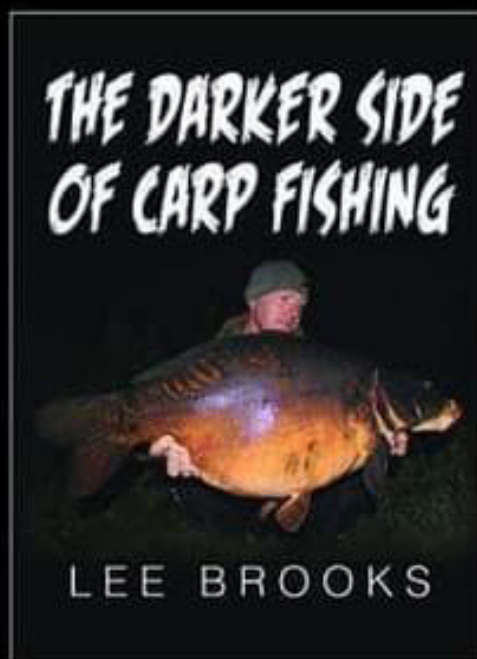
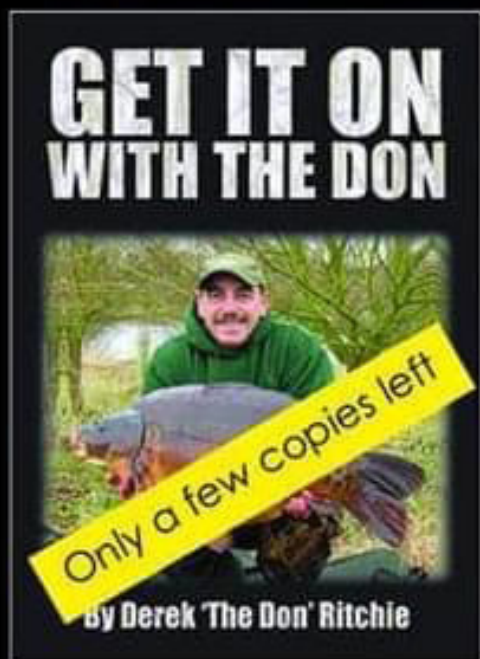
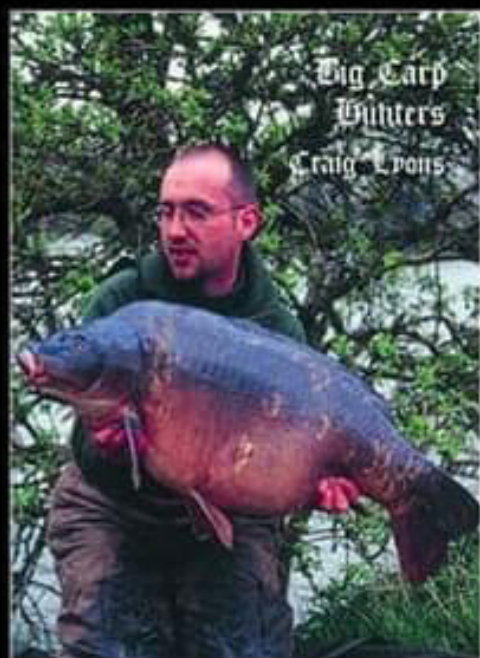
In the last few weeks leading up to the start of the season, I was down the lake every night after work, flicking a lead around and introducing a bit of bait on likely looking areas. My excitement levels grew, as on the last few nights prior to the kick-off of the season, I had a number of carp actively feeding on one of my baited areas. I kept the area topped up with bait in hope of holding them there a while longer, as it was here that I planned my initial assault.

I arrived at the lake at midday on the 15th to ensure I managed to secure my chosen swim. I quickly loaded up my barrow and headed to my baited spot. As I headed towards the swim it soon became glaringly apparent that I hadn't been early enough to secure my desired swim, and I was gutted. I stopped for a quick chinwag and to see if the carp were still in the area, which they were, and in numbers. After mentally beating myself for not being quick enough, I then set about formulating a new plan of attack. The lake was quite busy with anglers casually setting up down the majority of the shallower end of the lake. No surprise that this was where most of the carp could be spotted cruising from weed bed to weed bed. I decided to fish the other end of the lake near the island in hope that if the guys managed to nick a bite or two, the fish would push down my way.

Midnight came, and the rigs were dispatched before I drifted off to dream about what might be. At approximately 2am, I was rudely awoken as my alarms went into meltdown. I couldn't believe my luck – a take on my first night from a tricky pit.

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Sadly, the joy was short lived, as by the time I made it to my rods, I could tell something wasn't quite right. I looked out to see that a huge dog otter had picked up two of my lines. The rods were quickly sorted out, and I was sat there staring into the darkness, contemplating my next move, as I doubted that there would be any fish in the area with otters present. I decided to stay put and reassess the situation in the morning, as I guessed that the majority of the fish were still up the other end of the lake.

Much to my surprise, at 5am my rod was away again, but this time there was no mistaking it was definitely a fish. The fight was largely uneventful, and I soon slipped the net under my first Coate Water carp, and a little dark mid double mirror was my prize. Although not what I was at Coate for, it was very welcome nonetheless and made the decision to stay put or move infinitely easier. The remainder of the session saw me reel off a succession of tench, before I was homeward bound, reasonably happy with my first foray on the lake.

The next couple of sessions, I stayed pretty mobile. However, they were largely uneventful with only another small mirror to my name on the carp front, although the lake had only given up three of its residents in total, to my knowledge. I had managed to catch a number of bream – big bream! This place must be a bream angler's utopia, as the average stamp must have been around the 10lb mark. The lake was still very busy with the early season buzz, so I decided to give it a rest for a couple of weeks and wait for the anglers to thin out. During this time, I walked the banks two or three times a week to try a stay in touch with the place, but it was too busy to get anything going. If the weatherman was right, my next session would



coincide with a fresh southwesterly and a drop in pressure. To say the pressure was dropping through the floor would be an exaggeration, but I felt confident that the fish would start to feed, as it was the first drop in pressure since the season started. I got down the lake and pitched up in a swim that I felt the fish would pass through, as I was sure they were going to get on the end of the wind.

During the week, I introduced some bait onto a spot that I had previously found during my pre-season leading around. The area in question was just beyond a weed bed where there was approximately a yard or so of firm sand, which went into silt. I felt sure the fish would patrol this sandy area, which had the added security of the weed bed. I opted to fish just into the silt, as I believed I would achieve a better line lay and that the silt would also conceal my rigs better. Well, the weatherman got it right, and shortly after setting up, the wind swung, and it brought with it the first rain for a number of weeks. Bites quickly materialised, but again much to my dismay it was the bream that found me. I tried tweaking my setup to try and make it bream-proof, but these things were massive and nothing seemed safe.

At roughly 4pm, I was sat there sodden and disconsolate as I had already managed upward of 15 bream in only a couple of hours' fishing when I received another twitchy bite. I proceeded to lift up the rod and reel in yet another bloody bream when all of a sudden my clutch started singing as my reel was relieved of around 30 yards of line in a couple of seconds. I must admit that my initial thought was that this bream must be on steroids before quickly realising that I was doing battle with a carp. My rod was now doubled over,

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.

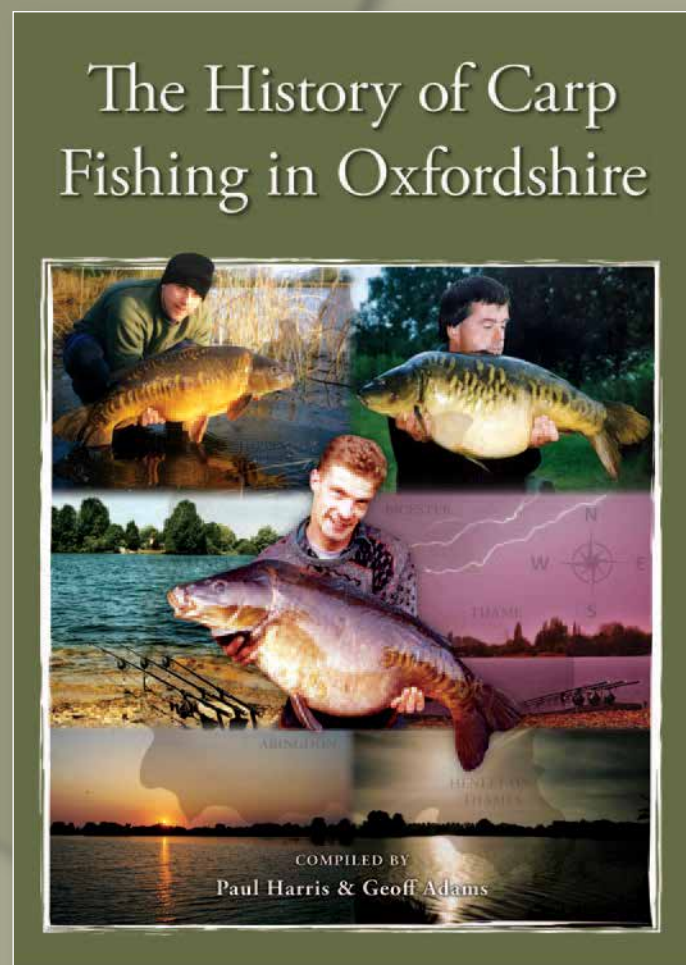
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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



and I was struggling to gain a significant amount of line. This stalemate lasted for a few good minutes with the fish plodding around well past the aforementioned weed bed. It became apparent I was doing battle with a completely different beast to what I had previously encountered on the lake.

I was now gaining line and thought the fight was all but over. That was until she reached the shallower water of the margin as another 20 yards of line were stripped as she tore down the margin to my left. One last hurrah before she finally slipped over the net cord, and I peered into the net to see a large dark-framed mirror, which I believed to be a fish called C Scale, one

of the known big girls, so I was a little shocked at just how easy she was to lift from the water. On the mat it was obvious that she was empty from a good spawning. She had also sustained some damage from photos I'd seen of her last year, as a large portion of her bottom lobe was missing. I could only think that she could've had a lucky escape from the clutches of an otter, but this is a debate for another time, and no one will truly know how the damage was sustained. On the scales she went 33lb 9oz, and with the pictures done and her wounds treated, she was released to fight another day.

Conditions looked perfect, so I was surprised when I awoke the next morning that I hadn't had any more action. I was even



more surprised that a buoy had been dropped directly over where I was fishing. I now had sailboats circulating my spot like vultures on the Serengeti looking to pick apart any chance I had of another fish. I decided to pack up and go home, but before I could, my middle rod was away again, and there was no doubting that this was a carp. The rest of the fight was plain sailing (if you'll excuse the pun). Well, as plain sailing as it can be when you're playing a carp from a tricky pit around and between boats. The culprit was a little plump, scaly mirror that was 21lb 7oz. I decided not to put a rod back out and headed for home, very happy indeed, as I had previously been told that two fish could be a season on here. I also identified this spot as an area to keep working for a while, as I thought it had more to offer.

I was soon back at the lake and the rods were back on the spots from where I had previously been expelled by the sailing club. Then the wind turned southwesterly again and really started to blow. I must admit that this hadn't been forecast, but I wasn't going to complain, as the conditions now looked bang-on for where I was. What can I say? Sometimes it's better to be lucky than good. At approximately 2am that night, my right hand rod was away, but unfortunately I lost the fish at the net. At least I got to see it – a common of low to mid 20s. There was the momentary kicking of myself before I put it into perspective. While that fish would have made my session, it wasn't going to define my season.

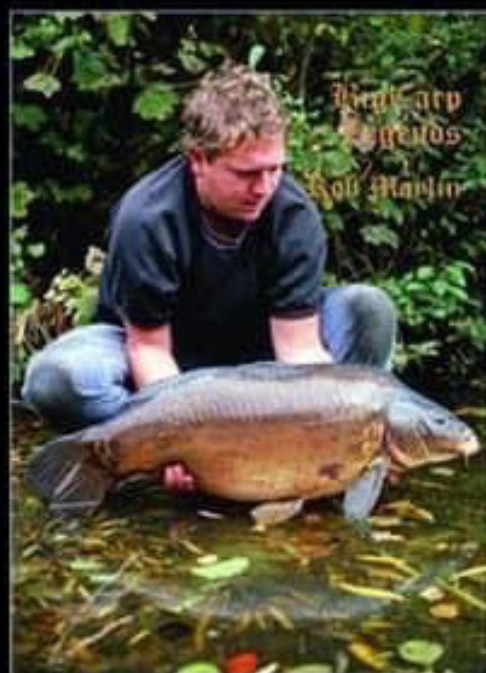
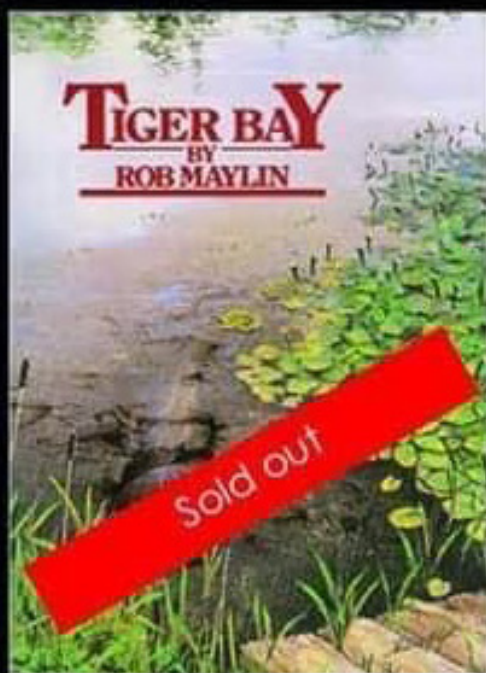
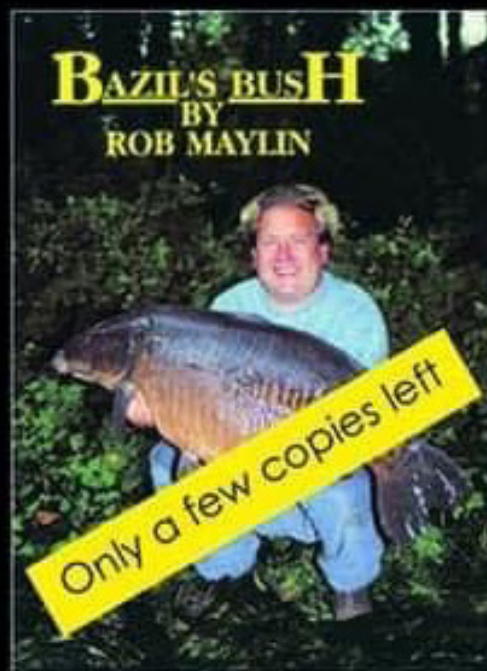
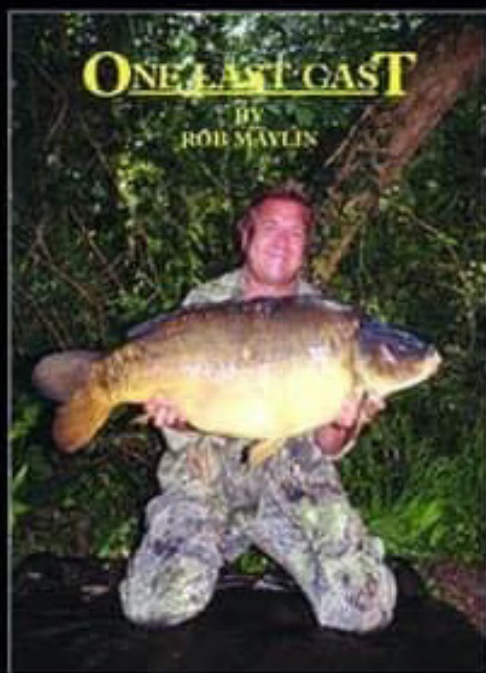
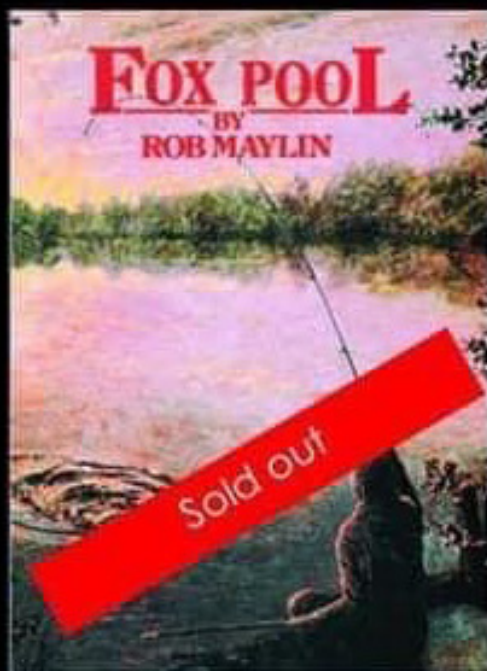
With my head back in the game, the rod was placed back on the spot, and just as it was getting light, it was away again. The fish weeded me solid immediately. I climbed up the bank to gain height and stood there with steady pressure on the rod. I've found that this is normally the best way of extracting the fish from the weed bed. Now it was just a waiting game. Almost half an hour had passed while I was contemplating that I may lose my second fish of the

session. Such a scenario is unacceptable and may have resulted in me taking up golf (for at least a week), when I felt the fish's head knock. I quickly walked backwards and had her moving again. The remainder of the fight was uneventful, as she saved her energy to give me a proper beating on the mat. I didn't mind one bit, as from the moment I caught a glimpse of her colossal frame wallowing around the margin, I knew I was into something special. She spun the needle around to 40lb 6oz, and I hit cloud nine – my first UK 40lb common. I must say my campaign on Coate is still very much in its infancy, and I feel immensely privileged to have hit the ground running.



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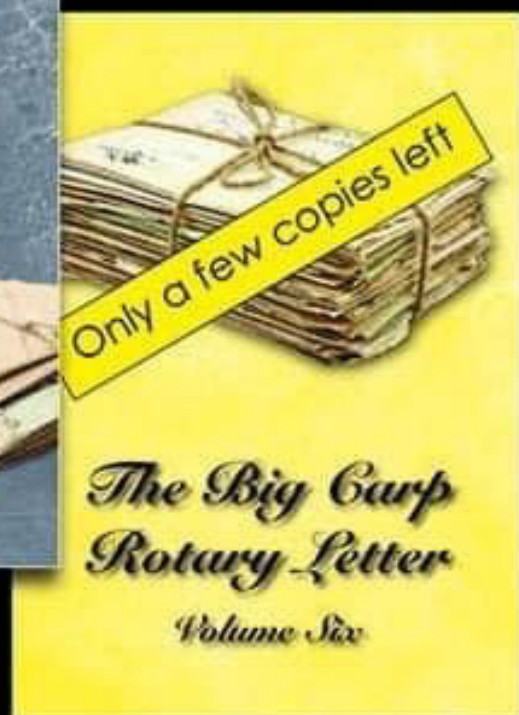
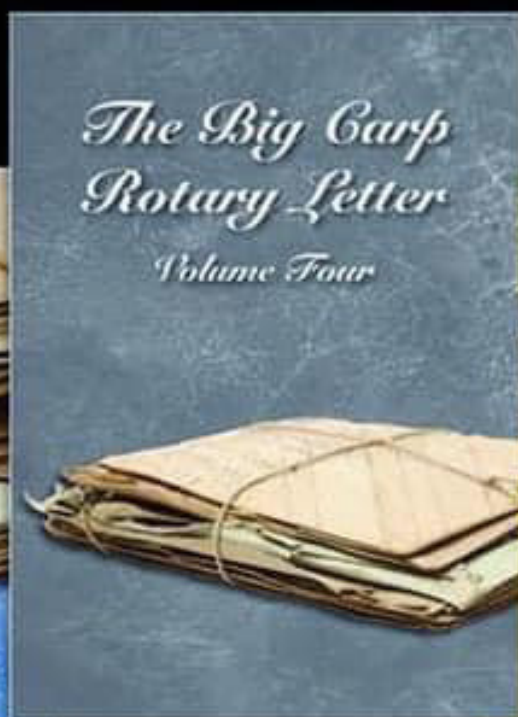
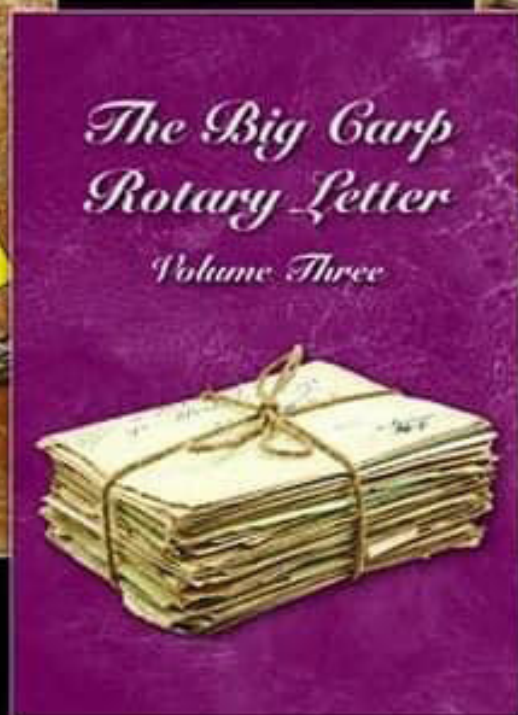


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An aerial photograph of a large, calm lake with a dam on the left side. The surrounding landscape is lush and green, with rolling hills and dense vegetation. The water is a clear, light green color. The title 'TALE OF TWO LAKES' is overlaid in large, bold, white letters with a grey outline. The author's name 'Derek Ritchie' is in the top right corner in white text on a dark grey background.

Derek Ritchie

TALE OF TWO LAKES



A few months back, I was lucky enough to be invited to fish a lake in France, Spruce Lakes, a small six-acre water around 40 minutes' drive from Limoges. I arranged with the family that ran the venue that I would come over and fish a week on the water. Now Bev, my long-suffering wife, always comes on my French adventures but wasn't really feeling up to another week in a stinky bivvy alongside all the tackle and gadgets that I now find part of my regular carp tackle. On speaking to the owners, I was informed that Bev would be able to have one of the guest rooms available in the main house, so dilemma sorted. Another invite came from Gary Norton to fish with him on one of his public water adventures, and I managed to organise it so that after the week on Spruce was done, I'd head down and have a dangle with him on a truly huge water that could have some absolute whoppers residing in it.

Finally, the day came to leave our comfy little home and head off to France into god knows what. We had been talking to Spruce Lakes, and we were promised that Bev's accommodation would be up to standard, but you never can be too sure when going to a new venue, especially when it had only recently been opened and work on the place was still ongoing.

The little van was loaded to the brim: rods reels, spare rods and reels, two Avid bivvies, unhooking mats, retainers, three landing nets, my ever present ATT alarms and TNT bank sticks to name just a few bits I trust to see me OK wherever I go. And of course, the faithful Mainline baits. Now I know that in France you can sometimes never have enough bait, so after talking to Kev, I was fully loaded with 100k of carp fishing's top bait. The drive down was lovely, no jams, no hassle just



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wonderful views, and we were enjoying it already, super chilled yet excited at seeing the place.

Arriving at the water, we were greeted by Mark, Alison and Jamie. I must take a breath and try to get over to anyone thinking of having a go on Spruce Lake that they would be hard tasked to find a more welcoming and lovely trio of people. We almost felt like royalty; there wasn't anything that they wouldn't do to make us feel comfortable, and the venue itself was proper stunning. I've fished hundreds of waters in the UK and abroad, and this place is up there with the best of them for looks and the feeling of being somewhere special.

Mark and his family had only taken over the venue 18 months ago and had been hard at work bringing the place up to the level it is as I write, and there's a lot of arduous work planned to make it even better. It's stunning as it is, but what's planned is going to take it to a different level. During this time, Channel 4 have been following the progression and been over numerous times to film the changes. My trip coincided with one of the filming trips, and I was hoping to catch a fair few fish to get an insight into the potential of the actual lake.

After a chat with Mark, Alison and Jamie, we were shown to the accommodation that Beverly would be staying in – one happy wife! The room was gorgeous, and I think I got a few brownie points for taking her to such a wonderful place. I hadn't even walked the lake yet, and it was looking like a winner already. After a tour of the facilities, the positive vibes were flowing. I was really gagging to get down to the lake and see for myself what I'd be fishing.

By now the light was fading fast, and I was eager to get the bivvy set up and rods out into the water. Once I located what I thought would be a good swim, I started bringing the gear from van to the lakeside. I had chosen to use the two-man bivvy just in case Bev



decided to spend a night lakeside, but with a room like she had there was no chance!

As I was taking the gear to the swim, the guys were on the case, helping me set things up and couldn't be more helpful. My first night started off well with two fish falling for my hookbaits placed amongst 25-odd Essential Cell freebies. One took the scales round to 28 and a half, and the other went 24 something. I felt I was off to a good start; the owners had been feeding the lake with pellets, as prior to them taking over, it had been pretty much left to its own devices. This had seen the fish breed and become preoccupied on naturals. There was a huge stock of carp, which meant lots of competition for food, but no real monsters. Since taking over, the team had thinned out the existing stock and started to introduce a few bigger fish that have the frames to get very large.

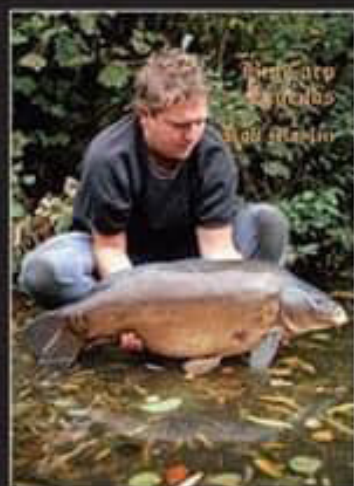
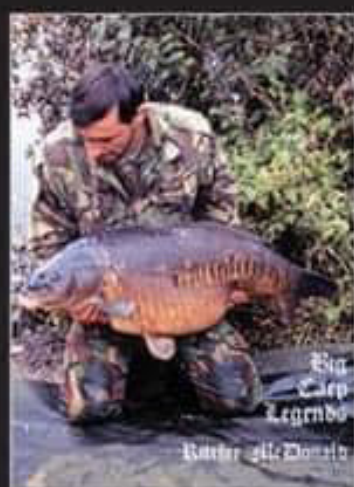
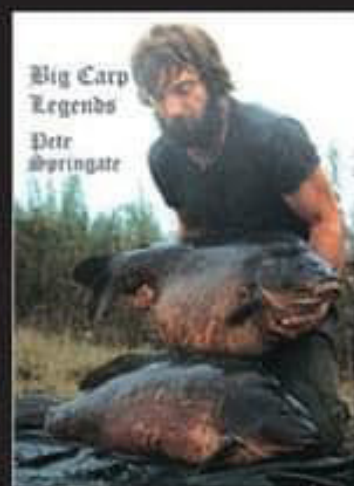
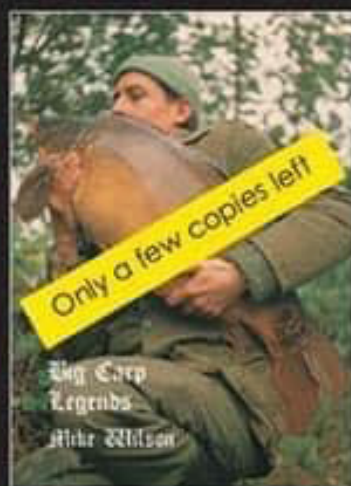
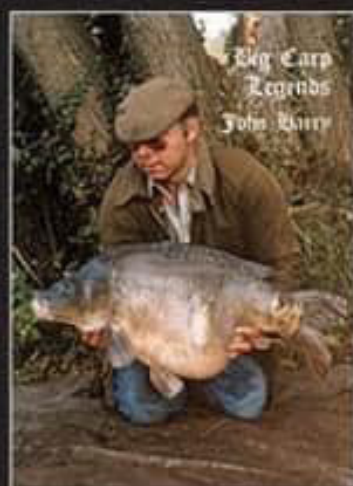
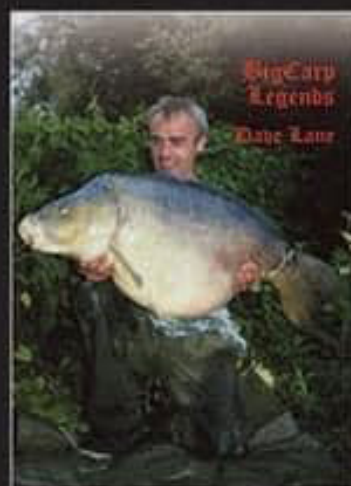
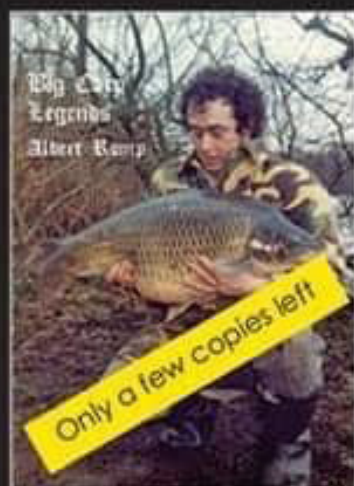


Because of the small fish, I used the Korda shrink-wrap to coat my hookbaits to stop the hookbaits getting whittled down. The last thing I wanted was me sitting there with either no bait or not enough of a morsel to entice one the carp to have a little taste. During the week, I started to get amongst some of the stunning looking fish in the lake, and even though I wasn't getting monsters, I could see the potential that this little piece of paradise had to offer. They definitely had turned on to the boilies, and I had one 33lb common three times in that week. The biggest fish I had during the week was 36lb, but that fish had previously gone over 40lb.

The next few nights got even more rewarding with a nine-carp haul within 24 hours. Most evenings I would reel in and go up for a lovely meal at the house. Alison can really cook and was a gourmet-trained chef, so there was no way I was missing out on that quality of food!

BIG CARP LEGENDS SERIES

The anglers that shaped today's carp scene



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Derek Ritchie

Usually when I'm fishing I don't really like to be away from the rods, but the company was so good, I tended to spend more time away from the rods than I normally do. Despite being away from the rods for some lengths of time, I ended my week's fishing on Spruce Lake with over 50 carp. I wonder what that tally would be if I'd been on the rods 24/7?

When the time came to drive down to meet Gary, I was actually sad to leave, but with a sigh, I loaded the little van and started the journey to my second water of the trip. Gary had arranged a chalet to house Bev right next to the 1700-acre water, on a nice camping complex.

On meeting Gary, we were shown to Bev's home for the few days



we were there, and I proceeded to get my gear set up on this huge piece of water. The best way to fish the water we decided was to place our baits on the far margin. When I say far, I mean 240 yards' distance. Now I can cast when I need to, but 240 yards? This meant Gary had to boat every rod out while I held the rod high to keep the line away from the rocks that line the banks. My lines had to be fairly tight, as it went across depths of around 145ft in the middle of our stretch! I was using four rods with braid on the reels. I back-led the lines about 30 yards out to keep the line away from the boats that the bass anglers used to find their prey.

On the first night, I managed a couple of 30s, and I was quite impressed with the start, even though I'd lost a couple as the jagged rocks cut through my braid like a hot knife through butter. I changed up to 50lb breaking strain hooklengths, and I felt I had nullified the



Derek Ritchie

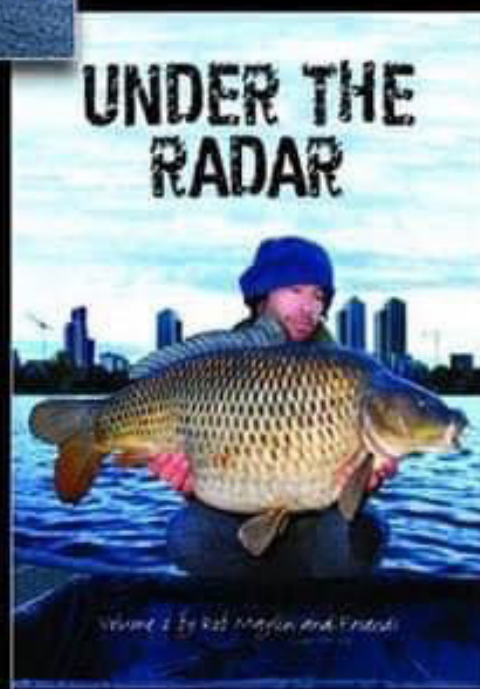
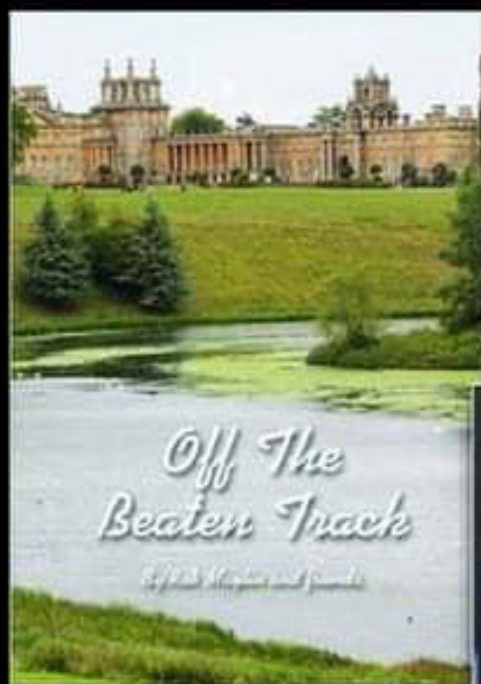
problem... we would see. The weather was dreadful; it felt like I was in the middle of a biblical flood – it did nothing but rain. The grim weather kept poor old Bev housebound, and that wasn't going down too well! I was stuck in the bivvy all day too and couldn't have a good look at this massive water. I would have loved to have a proper look around, but the rain was really dampening our spirits. We only managed three nights but managed 12 fish, so a pretty eventful session despite the rain.

Thanks to Mainline and Avid for all their help, Gary for inviting me over, and of course Mark, Alison and Jamie at Spruce Lake for such a warm welcome and wonderful place to fish.



OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

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WASING YEARS

My story begins in 2005 when my late friend Pete introduced me to Cranwells on a guest ticket. He was a bailiff on the estate, and we used to occasionally fish together. I caught a mirror of just over 23lbs on that guest session, and I was hooked on the place. The following season, I applied to join, and, in 2006, I began fishing Cranwells. It wasn't long after this that as luck would have it a bailiff vacancy came up. Pete, being a mate, put my name forward, and it was on his recommendation that I was accepted. Becoming a bailiff was a huge bonus, as it gave me access to all the waters on the estate.

I began my campaign in the spring of that year fishing a swim known as 'the Woods'. This gave me access to the nature reserve area to the left and a bay in the margins of the central island at around 150 yards out in front. Cranwells is, and always has been, a bait boat water. A few brave souls have tried to do without, only to be banging their heads against a brick wall, whilst watching others catch far further out than they could comfortably cast. It doesn't take long for the majority to give in. So, this was how I started. I gave that swim my all between April and July 2010 and had little to show for my efforts. I had decided on a bait I had never used before. It smelled sweet, like marzipan, and I had been putting it in regularly. I must be honest and say my confidence had been worn away by August, having not had a single fish on it. I had put a considerable amount of bait in by then, and so it felt like things were not going my way. We all know how it is – you feel like you are doing the right things, putting in the effort and everyone else is making it look easy catching fish all around you, and you struggle... and I was really struggling. I even managed to miss a take from the big common whilst surface fishing in a shallow bay. I was desperate, and it seemed the harder I tried, the more things didn't go my way. I managed to find fish on most trips and saw The Parrot from a tree overlooking the shallow bay many times, and he looked big... very big! But this bay was popular, and there was no chance of getting anything going in there without interference. I just could not get anything going, and it seemed impossible.

I work shifts, so getting a few days together can be a bit difficult at times. I decided that I had to make every effort to turn my fortunes around, so I was baiting up in the morning

and evening before work and then returning to fish between shifts often late at night after I finished. This was made easier by the fact that you can park your car behind most swims in Cranwells. The day before my birthday, I was working a late shift. I had already fished the previous night and had gone straight to work from the lake after putting a couple of kilos of bait onto the spots before I left. My intention was to return and fish again that night. I had noticed that often fish would be caught on the second night of a session. This meant setting up in the dark, but as I had my lines marked already, this was not a problem. I had already baited the areas, so my intention was to put three single hookbaits out onto each spot.

I left work around 11pm and got to the lake 30 minutes later. I managed to get set up and had a bait on each spot just after midnight. I was a bit wound up from working and the effort to set up so late at night, so I stood looking over the lake with a cuppa in hand for a while. Around 1am I had a slow steady take on the middle rod located at the bottom of the plateau where it met the silt. If I am honest, I was a bit shocked, as I had not had a single bleep all season to this point. It was mid-September and I had almost forgotten what a take looked like! I lifted into the fish and was surprised as the fish hit the surfaced and slapped its tail causing a big splash. This should have given me some idea of what I was attached to, but for some reason, probably tiredness, it didn't register. Then it suddenly flat rodded me. The fish took line and then stopped abruptly. I attempted to gain some line on it, but it was stuck solid in what I assumed was a weed bed.

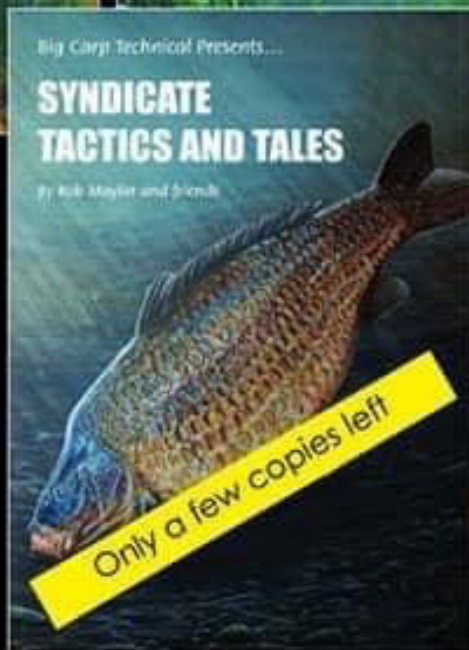
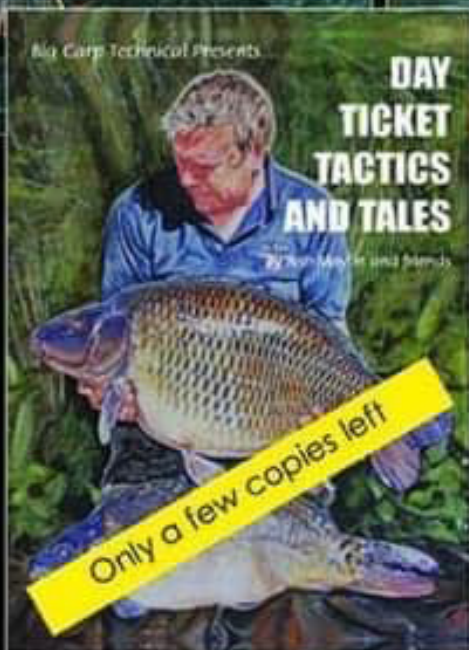
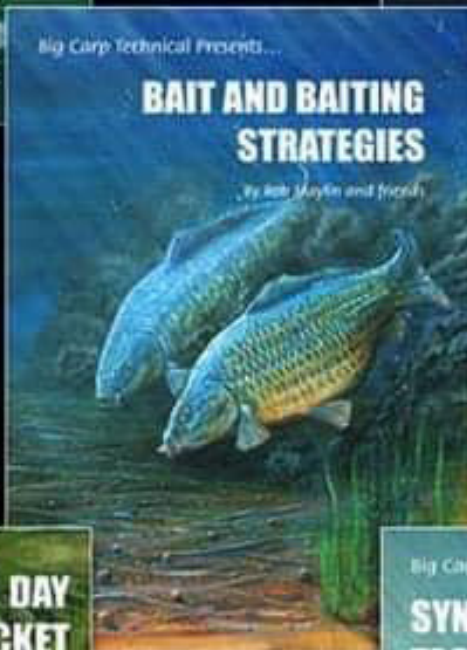
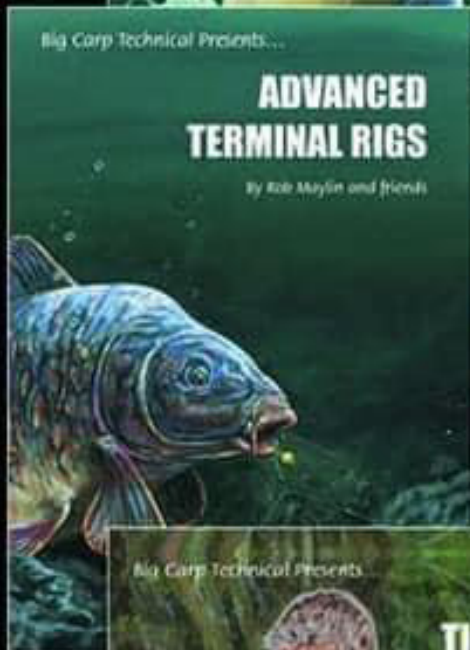
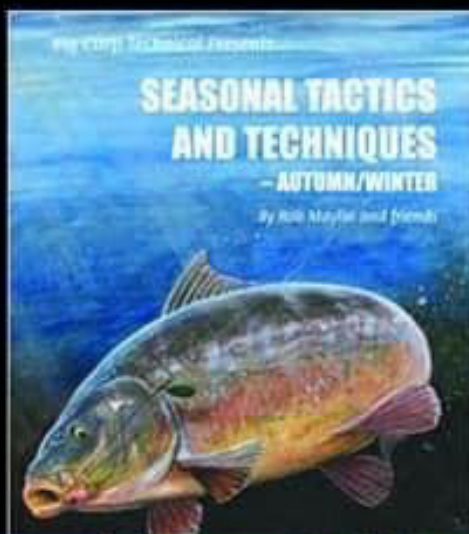
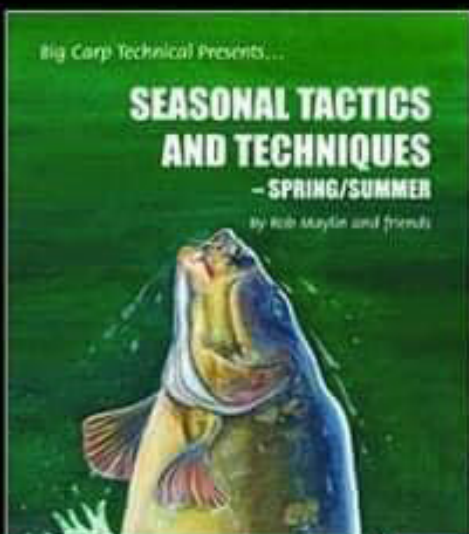
So there I was, my first fish of the season, it was pitch dark, and it was stuck solid. So, I tried all the usual things, pulling from

different angles, slackening off and leaving it for ten minutes, but nothing happened. I was by now feeling dejected and had accepted that it just wasn't my year. It was at this point that I realised it was past midnight and my birthday... Some birthday this was turning out to be! "So, what should I do?" I asked myself. I was thinking it had gone, nothing was happening and there was nothing to feel down the line, so I did the only thing left open to me. I compressed the rod fully and pulled like mad. I suddenly felt things slowly begin to move, and I was winding in what I thought was a weed bed (or a big part of it at least by the weight if it). Suddenly and expectedly, the weedbed pulled back, and I was astonished that the fish was still on. Then the fish hit the surface around 40 yards out and I could see the disturbance in the moonlight. It looked big, but I still had no idea how big it was, and again it proceeded to strip line off me. I managed to gain control of it this time, and I decided it wasn't getting the upper hand again or going into any more weed beds. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity, but in reality was no more than five minutes, it seemed to be tiring, and it was time to get the net into the water. The swim was called 'The Broken Leg' for a reason. It was a high banked swim and muddy! Thankfully steps had been cut into the muddy bank to assist, but what this means is that you end up standing on a narrow mud shelf at the bottom of the steps to get near enough to net a fish, with an 8ft deep gully sloping away right in front of you.

I put the net in the water and slowly and steadily drew the fish towards me and the waiting net. The fish went over the cord at the first time of asking. I had a head torch on but had not switched it on at this point so as not to spook the fish. I

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still had no idea which fish I was attached to, but then I felt the fish's head hit the spreader block, and, in the moonlight, I could still see that half the fish was lying on the net cord, so I had my suspicions as to which fish it was as my net was a big one - 52ins. I had to scoop the rest of the fish into the net, and when it was safely in the bottom of the net, I then put on my headtorch. There lying in my net was the magnificent Parrot, and he looked big! I could not believe my eyes! The sheer length and width of the fish was breathtaking. I had no chance of ever being able to weigh him on my own, and as daylight was only a few hours away, I made the decision to put him into a retainer until first light. Even this was a struggle on my own, but I managed it, carefully utilising a huge mat I kept just for such an occasion. I would normally do this, but this was not what I would call a normal situation. I made a few calls, waking a couple of mates who told me they would be with me just before dawn. I spent the rest of the night sat in the margins in chest waders watching the fish and making sure it was ok. Thankfully I wasn't working again the next day having taken my birthday off, as I was exhausted.

I did put the rod back out onto the spot, and just before daylight, I had another take on it, which turned out to be a 36lb-plus common. I can honestly say I don't remember much about that capture. I sat there contemplating my turn of luck and thinking what a birthday this was turning out to be and how my fortunes had changed in one quick moment. I guess that's fishing for you. One minute it's all doom and gloom, and the next you are on top of the world. I also thought then, and have done many times since, that had I known what I was attached to when the fish weeded me up, would I still have gone for



it and pulled so hard? I have never been able to answer that question honestly. All I know is if I hadn't, there would have been a good chance that I would have lost it and never would have known what fish it was.

Come first light, my mates, Andy and Will arrived. Andy is well versed in handling big fish (he was the first to catch The Eye from Sonning at over 50lb). We weighed the fish suspended from our shoulders between two of us, and at 55lb 8oz I had a new personal best that I was unlikely to beat for some time and a fish of a life time. It became a bit surreal when Andy

Lyndon Barrett



said to me, “Shall we do the photos of the small one first?” The small one! 36lb-plus and it was the small one! Blown away doesn’t really cut it! Photos done and returner shots sorted, I ended up with a bucket of water over my head, and I just punched the air. There really is no feeling like it! Ordinarily I would have pulled off a lake having caught the

biggest resident, but as I had not had any of the other A-team fish, I decided to stay on for a while and push my luck. The Parrot was a rare capture in those days, and I would not expect to catch it again that season, so it felt right. I decided to remain in the swim keeping the Choc Orange going in regularly, and I really didn't look back after that. I had another 36lb 13oz mirror the following session, and then I just kept on catching, but no more of the big fish came my way that year.

The spring of 2011 started in the same way the previous year had finished. In May I had a hit of fish from the Lifebuoy swim, having seen fish gathering there in numbers. It was one of those sessions when you just could not fail. I was just spraying Choc Orange out at 20 yards, putting a hookbait in amongst them and it was away within minutes of each cast. Fish had started to gather on the shallows, so it was a rare opportunity not to be missed. In one day, I had fish of 18lb, 22lb, 23lb, two of 24lbs, a 25lb, 32lb and a 39lb'er. The 39lb fish was one of the ones I wanted, Black Spot, a deep bodied chunk of a fish. The spring and summer carried on in the same vein with some nice fish coming my way. One morning in early September, almost a year since I had banked the Parrot, I caught another of Cranwells' jewels in the form of The Floppy Tail Linear. This was up there at the top of my list along with the big common. The fish came from that same spot at the bottom of the plateau. This spot was becoming hard. Initially it was an area where the gravel of the plateau met the soft silt in the deeper water. However, as I caught fish from it and continued to bait it regularly, it was becoming harder and harder – a good sign it was being fed on and cleaned off. The Floppy Tail gave a good account for itself, staying deep and going on run after



run. It seemed as quickly as I gained line on it, it then took it back. But eventually as it began to tire, it hit the surface, and I could see its flank glistening in the early morning sun... and what a good-looking fish it was too! After a big gulp of air, it was in the net. It weighed in at 39lb 8oz. This is the only fish I have said I would like to go back and catch again, as my photos, taken by another member, are not great to say the least.

Early November was upon me before I knew it, and there was a chill to the air. I had landed a fair few fish by then. I had

caught a fair few Cranwells fish over the preceding years, and some nice ones, but nothing like what was happening now. The change of bait and the swim turned things around for me. I also forgot to mention I had made a tweak to my rigs during this period. Now I am not saying it was the reason things turned around, but I am sure it helped – it's all percentages, I suppose. I had begun sharpening my hooks by hand and leaving the areas where I had filed the hook rough rather than



Lyndon Barrett

smoothing it off with a stone. I felt this helped the hook to penetrate and stay in, even when slacking off in weed! Who knows? But I felt more confident, and that can only be a good thing. Things really felt like they were going my way at last. On the 2nd of November 2011, I was once again in The Broken Leg swim when around 10am, I had a screaming take off the right-hand rod fished again at the bottom of the plateau, but this time far right towards the Lifebuoy bank. I had seen a fair bit of activity in that area, bubbling and fizzing, and I decided to give it try. The fish went off on a run and then the lead must have ejected, as the fish suddenly came to the surface and swam from right to left in front of me around 30 yards out. It was a common – I could see its flank in the water – and obviously a very big one. There was a big distance between the dorsal fin and the tail, and both were visible cutting through the surface film. It could only be one fish, the Big Common, the same fish I had missed a take from while surface fishing the previous year. It fought hard and made several attempts to get into an overhanging bush to my left. I had to thwart this tactic several times before I managed to get it into the net. I remember thinking what a contrast the fight was to The Parrot. Knowing what I was attached to made an enormous difference to the way I played it; I was far more careful this time, I can tell you! I called the assistance of Andy and Will again (Will being rather good with a camera). The Common was weighed in at 45lb 4oz and was my new PB common. What a beautiful fish the Common was! It was immaculate; it had scales like gold sovereigns. I really did feel privileged to be holding it up for the camera.

I decided this was a fish too far. To stay meant I would probably



have to fish the following spring, and with the way things were going, I was pushing my luck and would be in real danger of picking up The Parrot again. I would not want to be a dream breaker and take someone else's chance of catching it, so I decided it was time for me to leave Cranwells and move on elsewhere. After all, I had caught more or less everything I wanted, and there were plenty more waters to go at on the estate.

I spent the next few years flitting around the estate, catching

fish here and there from the waters. I had little flirtations with Oxlease and Rowneys, losing what was a very large common from Rowneys, but I just could not settle on one water. I did do a fair bit of piking in the winter; I had bought a boat, which I used to pike fish on Rowneys. I also spent the next couple of summers on the river catching barbel and upping my personal best into double figures. It is so easy to be distracted on the estate, like I said. I went through some personal trauma ending in a divorce in 2013, so I had to live in a rented room and didn't really fish much through 2013 and 2014. I did the odd night on Staghead throughout this period, which was my stock water for a session when I wasn't really feeling up to a proper campaign, for want of a better word. I did have a flirtation with a very large water away from the estate in this time, but I felt there was unfinished business on Wasing, so I wanted to concentrate on the estate.

I have always struggled to concentrate on more than one water at a time. There was one water on the estate that I really wanted to fish and to catch a few of its better-looking residents. The water was Shalford. I had fished the other water on this lake complex, 'Bottle', many years before in the early 90s. This was when Reading and District Angling Association had control of the two waters. So, I really didn't want to go back on there even though the stock had changed. I felt like it was stepping on old memories. I never think it's a good idea to go back to a water once I have left. It never feels the same. I had always intended to have a go at Shalford back in the day, but then RDAA lost control of it before I had a chance. So, it was in the winter of 2014, having moved into my new house and life having settled down a bit, that I started to walk around Shalford and do the



odd day session. Admittedly it wasn't the best time to target a new water, but it gave me an opportunity to gather more information about it. I began fishing it properly in the spring of 2015, and if I am honest, I didn't fish it well. I could not settle and found myself flitting about the water. Shalford is round in shape, and it is almost as if someone has taken a wedge out of the landscape. It is shallow one end and deep at the other, approaching 20ft. I caught the odd fish in 2015 but nothing to write home about. I was being lazy with my fishing, and the results showed it.

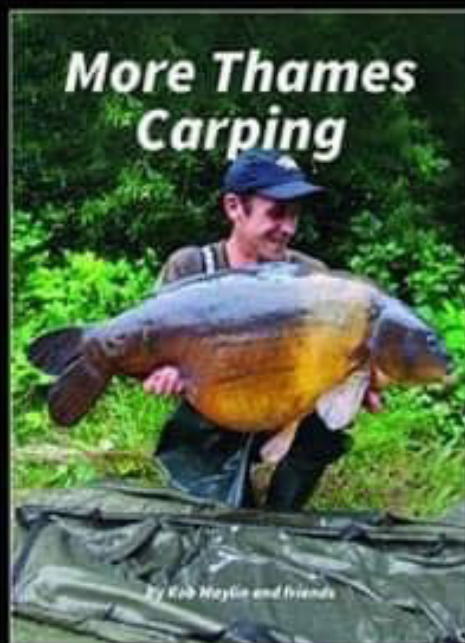
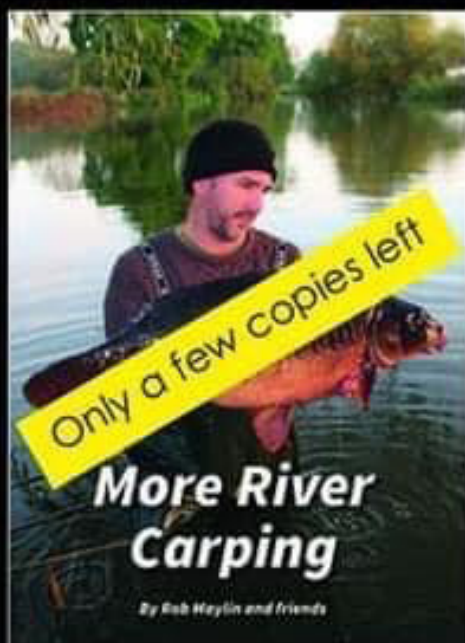
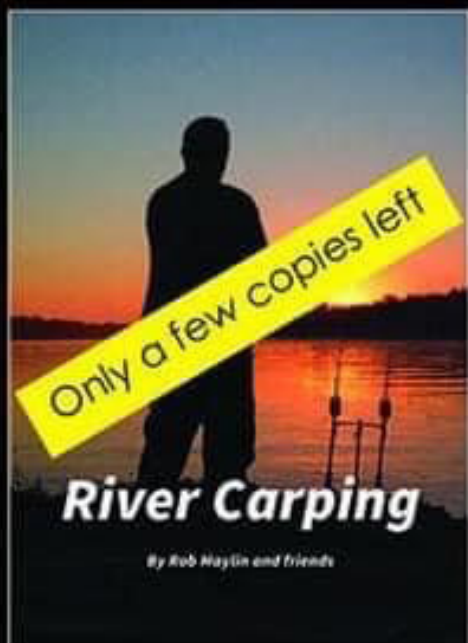
So, in the spring of 2016, I was determined that things would be different, and, learning from my experiences on Cranwells,

I decided to fish a swim that was in an area I could concentrate on. Once again, it was not the most popular swim on the water, but it had the advantage of being in the middle of the lake and so had a variety of depths to fish. It had reeds running from its right towards a corner swim in the shallows. This gave the swim a long piece of bank that was not disturbed. There was a small bay in the reeds halfway along, which was the remains of an old swim and had been allowed to become overgrown. The bay was fished on occasion from a swim opposite called 'The Lawns', but other than that, it was all my water. Shalford is a different kettle of fish to Cranwells, and if people find out you are catching, it can mean you may struggle to get back into the swim again for a while. So, there were some whom I wanted to avoid knowing what I was catching. This meant I had to stop wagging tongues. So, the decision was that I would try and keep my catches to myself. If I caught, the mat would be stowed away afterwards so as not to give the game away.

I began baiting and fishing the swim in April. I was concentrating on the shelf into the deeper water, and I was also wading a bait out to the edge of the reeds where I could just lower a hookbait down onto a firm bottom and throw a handful of pellet and broken boilie around it. This is one of my most favourite fishing situations. My confidence was high now, and I hoped it would not be long before I had some action. It worked, and almost straight away I began to catch. I had a string of twenties, all commons weirdly. The game was nearly up though when I was spotted landing two fish in as many hours from the swim by an angler fishing opposite. Luckily, he had something going on in his swim, so he left me alone, and it seemed he kept my catches quiet.

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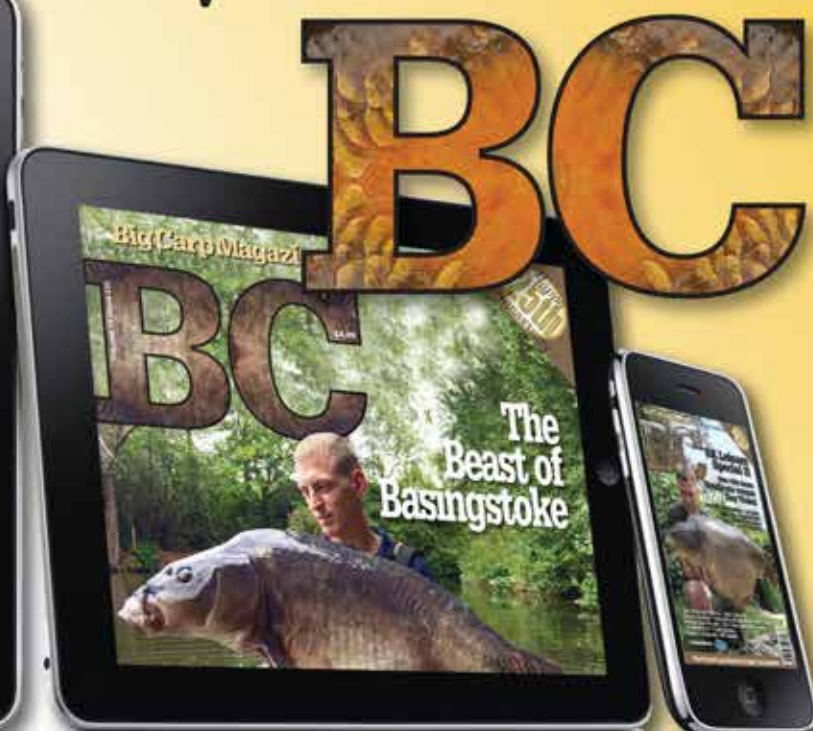
One day in June I saw one of my target fish: The Big Koi. The water holds two koi carp, most probably deposited into the water having outgrown a tank or garden pond. The bigger of the two had been caught at over 28lb. I saw it in the little bay in the reeds. I had to stop myself from moving into the Lawns swim, as this would be the usual tactic for fishing the bay. I decided that I would just stick it out with my bait on the edge of the reeds, as this was the same reed bed I was fishing but just further along. At around 3am the following morning, I had a take on the rod placed on the edge of the reeds. The fish gave a good account of itself, and after a great scrap, I was pleased to see The Big Koi in the bottom of my net. She was down in weight though at 24lb 10oz, but what a fantastic looking beast. It may not be everyone's cup of tea, but I think it looks different and stunning, so I am glad to have it in my photo album.

My fishing continued, and I kept catching. I found it amusing listening to some of other members comparing captures and remember one saying he was top rod having had 14 fish. By this time, I had caught 24 and was still staying quiet. Then came the end of June, and I had the last of my targets in the form of Meg. This fish has been caught at 36lb-plus previously, but again I had it down in weight at 29lb 8oz (I must get my Reubens checked!).

Well, I decided that enough was enough and I had achieved what I wanted from the water. I needed a new challenge. As luck would have it, I had received an offer of a ticket for Burghfield in the winter of 2016. So, I decided that this would be my next challenge (I don't do things by halves).

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