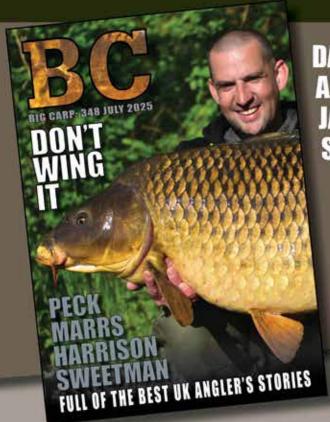
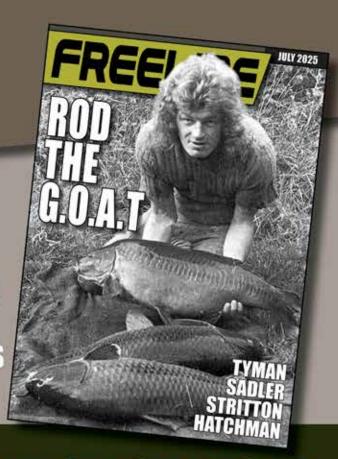
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DARRELL PECK - 5 FUNDAMENTALS ANTHONY MARRS - WINGHAM WHACKERS JAMES HARRISON - OVERNIGHTERS SCOTT SWEETMAN - MY GO-TO RIG

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BIGGERS BEADERS TOPTENS II

TOP 10 DAY TICKET CARP WATERS 1 BLUEBELL LAKES 2 LINEAR FISHERIES 3 SANDHURST 4 COTTINGTON 5 FARLOWS LAKE 6 HORCOTT 7 COKING FARM 8 OAK LAKES FISHERY 9 ELPHICKS 10 ORCHID

TOP 10 FRENCH HOLIDAY VENUES	
1	IKTUS
2	ABBEY LAKES
3	CRETE LAKES
4	RIBIERE
5	GIGANTICA
6	RAINBOW
7	THE AQURIUM
8	DREAM LAKES
9	THE SECRET GARDEN
10	BROCARD

	TOP 10 BAIT COMPANIES	
1	STICKY BAITS	
2	DYNAMITE BAITS	
3	MAINLINE BAITS	
4	CC MOORE	
5	TARGET BAITS	
6	NUTRABAITS 2025-26	
7	PROPER CARP BAITS	
8	URBAN BAITS	18
9	DAVE MALLIN BAITS	N 15 W
10	NASH BAIT	1111

TOP 10 END TACKLE COMPANIES	
1	ESP
2	KORDA
3	FOX
4	THINKING ANGLERS
5	GARDNER
6	TRAKKER
7	BANK TACKLE
8	NASH TACKLE
9	CARP ONLINE
10	AVID

	TOP 10 CARP FISHING BRANDS	
1	DIAWA	
2	SHIMANO	
3	REUBEN HEATON	
4	SOLAR	
5	JAG	
6	FREESPIRIT	
7	FOX	
8	TRAKKER	
9	CHILTERN RODS	
10	KUDOS	

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

	TOP 10 ICONIC CARP LAKES
1	YATELEY
2	SAVAY
3	REDMIRE
4	WRAYSBURY
5	FOX POOL
6	HORTON
7	CASSIEN
8	LINCHHILL
9	ROACH PIT
10	JOHNSON'S RAILWAY







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CATCH REPORTS



Maxime Fished on peg 6. He had a very busy trip with plenty of big carp while after a big cat !!!!! Here's one of his 40+ caught during his stay. Congratulations



Norbert caught this beautiful Koi about 30 pounds. A Fish not seen For years!!

BOOK NOW FOR THE HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME



Mathew had a terrific fishing session in peg 31 with many big fish over 40 pounds



Renaud Fished on peg 30 and had a great session with plenty of big Fish



Sean is back again at Fishabil and as you can see the man is in the right place!!

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

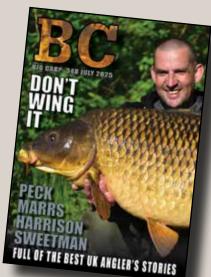
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BIG CARP 348:
July2025
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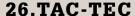
Front Cover: Anthony Marrs with one of Winghams best.



The early high temperatures definitely triggered many lakes to start spawning earlier this year. But the very changeable weather has caused many lakes to spawn and starts. Not ideal fishing in fits conditions. That said there have been some awesome catch reports this month. While you're waiting for a bite you can check out Anthony Marrs' article on fishing the incredible Wingham Syndicate. He's banked some awesome carp. Darrell Peck breaks down his fishing to fundamentals. Don't make it more difficult for yourself. James Harrison shows how productive overnighters can be and lastly Scott Sweetman talks us through his goto-rig. The D-Rig is so versatile and Scott outlines how he gets the best from it in his fishing for big carp.

6. SHOCKLEADER

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



Our look at some of the best fishing products around.

40. CATCH REPORTS

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

66. ANTHONY MARRS

Find out what it's like to fish one of the best syndicates in the UK.

78. DARRELL PECK

Darrell breaks down his fishing to 5 fundamentals.

86. JAMES HARRISON

James proves that with a bit of effort, overnighters can be extremely productive.

104.SCOTT SWEETMAN

Talks us through his go-to-rig - the D-Rig, and how to get the best from it.





















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BIG NEWS REGARDING THE ELITE CARP MASTERS!!

The elite will be holding a 48 hour carp match at linear fisheries oxlease lake the dates are 8-9-10 august, Friday - Sunday, this is a pairs match with the 3 biggest fish rule (you catch the 3 biggest you win), lots of 20s and 30s and 40lb carp will be caught on this event, there will also be a bbq and beers on the Thursday night (pre match social) which is included in the price this is a weekend payout match so no qualifying for finals etc, a one of match at a weekend, what you will win

1st place £2000

2nd place £1000

3rd place £700

Sweep stake biggest carp in excess of £400



excess £250

To enter match it is £370 for the pair,

The elite carp masters has been going for 14 years now and is getting bigger and better every year , and the one thing we guarantee is the prize money, no fucking about , no stupid rules , proper carp fishing for tournament anglers

Sweep stake for pairs in or people that want to fish with there mates and compete in a friendly atmosphere, if you are interested pm me on fb, no tyre kickers or fucking about with payment, if you haven't got the money don't tx, we are not interested in excuses or nx week,

> If you fancy this match with a guarantee payout get in touch thanks Benn

FESTIVAL OF CARP 22025 SATURDAY 12TH JULY

HORSESHOE LAKE, LECHLADE, GL7 3QQ

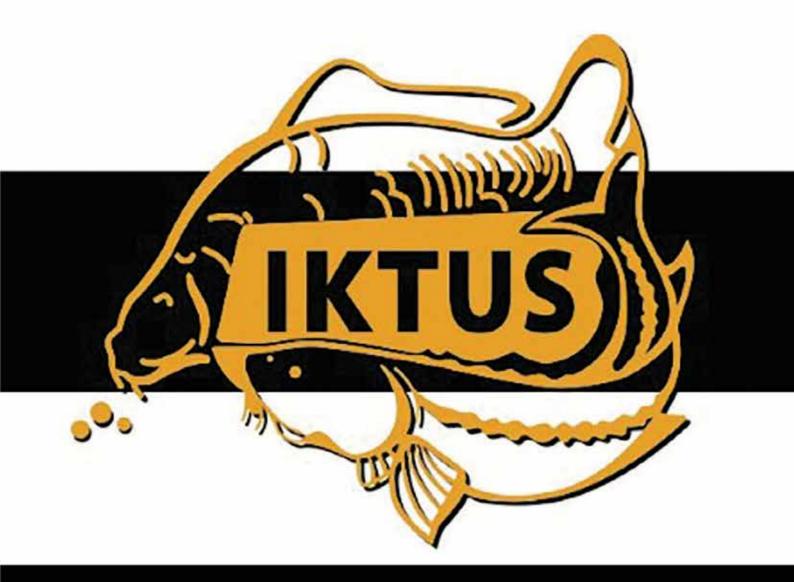
Save the date for this years 'Festival of Carp.' The event will be at Horseshoe Lake in Lechlade on Saturday 12th July, it's always a good social event with something for everyone, we hope to see you there!

This year there will be:

- Talks
- Angling companies demonstrating their products around the lake
- Angling Trust coaches

helping youngsters to catch their first fish

- Casting demo's and tuition
- Vintage tackle displays including a range of 'Carp Catchers Club' items
- Vintage tackle and book sales
- Raffles
- An auction including many of the late Chris Ball's books plus other significant items
- Delicious food and drink and much more ...



FISHING RESORT



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EMBRYO OPENS WAITING LISTS FOR SOME OF ITS VENUES

We are pleased to announce that the below waiting lists have now re-opened. These will be open for a limited amount of time until they are full:

- Bakers and Homefield
- Broom Big Lake -Weekday and weekends
- Broom Blue Lake -

Weekday and weekends

- Cables Weekday
- Cawcutt Weekday and weekends

To join any of the above waiting lists, all you need to do is visit the 'Syndicate Venues' page on our website and click on the relevant venue page.



see the 'Join the waiting list' and click that. Finally, fill in the simply details before submitting to is required for each venue. The pay the £40 deposit.

For weekday and weekend rotas. please ensure you click the correct rota at the top before submitting. Once you have clicked submit, you will be added to the waiting list manually here soon as as possible so you will be able to contact us on 01268 285987.

Then, scroll down until you see your name on that list on our website.

You can join as many waiting required lists as you wish but the deposit deposits are non-refundable those venues with and non-transferable, but they are deducted off the ticket price when you join each venue.

> More lists will be opening very soon, so keep an eye on the website.

As always, if you have any questions, please feel free to

ANGLING TRUST REELS IN SAFETY MESSAGE WITH NORTHERN POWERGRID **PARTNERSHIP**

The Angling Trust is renewing are leading the way in their safe on the bank this summer roots anglers with our help." through the powerful "Look As Up It's Live!" campaign.

Cook. of Jamie CEO Angling Trust, said:

"We are delighted to continue via our partnership with Northern Powergrid. Their support and expertise have enhanced our ability to warn anglers of the dangers of fishing near power lines. It's a simple message help spread the word. but a hugely important one Gareth Pearson, Director Northern and

its partnership with Northern industry to ensure that safety Powergrid to help keep anglers messaging gets out to grass part of the campaign, the Angling Trust will share the Northern Powergrid's 'Look Up It's Live!' leaflet with members direct communications. blogs. social media. newsletter features. Fisheries, angling clubs, and tackle shops are also encouraged to display the campaign materials and

Powergrid Health, Safety and Training at



Northern Powergrid, added: "We've renewed partnership with the Angling anglers to tackle safety before Trust anglers to help keep them they hook up, to make sure safe.

"High voltage currents can contact our power network.

pass through almost all fishing our rods and poles, so we ask to target and reach they set off and look up before fishing equipment does not







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ALLIANCE ABINGDON AND OXFORD NEW WATER SHARING AGREEMENT WITH

Following the agreement with are able to fish the AOAA Littlemore Angling Club (LAS) that we announced back in August 2024 the club is now delighted to announce a new water sharing agreement with & District Angling Reading (RDAA) Association that enables AOAA members fish the RDAA stretch of the river Thames in Sandford.

From 16th June 2025 AOAA Members are permitted to fish the RDAA-controlled stretch of the River Thames in Sandfordon-Thames as outlined on the map below.

In exchange RDAA members

stretch of the river Thames downstream of the car park at the bottom of Sandford Lane (accessed via Kennington).

NOTE THAT THIS EXCLUDES THE EA LOCK & WEIR PERMIT SECTION that runs the full length of the car park upstream to the small wooden foot bridge in the woods, and the agreement is limited only to the club stretches in Sandford-On-Thames All other club stretches are excluded from this sharing agreement.

Members must adhere to all fishing regulations, rules.



are fishing on. Rules can be club controls the stretch. found on the respective clubs. Not only does this agreement website. Failure to comply fishing rights granted under this and agreement mav result in the loss of the guilty members permit.

to check fishing permits and reports! club shared club stretches of the Rivers Team!

and codes of conduct set by River Thames in Sandford-onthe club whose stretch they Thames, regardless of which

give our members access to with these rules may result in new stretches of water. It also revocation of the reciprocal empowers the club bailiffing teams to work more effectively together to reduce misuse and abuse of fishing rights in the area.

Bailiffs from AOAA, RDAA and We look forward to seeing LAS are mutually authorised your future catch photos and

membership cards on Tight lines from the AOAA

STRUGGLING W

Join us for 'Stepping Stones Ask anything - our friendly to Carp Fishing Success', a team will get you sorted! fantastic carp fishing tuition weekend from - Sunday 6th July 2025 at Lea Big Pond Badshot Lea Big Pond – led by Session 1: Friday Tony Smeets and friends! This is the perfect opportunity Session 2: Saturday 4pm for anyone who's finding it Sunday 4pm tough to fish effectively in the 20 spaces total - 10 per session weed – our team of experts will Book show you how to fish smarter, Tackle: 01252 318937 more confidently, and with the

this venue. What's on offer? 24 hours of hands-on tuition Expert guidance tactics, baiting and weed Tight lines, fishing

right techniques that work for

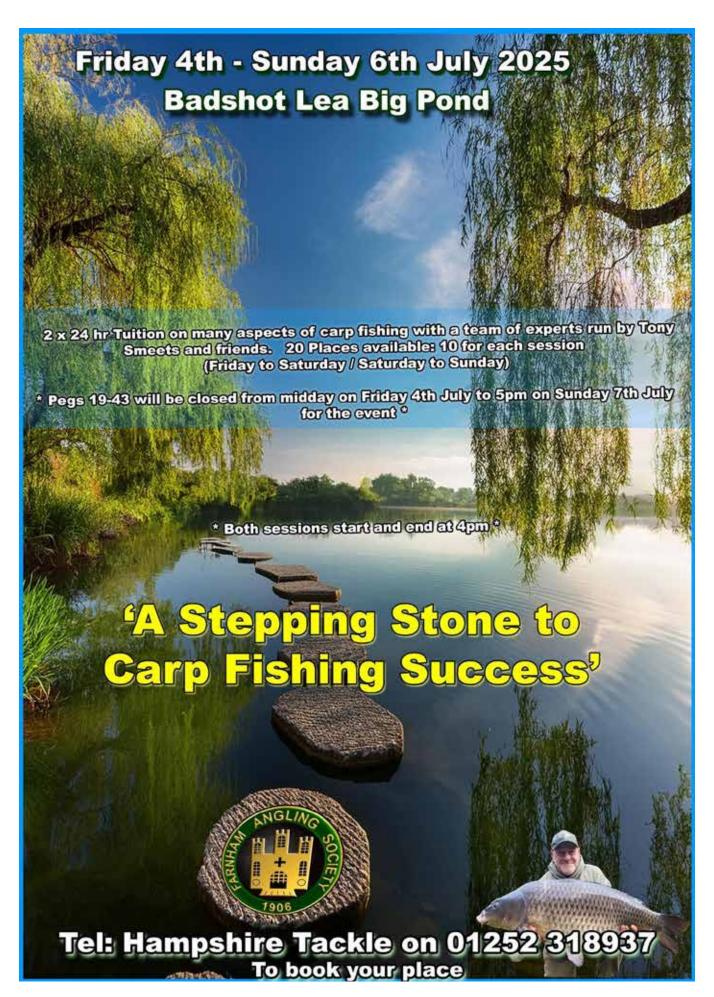
Friday 4th Location: Pegs 19-43, Badshot

4pm Saturday 4pm

now via Hampshire

These places won't last long - whether you're new to the weed or just want to improve, this is a brilliant stepping stone to greater success on on rigs, the bank!

- Farnham Angling Society



BLUEBELL LAKES OUR READERS

little bit about what we offer.... Creature".

Carp Fishery based in Tansor and beautiful area on the North near Peterborough. We opened Northamptonshire boarder, with our doors 32 years ago and no major roads, trains city traffic now remain a prestigious and that spoils are great spot. well established Carp Fishery. We are set in approximately 150 acres and have 5 lakes plus optional fishing on the river nene.

fishery and why choose us?

We have some big ones - We refurbished this winter. We also have a range of Carp from 11- offer those must have items in 56lb - we hold some of the UK's our shop from a toothbrush to largest carp but something for Red Bull. Bensons Cafe snack all anglers. We were home to van is now open for our summer

A warm welcome let us share a the famous "Benson" and "The

Who are we? We are a family ran Location - We are set in a green

Facilities - We have a huge on site tackle shop stocking over 10,000 items to really enhance experience. We your have regularly cleaned toilets located What makes us a great day ticket around the fishery and our men's shower/toilets were fully



months - we really do offer everything you need on site Family - We are a family ran business that puts our passion, time and commitment into constantly maintaining very high standards across the fishery and your experience matters to us! Our family uphold the traditions we had from day 1 and work hard to ensure the sport remains a truly enjoyable one.

continually improving our answered. to

facilities and offering's to ensure you will always get the very best experience as time goes by this winter we just updated our Gents showers/ toilets.

Stay tuned for all the upcoming updates, exciting plans improvements we have planned for 2025

Still want to know more? We have a full FAO listed on our website with prices, opening Committed- We are committed hours and all your questions

NORTH LINCS VENUE OPEN TO SYNDICATE OFFERS



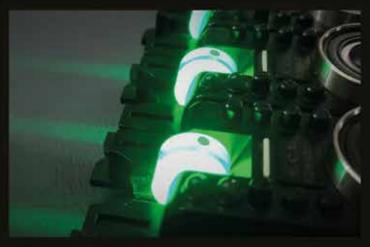
Lincolnshire Council are remain open to the public. looking for applicants to set up. We are looking for offers over and manage a fishing syndicate £800 Blue Lagoon, Normanby Road, review). Scunthorpe, DN15 9YG.

Reserve. The site has open Colby@northlincs.gov.uk

Are you a keen angler? North access for visitors and will

per annum over five with private membership at years, with a three per cent council owned land at the annual increase (subject to

For more information and to Blue Lagoon is a Local Nature apply please email Gavin.















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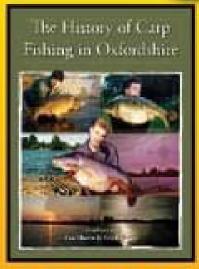


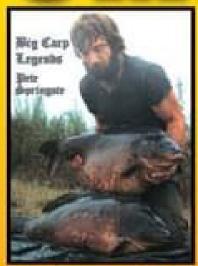


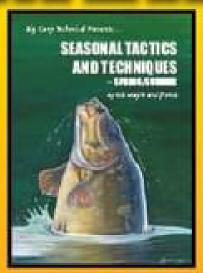




SUMMER

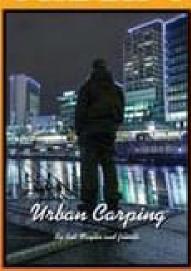


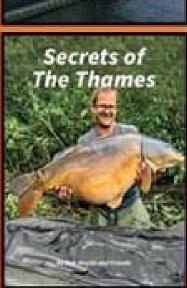


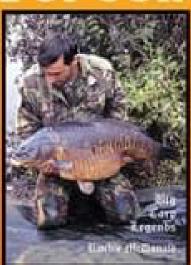


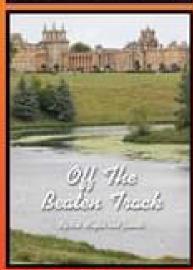


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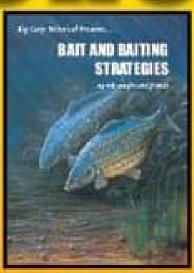


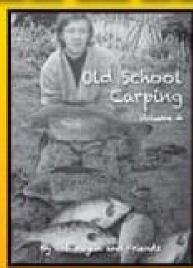


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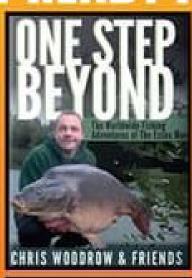


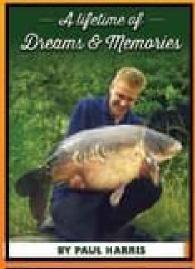


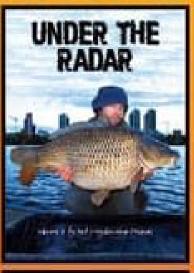


ND GET READY FOR SUMMER ACTION

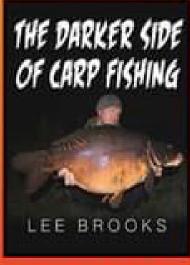








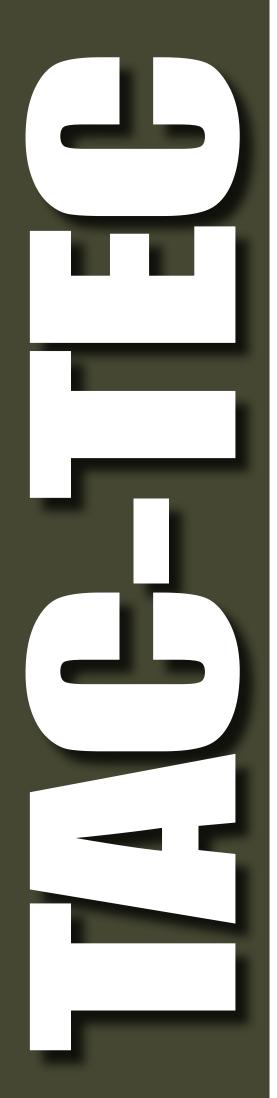








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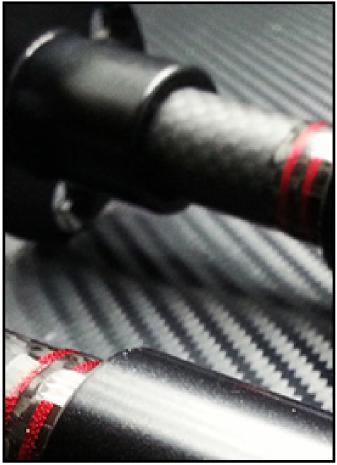


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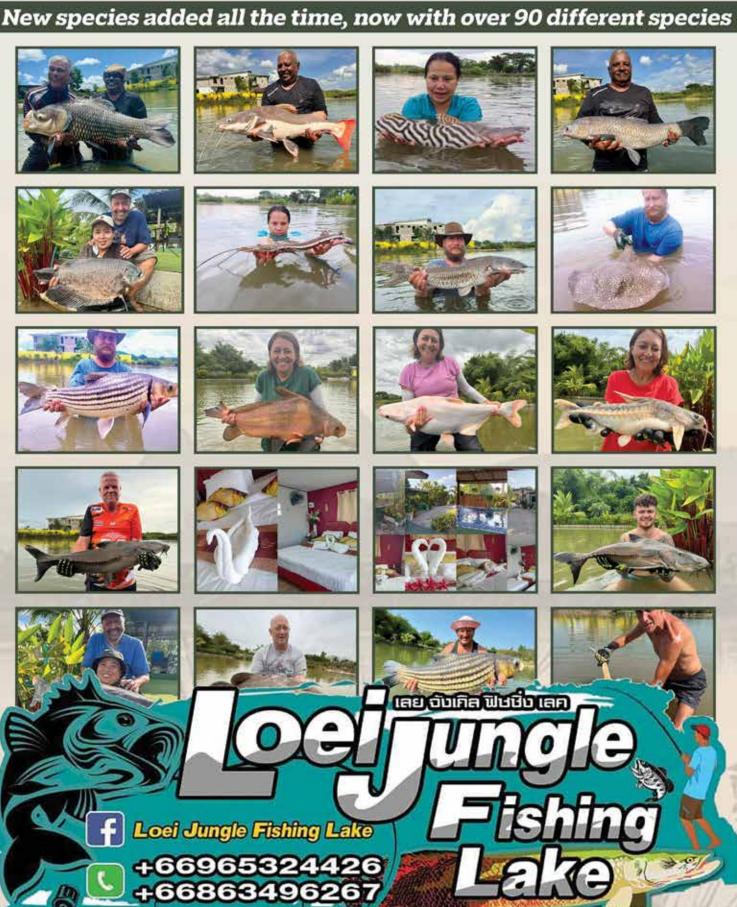
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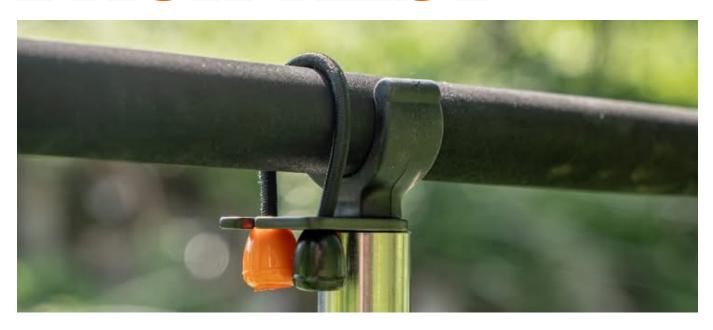
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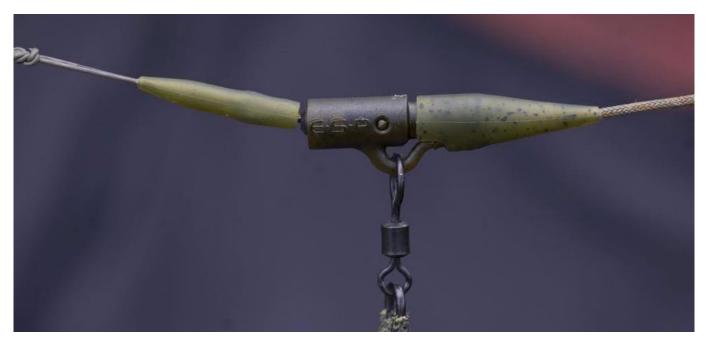
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Moulded in our own factory, rubber part way on or cutting Clips feature the arm back to drop the lead

> The tail rubbers provide are compatible and with Tungsten Loaded tubing.

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- camo brown and silt grey

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also functions as a power bank. capable of than 3.5 times. With a 3.5-hour charging time, users can be ready for their next adventure

CTEK M15 CHARGER



lot of benefits, what happens with no worries about getting if you experience a battery stuck out on the open water failure on the water? Now with a flat battery. It is fully you can achieve that level automatic and user-friendly, of freedom with the CTEK easy to connect, spark-free M15, the perfect 15A battery and protected against reverse charger for all boat owners. polarity - it's so simple to use. The M15 is a multi-functional ■ www.ctek.com

While owning a boat has a charger that will leave you



Just as I was ready to bring the rods in for the final time. I had one of my bobbins pull up tight and the spool slowly started ticking. I picked up the rod and pulled into a dead weight. I could feel there was a fish on but it wasn't move much just plodding very slow.

It kited to the right margin, so I got into the waders and jumped off the edge of the boards.

I think I was playing for what seemed like 45 mins I just could do much with the sheer weigh of the fish.

A few more runs and I waded out down the margin and slipped the net under it.

Paul Came around and did the photos and weight and I was blown away when it went 61lb a new uk pb for me.



So, after an amazing journey I have finally bagged Northamptons answer to the Black Mirror. Irchester Car Park Lake holds around 18 originals and a similar amount of stock fish topped by the incredible 'April' a carp named after its favourite month for a capture.

With three days of that month remaining, I finally hooked him after 2 days of intense stalking on the surface. One ounce shy of forty-six pounds and a new surface caught PB.

I had already worked my way through the lakes A Team of old warriors and this was the icing on the cake, the final part of the jigsaw.

The entire journey was captured week by week in one-hour vlogs, available now, on my Patreon Channel along with hundreds of hours of instant access carpy stuff.

www.patreon.com/DaveLane







Just after first light, I knew I got it wrong and moved to the swim next door, allowing me to cover more shallow water and with warm weather forecast, I anticipated the carp would be in this zone. I chose to fish chods over the weed, with whole and broken 12mm boilie over the top. Not long into dark, I had a big liner, which shortly followed by a savage take - I played in what felt like a heavy carp under the big moon, eventually netting what I instantly recognised as a mirror called "Beadle", a fish we had all been talking about, which hasn't been caught since the previous spring. The scales went around to 40lb 10oz, capping off an amazing spring'



After finding a couple of spots, I settled in for the night. Although I saw a couple of fish show just on dark, it was still a shock when the right hand rod was away at 1:30am. An incredible battle ensued, and some last-second drama that saw me jumping in to land it, I eventually netted the carp and pulled the net towards me. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the huge mass sitting in the bottom of my net.

There was no mistaking what I had, but it was still thankful of the help from another member, Jason Hayward, who help me weigh and photograph this incredible carp.

Giggling like a pair of kids as we lifted the sling, the scales settled on 56lb 12oz! A new complex record and a personal best for me.

How's that for luck? The Big Carp Buzz at its best



ETANG DES MOULINOTS

A serene carp fishery nestled in the lush forests straddling the Champagne-Ardennes and Lorraine regions of Northern France. Perfectly resembling an exquisite English estate lake, our stunning 19-acre fishery is just a 3.5-hour drive from Calais, making it an ideal destination for anglers seeking tranquility and adventure. Current stock is over 300 carp up to 65lbs. Check out our website for more details and take a look at the video link below.





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Tyson at 57lb 12oz – A Moment 11 Years in the Making for Ed Betteridge who had previously photographed her six times for others.





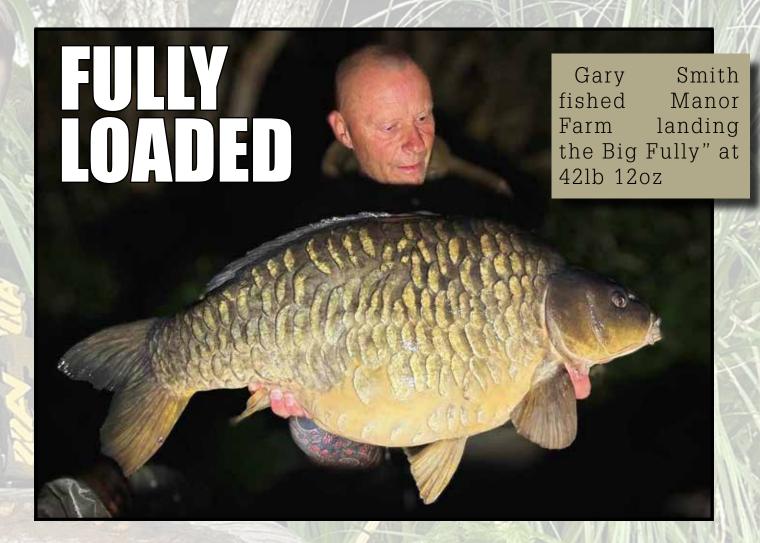
The Top Lake bigun made an appearance recently for Aaron Tayler going 42lb 6oz, He also backed this up with a 32lb mirror,



BigCarp 47



The Beast of Brasenose (b1 if you didn't know) has made an appearance to 14 year old Jamie Jones!! She weighed his new PB at 53lb 12oz









The machine that is Ken Wildman with the biggest fish of his spring so far at 46lb



Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



NEW DAY TICKET LAKE RECORD

And a new PB for Dave - 35 lbs 5 oz - fishing swim 12, The Long Finger - the fish is now known as "Big Dave" and we gave little Dave a good soaking!!! Well done Dave absolute cracker.



Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



Just over 15lb



Another just over 15 lbs out at same time as other one



Gary Linear out at 23 lbs 9 oz





26lb



AVAILABLE ON THE SWIMBOOKER APP



3rd 30lbs carp in less than 24 hours using A M Baits his favourite and clearly a winning formula. Well done Gary.











Oak Lakes Fisheries



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



Big Ghostie at 30lbs



30 lbs 14 oz off platform 4 biggest catch of the weekend we believe





39 lbs 15 oz Twisted Scale

29 lbs 12 oz



Big mirror at 31lb





Nice one off platform 4









Benn OConnor with a 43lb 4oz linear from Coking Farm



Jim Edwards cradling a superb 45lb 8oz common. The result of two years hard graft!

CATCH REPORTS





Paul Wild was 5 nights into the new season and got the one bite he was aiming for this spring from Meadow. The Bullet 41lb 14oz.

BigCarp 55





CATCH REPORTS





Dieter Allen banked a new lake record for Bayeswater day ticket lake. This lovely long mirror weighing 42lb is PB for Dieter.



On a pretty hectic session, a couple of weeks ago, I actually lost this one at the net. Fast forward 2 weeks and I was backin the central area, Fishing at over 100yards, I had a midnight bite. All was well until around 30 yards out, when it randomly dropped off! I was surprised there was no more action by morning. As I stood with my first cup of tea of the day, contemplating whether to put more bait out, my other rod fishes on the baited spot, sprang into life. After one of the most immense, tiring battles of my carp fishing life, this big common was soon tearing about In the margins again! I prayed that everything would hold firm, and after what seemed like another eternity playing it in the margins, I finally slipped the net under first time of asking.



Tried, tested and guaranteed, Nite watches are made with quality Swiss-made components, super bright tritium illumination and most importantly are designed to be worn doing what you love.

Tight Lines!











Perry Harris with this lovely 45lb 1oz linear from a local Club Lake



Congratulations to Benjamin Phillips on his new PB, Horton Church Lake's Alfie, at a weight of 49lb 8oz.



Brad Moore had his PB on Kingfisher at 44lb 2oz then caught a 43lb 10oz .Two days on Kingy and two over 40lb!!!







Dan Seager with a mega 46lb 6oz Common

CATCH REPORTS



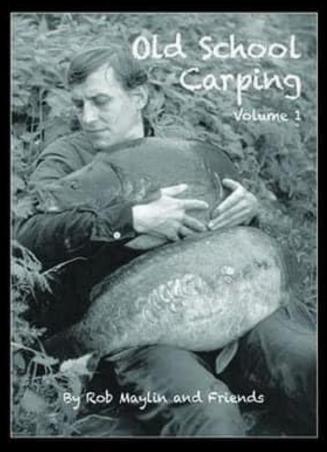


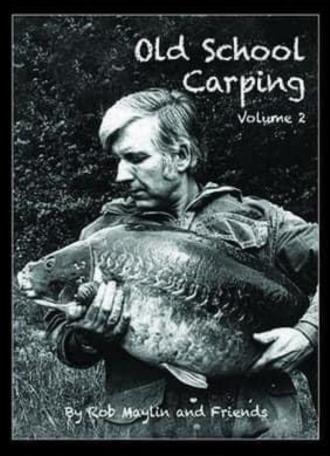
One of Sandmartin's finest. A new PB for Adam Wardle Cluster. Caught on pop up in the margin at 43.9lb

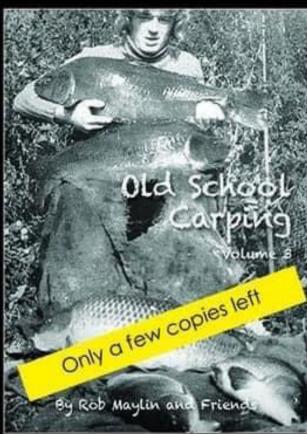


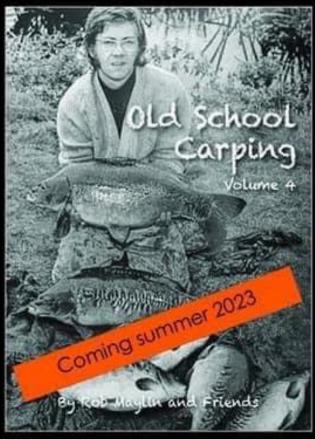


OLD SCHOOL CARPING SERIES









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It took me three long years to get a ticket to Wingham. Like most sought-after syndicates, it wasn't just a case of applying and waiting. Wingham is special. It has a reputation — not just for the size of the carp, but for

the setting, the atmosphere, and the sense of belonging that comes with being part of something truly rare.

When I finally got in, I remember walking round to the lake for the first time, heart pounding like a drum,

lav before What me without exaggeration, the breathtaking lake I'd most ever seen. Nestled deep in the Kent countryside, Wingham is more than just water and banks. It's a world of its own — where mist rises gently off the surface in the early hours, where you can hear the distant, surreal roar of lions from the local wildlife park, and where the silence is punctuated only by the subtle sounds of nature and the occasional crash of water from its large residents

Everv time Ι turned off and the main road went through the old farm gate, the butterflies would start. That moment of arrival — full of anticipation, full of possibility — never got old. The nervous excitement, just thinking what might be caught that session, was overwhelming. It didn't matter how many times I'd fished it; that feeling was always there.

The first few springs were

was, tough. I blanked more than the I care to admit. Wingham I'd isn't a lake that gives away the its secrets easily. But I dug gham in. I stayed consistent with and my approach, especially in own the summers when I adopted by off a serious baiting strategy. Ours, Over time, I began to unlock tant, the lake. Slowly but surely, in the the pieces started to come there together — and with them, only the fish.

One of the biggest learning curves was understanding the lakebed itself. Wingham is a maze of underwater channels, bars, gullies and plateaus the kind of topography that effort. rewards time. and careful observation. Working out the fish's habits, patrol and feeding routes zones challenge, but was one that made every success deeply earned. What's feel more, Wingham had a way of flipping conventional carp fishing wisdom on its head. Forget those textbook low-





pressure drops and warm south-westerlies — this place often fished better under high pressure, even in biting northerly winds. It taught me to think differently, to stop relying on the obvious, and to trust in what the lake itself was telling me.

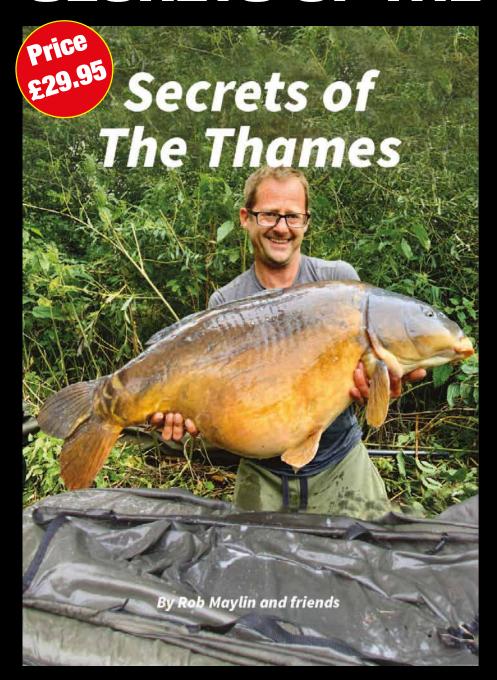
That consistency and dedication eventually earned me results; things began to click. My efforts didn't go unnoticed — other members started to respect the graft I

was putting in, and I earned a quiet reputation as someone who fished hard and gave the lake the respect it demanded. Wingham rewards patience and persistence, and in those long, golden summers, the efforts truly paid off.

Wingham is the land of giants
— and I've been lucky enough
to meet a few of its biggest
residents. Three fish over
50lb now grace my personal
album, each one etched into
memory not just for their



SECRETS OF THE THAMES











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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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size, but for the battles they gave and the stories behind them. Each one came after a long campaign, the result of groundwork, effort, and a bit of that old angling magic when everything aligns. But it's not just about the big fish at Wingham. Every carp in that lake is unique — from dark, ancient mirrors to scaley midthirties with character etched into every scale. Each one has its own story, its own shape, its own personality.

Some of the most memorable moments weren't about size at all, but about the beauty, the battle, or the surprise of what surfaced.

Some of the carp I was lucky enough to catch were fish I'd only ever seen on the bank once or twice during my entire time on there — true rarities, almost mythical in their own right. Those moments stay with you. They remind you just how magical Wingham really is. The stock at Wingham

is simply insane — a rich, varied mix of ancient lineage and truly colossal carp. Every cast holds the possibility of meeting something special.

Wingham has given me so many special moments and unforgettable captures. I'll never forget my first-ever 40lb common — a proper milestone, and from that point, the bar just kept rising. Over the years, I was fortunate enough to bank some of the lake's most iconic residents:

the incredible Long Leney, the powerful and pristine Bob's Common, and the legendary Nelson — all tipping the scales at over 50lb.

These aren't just fish—they're history, character, and living legends. Each one came with its own story, its own battle, and its own place in my heart. And yet, there's still one that eludes me—Black Spot, the mighty ghost of the lake. I'll go back for her one day—of that, I'm certain.



makes Wingham truly special chorus lake that doesn't just feel like because I didn't want to miss a venue, but like a sanctuary. a single second of it. Every swim has a story. Every path holds memories. There's a calmness here that's hard to find in the modern world.

at dawn, barn owls at dusk, We've shared blanks, buzzers,

Beyond the fishing, what and the constant background of songbirds is the sense of home. Matt waterfowl. There were nights and India, the owners, have I lay awake in the bivvy, not achieved something rare — a because I couldn't sleep, but

And the friendships... well, those might just be the best part of all. Five years on the bank has introduced me to The wildlife is nothing short a circle of lifelong mates of incredible — fish showing anglers I now consider family.



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'.

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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.

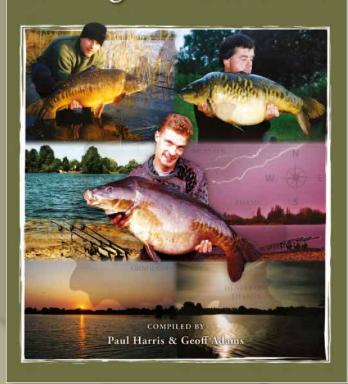
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson

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

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

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

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire



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AVAILABLE NOW





barbecues, and brews. We've still a debt to settle with laughed, we've learned, and Black Spot. There's still mist we've watched the seasons to watch rise, fish to outwit, turn together.

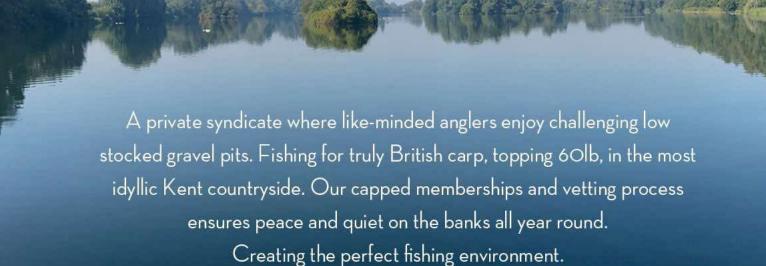
and mugs of tea to be shared

After five unforgettable years at Wingham, I've stepped away for now. Life has its chapters, and sometimes, even the best stories need a pause. But I know, deep down, that I'll return. That lake has more to teach me. There's

still a debt to settle with Black Spot. There's still mist to watch rise, fish to outwit, and mugs of tea to be shared with good people. Wingham isn't just a syndicate. It's a part of me now. And for any angler lucky enough to fish its hallowed banks, it's more than just fishing — it's where memories are made.

Until Next Time

WINGHAM FISHERIES



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FUNDAMENTALS OF GARP FISHIG

Carp fishing can seem complicated from the outside looking in, but it really doesn't need to be. Focus on aligning the 5 key fundamentals, and apply a bit of common sense / logic to the rest.

- 1. Location is KING Find the fish, locate the right spot, and your confidence will go through the roof. This is your pole position!
- 2. Precision Casting & BaitingIf you can't hit the same spot





twice, your results will suffer. The best anglers are deadly accurate with both their rigs and baiting!

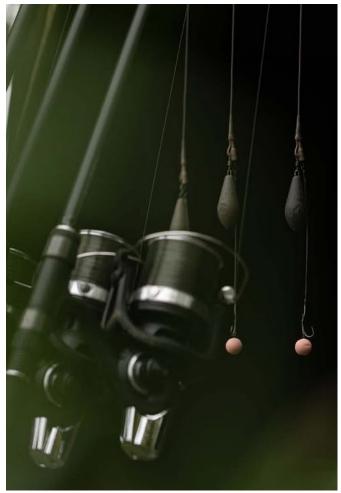
- 3. Bait Choice Matters Pressured carp will ignore bait they see too often. Give them something they really want!
- 4. Presentation Over Perfection
 The lakebed dictates your
 rig choice. Master just 2-4
 solid rigs that suit different
 conditions and you'll always be
 in the game.

5. Razor-Sharp Hooks - A sharper hook equals more bites. Think of it like a hair-trigger mousetrap—catch more fish by making sure your hook is deadly sharp!

Bonus Tip: Stay Adaptive - Carp are always moving. Treat it like a puzzle—read the water, find the gaps, and don't be afraid to move!

Apply these fundamentals to your angling and you will catch more carp as a result!



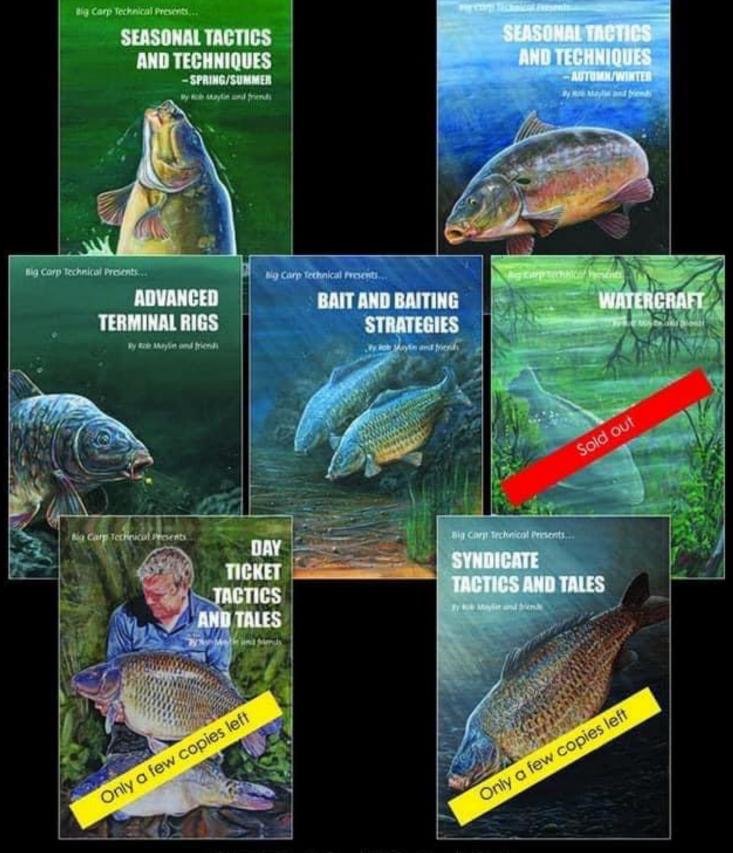






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The carp anglers bible unlocks the path to consistent catching



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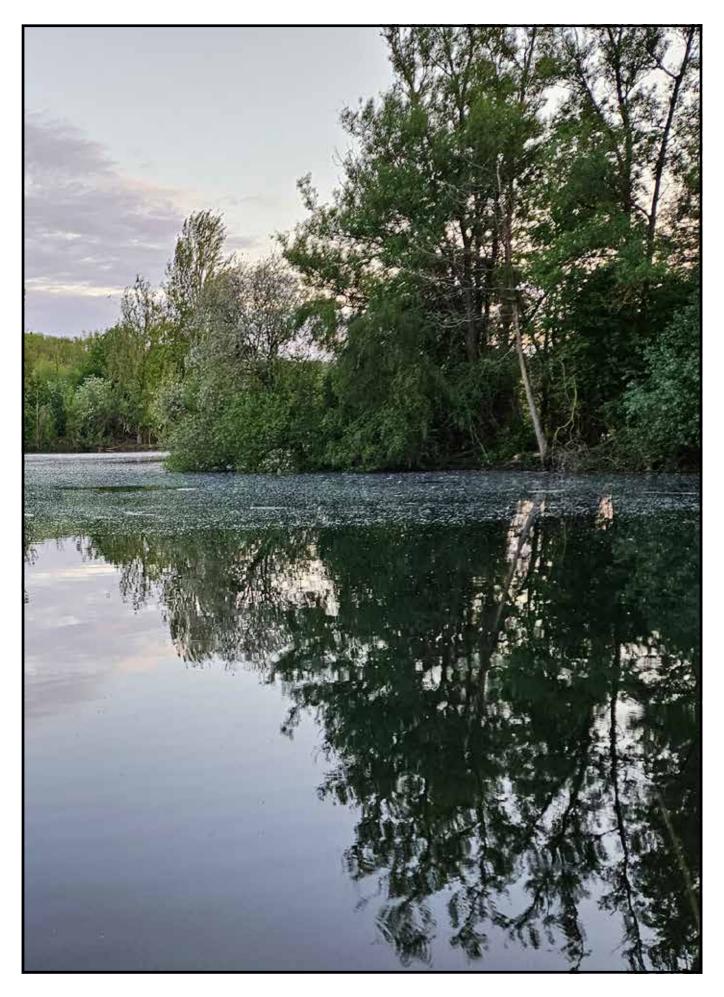
For the past 10 years or so I had worked for myself and this had given me the luxury of being able to pretty much pick and choose when I went and for how long. fishing Midweek sessions of 2-3 days were the norm and they'd been successful seasons in my eyes. This all changed at the end of 2024 when I decided to rejoin the rat race for a more stable income - at least for a while, to allow me to work on relaunching Sharp Tackle 2025. This meant T was in

either to become a weekend warrior and have to face the rush to get to the lake on a Friday as early as possible to secure a decent swim or do midweek overnighters. At 52, with dodgy hip and expanded gut I wasn't sure I'd have the commitment and discipline for overnighters but I really didn't fancy weekends. Time to dig deep. I used to be a very mobile angler in my fitter days overnighters would the SO force me to be more mobile if need be. One thing that made

this process easier was being able to stash my gear with a mate or around the lake while I was away. It wasn't fair to leave my gear in the swim so usually I'd chuck it all on the barrow and park it up out of any swim with the bivvy over the top. If it was raining and/ or quiet, Kev, the syndicate owner, was happy for me to leave my gear in the swim. We had a booking on app, so you could see how many anglers were coming and the regular lads knew what I was doing and in fairness to them they let me get on with my fishing. It worked both ways as I'd often asking what messages get was occurring at the lake, from the weekend guys especially. There's plenty of fish to go around and I have always been happy to put people on them where possible.

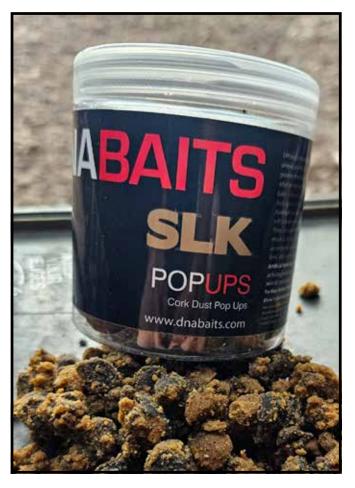
The courier job I took had flexible hours and as long as I rocked up before midday to load up they were happy. This fitted the fishing perfectly as the lake had a strong track of record morning bites. The lake in question was Carptonik's Trout Lake. It's around 19 acres with 2 islands and a spit. Kev White took the lake on just over 5 years ago with a partner who caused no end of issues and left within a couple of months. Kev had smaller managed venues before, but this was a different animal. 2 lakes in around 35 acres of land was a big task to manage. At first he wasn't overly sure he could give it the amount of time and effort but with promises of help from numerous syndicate members thankfully he did continue and it is rapidly becoming the new jewel in the Kennet valley.

Mark Simmonds came on board and that turned the planned stocking on its head from trickling in a few carp each year to 400 going in Trout and 200 in the smaller Meadow Lake. The syndicate put in a



massive effort at work parties for the first 2 seasons to create an otter fence, swims and a pathway around the lakes to get the lakes to where Kev and a few key members, notably Fidz, Carly and Murch could maintain them to the high standard created. Any major jobs were covered with work parties which were always well attended. The lake was stocked mainly with C3 in the 8-10lb bracket and they have absolutely thrived in the rich

water of Trout Lake. There are over 20 thirties already and a large number of high twenties. The lake is weedy and 2025 is the weediest it's been so far, making presentation difficult. Thankfully we can use bait boats and these have been a game changer for dropping in small holes in the weed. With a bait boat it's tempting to put too much bait in. I prefer to just have the PVA bag and handful of crushed boilies and pellets in the hopper. The

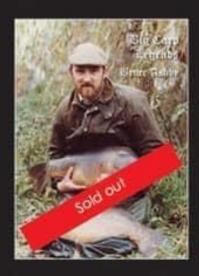


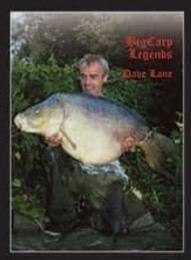


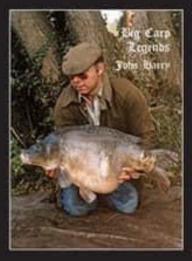
BIG CARP LEGENDS SERIES

The anglers that shaped todays carp scene

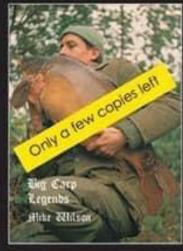


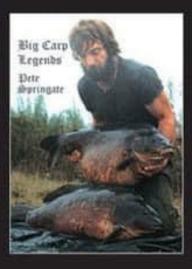


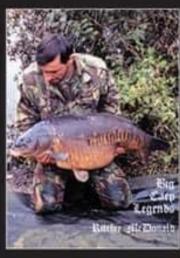


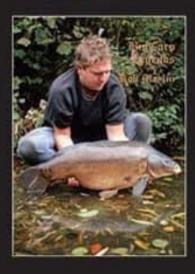


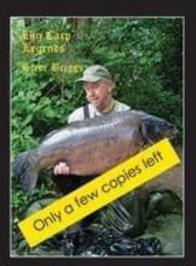












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crushed. almost powdered baits, tend to create a larger area of attraction than just a big dollop of baits in a tight spot. DNA Baits SLK with the house pellet would be all the bait I needed. Rig wise mainly Ronnies on 6-7in of soft braid. I often fish my Ronnies with baits bottom something which some think you can't do. I also fish my rig on the outside of the PVA bag as this helps create drag as it drops though the water and aids the

bag landing hook bait side up. I kicked off my overnighters in mid March. The lake was starting to do fish but they very localised and I were couldn't seem to get on them. I felt I wasn't quite in tune with things and the lake is more of a conundrum that it would appear on paper. The carp don't do what you expect some reason. I started for with 3-4 overnighters a week and with the blanks totting up I was starting to think

weekends might not be so bad to get one of the grown on 30s after all.

too in the shape of Mva. after

April arrived and I finally started to put a few fish on the bank. My body was starting to get used to the daily pack up and work and I fell in to a nice groove with it all. I was generally flitting between 2 swims at either end of the lake, depending on where the active fish seemed to be. I rarely had a blank night and that made the required effort much easier. I finally managed

too in the shape of Mya, after a string of 28s. The weather was rapidly reaching summer like proportions and it was clear that an early spawning was well on the cards. By the begging of May the first lot of spawning started. Now usually I leave the lakes well alone around this time. The carp can be really moody about feeding and the fishing becomes very sketchy. doesn't close lake during



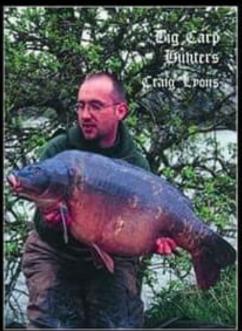


this time, but certain areas are off limits. A weighed up the situation that not all the carp were spawning yet and so there would be bites to be had. Avoiding the spawning areas was fine. Then there was the choice of an 80 mile round trip home after work each day or a 10 minute trip to the lake. The overnighters won and I was back on the bank 4 nights a week.

As expected the fishing

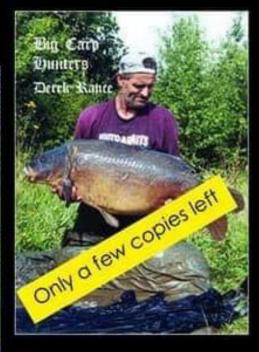
tricky than prewas more spawning, but I seemed to be able to winkle a fish or 2 out each night with the odd blank thrown in to keep the ego in check. I do find at this time you tend to lose quite a few fish. The spunky males are so energetic and probably grab at the bait rather than properly feeding, resulting in hook holds. Coupled with the now extensive weed and you fishing were often only in contact for

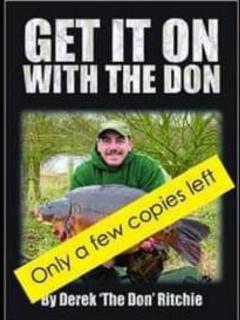
THE BIG CARP HUNTER SERIES

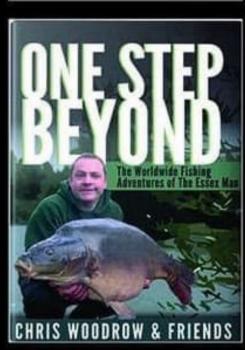


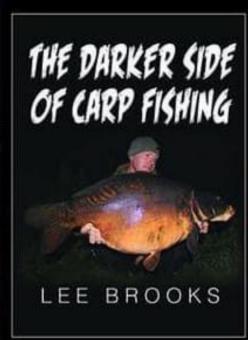
The Unsung hero's prolific catches with a unique tale to tell













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a few seconds before the rod other 2kg to try to clear some sprang back limp followed by a shout of "FER F**K'S SAKE!" I did try a few rig changes sometimes I think you but can disappear up your own arse and make things worse. Smaller PVA bags over very little else seemed to get the best results - logically this made sense if the carp weren't committed to feeding.

So, 2 months in to overnighters and I now do upto 5 in a row. I have been committing myself to one swim where possible as the lake has a feeding policy and provides all anglers with 5kg of pellet per session. As each overnighter is technically a new session I could get through 25kg a week. It wasn't growing the carp stuck in the sacks after all, and the lakes being quiet not a lot was going in. I used the pellet in 2 ways - baiting the spots I was fishing with around a 1kg of pellet when I left each morning and then used the

spots to give me and other anglers some options. It has been very rewarding watching the new spots come alive with fizzing carp. A couple more weeks and they'll be ready to start fishing!!

know they'll be people thinking I'm lucky to be able to do 5 nights a week, but then I set my life up to be able to do this. We all make choices in life. I don't have a house and mortgage. I don't have children and I gave up on women after relationship. last The mvonly commitment I have is to my work unit. I'm about as free as it gets and I'm loving Not sure I'll be doing life. overnighters the through the winter but I'll cross that bridge when it comes to it. I'm glad I made the decisions I did. Waking up lake side each morning is a great start to the day. As they say - 'effort equals rewards'. So far, I'd have to agree.

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PLEASE ALEOW TEN DAYS



The D Rig has now been my go-to for a number of years, ideal to present a balanced bait on clean lakebeds, suitable for a variety of situations.

The simplicity of the rig is something that first attracted me to it - I wanted something I

knew wouldn't tangle and could reset itself. Fishing straight fluro (IQ2), I also knew the rig would be pretty much invisible on the lakebed.

I use IQ2 in 15lb I think it's the perfect mix of being stiff enough to keep your hookbait





away from your lead, but supple enough that the hookbait can be sucked up no matter which angle the carp approaches the bait from.

I always fish this rig with a balanced bait, which firstly means the hookbait will sit just above the hook, almost camouflaging it, but also reacts quickly when sucked in and will fly back into the carp's mouth, offering perfect hook holds, which is why the hook to land ratio on this rig is as good as

anything I've ever used. This for me is the most important part of any rig, the type of fishing I'm doing I want to land everything I hook.

I'll always use this rig with a size 4 or 6 Kamakura Wide Gape X, a pattern I have utmost confidence in. The in-turned eye of the Wide Gape almost acts like a kicker, creating a lovely angle, aiding hooking results.

I always add a small section of silicone tubing around the





hook's shank, extending the D, making it nice and long giving the hook and hookbait more movement. When the hookbait is picked up, it can slide on the D, forcing the hook downwards into a 'hooking' position.

Lastly, I use a Micro Ring Swivel to attach my bait, meaning I can use a variety of hookbaits. I don't pull the bait all the way onto the swivel just the first eye of the ring swivel, allowing a little more distance between hook and hookbait.



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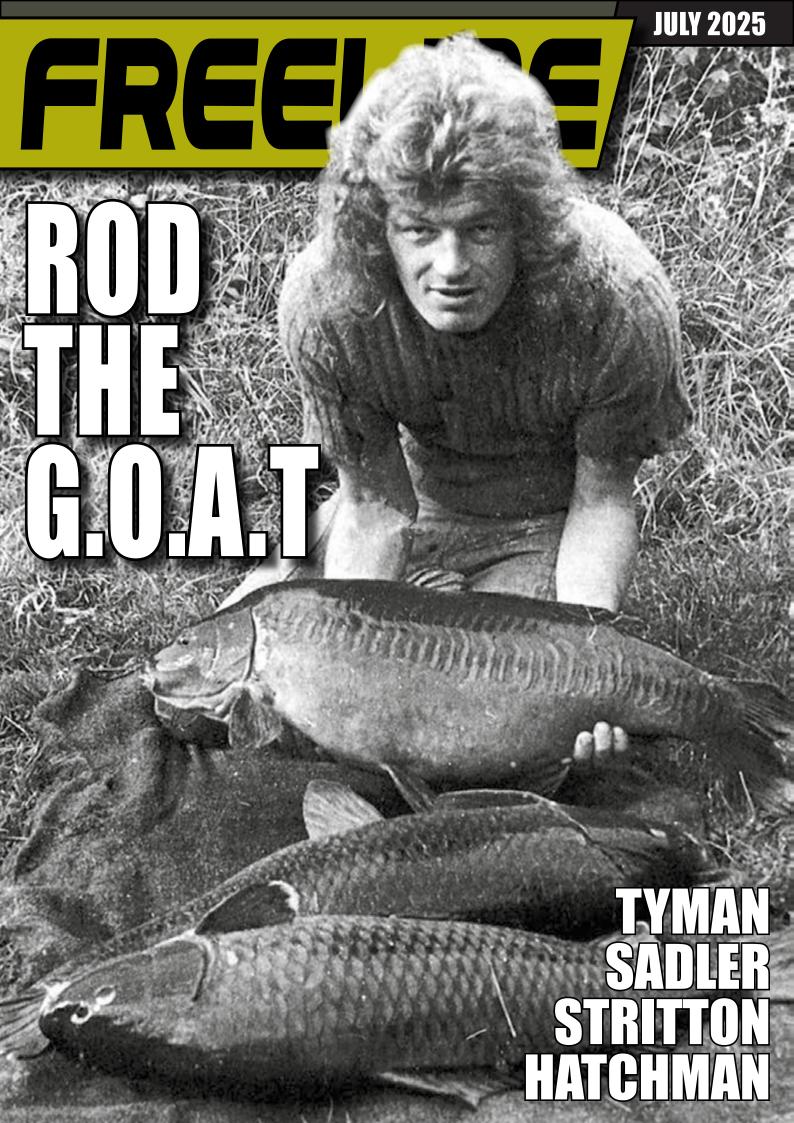
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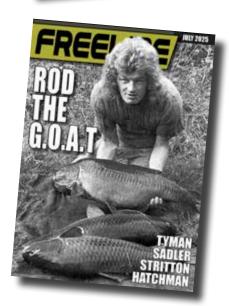
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Design & Production James Harrison

Also available this month Big Carp issue 348.





Front Cover: The legendary Rod Hutchinson

Willow Foundation

Catch of the Day 2025

Love fishing? Join our virtual Catch of the Day event this August. Take part from anywhere in the UK and raise vital funds to help provide special experiences for seriously ill young adult. Date – From Midday 1 August to Midday 3 August Location – Anywhere – at your local lake or

favourite fishing spot. Cost – Free to take part! By raising £20, you'll receive a free t-shirt in the post. Willow is casting its net, far and wide! We're launching a new virtual fishing event. This virtual experience invites everyone, across the UK to join in the fun—at your local lakes or favourite fishing spots, whilst raising vital funds for Willow. By signing up you'll be part of a fishing community with insight from the likes of David Seaman MBE, Tom Maker, Scott Lloyd and Carl Smith. You can take part with friends and family, with prizes being awarded to the biggest catch in both under 16s and over 16s categories—any species counts! Competition will run from midday Friday to midday Sunday, with participants able to fish for any length of time within those parameters.

Enter today and fundraise £20 to receive a free Catch of the Day 2025 t-shirt, then get planning to fish at your favourite spot from 1-3 August

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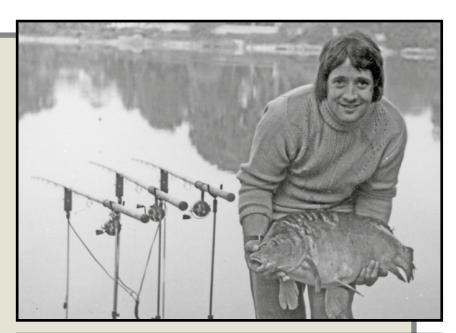
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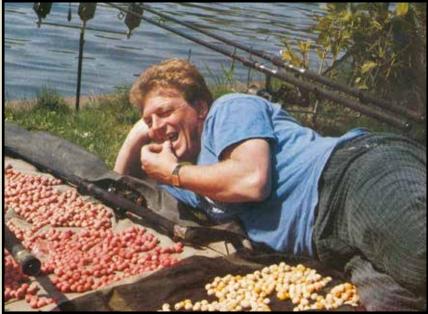
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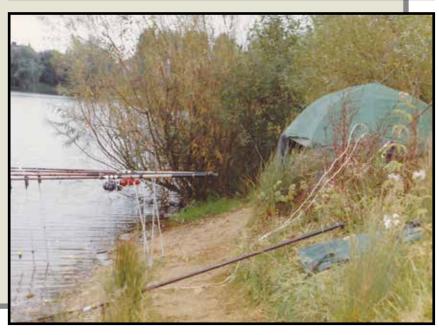
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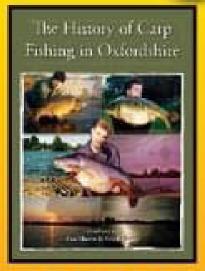


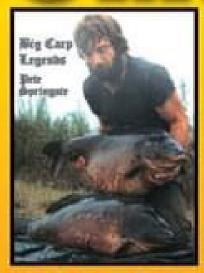


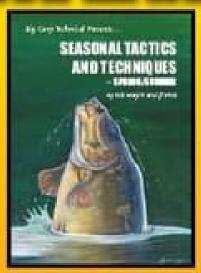


SUMMER



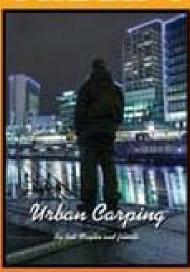


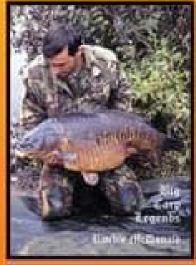






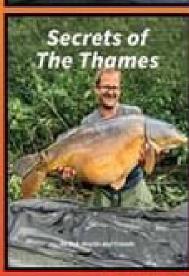
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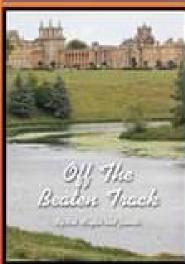












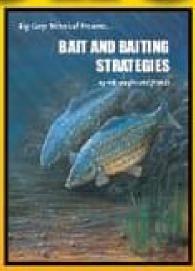


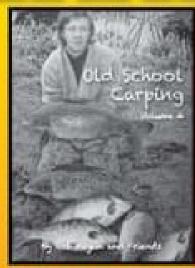


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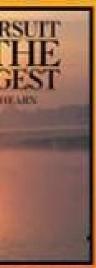


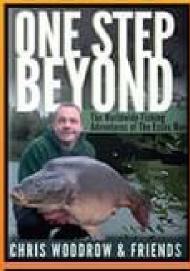


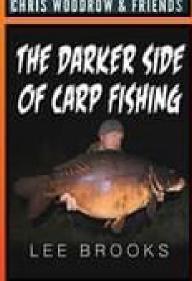


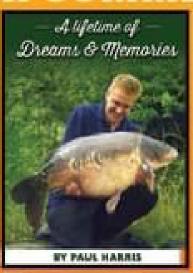


ID GET READY FOR SUMMER ACTION

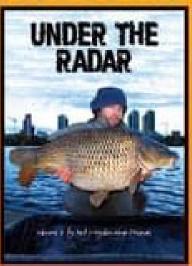














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WORLD CARP CLASSIC OFF TO CHINA

The World Carp Classic has come a long way since I founded it back in 1998. From humble beginnings to now having 57 countries represented and thousands of passionate anglers taking part, it's been incredible to witness the growth of carp angling across Europe.

Today, I'm proud to share that we're once again pushing the boundaries—this time by pioneering European-style carp angling in China. This exciting new chapter began with a historic agreement signed by James Zhou on behalf of our Chinese partners. Fittingly, the signing took place in the magnificent Great Hall of Arundel Castle, on a table beautifully inlaid with jade—a truly symbolic moment.

Our first event in China is set to launch later this year, with a full national structure rolling out in 2026. With 90 million registered anglers in China and a phenomenal team on the ground, I'm confident we'll build the same success and legacy that we've achieved in Europe.

Carp Chat

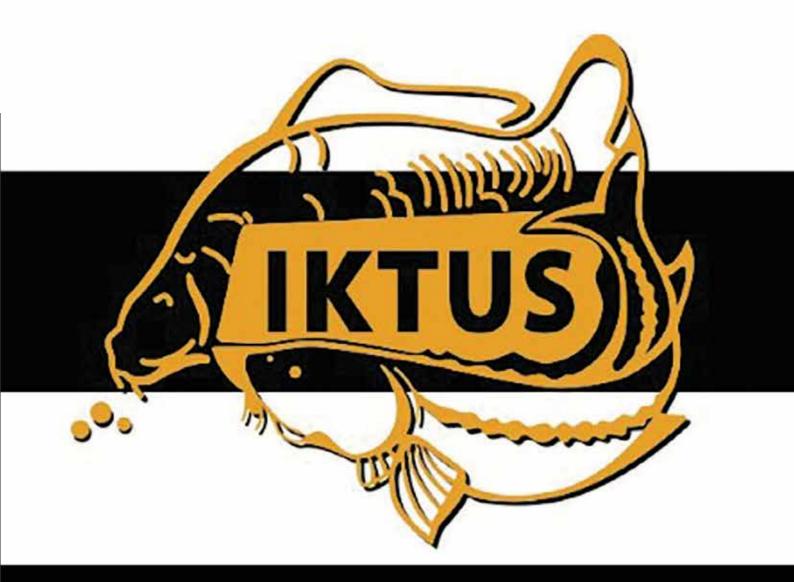


FESTIVAL OF CARP 22025 SATURDAY 12TH JULY

HORSESHOE LAKE, LECHLADE, GL7 3QQ

This year there will be:

- Talks
- Angling companies demonstrating their products around the lake
- Angling Trust coaches helping youngsters to catch their first fish
- Casting demo's and tuition
- Vintage tackle displays including a range of 'Carp Catchers Club' items
- Vintage tackle and book sales
- An auction including many of the late Chris Ball's books plus other significant items
- Delicious food and drink and much more ...



FISHING RESORT



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TICKETS FOR THE PHYLISTUCKWELL CHARITY EVENT AT FRIMLEY



The Frimley charity event in aid of Phylis Tuckwell Hospice is on the 29th-31st of August. This is an absolutely fantastic event. The atmosphere is amazing. Lots of smiles and plenty of big big fish are caught every year. The raffle has 1000's of £'s worth of prizes. The bbq is the best you'll have seen!

Pit 3 carp to over 56lb. About 27 x 40's and about 3-4 x 50's or more £300 per space. Draw on the Friday morning of the event. Watercraft draw.

Carp Chat







Pit 1 has loads of old original fish to well over 40lb. Some proper stunning dark Leneys too. A very carpy looking water £150 per space

Pit 2 is filled with carp to near 40. This is a perfect water if you want to catch. They love a surface bait in here too. Again some lovely dark scaleys in here. £150 per space

If you want in, be quick. Spaces go fast. Once they are gone they are gone Call 01252 598411. Payment at time of call Or message Rain Frimley.

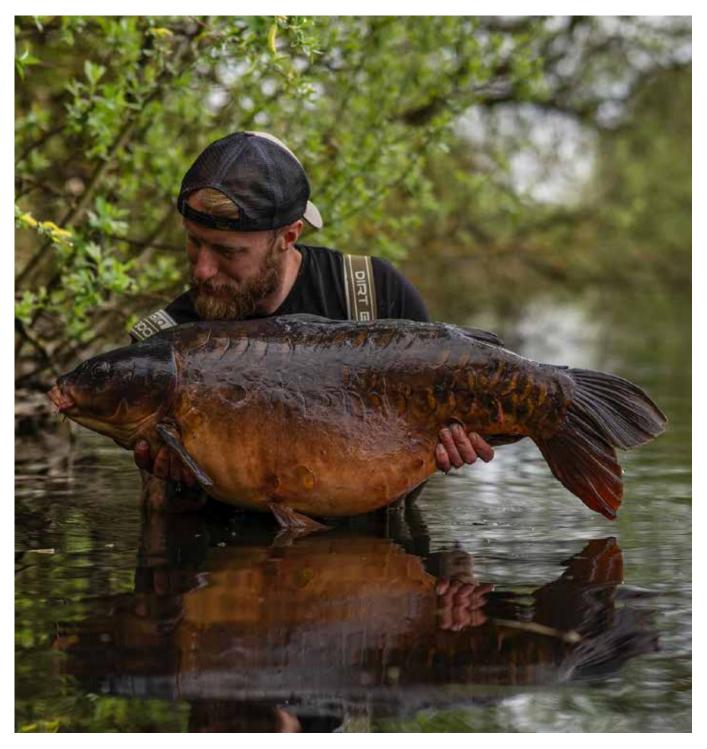
ANGLING TRUST MEGA COMP



Offered in association once again with Reading and District Angling Association, take part to win exclusive access to their renowned 'Junction 12' carp lake for 48 hours accompanied by four legends of carp angling.

As in 2023 and 2024, Terry Hearn, Oz Holness, Tom Stokes and Nick Helleur have generously donated their time to give 4 lucky winners the ultimate carp session. The four prize winners will have exclusive access to Junction 12 on Friday 20th to Sunday 22nd June 2025. The 15-acre lake is reported to hold up to 500 carp with 12 different known 40lb+ fish present.

In addition, our winners will enjoy homemade stew by the bank on the Friday and a social BBQ on the Saturday courtesy



of RDAA. These are great opportunities for everyone to get together, meet one another and ask questions of the other anglers.

Tickets for a chance to win are just £2 - simply decide which legend you would like to fish with or buy tickets for all four! All proceeds from the draw will be used to continue our work to protect, promote and develop angling.







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I am pleased to announce that the Fishabil Challenge will commence on October 4th to the 10th. Full Details to follow. If you are interested, please use and subscribe to the email fishabil.challenge@gmail.com

J'ai le plaisir de vous annoncer que le prochain Fishabil Challenge se déroulera du 4 au 10 octobre. Veuillez trouver tout les détails ci-dessous. Si vous êtes intéressé(e), veuillez suivre les instructions et vous inscrire à l'e-mail fishabil. challenge@gmail.com

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MANAGE YOUR HAY FEVER WITH HAYMAX

Late May, June and July are peak hay fever season. Unfortunately this is when grass pollen is at its highest and 95% of hay fever sufferers are allergic to grass pollen. There are many ways that anglers can help tackle their allergy symptoms and still enjoy their fishing. Airborne allergens expert and creator of HayMax allergen barrier balm, Max Wiseberg offers his advice to anglers with hay fever this summer.

"Hay fever is a result of our immune system's overreaction to innocuous allergens such as pollen. The body's reaction to pollen is to produce histamines. Normal amounts of histamines in your brain are good – they keep you alert, attentive and awake. But, when there are too many in your body, they produce the various symptoms common to hay fever sufferers including sneezing, a runny nose, nasal congestion, itchy eyes, watery eyes, streaming eyes, swollen eyes, and an itchy nose and throat."

"My eight pillars of wisdom for anglers with hay fever this summer are:"

"Time your angling trips to avoid peak pollen. You should avoid going out fishing – or even being outdoors – when the pollen count is highest, generally first thing in the morning and early evening, especially on dry, warm, sunny days."

"Use HayMax daily. Apply this organic drug-free allergen barrier balm first thing in the morning, before you go to bed at night and before going out fishing during the day. HayMax (haymax.biz) has been proven to trap over one third of pollen particles [1] and is suitable for anglers

as it is drug-free and non-drowsy, so won't affect your concentration."

"Wear clean clothes each time you go out fishing. If you wash your clothes after each trip, you will have clean, pollen free clothes for next time. Make sure you dry them indoors rather than on an outdoor clothes line or dryer to prevent pollen particles being blown onto it by the wind."

"Stop pollen getting in your hair. Tie up long hair and wear a cap or hat whilst out fishing. A cap or other head cover will help stop pollen particles being caught in your hair."

"Stop pollen getting in your eyes. Wear wraparound sunglasses whilst angling. Not only will this protect your eyes from the sun, but will help stop pollen particles getting in your eyes. And apply an allergen barrier balm around the sockets of your eyes to help trap pollen."

"Stay well hydrated. Make sure you drink plenty of water on your fishing trip, as this will help symptoms; being dehydrated makes symptoms feel worse."

"Eat lots of fruit and vegetables. This will help you stay healthy and support your immune system. Red onions, kale, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, blueberries and apples are good sources of quercetin, which is thought to limit the release of histamine, the chemical that sets off allergy symptoms in your body. Take cherry tomatoes, blueberries and apples with you to snack on."

"Shower and change your clothes after fishing. Take a shower when you return home to wash away allergens so that they can't cause a reaction. If you change your clothes after being out, this will reduce the amount of pollen you bring back indoors."

"So, there you have it – a few simple ideas that could make all the difference to those nasty symptoms and help you enjoy your angling despite your hay fever! If you would like more advice visit my Hay Fever Guide at www.haymax.biz/hay-fever."

NITE WATCHES OPTIONAL STRAPS

Nite watches now offer a range of straps for its watches. You can match up the watch you like with the strap that suits your style and needs.

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HSD FRENCH TERRY SHORTS



HSD have manufactured five new shorts, they are designed for summertime ease in midweight cotton terry. The HSD french terry shorts offer a comfortable fit that lets you move

freely, the HSD logo is printed on the left leg in a curated range of colors who pairs perfectly with many others items in our range, you can choose one or more to get a great stylish look.

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Tight Lines!









CAMELBACK FLIP STRAW AND FLIP CHUG BOTTLES







Carp Scene

Flip Straw and Chug bottles, 900ml. combining comfort, durability, The new and effortless hydration for Straw and Thrive Chug are any adventure. CamelBak®, durable, dishwasher safe, and the global leader in personal comfortable to hold, carry and hydration products known for to drink from. They feature hydrating outdoor enthusiasts 100% leak proof caps, with two and athletes for 35 years, has different drinking interfaces. launched the new Thrive™ Flip All bottles are available in a Straw and Thrive™ Chug, a range vacuum stainless steel (VSS) of reusable and sustainable version, featuring integrated outdoor and everyday bottles.

Now available to consumers, full the new bottles expand the provides a long-lasting colour Thrive Collection, a versatile effect, while the double-wall hydration solution that already vacuum insulation

The Thrive™ Family grows: Thrive Mug 1L, Thrive Tumbler CamelBak introduces the new 600ml, and Thrive Tumbler

> Thrive Flip

silicone bumpers. The durable powder finish coat ensures includes the Thrive Mug 500ml, drinks stay hot or cold for hours.

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CATCH REPORTS



Maxime Fished on peg 6. He had a very busy trip with plenty of big carp while after a big cat !!!!! Here's one of his 40+ caught during his stay. Congratulations



Norbert caught this beautiful Koi about 30 pounds. A Fish not seen For years!!

BOOK NOW FOR THE HOLIDAY OF A LIFETIME



Mathew had a terrific fishing session in peg 31 with many big fish over 40 pounds



Renaud Fished on peg 30 and had a great session with plenty of big Fish



Sean is back again at Fishabil and as you can see the man is in the right place!!



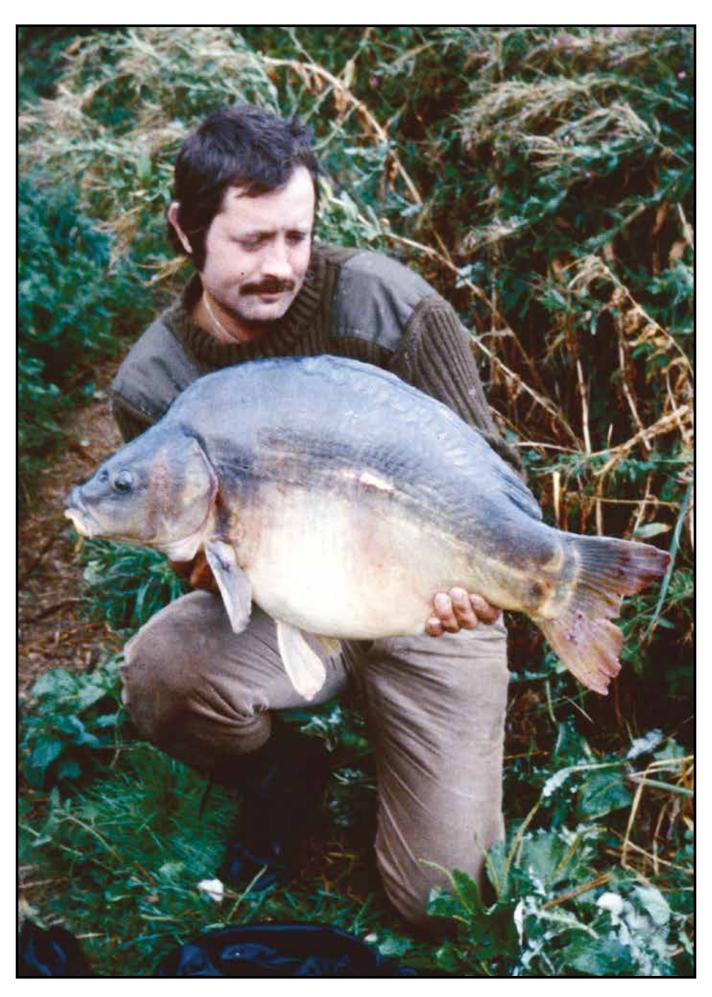
Rob has been kind enough to give me a second chance to recall some of my early thoughts following on from many years of carp fishing and my last "old school" piece, so before I forget what I want to say, which can be a problem at my age, I'd better get on with it!

One of the stories I often tell about my very early days of trying to catch carp from the various ponds in Epping Forest is about the time I spent at a place my friends and I came to call Goldings Hill inner pond. The outer pond is still there, stocked with fish, and available today. I know nothing of the inner pond now, but then, it was a small, overgrown forest pond, one of the most haunting places I ever fished. We convinced ourselves it contained carp of monster proportions. I fished there every Friday night throughout an entire summer before eventually getting a run! It turned out to be a newt of huge size! It was so big that when I viewed it that night in the torchlight, it was like a prehistoric monster!

Fast forward 50 years, and I was at the Brentwood show earlier this year, on the Carp Society stand, when a younger angler came over to speak to me about years past, and especially my time on the Forest Ponds. I laughed when speaking to him about the huge excitement of those times, and the not knowing element. I mentioned Goldings Hill, and he asked how we did. "Just a newt for a whole summer's fishing," was my initial reply, "but I did rather well really with that newt!" He looked at me as if I was mad! And then I followed up with, "The lake dried up the following year and there were no carp in there!" Many of you will think that's mad, but the sheer joy of not knowing, and the excitement of hoping was for me one of the joys of early carp fishing.

When I left the Savay Syndicate in 1981, I was fortunate enough to hold a ticket for North Harrow Waltonians, and when I first walked the banks there that feeling of not knowing was as important to me then as it had been many years earlier. That was fuelled even further when Lee Jackson who arrived on the lake the same year as me landed a 40lb fish on his first session there. I had two wonderful years fishing there on a regular basis, catching some special fish, before the word was fully out and I felt the need to move on. Throughout my fishing, I have tried to fish lakes where the fish are relatively unknown and without names, even though I have mixed this with a number of the old circuit waters. I know modern day carp anglers reconcile fishing for known fish, with the term "target" or "history" but for me nothing beats that feeling of new or unknown!

My early years of fishing in France, mirror that view. I never made it down to Cassien in the early years, primarily because I





had a young family and was always trying to reconcile a family holiday with a few hours' fishing here and there. Although I wasn't too successful during those trips, they still encompassed for me that "not knowing aspect," as we would often just plot up beside a lake and fish with no prior information or knowledge, and every now and again I got lucky!

My days of doing talks or show slides to groups are thankfully long since over, and nor, on the basis of my fishing, would there be a demand for me to do so. That said, a year or so ago however, I did agree to do something for a local club and prefixed what I had to say by asking why it was that every modern day carp angler of the time had a beard and felt the need to wear a pair of "Vass Waders?" My comments received varied reviews and comments. I also put up a slide of myself



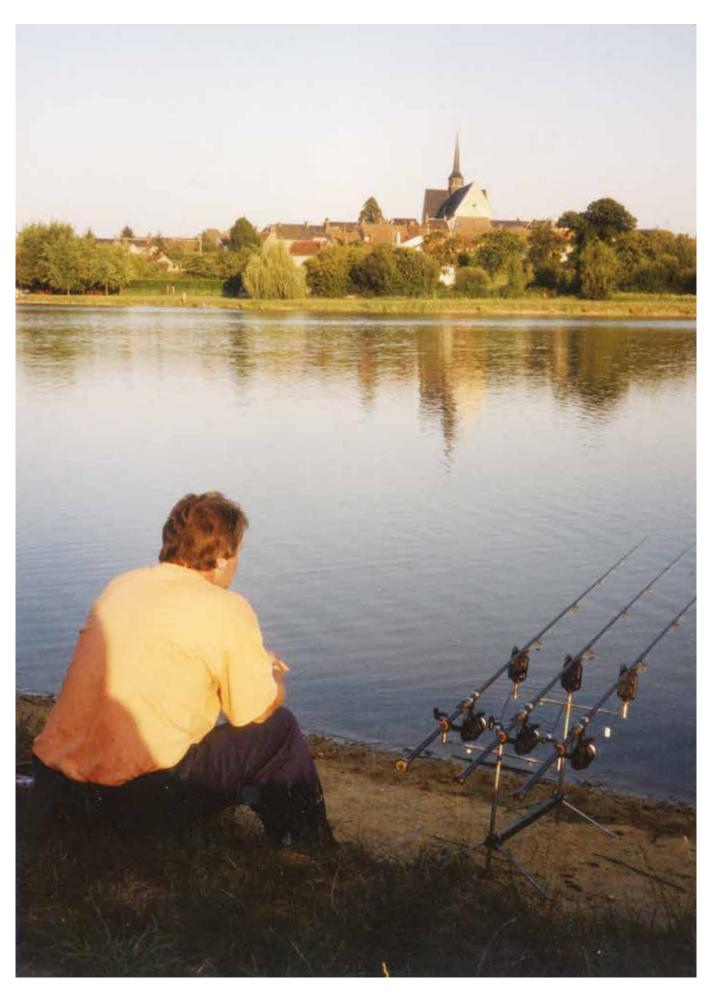
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fishing in the 1980s and suggested that while fashions had changed somewhat, they had always existed! When I first started carp fishing, the only clothing available was ex-army surplus stuff.

Late 1960s early 1970s were the "flying suit years!" Then came the padded pilot suits, also army surplus. camouflage trousers still in use today were also around! Later on in the 1970s came moon boots, the saviour of cold feet when fishing in the winter! But oh, they were not built for walking distances in! Then there were "Kevin Maddocks jumpers" and Derri boots, not to mention those droopy moustaches! Anyone remember those teddy bear suits? What about green and blue Dartex suits? How many of you remember the "Famous Five?" Rob could tell you all about them; indeed I hope he does! In the years that followed, we all convinced ourselves to wear garish colours, and it made no difference! And now we are all back in camouflage, hoodies and the like! When you reach my age, it just all makes you smile, but to some it's all a bit too serious! I always allow myself a wry smile when Maggie and I are on the ferry to France, which we do often each year, dressed as normal passengers, and see the carp uniforms on display - not intended to be offensive by the way!

I mentioned my long-term friend Fred Wilton, in my last "old school" piece. He is not mentioned enough in today's angling scene, but if I can take you back to the 1970s for a while, I'll tell you a few stories that might make those of you who were around at the time smile. To begin I'll make myself look stupid! When I first found out about Fred's PYM (dried yeast bird food supplement bait), I managed to source all of the ingredients required to make it, except the PYM! Instead

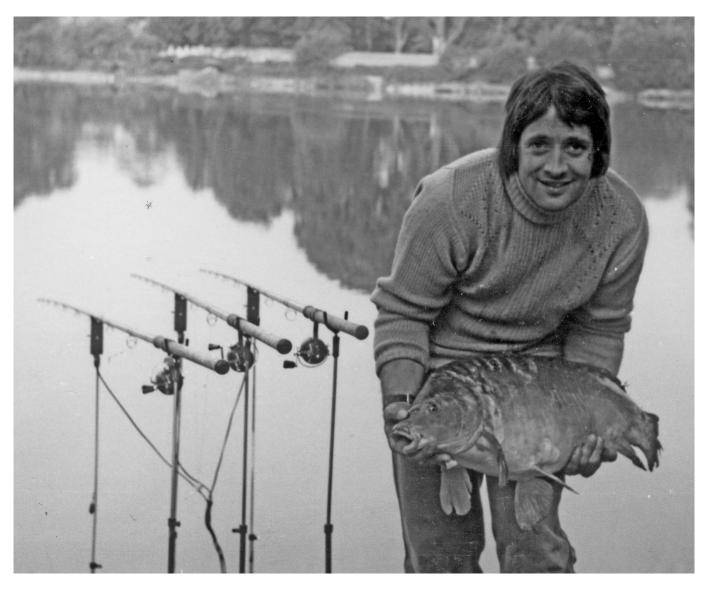


I purchase another yeast derivative, which I didn't know was active! Anyway, I made my boilies, put them in a box and beat my way off to Moor Hall lakes in Ockendon Essex to do great slaughter! Because of the active nature of the yeast, by the time I arrived at the lakes, my marble sized baits had grown to footballs, pushed the lid off the bait box and were close to pushing the boot lid of the car open! Oops! I was soon lucky enough to not only meet Fred but to fish with him and his baits, and other stories began to emerge!

One or two friends have been kind enough to comment about my last "Old School" piece. Although they said they enjoyed it, they also added they would have liked me to say more about the "Wilton Years" and also the coming of the "hair rig." I'll begin with Fred, whose thoughts, ideas and practices impacted so much on my own fishing and that of every angler who has followed. Fred's idea that carp would benefit from and learn to eat a high nutritional food was light years ahead of its day. To not only put together a bait that was good for the fish, give it a "label" that distinguished it from other baits, and then to put a skin on it to prevent it being taken by many other species was simply brilliant. We could bait up knowing the bait would still be intact when the carp came upon it, and those of us who were lucky enough to use it simply improved our catch rates beyond all comprehension. My recollections of those years, however, are as much about the fun and friendships as the actual fishing. Fred is not only a very intelligent and thoughtful guy; he also has a sense of humour far beyond that of most. His ability to tease, torment and abuse (in a pleasant way) knew few boundaries, and whenever our group: Bob Morris, Robin Monday, Alan King, Fred and I fished together there was

always much banter and laughter, little of which was ever at Fred's expense.

At the time when Fred published his original bait recipe, it was only available to those who were members of the British Carp Study Group. Carp fishing was very secretive in those days and people didn't pass it on. At the time Fred worked as a dockworker in the East End docks. Other anglers who worked with him were anxious to find out what bait he was catching carp on but didn't want to ask him directly. Eventually Fred was told this story! One of them was heard to say during a tea break at the time that he had been told the bait was made up of milk protein, lactalbumen, vitamins and minerals, budgie



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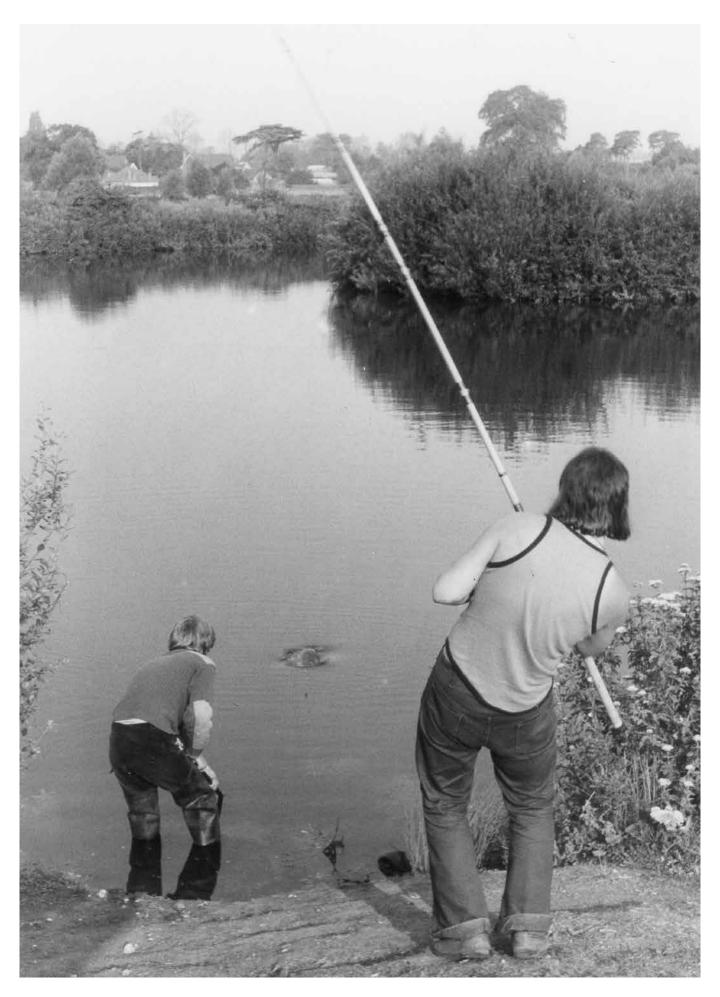




food supplement and eggs. But, "he knew that was a wind up and would go on trying to find out what it really was!" I wonder how he feels now...

Also on Fred's bait theme, a story that many of you slightly older guys should be able to identify with... When Fred published PYM and his original bait ideas, it quickly became apparent that he would need to develop a new and unknown attractor/label for his HNV bait. The one he decided upon was a food additive, which was nicknamed "Red Devil." A number of people, the late, great, Ian Booker included, concluded that this must be "Robin Red" bird food additive just like PYM. Ian and many others went on to catch many carp as a result, but I can confirm Robin Red had nothing to do with Red Devil! We all make mistakes and jump to the wrong conclusions, but as they go in fishing, this one wasn't too bad a mistake as things turned out, as Ian absolutely captivated both the Big Lake and Tip Lake fish using it in his baits!

With apologies to those of you who have heard me tell the following stories before, but they will give you an idea of how things used to be, and the banter that went on between the group. While fishing on Darenth big lake one morning, I looked across to the long island from the White Post swim. A movement led me to concentrate long enough to see a rabbit run along the margin of the island. Now this got me to thinking, how on earth a rabbit got onto the island. Later that day I mentioned it to Bob, who in turn mentioned it to Fred. To cut a long story short, I then spent 12 months of misery being teased about Rabbit Island, as everyone else clamed they'd never seen one out there. The following winter, Bob revealed that when the lake was frozen over and there was a covering of



sleet, he could see rabbit footprints leading over to the island. It seemed at last my misery was over! The following summer, I was sat talking to Fred when he mentioned to me that he had also seen a rabbit in the water by the long island. There was a hint of sympathy in his voice, and I fell straight into his lair as a result. "What was it doing?" I asked rather foolishly! "Breast stroke," he said, before roaring with laughter! That was the beginning of a further year of torment!

Mind you, I wasn't the only one to suffer. One evening, we were all fishing in adjacent swims when Robin came along explaining he had just lost a really big carp after quite a long fight. Because there was still a degree of unknown in those days, such an event was always of interest, and he duly got sympathetic comments from us all. A few days later, we were again fishing similar swims. Bob, Rob and I were gathered together talking when a slightly excited Mr. Wilton arrived in our swim. "Rob," he said. "I've been thinking about the fish you lost the other night. I think I've worked out a formula to tell you how big it was." We all listened intently to what followed as Fred explained: "If you measure the angle of the bend in the rod, multiply it by two and then divide it by the time you had the fish on, it gives you an exact weight." Fred was always coming up with theories, but this one sounded a bit extreme! "OK then," said Rob. "If that's the case, what did my fish weigh?" "Seventeen pounds and ten ounces," said a very assured Fred. "But how can you be sure of that?" asked Rob again. Fred's response was classic, "Because I've just caught it, and it's still got your hook link in its mouth," with which he began roaring with laughter! At least that spared me being ribbed about the rabbit for a few weeks! Fred's bait was a real



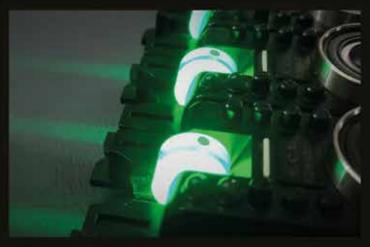
game changer.

When the "hair rig" arrived, it was no more or less influential on what happened to carp fishing in the years that followed. I learned about both bait and the hair from my time at Darenth, but it wasn't until I took both to various waters, both in Essex and the Colne Valley that I began to realise their true impact on carp fishing. On one particular Essex venue after baiting up, I landed the biggest carp in the venue within an hour of starting to fish there. I then went on to catch loads more, and I later discovered that I was the only angler there using boiled baits and the hair rig combination. Great for me, but man did I suffer from the "green-eyed monster" brigade! When Bob Morris and I joined Savay, we set up to fish on the first evening,

leaving our balanced hair rigged baits clipped in the butt ring before visiting the pub for something to eat and drink. When we got back to the lake, all of our baits had been dropped into the margin. The following day we were told by the person who had done it to keep our rigs a secret, as many of the syndicate didn't know about the hair rig! That was 1981! That the "hair rig" coupled with skinned HNV baits made catching carp far easier than it had ever previously been cannot be argued. So, thanks to Fred, Lenny Middleton and Kevin Maddocks for that. They initiated the growth in carp fishing interest that has continued ever since.

As someone who has been around for quite a while, I often allow myself a wry smile at the latest new rig development or change. An example of this goes back to rotary rigs, which we came to use at Darenth in the mid 1970s. We called it "the whirling Ted Smith rig" after the bloke who we thought had invented it. It was then used later by a number of well-known anglers, who by virtue of a slight change claimed some credit for the idea. It then eventually emerged as "the chod" albeit a shorter version, fished with a pop-up. I sometimes look on in a bewildered way watching how some of today's less experienced anglers are hoodwinked to jump onto the next new rig development and follow naively the hype that goes with them. Some of the stuff I've viewed recently contains more ironmongery than a scrap yard! Most of the very successful carp anglers I know have been using the same, or very similar, rig setup for many years and catch a lot of carp doing so. What's the saying? If it ain't broke don't fix it, as well as "Goes around, comes around!"

Around 30-plus years ago, I found myself spending lots of















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time fishing in Norfolk, simply because I was once again trying to juggle an attempt to spend more time with the family, whilst still being able to get out fishing. We purchased a caravan and used to visit Norfolk from our Essex home most weekends during the summer months. We would eat out at the local pubs; I would fish on the Saturday, on a lake close to the caravan, and we still had time to do "other stuff" as a family as well. The fish on the lake were not big, but what they lacked in size they made up for in looks, and I loved the peace and quiet of the fishing. Sadly from my point of view, eventually the place



became more widely known and the fishing more popular.

Initially I thought the fish were getting damaged as a result of the extra attention from anglers, but when I turned up one spring to find an electric fence around the place, I realised there were more sinister issues. Otters had arrived, and my retreat was under threat. Though we sold the caravan a good many years ago, we still regularly visit Norfolk. Until a year ago I often travelled to Wroxham to fish for pike on the Rive Bure. One of the reasons I got involved with the PAG (Predation Action Group) is because of my firsthand experience of otter predation in Norfolk, both on the lake I used to fish, the River Bure, other Norfolk lakes, the Broads and rivers. Norfolk was one of the first areas to suffer otter predation following the release of captive bred otters in the Bungay area. It was the devastating results of these releases that led to John Wilson forming the Predation Action Group. There are still people who are in denial about predation even now. Well, sadly, I can assure you if you haven't seen the effects in your part of the world yet, just be aware it's on the way. From every area angling is under threat: abstraction, pollutants, red signal crayfish, goosanders, cormorants, mink and otters. As an old school angler of three score and ten years plus, why should I worry? It goes without saying that I do!

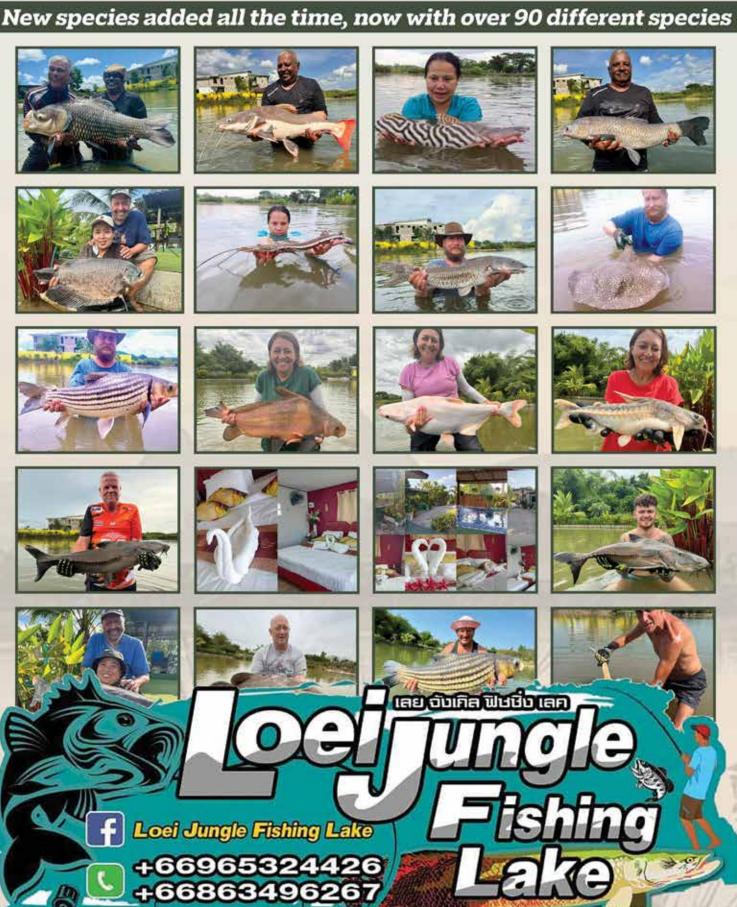
My re-involvement with the Carp Society has enabled me to indulge my love of the past with other friends. The original idea came from Tim Paisley, and now we have a Carp Museum on our site at Horseshoe. A Redmire Pool display, Brian Mills carving and stuffed fish from Frensham ponds are accompanied by a display about the development of buzzers, carp rods and reels. As time passes, there will be books and other items



of interest. If you're old school please come along and look. If you've anything to donate, it would be most welcome, as we need to celebrate the past whilst investing in the future. We have an open weekend on August 4th and 5th, one of the highlights of which will be an "old school evening" featuring Chris Ball, Len Arbery, Mike Wilson, Tim Paisley, Kevin Clifford and numerous others. Come and join us if you enjoy an old school story or two.

Once again, I find myself thinking that even after all this writing, it's the pictures that help tell the real story of my carp fishing and illustrate the passage of time. So here are some rod shots, places and a few fish too.

Loei Jungle Row!! Fishing Lake, Thailand



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In a world of opinion, debate and with all information openly accessible instantly via the internet, it's easy to approach your angling with pre-set ideas or approaches. Before the world of modern day carp fishing, the pioneers and originators developed new tactics, rig presentations, bait development and watercraft based on the situation. It was cause and effect back then!

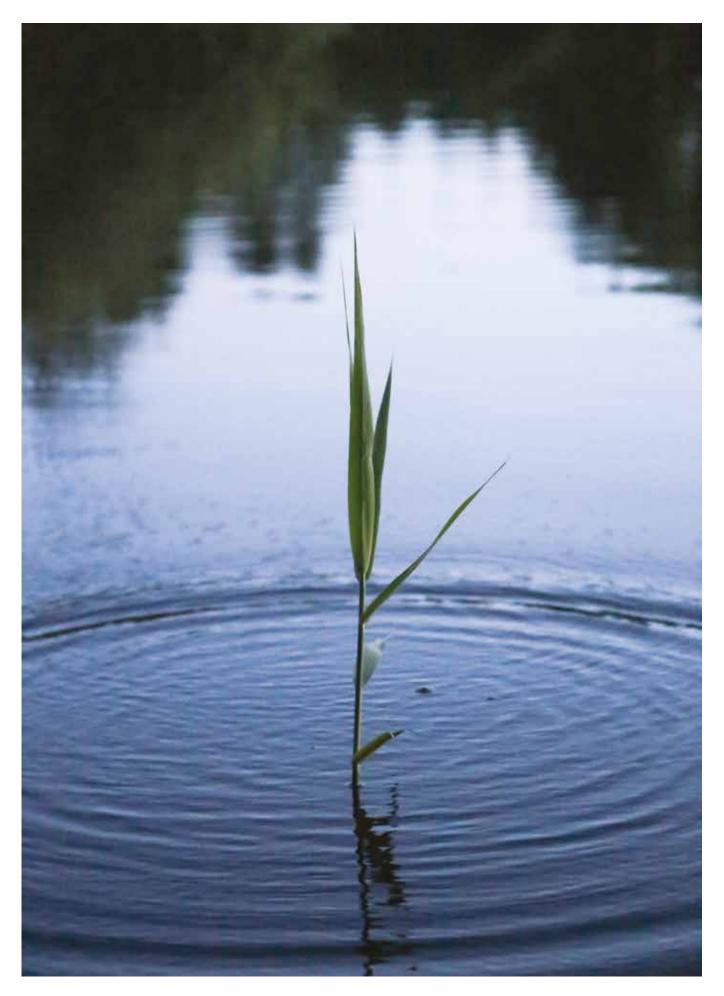
Now we all struggle from time to time, and believe me, I'm no stranger to that. It was recently as I began my first season on my new water in Norfolk, I realised just how conditioned

I had become to what I was reading, watching, liking and sharing! During my first few weeks on the water, I just went in with preconceived ideas about what would work and what wouldn't. I was impatient and ultimately paid a heavy price. We will come to that later.

Without question if you look at what separates a great angler from an average one, it's the ability to adapt to the conditions right in front of you. The ability to actually understand the topography of the lakebed, movement of the carp, understand the incoming weather or perhaps the behaviour of your fellow anglers! The list is endless, but it's the ability to digest it all and make sometimes subtle and occasionally huge changes that allows great anglers to be better than the rest.

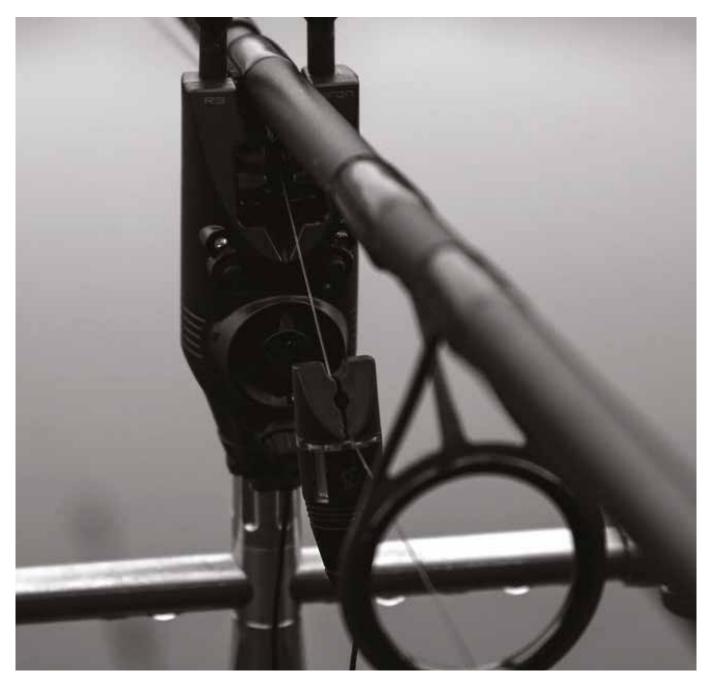
So it was back earlier at the start of the season towards the end of spring when I got my hands on my ticket. The normal Googling for information, forum reading and the occasional walk round the lake kept me busy beforehand, but the day had finally arrived, and I unlocked the heavy steel gates for the first time with the buzz you only get from entering a new water for the first time. As I drove the half-mile down the bumpy, pot hole filled track past the gravel works, I felt confident and hungry to prove I had the right skills to catch some of these stunning Norfolk carp.

The complex consisted of seven lakes, but I decided to tackle one of the smaller, tap-water clear, five-acre pits, as although not home to the biggest fish on site, I felt they were by far the best looking. After an hour or so leading around, I flicked my go-to pop-up rigs out, mounted a white pop-up and sat back, almost arrogant and certainly ignorant to my surroundings. This was my normal approach on previous waters, and I had



every reason to be confident. I had seen the reeds twitching and was certain carp were around. This confidence soon began to drain away.

I had done a few work overnighters with no success. I had seen countless decent carp topping in various areas, and I remember sitting there perplexed as to why my rods hadn't screamed away! The swims on the lake, apart from one, are all on one bank. Naturally the carp tend to get caught from the opposing marginal bank, and yep, you guessed it, every man



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'.

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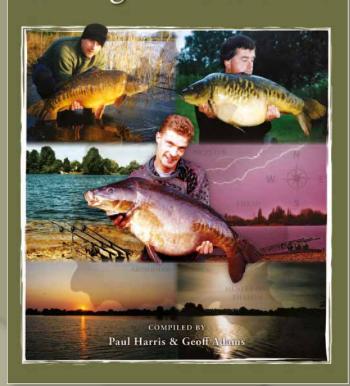
We have brilliant chapters on Newlands from Ginger Robinson and Milton Pools from Stuart Rothwell. Danny Aplin has written about his time on Linch Hill which will just blow you away! His pictures alone are worth purchasing this book.

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

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

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

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire



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and his dog was baiting and fishing along this far margin. On the fourth session of the season, I was in, and it felt like a solid fish. The R3 alarm burst into life at 2am, and as I stood there with wet feet playing the fish, I remember the absolute desire to get it landed and start my account. The fish steamed across the lake, taking 40 or so yards from the clutch. I felt in control as my head torch beamed across the darkness. Just when I thought I was clear from the initial lunges, it was gone. The weight was gone, and so was the fish. I sat back, and as the adrenaline started to dissipate, I made a brew and began to lick my wounds.

Now at that point, I needed to address the situation, but I was still blissfully unaware of what had happened and just put it down to bad luck. To cut a long and very painful story short, this exact same procedure happened twice more before the situation became clear. Only after I lost what I believed to be one of the big girls did I force myself to adapt. My confidence was in bits, and the feeling of optimism on the new water had been replaced by anger. I needed to start again, strip it all back, take stock of what I had learnt and rebuild. I needed to fish to the situation.

So out popped the marker rod, my eyes were back open, and I was determined to make the adjustments needed. Now this is going to sound ridiculous, and yes, I know how stupid it is... t turns out there was a huge bar that runs directly halfway across the water parallel with the swim bank and the bank everyone was fishing too. I was so occupied with the far margin and the fact everyone else was fishing there that I didn't even bother to explore the entire water. This bar also happened to be covered with razor sharp mussel beds. Suddenly the

mysterious case of the cut-offs was clear. Wow! So I had lost four fish with nothing to show for my efforts because I didn't do the basics first time round!

Now don't get me wrong; the fish were definitely patrolling the far margin away from the noise and disturbance of their hunters on the other side, but now I understood this one obvious feature, I could make a situational change based on fact. I took my beloved X-line off the spools and put on a tapered mainline that gave me some extra protection. This was attached to the toughest leader I could get away with, and bow tight lines and tight clutches with drop off leads was now very much the order of the day. I told myself as soon as I got a bite I needed to be on it, walk back up the fairly steep bank and get the fish to rise quickly. From there I had a much better chance at landing the fish.



I also felt I was bogged down with too much gear and promised I'd be more mobile and fish under the stars wherever possible. The work overnighters were starting to take their toll on me, and I felt my motivation begin to drop slightly. Don't forget I was still without a fish but felt a renewed confidence. Knowledge is power as they say, and this is never truer than with carp fishing.

The next session arrived, and the wind was absolutely howling down to a narrow corner of the lake. It's common knowledge that the fish really follow a warmer wind on this lake, and I couldn't believe the swim was free. I think the draw of the "popular" swim can even override people's thought process, ven when deep down they know the fish follow the wind. Anyway, I jumped in what was known as the Works swim and put my rods on a known clean area.

After an uneventful night stargazing, the Nash R3s burst into life at around 5am. It was a shy bite, but it couldn't run, as I was fishing locked up. The only thought that was going through my mind after all I had been through was to get it over the danger zone and keep it high in the water. As I slipped the net under my first carp, I could see it was only a small stockie, but the sense of relief and accomplishment was amazing, and I knew I only had the privilege of meeting this carp thanks to the changes that I'd finally made. An hour later, the other rod was away and another stockie was in the net. The proof is in the pudding, and the second fish only confirmed further that I was on the right track.

By the time I arrived back at the lake, the weather was warming up, and it seemed everyone was just piling bait into the water. As I sat there and watched one of the other members





put five or so kilos on to this marginal area, I remember thinking how with such short sessions I would ever get bites. I was competing against the fish and of course other anglers. In my opinion too much bait was being put in, and I needed to do something different. Surely a few kilos of fresh boilies and a pop-up in the middle was a clear danger sign to these highly pressured carp? I decided to go down the route of very few washed-out baits, using bottom baits straight from the bag placed firmly on the deck. I was now fishing with the claw rig. This rig has been around forever and is much used by the likes of Terry Hearn for good reason. It's ridiculously effective with a bottom bait; it's underused and very easy to tie.

I found myself back in the same swim where I'd had the two stockies from a few weeks earlier. It was really hot, and as I arrived, I found a group of much better fish basking in the sun. I placed a very small amount of bait along the marginal patrol route and hoped they would get on the feed later in the night when things had cooled down. I had worked out that there were two distinct feeding spells on the water – dark until about 1am and 5am until about 8am. As the sun came up, I was awoken to one single beep on the left had rod. As I lay back down, bracing myself for the pack up, off she went. The line tightened, and I instantly knew this was a better fish, and the old knees started to wobble.

After what felt like a titanic battle, I slipped the net under an immaculate chestnut brown common just over 20lb. Not one of the A-Team, but like I said, it's not all about the size, and this was one of the finest common carp I had ever caught. I was made up and had learnt a lot about my own angling leading up to that capture.

Fishing to the situation sounds obvious, but yet so many of us simply don't do it! We do what we want, we do what we read or we do what we see or hear from others. Now make no mistake; it's all right, and there is no right or wrong when it comes to bait or rigs – just used in the wrong situation. It's how and when we make the changes; it's adapting, and it's being brave enough to ask yourself questions. Next time you're out on the bank, take a second and ask yourself, are you truly fishing to the situation or are you just fishing? As I begin the winter campaign after some time away from the water, I know my situations will continually change, and it's down to me to keep open minded. The answers are usually right there in front of us, and our job is to ask the right questions!





Guesting, the snide rod, dummy prebaiting... and the list goes on – all commonplace occurrences within the modern scene that allow some of today's carpers the chance to get one up on the rest of the crowd. A new phenomenon perhaps, or is it something that the old schoolers were up to all those years ago? I've never really considered myself to be a rule breaker, but then putting pen to paper some years back gave me cause for concern that perhaps I was as guilty as the next in trying to take advantage of situations that might put a few more fish on the bank.

It was the mid 90s and if you've read my last piece, life was in full swing. I was, however, many miles away from the local water that had absorbed my teenage years. Of course, by now I'd ventured to pastures new and had acquired membership to a variety of other venues, but nothing had really caught my imagination or come close to successfully feeding the addiction. So, with a ticket still valid for Broombanks, the simple solution was to put in a few road miles, head back south and fish chunks of time rather than 'quick overnighters' (as opposed to 'slow overnighters' (another modern-day carp phrase that is rather odd in its true meaning and does make me chuckle).

At the time, being involved in education meant that the perks of lengthy summer breaks were a real benefit. Blocking off a few days and nights per week was not really a problem, although getting to grips with the third lake on the complex could have been. I wanted to make the most of these visits and maximise my free time, so I figured that I needed to somehow gain an advantage. Now, bearing in mind that this was many years ago, it was certainly the case that even in Kent, some club waters really were still rather quiet. If you managed to find the time to fish midweek, the chances were that you'd only see the odd green dome dotted around over the entire three-lake complex. So, in terms of me 'getting away with it', my simple plan was to get water bound, have a good mooch around in the lake, find some decent features and load them up with bait.

On one previous occasion, I'd 'been in' to net a fish stuck in the weed off the Horse Bank Swim. Following that adventure, I knew that bottom of the lake was a mass of stinking silt, so the purchase of a wet suit and buoyancy aid made the whole experience of swimming in the lakes a much safer and more pleasurable experience. Knowledge of previous captures off the straight bank, gained mainly from my fishing buddy Steve, gave me my starting point. I figured that there must have been something out in front of a few of the main swims that could be considered a 'feature' that I just wasn't finding with my marker rod. So, on a blisteringly hot summer's day in the middle of July and with all my new kit on, I lowered myself in to the stinking, silty margins and headed out into the lake. The third lake was deserted, which meant that going in to find a few spots wouldn't upset anyone.

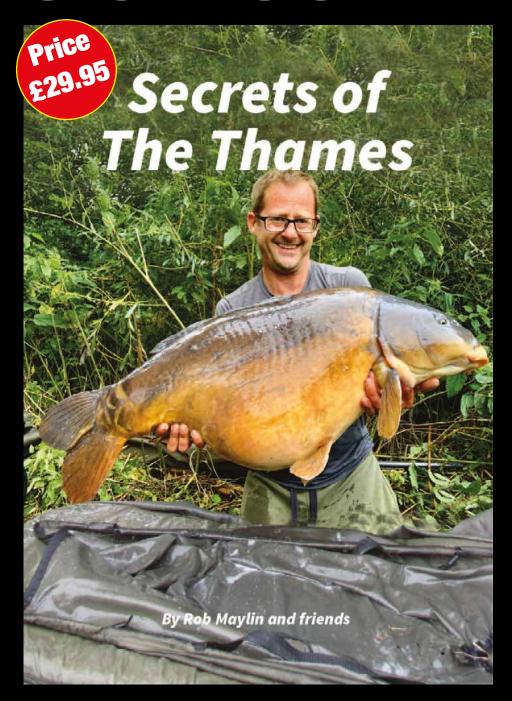
Swimming around for the next hour or so was totally enlightening! The bottom was largely a mixture of deep silt and clay, but occasionally I would find the odd mound that would rise up to a fairly shallow depth of about three feet. At first I was unsure as to whether these areas would prove to be good feeding spots; all I really wanted was a clearing to present the bait on that was in range for a simple accurate cast and was close enough to reach if I wanted to swim back out to bait up, or indeed retrieve the storm poles that I was using as markers. The mounds were incredibly slippery, and I can vividly remember sliding down the side of one as I attempted to get a storm pole in place. The depth of water around the feature was such that it meant I could only just about manage to get the marker to the back of the mound whilst still leaving a good amount of clay to cast to. Swimming back to the bank, I had to pass a couple of weed beds and carefully noted their position, as they of course may present a problem later on if any hooked fish decided to pile straight into them. The heat

that those weed beds held was incredible - so much warmer than the actual water temperature - and unsurprisingly, I could just make out the back of a large fish who proceeded to stay 'laid up' for most of the day that followed.

I returned to the spots for the first dosing of bait. This consisted of a mixture of tigers, condensed milk and halved baits (another sign that nothing is ever new in this modern cult carping era). With no slicing tools available back in those days, it was simply a task of squeezing the Club Mix baits in half and fishing a couple of balanced tigers over the top. On returning to my swim, I dried off, set up for the evening and attempted to remove the silt from behind my toenails with my rig scissors! My diary note from that day states 'conditions look good' and after such a mammoth undertaking, surely, I had to catch?



SECRETS OF THE THAMES











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

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

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

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

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

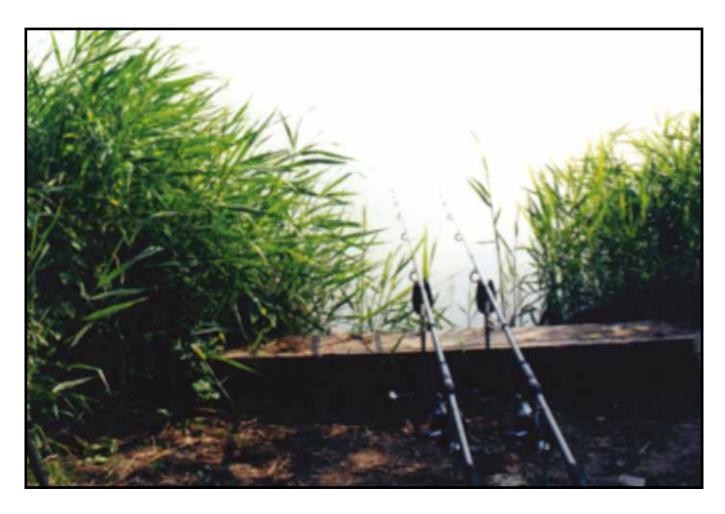
Along its course are 45 navigation locks with accompanying weirs. Its catchment area covers a large part of South Eastern and a small part of Western England and the river is fed by 38 named tributaries. The river contains over 80 islands. With its waters varying from freshwater to almost seawater, the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

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Sitting set up in a swim at the beginning of the session is a wonderful feeling. I was full of anticipation and expectation! The late Keith Cooper was down for a wander and scrounged a brew. At 7.30pm on the dot, the long chuck left hand rod was away and immediately kited left to the weed bed. The fish felt good, if there is such a feeling, but I was a little aghast when, with the fish wallowing on the surface some twenty yards out, the hook pulled! As a consolation, the closer right hand rod produced a mid-double common some thirty minutes later. With that, I topped up the swim with a few pouches of tigers and baits and settled in for the night ahead, happy and full of confidence that there was more action to come. A lost fish at 10pm and then another at 2am, however, caused me to start worrying about my rigs, so I was up early to reevaluate the situation. Another scattering of bait went into the swim, followed by a 'BB weighted down' squid and octopus pop-up on the left-hand rod, and then a shorter hook link on the longer rod completed my new approach.

The changes worked well! I was kept busy throughout the day, catching carp and adding bait to the swim. Three more mid doubles followed until at 1.20pm, I landed the first twenty of the session, a mirror that I'd caught previously and was previously my first ever fish from the third lake. After this catch, it was evident, and perhaps blindingly obvious to some, that the fish were really on the bait; the left-hand storm pole was being knocked around all over the place as fish visited their new feature. Within the next three hours, four more takes followed on the left hand rod with the best fish being a nice twenty common. The takes just kept on coming, and by now the bait was beginning to run low. With no mobile phone



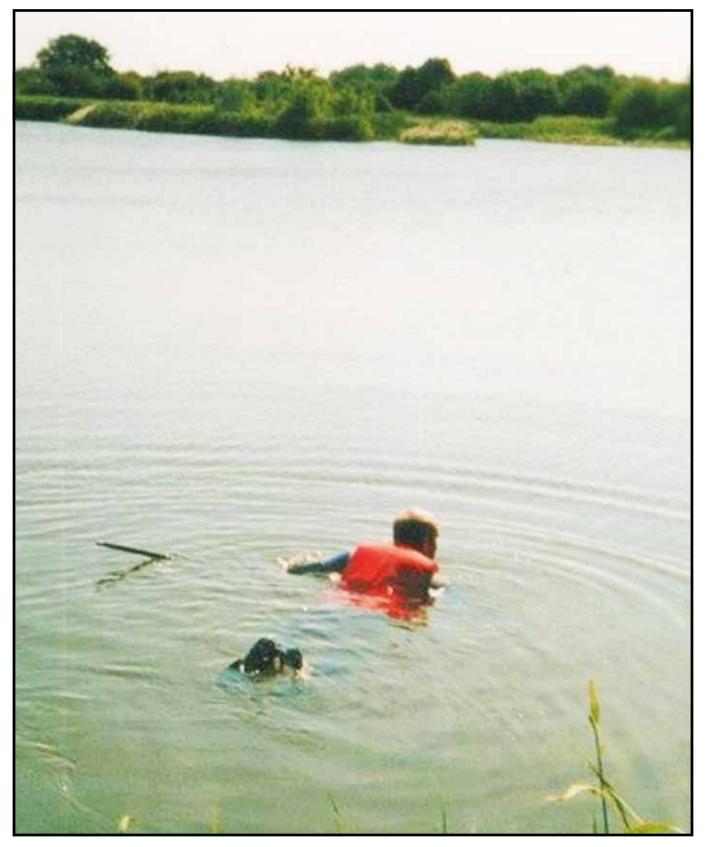


and no one around to look after the gear, I had little choice but to be more conservative with the free offerings. The third twenty of the session arrived at 5.00pm from the right hand rod, another lovely golden common of 20lbs exactly (honest), and I somehow managed to get a good selfie on some rickety old camera that I'd begged off someone. Three more fish arrived that day: an 18lb mirror to the right hand rod and a couple of low doubles to the left hand rod, ending a truly wonderful day of carp fishing. A peaceful night's sleep was needed after such a mad day, and strangely enough that's what I got! An early wakeup call from the last fish of the session – an upper double mirror on the right – brought the session to its end, and, unsurprisingly, the two-hour drive home to Essex was a very happy one.

I kept these visits going right through that lovely summer and enjoyed some more great captures and many memorable evenings sat on the straight bank socializing with the likes of Alan Young and Phil Baker to name but just a couple. I'm not quite sure how I managed it, and a fading memory isn't helping here, but I acquired a guest ticket for my Brummie carp catching mate Russ Bradley. We had met during the previous summer, and he had come down for a drinking session in Essex, followed by a two-nighter at the lakes. Wanting to ensure that Russ was able to catch during his visit, I donned my elegant neoprene outfit and followed the usual routine. The water temperature that day certainly cleared the head, as I was suffering from one awful self-inflicted hangover. God knows how we managed the two-hour drive south, but we did, and after drying out in the afternoon sun, I slept for three hours before even managing to cast a rod!

GREG SADLER

The session was ticking along nicely with us both experiencing success in the warm July conditions. Before too long, it was time for me to head out into the deep to bait up. At this point, we had the lake to ourselves, or should I say, we thought we did! I

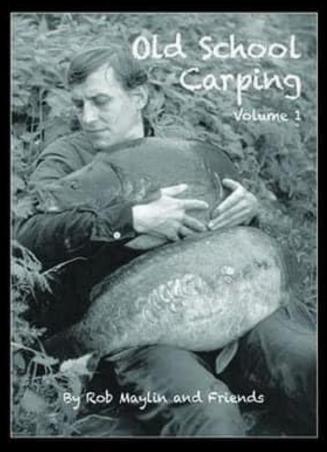


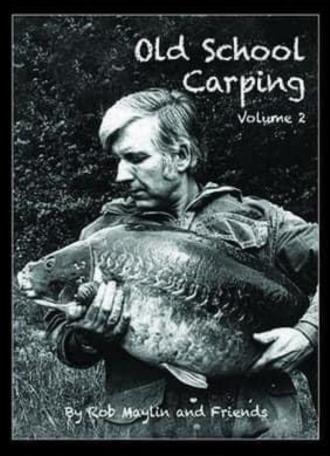
GREG SADLER

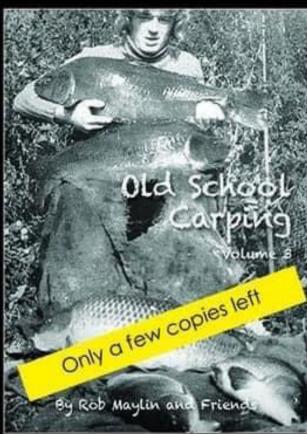
was heading back to the swims, having emptied another bucket of tigers and boilies onto the spots, when Russ hollered out in his broadest Brummie accent, "Grog, yow've got companaaaa!" With that, I swung around to see a bloody great swan that had appeared from around the back of the island and was heading straight for me. It was moving at some speed and looked enormous as I was treading water and looking directly across at it on the same level. I stayed calm (ish) and continued my slow swim to the bank, at the same time attempting to ignore the Brummie's piss-taking gibes and commentary. By now, our feathered friend had continued to quickly catch up with me, and when it was getting too close for comfort, Russ's next piece of genius advice was delivered to me between his fits of hysteria, "Grog, put the bucket on ya 'ed!" The swan was now dead level with me, and the only thing that stopped it from getting any closer were the lines that were out from Russ's rods. At this point, I really began to shit myself! I just dumped the bucket and went for it, swimming the final 20 yards as fast as I could, and, like the true gent he is, Russ helped haul me out of the margins as I ploughed straight through the nearest reed bed in an attempt to exit the water as quickly as possible.

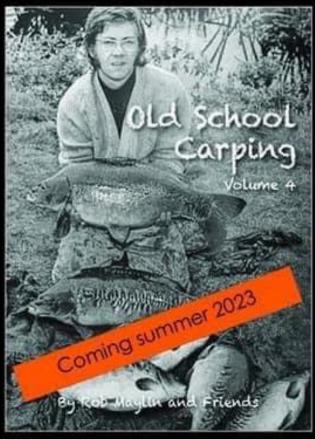
Much hilarity was to follow, largely at my expense, but it was all part of a memorable few days spent with a good friend, at my favorite place. We shared eight takes between us with Russ landing Little Ockley, the legendary linear. I managed two mirrors weighing 19.10lb and 20.08lb but all in all, I think the empty beer cans weighed much more. This proved to be my last ever summer session on the straight bank. I'd had more than my fair share of captures and I'd found a method that worked; it did take a little effort, but as I was travelling a fair

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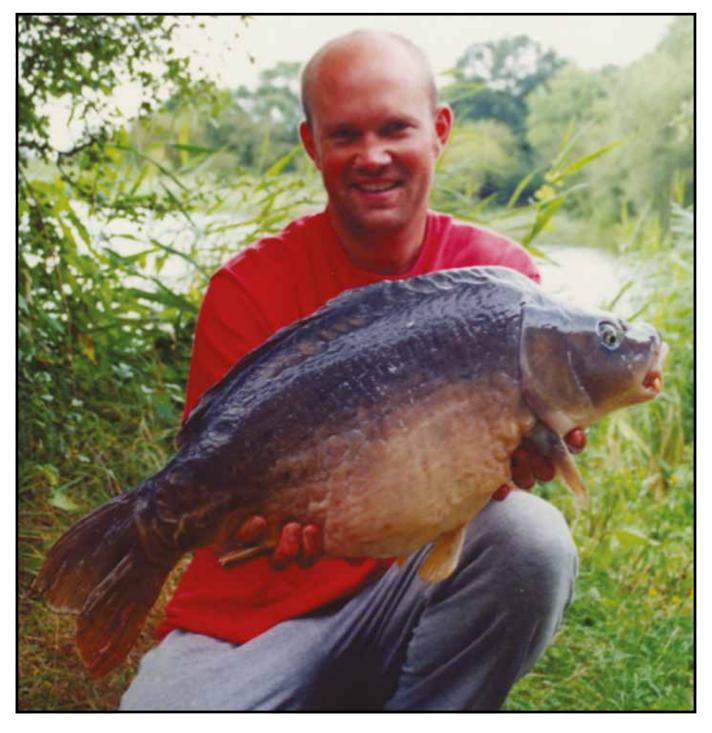


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GREG SADLER

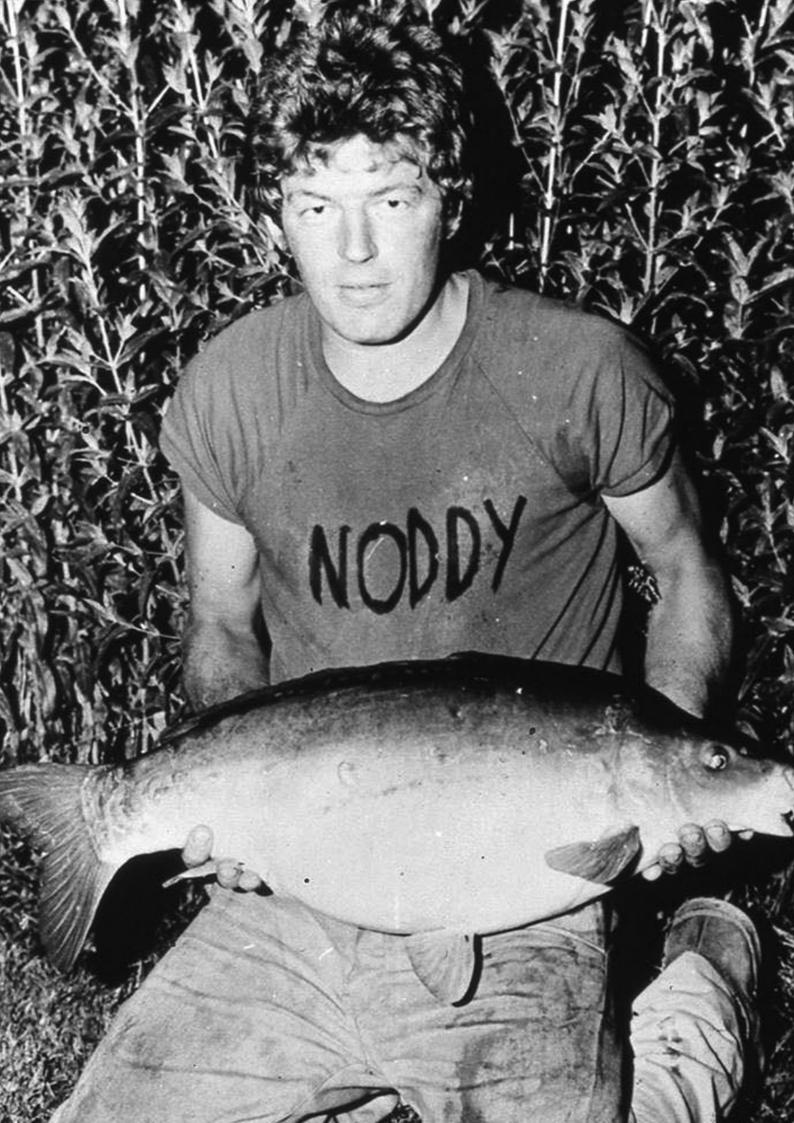
distance to fish I figured it was more than worth it.

So, looking back, it's worth remembering that all of this was in the days well before bait boats, wraps and Spombs. At the time, and under the rulebook of the fishery, did it cross the boundaries of what was deemed acceptable behaviour? I'm sure opinions would vary, but nobody ever passed comment, so I'm guessing that those who knew what I was up to really didn't mind at all!



GREG SADLER





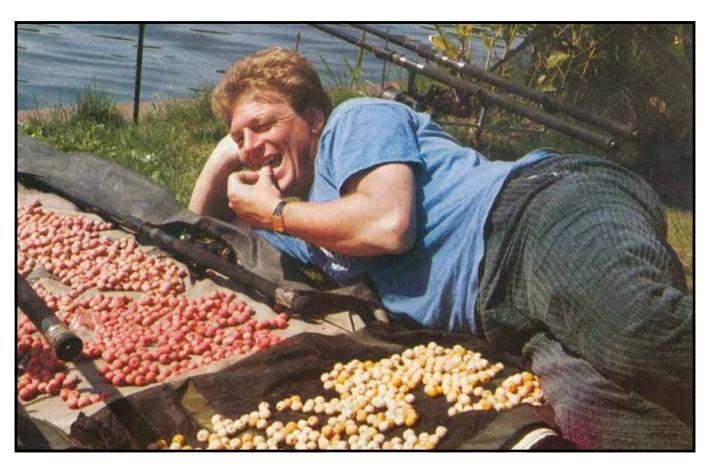
It came as a great shock when I heard Rod Hutchinson had passed away in June this year. I knew he had not been well for a while but had no idea it was so serious. My thoughts immediately went out to his family and friends, as I knew he had grandchildren, as do I, and how devastated they would be. Rod was one of the most well respected and popular guys I have ever met. I honestly have never heard a bad word said about him in the 40 years I have known him, and you can't say that about many people!

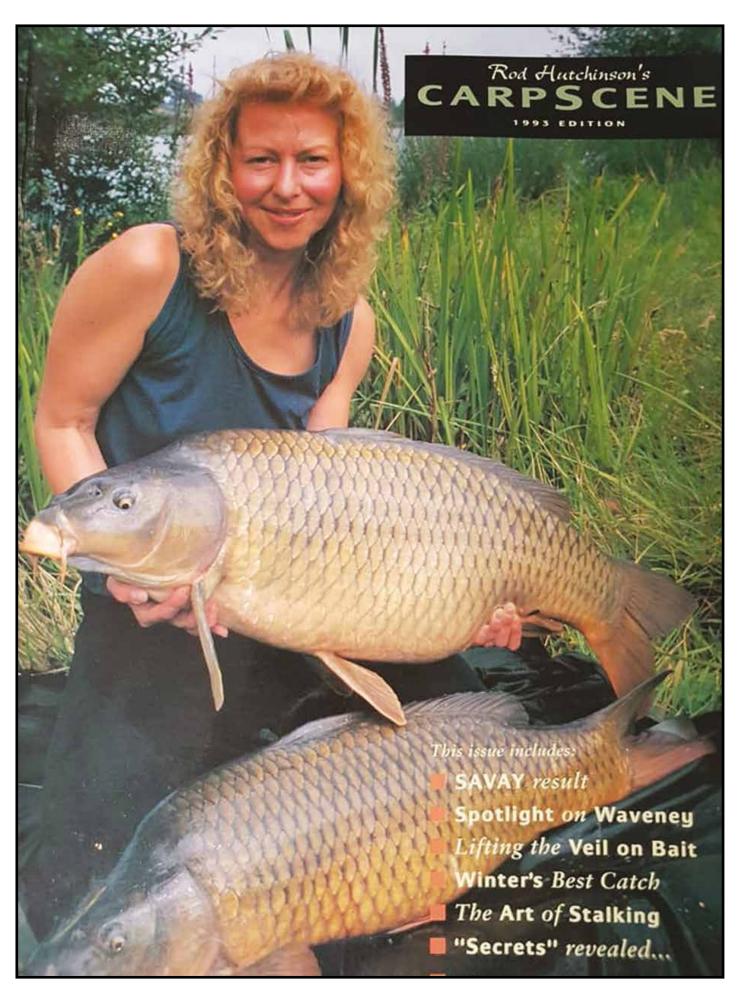
Rod was a pioneer, an inventor, a great angler and writer, a guester and was as keen a carper as you could ever meet. His contribution to carp fishing was huge, mainly through his writings in both magazines and books – books that I have read dozens of times. He was a great writer as I say, but more than that, he had a unique gift of being able to entertain the reader

with his humorous tales of life in the Colne Valley. I was very fortunate to have known Rod, to have fished with him, listened to his stories and to be able to call him a friend. But in all honesty, it was more than that – he was my hero, and my one regret is that I probably never told him.

Anyway, this is my story of our relationship... He knew thousands of carp anglers in many countries, n everyone will have their own stories to tell, but this is ours...

Like many carp anglers of my era, we first heard of Rod through his early writing. Articles on his early pioneering of particle fishing were published in the seventies, and later his friendship with Chris Yates at Redmire was legendary. But it was when he came south to fish at a lake in Denham called Savay that we became friends. I was fishing with a mate of his, Geoff Rendall, and it would have been about 1980 when one evening, as we walked back to our cars after packing up that





Geoff asked me if I had heard of a carp angler from Louth in Lincolnshire called Rod Hutchinson. I told him I had and that I had read a couple of articles on fishing maple peas. Well, he said he had written a book, and in the book were rigs, and when this book came out, it would blow carp fishing wide open and carp fishing would never be the same again!!

He was talking of course about Rod's first book "Rod Hutchinson's Carp Book", and how right he was. As it happens, Rod decided not to publish the hair rig in his book, nevertheless it opened everyone's eyes to what was possible, and indeed for me and thousands of carp anglers, carp fishing was never the same again.

By the time his second book came out, The Carp Strikes Back, Rod had become a big name with his own bait and tackle range. His tales of little Brian and him at Savay and Paul Gummer at Harefield entertained the carp world. I had joined Savay on a day ticket for a year before my invite to be part of the Loony Rota came along. This was pre-Horse and Barge; in those days we would drive a couple of miles to another pub, on the canal, The Fisheries. Here Rod would hold court, sat at the head of the table, or dancing on it. Always the joker but never the fool, Rod was already planning tomorrow's assault, ahead of the rest as usual. Rod and I hit it off immediately; our love of bait resulted in him writing the bait chapter in my book. We then fished the North Harrow Waltonians but although he caught a few, this was his bogey water, unlike me who could not put a foot wrong.

Rod chose to head off to France - Cassien, the River Lot - in fact everywhere, and the world became his oyster. However we kept in touch, and when I started Big Carp in 1991, Rod

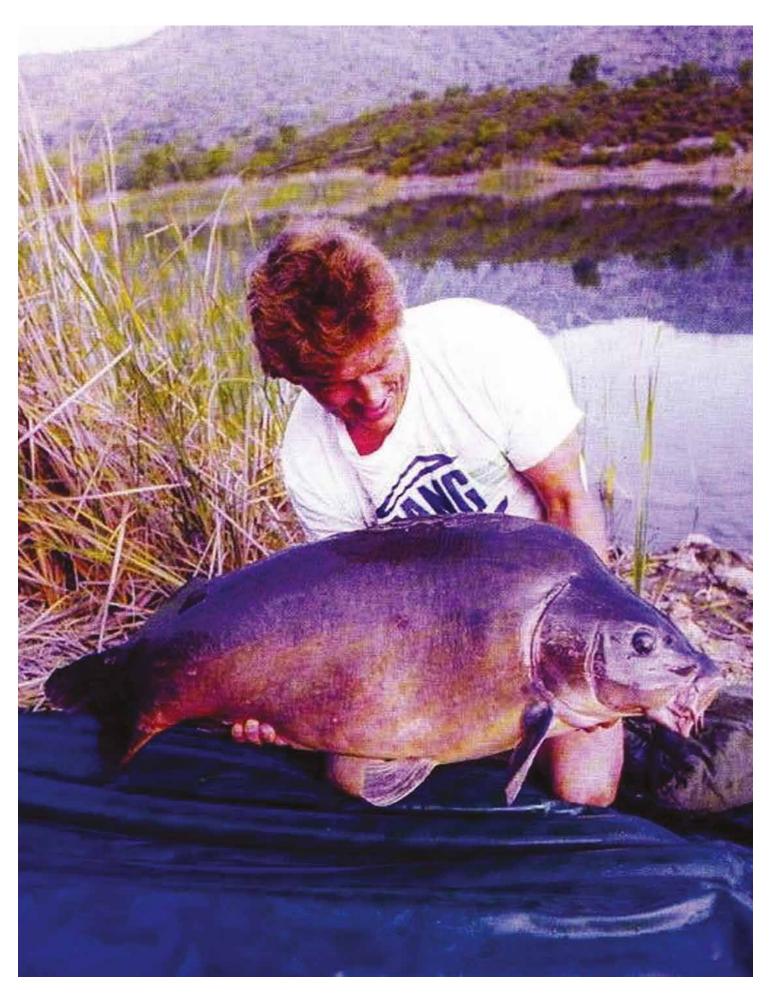
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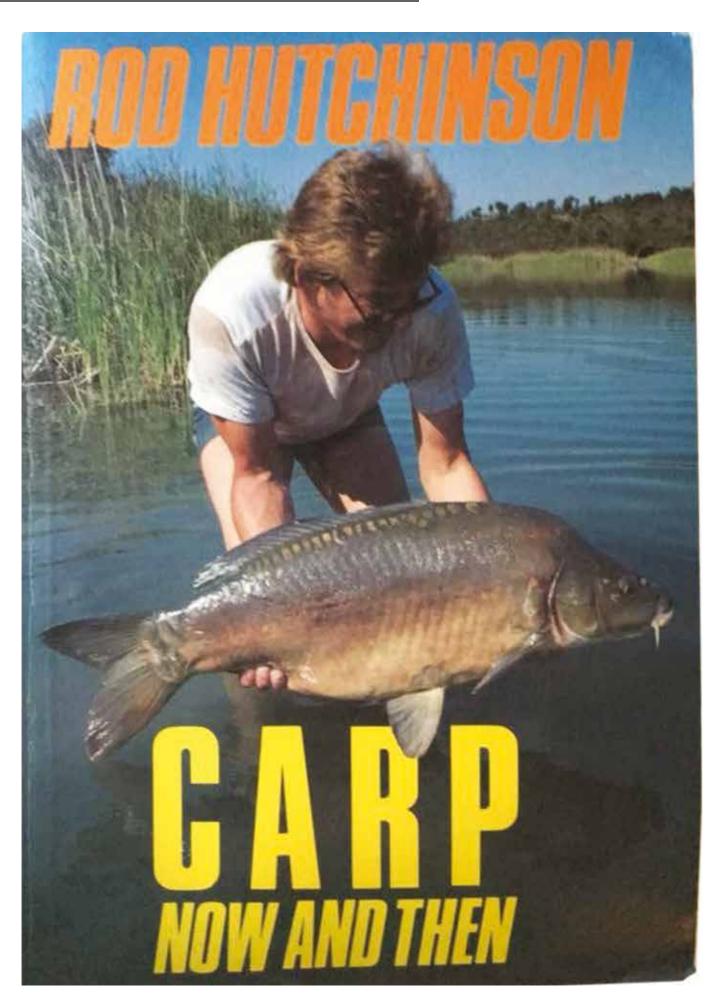
wanted to be part of it, and not only wrote some articles but became a founder member of the original Rotary Letter team, writing regularly for a couple of years.

Life and love and fishing took over our lives; we both had our ups and downs and would often laugh about it. When I last saw Rod in 2016 at one of the shows, he led me off to a quite corner and confided in me that he hated the crowds, being pulled this way and that and longed to get home in the quiet. He told me how much he was enjoying the Off The Beaten Track stuff in the mag, how he had always said there were some unknown monsters out there just waiting to be caught. We laughed about the story he wrote about when he ended up fishing a swimming pool!! Once a guester, always a guester!! RIP, Rod... There will never be another like you.

Dave Lane

I have never been the sort of person to have angling icons that I look up to. That's not meant to sound conceited; it's just the way I am. We are all just scruffy blokes in green clothing that love to fish. Rod Hutchinson, however, truly was a man to admire for his exploits, and, more than anything, the knack he had for recounting those tales with such an honest and down to earth approach.

Everyone who has ever fished for carp knows his name, but if you angled through those halcyon days of the late 70s and 80s, then he will definitely have affected your thinking, your angling, your bait choices and most importantly reinforced the need to enjoy your pastime to the full. I make no secret of the fact that I modeled my style of writing on Rod's amazing books, books that I could quote word for word even now. Nobody will ever have such an impact on carp fishing again. RIP.



Tony Globetrotter Davies-Patrick

Very sad news... Rod Hutchinson, the carp angling legend, died today. I knew he'd been ill for quite a while, and I hope that his final days were painless. My fond memories were drinking together all night at Dunstable, but even happier memories were his earlier years when he was younger and in better health, when his incredible sense of humour was in full swing. His first book, "Rod Hutchinson's Carp Book", was published by my fishing partner, Mike Benwell. Then here was the amazing "Redmire period with Yatesy" and his comical articles in the very early magazine's pre-hair rig days. He was a true legend, and an even greater man. Rest in peace, ol' boy. May the carp gods forever keep your line singing.

Jason Holton

I'm absolutely gutted; he was such a lovely and funny guy, and he was only 73. Every night after school in the early 80s, I was up till after midnight reading and rereading the bible ("Carp", and later on, "Carp Now and Then"), excited about my Saturday's fishing, which was always carping on the River Trent in those days. I'll never forget the first time I met him many years ago when he came to Planet Carp to meet the lads and for a bit of book signing. He turned up in a pair of old jogging bottoms covered in base mix, as he was off to France!!

Brian Ingram

He was the Man - a brilliant writer, true pioneer, and the biggest influence to me by far when I started carp fishing. I hope he's guesting (Rod's phrase) on some heavenly water for those iconic carp that are also no longer with us. RIP, Sir Rod

Julian P Cundiff

Yesterday we lost a true legend of carp fishing, and later this

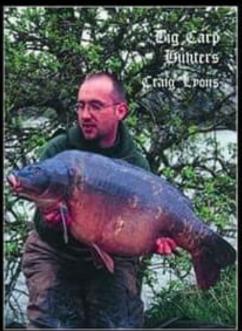
week I will pen a proper tribute to him. However in memory of Rod, this mid double common was stalked in the edge this morning. I thought it would be nice to place his last book that I wrote the foreword to next to it. Guys, "smell the roses" and enjoy it. When we last spoke he laughed at my discipline whilst giggling over his life... Sad times....

Stuart ThePear

Wow where do you start? Rod died yesterday. I have never been one for heroes; I admire lots of people, but heroes? In my angling, I guess there are three who I would put that mantle on: Richard Walker, Jack Hilton and Rod Hutchinson. I first met Rod late 70s when I was walking around Johnsons, and

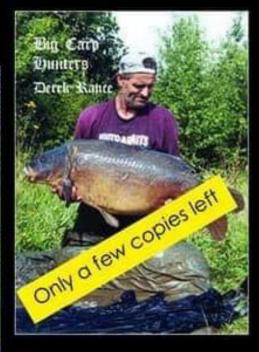


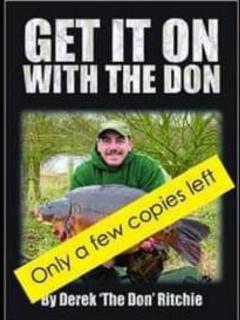
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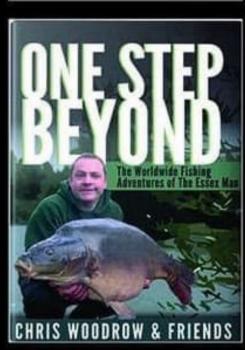


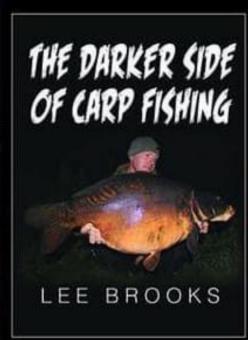
The Unsung hero's prolific catches with a unique tale to tell













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then later got to know him better in the early 80s in the Colne Valley. Later I became his rod builder and made well over 15,000 rods for his company. I used to chat to Rod almost daily for ten years while I was rod-building, sitting in his office or home just chatting about business, carping and life, or sat on the bank fishing...

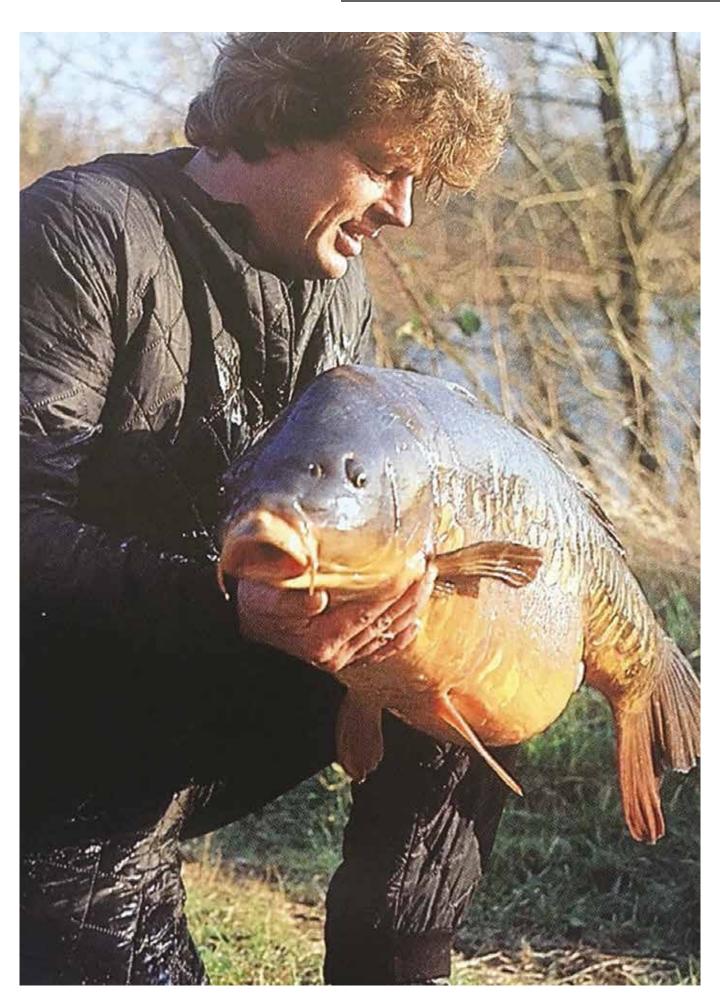
He was a more complex man than most will realise – infuriating one moment and the most generous the next – but in all a great man who made my head spin when we talked about bait theory. He had a deep understanding that I could only grasp at... All the things you could mention... the books, his pioneering theories and tactics, the outrageous times had on the bank, pub and curry house, but in all that, he was just a bloke that liked to go fishing with his mates, drink a few pints and talk football, music and angling... Rest in peace, big man..

Dave Kingsman

It was sad hearing the news today about the passing away of Rod Hutchinson, for me one of carp fishing's most iconic anglers. I guess Rod would have meant a lot to a great many anglers... I expect lots of people will be leaving a tribute, so here is mine.

When I started out carping, Rod's name was spoken in awe. He was the man.

Redmire Pool, particles and their application, Lake Cassien and the Carp Strikes Back books – he certainly made his mark. My love affair with Hutchy products started in the late 80s. Lee Jackson whispered a secret 'under the counter' special to me and my mate Gary one day in the Tackle Box – RH1 Essential Oil plus Leaf Spice EA. We got it, made it up and started using RH1. 20 years later, we both still love it. A lucky spell at the



time produced some nice Kent fish for both of us including his British record grass carp, the largest fish out of a few lakes and good hits from Darenth and Honeycroft.

One day, out of the blue, we received a brown package through the post with a message from Rod. Inside were our bottles of flavour with a message to give them a try and let him know how we got on. I remember they were Nouvelle Fizz, RH2, Secret Agent and Mulberry Florentine. I was also doing a bit of casting at the time and received a few prototype 'Big Pit Special' rods to put through their paces. It was a good time and speaking to Rod and Annie was always fun. The Spiderhall Common below (then Reeds Lake) was my first RH1 biggy t 26lb 10oz. I will never forget that one. It feels like a big part of carp fishing history left us today, and I doubt we will see anyone like him again. RIP.

Rod Hutchinson Products

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of our founder and namesake Rod Hutchinson. Rod was a true pioneer of the carp fishing scene, loved by many and there is many a tale of his early adventures flying around. Our thoughts are with his family and friends at this sad time. You will be greatly missed, Rod, and we thank you for all the innovative ideas and baits you gave us. We will strive to do your name proud and keep the morals and respect that you gave to others.

Leon Bartropp

The word "legend" is bandied around, but Rod Hutchinson truly was one and was one of the pioneers of the carp scene. It's a very sad day as one of my carp fishing heroes that gave me the buzz for carp fishing 35 years ago sadly passed away. Rest in peace, carping legend.



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As we move into July, a good proportion of the fish will have seen the bank, angling pressure will be at its greatest. The weed and natural food will be on the increase and you can often find carp mooching around margins and weedy areas.

With limited time on my hands, but itching to get on the bank. I can often sneak in a few hours after work and this is when the stalking gear comes into play.

There are numerous advantages to stalking. Firstly, not many anglers do it and if your willing to go looking, finding and feeding them in the edge whilst everybody else is sat behind their rods, the rewards can be well worth the effort.



A slow walk around the lake with my Kodex stalking rods, looking and feeding little areas can quickly result in carp giving away their location and this has given me many chances and has led to a number of opportunistic captures.

The equipment needed for a stalking is minimal. A rod or two, unhooking mat, landing net, a small bag of end tackle, bait and your be ready to go. I do use two methods of stalking out fish, one being off the surface and the second method I will address a little later on.

Locating carp at close quarters puts you in a fantastic position to judge the carps' reaction to bait and rigs. If the water is clear enough you may be able to identify individual fish. Watching them for a while may just give you a clue as to how to trip them up.

I will start firing out a few surface baits in two areas quite close to each other in the patrol routs of the spotted carp. I will now start to set up my rod while constantly watching for any feeding fish taking my freebies. The key is not to rush getting a hook bait into the water. Believe me; you may think you are being stealth like, but I can assure you they know you are there.

If fish begin to feed, just keep topping up with freebies. The longer they feed with no pressure, the easier it becomes to nick one or two as they start to feel you are not a threat.

Right it's time to get to the business end. There is only one hook link material I will use on the surface, that being the



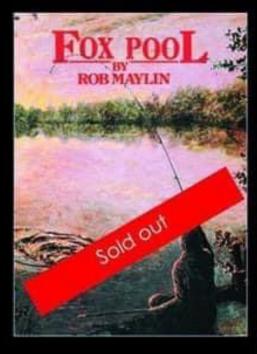
Kodex Zig & Floater line. I have watched too many fish shy away from my hook baits with other lines on the surface. So by tiring a few meters of Zig and floater line to the end of your main line, makes all the difference. As soon as I changed to this line, they don't hesitate taking the danger bait.

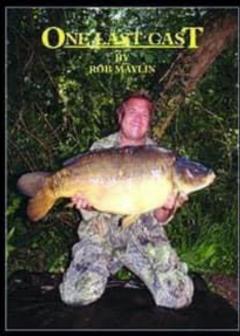
The Kodex Zig and floater line comes on a 100m spool and its Lo-Viz fluorocrystal characteristics make it virtually undetectable on top and underwater. It has a low accurate diameter of just 0.25mm yet a breaking strain of 12.9lb (5.8kg)! This is a hi-

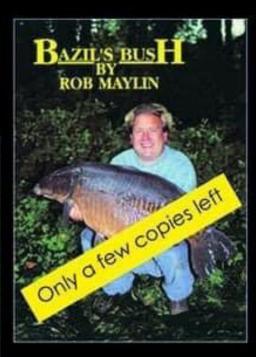


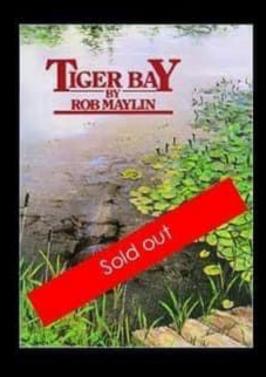
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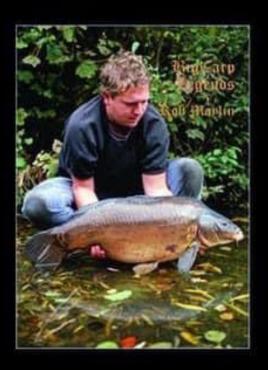
50 years on the bank with Rob and Friends











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tech low diameter line and Kodex have still managed to retain good knot strength. It is ideal for surface fishing on long lengths using a surface controller set-up. This paired with a size 10 Kodex Genomic Wide Gape hook and one of the Kodex controller floats is a deadly combination.

After casting out my float beyond the feeding area and slowly retrieving it onto or near to the freebie baits, within seconds resulted with a fish on. With an intense battle I finally manage to slip the net under a cracking Carp just over 30lb.

It felt like job done, but with the hunger for more. I noticed a lot of fizzing in the left hand margin, of the other area which I had been throwing small little pva bags of Monster baits pellet covered in the Kodex Ectoplasm, every 10min for the last half hour. This brings me onto my next stalking method as mentioned a little earlier.

My second fishing method was poised to go on my second rod. This being a small chod rig on a stiff boom section with a 15mm Monster baits Ice popup boilie normally, but I do use all of their range of baits. This is attached to a 2oz lead on a Kodex lead clip system.

I could see carp moving in and out of this margin and noticed a cracking large carp giving away a feeding patrol. As soon as it had moved out again, I placed my rig on top of the area being visited frequently by this unit.

20 minutes later, BANG, I was off again. This time resulting with the carp I had been watching and what a fish weighing in at 41lb 4oz. This time it was mission accomplished, with time ticking away far and all my clothes wet including my spares. It was time to chuck my gear into the van and head home buzzing all the way.







BEGUESTONS: PARTIES AND TON

Nowadays when folk think of particles, it always seems to be tiger nut related, but back in the 70s, way before anyone ever used a tiger nut, carp were being caught all over the country on a much wider variety of particle baits than appear to be used today. Like most at that time, I started on sweetcorn, and it only took a few hours before I landed an 8lb'er on them, but it took four years for me to catch my second fish on sweetcorn because a whole new world of carp baits had opened up to me.

Maize was the obvious choice as the next one to try, but I discovered two guys were already using it to good effect on a water locally, so not wanting to tread on their toes, I tried processed peas instead. What a waste of time that was... Despite being very convenient and cheap, alas carp really did not seem to like them, so coupled with the difficulty in keeping them on the hook, I very soon moved onto broad and butter beans.

The year was 1975, and despite catching steadily all summer on a boilie made from ground cat biscuits, I was very willing to keep experimenting with these particle baits, as they worked out so much cheaper to use. 1975 was the year I left school and began an electrical apprenticeship, so money was tight, and these particles really did seem to be a viable cheaper alternative.

The carp at the Dartford club water Sutton at at Hone really went for the butter beans initially, but catches very quickly diminished after the initial flurry. Broad beans produced bites steadily over the same period, but this was late in the year and no one told me that particles were less effective in winter. Still, I stuck it out, and in March 1976 was rewarded with a 9lb'er just before the season





finished.

The long, hot summer of 1976 is well remembered for having great weather but in North Kent, the hot, dry conditions had a very serious effect on the lakes and are well remembered for the resulting drought. By July the water levels were so low that the club were forced to suspend angling at both Sutton and Horton Kirby. Brooklands became packed, so I moved onto Darenth, which incidentally coincided with the first year of legal night fishing. Longrange fishing (50 yards-plus!) became necessary, so I reverted back to the ground cat biscuit boilie for most of my fishing, and after a few hints from the late Ian Booker, I switched to a casein bait by late summer. I still persevered with the particles on occasion and picked up a few fish

on broad and butter beans, but elsewhere some friends had excellent success using black-eyed beans.

Black eyes were a different type of particle because although they were available in tins, they were best used by buying the dry, uncooked ones and first soaking for before boiling 24 hours and simmering until soft. added various We also soup mixes to the soak that certainly added to the bait's attractiveness, with tomato



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being the most effective. This slight change opened the doors to a whole host of other baits that I eventually tried over the next couple of years with most being useless with the exception of maple peas and chickpeas. Some of the other peas/beans showed promise but never produced as consistently as chicks and maples, notably haricot beans with the commercially available tinned version, baked beans, being by far the best and a bait I really should have



stuck with and probably would have come back to if future events had worked out differently.

Len Middleton, inventor of the hair rig, suggested trying peanuts to me on several occasions over a couple of years. As my focus had switched slightly to boilies, I didn't really take his idea seriously, but some friends who were fishing a lake up the valley did eventually give them a go, and although they took some time to get going, it soon became



clear that they were a game changer. The very first night I tried them on the Big Lake at Darenth, I had five fish, and over the next year, a sack of brown peanuts was a permanent fixture in my van.

I'd best add a bit about rigs at this stage. Only Len Middleton and the guys he fished with were on the hair rig; the rest of us were still hiding the hook inside the bait. Size 4 Au Lion D'Or was the hook of choice, tied to 10lb Maxima or 11lb Sylcast. Leads were ideally 3/8oz Arlesey bombs because with ½oz you tended to overcast the baited area and 4oz didn't hold when sinking the line. Leads were never fixed but slid on the line and were stopped with a split shot gently pinched on the line for close range fishing or a swivel tied in for harder casts. The baited area was generally as far as you could catapult out your particles and maintain a reasonable grouping. A not inconsiderable amount of effort went into sorting this out as, at that time, there wasn't a viable catapult on the market, and all of the ones I used were homemade or heavily adapted. I even made my own pouches, as there was no alternative.

Just when peanuts had probably reached their peak as a bait in the Darenth Valley in 1980, a couple of friends started having phenomenal success on a new particle bait. This bait was slightly different because right from the start they did not need heavy prebaiting, and you certainly did not need to pile in loads to get the fish going; in fact one pouch load of 20-30 items was ample to get a bite. Nuisance fish were not a factor because this new particle didn't fall off, although to be fair, we were on the hair by this time, but that was something we had to always consider back

then, as baits were for the most part softer because the hook was generally buried inside the bait, which had to be struck off in order to hook a carp.

Of course I'm talking about the genesis of tiger nuts. Initially there were just seven of us "in the know", and if I had my way, it would have been many years before anyone else found out, but one of our group was more benevolent, and after a year or so, the cat was let out of the bag. I didn't worry too much though personally, as peanuts were still going well and have become a bit of a forgotten bait.

Anyway, that's how things evolved for me back in the 1970s.



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