

# DECEMBER ISSUES OF **BIG CARP** & **FREELINE** MAGAZINES - FREE HERE:

[www.freelinemagazine.com](http://www.freelinemagazine.com)  
or [www.freelinemagazine.co.uk](http://www.freelinemagazine.co.uk)



**Elliott Gray - A Special Carp**  
**Michael Madeley - Plastic Baits**  
**Tom Garrett - A New Lake Record**  
**Oscar Thornton - A String Of 40s**  
**Tom Stokes - The New Combi-Hinge**



**Nigel Sharp - Mill Lane**  
**John Quinn - Happy Days**  
**Ken Beech - Preparation**  
**Rotary Club - All Things Riggy**  
**Ben & Barry Oconnor - Hauling**

**ADVERTISING AT REALISTIC PRICES**  
[info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](mailto:info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)  
**Over 42,200 email subscribers**



# BIG CARP

*Top Tens!*

## Top 10 Day Ticket Carp Fisheries

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

## Top 10 French Holiday Destinations

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

## Top 10 Bait Companies

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

## Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies (Terminal)

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

## Top 10 Carp Tackle Companies

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

## Top 10 Carp Shops

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

## Top 10 Iconic Carp Waters

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



*As voted by Big Carp readers!*



# BC

BIG CARP: 341 DEC 2024

# MERRY XMAS



4  
DISCOUNT  
CODES INSIDE

STOKES  
GARRETT  
MADELEY  
THORNTON

FULL OF THE LATEST UK CATCH REPORTS



# CARP TACKLE ONLINE

carp.online

QUALITY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

CARP TACKLE ONLINE  
WWW.CARPTACKLEONLINE.COM

## NEW PRODUCTS, BEST SELLERS AND DEALS

See us on Facebook



Tim Thornton was back at it again and continued his success, this time on Durleigh reservoir where he caught a cracking brace of a 28lb 4oz common & a 25lb 12oz mirror. Both taken at range on size 4 Scorpion Crank hooks IQ2 D rigs. Well done Tim



Team member Grant Walters getting amongst the autumn bigguns: "After heavily baiting an area with Infusion, hemp, pellet, corn and liquid food. This 35.8 stunner, tripped up. #carponline size 4 Scorpion Curve, as always (never fail me)"



Showing his dad how to do it, Bradley Johnson with two bangers of 15lb and 17lb. Both fell to our size 6 Cranks tied in a Ronnie Rig style. We'll done Bradley.



Team member Will Cottrell caught this cracking mirror last weekend using our Size 10 Scorpion Zig hooks with the eye slightly bent in. We'll done Will.



"Using Carp Tackle Online - 20lb Fluorocarbon hook link, Tungsten sinkers, Scorpion Wide Gape size 6, 0.5mm Krimps on Helicopter Safe zone setup I caught a 23lb mirror, 34lb 3oz and a low double. Well done Brett, great angling!

Chard reservoir 10 fish hit for Tim!! Lovely 48 hours on Chard ressie in Somerset. 10 bites fishing at range using size 4 scorpion crank hooks and IQ2 D rigs. end tackle. 22.08 was the best a big moon common. Love this time of year.



# CARP TACKLE ONLINE

carp.online

QUALITY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

CARP TACKLE ONLINE  
WWW.CARPTACKLEONLINE.COM

**NEW PRODUCTS, BEST  
SELLERS AND DEALS**

See us on facebook



Swivels



Scorpion Chod Hook



Scorpion Crank Hook



Scorpion Snag Hook



Tungsten Putty



Shrink Tube



Hair Stops



Hook Beads



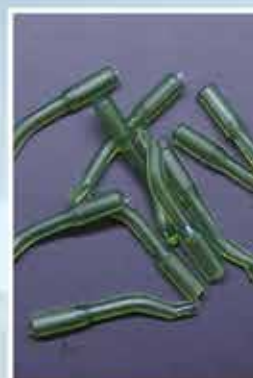
Scorpion Ronnie Rigs



Composite Leadclip



Choddy Crank Hook



Aligners



Tungsten Aligners

Thank you to our loyal customers, hope you all have a  
**Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.**

To celebrate Christmas from the 1st December 2024 to 1st January 2025, we are adding 10% discount to your basket. Just use the code **JOLLY10** at the checkout to apply the discount



# CONTENTS

Editor/Publisher  
Rob Maylin  
Bountyhunter  
Publications  
44 Herbs End  
Cove, Hampshire  
GU14 9YD

07768 731425  
bigcarpstudio@hotmail.  
co.uk

Design & Production  
James Harrison

Advertising Sales  
Bountyhunter  
Publications  
mobile 07768 731425

BIG CARP 341:  
December 2024

Not to be stored or reproduced by any means, in any form, without the written permission of the publisher. Failure to obtain permission to reproduce material may result in legal action. Articles that appear in Big Carp Magazine are the property of Bountyhunter Publications and may be used in other publications as they see fit.

© Bountyhunter  
Publications 2024



Front Cover:  
Myles Gibson with one  
of Dinton's jewels



Well it seems Winter can't make its mind up as to whether it has started or not. We've just seen temperatures in the high teens at the end of November!! What must the carp be thinking?

This month we explore how to use bloodworm in your baiting strategy. Then we have 2 examples of the combi hinge rig. Tom Stokes has been having a right result since making changes to his. Danny Taylor had one of those golden sessions we all hope for. See how hectic it got for him. Michael Madeley is back discussing his approach with plastic baits. We also have some in session news from Elliott Gray, Tom Garrett and Oscar Thornton. We finish up with an in depth look at one of the country's most outstanding venues - Ashmead. So much work has gone in to creating this unique paradise.



## 8. SHOCKLEADER

News from around the fishing industry. Keep up to date with all the goings on in and around the angling community.

## 18. 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?

## 24. CATCH REPORTS

Check out some of the biggest carp to be caught in the UK, the last few weeks.

## 50. BUILD A BLOODWORM BED

Bloodworm are a superb natural attractor to carp. Here's how to use them in your angling.

## 56. COMBI HINGE

The Combi Hinge rig has proven the downfall of many a large carp at home and abroad. Here's one way of tying it.

## 58. DANNY TAYLOR

Danny recalls one of the most hectic 90 minutes in his whole angling career where he couldn't put a foot wrong.



## 64. ELLIOTT GRAY

Elliot recalls one of his most prized captures from a very tricky venue.

## 70. MICHAEL MADELEY

Michael talks us through his approach which centres around plastic baits. You'll find a few little nuggets here to help you maximise your plastic bait fishing.

## 78. TOM STOKES

Since filming the latest Underwater series Tom has made some changes to one of his favourite set ups

## 82. TOM GARRETT

Big Fish Friday is put to the test when Tom hits it big time.

## 88. OSCAR THORNTON

Oscar is having it right off on one of the South West's best waters - Milton Abbas. The hand of God is a big part of his armoury.

## 94. ASHMEAD

One of the countries most unique carp venues takes some running. Here's a look behind the scenes following the ups and downs.

Download the 2024 advertising media pack now and save over 50% with our big value deal -

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

DOWNLOAD THE 2024 BOOK LIST NOW -

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

Just click on the cover you require.

Email [info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](mailto:info@bigcarpmagazine.co.uk) for advertising.

Order books at -

[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/buy-books.html](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk/buy-books.html)

**GREAT AD  
DEALS**



Dear Santa,  
PLEASE  
No more  
socks this  
Christmas!

Wish list:

*Seasonal Tactics and Techniques - Autumn/Winter*

*The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire*

*The Darker Side of Carp Fishing*

*Old School Carping Volume 4*

*History of Yateley Volume 3*

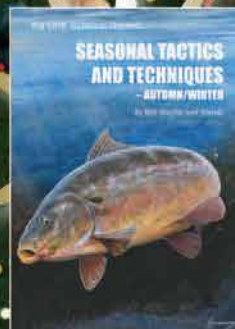
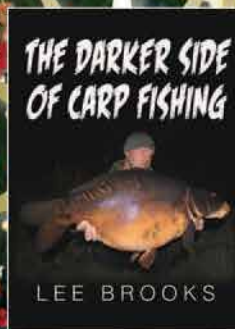
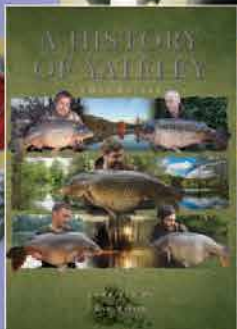
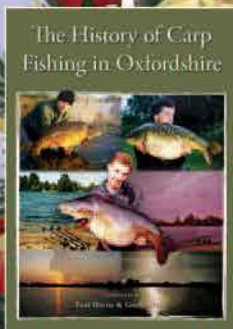
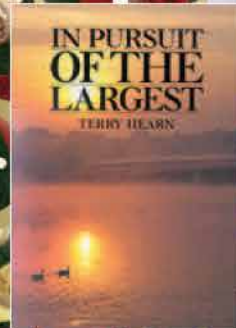
*Under the Radar Volume 2*

*In Pursuit of the Largest*

*Further off Beaten Track*

*Advanced Terminal Rigs*

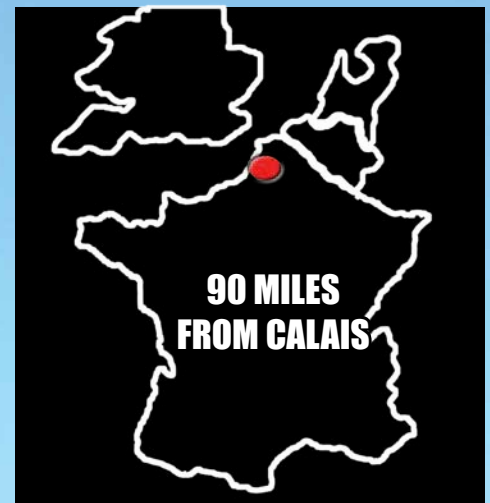
*Secrets of the Thames*



All available now only from Bountyhunter Publications  
bigcarpmagazine@hotmail.com or call 07768 731425



# Experience the big carp venue in northern France



Only 1 hr 1/2  
from Calais !

## Val Dore Lakes

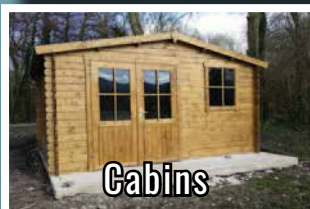
WEB : [WWW.VALDORE.COM](http://WWW.VALDORE.COM)  
email : [contact@valdore.com](mailto:contact@valdore.com)

ONLINE  
BOOKING  
AVAILABLE



**CARP AVERAGE  
WEIGHT : 30 lb  
CARPS up to 74 lb...!**

- £255 / angl / week
- 6 lakes - 60 acres
- 24 tons of carp
- Restaurant / Bar
- Wifi - Elect on swim
- Carpark on all swims
- Log cabins
- Tackle shop



Cabins



Tackle shop



Restaurant

**FREE BROCHURE** ☒

Call evening

**00 33 608 109 134**

**english spoken**

or email us : [contact@valdore.com](mailto:contact@valdore.com)



## New Look For Angling Trust and Fish Legal Cards



Renowned fish and wildlife artist David Miller has kindly agreed to provide illustrations for the cards which are issued annually to adults, young adults, juniors and senior citizens.

David is well known by freshwater anglers for providing the fish artwork which featured on the Environment Agency's annual rod licence for 15 years until the move to digital rod licences earlier this year.

His first rod licence artwork in 2009 featured a perch about to devour a worm and over the years he has continued to showcase the beauty of British fish, with each annual licence depicting a different species for coarse, game and carp anglers. They have included brown trout,



salmon, grayling, pike, rudd, roach, barbel, tench, carp and gudgeon, and such has been the appeal of the Miller-illustrated rod licences, they have become collector's items among many anglers.

David said: "I'm a long-time supporter of the work of the Angling Trust, particularly the work that they and Fish Legal do to fight against pollution and preserve our precious rivers, lakes and oceans, so I'm delighted that my artwork will be featuring on the Angling Trust membership card going forward."

Jamie Cook, Angling Trust CEO, said: "I want to thank David for kindly offering to provide the artwork for our membership cards. We know how much many anglers enjoyed collecting the miniature works of art depicted on the rod licences over many years, and we are delighted that David's wonderful images will portray the many species the Angling Trust and Fish Legal fight so hard to protect, promote and develop."

The first Angling Trust and Fish Legal membership cards to include

David's work will feature a pike and will be sent out from this week to new members and existing members once they renew - so make sure you join or renew now to receive one of these beautiful membership cards.

David has also agreed to offer an exclusive discount of 5% to Angling Trust and Fish Legal members purchasing artwork from his online store. Members can access the discount code through My Dashboard on the Angling Trust website.

If you're not yet a member of the Angling Trust, please consider joining. Not only will you be supporting our work to protect the waters we fish from pollution, promote the health and wellbeing benefits of fishing to the next generation of anglers, and develop angling opportunities for grassroots competitions, but also receive fantastic member benefits including discounts on tackle and bait, day tickets, fishing holidays, high street goods and more! You can find more information here.



**SHOCKLEADER**

**18<sup>ÈME</sup> 22 & 23 février 2025**  
**FORUM INTERNATIONAL**  
**DE LA CARPE ET DU SILURE**

**20 000 M<sup>2</sup>**  
**D'EXPOSITION**

**LES PLUS BELLES CONFÉRENCES, LES PLUS GRANDS SPECIALISTES...**

**TOUTES LES**  
**NOUVEAUTÉS 2025**

Espace «BIWY-LAND»  
aménagé pour vous.



**GN Carpe**  
Association

**MONTLUÇON PARC DES EXPOSITIONS**  
soirée festive, rencontres, animations et conférences en nocturne !

SAMEDI 22 FEVRIER - NON-STOP DE 9H00 À 20H00. À PARTIR DE 20H00 SOIRÉE FESTIVE...  
DIMANCHE 23 FEVRIER - 9H00 À 17H00.

Plus d'informations et billetterie sur : [www.forum-de-montlucon.fr](http://www.forum-de-montlucon.fr)



**FREE LINE CUSTOMERS SPECIAL OFFER**

# ACCOUNTING FOR ANGLERS



- ACCOUNTS
- SELF ASSESSMENT
- TAXATION
- PAYROLL
- TAX PLANNING
- COMPANIES HOUSE SUBMISSION
- BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
- GROWTH PLANNING
- ENABLING CLOUD ACCOUNTING
- PROACTIVE AND RESPONSIVE
- STRATEGIC ADVICE
- QUICKBOOKS and XERO CERTIFIED ADVISERS

**As an angling accountant and business owner I have over 30 years accounting experience and a lifelong passion for carp fishing. We currently work with many clients who fish and have businesses.**

email [peter.andrew@fpbusiness.co.uk](mailto:peter.andrew@fpbusiness.co.uk)  
call / text/ WhatsApp on 07801104530

**fp business**  
financial accountants



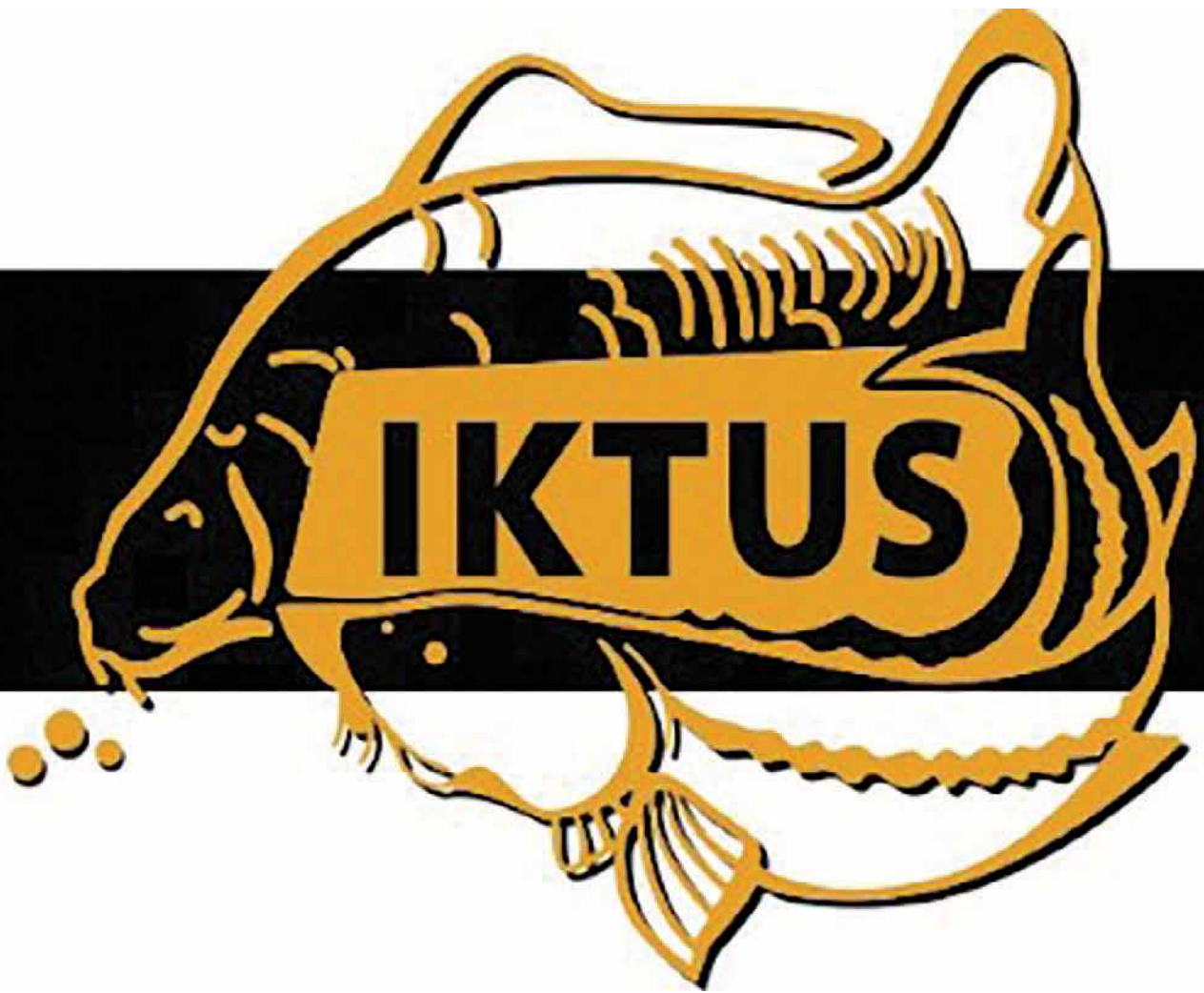


# Stokes Signs for Kent Particles



Kent Particles are delighted to announce that TOM STOKES has joined us as a Particle consultant. Here is Tom with a stunning 42lb Carp caught recently using our Tiger nuts. To celebrate Tom joining please use Toms discount code at the checkout which is TOM10 for 10% Off your order.





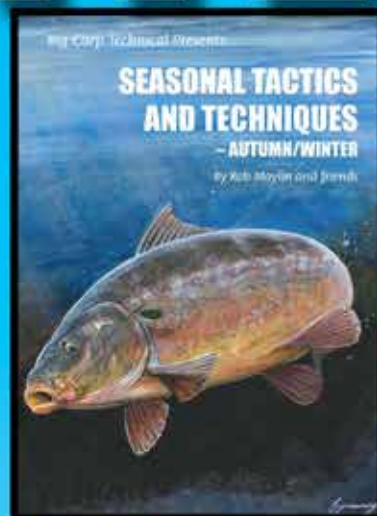
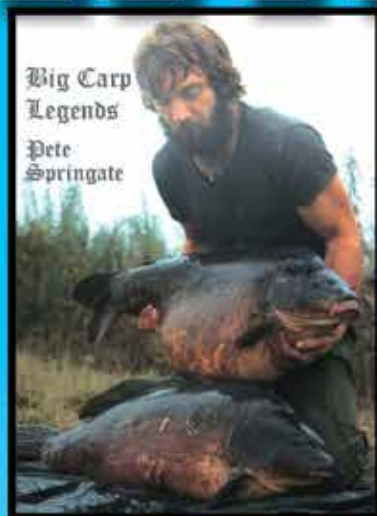
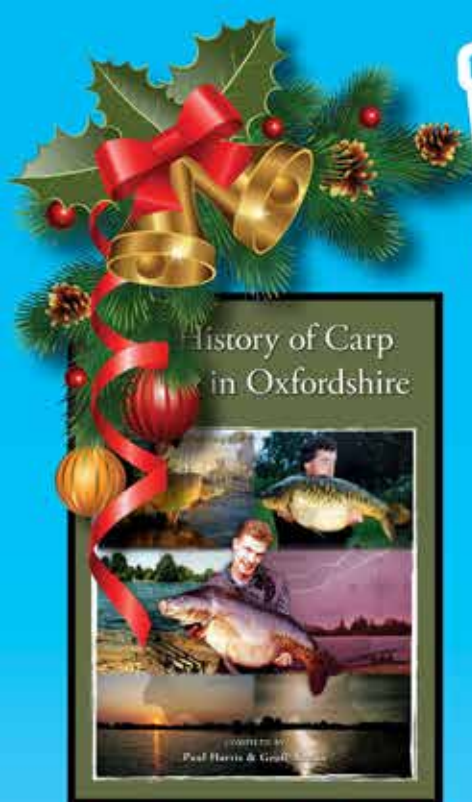
# FISHING RESORT



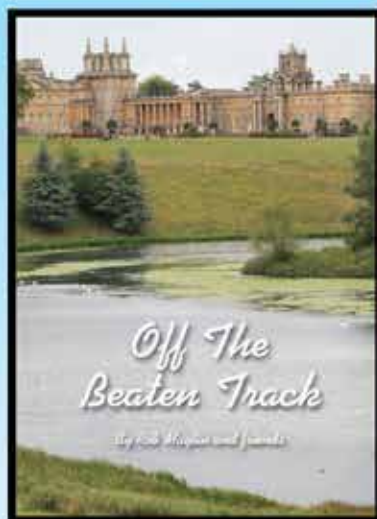
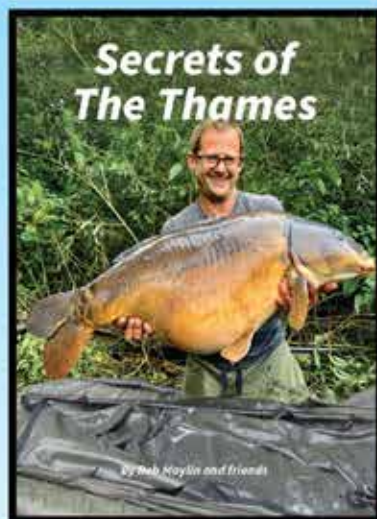
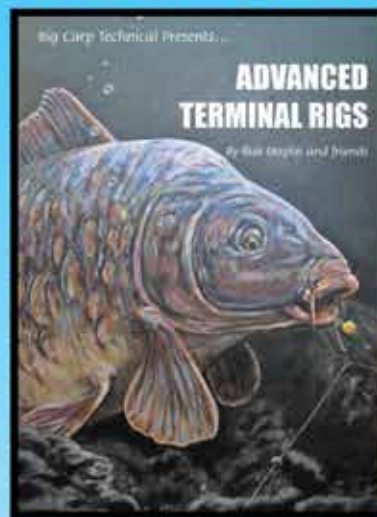
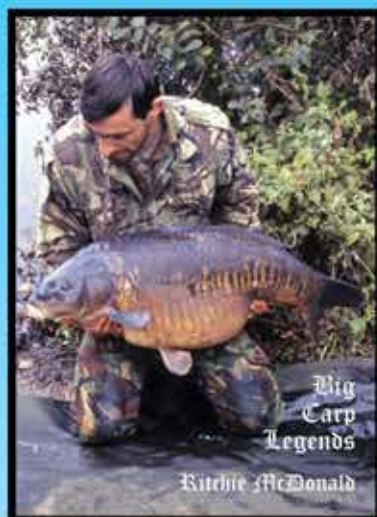
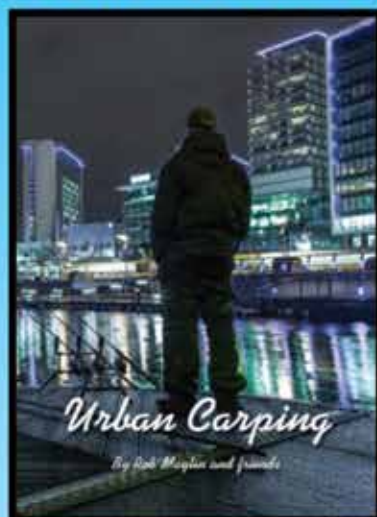
[https://naxiresa.inaxel.com/etape1-criteres.php?  
compte=iktus&lang=2](https://naxiresa.inaxel.com/etape1-criteres.php?compte=iktus&lang=2)



# WINTER



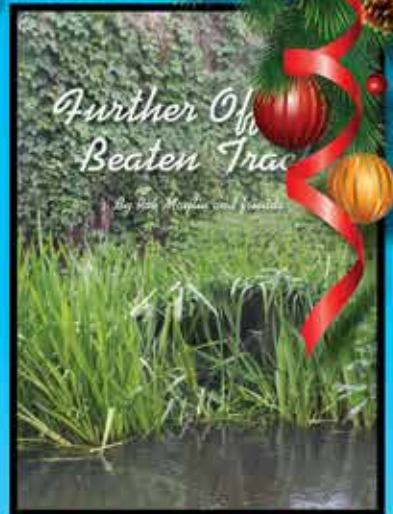
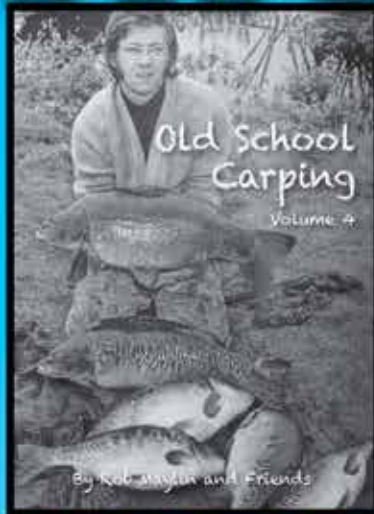
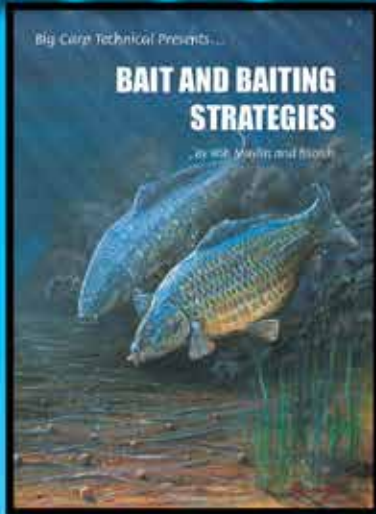
ORDER ONE OF OUR BEST SELLERS AND



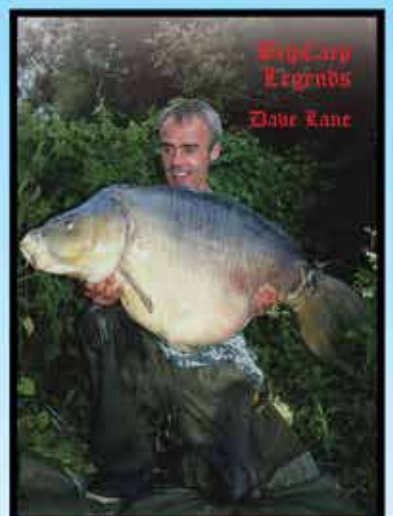
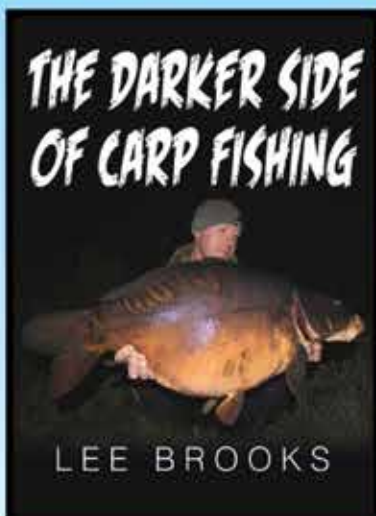
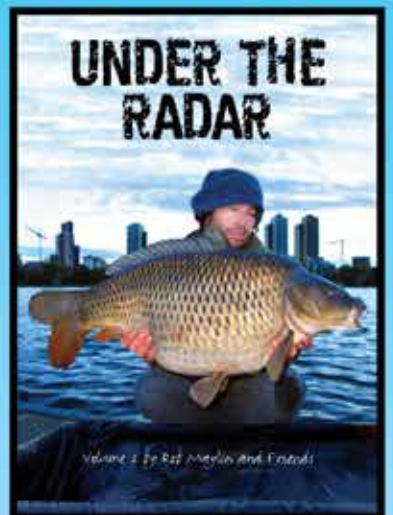
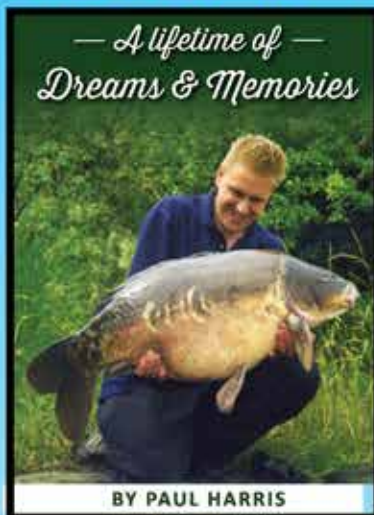
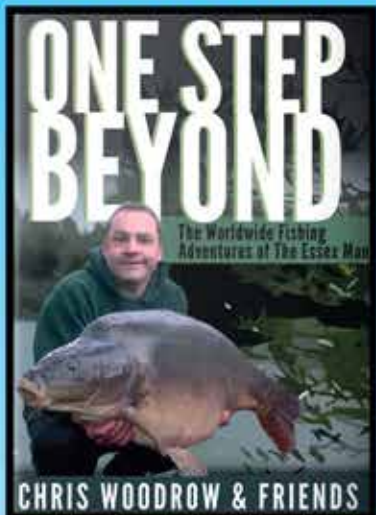
NEW BOOKS: [WWW.BIGCARPMA](http://WWW.BIGCARPMA)  
NEW AND OLD BOOKS: [WWW.EBAY.C](http://WWW.EBAY.C)



# READING



AND BE PREPARED FOR NEXT SEASON



[MAGAZINE.CO.UK/ONLINE-SHOP.HTML](http://MAGAZINE.CO.UK/ONLINE-SHOP.HTML)

[CO.UK/USR/RARECARPBOOKSUNLIMITED](http://CO.UK/USR/RARECARPBOOKSUNLIMITED)



# CTO-TAC-TIE

## CARPTACKLE ONLINE RONNIE RIGS



A ready tied Ronnie Rig using ALL CTO products with a choice of our Curved, Wide Gape or Crank hook in 2 size options and in Barbed or Barbless. Made using their our own hook bead, Bait Screw OR Micro Hook Ring Swivel, Shrink Tubing and our new E-ZEE Quick Swivel, an open ended quick change swivel allowing for the full mechanics of the rig to be applied. Available in packs of 3.

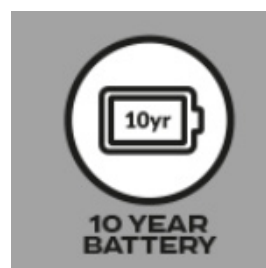
- £4.49
- [www.carptackleonline.com](http://www.carptackleonline.com)



# THE ALPHA WATCH SERIES

Alpha continues the legacy of precision and durability for those who demand the best, both in and out of the water. Drawing on the innovations of early naval instrument makers, who equipped frogmen with luminous watches for night operations, the Alpha is designed to perform in the most challenging conditions.

- ultra-scratch-resistant sapphire crystal
- triple anti-reflective coating
- Swiss-made movement
- Webbing strap option in 5 colours
- from £350
- [www.nitewatches.com](http://www.nitewatches.com)





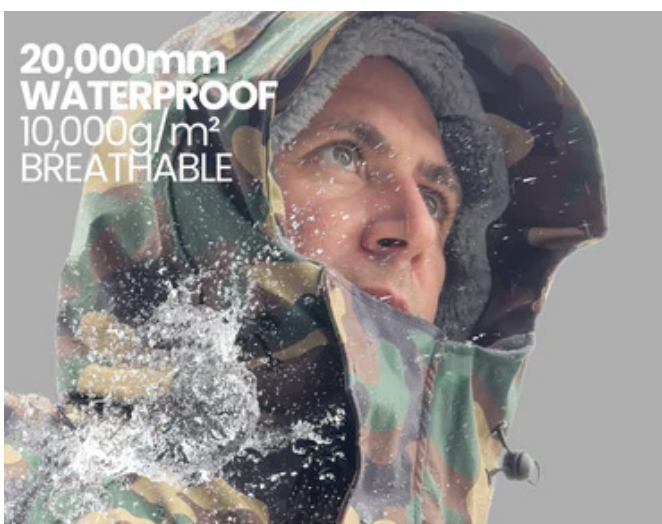
TAC-TEC

# CATCHDRY WATERPROOF COAT



GET 15% OFF  
WITH CODE:  
BIGCARP15





CATCHDRY sent us in a sample jacket just as the temperatures plummeted. We can safely say this is one of the best thought-out coats for the angler currently available. 20,000 HH outer material in a range of colours and camou patterns to suit, with a luxurious fleece lining. We were dry and toasty in this. The extra length provides additional warmth and protection to your lower body and keeps your back covered when seated. Add an ample hood and storm cuffs this coat has you fully protected.

- 20,000HH outer shell
- Windproof and lightweight
- Shantoosh fleece lined
- Waterproof zips
- Adjustable fleece-lined, peaked hood
- Adjustable storm cuffs
- Fast drying
- £179.99
- [www.catchdry.com](http://www.catchdry.com)



# PETROMAX STAINLESS STEEL FIRE KETTLE



The Petromax Stainless-Steel Fire Kettle makes it easier to brew up an essential cuppa, wherever the outdoor destination. The kettle is a self-sufficient outdoor stove for any camp kitchen, ideal for preparing tea and coffee, and for warming up other cookware while preparing a meal.

- comes with a small compatible fire bowl with feet, that creates a solid stand.
- Using small branches, twigs or fir cones for fuel, heat rises from the fire bowl through the inside cavity.
- 750ml and 1.5l sizes
- £81.99 and £99.99
- [www.petromax.com](http://www.petromax.com)







**Fine quality fishing tackle  
since 1857**

**[www.reubenheaton.com](http://www.reubenheaton.com)**

**For more on Reuben Heaton, Sportscale & RH brands  
call 01455 293000 or email [info@reubenheaton.co.uk](mailto:info@reubenheaton.co.uk)**

**Join Reuben Heaton on Facebook for all our latest news**

**REUBENHEATON**



# ROXXO PANTS - NEW COLOURS



- Water resistant 500mm
- Sun protection
- EULAN® SPA 01 bug shield
- Windproof
- Highly breathable
- Durable
- Quick drying
- Stretchable
- £149.99
- [www.geoffanderson.com](http://www.geoffanderson.com)





**SWAN VALLEY LAKES**

**LAKE EXCLUSIVES & DAY TICKETS**  
**HOME OF THE FORTIES**



**LAKE EXCLUSIVE  
BOOKINGS -  
ENTIRE VENUE  
£700 (30 Swims)**

**Info and bookings -**

**Paul Bloomfield 07770 667466**



**www.swanvalleylake.co.uk / 07770 667466**



# OVER THE MOON



Luke Anderson is over the moon.

What a morning first UK 60, Moonscale at 63+ thanks to all the boys that come down to help / witness & weigh

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





# UP THE ROAD

Jon Ramsey hits the road. The Road Lake Upminster doing its thing.....all 40lb plus of it

Congratulations to John Tollitt on his capture of Wraysbury's Long Sutton at a weight of 52lb 8oz



# LONG JOHNS



# BEN'S COMMON

With a little help from my friends. Max Whitehall with Ben's Common at a whopping 46lb!



# BYRON BANKED

Rob Allen strikes gold one of Cheshire's finest, BYRONS at 43.2



# PB FOR LEE

A new pb to boot.  
Lee Thomas with a 46lb mirror called "FALCOS"





**CATCHDRY**<sup>TM</sup>

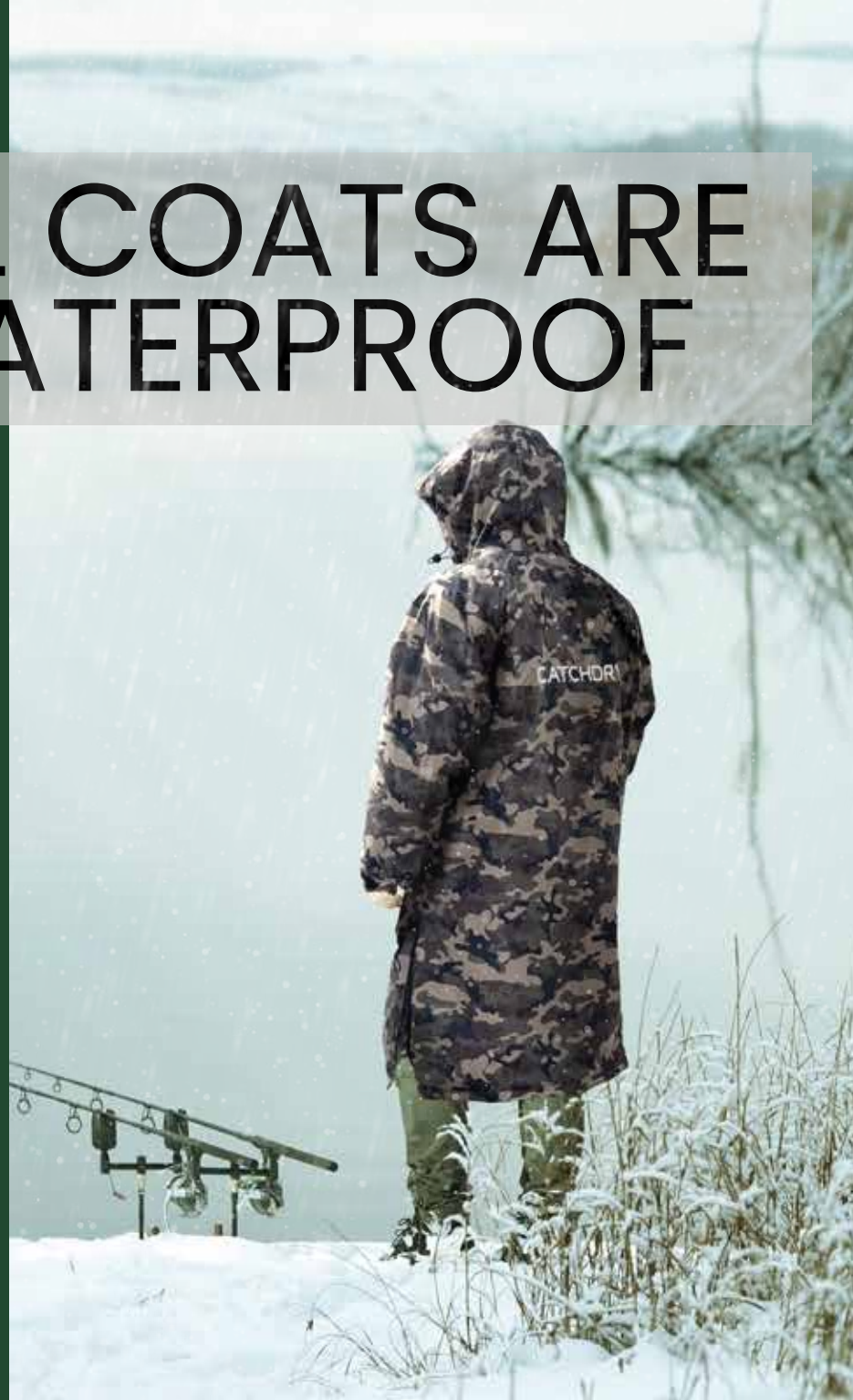
# NOT ALL COATS ARE 100% WATERPROOF

- ✓ 20,000mm Waterproofing
- ✓ 10,000g/m<sup>2</sup> Breathability
- ✓ Shahtoosh Fleece Lined
- ✓ 2.5 Layer Protection
- ✓ Water Repellant Coating
- ✓ Adjustable Hood With Peak
- ✓ Two Waterproof Pockets
- ✓ One Interior Pocket
- ✓ Waterproof Zip + Flaps
- ✓ Adjustable Wrists + Hood

BIG CARP EXCLUSIVE

# 15% OFF

USE CODE: BIGCARP15  
WWW.CATCHDRY.COM



**THE ULTIMATE WATERPROOF FISHING COAT**

WWW.CATCHDRY.COM - USE CODE BIGCARP15 AT CHECKOUT



# NOT SO ELUSIVE



Jason Smith has only gone and banked another 40 on a day session . The "Elusive" at 42lb 2oz .

# MORGAN MAKES 44



Mark Young lands Morgan at 44lb 10oz from Orchid  
To top it off another mirror at 28lb 4oz



### ONE MORE NIGHT



George Benos said, "What a difference one more night makes, just when I thought I was gong home a blanker... a change in weather conditions and a drop in pressure and zero to hero, a 20,30 and this 43plus, from the Manor"

Jim Chisnall has continued to bait and work an area of water which has been the key to his autumn campaign. Baiting an area of shallow water has produced some stunning carp recently including this one and his latest carp weighing 47lb 8oz known as 'Bomb Head'.

### BOMBS AWAY



### NO FLUKE FOR LUKE



Give Luke a Chance  
Luke a fish known as Bullnose at just under 52lb



# KENT KRACKER

Martyn Reeves with a  
stunning Kent 40



# ON FIRE

That's what it's all  
about  
Blaise Price fishing  
from 1st Island lands  
another one of the  
Orchid residents. Cathy  
weighing in 44lb 2oz





 **Exclusive Carp Venues**

**NEW FOR 2025**  
**ETANG DE VRIGNY**  
click here 



**ETANG DE VRIGNY**

60 ACRES  
7-10FT  
CARP TO 50lb+



**BRENNE CARPING:**

22 ACRES  
2.5-6FT  
CARP TO 60lb+



**FURET:**

25 ACRES  
4-7FT  
CARP TO 70lb+



**LA LOUBIERE:**

37 ACRES  
2.5 - 5.5FT  
CARP TO 74lb



**LA BERSONNIERE:**

3 ACRES  
9FT  
CARP TO 66lb+



**CAMALO:**

11 ACRES  
2.5 - 10FT  
CARP TO 70lb+

**click here to visit [www.exclusivecarpvenues.com](http://www.exclusivecarpvenues.com)**



### WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY



The action didn't last long (2 hours max) for Robert Burgess and Tom Maker on Linear Fisheries B1 last week made the small window of opportunity count.

Catching 7 fish with them all being over 30lb to 43lb 7oz.

### MILL MAGIC



MT finally got his hands on this crazy forty something, one that appears on the bank very rarely at THE MILL SYNDICATE





NEW CHRISTMAS SPECIAL PRICES  
FROM 1ST DECEMBER 2024



# "CARP FISHING MAY HAVE JUST CHANGED FOREVER"

## THE REEL RAPZ

- SUPER CHARGE YOUR MONO
- MAKE YOUR MONO HEAVIER THAN FLUOROCARBON
- MAKE YOUR MONO SUPER SUPPLE
- THE ULTIMATE IN PRESENTATION
- SOAK & SINK YOUR BRAID / ANTI FRAP
- LINE GUIDE / BAIT BOAT, BAITING CONTROLLER
- LINE GUIDE / BAITING POLE, BAITING CONTROLLER
- THE FIRST DEDICATED LINE INSTALLATION WRAP
- REEL PROTECTOR – DEDICATED REEL HANDLE LOCK
- SPOOL / LINE PROTECTOR
- LOOK AFTER YOUR MOST IMPORTANT  
PIECE OF TACKLE "YOUR LINE"

MULTI USE REEL WRAP

# 5 USES IN 1

[www.urbanfrogtackle.com](http://www.urbanfrogtackle.com)



see us on Facebook



*Secret Santa discount code: BCCRIMBO24*



## CATCH REPORTS

### MAXED OUT



Well earned.  
Max Lloyd nicked two this morning with this 41lb mirror being the best one from both bites.

What a session for Julian Hall had recently over at his Cotswold syndicate.

### HALL'S HAULING



### DEAN SMASHES TILLY



Dean Newman smashes it!!  
Tilly 52.3lb pb oh yeah!



**AARON  
STRIKES  
GOLD**

Aaron recently struck gold in the shape of a new PB common, this 40lb 8oz cracker.



Autumn Cracker for Alex Woodcock with a 43lb Stunner!

**AWESOME  
ALEX**





# MISSING LINC



Having been in full swing on a campaign elsewhere all year, Andrew Batty made a return to his beloved 200 acre pit in search of its big girls. Here is the biggest of the trip, weighing in at 43.4lbs .

Big hit on the pit. Ricky with a big hit 40

# TOP 40 HIT





# Oak Lakes Fisheries



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

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



Nice fish



From a recent session on Oak lake



Tom Richardson had a good session recently on the first finger on Oak lake.



22 lbs sent in by Lee thanks mate

24lb



34 lbs 4 oz caught last night this carp known by members as "The Long Common" Well done Buddha



## ZIP UP



OUCH! what a zip! Jack Price with the BBQ Zip at 52.07 from Long Lake

## PECKING ORDER

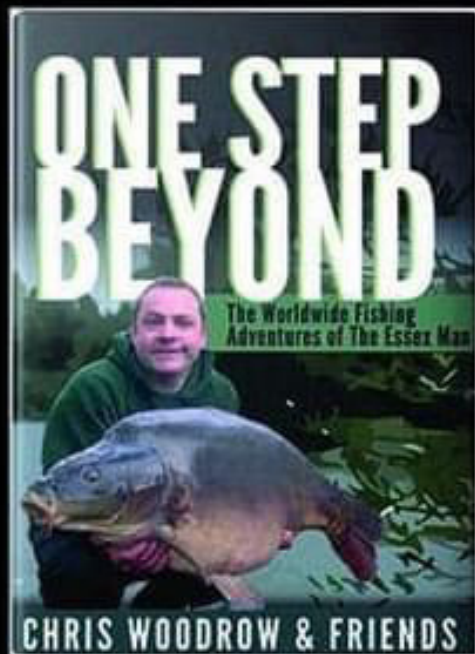
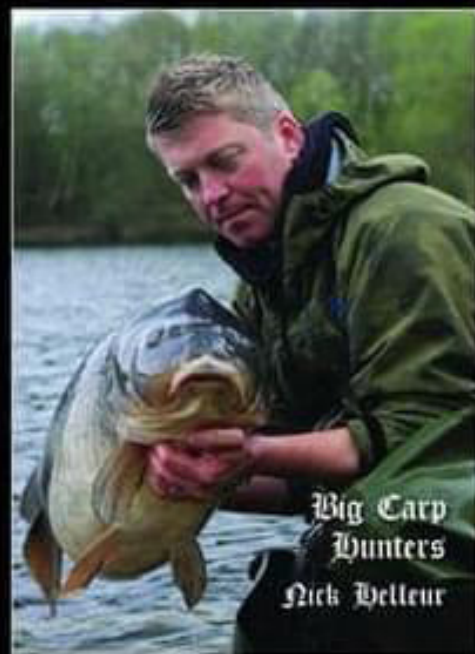
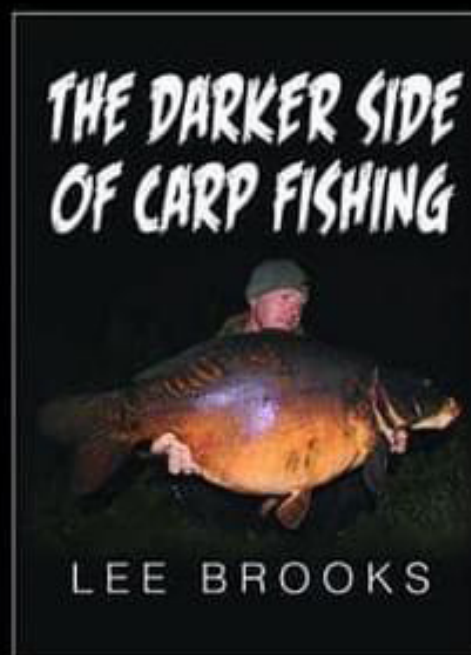
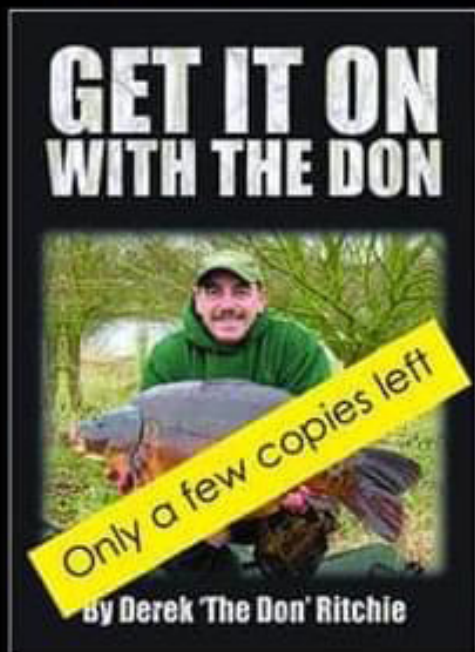
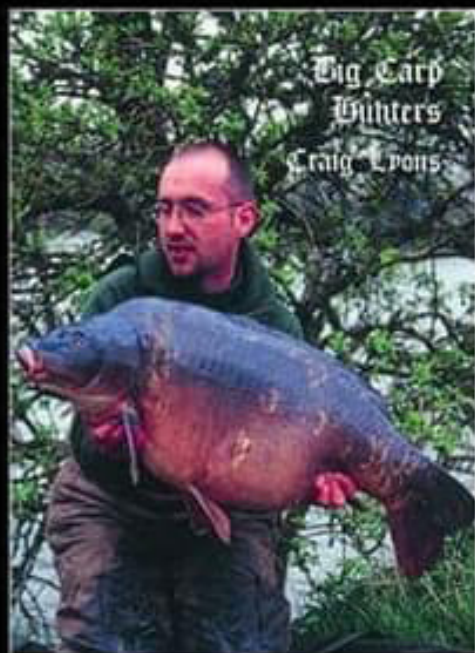


Darryl Peck's Mainline shoot at the Grenville syndicate went really well, 7x 40s to 47lb, and a rake of nice 30s also. Big drops of Cell and ISO Fish at long range via the boat, then launching 15mm pink waffer hook baits over the top.



# THE BIG CARP HUNTER SERIES

*The Unsung hero's prolific catches with a unique tale to tell*



07768 731425  
[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)



## THAT'LL DO



A prior engagement.  
Keith Prior said "A nice November fish and caught at a nice civilised time 7-30 a.m .45-08 lbs. That will do."

## LIFE OF REILLY



Mark Reilly came down to The Res as part of a lake exclusive the other week and what a session he had!  
Average Joe @ 47lb 4oz  
KP @ 39lb 12oz  
Scaley Mirror @ 34lb 2oz



# BAGSAW BAGS UP

Bag-Up for Bagshaw  
Congratulations to  
Mark Bagshaw who just  
smashed his UK PB with  
this mirror weighing 49lb  
4oz.



King Dino!  
Keith Newton  
with Kingys awesome  
Dinosaur 41LB

# DINO KING





# MOONEY ON THE MONEY

Epic Catch!!  
45lb of pure  
epicness for Jason  
Mooney!



# BURGHFIELD BRUISER

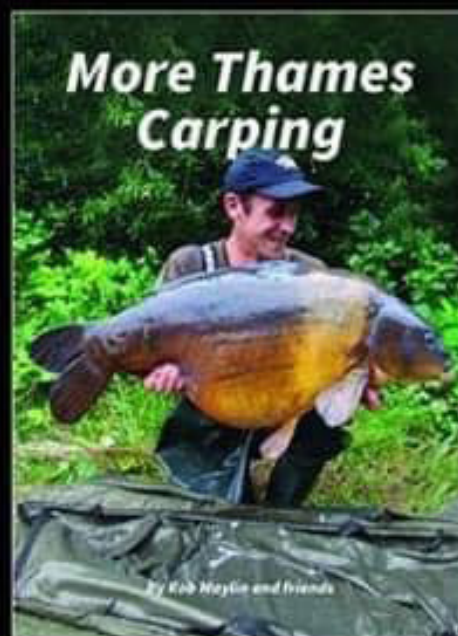
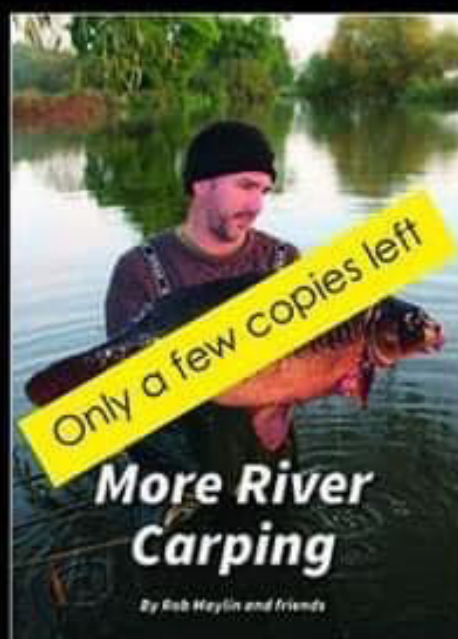
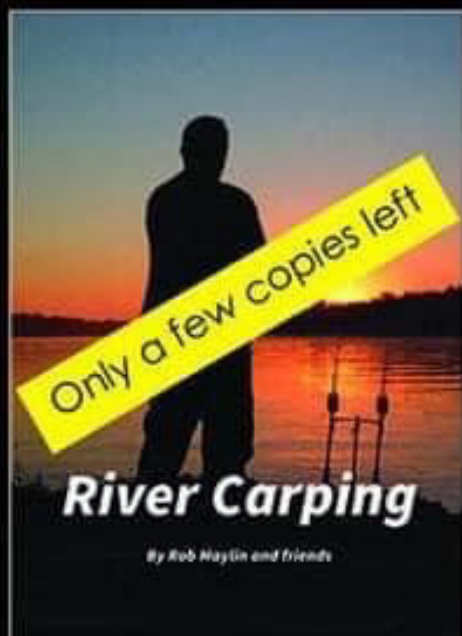
Burghfield Bruiser!!  
Advanced Angling  
reported a 54lb 6oz from  
Burghfield Main Lake, no  
other info at this time.





# THE RIVER CARPING SERIES

*Tales and Technical, a must-read series for the river angler*



07768 731425

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



# SINGLE SCALE FOR SCOTT



Sometimes it's meant to be. Scott Lloyd with one of Lynch's remaining few that evaded him. Single Scale at a colossal 48lb 12oz

# KIT FINDS NEMO



Orchid resident alert. Nemo weighing in at 43lb 8oz for Kit Mellis



# GREAT SCOTT

Pick of the bunch.  
Scott Millbank  
fished Orchards  
syndicate this week  
taking this 44lb mirror



This day was a good day, my first ever Cheshire 40+ common, from earlier on in the year, and what a carp she is, unknown to me and never seen a photograph of this one so it made it that extra special. My goal was fulfilled that day and the buzz still burns

# THE UNKNOWN





# BEN'S BRACE OF 40S



What a moment!  
A few weeks back I  
headed to Elphicks  
Fisheries fishing no  
other than North Lake  
with Swimbooker! a  
brace of 40s for my  
efforts was insane!  
43lb and 43lb 8oz,  
what a surreal  
moment





# 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.

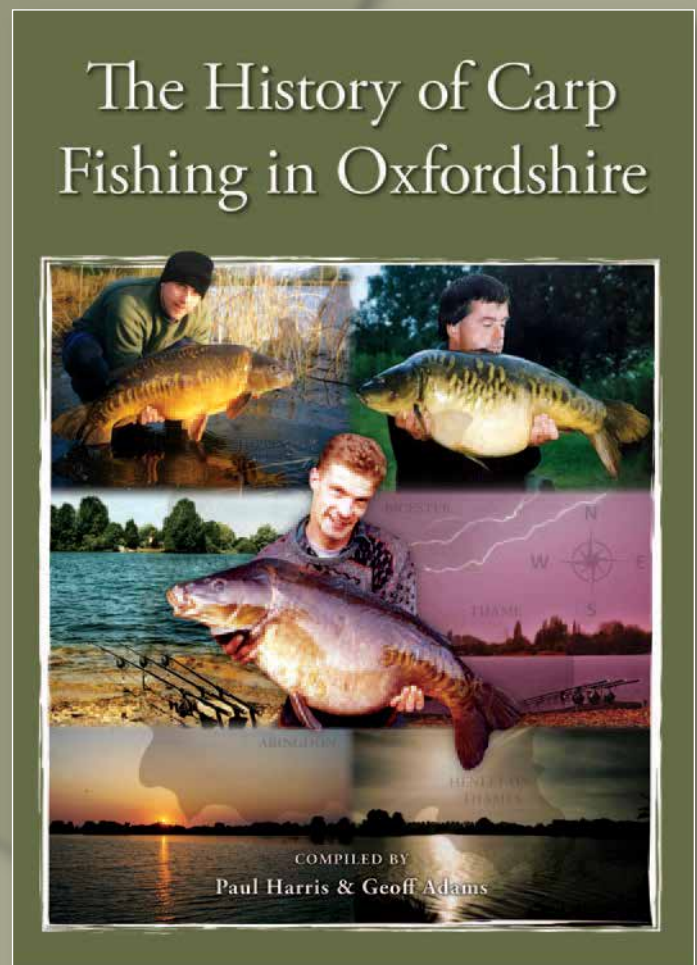
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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



CARD: 01252 373658

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

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



# GOING BIG ON A ZIG

Zig Brute for Josh. Josh Lowe banked this brute of a mirror recently at over 40lbs! After seeing fish show in the deeper water, he placed his bets in fishing a zig to the zone.



The Price is right for Jack Price with the VS Scattered Lin at 43.10 from Long Lake.

# RIGHT PRICE





# HAPPY 60TH



Gary Calton was mighty pleased that Old Crinkle decided to pay him a visit over the weekend, especially as she came at the end of a week in which he celebrated his 60th birthday! She went 49lb 4oz

Three UK 50's in two trips. featuring Peter Thorne. Peter Thorne has been enjoying some truly incredible results at Wellington Country Park. The 'Pretty Mirror' at 57lb8oz

# HELLO PRETTY





# BUILD A BLOODWORM BED





As the weed begins to die back, the beds of natural food have fewer places to hide from the carp. Because of this, the carp focus in on finding them, a perfect example of what they are looking for is a bed of bloodworm.

By imitating as close to as possible what they are naturally hunting down, you are heavily pushing the odds into your favour!

Here's how to make the mix:

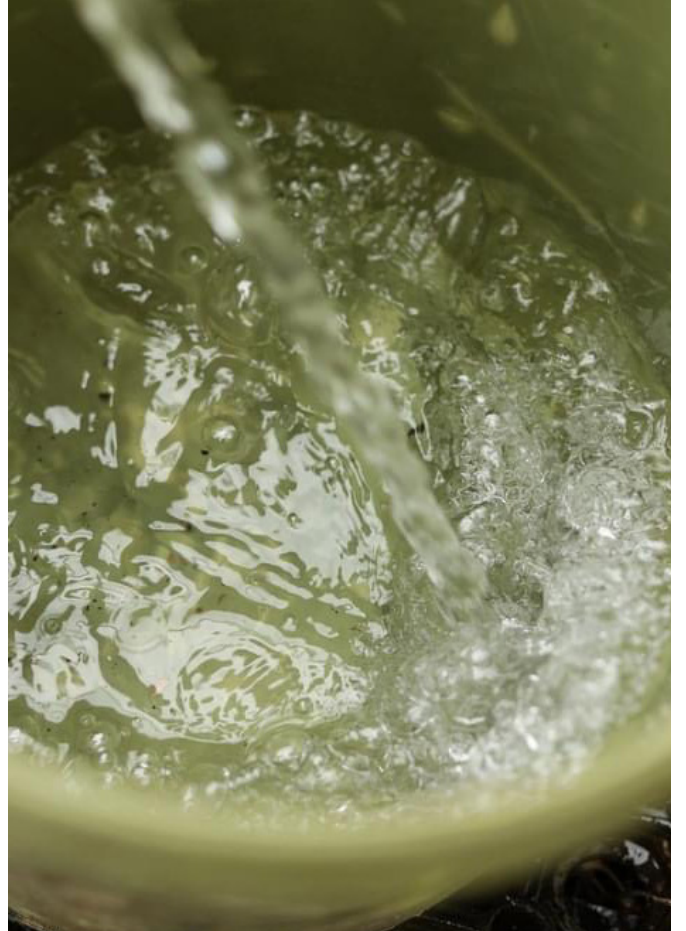
- Add some water to a bucket
- Followed by a generous helping of the Cloudy Bloodworm Liquid
- Crumb up some Bloodworm

Boilies and add this to the bucket

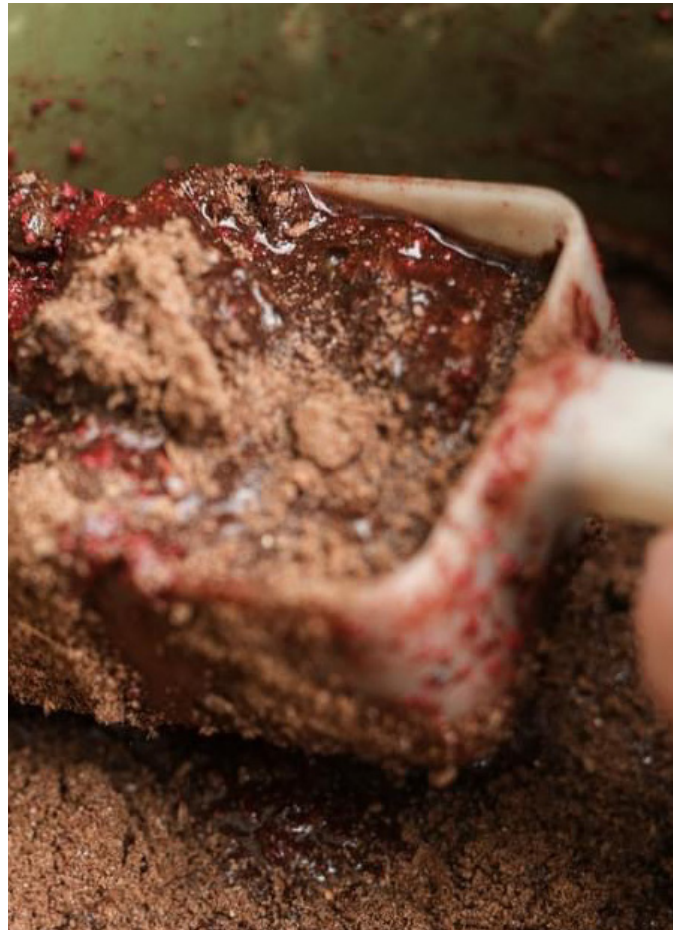
- Now add a few handfuls of the Bloodworm 12mm Boilies
- Next up, add some Bloodworm pellet in mixed sizes
- Lastly, add some of the matching Bloodworm Active bag mix
  - Give everything a good mix, and add more Active Mix or Boilie crumb until you are happy

Now you have a mix at your disposal that will act as a carp magnet as they hunt out the naturals!











# BIG CARP CLOTHING RANGE

## 3 DESIGNS AVAILABLE

In 9 different colours: Black, Grey Marl, Red, Navy, Bottle Green, White, Orange, Royal Blue and Brown

### "GEEZER"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "LETS AVE IT!"

**BACK PRINT:** GEEZER GETS EVEN WITH THE TUFTIES,  
**DRAWN BY**  
**GLYN GOMMERSHALL**



£32.95  
+£4.95\*



£32.95  
+£4.95\*

### "SAVAY"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "SEX DRUGS AND CARP THAT ROLL"

**BACK PRINT:** SAVAY SCENE,  
**DRAWN BY**  
**JOHN HARRY**

£32.95  
+£4.95\*

### "LEGEND"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "WHERE LEGENDS ARE MADE"

**BACK PRINT:** LEGEND, DRAWN BY LEN GURD WITH "STAND CLEAR APPRENTICE LEGEND"



STAND CLEAR APPRENTICE LEGEND



**RANGE AVAILABLE: ZIP HOODIE, SWEAT SHIRT, POLO SHIRT, T-SHIRT, TRAKKIE BOTTOMS, BEANIE HAT, BASEBALL HAT – ALL MADE USING TOP QUALITY GARMENTS – AVAILABLE IN 9 DIFFERENT COLOURS (Black, Grey Marl, Red, Navy, Bottle Green, White, Orange, Royal Blue and Brown)**

Please note the designs are only on the tops, but the Union Jack BC appears on all garments



**POLO SHIRT**  
**£29.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**SWEAT SHIRT**  
**£29.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**T-SHIRT**  
**£12.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**JOGGERS**  
**£32.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**LONG-SLEEVE T**  
**£16.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**BEANIE HAT**  
**£10.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**CAP**  
**£9.95**  
 +£4.95\*

Only available in Black

**HOW TO ORDER:**

- 1) Choose Garment
- 2) Choose Design A, B or C
- 3) Choose Colour
- 4) Choose Size: S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL or XXXXL

**NEW SUBTLE**  
 JUST THE BC LOGO  
 see website for details



[BIGCARPMAGAZINE.CO.UK](http://BIGCARPMAGAZINE.CO.UK)

Place your order online at **THE BIG CARP SHOP**  
[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)

Phone the order hotline **07768 731425**

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 9.00AM UNTIL 9.00PM



\*All orders subject to a postage charge of £4.95 for 'Signed Delivery'.  
 PLEASE ALLOW TEN DAYS



# COMBI HINGE RIG







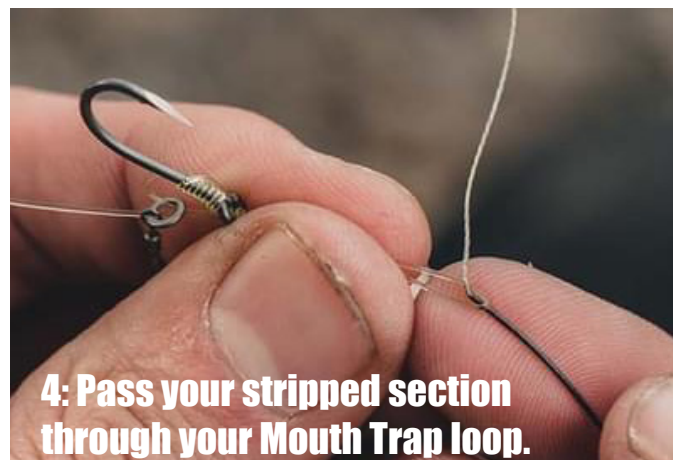
**1: Take a length of Coated Braid, and strip around 4 inches of coating**



**2: Form your Chod section using our Mouth Trap - knotless knot style**



**3: Fold over your Mouth Trap to set the height of your end section.**



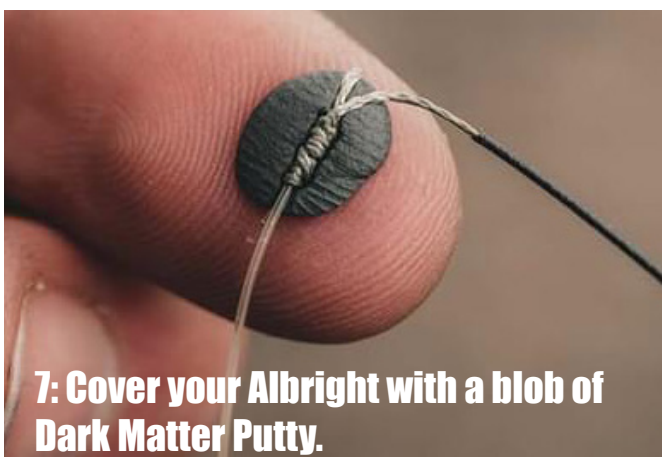
**4: Pass your stripped section through your Mouth Trap loop.**



**5: Form an Albright Knot, ensuring your tag ends exit the same way .**



**6: Set the length of your rig, and form a fig.8 loop at the end.**



**7: Cover your Albright with a blob of Dark Matter Putty.**



**8: Attach your chosen Pop-Up and go catch a carp!**





**DANNY TAYLOR**



# 90 MINUTES OF MAYHEM

Arriving at his Hampshire syndicate lake an hour before darkness, Team Manager Danny Taylor wasted no time getting his spomb rod out and with a bucket of hemp, maize, and a mix of Nutty and LT boilies swiftly deposited to a gravel patch at 40 yards, and 3 rods tram-lined to the spot, it was now just a matter of sitting and waiting for them to turn up. After a quiet night, the first bit of action came at 6.30 am, when a welcome 25lb 2oz mirror came to the net. With the fish quickly slipped



into the retaining sling, the re-cast rod was away 20 minutes later, this time, a chunky 32lb 12oz mirror was the culprit.

No sooner was the fish unhooked, the middle rod was next to scream off. This time, one of the lakes' real jewels, a fish known as Johnny Long at a massive 44lb 2oz, was

the next to trip up.

Whilst the big girl was being unhooked, 2 more bites quickly followed, the first being a beautiful specimen of 33lb 9oz, quickly followed by a mirror of 25lb 8oz.

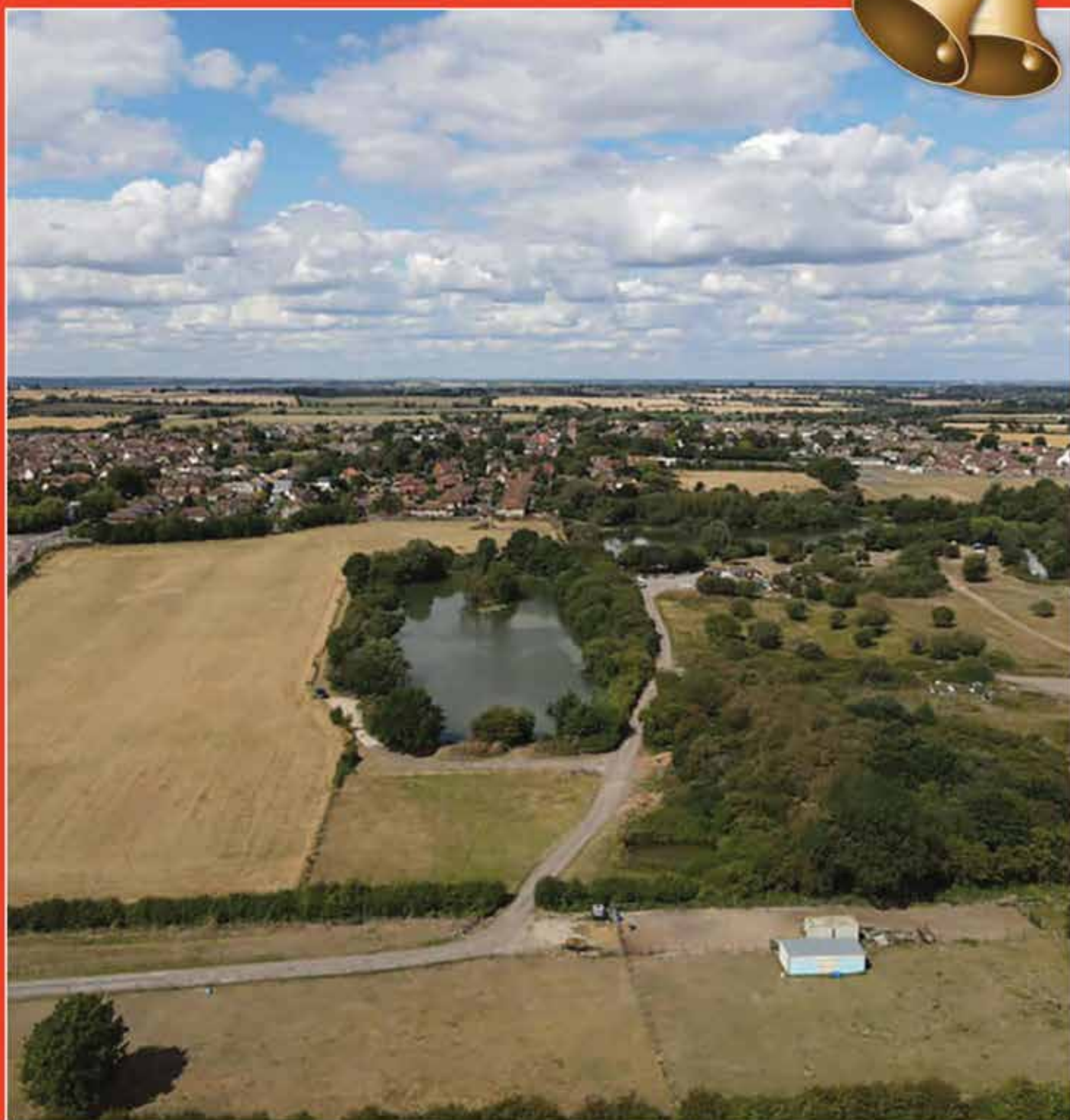
5 bites, 5 landed in an epic 90-minute feeding spell before Danny called it time at 9.30am.





# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



*A Merry Christmas from all at Oak Lakes Fishery*

*A huge thank you to all our valued customers*

*Looking forward to great times in 2025*

*and to seeing you all again*















**ELLIOTT GRAY**



# A SPECIAL OLD CARP

During September a number of years ago, I was spending a lot of time fishing onto a plateau that was really quite shallow on top, and shelved away quickly towards me. This area was also smothered in zebra mussels and was prone to cut-offs, so it had to be fished right.

Normally I'd use Sub Braid, but it was banned so the obvious choice was Kontour fluorocarbon in the 15lb, which has less stretch than mono, is tough as old boots and with

the weight of it would give me an acceptable line lay despite fishing really tight lines.

With the tips up and my lines stretching out over deep water, some 80 yards or so to the plateau, I was happy my line would be suspended between me and the feature but would be flat at the business end, with a long leadcore leader attached.

I'd caught plenty out of the swim by this stage and fishing locked up and walking back



once I'd hooked a fish seemed to result in a good hooked to landed ratio.

Fishing with slack lines, or slack clutches and letting the fish get the upper hand would almost certainly result in lost fish but by doing the complete opposite to that I was happy with my approach.

This mirror was one of the rarest and oldest carp in the lake, and despite it looking so clean, it's an absolute dinosaur of a carp.

I caught her late morning on the September full moon, when the sun was high in the sky and looked and felt like the chance was gone. Sometimes they come by surprise and when you look down in the net to see a carp like this one laying there, it acts as a stark reminder to how important fishing the swims safely and effectively can be – giving full thought to what gives you the best chance of landing that fish in a particular swim.









# BIG CARP

*Fine arts*  
presents

## WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

*The Legendary Big Carp Series*

### **Burghfield Common**

*The sixth in our series of Legendary Carp paintings is none other than that awesome creature, the Burghfield Common.*

*Only discovered in recent years, Nigel Sharp rocked the carp angling world when he finally landed the beast after a five-year campaign, during which time he had only seen this leviathan on a handful of occasions.*

*Regarded by many as the original myth, there was much speculation about its existence at all, until it was finally landed at an incredible weight of 50lbs.*

*Quite how it had evaded capture for so many years is still a mystery, but due to the vast size of this huge gravel pit, it simply became the needle in the haystack.*

*Once its existence was verified by that first capture, an army of the country's top carp anglers have invaded Burghfield's banks and some feared its mystery would be lost forever.*

*But no, this incredible beast has still proven to be virtually uncatchable with only a very few captures in the past half a dozen years.*

*Undeniably a legend, this beautiful animal well and truly deserves its place in the Big Carp Hall Of Fame. Coming soon – the Royal Forty...*

*Strictly Limited to only 100 signed and numbered by the artist.*



*The A3 prints are very modestly priced at only £25 and are available now on the Big Carp website [www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk). Visit the site, go to the shop and select the 'Fine Art' section. There is also more information on the rest of the series, which will be available at one to two-month intervals, but I can tell you that the Black Mirror, the Burghfield Common, Heather, Jumbo, Jack, Mary, Clarissa, the Bishop, the Royal Forty, the Fat Lady, Mary's Mate etc are already on the list and we are up for any more favourites – just let us know – Rob Maylin*

**Price £25.00 plus £8.00 Recorded Delivery and tube.**

**Call 01252 373658 for card payment or go to our website for secure Paypal payment.**

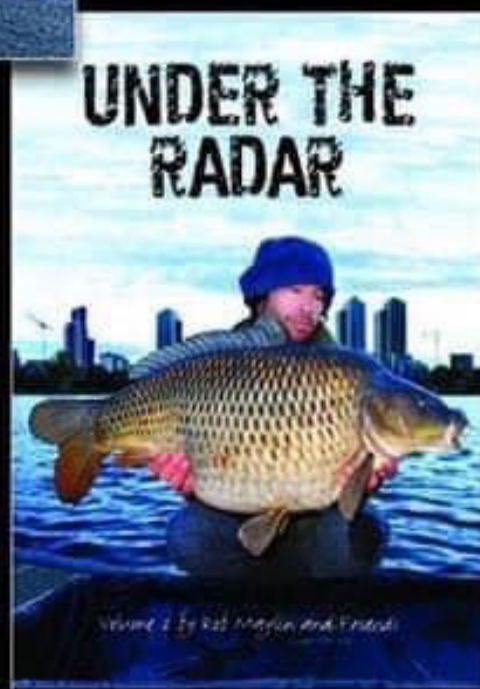
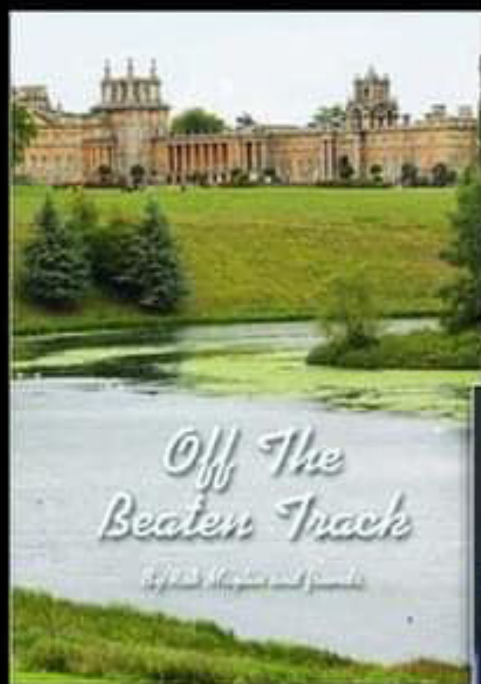
**[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)**





# OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

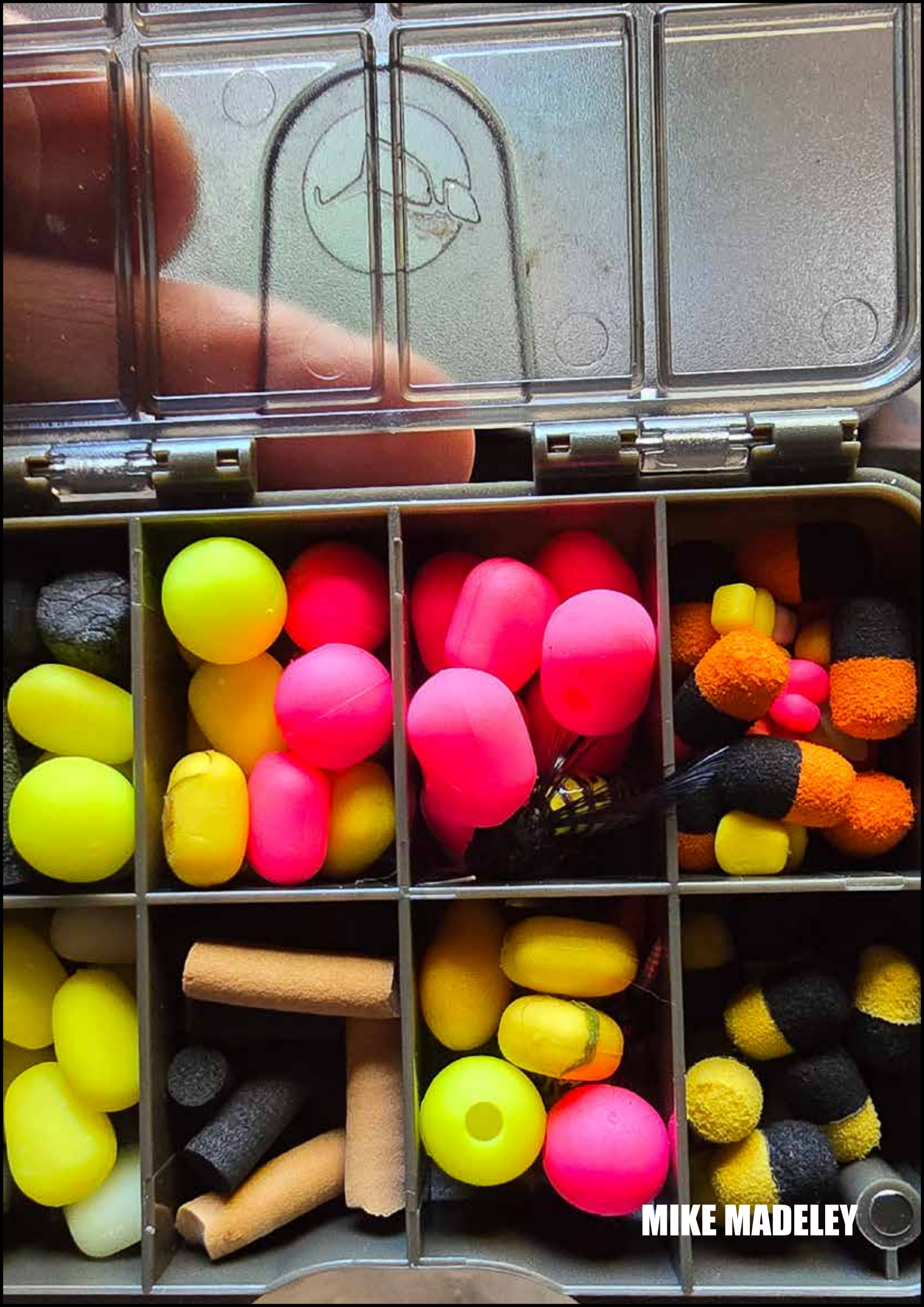
For lovers of the unknown, unnamed and uncaught



07768 731425

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





**MIKE MADELEY**



# THE IMITATION GAME PT2

Leading on from my initial The Imitation Game in November's issue, and because there is so much to cover I decided to continue the article and pick out some of the key imitation baits that I use, and also some other bits that you will find interesting and maybe never knew about !!!!!

## Quick spikes and Sight Stops

To be honest, why aren't more people using these? It's a simple straightforward idea, that not only holds any bait secure due to the retaining barbs there

not actually barbs more of a retaining blob but I will call them barbs. They will adapt to any size boilie including Snowman presentations and obviously plastics.

From the photos you can see the retaining barbs and these grip the bait internally very securely, even with a hard cast you can be confident they are staying on.

The spike is attached to a micro hook ring swivel, so attaching to a D rig is perfect with full 360 degree movement of the bait up



and down the D, or use on the Multi Rig. They come in a long size, very handy when setting up a Snowman presentation and the smaller size to suit maybe a single bait or double corn/ Single Corn etc.

With a packet of quick spikes you also get a selection of sight stops, ingenious so if you want to add a fleck of colour to your set up simple push on your desired colour sight stop, trim so it's flush and away you go, quick and so straightforward.

To use the spikes simply push the spike into the Bollie after making a pilot hole about 1.5mm with a baiting needle. Be careful of the hook swivel and trim off the top after adding a Sight Stop. That's it, you will also find the spike is made in such a way that it will not split the bait. Another point is with the spikes changing baits could not be easier, as the spike can be reused.

Now the Quick Spikes are not to be confused with the Enterprise









Hair Rig Boilie spike, they are 2 completely different entities!!!. The Hair Rig Spike is a rigid lightweight plastic, with retaining barbs meaning nothing is coming off. To use these again is straightforward, once you have created your hair tie the end to the eye of the boilie spike and set the distance of the bait from the shank of the hook before tying the knotless knot. These come in 2 lengths with the longest ideal for snowman presentations. These are a great

way to secure baits on a hair rig without fiddling about with little bait stops and an added bonus you can slide on a quick sight to add a fleck of colour if required, a pack of these in the tackle box take up no room!

Right then I am going to move onto a couple of imitation baits that I use when rules allow. Flavour pots I always have these in the bag, especially the Tiger nuts. A favourite bait the Carp love, I use both the Mini and large Tiger nuts, but mix







them in the same pot as there is plenty of Tigernut flavour to keep them immersed, this leaves you with an empty pot that you can soak another bait in the Tigernut flavour.

A note on Enterprise Tackle flavours, they are all specially formulated so they actually soak in to the imitation bait and not just coat them, this means they will ooze the flavour indefinitely and not be washed away on entering the water!!! There are

so many flavours to look at that at least one of them will suit you perfectly.

Now as I'm only covering what I use mostly from Enterprise I can not finish this article without mentioning the Immortal range of boilies and in a 10mm / 12mm size soaking away in a flavour pot is just so handy, especially if Crayfish are knocking about. The advantages of having something like these in your armoury are Ten fold. So they



will retain 100% buoyancy, they won't lose colour, pest and Crayfish proof and do not lose their smell.

So that wraps up my Enterprise article, you might not be a fan of using plastics even if the lake rules state you can and believe me there are still a few, so having a pot or 2 in the

bag will always give you the option.

The quick spikes will securely hold your bait and is a winner on D rigs, chod rigs or multi rigs, even the under used Withy pool rig.

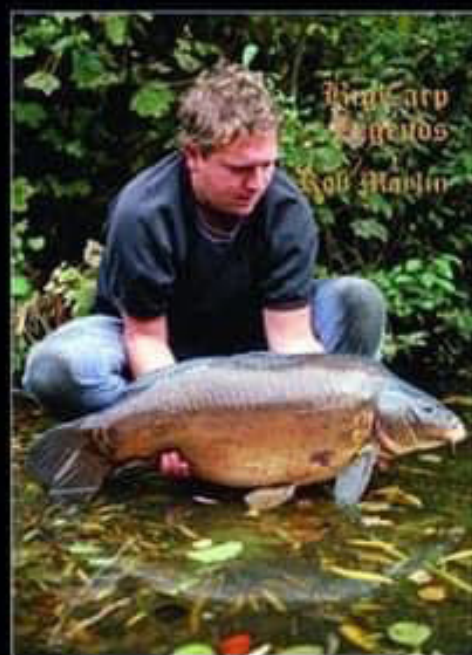
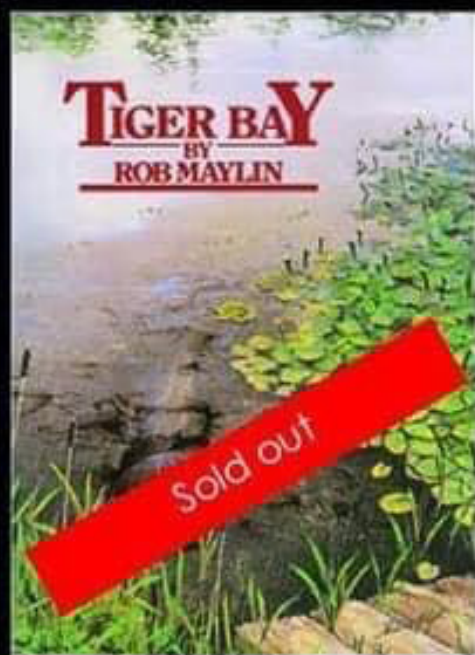
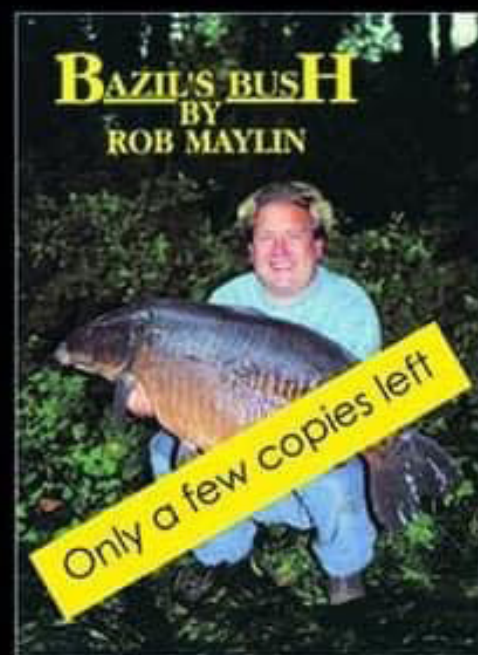
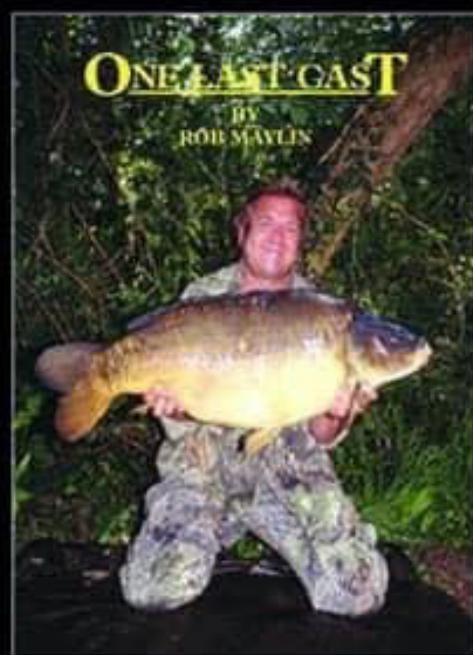
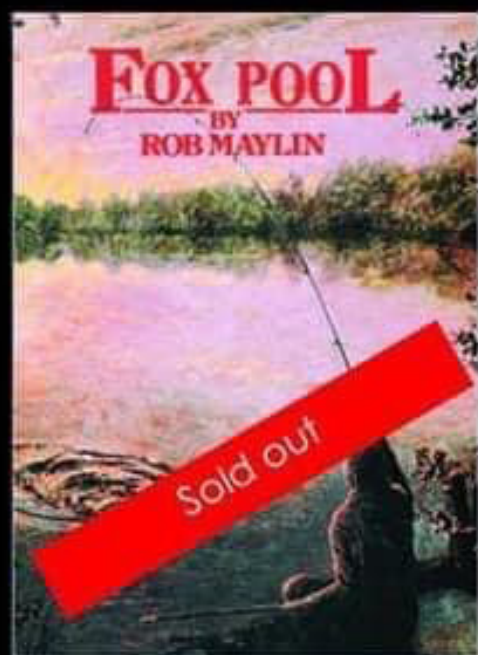
I wish you all well in your Winter fishing and thank you for reading.





# THE ROB MAYLIN SERIES

*50 years on the bank with Rob and Friends*



07768 731425

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



# TOM STOKE'S STONEY RIG







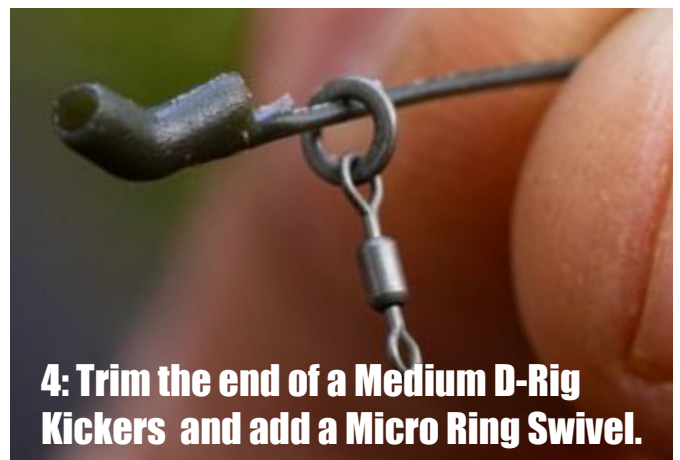
**1: Tie a 1.5" loop in some braid - trim and blob the tag ends.**



**2: Crimp a PTFE Spinner Swivel to 25lb Boom using a 0.6mm Krimp.**



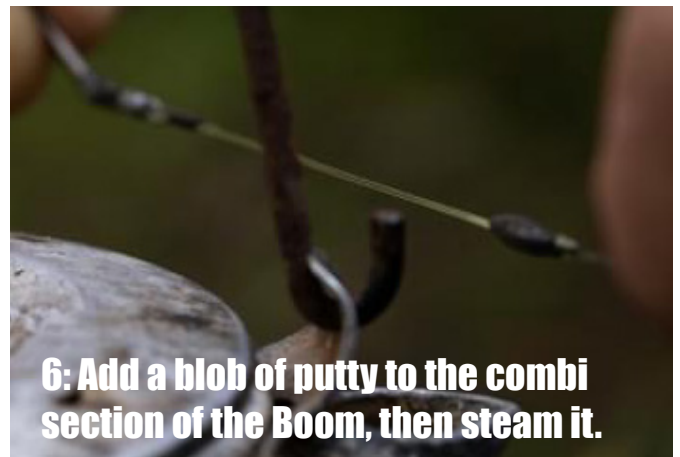
**3: Now take the Supernatural section and loop to loop to the Boom section**



**4: Trim the end of a Medium D-Rig Kickers and add a Micro Ring Swivel.**



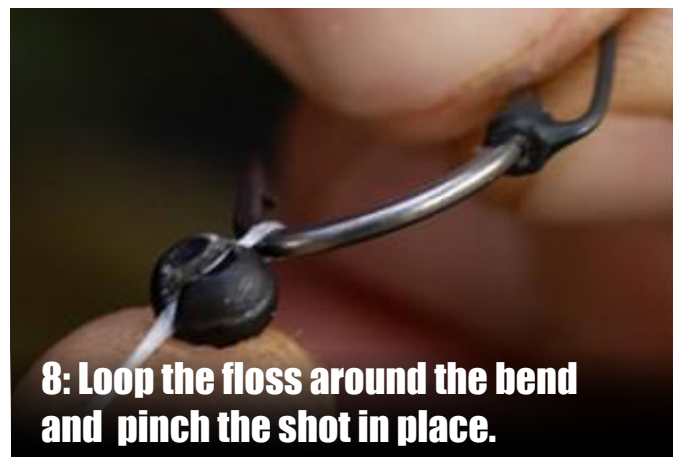
**5: Attach the hook to the Spinner Swivel and secure the D-Rig Kicker.**



**6: Add a blob of putty to the combi section of the Boom, then steam it.**



**7: Take a No.1 Split Shot and some Bait Floss.**

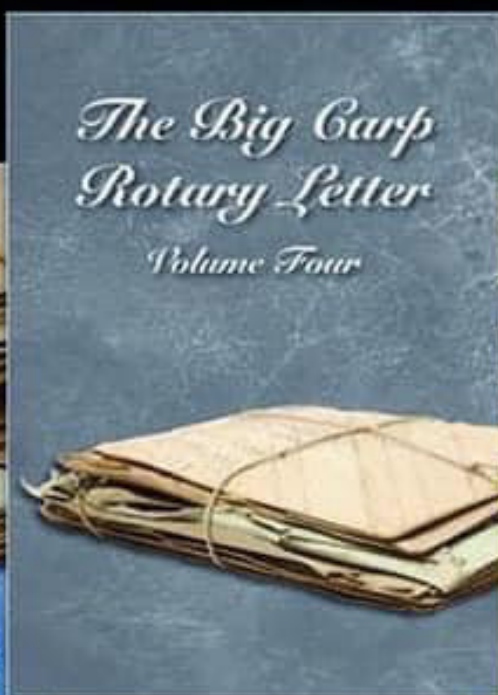
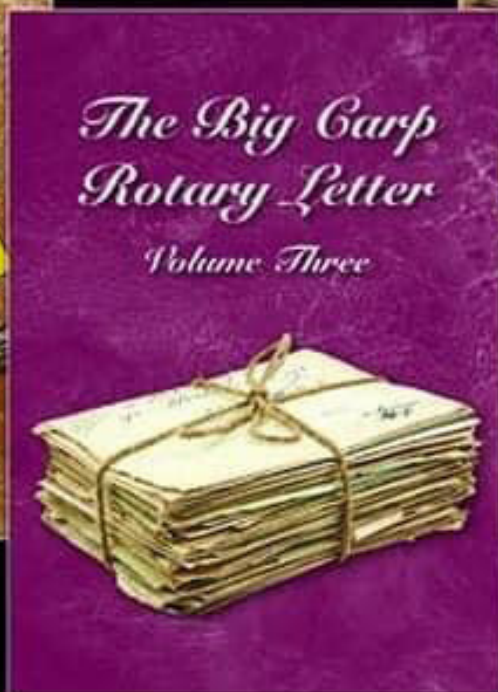


**8: Loop the floss around the bend and pinch the shot in place.**



# THE BIG CARP ROTARY LETTER SERIES

The greatest collection of thinking anglers ever amassed



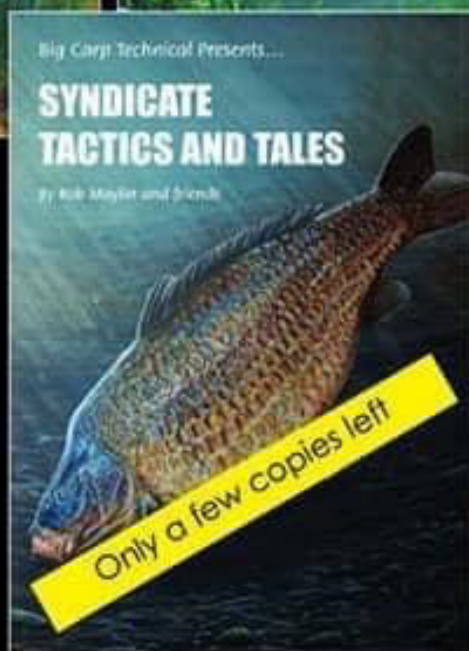
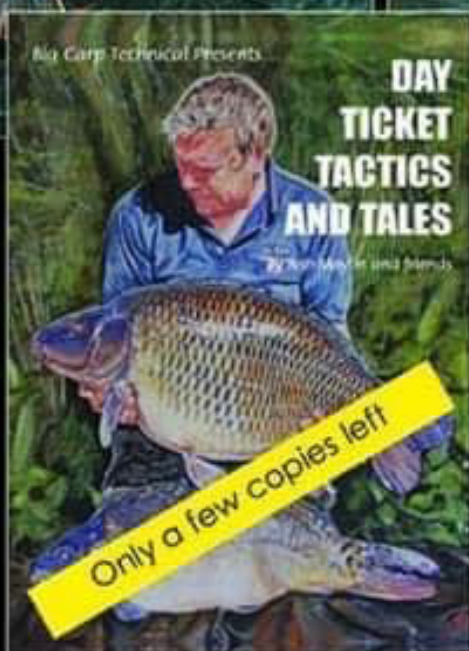
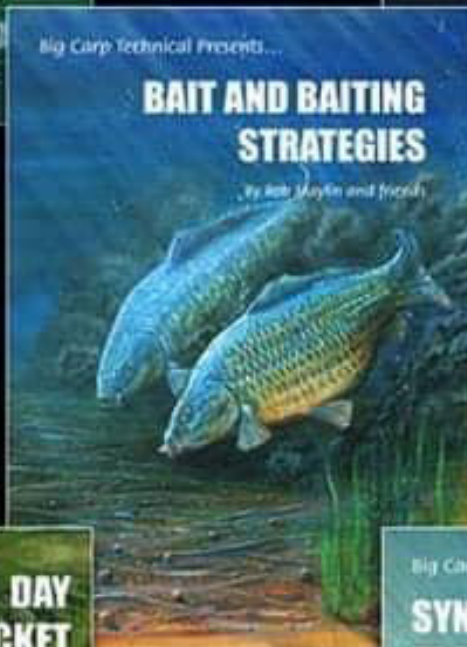
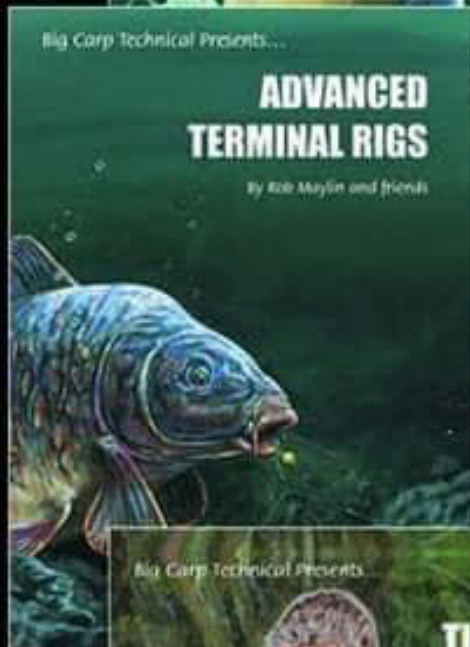
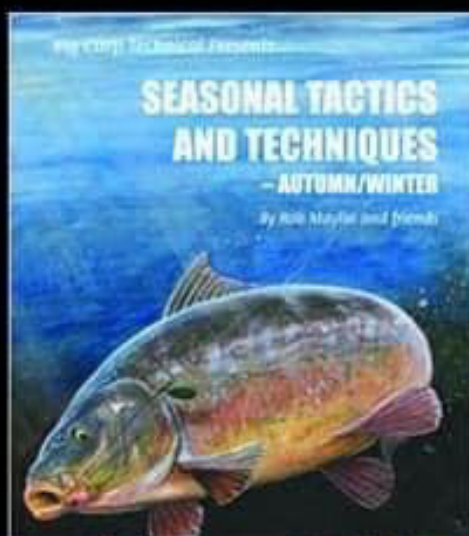
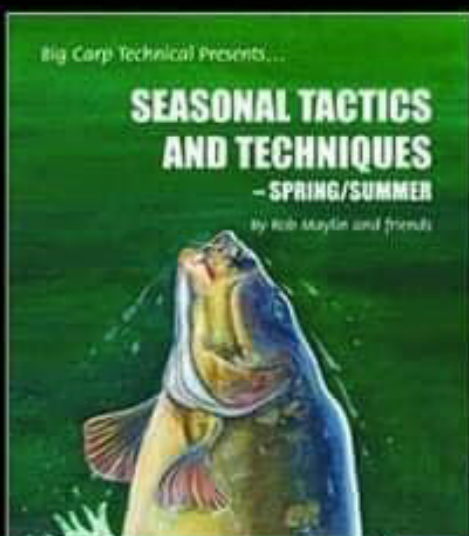
07768 731425

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



# THE TECHNICAL SERIES

*The carp anglers bible unlocks the path to consistent catching*



07768 731425

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





**TOM GARRETT**



# BIG FISH FRIDAY

Phil's Lake has been smashing out the big'uns with two DIFFERENT Lake Records in under two weeks! Tom Garrett landed Moony at 46lb 1oz, but around a week later Stuart Simmonds netted Beau, a few ounces bigger at 46lb 8oz!

Tom told us, "I'd been doing overnighters this year, and settled on a little and often baiting approach with a small amount of groundbait, CreAmino crumb and sweetcorn, with a few house pellet mixed in. I'd been



baiting into darkness which had worked well so far with a 38lb mirror falling on the Thursday night.”

“After seeing some fish during a brief visit, I was back on the Tuesday night with my kit. I targeted a silt spot at 17 wraps with two Fluoro D-rigs, baiting with a few spombs of the mix every 2-3 hours until about midnight. I started again at first light and at 9am the middle rod pulled up tight! After a slow, dogged fight, I slipped the net under Moony - with a new PB, it’s safe to say I floated my way back to work that morning!”

Tom’s capture of Moony had set a new lake record, but that wasn’t the case for long as it was pipped the following week by his mate Stuart!

Stuart mentioned, “I managed to get in my second choice of swim and after a brief exploration, I settled on a silty area just off the gravel. The baiting approach involved a

mixture of SLK and Bug boilies from 8-15mm, alongside house pellet, fishing two wafers over the top”

“That day passed quietly, but as the Harvest Moon lit up the lake that night, carp began showing around the lake and my confidence rose after a few liners. Shortly before daybreak I woke to a couple of beeps and the bobbin tight to the alarm. I soon caught a glimpse of a good fish in the torchlight but this is when the fun started as it then proceeded to go on a couple of 30-yard runs!”

“20 minutes later I finally netted Beau – with help from my mate Chris, we recorded a new PB of 46lb 8oz! I was so excited at having caught such a special carp and quickly called my mate Tom who’d landed Moony to say sorry that his record had only lasted a week! He was as pleased for me as I had been for him a week earlier.”

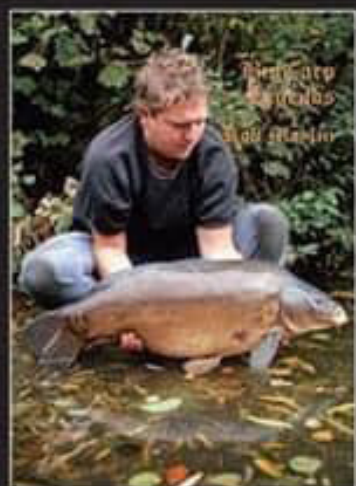
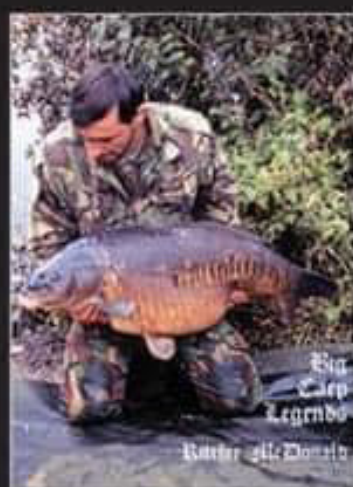
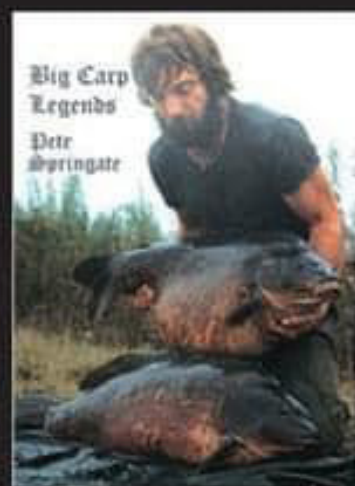
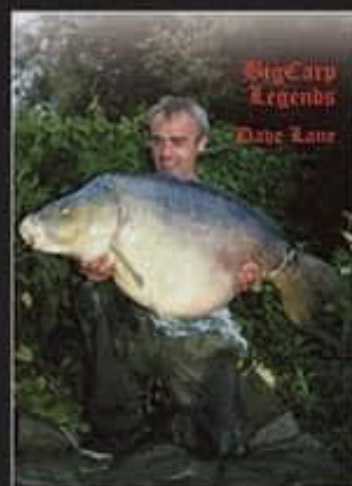






# BIG CARP LEGENDS SERIES

The anglers that shaped today's carp scene



07768 731425

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



# BIG CARP

*fine arts*

## WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

*The Legendary Big Carp Series*



*This is the first in a series of watercolour paintings capturing England's fantastic carp history. 'The Legendary Big Carp series' has been especially commissioned to celebrate a massive milestone in Big Carp magazine's history – the 200th issue! Basil, that famous Yateley North Lake legend, seen here in her natural habitat, is the first in a set of numbered and signed prints – absolutely breathtaking and scale perfect. The A3 prints are very modestly priced at only £25 and are available now on the Big Carp website [www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk). Visit the site, go to the shop and select the 'Fine Art' section. There is also more information on the rest of the series, which will be available at one to two-month intervals, but I can tell you that the Black Mirror, the Burghfield Common, Heather, Jumbo, Jack, Mary, Clarissa, the Bishop, the Royal Forty, the Fat Lady, Mary's Mate etc are already on the list and we are up for any more favourites – just let us know – Rob Maylin*

**Price £25.00 plus £8.00 Recorded Delivery and tube.**

**Call 01252 373658 for card payment or go to our website for secure Paypal payment.**

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





**OSCAR THORNTON**



# HAND OF GOD

Having not been to the lake since February, Oscar's first port of call was to find carp. After several laps, he found the carp seeking sanctuary in the snags.

By casting a bare lead to the far margin near the snags, he was then able to walk round, and by using the bait pole, was able to accurately place a small solid bag, safely on the edge of the snags where

he'd seen them.

His usual blow back presentation set up with a size 4 Kamakura Wide Gape on 4-inches of 25lb Supernatural was used with a balanced 10mm wafter. 4oz drop-off inline leads completed the rig, with 15lb Kontour mainline.

The first bite came within 10 minutes, managing three more that day to 44lb 12oz!



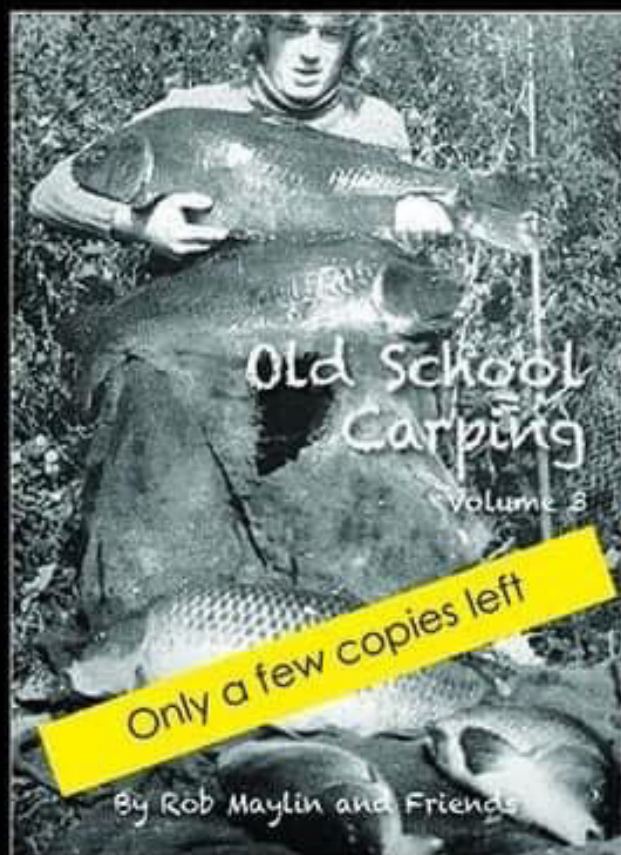
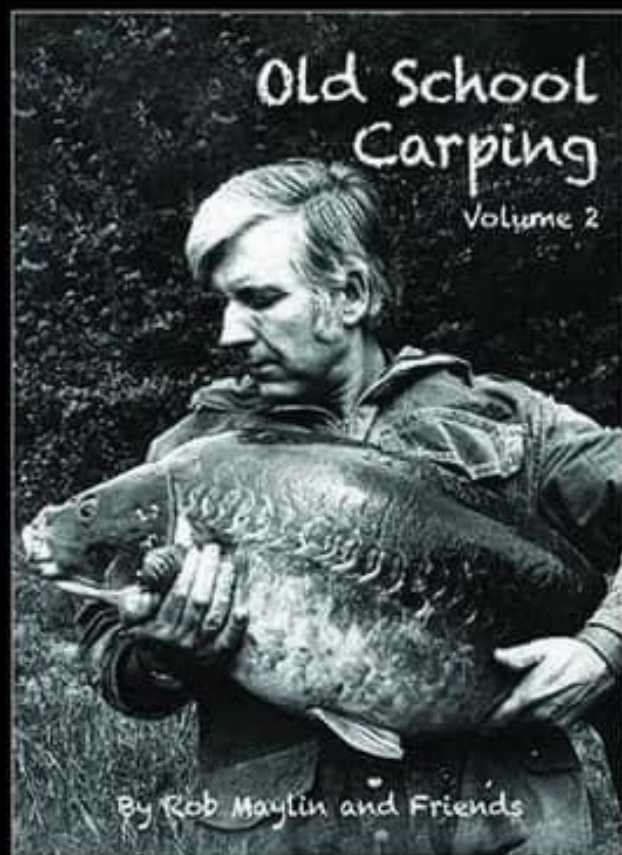
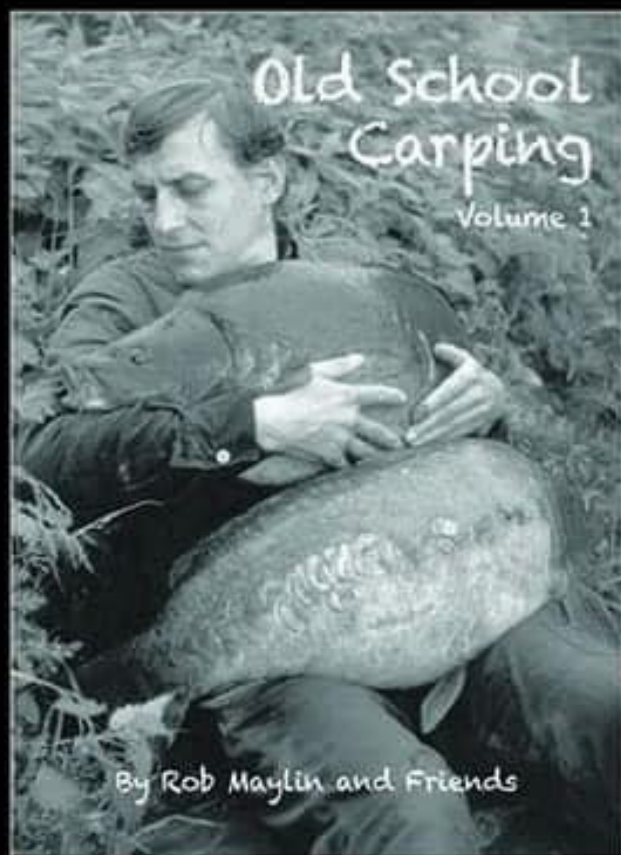








# OLD SCHOOL CARPING SERIES



07768 731425

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



# BIG CARP

*fine arts*  
presents

## WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS



*Mary and Mary's Mate, the icons of the great Wraysbury complex... The British Record in the arms of Terry Hearn and the brace which Sir Pete posed so wonderfully with on the back of his legends book are but two of the many captures which have earned these two awesome creatures their place in the Big Carp magazine legends hall of fame.*

*The A3 prints are very modestly priced at only £25 and are available now on the Big Carp website [www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk). Visit the site, go to the shop and select the 'Fine Art' section. There is also more information on the rest of the series, which will be available at one to two-month intervals, but I can tell you that the Black Mirror, the Burghfield Common, Heather, Jumbo, Jack, Mary, Clarissa, the Bishop, the Royal Forty, the Fat Lady, Mary's Mate etc are already on the list and we are up for any more favourites – just let us know – Rob Maylin*

**Price £25.00 plus £8.00 Recorded Delivery and tube.**

**Call 01252 373658 for card payment or go to our website for secure Paypal payment.**

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





**THE CARP SOCIETY**



EXCLUSIVE

# ASHMEAD: THE 'HEAR' AND NOW



Over the years that Mark and Shona Walsingham owned Ashmead it developed from a small weedy pool in the Somerset wetlands (Goat Willow) to an iconic carp water and wetlands nature reserve, creating memories for so many carp anglers from all over the UK.

For those unfamiliar with Ashmead, it is very different to the other waters currently controlled by the Carp Society. In complete contrast to Horseshoe, Farriers and Little Farriers, Ashmead is a very secluded venue. The entire 17 acres is broken up by a number of islands, with connecting channels and pools giving a very intimate water with many of the swims tucked away within the bankside cover.

One of the clear objectives of the Society since its initial inception has always been to acquire its own waters to be enjoyed by members. The decision to proceed with the purchase of

Ashmead wasn't taken lightly and many discussions were ongoing at the time before we committed to the purchase. The Board has always been mindful that the waters currently under the Society's control are all located in the Cotswolds, so it was felt that a water in another area would be appreciated by visiting anglers.

It's approaching three years now since the Carp Society purchased Ashmead. It was never going to be easy to transition from a very personal, daily hands-on, approach that worked so well for Mark and Shona to a more remote routine, as Ashmead became one of the four waters we have to manage from our base in Gloucestershire. Some aspects of the transition have proved to be difficult, and there is a very vocal group of anglers who are very critical of what is happening at Ashmead. Up to this point we have not commented publicly but feel the time is right to make a reply





on some of the issues raised.

1) Comments that we are not committed to Ashmead's future ...We suggest it's easier to let the facts speak for themselves, with a summary of expenditure and what has been completed to date.

a) Electricity and Fresh Water Supplies. When the Society took over Ashmead neither fresh water nor electricity was on site. Protracted negotiations finally got both installed to serve the aerators, kitchen, shower and W/C – cost £30,000

b) Kitchen Upgrade, Shower & WC Facilities. The existing facilities the Society inherited at Ashmead at the time of purchase needed attention. The cabin has now had a fitted kitchen installed, and the shower (previously served by lake water) is now fed with heated fresh water – total cost £2,000.

c) Car Park. With all the vehicles now attending site for ongoing improvements it was clear the existing car park was inadequate to deal with this



**EXCLUSIVE**





level of traffic and would also be unfit to accommodate visiting anglers. Suitable machinery was brought in, debris skimmed off, rough hardcore laid, topped and rolled with Type1 aggregate – cost £5,000.

a) Perimeter Otter Fence.

Whilst Ashmead was sold to the Carp Society as having a fully enclosing otter fence, it soon became apparent that the existing fence needed upgrading so that we could ensure total protection for the venue's residents. Evidence of otters was found on site and the situation needed immediate priority. Subsequently, a professional contactor was engaged to erect a full perimeter otter proof fence (similar to the one at Horseshoe) which will now last for many years – cost £50,000. The unwanted delay in the contractors clearing the rubble from the aftermath of the new fence-build was an issue which has now been resolved.

b) Bank (and Islands) Clearance

and Maintenance. Maintenance of bankside vegetation and fallen trees, much of which has to be initially done by hand to create sufficient room for machinery access.

Expenditure so far ... Plant items purchased:

Mower, strimmers and hedge cutters - £5k

Winch for tree and snag removal - £3k

ATV to aid tree/snag removal - £4k

Hired plant items:

Diggers and wood chippers for tree removal - £4k

Total cost - £16,000

c) Stockpond(s) When we bought Ashmead, we were led to believe there were two stock ponds on site holding fish approaching 20lb, that had been periodically moved from the main lake. One of the 'ponds' was drained and was actually found to be devoid of any carp. The pond has since been totally redeveloped and now holds thirty C2 and around a hundred









hand selected C1's. To avoid any risk of cross-contamination, these fish have been selected and reared from spawn taken from the main lake. These fish are currently being grown on, and when of a suitable size, will be reintroduced to the main lake. Our thanks go to Justin who took the lead in this project, and we are extremely grateful for his efforts on this – estimated cost £2,000.

d) Caravan: Given the amount of ongoing work at the venue,

our staff have had to spend a significant amount of time at Ashmead. With the lake over two hours from our Horseshoe base and the local B&B costs spiralling it was felt necessary to purchase a second-hand caravan for more convenient on-site accommodation – cost £3,000.

e) Long term plans...In total we have invested close to £100,000 over the last three years; evidence of our commitment to Ashmead as a long-term





investment to be enjoyed and appreciated by Carp Society members for many years to come. For anglers who prefer the more traditional approach with peace and seclusion at an intimate venue, coupled with some glorious carp, then Ashmead will tick all of the boxes. Along with the necessary ongoing daily maintenance at the lake, we have an ongoing schedule of further works planned for Ashmead as finances allow. Members will be kept informed about scheduled updates and developments.

2) Weed Control and Long-term maintenance....Anyone visiting Ashmead will immediately be aware of the prolific weed growth, this was always going to be one of our biggest issues and so it has proved. Soon after the Society took over ownership of the venue an emergency developed that required immediate attention in the form of an oxygen crash caused by the excessive weed growth. At the time of the oxygen crash, the EA were actually called in to attend and give a professional





opinion. Their repeated message was that we had to address the weed situation which was out of control and in danger of taking over the place and was largely the reason for the oxygen depletion. Aeration systems and generators were immediately sourced and located permanently at the pool and kept running around the clock for several weeks, which involved daily manual attention on site. The purchase cost of generators, aerators and the necessary fuel (the diesel cost alone was in excess of £6k) – involved a total cost £10,000. With the oxygen crisis temporarily averted, to avoid a repeat performance, it was blatantly clear that the excessive weed situation had to be addressed as a matter of priority. The extent of the weed growth was such that manual removal with rakes would not solve the problem quickly enough, so a professional outfit were engaged to provide a weed boat and operator for a week (£5k per visit). Such was the extent of the weed the contractor was







required to attend for three separate weeks – total cost £15,000.

Managing the weed has not been easy, but long term we are committed to getting it right, both for the welfare of the fish and for the anglers fishing the water.

3) Anglers access...We have made every effort to maintain personal contact for bookings; however, transitioning from a family-oriented approach to a more business-like model has been challenging. As recently

advertised, we are moving to a syndicate system and will monitor how it works. Ashmead can be a tricky water to fish and best suits experienced anglers. This has always been the case, and we will aim to explain this to anglers looking to book, to ensure the continued welfare of the fish and the environment.

4) The Ashmead Carp: The principal aim of any carp venue is to provide enjoyable carp fishing. The stock levels in Ashmead are largely unknown. At the time of the purchase, it was indicated to







contain in the region of 150 carp, primarily comprising mirror and common carp with a significant proportion of the stock said to be over 30lb. Due to the sprawling maze-like nature of the lake, it is hard to give an exact estimate of the stock. Over the last 3 years we have received catch reports evidencing a high proportion of thirties.

The current lake record is Single

Scale, a big mirror which peaked at well over 58½lb, with the last known capture being just shy of 50lb. The lake has produced two 40lb+ mirrors, and no fewer than four 40lb+ commons, the lake record common weighing in at 44lb. (Information from previous owner Mark Walsingham.)

The stock is of true Leney carp, and a venue which has produced a 50lb+ Leney mirror



and four 40lb+ Leney commons - and has the potential to repeat those weights - is a very special venue indeed, which is an apt description of Ashmead. It is a very special venue indeed which the Carp Society is proud to own and promote for the benefit of its members. For many years Ashmead has been a high profile and inspirational water which has moved several writers to set pen to paper about its beauty and prowess. It is a water for the ages.

5) A reply to some of the criticisms that we are a closed shop and do not listen to feedback....

We do listen. The Carp Society is not a closed shop (it is a democracy open to all carp anglers) and we will respond, but not to inappropriate posts, containing offensive language and personal insults. We also need, where serious concerns and complaints are made, to go through a proper process of discussing issues and agreeing replies which can take time.

We understand that emotions can run high. Ashmead is very special to so many people and as anglers we understand how easy it is to become attached to a water and want it to remain as it is, but the reality is that we are now the owners and must run it in a manner best suited to the Society's membership and administration.

If you genuinely care about Ashmead work with us, tell us what your concerns are but do so in the right way by emailing [enquiries@ashmeadfishery.com](mailto:enquiries@ashmeadfishery.com)

6) In conclusion: Finally we must comment on the excellent work that has been done down there by the Society's Fisheries Management - Miles Carter, and his team - and the progress that's been made to improve the venue for visiting anglers. A big thank you goes out to all the bailiffs, volunteers, staff and anglers who have supported the Carp Society by contributing to the work that has been completed.



# Big Carp Magazine!

*a history of excellence*



## AVAILABLE AS A DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

Yes, you can purchase Big Carp magazine as an App downloadable to your iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch, PC and Mac and read the only carp magazine worth reading anywhere you go...



Available on the  
App Store



Available on  
Android

 [pocketmags.com](http://pocketmags.com)





DEC 2024

# FR LINE



# MILL LANE MAGIC



QUINN  
BEECH  
OCONNOR





# CARP TACKLE ONLINE

carp.online

QUALITY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

CARP TACKLE ONLINE  
WWW.CARPTACKLEONLINE.COM

## NEW PRODUCTS, BEST SELLERS AND DEALS

See us on Facebook



Tim Thornton was back at it again and continued his success, this time on Durleigh reservoir where he caught a cracking brace of a 28lb 4oz common & a 25lb 12oz mirror. Both taken at range on size 4 Scorpion Crank hooks IQ2 D rigs. Well done Tim



Team member Grant Walters getting amongst the autumn bigguns: "After heavily baiting an area with Infusion, hemp, pellet, corn and liquid food. This 35.8 stunner, tripped up. #carponline size 4 Scorpion Curve, as always (never fail me)"



Showing his dad how to do it, Bradley Johnson with two bangers of 15lb and 17lb. Both fell to our size 6 Cranks tied in a Ronnie Rig style. We'll done Bradley.



Team member Will Cottrell caught this cracking mirror last weekend using our Size 10 Scorpion Zig hooks with the eye slightly bent in. We'll done Will.



"Using Carp Tackle Online - 20lb Fluorocarbon hook link, Tungsten sinkers, Scorpion Wide Gape size 6, 0.5mm Krimps on Helicopter Safe zone setup I caught a 23lb mirror, 34lb 3oz and a low double. Well done Brett, great angling!

Chard reservoir 10 fish hit for Tim!! Lovely 48 hours on Chard ressie in Somerset. 10 bites fishing at range using size 4 scorpion crank hooks and IQ2 D rigs. end tackle. 22.08 was the best a big moon common. Love this time of year.



# CARP TACKLE ONLINE

carp.online

QUALITY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

CARP TACKLE ONLINE  
WWW.CARPTACKLEONLINE.COM

**NEW PRODUCTS, BEST  
SELLERS AND DEALS**

See us on Facebook



Swivels



Scorpion Chod Hook



Scorpion Crank Hook



Scorpion Snag Hook



Tungsten Putty



Shrink Tube



Hair Stops



Hook Beads



Scorpion Ronnie Rigs



Composite Leadclip



Choddy Crank Hook



Aligners



Tungsten Aligners

Thank you to our loyal customers, hope you all have a **Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.**

To celebrate Christmas from the 1st December 2024 to 1st January 2025, we are adding 10% discount to your basket. Just use the code **JOLLY10** at the checkout to apply the discount



# Rob's Ramblings

Editor/Publisher  
Rob Maylin  
Bountyhunter  
Publications  
44 Herbs End  
Cove, Hampshire  
GU14 9YD

07768 731425  
bigcarpstudio@hotmail.  
co.uk

Design & Production  
James Harrison

Also available this  
month Big Carp issue  
341.



Front Cover:  
Nigel Sharp with one of  
Mill Lane's finest.



**A**nother successful Anglers Against Litter event was carried out on Sunday 17th November with the Trust and River Lea Anglers Club partnering up to remove as much litter as possible from one of the stretches of the Lea Navigation. A great turnout from club members and other members from the local community who managed to remove 25 sacks of litter from between Chalk bridge & Ponders End Lock. 99% of the litter collected was non-angling related. A huge thank you to everyone who turned up and to Canal & River Trust Angling, who removed the litter on the day. We also presented 2 young “litter heroes” with a limited edition #Shimano cap which made their day!



**8. CARP CHAT**

**16. CARP SCENE**

**24. BEN and BARRY  
OCONNOR**

**46. JOHN QUINN**

**64. KEN BEECH**

**74. NIGEL SHARP**

**116. ROTARY CLUB**





Dear Santa,  
PLEASE  
No more  
socks this  
Christmas!

Wish list:

*Seasonal Tactics and Techniques - Autumn/Winter*

*The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire*

*The Darker Side of Carp Fishing*

*Old School Carp Fishing Volume 4*

*History of Yateley Volume 3*

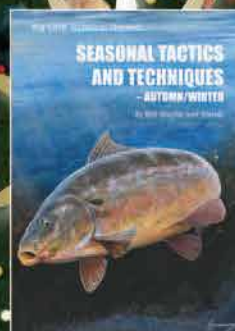
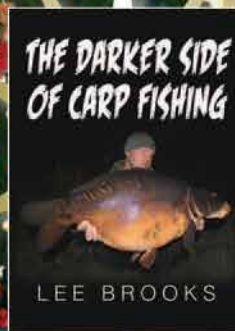
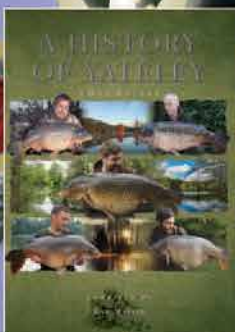
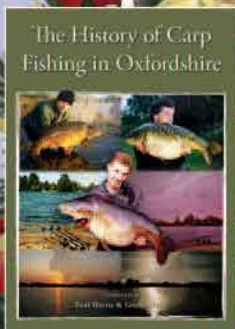
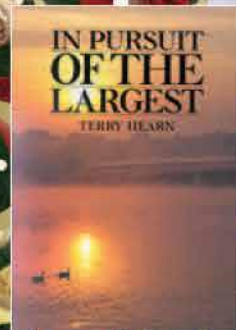
*Under the Radar Volume 2*

*In Pursuit of the Largest*

*Further off Beaten Track*

*Advanced Terminal Rigs*

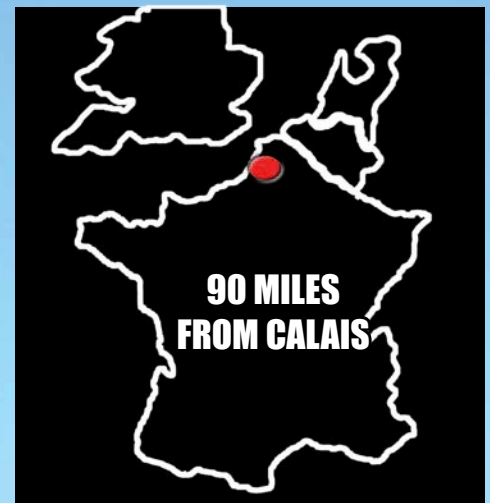
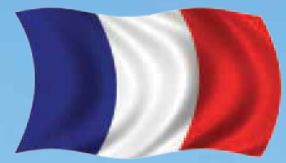
*Secrets of the Thames*



All available now only from Bountyhunter Publications  
[bigcarpmagazine@hotmail.com](mailto:bigcarpmagazine@hotmail.com) or call 07768 731425



# Experience the big carp venue in northern France



Only 1 hr 1/2  
from Calais !

## Val Dore Lakes

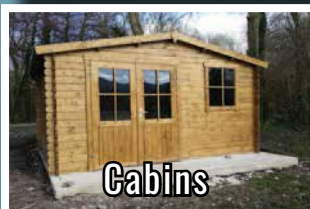
WEB : [WWW.VALDORE.COM](http://WWW.VALDORE.COM)  
email : [contact@valdore.com](mailto:contact@valdore.com)

ONLINE  
BOOKING  
AVAILABLE



**CARP AVERAGE  
WEIGHT : 30 lb  
CARPS up to 74 lb...!**

- £255 / angl / week
- 6 lakes - 60 acres
- 24 tons of carp
- Restaurant / Bar
- Wifi - Elect on swim
- Carpark on all swims
- Log cabins
- Tackle shop



Cabins



Tackle shop



Restaurant

**FREE BROCHURE :**

Call evening

**00 33 608 109 134**

**english spoken**

or email us : [contact@valdore.com](mailto:contact@valdore.com)



# Angling Improvement Fund To Control Invasive Species And Increase Biosecurity



The Angling Improvement Fund (AIF) has re-opened with £100,000 available to support angling organisations with projects that tackle the spread of invasive non-native species and increase biosecurity at angling venues.

The AIF is administered by the Angling Trust and is funded by the Environment Agency from income received through the sales of fishing rod licences. The AIF is just one of several ways the EA channels this income to support the delivery of tangible benefits to anglers across England.

Applications for up to £5,000 funding are invited from clubs, fisheries and other angling-related organisations. Joint applications from clubs and fisheries that wish to undertake a project covering larger areas will also be welcomed. The maximum award for these catchment projects is £10,000.

All applicants must have consulted with an Angling Trust Fisheries Support Officer before applying and should do so as soon



as possible to gain the best possible chance of receiving advice before the closure of the application process at 5pm on Thursday, 14 November 2024.

Applicants should attempt to match any award with a similar amount of funding from their own sources. This may include cash, volunteer time, donations, or a combination of all three. Successful applicants will be encouraged to complete any funded projects by 31 March 2025 although consideration of a final deadline on 30 September 2025 may be considered for broader projects.

# Take a Friend Fishing

Take a Friend Fishing Campaign Dates:

Our 24/25 Festive Take a Friend Fishing runs from Saturday 21 st of December

2024 to Sunday 5 th January 2025 (inclusive)

Spring 25 Take a Friend Fishing runs from Saturday 29 th of March 2025 to Sunday

13 th April 2025 (inclusive)

Take a Friend Fishing Key Messages:

Take a Friend Fishing offers more opportunity than ever to get out fishing with a friend during our

extended festive period and Spring campaigns.

Take a Friend Fishing continues to grow with our 2024/5 campaign offering more weekends and more

opportunity for you to go fishing and create those long-lasting friendships and memories.

Existing fishing licence holders can register for a FREE one-day fishing licence from the Environment Agency.



# 20 Years Of Fox & Chilly

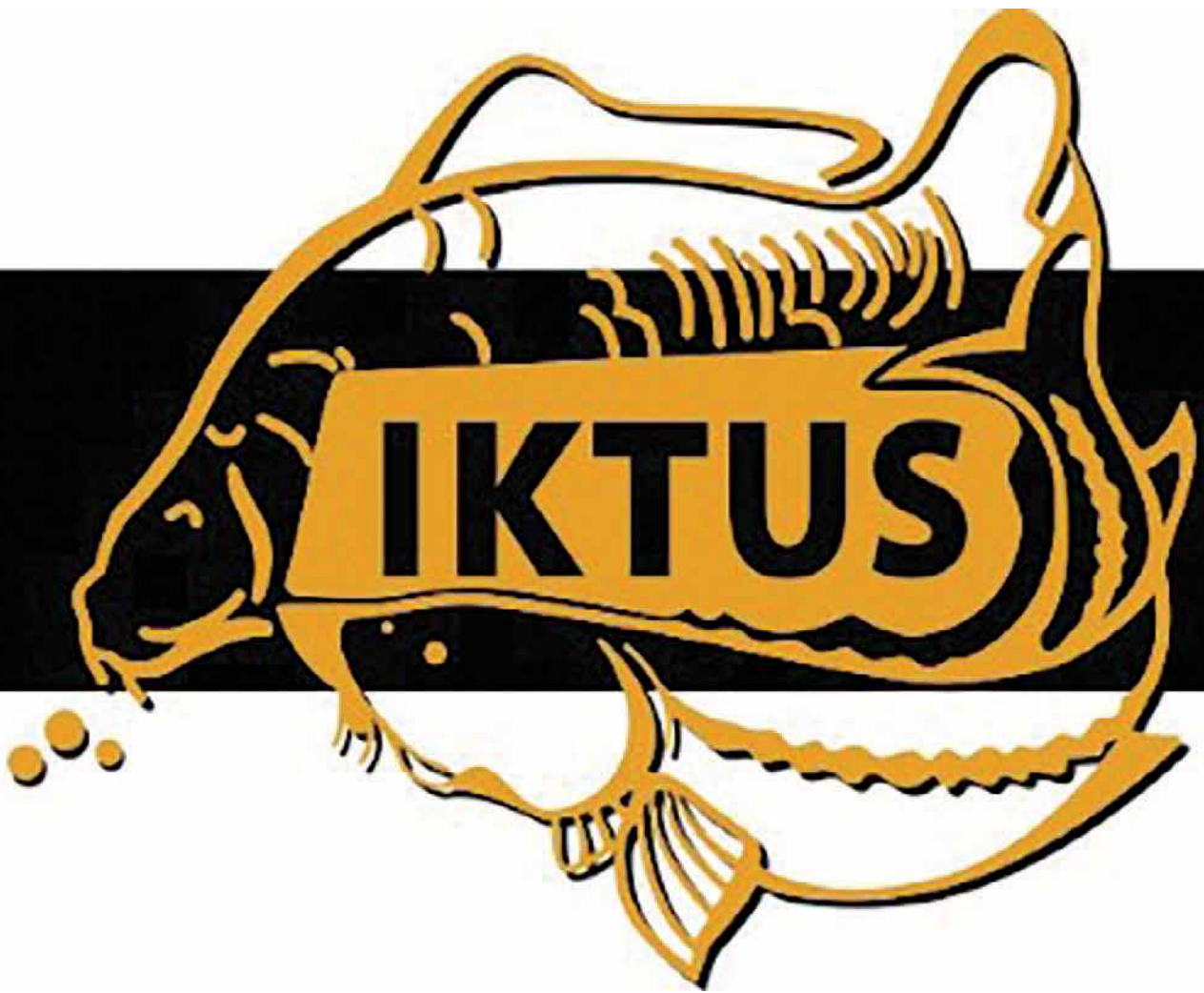
Twenty years ago, Ian Chillcott joined Fox International! An incredible journey for both parties, and it's impossible to mention and include everything that has happened in that time in one post!

But we have done our best to show 20 years in just a few slides Chilly said; "The 20 years with Fox International have been the best fishing years of my life. Although some may disagree, mine and their loyalty to each other, has made those years so incredible. They ignited all my Fires!!"

We couldn't agree more, thank you for everything Chilly and we look forward to many more years to come.







# FISHING RESORT



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



# Help/Support Required And Warning Order



In a few weeks' time, I will be going live with my annual Homeless Support Campaign for our Armed Forces Veterans. This year, I'm doing it slightly earlier and for a very good reason.

I feel the lead up to remembrance will ensure it's more pivotal, but also this year I'm collecting sleeping bags, hoodies and coats too in order to distribute around the South West of the UK and South West Wales. This is where I need you. I will be going live with another fantastic auction to fish with myself on The Wharf, along with a few other surprises imminently.

However, if you're a tackle company, holiday company, or anything for that matter. And you would kindly like to donate in order to support our homeless veterans via an auction etc please don't hesitate to contact me. Tutorials, Holiday, Bait Package, Clothing Bundles... the list is endless. I have thousands of wonderful people within the Fishing Tackle Industry on my platforms alone who could make a



real difference, so please don't just read and scroll. Act and step up where it's needed, please.

If you're also a company that has old sleeping bags or as an individual, you have some old hoodies, a coat, or a sleeping bag that you'd like to donate via dropping off or posting. Again, please don't hesitate to get in touch. It will certainly keep someone warm this winter.

There is a huge armed forces homelessness crisis right now. Let me assure you. The dark and wet nights are here to stay for many months, so please help me so I can help others in desperate need. Together, let's make a special and significant difference as we see out 2024 but at this very poignant time of year, too.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and help in advance. Auctions will go live within a few weeks and end on Remembrance Day.

Thank you, Mike Bridges

## Britain's Strongest Carp Angler Dies Age 75

Geoff Capes, the 1980s strong man, Olympian, 3 x gold medal winner in the commonwealth games and keen carp angler has sadly died age 75. The six foot five inch, 27



stone Goliath loved a bit of carp fishing and was a good friend of Derek the Don Richie. Derek said "I had the privilege to take Geoff out fishing on numerous occasions having him running around the bank shouting get it onnnnnn with Don thank you for the memories RIP BIG MAN XX" those of us who grew up through the eighties fondly remember Geoff in the world's strongest man competition usually shown on tv at Christmas .



# Join Our Plastics Challenge



Don't let plastic become part of our nature. Take on a Plastics Challenge litter pick. Every year, millions of pieces of plastic end up in and around canals, with a significant amount being carried out into oceans, negatively impacting the environment on a global scale. Plastic rubbish damages vital waterside habitats, such as grassland, hedgerows, banks and reedbeds, destroys precious inland aquatic ecosystems and habitats, impacts our water quality, and endangers species such as aquatic birds, water voles and otters. Join our Plastics Challenge

By doing a litter pick at your local canal at a time that suits you, you can really make a difference.

What is the Plastics Challenge?

If everyone who visits one of our canals and rivers picks up just one piece of plastic and takes it home, they'd be clean within a year.

All we're asking you to do is:

Visit your local canal and carefully collect any plastic you see

Dispose of it safely and sustainably by taking it home to recycle

Spread the word! Take pictures of your pick and use #PlasticsChallenge on social media to encourage others to get involved!



**FREE LINE CUSTOMERS SPECIAL OFFER**

# ACCOUNTING FOR ANGLERS

- ACCOUNTS
- SELF ASSESSMENT
- TAXATION
- PAYROLL
- TAX PLANNING
- COMPANIES HOUSE SUBMISSION
- BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
- GROWTH PLANNING
- ENABLING CLOUD ACCOUNTING
- PROACTIVE AND RESPONSIVE
- STRATEGIC ADVICE
- QUICKBOOKS and XERO CERTIFIED ADVISERS

**As an angling accountant and business owner I have over 30 years accounting experience and a lifelong passion for carp fishing. We currently work with many clients who fish and have businesses.**

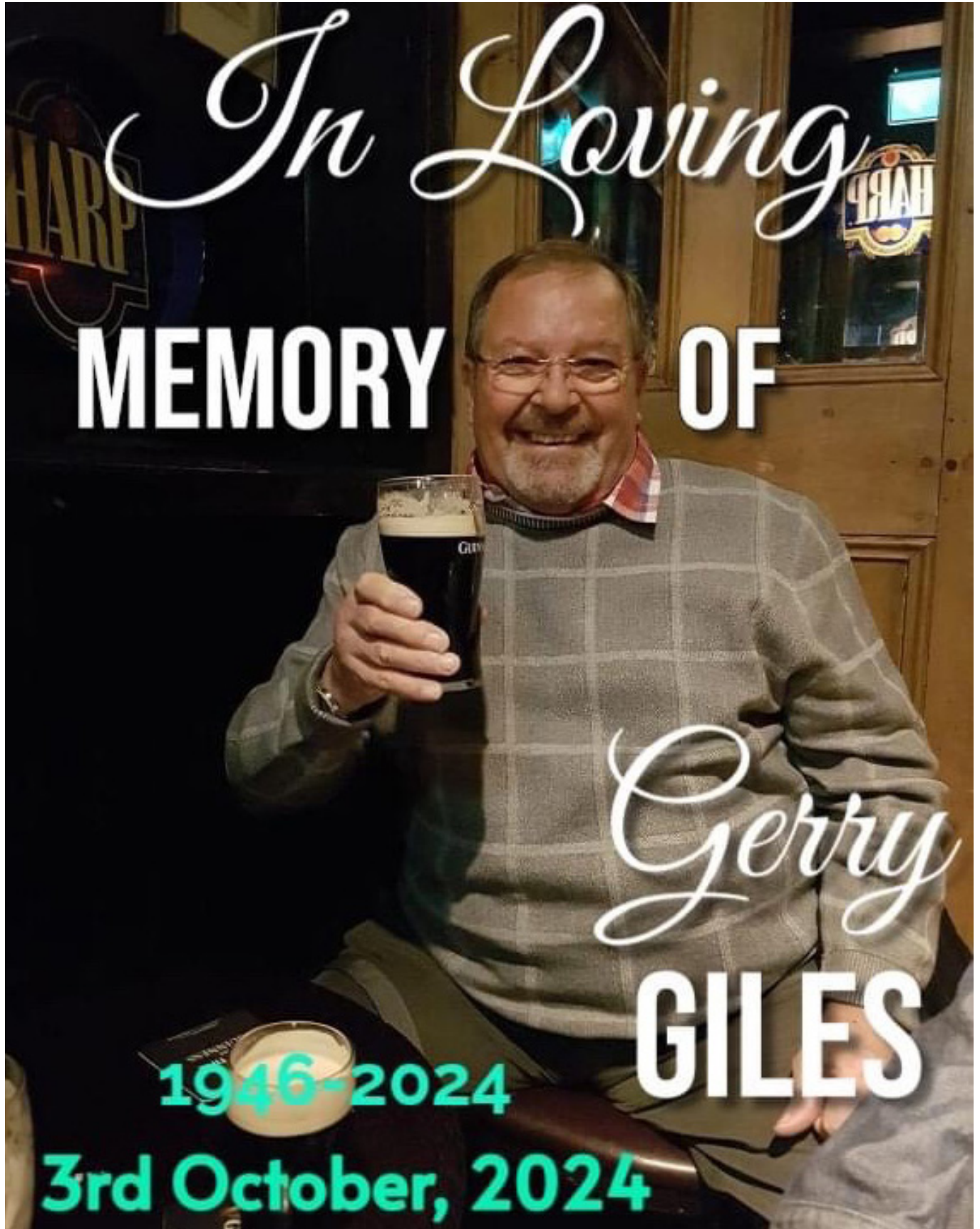
email [peter.andrew@fpbusiness.co.uk](mailto:peter.andrew@fpbusiness.co.uk)  
call / text/ WhatsApp on 07801104530

**fp business**  
financial accountants





# Gerry Giles RIP





It is with deep regret I announce the passing of my father Gerry Giles on Thursday 3rd of October 2024.

He spent over 5 years fighting like a warrior to keep going, always facing every day and challenge with strength and determination and his sense of humour never left him.

Even now he will be up there looking down laughing his bollocks off at me, after he told me to post an announcement on FaceBook to let all his friends know when he had “ kicked the bucket “ ( his choice of words, not mine lol ), sadly he never gave me the password or his phone pin number so i have spent last 36 hours looking for a way get in, and i have finally done that via an old email address on an old device that was still linked and i guessed the password to, Cheers dad you couldn't of made it more difficult if you tried lol

My father was an old school kinda guy, that had to excell at everything he did, he was a G1 ham Radio Operator, An expert carp fisherman and a keen Metal detectorist. He excelled at everything he attempted in life.

He was loved by so many people and will be very much missed, I have forgiven you mate for giving me the CB Radio handle Skidmark was a was about 6 years old and he let me talk on his CB whilst we are at The Great Dorset Steam Fair along with his friends Dennis and Audrey and where we met the legendary Fred Dibnah for the first time. Memories that i cherish and will never ever forget.

Thank you, dad, for being more than a father, you were a bloody good mate to, always giving advice on how to deal with situations in life.

I thank you all for being such great friends to my father.

R.I.P Dad



# CARPTACKLE ONLINE HOODIE



The new carp.online Hoodies are made from a high quality material with their logo high up on the shoulder. These are very comfortable loose fitting and are available in Olive Green, Black and Grey and in sizes S through to 5XL. Small size fits children aged 11+.

- Olive, Black or Grey
- size S to 5XL
- £26.50
- [www.carptackleonline.com](http://www.carptackleonline.com)



# THE HAWK WATCH SERIES

Favoured by armed forces and built for the most demanding conditions, the Hawk 2.0 introduces a significant advancement in military-grade durability. Its new case, crafted from a combination of carbon and polycarbonate, strikes the perfect balance between lightweight comfort and enduring strength, ensuring it performs no matter the mission.



- ultra-scratch-resistant sapphire crystal
- triple anti-reflective coating
- Swiss-made movement
- from £375
- [www.nitewatches.com](http://www.nitewatches.com)





# KUDOS MIDI CARBON INDICATOR



These stunning indicators are made right here in the UK by Kudos themselves. There are wide range of coloured heads available to contrast the carbon main body. You can opt for an isotope slot or not.

The tried and trusted baa bearing 'clip' provides a sleek set up suitable for any tackle tart.

- Wide range of colours
- from £15.99
- [www.kudostackle.com](http://www.kudostackle.com)





**Fine quality fishing tackle  
since 1857**

**[www.reubenheaton.com](http://www.reubenheaton.com)**

**For more on Reuben Heaton, Sportscale & RH brands  
call 01455 293000 or email [info@reubenheaton.co.uk](mailto:info@reubenheaton.co.uk)**

**Join Reuben Heaton on Facebook for all our latest news**

**REUBENHEATON**



# OCOOPA RECHARGEABLE HAND WARMERS



The Ocoopa UT4 Camo is the camouflage edition of the UT4 Extreme,

- offering the same ultra-durable design and powerful performance, with a rugged camo finish 20,000mAh battery,
- IP56 water and dustproof construction,
- Up to 18 hours of heat and power
- Fast charge technology,
- Doubles as a high-capacity power bank.
- Three heat levels plus a high-power mode
- Solid metal construction
- built-in torchlight
- £79.95
- [www.ocoopa.com](http://www.ocoopa.com)





**SWAN VALLEY LAKES**

**LAKE EXCLUSIVES & DAY TICKETS  
HOME OF THE FORTIES**



**LAKE EXCLUSIVE  
BOOKINGS -  
ENTIRE VENUE  
£700 (30 Swims)**

**Info and bookings -**

**Paul Bloomfield 07770 667466**



**www.swanvalleylake.co.uk / 07770 667466**



# 10 DAYS OF HAULING





Having had a great first year on our syndicate water the Dell in Essex, we happily rejoined for the second year running and agreed there was more to be had. Ben had holidays owing to him, so we decided to do a ten-day session on there. We had a busy schedule of matches coming up, so we wanted to get it in before then. The Dell is home to quite a few thirties and forties, and there is a distinct possibility of catching a fifty. The weed is quite prolific on the Dell, and a few weeks before our arrival, the weed cutter had been doing his work. When we arrived, we could see piles of weed around the lake, so it appeared the weed cutter had been hard at it. There were still a couple of weed beds that hadn't been touched, but these were left to act as a barrier down the middle between the swims on opposite sides of the lake. We did a circuit of the lake before settling on a couple of vacant swims.



## Ben and Barry Oconnor

Ben went into a swim in a corner, and I went in to one a couple of swims up from him. Ben had chosen the swim because there were some carp showing at about ninety yards. Although nothing was showing in my swim, I knew the spots to fish on, which gave me a lot of confidence. The fishing on the Dell is not easy by any stretch of the imagination. The question is do you fish three rods on separate spots perhaps to better your chances or all three on one spot? I opted to fish on three different spots while Ben had two on the same spot and one out on its own. Our rig setups are virtually the same with short hooklinks tied to size 4 Deception D-X Curved Hooks. These hooks are individually inspected and are the sharpest hooks we've ever used. We've been using them for quite a while now and have had some very good results. Not one has opened up or broken. We fish with total confidence with them.





When fishing on the Dell you have to do a lot of plumbing about to find the clear spots. Sometimes the marker float doesn't surface because of the weed. To overcome this problem, we put a Spomb float on the bottom of the marker float to make it more buoyant. The marker rises every time with the added buoyancy. Once the clear spots are established, each rod is cast to the chosen spot and clipped up. It's then wound in, baited up, and recast back to the spot. This can take a lot of time to do, but hopefully it will pay dividends in the long run. It doesn't stop there either because after getting the baits in place there's a lot of Spombing to do. Initially each rod gets about a dozen Spombs of our mix over them. Top-ups are done as and when needed. A few hours passed, and the Spombing was finished. Effort equals reward. We could now relax over a cup of coffee.





## Ben and Barry Oconnor

The first carp came to Ben, a nice 32lb mirror, which was soon followed by another mirror at 22lb 7oz. I in the meantime had nothing on the first day. Next morning Ben phoned to inform me that he'd got another in the net. I went to his swim to help him with the weighing, and it was another mirror at 29lb 8oz. At this time, I was still blanking, so I decided to move into the swim next door, which had just become vacant. After moving all my gear and settling in, I got my marker rod and started plumbing about. About an hour later, I found a clear spot close to a weed bed at about ninety yards. The weed bed was between Ben and me and acted as a barrier between us. He was actually fishing to his side of it. Where I was going to fish was about thirty yards from Ben on the opposite side of the weed bed. We felt that if we kept putting bait on these spots we could keep the carp in





**CATCHDRY**<sup>TM</sup>

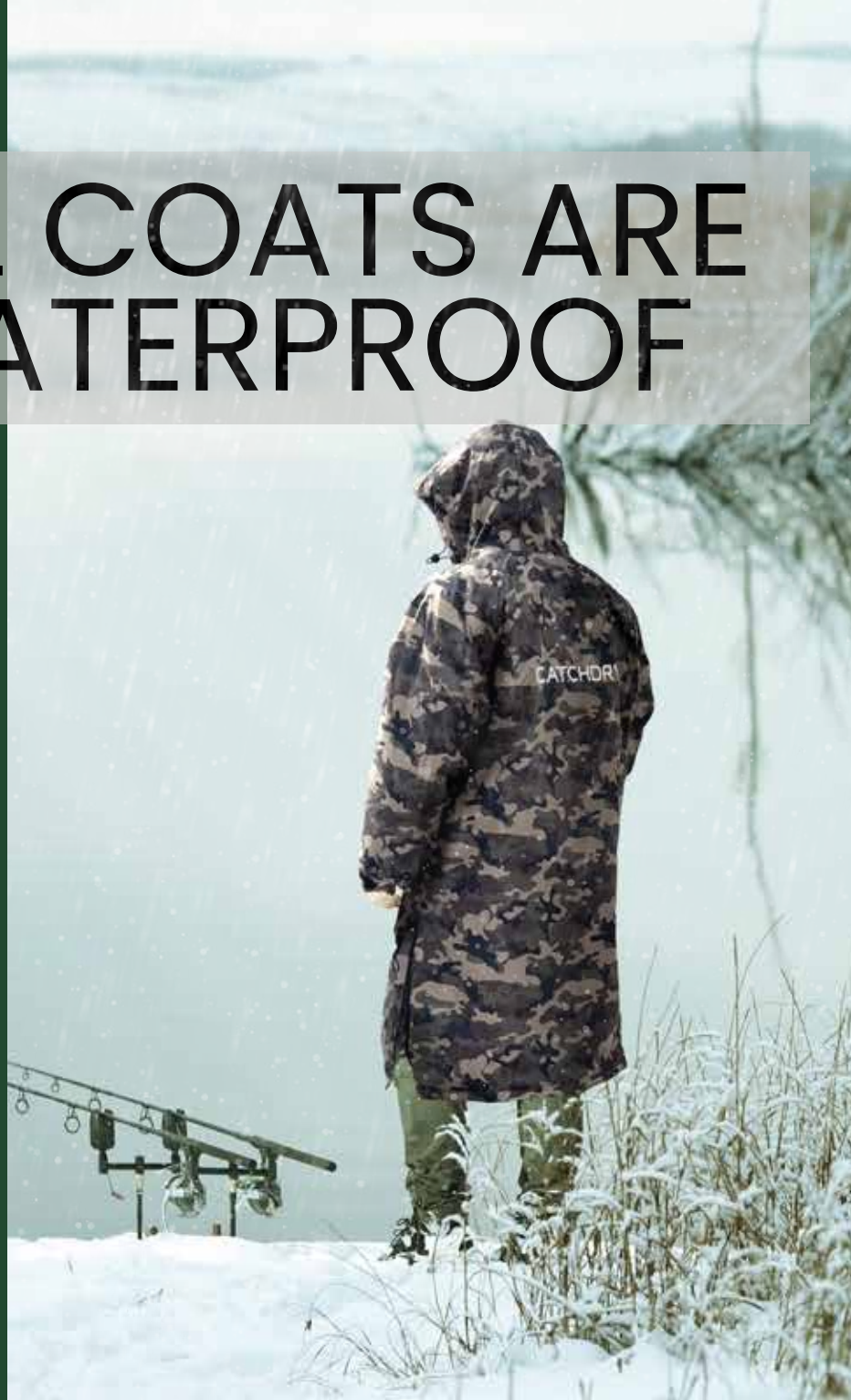
# NOT ALL COATS ARE 100% WATERPROOF

- ✓ 20,000mm Waterproofing
- ✓ 10,000g/m<sup>2</sup> Breathability
- ✓ Shahtoosh Fleece Lined
- ✓ 2.5 Layer Protection
- ✓ Water Repellant Coating
- ✓ Adjustable Hood With Peak
- ✓ Two Waterproof Pockets
- ✓ One Interior Pocket
- ✓ Waterproof Zip + Flaps
- ✓ Adjustable Wrists + Hood

BIG CARP EXCLUSIVE

# 15% OFF

USE CODE: BIGCARP15  
WWW.CATCHDRY.COM



**THE ULTIMATE WATERPROOF FISHING COAT**

WWW.CATCHDRY.COM - USE CODE BIGCARP15 AT CHECKOUT



# Ben and Barry Oconnor





the general area. Every now and then we could see some carp coming up in the weed.

Anyway, Ben Spombed to his side of the weed, and I did the same on my side. Ben now put all three of his rods next to the weed, and I did the same. A continuous onslaught of Spombing began until we'd put out about ten kilos of mix between us. Our Spomb mix consisted of Hooked on Baits Hemp, R9 and Blitz plus we added a sprinkling of sweetcorn and pellets to it. We'd just joined A2 Baits, and this was to be our first session using their boilies. Our hookbaits were A2 Baits Creamy Toffee boilies so we put some whole and chopped Creamy Toffee in the mix. Some Creamy Toffee glug and Salmon Oil are stirred into the mix, and it's left to soak for about an hour before we use it. The Salmon Oil flattens the water for a while when it's initially put out but then drifts away in the tow. If a carp comes along and starts rooting around on the Spomb mix, it releases globules of oil that float to the surface. This acts as kind of an early warning system letting you know something is feeding on your bait.

It wasn't long before I had a 21lb mirror on the bank, so the move had paid off. Ben in the meantime had an 18lb 8oz mirror. Another day passed and my swim started to come alive. I had a 36lb 8oz mirror, which was quickly followed by another mirror at 40lb 6oz. The forty got caught up in the marginal weed and Ben went in with the net to retrieve it. This was the first forty of the session, and boy was I well pleased. It went quiet for a while after catching the forty, so we started the laborious job of Spombing more bait out. By the time we'd finished we had put out another 20kg of mix. As tiring as it is, we feel the more bait we can get out, the more chance we have of catching. We've tried the roving tactic with small bags on the Dell and although we've



# Ben and Barry Oconnor





caught, we don't catch as many as we do with loads of bait. On the third day, during the early hours of the morning, I had a 28lb mirror, which gave me a right royal battle. It weeded me twice, but with perseverance and patience I managed to bring it to the net. Ben in the meantime had snuck one out as well just before daybreak. His was a 32lb 4oz mirror. We did the honours with the camera for each other before having some breakfast. After breakfast we once again began Spombing. We were now Spombing in the morning, in the evening and sometimes in between. PVA sticks with crushed Creamy Toffee boilies in were attached to the hooks before every cast. We use Castaway PVA for all our PVA requirements. Castaway make all sorts of PVA products such as mesh tubing, solid bags, and cable ties. The PVA cable ties are brilliant. Because we were fishing at a depth of ten feet, we were doubling up the mesh sticks. This stops the sticks melting too fast on the way down and exposing the hook. With so much weed about, we didn't want the hook to get caught up on a strand of weed. The hooklink is threaded through the stick and the hook pulled right into it. This method ensures the hook is safely out of the way until it has settled on the bottom. Our catching continued, and it was turning in to a great session. The fourth day brought us three carp: a mirror of 30lb 8oz for me, and mirrors of 27lb and 37lb 12oz for Ben. The 37lb 12 had weeded itself not too far out, so Ben had to go in and get it. Unfortunately as he netted it, the carp crashed onto the side of the net and broke one of the arms. Despite the broken net, Ben still managed to get it to the bank. One of the bailiffs kindly loaned Ben a net for the rest of the session, which was nice of him. We'd now had eleven carp between us. During the night the wind got up really badly, and unfortunately my broly system



## Ben and Barry Oconnor



upended. Only one peg was stopping it from being blown away. I managed to shut it down before it blew away. This didn't stop the wind from scattering my gear all along the bank. It was a mess. I got Ben to help me put it back up, as I couldn't do it on my own because of the wind. We managed to retrieve my gear and get it back in the brolly. Ben thought it was really funny. I didn't, and for the rest of the night until the wind calmed down, I was hanging on to the brolly. Unfortunately the brolly system suffered some damage and needs replacing. Anyone got a brolly system they don't need?

My next carp came during the fifth day and was a 31lb 8oz mirror. Later that day I had a belting run, which had me playing what I thought was something special because of the powerful runs



 **Exclusive Carp Venues**

**NEW FOR 2025**  
**ETANG DE VRIGNY**  
click here 



**ETANG DE VRIGNY**

60 ACRES  
7-10FT  
CARP TO 50lb+



**BRENNE CARPING:**

22 ACRES  
2.5-6FT  
CARP TO 60lb+



**FURET:**

25 ACRES  
4-7FT  
CARP TO 70lb+



**LA LOUBIERE:**

37 ACRES  
2.5 - 5.5FT  
CARP TO 74lb



**LA BERSONNIERE:**

3 ACRES  
9FT  
CARP TO 66lb+



**CAMALO:**

11 ACRES  
2.5 - 10FT  
CARP TO 70lb+

**click here to visit [www.exclusivecarpvenues.com](http://www.exclusivecarpvenues.com)**



# Ben and Barry Oconnor





# Ben and Barry Oconnor





## Ben and Barry Oconnor

it was going on. It got weeded, but I managed to free it only to have it go into another weed bed. Ben was by my side waiting with the net. It rolled about ten yards out, and we both looked at each other and nodded in agreement that it was a good carp. Ben did the honours with the net and told me I might have just beaten my PB. It was duly weighed, and the dial went round to 45lb 12oz, and yes it was my PB. It's a mirror called The Grey One. My previous PB was 42lb 10oz. Funnily enough it too was from the Dell. Happy? You bet I was.

After all the excitement, Ben went back to his swim. About an hour later my phone rang. It was Ben; he was into a carp and needed some help. I got there in time to see Ben struggling to land a carp. Ben's swim was quite muddy, so I put the waders on and walked out with the net to get the carp. Ben had got the carp







to the shallows, but a large ball of weed had come with it, and I couldn't get the net under the carp. The only thing I could do was to remove the weed until I could see the carp and then lift it into the net by hand. I removed some weed and could see it was a very good mirror and told Ben so. It all went well, and I got the carp into the net, but as I was returning, the waders got stuck in the mud. Unfortunately I was still trying to walk, and over I went straight into the mud. I was covered in it, but I didn't let go of the net. What a pro. Ben couldn't stop laughing. I, on the other hand, wasn't. Later on Ben did the same thing and he too got covered in mud. Anyway drama over and we weighed the carp. It went 41lb 10oz. I cleaned myself up while Ben put the kettle on. While having a coffee, one of Ben's other rods was away. Ben was on it



# Ben and Barry Oconnor







NEW CHRISTMAS SPECIAL PRICES  
FROM 1ST DECEMBER 2024



# "CARP FISHING MAY HAVE JUST CHANGED FOREVER"

## THE REEL RAPZ

- SUPER CHARGE YOUR MONO
- MAKE YOUR MONO HEAVIER THAN FLUOROCARBON
- MAKE YOUR MONO SUPER SUPPLE
- THE ULTIMATE IN PRESENTATION
- SOAK & SINK YOUR BRAID / ANTI FRAP
- LINE GUIDE / BAIT BOAT, BAITING CONTROLLER
- LINE GUIDE / BAITING POLE, BAITING CONTROLLER
- THE FIRST DEDICATED LINE INSTALLATION WRAP
- REEL PROTECTOR – DEDICATED REEL HANDLE LOCK
- SPOOL / LINE PROTECTOR
- LOOK AFTER YOUR MOST IMPORTANT  
PIECE OF TACKLE "YOUR LINE"

MULTI USE REEL WRAP

# 5 USES IN 1

[www.urbanfrogtackle.com](http://www.urbanfrogtackle.com)



see us on Facebook



*Secret Santa discount code: BCCRIMBO24*





in a flash, and as he was playing it, Joe, a friend of ours, arrived. Having just fallen in, and I didn't want to do it again, I asked Joe to net it. On went the waders, and out went Joe with the net. Ben in the meantime was slowly winning the fight with the carp. He got it close to Joe who netted it superbly. Joe brought the carp to the bank without mishap, and it looked another monster. It certainly was. It was another mirror and weighed in at 42lb dead-on. That's two forties Ben had within an hour of each other. Could it get any better?

Over the next few days, we continued to catch. Ben had a 20lb mirror, a 27lb 8oz mirror and a common at 24lb. I had a 32lb 4oz mirror. By now we had Spombed out a lot of bait, and we were running out. So much so that Martin Free who co-owns Hooked on Baits kindly went and got us some more Hemp, Blitz and R9 for us. Top man is Martin. With more particle mix available, the Spombing began again. On the second to last day Ben had a 17lb mirror followed by a carp called Megan's Mate at 34lb 4oz and a

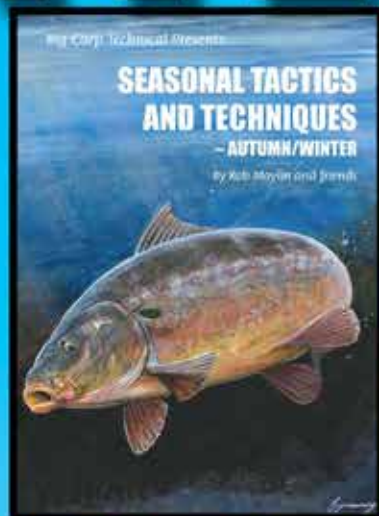
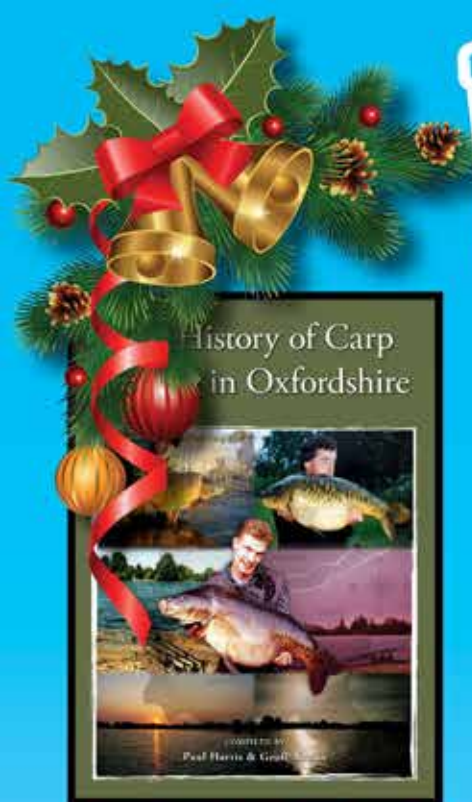


stunning 42lb 2oz mirror. The last day belonged to me when I had Crusty at 44lb 8oz, which put up a right battle. Then a strange thing happened. The last fish I caught, which was the last fish of the session, was the same fish Ben had caught at the start of the session at 32lbs. I had it at 31lbs. How weird! The session finished with Ben catching fifteen carp up to 42lb 2oz and me with ten carp up to 45lb 12oz. On this very productive session, we'd used 120kg of particle and 10kg of boilies. The story didn't end there though. We went back for a quick overnighter a week or so later, and I beat my PB with Charlie's Mate at 46lbs. We're sure there is still more to come from the Dell, and I can't wait to get back there.

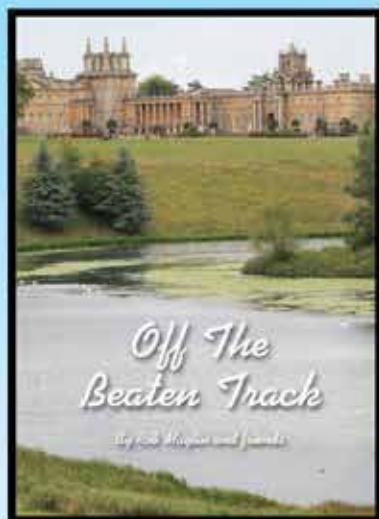
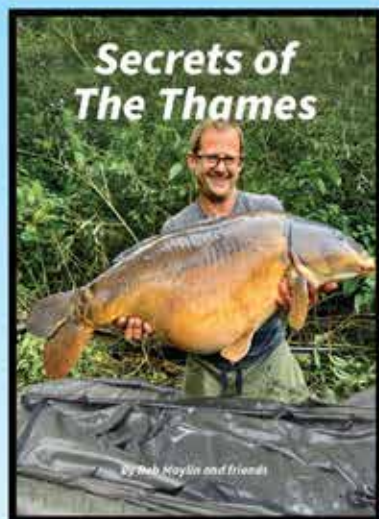
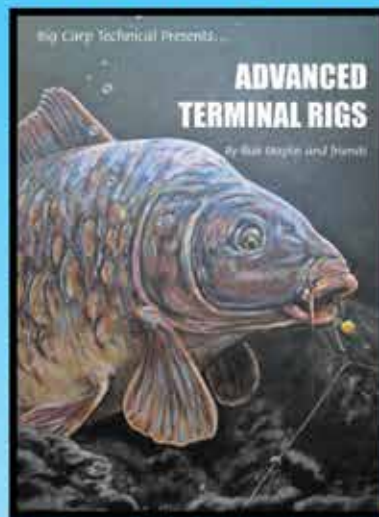
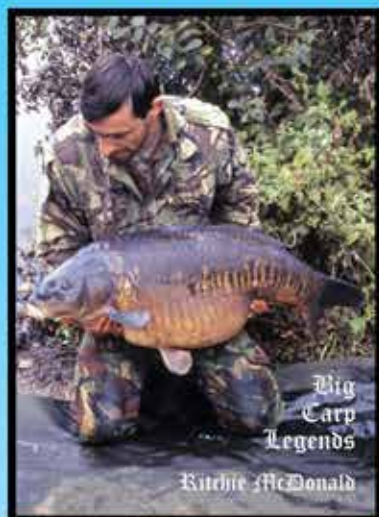
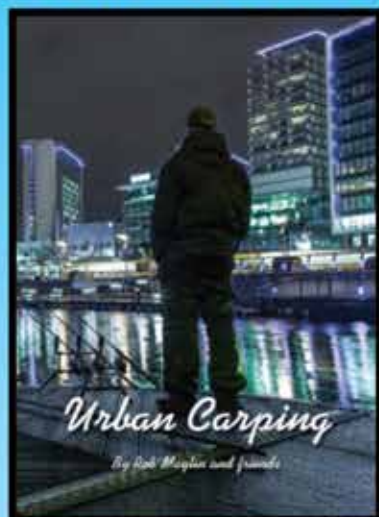




# WINTER



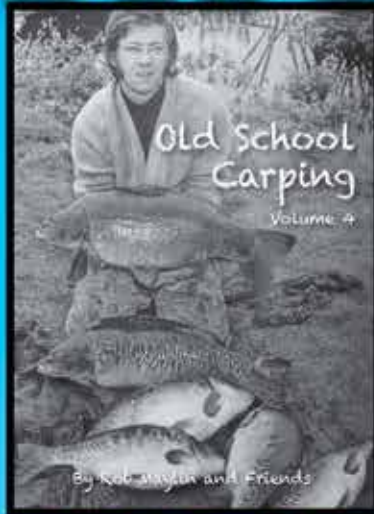
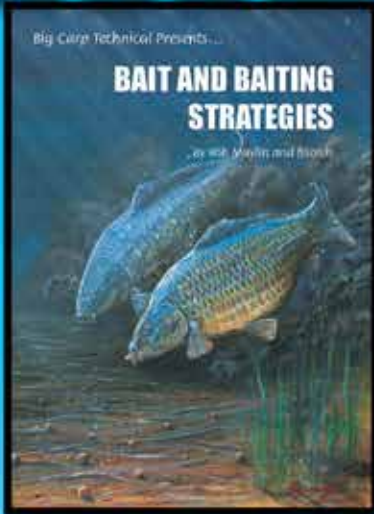
ORDER ONE OF OUR BEST SELLERS AND



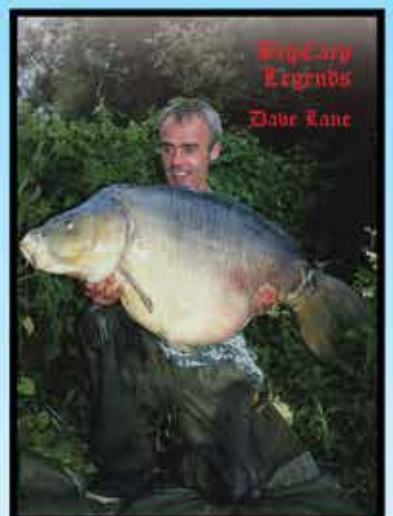
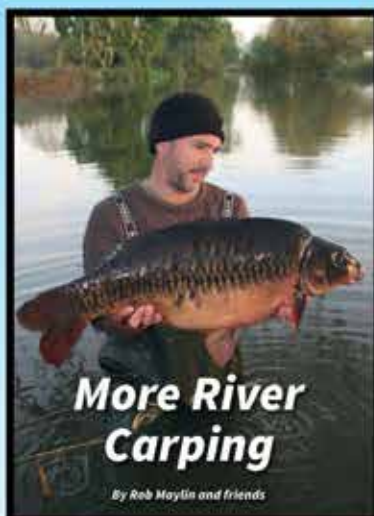
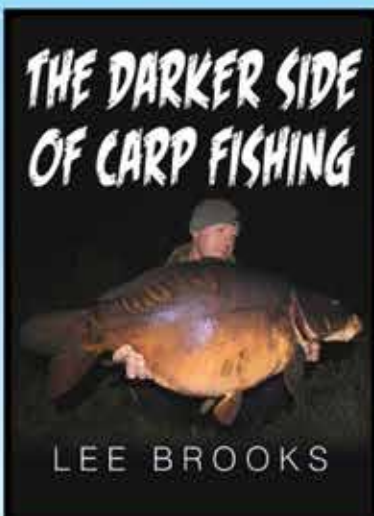
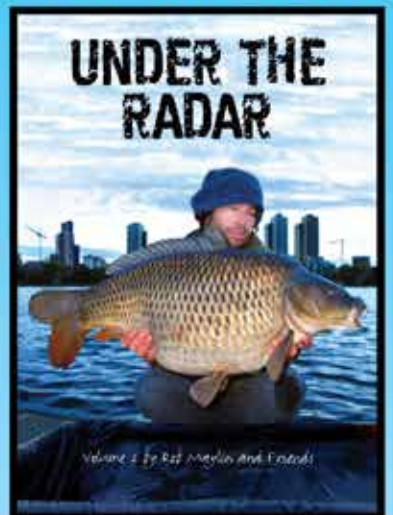
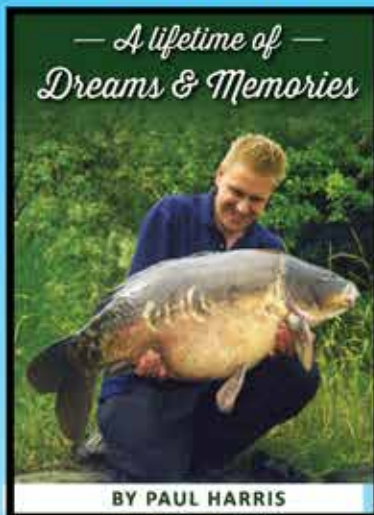
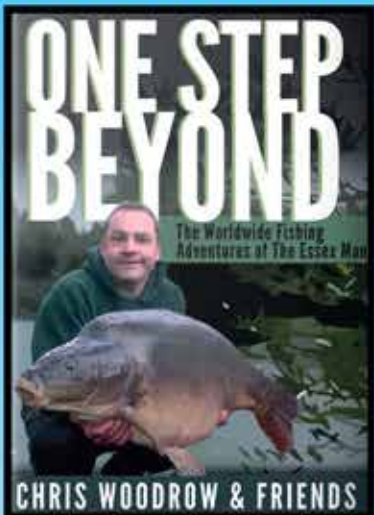
NEW BOOKS: [WWW.BIGCARPMA](http://WWW.BIGCARPMA)  
NEW AND OLD BOOKS: [WWW.EBAY.C](http://WWW.EBAY.C)



# READING



AND BE PREPARED FOR NEXT SEASON



[MAGAZINE.CO.UK/ONLINE-SHOP.HTML](http://MAGAZINE.CO.UK/ONLINE-SHOP.HTML)

[CO.UK/USR/RARECARPBOOKSUNLIMITED](http://CO.UK/USR/RARECARPBOOKSUNLIMITED)







# HAPPY DAYS

The season on Cranwells kicked off on August the 1<sup>st</sup>, having had a month's shutdown in July. I fished the first couple of nights having got to the lake early doors with a handful of other hopeful members who no doubt were there to make the acquaintance of the Mighty Parrot. I managed an upper 20 common on the morning of the second day and was chuffed, as it had come from a new spot to me and was chalked up for later reference.

Sadly the king of the lake was found deceased the following morning just after I had left the lake. The membership, and so it seemed the carp fishing world as a whole, were in mourning. The passing of the great fish had a major impact on the atmosphere on the lake, and very quickly the number



of regular anglers dropped considerably. This was great news for the likes of me who had joined the syndicate not only for the Parrot but the other absolute bangers that resided there. It was game on.

My next session was around three weeks later, and I managed to get in a swim that was taken pretty much every time I went to the lake the year before. Nice one, I thought. Lots of water to go at, and the area had a reputation for doing some of the nicer fish. Conditions were good – overcast and intermittent sunny spells with a gentle southwesterly blowing.

This was actually the first swim that I had fished the year before and managed two bites on the first session. I had a good starting point for two rods at least, and I planned to move the third rod around until I found some action. All three went out nicely and were spread from left to right. I was happy, and it was time to get the camp set up and tidy.

A quiet night followed, and I was up and watching at first light. As I did, and had been for an hour or so, a good fish showed out to my right at about 80 yards. I marked the show with a bankside feature and had also the exact distance that was shown from tree reflections. I fish like this a lot. I left the rods till my usual time of around 11. If they haven't gone by then, it's time to have a look and a rethink. The remainder of the morning yielded little in the way of real positive shows, and my gut feeling was the most of the fish were at the other end of the lake and behind the island and out of my view. I wasn't overly concerned, as it seemed to be the way on there for me. Nothing the first 24, then I would get several bites either on the second morning or throughout the day and night.

My pal Bungle turned up just as I was winding in and said he





had been round and it was looking quiet everywhere. I love a bit of info like this, as it helped me to decide to stay put for the coming night. A quick run out for some supplies, and I was back in the swim for round two. It's nice to get the lines out for a few hours during what I call the dead period.

The rods were all sorted with fresh balanced Cell snowman arrangements with one of my homemade yellow Cell toppers. This setup seemed to be outfishing my normal preferred pop-up by miles and had been doing so over the last couple of years, although I have found that this can change depending on the conditions and time of year.

The rods went out nicely and were felt down with a decent drop on all three with a moderate amount of freebies around each one, let's say a handful and just enough for a bite. This as always was accompanied by a good old half a tin of the yellow stuff. Happy days.



## John Quinn

Bungle and I had a little civilised social, although I think the Top Deck had got to him as he made his way along the bank to his swim. We had some laughs. I turned in at about 11. It was and had been unusually quiet. You normally see a few fish go at that time of year irrespective of where you are on the lake. Oh well, camping it was then.

At 2am I was awoken by the sound of the buzzer in overdrive, a proper ripper. It was the right hand rod where I had seen the fish show that morning, and it was properly steaming off. Now this swim can be a bit tricky when the water level is down, and it was low due to the lack of rain that summer. There is also a tree that extends out over the lake to the right, so ideally you want to be in the chesties and down off the swim and play and land the fish from there. I'm just glad that I wasn't seen trying to get into my waders and play the fish. It would not





have looked too clever that's for sure, but hey ho, I got into them and made my way down and in to the shallows.

It felt like a good fish, and my heart was in my mouth. Slowly the fish came towards me and must have picked up some weed on the way in. But at 20 yards it decided it didn't care about the weed and started to properly pull back. Not long after, I saw the fish take a gulp of air and then into the net it went. Lovely jubbly!!

I peered in to the net, and a good mirror lay sulking at the bottom of it. It was 2.15 and way too early to be sacking the fish up, so I secured the net and went and got Bungle. He was thrilled to bits to be woken up, but it was payback from a social we had been on earlier in the year. Cheers, mate. We weighed the fish up and I was happy with the 32lb 10oz that the scales read. Pictures done, rod back out and back in the bag. Nothing





further occurred that night, and I was away by nine the next morning. I was happy with my result, but more importantly, I was happy that I had found a new spot and couldn't wait to get back on it.

My next session on the lake, the swim was occupied, so quite happily, I fished a swim at the other end of the lake that had done a few bites for me the season before. It's a funny old swim this one and really is all or nothing. This time it was nothing, but I had enjoyed my time at the lake watching the water.

Still eager to get back on the spot, I went again the following week. It was now at the very end of September, and autumn was giving way to early winter quickly. I got to the lake nice and early to increase my chance of getting back in the swim, and lo and behold, the same angler was in it. He hadn't caught anything but was staying on. Funnily also he was the only angler on the lake. Curses!!

I had a look around but didn't see any immediate signs. Also at this time there was an enormous amount of floating weed, and at times it made areas of the lake virtually impossible to fish. The area in front of the swim I had fished the pervious week was relatively clear. I knew I could get baits down on spots relatively easily so again plotted up. I just wasn't where I wanted to be. I knew that the other swim would pay out if I could get in there. That's fishing I guess.

Rods were out, same game plan as before on spots I had had bites from on two rods previously, and as before use the third rod as a seeker. It had become a bit chilly as the day wore on, and I did see a couple of fish show. There was a gentle breeze blowing directly in to the swim. It didn't look half bad. The



# 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.

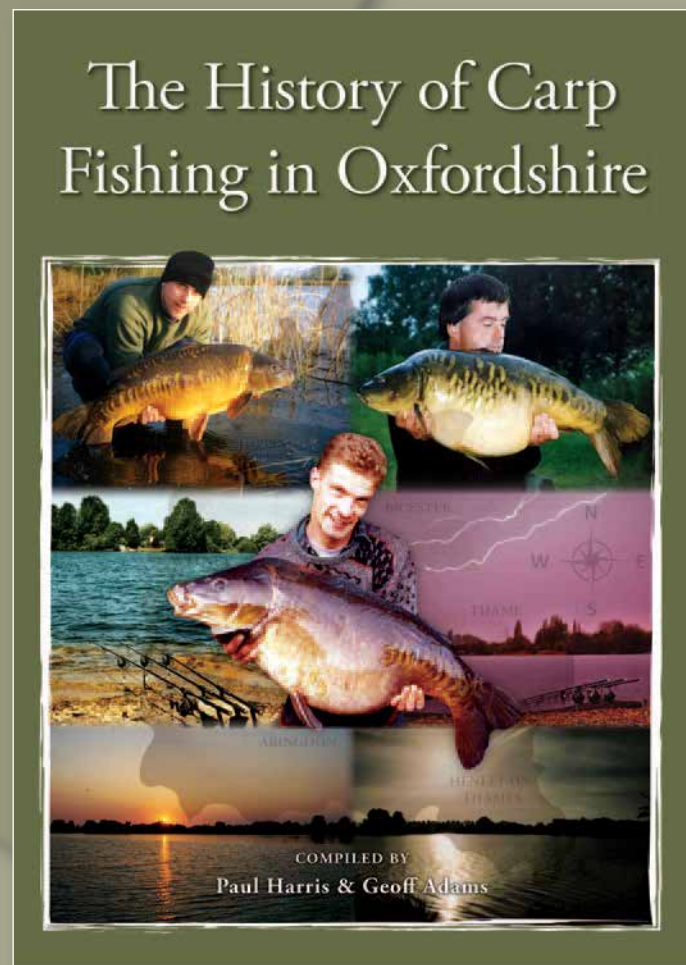
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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



CARD: 01252 373658

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

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





light faded quickly as it does that time of year, and I was nicely sorted with some quiet sounds in the tent.

Bungle called me at around 6.45 to see how it was going. We had been chatting for ten or so minutes when I had a series of bleeps on my right hand rod. Head torch on and out to the rod, I saw the bobbin rise an inch and then drop back. I was thinking at this stage, liner? Then it did it again, but this time the bobbin rose to the rod. I was still chatting to Bungle while this was going on. I picked up the rod and felt a resistance and some weight. First thoughts were that a tench had weeded itself, and I told Bungle this and had to sort this bloody tench out. Phone down, I carried on applying steady pressure, and



the fish started to move from my right towards me. It then broke the surface at about 20 yards out, and that's when I thought, that's certainly no tench.

I saw a flank of huge golden scales and thought, that'll do nicely. The fish was very obliging and went in the net first time of asking. I peered over the mesh... Yes!! It was Floppy Tail – one of jewels. I was blown away. Bungle thought I was winding him up when I called him back. I laughed. Kindly our mate John offered to pick up Bungle and come down to help with the photos. Cheers, lads. The fish was weighed up at 42lb 9oz. Pics done, and we watched her swim strongly off. How mad was that? I was buzzing.

I was unable to fish the following week due to other commitments but the following week I made my way back to the lake. During my week off, although chuffed with my last capture, which was a new PB for me, I couldn't stop thinking about the spot from the other swim. I kept playing it over in my head when I'd seen the fish show. All the markers were lined up, and I had had several conversations about how I needed to get back in there again and fish the spot.

This time my luck was in. The lake was quiet, and I think only one other angler was on. Yes, the pitch was free – result! Now I know that the saying goes, find the fish before you set up... However, the urge to get on that spot was so strong, I had to fish there no matter what. I had taken a day's leave from work and was in no hurry to set up, rather just soak up the atmosphere and watch the lake for an hour while watching the water for signs.

The rods went out nicely again as before, although I moved the middle rod to a slightly deeper area that I had found. The right



hand rod went sweetly to the spot that I couldn't stop thinking about and the left to a spot that had done a couple of bites for me previously. I was nicely camped up by mid afternoon, and the conditions looked spot-on for a bite. It was very mild with a gentle breeze blowing from left to right. As I sat there, a fish boshed out bang on the right hand spot. You know those times when you get that proper nice feeling, and I sat there grinning to myself. Game on! It was a cracking evening, and my confidence was high, but the night passed uneventfully.

I was awake at first light as usual, made a coffee and sat and watched for an hour. This is definitely bite time on there, so I was filled with anticipation for what may come. I had a call from my mate Trev the bailiff who said he was coming down to fish and perhaps have a bit of a social. His parting words were, "I'll be down in a bit. You'll have one before I get there." Not ten minutes later, the right hand rod melted off. Happy days. It all went smoothly, and the fish put up a good account of itself before wallowing in the bottom of the net. Trevor turned up and said, "See? I told you so!" We both laughed then weighed the fish and did the photos. It was a very pretty mirror of just under 28. Not massive by any means, but I was chuffed to bits to have caught it. The other two rods remained silent throughout the session, and I was beginning to wonder why. And my last three bites all came to my right hand rod from two different swims. Strange, I thought. I packed up the next morning and went home happy with my result and couldn't wait to get back down there for another go.

I managed to get down the following week and YES! I was able to get back in there again. Trevor was coming down as well, so another social was on the cards and a good crack as always.



Pretty much the same procedure followed, and I was happily angling by mid afternoon, hoping this time to bring one of the other two rods in to action, as I felt confident of a bite from the right-hander again.

As I sat and watched, the same thing happened again over the right hand rod. I was grinning so hard, my face hurt. The spot had now seen my bait for probably best part of five weeks now on and off, so I felt that they knew exactly what it was. It wasn't deterring them from the area that's for sure. Trev came down and went in the swim next door that commanded its own water, so we were fishing well away from one another. The BBQ was lit and some laughs had before we both turned in.



Conditions again looked spot-on, and it was still very mild for the time of year. The tawny owls were becoming very active, as they knew that winter was coming, and it was great just lying there listening to their calls. I must have drifted off at around midnight to then be woken some time later by the right hand rod melting off.

The same comedy occurred with me half asleep, trying to get in to my waders. I very nearly came a right cropper this time but managed to sort it out. It felt like a very good fish this time, and the heart was in the mouth as the fish took line from me on several occasions but all held well, and the fish after a good scrap was lying in the bottom of the net. I peered in and had a feeling I knew which one it was – one that I dearly wanted to catch, a heavily scaled mirror that I knew was a good upper 30. I was proper buzzing as I levitated down to Trev. By this time it was around 5am, and night was starting to give way to grey traces of dawn. We decided to retain the fish until it was light so we could get a proper look at it.

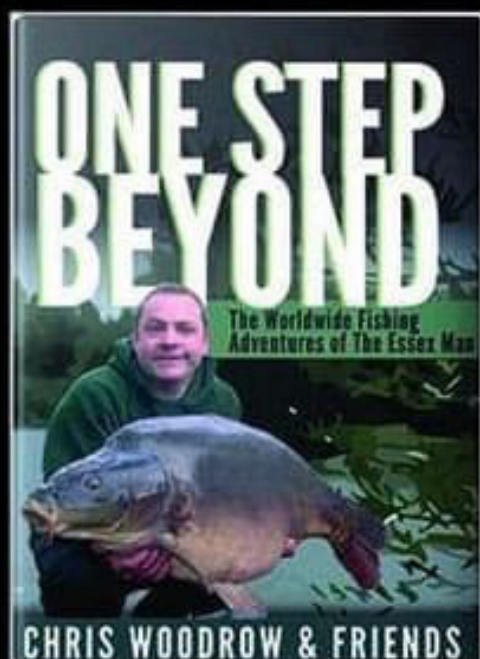
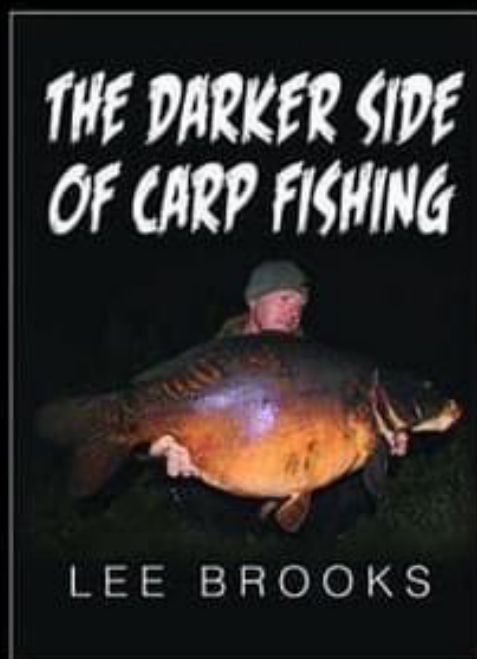
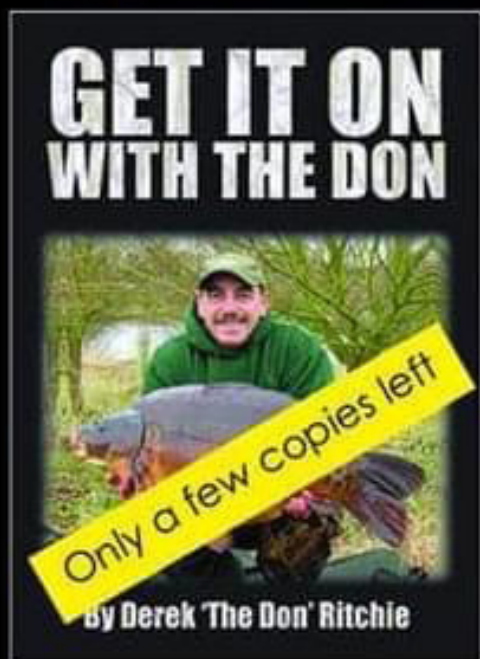
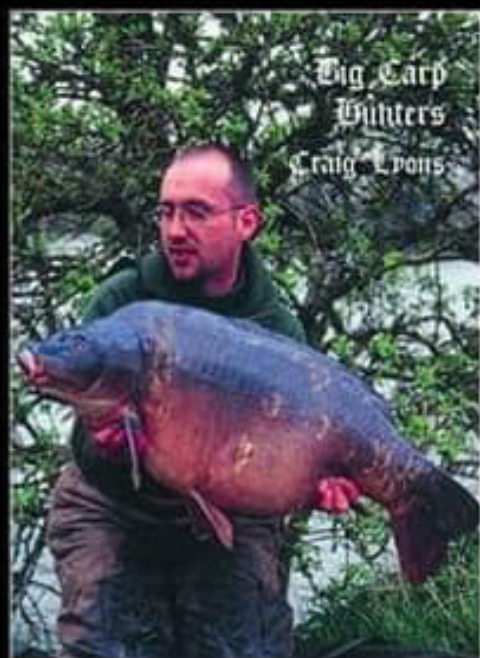
We stood about and had a chat and watched the day start. The fish was then up and ready for weighing. It was the one I had thought and definitely one of the best-looking carp I had ever laid eyes on. My face started to hurt again as we recorded a weight of 37lb 12oz, and Trev did a fine job on the picture. I was on cloud nine. Again it was to be my only bite of the session, and I went home a happy angler. Now at this point I was thinking, “You’ve had a good run here son. It won’t last forever, and if it’s done, be happy with it.” I was, but was back again the following week, and again the pitch was free.

I was quite happy just to camp this week, as I felt any expectation would just be greedy. They were all out nicely again, but I



# THE BIG CARP HUNTER SERIES

*The Unsung hero's prolific catches with a unique tale to tell*



07768 731425  
[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)



## John Quinn

was troubled by why I could only get a bite from the right hand rod. I moved the left and the middle again in the hope of searching one out. The first night passed uneventfully, and it was strangely quiet. Bungle and Dave were coming down, so another social was on the cards. They arrived before 8am and passed in for a catch up before they went off to set up. I wound in at around 11. All three came back good, and they had all definitely been fishing. I thought I would treat myself to a nice pub lunch down at the Row Barge and power myself back up for the last part of the session.

I must have got back to the swim at around half two and chatted with Bungle while getting my rods out again. It was very mild afternoon, and shortly after getting the rods back out, wallop!! Another fish boshed on the right hand spot again. I couldn't





believe what I was seeing. The swim was in a bit of a mess, as is always the case after getting the rods out, so the usual tidy-up followed. Nearly done, and the right hand rod steamed off again. I had my waders on thank goodness so no comedy moment, just down to the rod, and I was in again. No way, I thought to myself, as I could feel I was attached to another very good fish that had decided it was going to take some line from me from the off.

A good scrap ensued with a few hairy moments that were intensified by the weedbeds that the fish had to come through. The Carp R Us Longshank Nailer held firm as they do, and the fish was in the net. I could not believe my luck. I peered into the mesh and could see another very good 30 that was heavily scaled. This can't be real, I thought, and my face started to hurt again.

I secured the net and went round to tell Bungle. His response was hilarious. We do have a crack, and he was convinced I was winding him up. Eventually he agreed to come and have a look. I won't repeat the names he called me as he looked over the mesh. We both laughed and said how mental this all was. Dave came round, and we set about sorting the fish. It was another of the A-Team, and what a fish it was, heavily scaled and pristine, weighing in at 38lb 4oz. To catch this one after the one the week before was absolute madness, and I doubt will ever happen again to me during my angling life. Pictures were done – thanks, lads, and the fish returned. She swam off strongly, which is always the nicest part for me. The other two rods again did nothing, but did I care? Not one bit. It's still odd to me that all of my action has come from my right hand rod in that, the first part of the season. Perhaps it's my lucky

rod? Who knows?

I did manage another night in there a couple of weeks later, and although nothing happened on that trip, I was still a very happy man. That was to be my last session for the year on there, as work commitments dissolved any further chances to get out. Still with the best part of the season to come, I'm looking forward to getting back on there in the spring. As seasons go, I have had a belter and had some great laughs along the way and there will be plenty more to come, I'm sure. There are a few other fish in there I would dearly like to catch, so let's see what the future holds.

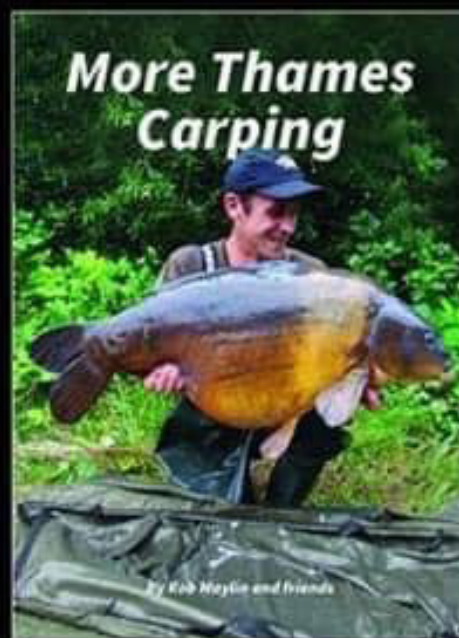
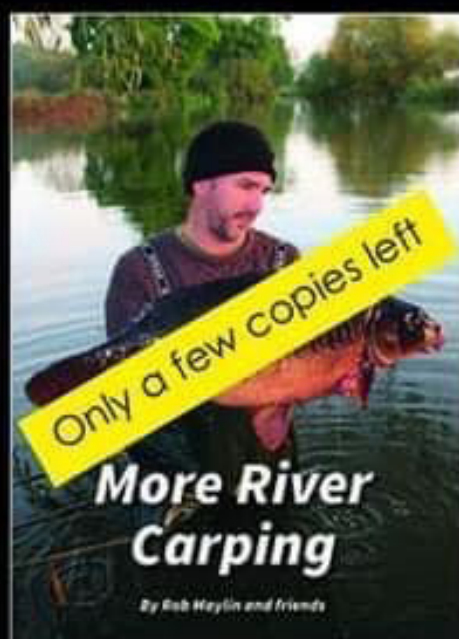
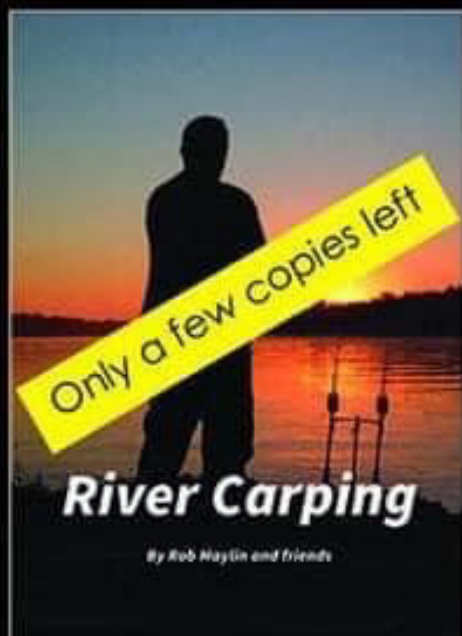
Thanks to Steve at Mainline and Ian at Colne Valley Tackle for your support and the pals who were around and were the best of company. Cheers!!





# THE RIVER CARPING SERIES

*Tales and Technical, a must-read series for the river angler*



07768 731425

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







# PREPARATION

All the best laid plans saw me starting to write this, and a few hundred words further to my intro to the team at Rod Hutchinson, I meant to expand on how I approach my angling and the key areas I concentrate on when out on the bank. However the word count soon crept over the thousand mark, therefore wherever it ends up, I hope you enjoy the read. These days since ceasing self employment (self unemployment when the conditions looked good), I have set days when I can get out on the bank, and gone are the days when I can move my workload to suit weather conditions, angler pressure and even moon phases. I go when I can these days, and with my favourite time of year just around the corner, I like to be prepared, organised and focused when I am out angling, which over the last 30-odd years has honed my approach as follows:

My angling mentality is pretty basic and is based on three key areas:

Preparation

Watercraft

Angling effectively and efficiently

Preparation: Great timing for this piece, as I have just secured two new tickets for the coming year, one of which starts in a couple of weeks and

the other in April. Many of you may also be embarking on a new journey or just keen to hone your spring approach on an existing challenge. A bit of preparation work will pay dividends when the solar powered anglers start coming out to play and the fish start playing ball.

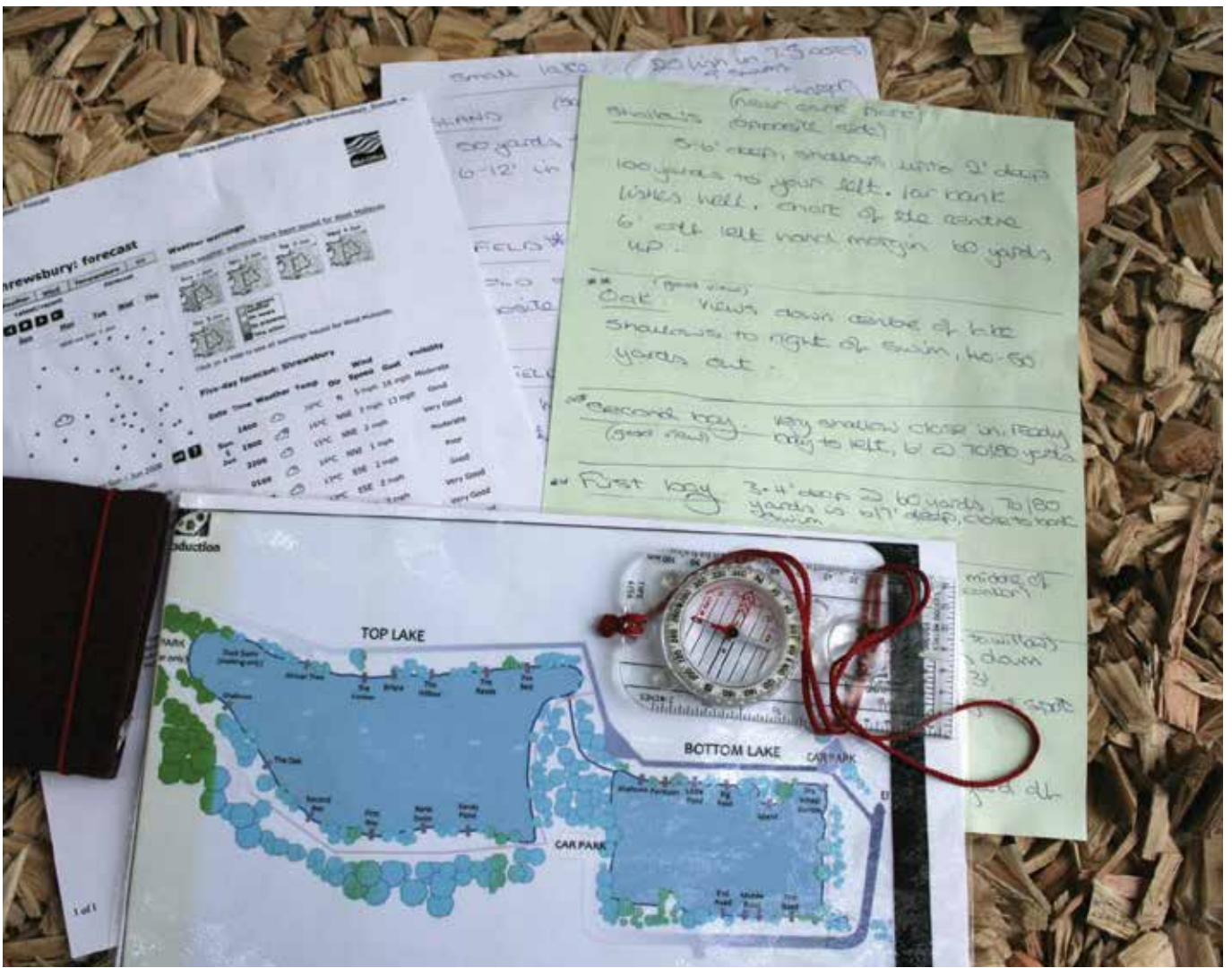
Preparation for me now starts in front of the laptop. Once I have my ticket, I will locate and label the lake on Google Earth, print out a couple of copies, and using the ruler tool I will measure the distances to islands, midpoints between swims, widest points etc. I will then trawl the forums for any potentially useful information. Then the fun bit begins when I get to visit the lake, get a feel for the layout and note which way the prevailing winds will blow etc.

A few years ago I was a member of the Farmwood Pool syndicate. The lake is a large, deep, exposed sand pit. Each swim has known areas of shallower water surrounded by depths up to 35 feet. I knew those features would take time to map out accurately, and I didn't want to be thrashing the water to a foam once the fish were active.

Over a cold pint discussing the water, a plan was drawn up, which saw a mate and me down at the lake from February onwards, armed with four marker rods and a flask of coffee each.

We picked and noted a reference point in each swim, then cast from left to right until we found an interesting area, noted the direction on the horizon and measured the distance. Using the other three markers we then found the right hand edge, then the front and back of the area. These extreme edges of the area were measured, noted and eventually plotted on a swim-by-swim map. It took two months to map out the key swims; some of the areas found were known features, which most members were aware of, however what were known as small humps or bars turned out to be large features with lots of varied depths to explore. As it turned out, it was the deeper areas that didn't get hammered like the shallowest spots, which produced the prizes. We also found a few bonus areas to





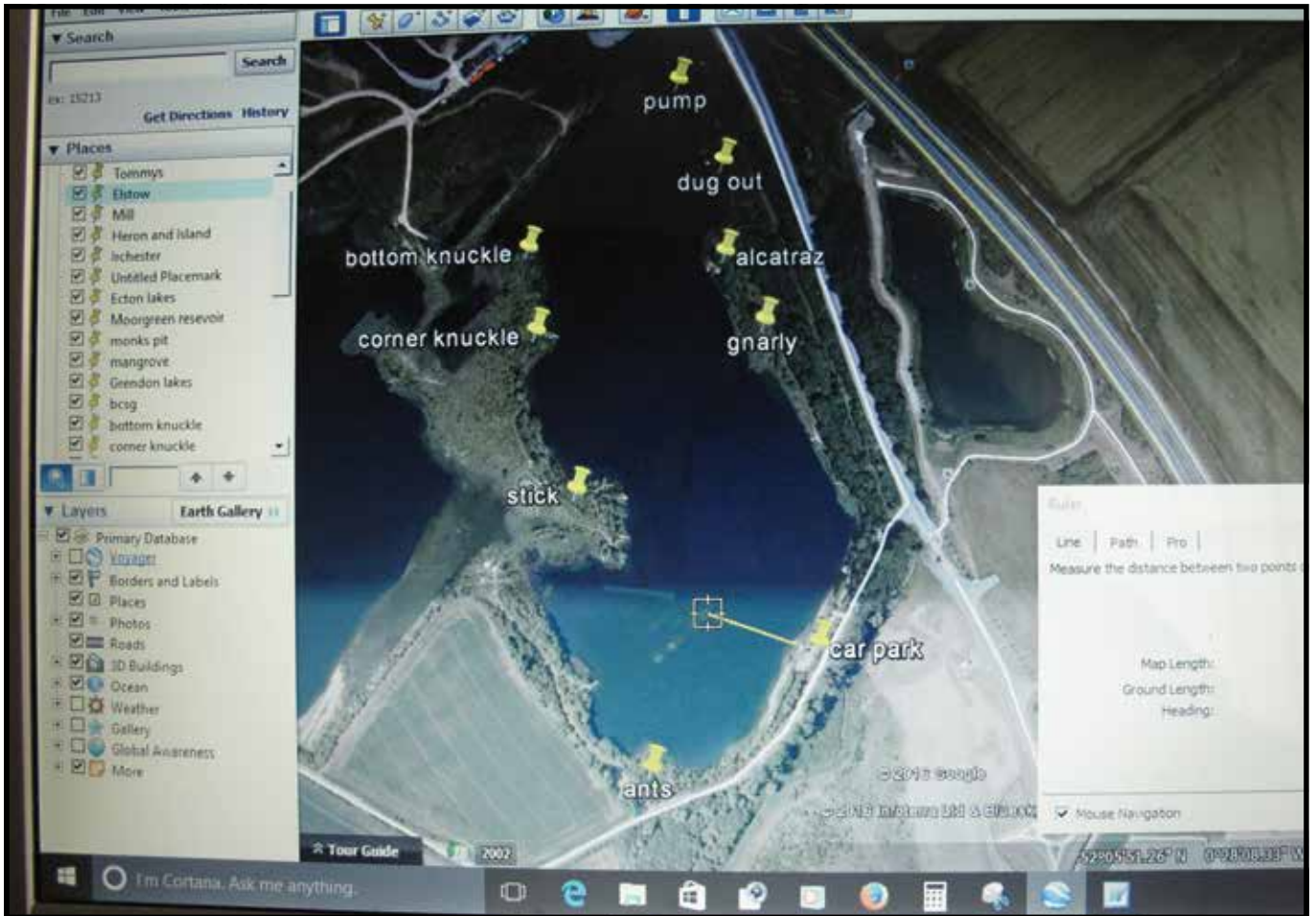
consider.

We now had a few swims on each bank that we could jump in when the conditions looked good, get the relevant map out, mark and measure the rods and drop the rigs and bait on the spots with very little disturbance. Our efforts were unknown to 99% of the members, however word must have got out, as members who came to visit us whilst fishing noticed the line angles were not pointing towards the usual spots. I wasn't going to give away all our hard work that easily and soon got round that by sinking my rod tips.

More recently, I employed the same tactics on the famous Bedfordshire clay pit; the only difference being that this lake was a 260-mile round trip. Marking and measuring visits were not viable, so I mapped the swims by day and fished the nights. Technology had also moved on since my days on Farmwood. A lake map was printed from Google Earth on which you can see some of the features, so using the ruler tool, I could then roughly measure their distances and direction on the far bank and note it down for each swim. The ticket started in January, so I used my first few trips to fine tune my swim maps using the Google Earth map as a base to start from.

During one of these trips in January, I was sat in a swim called Alcatraz with all three rods fished on a small area at around 48 metres. In this swim, you bivvy up above your rods, which gives you a great view of the whole lake. At some point during the night, it rained. Just after first light one of my rods ripped off, and the usual routine followed in a methodical, calm fashion... NOT. Rip the bag open, swing round, Crocs on... Oooopps! Don't forget the glasses, run down the slope towards the rods, right hand rod is away, try to stop before the rods... Oh no!! Crocs are no use on wet clay... I skilfully and elegantly skidded past my rods into the freezing cold water up to my nuts, picked the rod up still half submerged, wound down, picked up the slack, felt a kick on the end, and hey presto, a tuftie





—  
Dugout → 60 yards →  
big dome tree all way  
right to end of square  
factory. (spur bar).  
—  
Monks 55-60 yards =  
stick swim.  
—

popped up nailed on my pop-up rig. Luckily my preparation also extends to taking spare clothes.

In summary, deep waters are far more time consuming to map out, as the float takes so much longer to surface. The clay pit added another time consuming element in that all around the shallower areas, the lake bed in deep water was covered in a dark brown strandy weed, which clogged the float up and prevented it from rising. Unless you landed on the feature, it was a case of wind in, clear the float and chuck it out again. All the extra effort and prep work detailed above can give you an edge when dropping into swims when the fish start to play ball and all the other anglers are thrashing the water to a foam, but it's only used as a starting point. From then on, the picture in my mind's eye of that spot will change with sightings and captures of fish and weed growth, along with any presentation issues I have to overcome. The hot areas within the area will reveal themselves and will get noted and fine tuned accordingly. Your chosen venue doesn't have to be a deep and feature filled carpy paradise to benefit from some extra work, as there are harder spots, clearer areas, area of fresh weed growth and snaggy areas on all lakes, which are a great place to start your campaign. All of which can be located in the colder months when the swims are empty, the weed has died off and water clarity is at its best.

My new water is again a 260-mile round trip, so with laminated map printed, it will be a case of walking round and round looking for fish. If I don't find any, then I will set up in a swim from which I can watch the majority of the water, fish off the barrow until I am happy with my swim choice and be prepared to move if I see or hear anything carpy.

Preparation means different things to different anglers: rig tying, bait prep etc, all of which feature in my campaigns but comes after I know what is out in front of me in each swim.

I will cover my take on watercraft in my next piece.







# BIG CARP CLOTHING RANGE

## 3 DESIGNS AVAILABLE

In 9 different colours: Black, Grey Marl, Red, Navy, Bottle Green, White, Orange, Royal Blue and Brown

### "GEEZER"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "LETS AVE IT!"

**BACK PRINT:** GEEZER GETS EVEN WITH THE TUFTIES,  
**DRAWN BY**  
**GLYN GOMMERSHALL**



£32.95  
+£4.95\*



£32.95  
+£4.95\*

### "SAVAY"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "SEX DRUGS AND CARP THAT ROLL"

**BACK PRINT:**  
SAVAY SCENE,  
**DRAWN BY**  
**JOHN HARRY**

£32.95  
+£4.95\*

### "LEGEND"

**FRONT PRINT:** UNION JACK BC WITH "WHERE LEGENDS ARE MADE"

**BACK PRINT:** LEGEND,  
**DRAWN BY** LEN GURD WITH  
"STAND CLEAR APPRENTICE LEGEND"



Where Legends are Made

STAND CLEAR APPRENTICE LEGEND



**RANGE AVAILABLE: ZIP HOODIE, SWEAT SHIRT, POLO SHIRT, T-SHIRT, TRAKKIE BOTTOMS, BEANIE HAT, BASEBALL HAT – ALL MADE USING TOP QUALITY GARMENTS – AVAILABLE IN 9 DIFFERENT COLOURS (Black, Grey Marl, Red, Navy, Bottle Green, White, Orange, Royal Blue and Brown)**

Please note the designs are only on the tops, but the Union Jack BC appears on all garments



**POLO SHIRT**  
**£29.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**SWEAT SHIRT**  
**£29.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**T-SHIRT**  
**£12.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**JOGGERS**  
**£32.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**LONG-SLEEVE T**  
**£16.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**BEANIE HAT**  
**£10.95**  
 +£4.95\*

**CAP**  
**£9.95**  
 +£4.95\*

Only available in Black

# HOW TO ORDER:

- 1) Choose Garment
- 2) Choose Design A, B or C
- 3) Choose Colour
- 4) Choose Size: S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL or XXXXL

**NEW SUBTLE**  
 JUST THE BC LOGO  
 see website for details



[BIGCARPMAGAZINE.CO.UK](http://BIGCARPMAGAZINE.CO.UK)

Place your order online at **THE BIG CARP SHOP**  
[www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk)

Phone the order hotline **07768 731425**

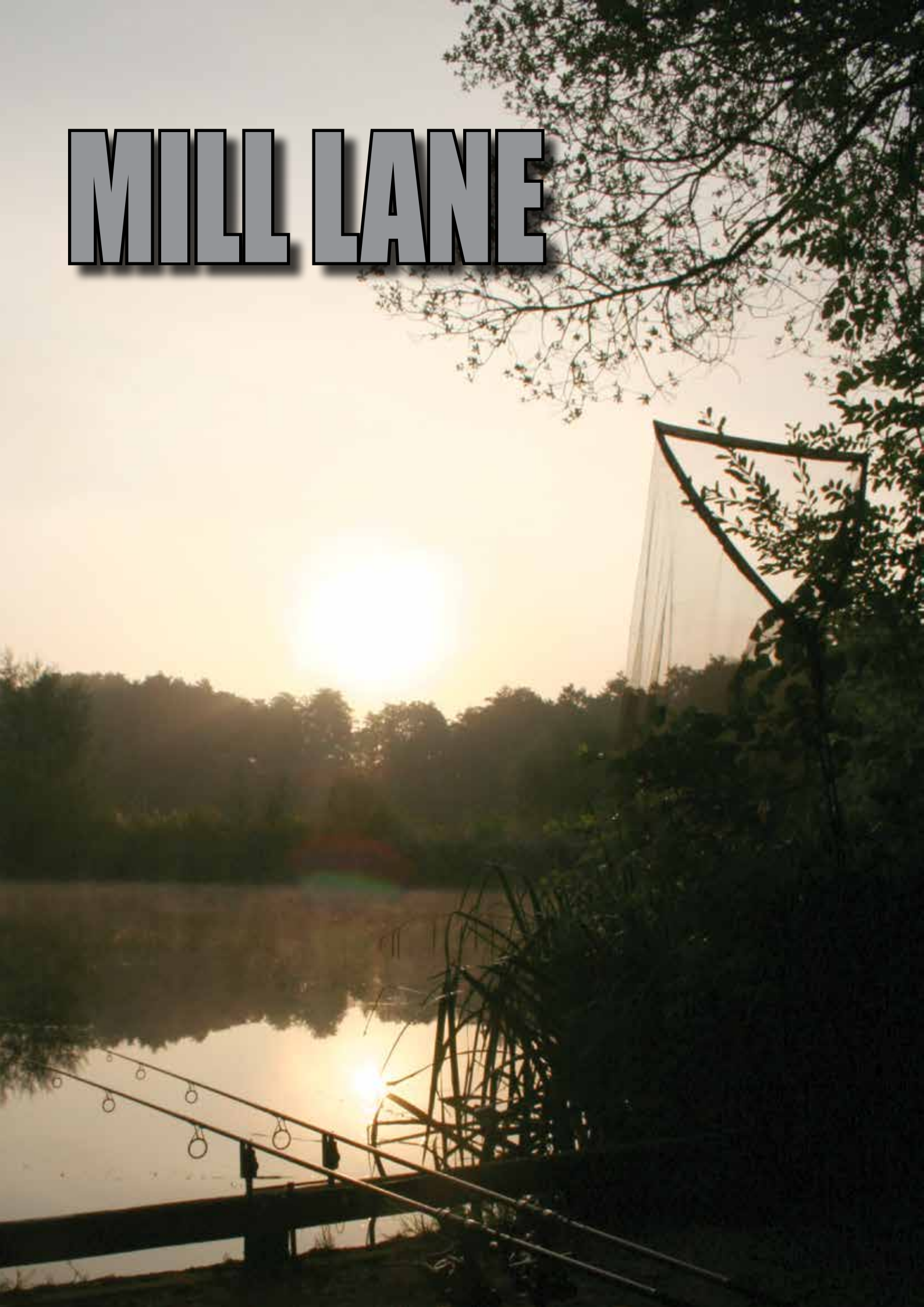
OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 9.00AM UNTIL 9.00PM



\*All orders subject to a postage charge of £4.95 for 'Signed Delivery'.  
 PLEASE ALLOW TEN DAYS



# MILL LANE





During my time fishing on the famous Yateley complex, I became aware of a relatively small lake on the other side of a ditch behind The Corral swim on the North Lake. What drew my and several other anglers attention to that little water was the constant sounds of bite alarms, so being carp anglers, which are a naturally inquisitive bunch, we all started becoming interested as to what that lake held! If memory serves me right, the first carp I heard caught from there was by an angler that shouted across the ditch to get Terry Hearn's attention to get some photos done. Obviously Terry obliged, and he told us about his little mission crossing the dirty, boggy stream to help this angler out, how nice the small intimate water was and mentioned how it might be one to keep an eye on in the future.

Not so long after that and roughly around the end of my Yateley days, I popped over to visit the Yateley munchkins who had started fishing the lake. In true Yateley fashion, Fat Al, Cooperman and a couple of the others were all set up having a social around the point area, so it wasn't too long before I

was awash with tea. At the time the lake looked stunning, and the lads were all getting regular bites from the carp – Koi and grassies, so it suited their fishing on limited time. Having just done the Yateley thing and getting the bug and confidence to chase big fish in low stocked waters, this little lake (known as Mill Lane) wasn't really my thing, so I just reminded myself of what Terry had suggested for leaving it for a future water and pretty much forgot about it.

Spinning the clock forward to almost 15 years later to the winter of 2011, Jon Mac rang me up one evening to tell me he was in my manor, and by the sounds of his excited voice, he was virtually begging me to come and join him over on Mill Lane. I was actually a bit busy that night, so I said I'd pop over and see him the following evening and have a catch-up.

That following evening, I found Jon around on the far bank behind the Corral swim. Straight away Jon's excited voice was telling me about the current weights of the remaining stock and how I should be on that little water. I did





know the lake had produced a few decent fish up to over 40-plus, but when you're hearing it excitedly from a likeminded mate, you've got to take note, and that's just what I did.

At the time, I was already fishing the local Sandhurst venue and wasn't too keen on changing waters halfway through a winter, so I just left it to short visits. It's funny really because although I was a local and good friends with the Boyda brothers who fished there, I didn't really know a great deal about recent times and weights and soon worked out, like the Little Frensham thing, a local clique were trying their hardest to keep things quiet and certain anglers away. Well, this was soon to start changing because my not-so-local mate Jon isn't phased by that kind of thing, and he virtually lived on there that winter and caught a few, which I heard about firsthand and even photographed one of them in December. Jon actually kept his captures close to his chest that winter but told me everything, and just after the Christmas break in early January, he was virtually screaming at me to come and fish



there because the lake's largest resident had been caught at 52lbs 12oz by a local called Gooley Stu. Again, that capture was kept as quiet as it could be in the Yateley area, but word was out, and the locals panicked about the likes of me etc turning up on their quiet little open access club water. In fact they panicked that much new rule changes came in with time restrictions and all sorts. Funnily enough, I was pleased to hear this because although I've got plenty of time on my hands, I rarely fish long sessions like Jon, so a 72-hour rule with booking on suited me just fine, as it keeps the campers away and stops all sorts of swim rotation etc.

Anyway, although Taffs had just gone 50-plus and several other fish, two of them 40s, had come out that week, I didn't jump straight in there and held fire, as I had other plans for my spring on a Reading water where I had another very big fish to try and catch known as The Brute.

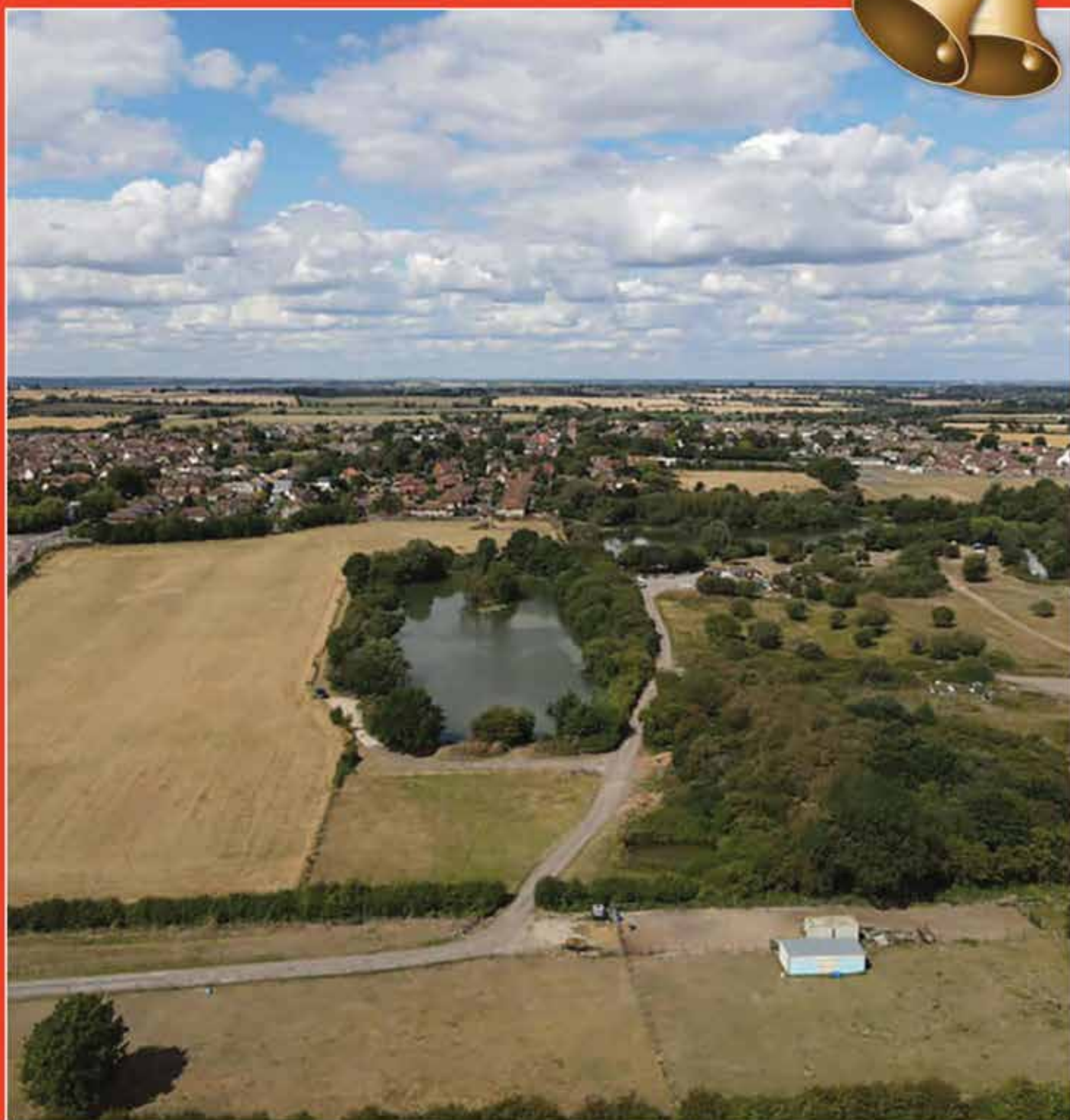
After fishing hard all that spring on Pingewood, things didn't go quite my way with the result I so badly wanted. Although I knew The Brute was only likely to do one capture during that spring, I was working more on the bigger





# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



*A Merry Christmas from all at Oak Lakes Fishery*

*A huge thank you to all our valued customers*

*Looking forward to great times in 2025*

*and to seeing you all again*



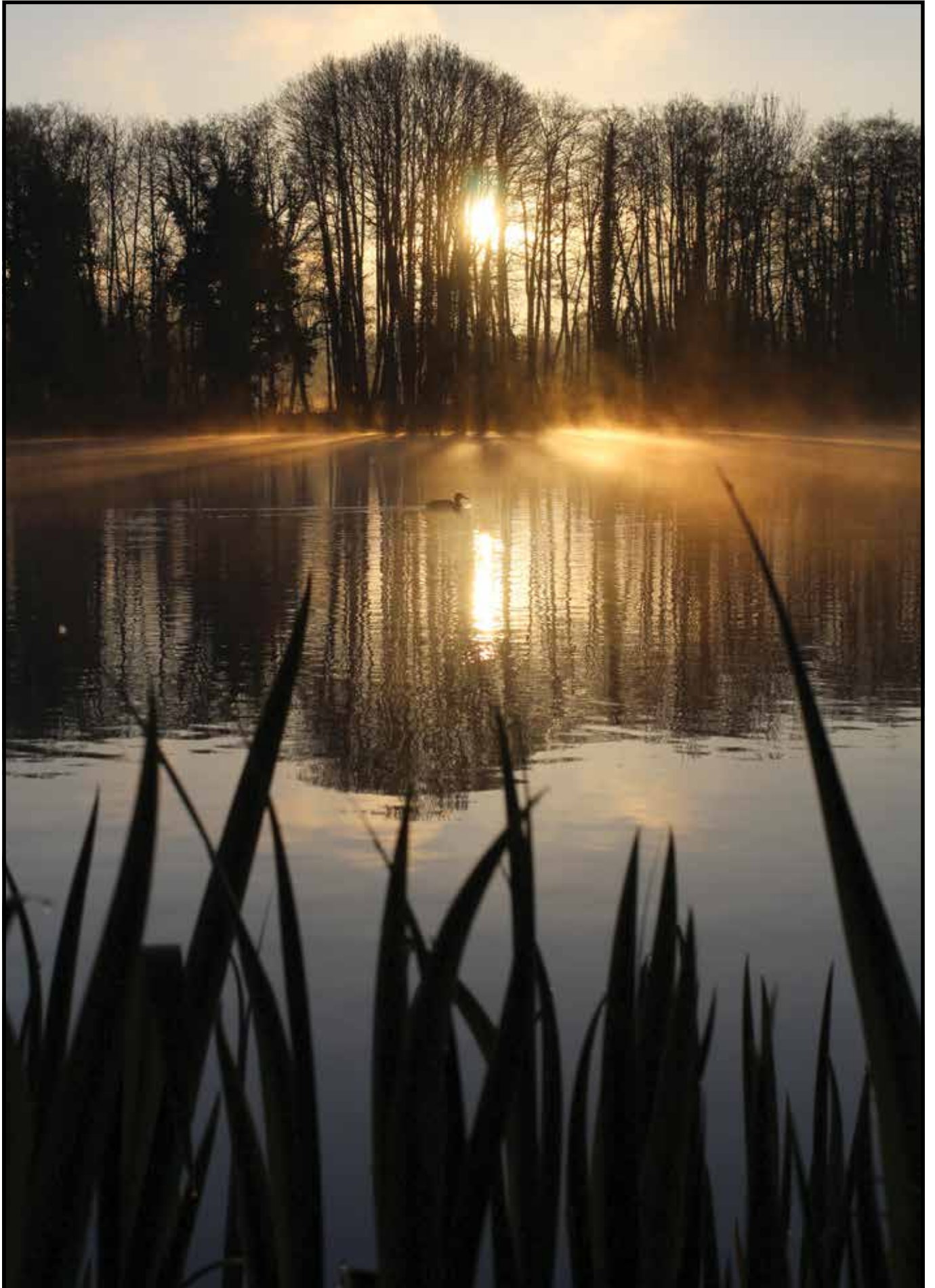
picture and thinking about a build-up to a possible 'getting lucky with a summer capture'! Well, like I say, things didn't go quite my way, and in late June, a young full-timer called Danny Mac that I'd befriended caught her at a huge weight of 49-plus. This was naturally a slight setback, but knowing that fish as I did, I wasn't put off by Dan's capture and returned the following week to keep the momentum going.

Although I didn't really enjoy fishing the lake, and anyone else in the same frame of mind would have used this as an excuse to back off, I considered this the right thing to do. Straight away on that visit, I found her in The Slipway snags and managed to secure the neighbouring swim. Obviously with past history of her doing a quick capture after a previous one, I felt confident she'd make that mistake again. Well I was right, and a few days later, she did, right over the other side of the pigging lake in The Pallets swim. Now if I said this didn't give me the right arseache I'd be lying because it did, and after I packed up, I went and congratulated the angler before heading home.

After licking my wounds for a few days, I rang young Danny up to see what he was up to, as he'd done the right thing and pulled off after his capture of The Brute. During the phone call, I learned he was fishing over at Mill Lane. Being as the club (Farnham Angling Society) that owned Mill Lane had given me a complimentary permit for all the help I'd given them with junior teachings over the years, I decided to pop over and visit Dan.

Although I'd spoken to Dan, I didn't actually know where he was on the water, so it was just a case of walking around till I found him. No sooner had I opened the gate than I saw Dan's little white van up the top car park so knew which way to head after parking my car by the gate. As I walked anticlockwise around the lake to see Dan, I was pleasantly surprised to see the lake was quiet. By the time I got to a swim pegged as 7, I saw carp milling around in the weed on the shallows to its right and fizzes from both tench and carp straight out in front of the peg. Naturally this caught my gaze for a good while, and straight away for some reason, I started making mental





notes as to where the bubblers were.

God knows how long I stood there watching this, but I eventually snapped out of hunting mode and went in search of young Dan, whom I found just around the corner in a swim known as The Slope or peg 13. While I sat chatting and drinking teas in Dan's swim, I could see it was equally as lively as peg 7, and I started feeling the draw from this lake.

During our conversations, Dan told me the fish had recently spawned, they had been feeding heavily since, and most the regulars had pulled off. Now being a carp angler of nearly 30 years at the time, I instantly saw this as an opening, and after leaving Dan's swim, I walked the whole lake, saw that it was indeed very quiet, then found myself back in 7 watching the Mill Lane carp behave naturally before finally pulling myself away from the water's edge about another hour later.

I don't know why, but that visit got me thinking, and that evening, I decided that I'd do a couple of nights on Mill from the following day and maybe think about getting back over to Pinge the following week. The next day I found myself back at Mill fairly early for what many would describe as second light. To my surprise, the lake was still quiet, and the fish were still very active in front of Peg 7.

I've never been a fan of bucketing swims, but if it's the done thing, you have to do it or lose out on waters where anglers can be ruthless, and from my knowledge of Mill Lane, I was under no illusion that this wouldn't happen to me. After parking my car behind the peg that's exactly what I did, then went for a clockwise walk around the lake, as I just can't simply turn up and fish without walking a water. The reason why I went clockwise around the lake was purely because I didn't want to get distracted by a tea drinking session, and I didn't know how long the bucketing rule allowed me to claim a swim without fishing it. On that walk I found one very large fish, which was definitely over 40lbs, and I'm pretty sure it was the big'un known as Taffs. Taffs had actually been caught at 52-plus in January from Peg 7, but



where I found her, she was just lying up in the rafts in between pegs 33 and 35. For a minute or two, I was tempted to relocate the bucket, but a moment of clarity told me she was just sunning herself away from randy males. The chances of getting her to feed were pretty minimal, so the feeding fish in 7 seemed a better option for a few nights.

After completing that walk and having a tea in Dan's swim, 7 still seemed like my best option, but I still had to go check on Taffs to see what she was doing or if she was still there. Luckily for me, that distraction was out of the way, as she'd moved off, so back to 7 I went. After setting up fairly quickly, I had a quick lead around on the areas I'd seen most of the bubbling just off the tip of the new island, which was formerly a point. Later on I found out that the reason the point had been converted to an island was due to typical club water antics over who's water's what battles, but from what I could make out with my marker float, it had made 7 a better swim. At the bottom of the island's marginal shelf there was a firm silt gulley, which screamed bite. Just to the left of it at the same distance, in line with the left hand side of swim 18 was a gravelly raise, and beyond both silt and gravel areas was towering weed, like a wall, causing a patrol route from the open water to around the back of the island to where Dan was in 13, and the silty area where I'd seen most of the bubbling was like a crossroads between open water, weed bed and island, which separated the shallower end of the lake.

Once all that was mapped out, I did my usual, stuck to what was catching me fish at Pingewood and cast two hinge rigs tight up against the weed, one on the gravel and the other on the silt, then scattered about 40-50 freebies between the rods before settling down for my first night on the water.

That first evening was absolute bliss, and the only person I spoke to was a bailiff checking my night booking number. He seemed like a nice chap and chatted for a while. He didn't seem to say much about the lake but asked a lot of questions about a mutual water we both had tickets for. Being a nice chap, I gave him advice how to fish that lake and thought I'd done a nice thing and

maybe one day he might share some Mill secrets with me, although I did suspect that now I'd been seen, the word was out, and I'd soon be receiving regular visits. Anyway, once the bailiff had gone, I settled down and woke early the next morning after an uneventful night. All I do remember about that night was how quiet it was. I suppose anywhere would be after fishing next to the M4 near Reading.

Anyway, as per usual, the kettle went on, and after wiping the sleep from my eyes, I sat watching the water and half expecting the Yateley scenario of a no-show from Mr. Carp. By the time the first tea was downed, the fizzes started all round my rigs, so I was well in the starting blocks and expecting a pick-up. That pick-up never came, and over the next hour, I got well and truly mugged off by Mill carp. After seeing what went on, I thought that maybe pop-ups weren't the ones so swapped over to bottom baits on D-rigs about midday and introduced about a kilo of red fishmeals.

Later on that afternoon, a regular called Kel turned up and dropped in peg 2. After he'd set his kit up, he popped down for a chat and openly told me he was going to put a lot of bait out and include some particle to get the grass carp in to hopefully encourage the carp to come in and feed. Kel also explained that his reason for doing this was because not many people heavily baited the water because it's not the done thing and laughed about it.

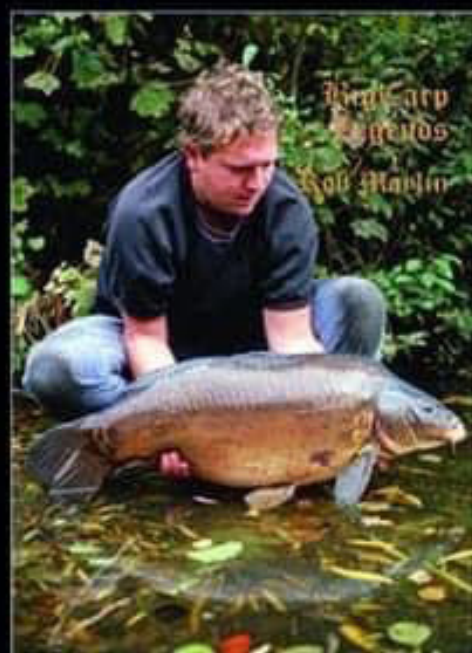
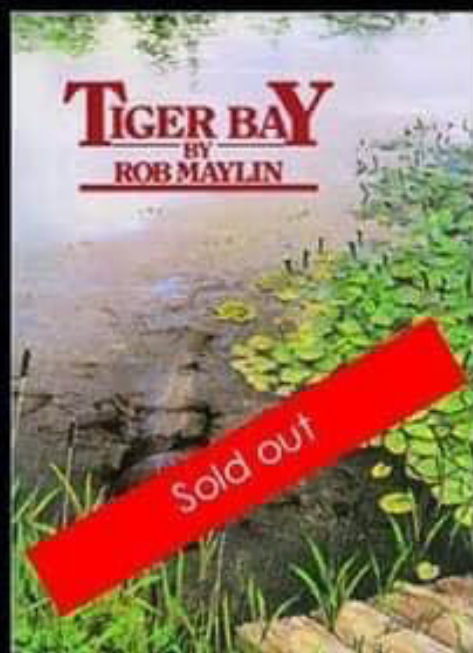
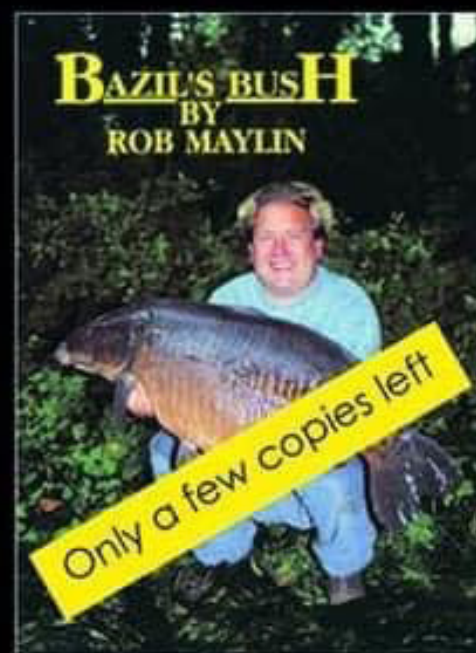
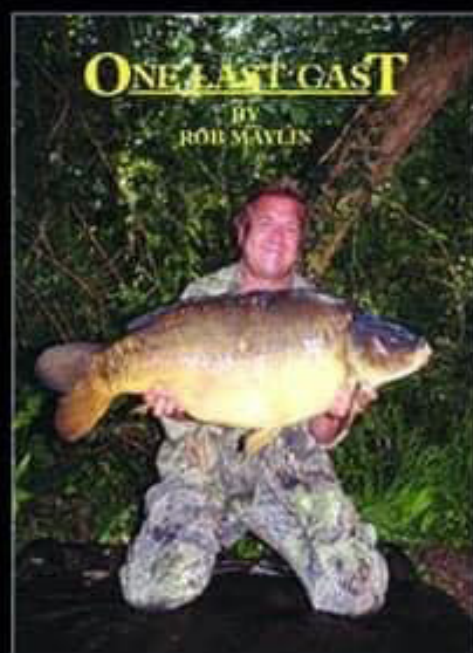
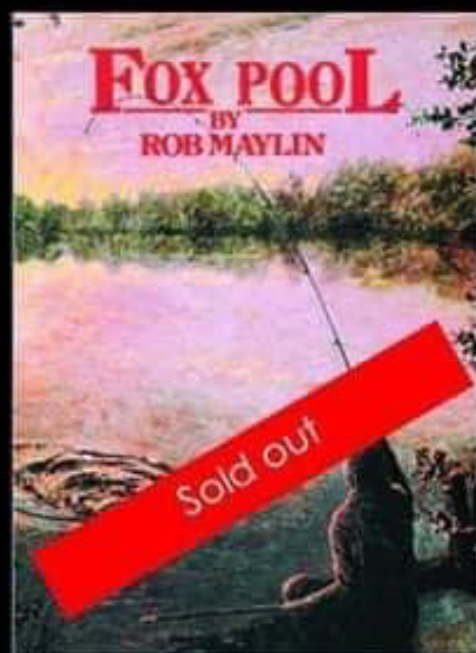
That evening a couple of what looked like regulars turned up, so I watched them, as you do, and saw Kel's observations were right – they all seemed to spot fish with light leads and very little bait. Maybe they didn't want to over feed if they were doing work nights, but I took note of their precision.

The following morning soon came round, and like the morning before, I was up early and watching my water as the overnight boys started packing up. No sooner were they driving out the gate than the bubblers started, and by god they fizzed like mad on me for hours, but still no bite that morning. About midmorning, Kel had a take, and as predicted landed a grassy. Now I'm not too keen on grassies, but I'm keen on good info, so I took note, and



# THE ROB MAYLIN SERIES

*50 years on the bank with Rob and Friends*



07768 731425

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

after I'd booked another night on the water, I decided to fill my swim in with every bit of bait I had left and made up a spod mix from some pellets and particles I had in my car.

On the third morning, in came the carp about 7am, and up came the fizzers. The swim was alive with bubblers, and as the weed cut up, out came the mallards too. About an hour of this passed, then whack! The bobbin hit the butt on the left rod fished on the gravel. Straight away a powerful fish ran me into the weed. This is where things went wrong for me due to barbless hooks. Normally I'm patient with weeded fish, so that's the same stance I took, but the Mill fish were clearly good at getting off barbless hooks, and this was no exception. That session ended with no cigar, but it made me want to come back, and that's exactly what I did do the following week rather than go back to Pinge.

Not only did I return the following week, but I came loaded to the gunnels with bait, and over the course of the next three nights, I loaded out 10kg of red fishmeals, boilies, 5kg of pellets, several tins of salty hemp and crushed tigers, tuna and sweetcorn. Basically a kitchen sink job of everything carp like to eat, and luckily the same swim was vacant again, so happy days. What went on from that session was another learning curve. My ever-faithful D-rigs were fished as usual, but the material I had started to let me down, and I lost fish on the second and third mornings due to breakages by the hook. This didn't amuse me, so I ditched the stuff, and on my return home, I rang Gardner Tackle's Lewis Read to see what he suggested I used instead of Amnesia. Good ol' Lewis invited me over, and we went through several products and eventually settled on the unbreakable 30lb Mirage as a hook link.

The following week, I returned, and all I did differently in the same swim was use Mirage. After baiting on the third evening, I had a couple of visitors. During that social, one of my rods ripped off, and once again I got weeded. This fish didn't want to budge, so the bailiff arranged a boat to extract it. While



waiting for that boat, the other rod ripped off, so then I had two weeded at the same time. Once the boat arrived, out we went, but both fish had gone. I felt gutted by this and needed a very good excuse to put the spectators off the scent, as the swim was clearly rocking. Luckily for me that excuse came in the shape of a cracked off zig in the weed that one of my lost fish had buried into. With this I came up with an “It must have been a trailer,” and the chaps bought it. So with that blind thrown, I managed to secure the same swim the following week.

Again that turned into another week of learning. The baiting situation remained the same, as I was getting the bites. All I had to do was fine-tune the rigs. Earlier on in that week, I started receiving strange takes and bumped a couple of fish after realising I was getting thrown by riggy fish on slack lines. Tightening my lines up definitely helped, but I still needed something else to bury the barbless hooks. The only answer to this was heavier 3oz leads. On the last night, that’s what I did, and just after dark on that evening up cracked the left bobbin, and I was in. Desperate not to let this fish weed me, I bent my rod double and virtually dragged the attached fish over the 60 yards of weed between my swim and spot then let it fight under the rod tip where I’d not been so lucky to get a fish to before. This all went well, and after a fairly strange surface fight, Dan netted a fish. At first we half expected to see a grass carp as they know to come in easily then fight under the tip, but no, it wasn’t a grassy, it was a large common carp, and unbelievably one known as The Vicar. Now this was me getting even in a big way, as that fish wasn’t known to be too friendly and one many wanted. Maybe it was slightly spawned-out at 36lb 8oz, but I didn’t care; I was buzzing! Being high summer and early in the night, it wasn’t a good idea to retain such an old fish, so we did a few night shots, and I soon had the rod walked out, clipped up and back in the game.

That night Dan and I sat up buzzing and retired to our beds quite late, but I couldn’t sleep after finally opening my account. Just as the light was



breaking through and I was gazing across the misty surface, a big mirror showed in the weed at the back of my area. The bubble trail from that show headed straight to the right side of my baited area. Minutes later, the fizzers started, and the mallards arrived for their breakfast, kicking up from the spot. Literally as they started picking the hemp shells off the surface, crack, the bobbin hit the butt again, and I was in. As before, I gave the fish the full bend of the rod to stop it weeding me, and once again won that part of the battle and soon gained line as the fish hit the surface and kited to my right and onto the shallows in front of peg 8.

I think the fish soon realised its mistake and headed out from the shallows to back in front of me, which was well handy, and I gained more line before finishing the battle under my rod tip before netting what was clearly a large mirror. On closer inspection, I could see this was a fish Michael Owen had shown me a picture of the evening before known as Whiskers. Knowing this and the fact that it might go 40, I weighed her straight away, but I needn't



have bothered because she was well spawned-out and the needle settled at 39lb 4oz.

Regardless of weight I didn't really care, as I'd pretty much braced two of the most sought after in a night, and Dan had done me proud with the pictures of both of them. This was all such a buzz at the time, and now I had my method for feeding, hooking and landing them sorted, so all I had to hope was that I could keep getting back in the same swim and milk it for every bite I could. Like I said, weight isn't that important to me, but luckily for me it was to others, and after Taffs had been caught during the following weekend at just over 40lbs, most of the regulars lost interest. This played straight into Kel's,







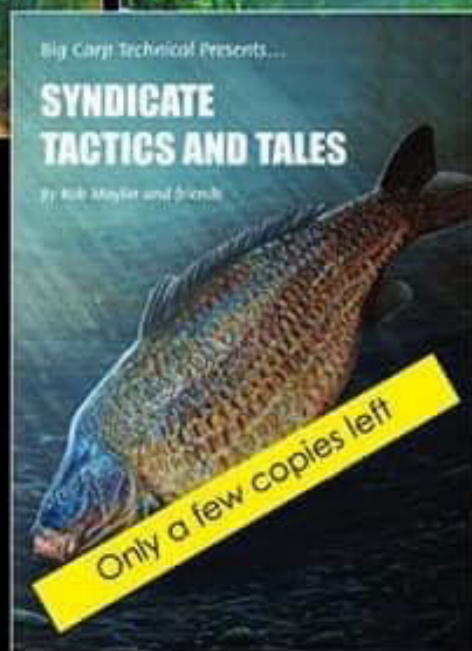
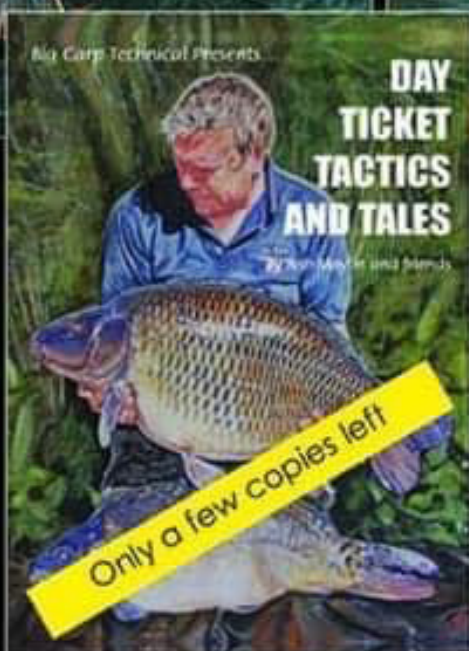
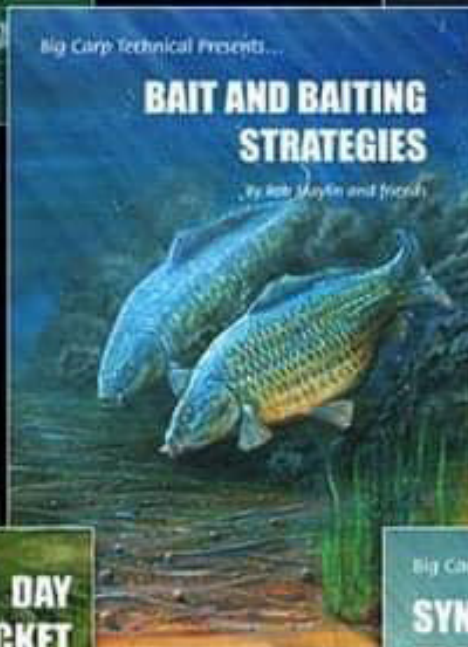
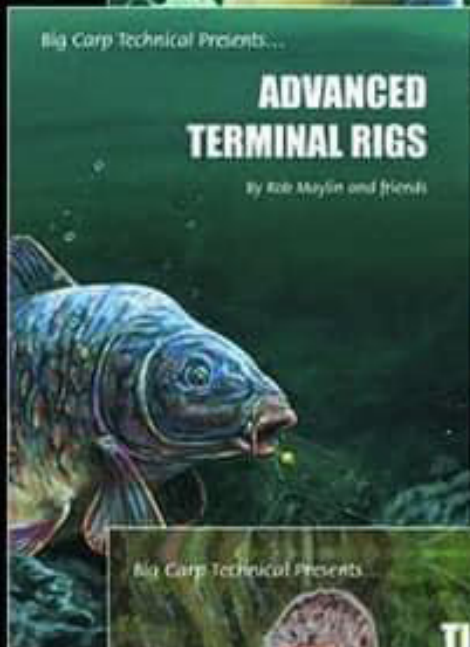
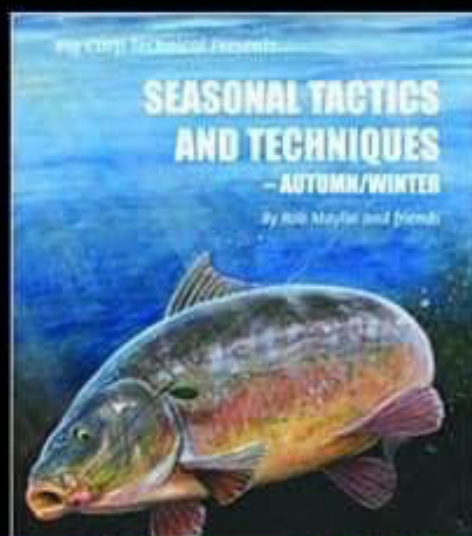
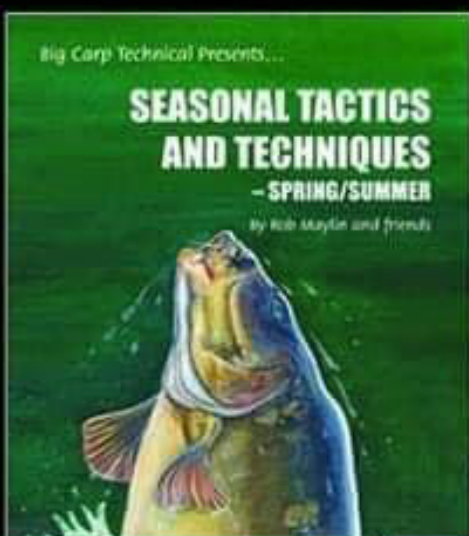
Dan's and my hands, and pretty much every week for the next month or so we managed to get back in the same pegs and keep working that area of the lake.

The week that followed my brace was a bit of an interesting one. I don't know whether it was sour grapes or nosey anglers, but one evening that week the bailiffs arrived like the SAS and demanded we all wound in both rods for a rig check. This did seem quite strange, as in the rules it was a case of one rod that the bailiff could choose randomly. But whatever, it did me a favour! After the check I recast my rod tight up against the weed bed at the back of my area, which I was unable to do earlier in the day after the morning kick-up had blocked me from making that cast. The result of the recast was a PB 27lb grass carp and the Little Golf Ball Common at 28lb 6oz at first light the following morning. Maybe it was the wrong thing to do, but the next time I saw the bailiff, I thanked them for the so-called rig check.



# THE TECHNICAL SERIES

*The carp anglers bible unlocks the path to consistent catching*



07768 731425

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





Funnily enough, the following week, after repeating the process of getting in the same swim and baiting it heavily before others started baiting up and pushing the fish towards me (an old Yateley trick), I managed a couple more bites. Unfortunately I lost one, but the one I landed was one of the lake's gems known as Two Scales. At the time of catching it, Dan and I didn't know which fish it was, so we asked one of the bailiffs. After he'd identified it, he clearly had the arse for some reason or another. Maybe I was catching too many for his/their liking, but that's fishing. Live with it, and if you're going to try putting me off, I'll just get more determined.

Well, with the spot/area still rocking and with Kel and Dan getting regular bites, it was a case of keeping the momentum going, and the following week we were all back. Kel managed to bag Taffs at a slightly heavier weight of 42-plus, so with us three being the heavier baiters, it was clear that they were troughing what we were feeding them. By the end of that week, just I was





losing hope of my weekly bite and considering packing up. I noticed three small patches of pinprick bubblers on the gravelly side of the spot. Just as I sent a text to Kel to inform him, the tip bent over, and I was doing battle with another carp. This fish managed to get tangled on my other line, and when its mouth came out the water, I not only clearly recognised it as belonging to The Parrot, I could also see my other line in the gap of the barbless hook and looking like one head shake could result in another loss. Wasting no time, I shouted to Dan to come and help me. Good ol' Dan did just that and eventually jumped in and netted the fish that I couldn't get any closer to due to it towing the other line and weed. Like everything else that was being caught, at 34lb 8oz, she was also down in weight, but who cares? I was going through them now and had to remain focused, and that's just what I did.

Sure enough the following week, I was back, but I arrived a day later than Dan and Kel. Just as I started unloading my car, I heard Kel's buzzer and saw his line cut up from peg 2. Like anyone would, I went up and helped out with



this, his second capture of the Small Tailed Common, one I'd definitely wanted to catch one day, and although I had slightly green eyes, I congratulated Kel. While this was going on, a bailiff swung in the car park then drove out a few minutes later.

At the time I didn't think much about this, but later that evening while settling down for the night, that same bailiff suddenly appeared waving his book and looking narked at me. To say the least, this was phase two of hostilities towards me, and I was being accused of all sorts, which were really pathetic excuses to try and get rid of me. The way I saw it, after yet another weekend of gossiping, that bailiff had been wound up by the local clique that was trying desperately to keep the water a secret, and they didn't like me being on there catching the fish. It was a bit childish really, as it's a local to me club



water with a reputation for being difficult, which puts many off, and besides everyone knew about it anyway.

Anyway, back to the story... That swim still kept giving, and as mad as it sounds, after one very heavy bait-up after trying to change the strategy from baiting each day with a 5kg mixture and catching on Fridays, I tried to speed up the bite times by a day or so and went in heavy from the off with 12kg, leaving three for top-ups. The result of that was the Silver Common within hours of doing so. I wasn't taken in by that success and put in down to an unlucky fish picking up the hookbait first, as I'd watched it start feeding only five mins before.

The last bite from that swim came at the end of August and was my one and only true midnight bite, so I did a couple of self takes, treated it and put the poor old warrior back. I call it an old warrior because it was, and it had the roughest mouth I'd ever seen on a fish. Apparently it was known as the Long Fish and hadn't been caught in a while. It did have mouth damage before, but looking at it that night, it looked like the poor thing had been tethered for a while.

Anyway, for whatever reason that swim suddenly died. You could surmise as to why, but I suspect it was down to the fact that it had suddenly become very popular. I was struggling to get back in it, and some who were fishing it couldn't handle the weed and raked it out so much it changed the area, and the fish became wise to it

I did try fishing around the pond for a bit and became interested in the deeper area behind the island from pegs 21-23 where I'd heard them jump at night during low pressure. This area came alive one morning, but unfortunately for me, I wasn't the angler in there that week. The one that was caught Taffs at a better weight of 44-plus. With that capture, and being as my mate Mark Fisher had just brought the Frimley complex during the great Cemex sell off, I decided to call it a day for the year and go and give Mark a hand with what was effectively my old stomping ground.

### **The Spring Of 2016 And A Return To Mill Lane**

After spending three great years back over on the Frimley complex helping Mark Fisher change the place from a rundown fishery to a much better place for the fish, the future and the members, and whilst doing all this work and organising countless work parties, I did fit in a lot of regular fishing time on both Pits 3 and 4 and had some excellent results, catching several 40s, countless 30s and god knows how many 20s. This was all well and good, but by late 2015, I started realising that I'd pretty much caught most of the big fish on the complex except for a couple of big commons and fullies. With this in mind, I started to think more about making a return to Mill Lane in 2016 regardless of whether I caught those last few on my Frimley wish list.

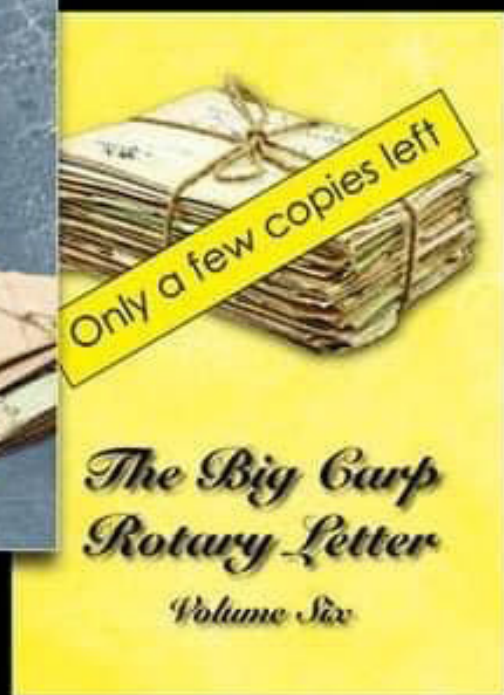
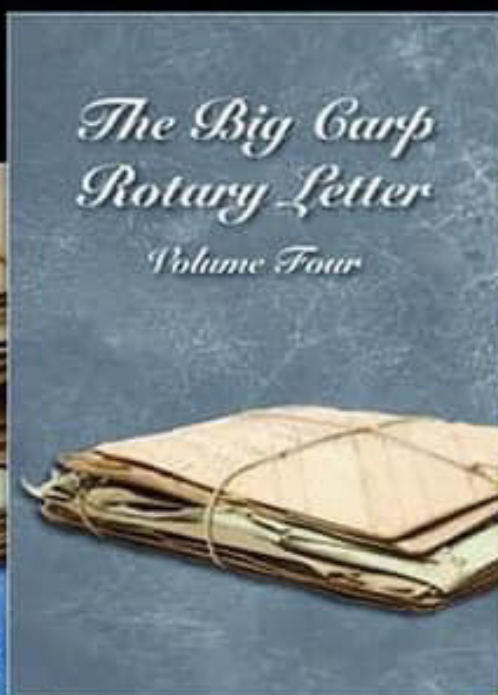
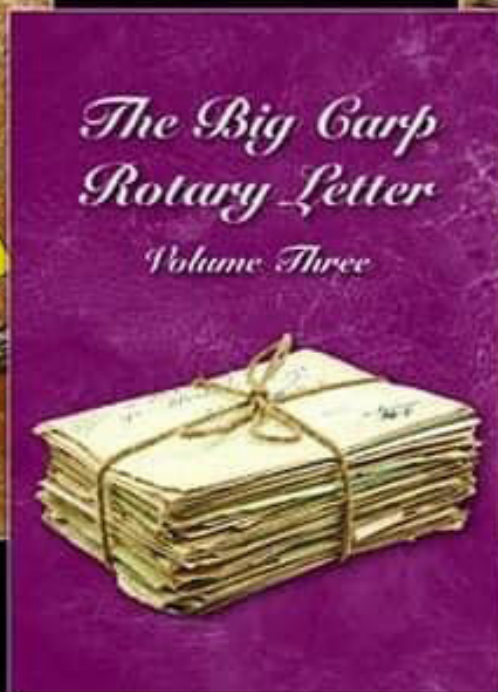
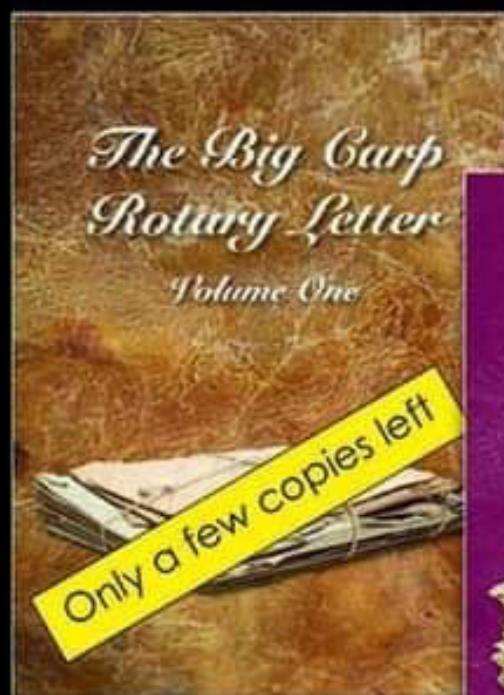
As I always do when considering taking on a campaign, I started plotting this move and planned to start looking after the Christmas break despite still catching consistently from Frimley in my hunt for the Big Fully. On the first Sunday afternoon after the Christmas break, half expecting it to be empty, I drove over to Mill Lane to reacquaint myself with the water. Despite having not fished it for a few years (being as it was local and a few of my mates had fished it during my absence), I was well aware that the fish had regained their weights after the 2012 spawning and hadn't spawned since. From what I knew, Taffs had been caught at weights up to just shy of 55lbs, and Whiskers had also been out at over 50lbs in 2014, not to mention the rest of the backup stock, which is incredible for a small water. As you'd expect, I was buzzing on the short journey!

On opening the gate, I was a tad shocked to see a few motors parked up and temporarily felt a little deflated, as I thought I could have had a sneaky look around and not get noticed. This wasn't to be the case though, so with hood up and glasses on, I got out of my car and walked up to the water's edge in swim 3. As I gazed across the lake for the first time in a few years, I worked out why there were a few cars parked up when I saw two blokes in a boat rowing across the lake and a group of lads appearing to be doing some work



# THE BIG CARP ROTARY LETTER SERIES

The greatest collection of thinking anglers ever amassed



07768 731425

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

on the far bank. Great, I thought, the bailiffs are having a work party, and with my previous experiences with them, I wasn't too keen on having a chat with any of them, but I was still going to walk the water regardless of former hostilities.

On my way round anticlockwise (the opposite way to which the boat went), I stopped for a good look in each swim until I got to the Slope (peg13). Whilst standing there for the standard scan, I noticed several bubbles coming up, and by the way they were moving around, they definitely weren't gas bubbles. To me they looked very similar to the way the fish at Frimley had been bubbling in the dead weedbeds, so naturally I was buzzed up by this and immediately started lining this area of bubblers up from several different swims around that corner of the lake to peg 16.

After spending a good amount of a short winter's afternoon in that area, I noticed the boat making its way back up the lake to where the rest of the bailiffs were working in peg 18 so decided to move on and go for a look at the other end of the lake. As I walked past the group of bailiffs in 18, I didn't recognise any of them, and a couple started chatting to me. They actually seemed quite pleasant, and as the boat went past, I got a better look at the two sailors. One was Ben Hamilton, and the other was young Dave, who I believed had just taken over as head bailiff. This was all a bit of a relief for me, as I felt like all the former more hostile team had gone, and it may well be a happier place to fish that year.

I didn't stop to talk for too long, as I wanted to look up the other end to see if there were signs of fish being disturbed by the boating around, as that what I believe had stirred the fish in and around the 13-16 area. Not long after standing in 27, I again started seeing several pinprick bubbles moving around out in the open water, so I assumed the boat had disturbed a few fish from their winter slumbers. Whether they had moved the fish to the central area after pruning prep around the edges or whether they were just in those areas of bubbling, I don't know, but what I did know was I was buzzed up by



this and didn't want to leave until it was too dark to see anything.

Just as the light began to fail, a young lad came pushing his barrow through the mud, bee-lining for swim 26, so rather than get into a conversation, I moved on and went back to the 13-16 corner for another look. Whilst walking that corner, Dave (the new head bailiff) was just tidying up on his own, so I gave him a quick hand, and he repaid me by making a tea back in his swim, which was in peg 5.

Although I knew Dave from the past, I didn't let on I was intending to fish the lake again and just said I fancied a walk around a different lake. To my surprise, he was very welcoming and encouraged me to return, but little did he know the bubblers had already done that. I went away from Mill that evening already buzzing and found myself back there the next morning, then the next and the next! In fact the only morning I missed was the Thursday morning because I'd planned to fish Frimley that Thursday with my mate Danny so had to prep my gear for that and get over there and get the swim I'd been concentrating on all winter. I needed to be on it, as a few big fish were coming from that area, and it was now on other anglers' radars, but that's a different story.

Anyway, not long after getting sorted and settled for the night, I had a very timid bite and hit into it. After a fairly good battle at range, I finally got the fish in from range, and in our torch lights both Dan and I could see what I'd gotten attached to. A few minutes later, after a bit of panic with the net and weed, I got my main target fish, the Big Fully at a weight I wanted – 40lbs 8oz. Obviously I was blown away by this, and after a low 20 common brought me down to earth a couple of hours later, I realised the capture of the Big Fully was distraction over and the rocket fuel I needed to get my year and campaign on Mill underway. Being the first week of January, I was buzzing for the year ahead, and after packing up from that session, I was thinking about nothing else other than fishing for a PB mirror on Mill again.

Pretty much every day from that day on until the end of February, I walked

Mill at dawn, in the evenings, in the dark and every different type of weather we had, just to get the feel for the place and get in touch with it again. I did do a bit more sociable fishing on Frimley catching fish up to 36lbs, but my head wasn't there; it was on Mill.

During those countless visits I found signs of fish regularly, some even boshing clear of the water in the two areas I mentioned earlier, and when there were big lows, I found the fish seemed to move and favour areas between 3 and 18 or around the deeps between 21 and 23. Amazingly, during countless hours of walking and looking, I never saw anyone and liked it that way, but around the middle to the end of February, I saw a few anglers turning up and bumped into Ben and a few of them. Still not asking too many questions and just doing my own thing, I learned my old mate Jamie had had a couple of commons out on zigs, so that would explain the sudden numbers, so I knew the time had come to stop walking and start fishing.

My first planned session was to be at the beginning of March, and from my own observations and by looking at the weather, I knew where I wanted to be, and that was either in 3 or 18. As mad as this sounds, I'd normally get to the lake at dawn, but the weather was that awful, and since I didn't expect anyone to be there, I thought I'd rock up late morning and set up in one of those swims slowly so as not to have a 'mare on my first session back on the water.

Well, like all the best laid plans, as I arrived and swung that gate open, I could see that not one but both my choices of swims were taken. Bugger, I thought, and after walking in to see the angler in 3, I muttered double bugger, as he, a chap I knew from old, was only just setting up, so my laziness had caused me to miss the boat. Whilst chatting and drinking a tea Pete had made me, it transpired the angler in 18 had been there all night, so I'd have missed out on that swim anyway. Judging by the squalid weather and northwest wind battering that side, I'm pleased I had missed it.

Anyway, while chatting to Pete, the gate opened again, and another chap,



Craig, who I hadn't seen in a long while, drove in. Soon as Craig saw me he came over and pretty much immediately asked if I was fishing. As soon as I replied "Yes," he shot-gunned peg 7 probably because he thought I wanted to go in there and relive the summer of 2012. This wasn't the case, and I actually didn't mind that swim being claimed. To me this reminded me of what's involved with fishing club waters, so I switched into that mode. Whilst chatting to Pete and Craig, I saw a fish roll in front of peg 2. Luckily for me Craig had his back to the water so he didn't see it, and with the weather being so horrible was keen to go and set up. Literally a minute later, he shot off, and just as he did, another fish rolled on the same spot out long from 2. As it showed, both Pete and I said at the same time, "That's the second time that's shown," and we both ran up to peg two to line it up. Since my main choices had gone, and with the lake clearly getting busier and fish showing in a vacant swim not far from where I'd originally fancied, I took the option to jump in the muddy swim 2, which clearly hadn't been fished in a long while.



## Nigel Sharp

After unloading my gear into the slop, I started setting up in the pure mud to Pete's surprise, and I think he felt a tad sorry for me and supplied more teas as I made the swim as comfortable as I could. Once all was set up and ready to go, Pete voiced his shock at my willingness to fish hinge rigs and not zigs. My explanation was that I'd been catching well on them all winter, the pressure was low, and with everyone else fishing zigs since Jamie's result two weeks earlier with no bites, I'd do something different. That said, I did say if bites do come to the zigs, I'll be happy to follow suit, but until such time, I wouldn't.

After talking up my approach and both Pete and I wanting to see what the fish had shown over, I cast one rod bang-on where the fish had shown, and after a clear descent through the water, the lead cracked down double donk on something hard. Like I always do, I clipped where my finger was on the rim of the spool, counted ten then wound the rod in to check how clean





# BIG CARP

*Fine arts*  
presents

## WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

### *The Legendary Big Carp Series*

#### **Burghfield Common**

*The sixth in our series of Legendary Carp paintings is none other than that awesome creature, the Burghfield Common.*

*Only discovered in recent years, Nigel Sharp rocked the carp angling world when he finally landed the beast after a five-year campaign, during which time he had only seen this leviathan on a handful of occasions.*

*Regarded by many as the original myth, there was much speculation about its existence at all, until it was finally landed at an incredible weight of 50lbs.*

*Quite how it had evaded capture for so many years is still a mystery, but due to the vast size of this huge gravel pit, it simply became the needle in the haystack.*

*Once its existence was verified by that first capture, an army of the country's top carp anglers have invaded Burghfield's banks and some feared its mystery would be lost forever.*

*But no, this incredible beast has still proven to be virtually uncatchable with only a very few captures in the past half a dozen years.*

*Undeniably a legend, this beautiful animal well and truly deserves its place in the Big Carp Hall Of Fame. Coming soon – the Royal Forty...*

*Strictly Limited to only 100 signed and numbered by the artist.*



*The A3 prints are very modestly priced at only £25 and are available now on the Big Carp website [www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk). Visit the site, go to the shop and select the 'Fine Art' section. There is also more information on the rest of the series, which will be available at one to two-month intervals, but I can tell you that the Black Mirror, the Burghfield Common, Heather, Jumbo, Jack, Mary, Clarissa, the Bishop, the Royal Forty, the Fat Lady, Mary's Mate etc are already on the list and we are up for any more favourites – just let us know – Rob Maylin*

**Price £25.00 plus £8.00 Recorded Delivery and tube.**

**Call 01252 373658 for card payment or go to our website for secure Paypal payment.**

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





the area was. On retrieving the rig, it was cleaner than I'd cast it from the muddy peg, so after checking the hookpoint was still good, out it went again, landing bang on the money, so I left it there and sunk the line before settling the rod. The next rod was cast just to the right of the last, in line with peg 19 at the same distance.

As we all know, casting singles at showing fish in early March can be deadly, but I did want to put some freebies out to get the fish searching out bait, as nobody else appeared to be feeding the lake at this point. Since I'd cast at showing fish and several gulls were marking me, I opted to leave the baiting until dusk when they'd gone to hassle other anglers on the neighbouring Yateley complex. During that afternoon, Jamie turned up and headed off to peg 16, as he fancied fishing on the end of the wind.

As always a first night of a campaign results in massive anticipation, so after baiting up on dusk and filling my gut with food, I tried to retire and get some



sleep, but I was buzzing too much and hardly got any sleep. During the night, I heard Jamie's Neville going off, then a short while later there were lots of torch lights and goings-on but no camera flash. He'd clearly had something but didn't photograph it, which was a surprise, as knowing Jamie he hates bad fish care and would never retain a fish. Anyway, something had gone on over there, and it led me to believe that maybe my four casts and light scattering of bait with a stick had moved the fish to that area.

God knows what time it was, but I finally drifted off to sleep and completely missed my first dawn back on Mill. This had me beating myself up for being lazy, and since it was pissing down and muddier than ever, I just sat cross legged on my bedchair feeling a tad deflated until I saw a fish roll over my bait mid-morning. This upped my confidence a tad, so more tea drinking commenced, and my eyes didn't leave the spot. Just after 10am, the left hand rod pulled up tight, held, then the line started cutting up through the water whilst holding on the clip. At first I watched, but as soon as the clip pulled, and knowing there were no birds diving, I reacted to this and bent into whatever had clearly shifted my 3oz lead.

On doing this, I felt a fish pulling gently, and just as I suspected a grass carp, it then flat-rodged me not once but three times, and once on a longer line, it started kiting right towards Pete's zigs. This had me in panic mode, so I piled on the pressure and started to gain line as quickly as I could. Luckily the fish stayed high in the water, went over my right rod, didn't hit either of Pete's zigs, and then when it got on a shorter line, it buried itself in a weedbed between us. Knowing how Mill carp tend to roll off barbless hooks in the weed, I was having none of this, so trusting my tackle, I gave it the butt and kept things moving in my favour, and eventually netted a ball of weed with a big carp in it whilst getting a right soaking. As soon as I had the fish netted, I got Pete and Jamie round, as they'd seen the goings-on whilst packing up. What a result this was! The weather was that bad to photograph and film this fish known as the Baby Rudder, and we needed to set Jamie's bivvy up

## Nigel Sharp

to keep the cameras dry. Despite our efforts, the pics didn't come out that great, but that's all part of it, and after catching a 34-pounder on my first night in four years, I didn't care... I was buzzing.

After the usual celebrations were over and I was left on my own again, I clipped and wound in my other rod. Once in, I got out my wrapping sticks to measure the distance of the casts I'd put in the day before. Once measured at 18.25 wraps, I clipped up both rods, rebaited them and sent them both back out to the same zone, but that left hand rod in line with the right hand side of a small tuft of reeds between 19 and 20 went down with that same double donk, bang on the money.

No sooner had I completed this and got some dry clothes on than the weather changed and brightened up, so if I'd waited a short while, I'd have got better pics of the fish, but again I didn't care. I was buzzing and had the confidence





in my methods, which to me is mega important. The rest of that day was spent following suit of the day before, and once I'd scattered some more freebies around and eaten, I vowed to get up early and watch the next dawn. God only knows why, but that didn't happen either, and I overslept and pretty much didn't see anything throughout that second full day, so the only main event was freshly baiting my rigs with dark pop-ups then scattering a few visual freebies at dusk.

Just as the night before, after a few visitors had finished slopping around in my muddy swim, I got in my bag, vowing to get up early. Next morning I managed this and sat drinking a tea watching the light come in on a dry and frosty morning. Not long after, it was fully light, and the second tea had been made. I was again sat cross-legged on my bed with eyes fixed on my area when the left rod pulled up tight again. Just as the last bite, I was on it when the clip pinged because no birds were present in the area. Straight away I was met with a dead weight holding its ground, just swaying from one side to another and sending up bubbles to the flat calm surface. After a short while, the attached fish seemed to change tactics, and like the last fish, it kited right. Again I panicked about Pete's zigs, and even more so, as this fish stayed deep until it got in front of where I thought Pete was still fishing. Then it came up in the water and rolled, started to almost give up and come my way until it was in close, and after rolling again and showing what was clearly a much wider set of shoulders than the fish two days earlier, dropped down and made a few last ditch attempts at rubbing the hook out from its mouth in the margins before blowing its tanks and giving up.

Initially once in the net, due to its size and colour, I thought it was the Parrot, which I'd caught in 2012. Knowing my mate Jon Mac had caught that fish during the winter at 45-plus, I geared my head up for this and assembled all the necessary ready for weighing and retaining for a few moments before photography. It wasn't until I lifted this fish clear of the water that I thought, "Jeez, this feels heavy!" Once on the mat and with the net clear of it I could

## Nigel Sharp

see from the size of its barbs and flat top to its tail that it wasn't the Parrot at all; it was Whiskers. At that point, I never thought about weight but could see she was huge.

Burghfield Dan had come round at this point and couldn't help with the weighing, but with the aid of a tree, the needle settled on 50lbs 8oz, a new PB mirror for me after nearly 20 years of trying since my capture of Basil from the neighbouring North Lake. Was I buzzing? Yes I was, and so much so that I gently lowered the retainer in the margins and rung Jamie up to come and help out photographing this beast. Luckily another clued up angler appeared, and with Craig being there as well, we had more than enough hands on deck to look after such a fish and share a great moment. I packed up later that day, and as you can imagine rode on that cloud of a great entrance for a good few weeks. Over the next few weeks, the lake did get a bit busier, but that was to





# BIG CARP

## *fine arts*

### WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

*The Legendary Big Carp Series*



*Here she is at last! Regarded by many as the 'ultimate' big carp, the stunning Black Mirror, captured here beneath the Colnemere snags. The Black Mirror joins Basil and Heather in our 'legendary carp hall of fame', soon to be joined by other famous carp that have shaped our big carp heritage, starred alongside the UK's most famous carp anglers and made us all gasp at their beauty and give those who have dedicated their lives in pursuit of them, the utmost respect. One of my favourite carp of all time – strong, dark and so very difficult to put on the mat. Once again an absolute masterpiece, the one and only Black Mirror is available now as a small number of signed and numbered prints (100). Anyone interested in this or any of the others take a look at the website.*

*At the very modest price of £25, this is a collection not to be missed.*

*There will never be a collection like this again. Now is your only chance to own the history fish collection.*

**Price £25.00 plus £8.00 Recorded Delivery and tube.**

**Call 01252 373658 for card payment or go to our website for secure Paypal payment.**

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

be expected and to get back in that swim again, I had to keep my ear to the ground and time my sessions, as the muddy peg two seemed to be getting a little bit popular again.

Funnily enough, after catching those two fish, Pete said to me the next time he saw me that peg 2 is a very good swim, but it only seems to do one hit of fish per month, and you can spend the other three weeks wasting your time. A lot of people think Pete talks crap because he doesn't seem to catch much, but one thing – he is very observant, and he's right. In fact the only action I'd had was possibly foul hooking the Vicar on a zig during a period mid March when Jamie and Lee Petty were effectively smacking them on zigs. I simply had my depths slightly out and didn't do too well at that lark while others did.

After several follow-up sessions, my next hit of fish from that peg came at the end of March during a 48-hour session just as Storm Katie was blowing out. I arrived at dawn as trees were breaking and dived straight in 2 after seeing it was empty the evening before. Normally on a pressured water when others are fishing through bite times, I wouldn't cast out, but since it was so windy and fish were rolling at the back edge of it over the spot I'd caught the last two from, I risked a couple of casts. The first was the banker rod, which flew straight, and I got that double donk. The second cast I opted to cast left, as nobody was in 40 and there was another Pete fishing in 3, so I thought I'd practice some etiquette and cast away from him and didn't bait up. I just relied on singles for the day until dusk bait-up time.

Not long after making those casts, Chris and Scott turned up, and as I made the teas, the banker rod, which was on the right of the setup, pulled up tight, then dropped back before pulling up tight again, so I hit it. Once again the rod took up its curve, and a carp was on. Pretty much a standard battle followed, and the fish did the usual kite right then a bit under the tip before being safely netted by Chris. On inspection this was not just a common, but one I so wanted to catch called the Small Tailed Common at 39lb 4oz. I was



well happy with that, as it's effectively a PB Yateley common for me, and I had some good photographers to capture the moment.

The action didn't stop there on that 48-hour session, as late the next morning just as I thought bite time had passed, Byron turned up for a tea, and like the day before just as the kettle was boiling, up went the bobbin and a fish was hooked. This time the fish powered left and flat-rodged me several times. If I said I wasn't crapping myself, I'd have been lying. This fish was going mental, and being on a roll I was thinking this could be Taffs. When I saw it roll in the edge and it clearly wasn't Taffs, I was actually relieved. Byron wasn't though – it was one he still wanted to catch known as the Pearly Linear. This fish went 38lb 8oz on the scales, and I recognised it as one Jamie had caught on a zig that we were told was Baby Pac Man, but I trusted Byron's identification skills more, as he knew these fish as well as he took my pics. After repeating the process as I'd done every night in that swim,





the following morning that banker rod did another bite, and after a good marginal battle, I caught another common I'd not caught before known as the Big Football at 34-plus. Unfortunately for me, due to some rule, the lake closes for the last day of March, so I had to pack up begrudgingly that night... and that for me wasn't just the end of that ticket; it was the end of that roll of fish from peg 2. I did lose a decent fish from that swim the following week, but after the new tickets had started, more anglers turned up and the swim became increasingly more popular as more bait went in it. The grassies started to become a pain in the arse at night, and like the mud, the carp bites seemed to dry up for me in there. My last capture from Mill in 2016 came from swim 18 on a zig, minutes after casting one out after getting my depths right. That



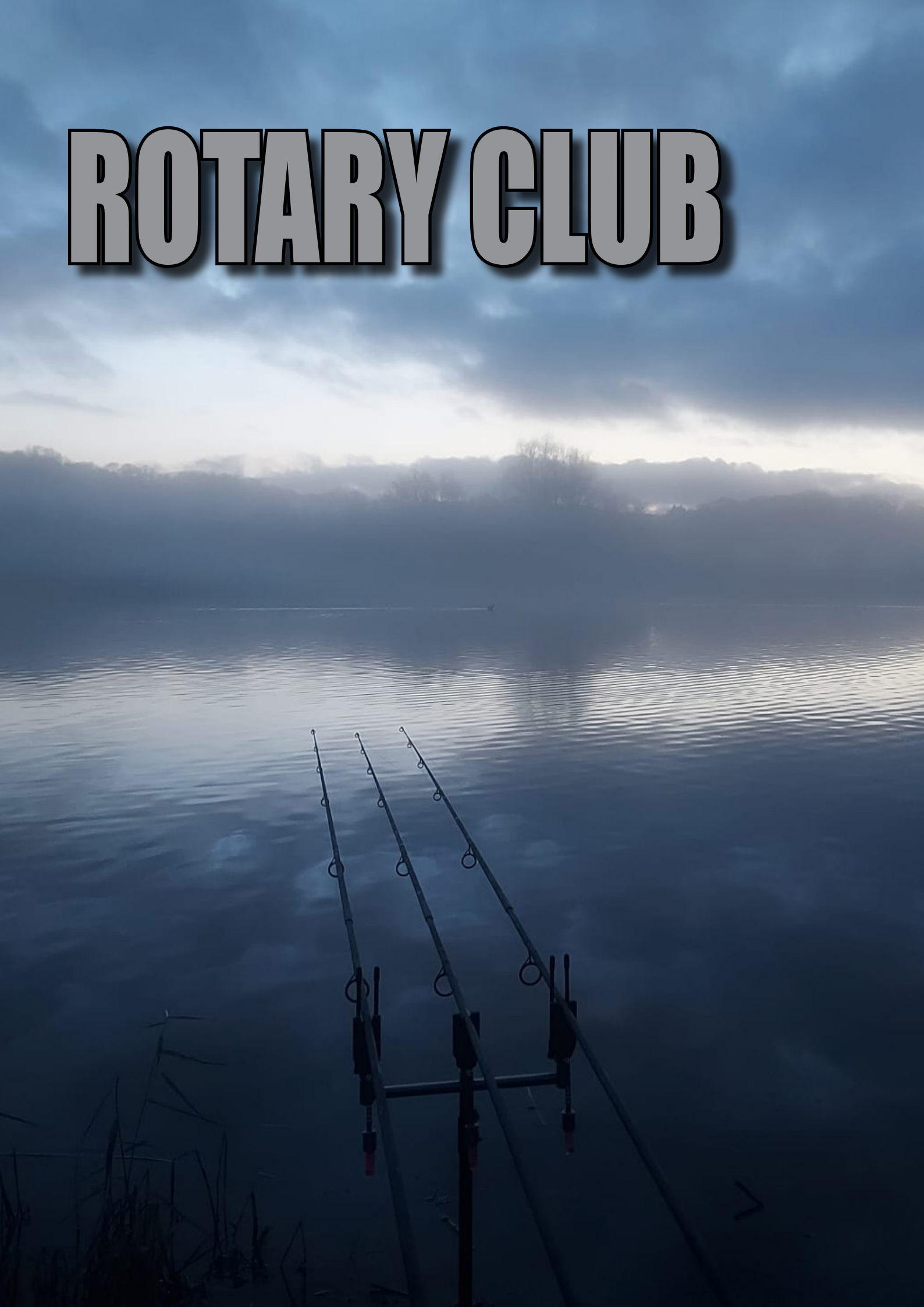


was the fish known as the Notch Tailed Common at just under 37lb and a zig PB for me. With all the weed growing in the lake at that stage, I was happy to have caught on a zig but didn't think it was a good idea to persist in the use of them whilst targeting another 50-pounder.

I had a few plans which were set back by Dan's repeat capture of Taffs from 21 but carried on putting these into place until the end of July when some cowardly scumbag decided to sneak in at night and do all my tyres in the side wall with a dart. This was obviously someone who has done this before, as he knows darts let them down quietly and slowly. That night there were 17 anglers on the lake, and I wasn't the only high profile angler. The other one didn't have his tyres done, and when we all found out about this the next morning, only two anglers offered to help while the others remained carpy! It's times like this you realise who your mates are on a water, and I learned a lot about others I'd made tea for in the past and carried on that knowledge to my return in the spring of 2017.

Unfortunately something wasn't quite right about the lake, and the bites were very few and far between. There was clearly something wrong with the once tap clear weedy water, and it had an algae bloom and no weed. Fish started dying, but nobody wanted to report it until the worst thing happened and Taffs died, the biggest fish ever to swim in a Yateley water. A very sad day, and although I failed to catch it, a few others I didn't catch still remain. Out of respect for a few anglers trying to catch Whiskers, I won't return, as that fish seems to like my methods. I even hooked her this year, but she won that battle this time. I'll give her that and my best wishes for the future. Hopefully she'll take the Yateley record in years to come.

# ROTARY CLUB





In a world of confusion, chaos and hearsay, Big Carp seek out The Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing but the Truth... in a series of simplifying our quest for catching carp. Their refreshing non-bias position allows them access to truly independent answers from some of the UK's greats in carp angling. Separating the wheat from the chaff in today's carp angling world, A brand new Rotary Club Journey by asking Martin Crackoff, Bill Phillips, Mark Walsingham, Ali Fisher and Bernie Loftus about their views on rigs.

Rigs - Uncomplicating the Complicated!

It's very apparent that when an angler asks the question in open forum, "What rig would you recommend?" that he or she will receive a multitude of different and somewhat confusing answers.

Appreciating that with new rigs comes new products to be purchased, it can therefore be a minefield to the improving angler let alone the newcomer.

If we were to believe everything we are told, then a thousand different rigs would be required for a thousand different scenarios.

What's your approach and thoughts on rigs?

### **ANSWER 1 - Martin Crackoff**

I think that whilst there is a certain amount of information needed regarding the water and how the angler intends to fish the water, and this information will make your answers differ, the amount of rigs out there in the carp fishing world are



basically variations on a few very simple ideas. As an angler, I always concentrate on getting a good rig and bait in the right spot rather than waste time getting the perfect rig tied and the perfect bait.

Rigs have been elevated to the level of importance they are in today's carp fishing simply because the angling media can't think of anything else to write about. This makes people think that the rig is the be-all and end-all of fishing, and so more people start tying more unnecessary clutter to their hooks, and hey presto, another wonder rig is born. This of course is never going to be called out for what it is by the tackle firms – they love it – more junk being sold to the novice angler thanks to another "thinking angler" and his new rig.

Personally, when I arrive at a lake, there are two different scenarios,



certainly not thousands... I start by finding out what the lakebed is like, and that tells me whether I want to fish on the bottom, (with a bottom bait) or if I want to fish a pop-up. That's it! If it's a bottom bait, I'll fish a variation on the standard hair rig, either a super supple cotton hair, or a KD-style rig. If I want to fish with a balanced pop-up over soft silt, weed, detritus etc, it's just a matter of how high I need the bait in order to fish it effectively, so the differences are again simple. Close to the bottom, and I'll have a hinged type rig of the "control" type where the bait is held close to the hook, and if I need the bait higher up on detritus or longer weed, then I'll just use a chod rig.

I have two basic theories on rigs, separation rigs, and "control" rigs... (Sorry that I keep using that term, but it's what I call the type of rig where the last couple of inches act similar to the chod rig, where the hook is controlled by the bait and the rig's mechanics). Do I think all these new rigs are too hyped? I'll answer by saying my number one catching rig over the years has been the hair rig in its many variations. Separation rigs are something that appear not to have changed much over the years, but there are a few tweaks to be added that can make it just as effective as any rig out there.

Over to you, Bill...

## **ANSWER 2 - Bill Phillips**

Cheers, Martin. I believe we sing from a similar hymn sheet.

Rigs! Now there's a buzzword that is often used to unnecessarily complicate the simple task of attaching bait to hook, line and maybe lead arrangement



in order catch a carp. I tend to think of it as terminal tackle. The media hype around rigs, which is largely commercially driven, must totally confuse the newcomer to our wonderful pastime of angling. Interestingly, one of the definitions of the word rig is 'to arrange in a dishonest way'. Add to that 'to sell more bits', and it sounds like a fitting definition. In my opinion, overcomplicating rigs catches more anglers than carp.

The terminal tackle you use, 'rigs', is of course an important part of the jigsaw, but not to the extent that seems to be believed nowadays. Rigs are far outweighed by watercraft, finding fish, stealth and careful presentation. The simplest rig carefully presented in the right place stands far more chance than the latest super rig in the wrong place.

My advice, particularly to those new to the game is to KEEP IT SIMPLE. Truth be known, the knotless knot hair rig in its simplest form has probably accounted for as many carp as most of the fancy new wonder rigs all put together. I believe that the majority of consistently successful carp anglers use relatively simple hair rigs for most of their fishing. The versatility and variations with just a straight hair rig are huge – hook type, hook size, hook link material, hook link length, hair length, lead size, fixed, running, stopped, drop-off or combination. The permutations are huge before you even consider bottom, wafter or pop-up as bait. I'm not saying that you should never bother with any other type of rig but just think about the topography of the bottom and consider what you are trying to achieve. In more cases than not a simple hair rig presented thoughtfully in the right place will produce.

I do understand and fully accept that playing with rigs can be an addictive art form in its own right. There are anglers that enjoy



# BIG CARP

*fine arts*  
presents

## WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS



*Mary and Mary's Mate, the icons of the great Wraysbury complex... The British Record in the arms of Terry Hearn and the brace which Sir Pete posed so wonderfully with on the back of his legends book are but two of the many captures which have earned these two awesome creatures their place in the Big Carp magazine legends hall of fame.*

*The A3 prints are very modestly priced at only £25 and are available now on the Big Carp website [www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk](http://www.bigcarpmagazine.co.uk). Visit the site, go to the shop and select the 'Fine Art' section. There is also more information on the rest of the series, which will be available at one to two-month intervals, but I can tell you that the Black Mirror, the Burghfield Common, Heather, Jumbo, Jack, Mary, Clarissa, the Bishop, the Royal Forty, the Fat Lady, Mary's Mate etc are already on the list and we are up for any more favourites – just let us know – Rob Maylin*

**Price £25.00 plus £8.00 Recorded Delivery and tube.**

**Call 01252 373658 for card payment or go to our website for secure Paypal payment.**

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

rig development as much as the fishing, often very successfully, but I am not so sure that it gives any great edge. So often I do wonder if results are because of or in spite of. However, don't be afraid to experiment with new rigs, but certainly don't think it's the be-all and end-all.

For me there are two groups of rigs, the stealth or the aggressive hooking type, which seem to be most hyped nowadays, largely because of the popularity of the aggressive hooking type rigs. My personal favoured rig is one of stealth, the objective being for the bait to act as naturally as possible and not stand out like a sore thumb creating suspicion. Stalking at close quarters in clear water over the years has taught me that a carp's natural instinct to sense danger are acute to say the least. A strong but lightweight size 6-ish hook tied direct to a sinking main line with a simple lump of bread flake stealthily presented to meandering carp can be the deadliest of rigs in such a situation. As you may well have gathered, my first port of call and favourite terminal setup is simple but influenced of course by what is out in front of me at the time. Under normal circumstances, I will use as small a hook as the bait and conditions permit attached to a supple 8in to 10in hook link with a lower breaking strain than that of the main line. A knotless knot with a longish hair of about 2 to 3ins, but again this is dependent on the bait. I do like to add a ring to create a blowback function and a few pinches of putty to pin the link down., then a 2½ oz semi fixed drop-off lead with a weak link to a run ring. Baits are very carefully balanced to rest gently on the bottom to mimic the freebies.

This simple setup can be made more aggressive with a bigger hook, shorter hair, very short 2 or 3ins hook link and bigger



lead. Or conversely, if the fish are very shy, I will change to a light nylon hook link attaching the hook with a Palomar knot and a very light cotton hair attached to the hook by a rig ring with a small stop rubber just behind the bend to give a blow back effect. Presented with a light running lead, this completes a nice stealthy setup. Various permutations of the above have accounted for a considerable percentage of the carp I have caught from many different waters both at home and abroad. As an example of how unnecessary it is to chase the dream of the perfect rig, I will tell tales on a couple of my close old school friends. They both have in excess of 50 years of very productive under-the-radar carp catching.

The first has never used or even tied a knotless knot, let alone any fancy complicated rig. He is still fishing in the same way as we all did at the start of the hair, threading the bait on to a length of cotton and tying it to the bend of the hook. Would you believe he has been outfishing some very high profile anglers on a rock hard circuit water for several years now? A couple of years back he had seven big forties from that water which was more than the rest of the syndicate had achieved put together. The second only ever uses a simple knotless knot hair rig to 6 to 8ins of coated braid with about ½in stripped above the hook. Come rain or shine, big water or small, it's all he ever uses. However, he is a proper Mr Consistent carp catcher both in the UK and France. He is one of very few to have caught a back-to-back 80lb-plus mirror and common in little over a week.

The above examples are 100% testament that keeping it simple is not as detrimental as some might have you believe.

That's enough of my waffle, over to you, Mark to bring some sense back into things.

## ANSWER 3 Mark Walsingham

Rigs in three words - Keep it simple.

I have one rig that I've used for 90% of my fishing for the last five seasons. It's a simple, short, stiff D, long hair, figure-of-eight loop at the swivel and a light lead (1oz).



The thing is; I think many anglers get so embroiled in the mechanics of rigs that they overlook the most important thing in rig selection, and that's carp behaviour. I'll run through the thinking on the rig above as an illustration of what I mean.

The lakes I fish have all got a large head of silver fish and heavy weed, especially blanket weed, so I want a rig that won't tangle if the silvers play around with the bait. The long hair helps with this because the silvers can move the bait without moving the hook.

The carp are all as spooky as hell, so I want minimum disturbance, hence the light lead. I've also watched carp using a heavy lead as a fixed point to work out the hook once pricked. Terry Hearn once watched an Ashmead carp working the hook on a heavy lead for fifteen minutes before it finally ran... A light lead moves, and the carp can't use it in this way. The fishing is all close quarters so no long cast required.

Combination of a really sharp hook, stiff link, D and long hair means the hooking efficiency is good and bait separation



# BIG CARP

*fine arts*

## WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

*The Legendary Big Carp Series*



*'Heather The Leather' – The jewel of the Blackwater Valley. She is THE Yateley Car Park Lake legend; a fish that shaped and changed the lives of some of the greatest carp anglers this country has ever known. Pete Springate, Robin Dix, Ritchie MacDonald, Jock White, Terry Pethybridge, Nigel Sharpe, Terry Hearn... the list goes on of anglers who devoted weeks, months and years of their lives in pursuit of the queen of the lake. She has gone now; gone to that great carp lake in the sky, but here, thanks to one of the county's most talented young artists, she has been brought back to life for all to wonder at her beauty... I am proud to bring you No. 2 in the Big Carp Legendary Fish series – Heather – God save the Queen!*

**Price £25.00 plus £8.00 Recorded Delivery and tube.**

**Call 01252 373658 for card payment or go to our website for secure Paypal payment.**

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

excellent, so the hook goes in, and no amount of blowing of the bait will dislodge it – so simple and efficient. The key to success though is the way you feed the fish. The rig is hopeless if carp are static and sucking and blowing at a bait – the short stiff link just doesn't move naturally. But fish a wide scatter of bottom baits and a bottom bait on the hook, so the carp are moving between baits and picking them up individually and it's deadly – more so if you feed steadily and get the fish competing and racing between baits.

So it's not the rig in my view that matters most but understanding how the fish are feeding and why you are using it. Understanding gives confidence and that brings success. I'll pass this Ali for his thoughts...

### **ANSWER 4 – Ali Fisher**

Confidence is key. Find a rig you're happy with and stick with it. The quickest way to ruin your confidence and affect your fishing negatively is to start messing with rigs. You'll have the latest fad rig on, and you'll be sat there second-guessing yourself. There is very little



new in rigs since the invention of the hair.

The vast majority of my fishing is done over particle and naturals, and I have two rigs I use 99% of the time. One is a stiff rig comprising of a chod hook tied using strong fluorocarbon with a tight D near the eye and a small rig ring. I use this arrangement when fishing maggots. I tend to use a large ball of live maggots, and having them



up near the eye keeps the hook point free. It also stops them getting caught on the point during casting etc. It's an incredibly effective rig.

The other rig I use is for bottom baits like corn/boilie/nuts etc. It's often referred to in the mags as the claw rig. The rig is tied so that the hair exits the hook directly below the point, and it's held in place with two small pieces of silicone tubing. The distance of separation between the bait and the hook varies depending on bait size, but usually it's around a ¼in to ½in. The mechanics behind it being that the bait being where it is in relation to the point makes the point heavy and keeps it down in the carp's mouth increasing the likelihood of pricking the mouth.

The other 1% of the time I use zigs. I have 100% confidence in these rigs, which allows me to concentrate on what really matters, and that's location. One of the best anglers I know still side hooks his baits, and he catches more than his fair share, including some of the best history fish this country has to offer. Food for thought there.

I feel most modern rigs are purely to catch the angler rather than the fish. I mean, there are only so many ways you can mount a bait on a hook. I see people pulling the hook over their hand and getting all excited when it flips over. I sometimes wonder if they have ever had the pleasure of watching a fish pick a rig up.

In order for it to work like it does on their hand, the fish would have to back off, tightening the hook link, which in reality never happens, or at least I've never seen it. They inhale it and either get pricked immediately and bolt/stay on the spot trying to ditch it or spit it out and either carry on feeding or leave the area.

Having something you are confident in is key. The quickest way to ruin your confidence and affect your angling negatively is to chop and change. If you're catching regularly, why change? Yet I see so

many people constantly chopping and changing when the latest all-singing all-dancing rig comes out.

What about you, Bernie?

## **ANSWER 5 - Bernie Loftus**

Thanks, Ali. Rigs - keep it simple is the often quoted saying, and this is precisely what I do.

I've used the same carrier for more than twenty years on every single lake I've fished - it's no big deal, but I like the anti-tangle properties of the helicopter/rotary rig and the way it presents the nitty gritty part of the rig, which is second to none. If there is a problem



with silt or light weed, it's just a simple matter of pushing the backstop up the lead core to the estimated depth of the silt. Lead core fly line is sometimes frowned upon by some, but I've had no issues. Rules permitting, I use a length of about four feet, but because I do not use any quick-change clips, every rig change shortens this length by two or three inches.

The waters I fish don't really need a speed fishing approach, and the little clips are just another complication that could (I know they probably will not, but there is still a chance they could) cause a problem. All I have on the lead core is a short length of silicone tube as the stop, two plastic beads with the ring swivel in between and a sleeve that covers the knot and the loop on the lead. I usually cut the



swivels off my shop bought leads, as it has no function when covered by the sleeve. I've just bought loads of leads with no swivels to save the waste. I also managed to convince the chap who made them that I didn't want any "camouflage" plastic coating. These plastic coatings might look nice and carpy, but divers have proved they are anything but camouflaged and are much easier for them to find than uncoated leads. When the rules dictate that lead core leader can't be used, I use just three inches as a buffer for the swivel. No way would I want the swivel directly on the main line because it WILL damage the line during the battle with a fish, and for me this is unacceptable.

Like the carrier, the most important thing to me is the anti-tangle qualities of a rig. I've already mentioned my faith in sweetcorn, and it is my go to bait until I find a problem with nuisance fish. Small, light baits are more inclined to fly back and tangle around the leader. Short, stiff hook links and short hairs are the only real option. This means hook and bait move as one as the fish picks it up, and I've never found



this to be an issue when fish are feeding confidently over lots of bait. I used the same pictured rig with 14mm boilies on the last lake that I had to use boilies exclusively on. Confidently feeding fish is the key, and I was feeding 3kg of bait three days a week to achieve this.

I'll happily use this rig anywhere and have very rarely found the need for different rigs for different lakes; it's just a matter of finding the right spots.

# Big Carp Magazine!

*a history of excellence*



## AVAILABLE AS A DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

Yes, you can purchase Big Carp magazine as an App downloadable to your iPad, iPhone, iPod Touch, PC and Mac and read the only carp magazine worth reading anywhere you go...



Available on the  
App Store



Available on  
Android

 [pocketmags.com](http://pocketmags.com)

