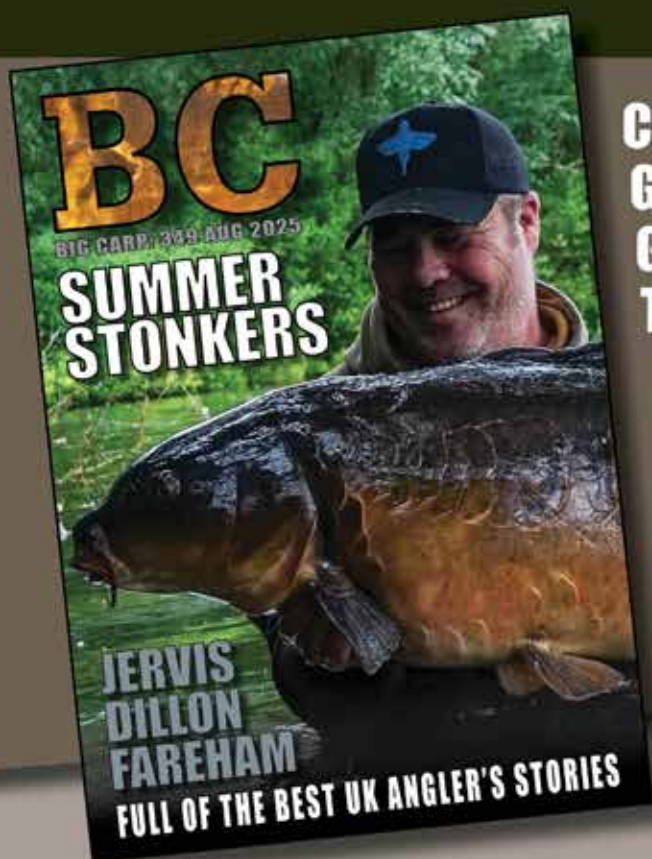


AUGUST ISSUES OF **BIG CARP & **FREELINE** MAGAZINES - FREE HERE:**

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**CHRIS JERVIS - PARK LAKE CAMPAIGN
GAZ DILLON - TAKING ON THE FOUNDRY
GAZ FAREHAM - ONE OF READING'S FINEST
TIM BARNETT - BASINGSTOKE CANAL**



**STEVE FISHER - BROOKLANDS DAYS
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BIG CARP READERS TOP TENS !!

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	ABBAY LAKES
3	CRETE LAKES
4	RIBIERE
5	GIGANTICA
6	RAINBOW
7	THE AQUARIUM
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
7	PROPER CARP BAITS
8	URBAN BAITS
9	DAVE MALLIN BAITS
10	NASH BAIT



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

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

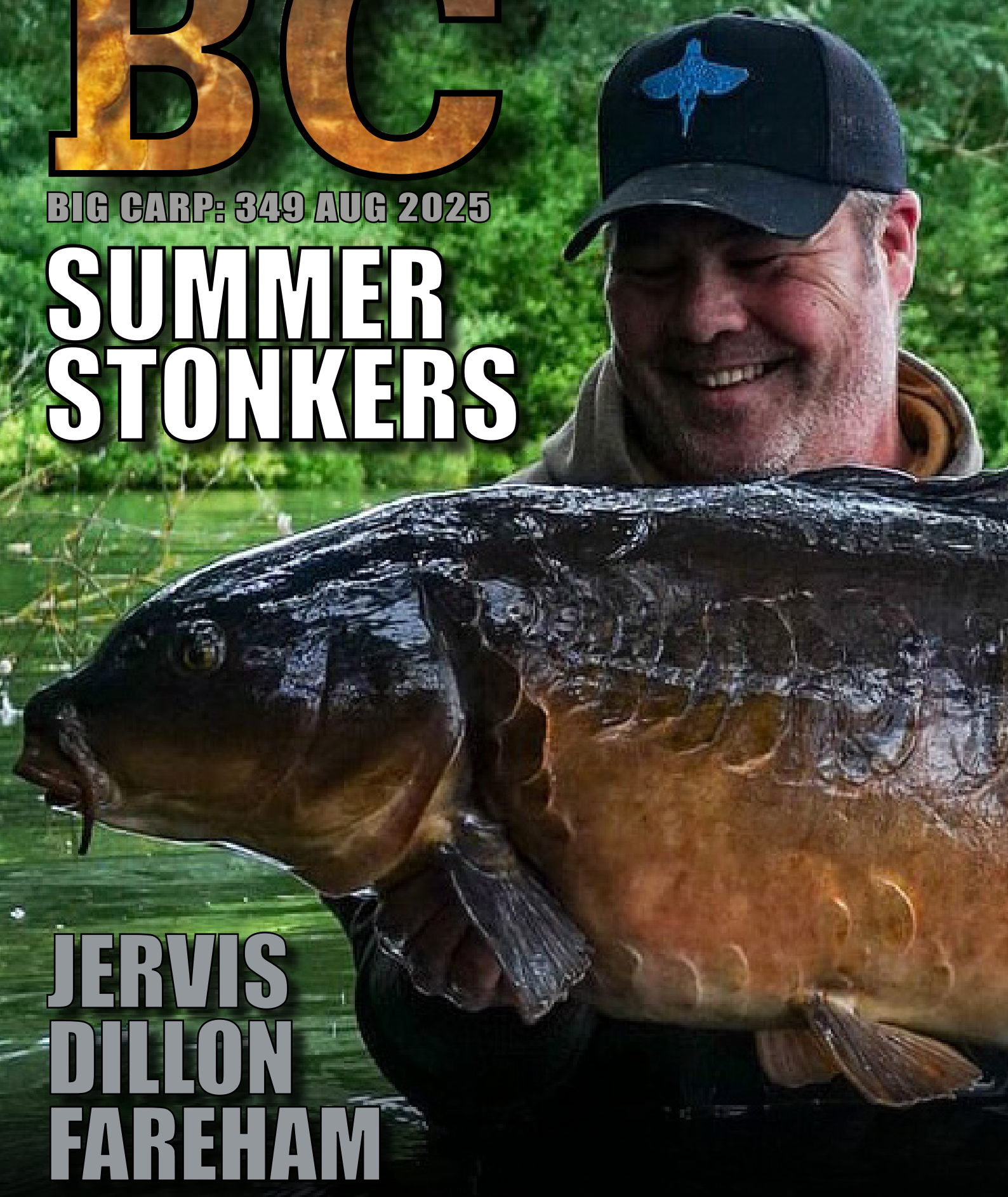
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BIG CARP: 349 AUG 2025

SUMMER STONKERS

JERVIS
DILLON
FAREHAM

FULL OF THE BEST UK ANGLER'S STORIES



Aqua Lilium Clothing



It has been a while now since our last feature in the country's biggest magazine so we thought it was time to bring all of you up to speed with what the team have been up to.

So, to start we have two new designs coming out and by the time you read this they will both be in stock. The first design is called Who Dares Wins and this design as usual is full of colour. The design itself uses our beloved union Jack flag as a base followed by the Aqua Lilium logo in deep black over the top to create a unique piece. This is then outlined by a beautiful blue and white wreath to finish the design. The front of the T boasts our stunning logo in gold but the difference is with this one it has three embroidered rings red, blue and white. We also added the Who Dares Wins motto underneath in a striking gold.

Moving on, we have decided to re-release Casting At The Sun. If you don't know, this was hand drawn by Mark Quinn back when Aqua Lilium was being born. Also the main logo was produced from this very picture and is the base for all of the clothing. We asked Mark why wait until now to re-release?

Mark's reply was, he never thought he'd done the picture justice and always believed it could be better and more appealing. So he said that he decided to take everything we had learned over the last four years and take the design back to the drawing board.

All I can say is wow, Mark really has pulled out all the stops with this one and I for one can not believe the outcome. This for me is a game changer and one that will without doubt reign for some time amongst the Aqua Lilium fan base.

The design is unbelievable, and gives off a 3D effect on to a black shield with the lettering in gold stating the name of the design. The sun itself is a deep sunburst orange along with the water. Also, the rest of the image is tipped in a silvery white to highlight tint and reflection. This is then finished off with two thin sunburst orange lines around the shield to bring the design away from the fabric.

This truly is a unique piece from Mark and one to be proud of.

Lets move on to the quality side of things, and I am pleased to say as usual there is nothing to fear hear as where other companies are trying to cut costs on materials, Aqua Lilium Clothing will never compromise. Therefore all T-Shirts are made only using materials that are 100% cotton. This is our guarantee to all our customers to insure they never have to look anywhere else.

It doesn't stop there either, here at Aqua Lilium Clothing we are excited to bring you our very own collection of Jet flamed gas wind-proof lighters. These are available in black and will have various designs on them that we have released over the years including our beloved Blue Koi design. These will be available to buy individually or if you spend £60.00 or more on the website www.aqualiliumclothing.com you will receive a lighter of your choice free of charge. You can only purchase a lighter if you are over 18 years of age.

Here at HQ we are always asking our customers how can we improve?

And believe it or not a few of our trusted customers came back and said the material for the shorts is to thick and although comfortable they were just to warm.

As usual we don't like to disappoint, so we are delighted to bring you the ultra-lightweight cargo shorts, available in black or olive green. These are so incredibly comfortable and have expanding side pockets, yes you heard me correct the pockets are stitched in such away that when empty they sit flat to the side of your leg but when full they open up.

Also, these great shorts have adjustable side buckles that allow you to pull them in tighter around your waist if needed or looser if you have had one to many burgers on the bank. There are so many great features to the shorts so please visit the website for more information.

Last but not least, we are also excited to bring you our very own insulated double skinned stainless steel mug.



Again these mugs are top of the range and will keep your Tea hot for up to 6 hours and cold drinks for twice as long. These will feature the same designs as explained earlier on the lighters and will be available from mid-September.

What's next here at Aqua Liliium Clothing?

We are working on a new winter jacket along with matching Salopettes.

We wish we could mention everything but simply don't have the space so, as previously mentioned why not pop over to the web page and have a look.

Also some of you may have seen footwear on our social media posts. This is in the early stages and we hope by the end of the year footwear will be on the website.

Here at Aqua Liliium Clothing can we just say your support really does mean everything to us. We are only a small family business and really need you guys to survive. Please support all small British run businesses as your helping families not corporations.



Website: www.aqualiliumclothing.com

Email: aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

You can also reach us through our Facebook or Instagram pages



CONTENTS

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

07768 731425
bigcarpstudio@hotmail.
co.uk

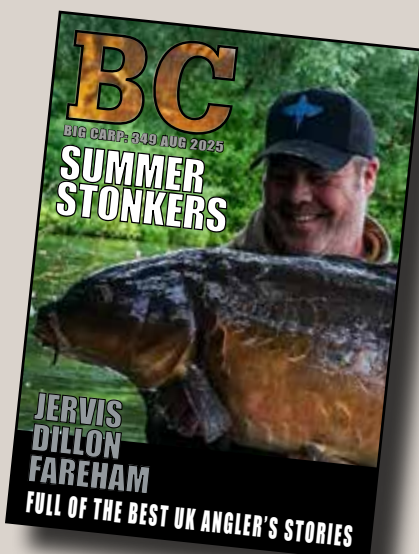
Design & Production
James Harrison

Advertising Sales
Bountyhunter
Publications
mobile 07768 731425

BIG CARP 349:
Aug 2025

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Publications 2025



Front Cover:
Mickey Bee with on of
Ecton's finest.



Well we're in full summer mode now. The carp have spawned, the weed is up and the naturals are at their peak. More importantly the carp are on the munch. I hope you are out doing it and catching plenty. From the looks of our catch reports you certainly are. In this month's issue we have Chris Jervis taking on a local park lake. These venues have somewhat unique challenges shall we say. Gaz Dillon takes on the mighty Foundry. Gaz Fareham gets his teeth into one of Reading's best venues. Haydn Hoskins makes up for losing a big common at the net last month. Jonny Old has been targeting a large sailing lake with some nice surprises. Cover star Mickey Bee has an awesome result from Ecton's Main Lake and Tim Barnett's been stalking them from the Basingstoke canal.

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BEST FACILITIES
ON THE MARKET



8 WORLD RECORD - 2 WORLD CARP CUPS



ALL PEGS
JUST REDONE



HOTEL TOTALLY
RENEWED



CATCH REPORTS



The '180 Bait Social' which had a terrific week and we are all waiting to see them back this Autumn. Congratulations once again



This is Andy on peg 18 who spent a terrific week on the north bank, with so many takes. Congratulations



Harley was Fishing with Andy on next peg number 17 and had a terrific week on the north bank with so many takes.



This is the young Florian who had the chance to discover Fishabil and made an amazing Fishing session on the peg 7 of the East bank with many big Fish.



Sean has been back again and keeps catching big ones every day.

NASHBAIT RUMOURS - TRUE!!

The rumors have already condensed since May, but only today the fishing equipment specialist trade was informed via eMail that the NashBait brand is being discontinued. Nashbait cites continuous rising production costs, unstable supply chains and increasingly stringent import and export regulations as the reasons for this measure, which make it impossible for the brand to continue.

It's a great brand that has provided the bait market for decades with excellent products, and those that enjoy cult status, that we will soon have to give up.

With Nashbait, we also leave a brand that has written history and provided countless stories of carp anglers.

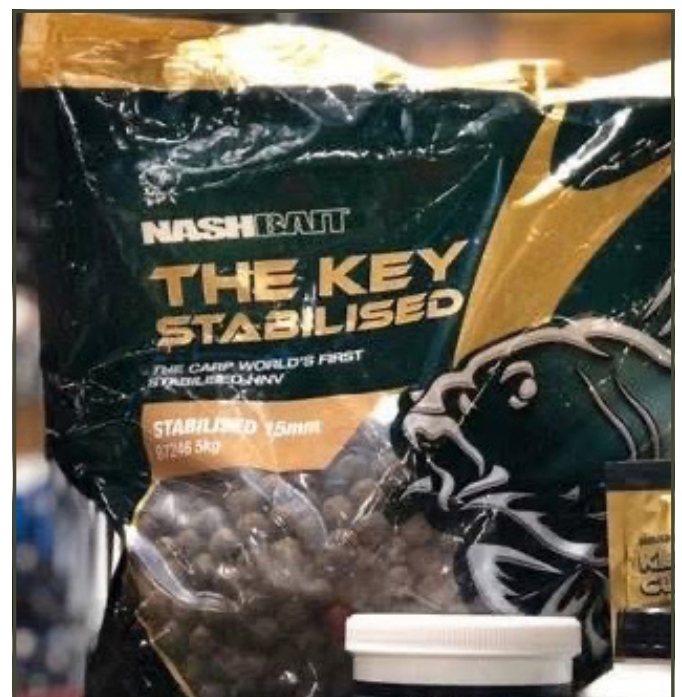
Alan said " It is with heavy hearts that we announce the end of Nashbait. An iconic page of Carpfishing turns today, but its legacy will live on through



the many catches, personal records and memories created on the water.

This decision wasn't an easy one, but it was made to ensure the stability and future of Nash Tackle.

To everyone who has ever trusted Nashbait - THANK YOU! You were part of something special."



Join the Jungle Baits team

Benefits of being a team member:

- Discounted bait
- Access to new products
- Represent the Jungle Baits brand

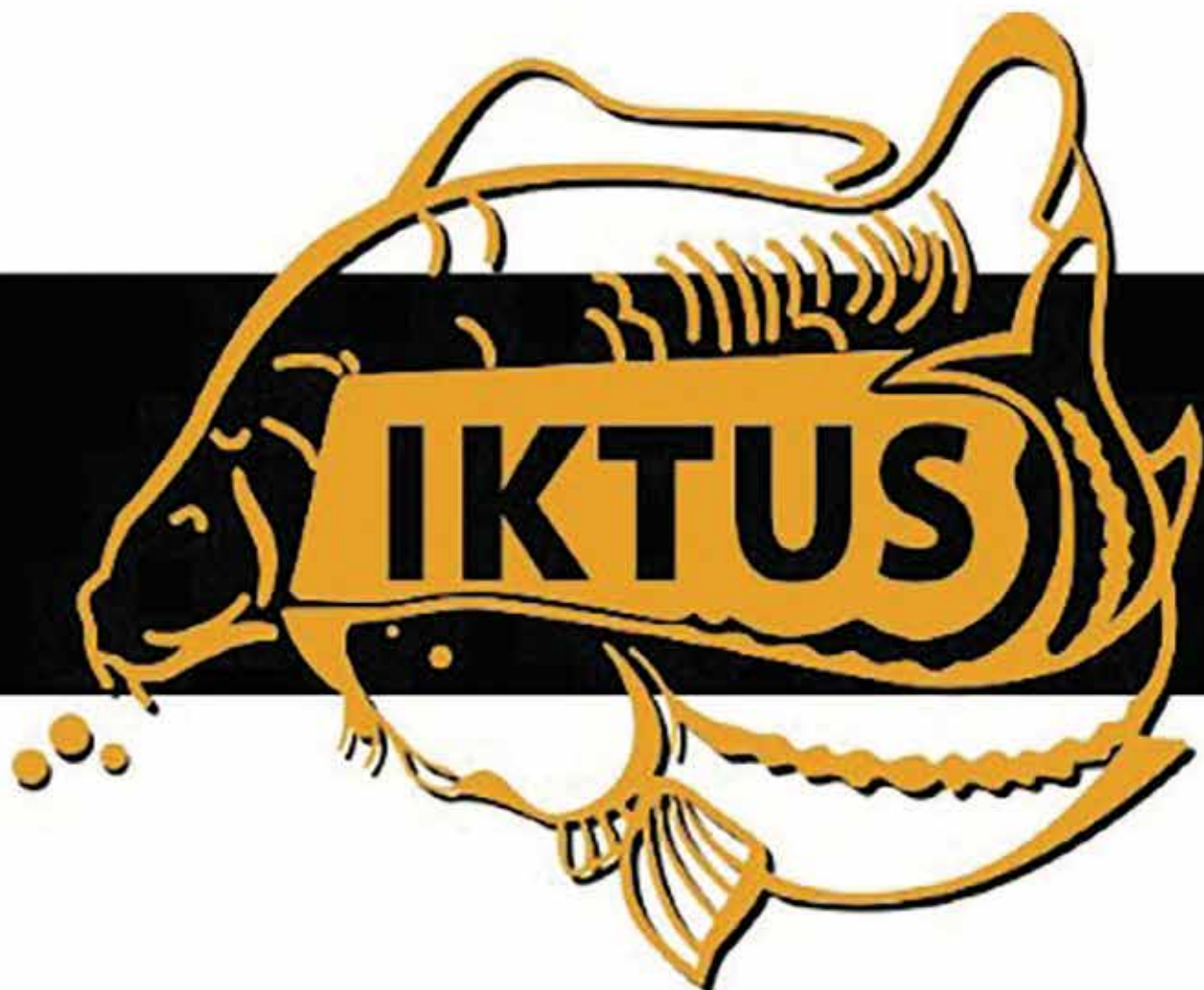
We're on the lookout for people through to being full passionate, dedicated carp consultants for the brand, but anglers to join our team. this obviously depends on

If you are an active angler just how active and involved that is decent with a camera, you are.

then drop us a message to see what's involved..... Face Book DMs are open.

We offer discounted bait based anglers at present. Only accepting 18+ UK

to team members and are For more info check out always looking to push www.junglebaits.shop



FISHING RESORT



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CARP SOCIETY SUMMER SHOW A GREAT SUCCESS

You've probably already read many of the on-line posts about the weekend at Horseshoe. Here are a few photos I took during the setting up period that don't really do it justice and how busy it was on the day. I just wanted to offer my personal thanks to many of the unsung heroes who helped make the day such a success. To Brian Skoyles who gave us such a great event to build on in 2024. To the wonderful Carp Society staff Sabrina Widows, Miles Carter, Karl Goldsmith, Lolly and the family, Des, the two Joes former Plumpton College fishery students were amazing (any time you need a reference guys, put me first on the list). The Horseshoe and other Bailiffs(thanks a million guys) To the Panel Hassan Khan , Joe Turnbull, Neil Spooner, Steve Briggs Jules and Ian Russel, great entertainment and lots of common-sense answers. To the trade and book sellers for their wonderful support, thank you! Special mention to Shimano and the PAC who having broken down en route soldiered on and got there in the end, to the Specialist groups who supported us, John Carver and Craig Lyons for the casting. To my old mates Pete Peter Curtis, Richard Stangroom, the Crabtree Society, Steve Chambers the Crabtree Society Essex, and Greg Fletcher! And the wonderful Jill Grimshaw who did the raffle for us. Thank you all!



And of course Maggie Stritton, my Maggie, who kept me and my blood pressure under control, regularly over the past 4 or 5 months every time I spat my 'dummy out' (without her the event would probably never happened) which was a pretty regular occurrence in the lead up to this weekend! Well as they say we got there in the end! If I've left anyone out, I apologise, it's not intentional the term 'Never Again!' Was a frequently used phrase in our house for some time in the lead up to the day, it usually contained a word beginning with F and ending in G in the middle just to give it real meaning. But as someone once said: 'Never say Never!' Let's see what 2026 brings!

DUNCAN NEWTON SADLY PASSES



“Duncan befriended me back in my Bob Morris Tackle days over 30 years ago. We often crossed paths fishing, at shows and he was always at the end of the telephone, messenger, text etc. He helped me in difficult times; he offered life advice and was always happy no matter what life through at him. His Bivvy was always like a hotel and he used it like one! He snored like a trooper on his regular afternoon siestas! He caught his fair share too. Duncan, we will miss you mate, you gave such much and took so little. Bless you my friend, rest easy, the Darenth Valley will never be the same xxx”

Spencer Humble

MARTIN BROWN JOINS VARDIS



If the addition of our latest recruit doesn't show what we are trying to achieve in terms of brand development, then I don't know what will!!

With limited time at his disposal due to work commitments he still manages to hold PB's well in excess of 40lb. He's been a lynch pin within the industry for many years having set up, managed and promoted multiple high-profile events such as Anglers Against Cancer and the famous Crete Lakes matches!

He has the knowledge and experience of having represented other terminal tackle brands and is backed by none other than Mainline Baits..

All Pairs must have 1 x Qualifying person (Forces/Blue Light or Ex)



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CARP IN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES SHOW HIGH RESILIENCE TO STRESS OF CAPTURE

Common carp which are reared in fish-farms, stocked into recreational fisheries and then captured regularly by catch-and-release angling show much lower chronic stress levels than their wild counterparts that never see an angler's hook, a new study has found.

The findings, published in Plos

One, indicate that although angling capture can be a short-term stressful event, repeated capture does not necessarily result in high levels of chronic stress in these fish.

Although previous research by the team has revealed

associations between the amount of cortisol found in a fish's scales – a sign of chronic stress in fish - and the vulnerability of fish to angling capture, this was the first to compare scale cortisol levels of hatchery-reared (domesticated) carp against wild carp.

Professor Robert Britton of Bournemouth University led the study, where scale cortisol data from domesticated carp in five recreational fisheries was compared with data from five wild populations. Although some wild carp had scale cortisol

concentrations in the range of the domesticated carp, most wild carp had substantially higher scale cortisol - in some cases, well over ten times the cortisol concentration. So, despite their regular angling exploitation, the domesticated carp had much lower levels of chronic stress than those in the wild.

The authors believe these differences in stress resilience relate to the domestication of carp producing strains with traits that include resilience to chronic stressors, coupled with their presence in fisheries where there is an abundance of food available from angling baits. The wild carp might also be more active, for example through searching for food, which could elevate their general cortisol levels.

Professor Britton commented "Our results suggest that the fish that we considered could be most vulnerable to chronic stress from angling could instead be the most stress resilient. This is reassuring that fish welfare in fisheries based on hatchery-reared fish might not be compromised by their regular angling capture." Co-author Dr Josephine Pegg of the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity commented "Recreational fisheries provide significant socioeconomic value worldwide, but it's important to recognise that the animals at the heart of these systems also deserve consideration and care. I'm pleased this work helps advance our understandings around the welfare of fish used in angling".

However, the authors caution that despite the apparent resilience of their fish to chronic stress, fishery managers should continue to apply a range of welfare metrics to safeguard their fish, including monitoring disease levels and water quality, especially during the current period of warm weather.

CARP TACKLE ONLINE LAUNCH NEW SUPER FAST WEBSITE

Take a look at the new super-fast Carp Tackle Online website. Featuring all new drop-down features, new products, new packaging all much faster than before. Here's what the owner Mark Russell had to say...

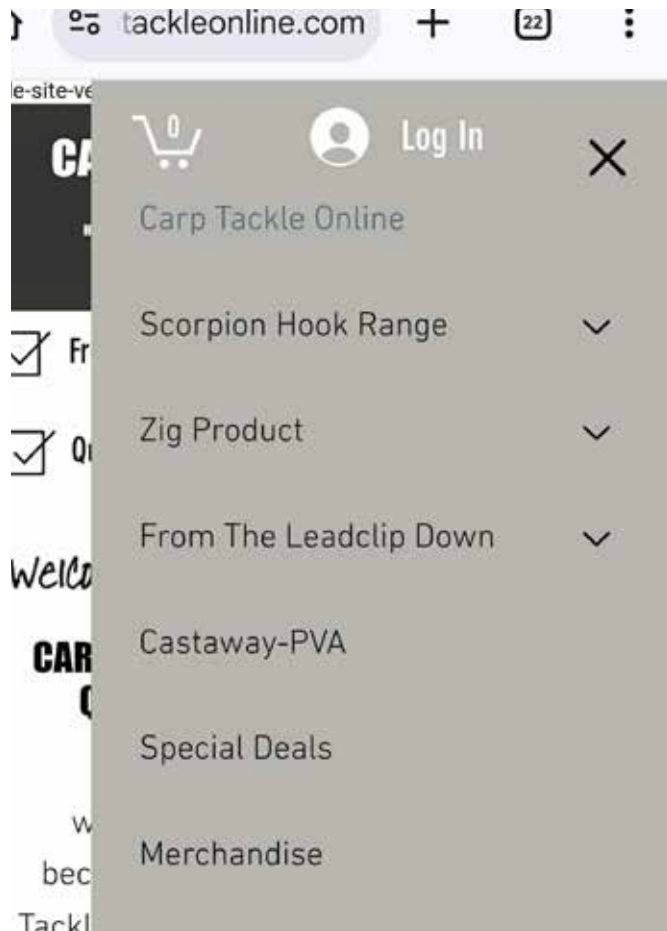
"Our new look website is up and running. The overall look has remained. However, the site is much more reactive than before, making it easier for you to find what you want.

How about 3 packs of hooks for less than a tenner? When you add your hooks to the basket,

select the 30-quantity option to get the best discount!

If you want quality end tackle at affordable prices, then take a look at www.facebook.com. We have listened to your feedback and have optimised the site on both the PC and mobile devices. We have also made the navigation clearer, easier, and quicker by adopting more drop-down menus to take you directly to the product you want.

Please send any feedback by emailing sales.carponline@gmail.com or messaging us on Facebook



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CARP TACKLE ONLINE - DISCOVER THAT QUALITY IS NOT ALL ABOUT COST

Since February 2018, www.carptackleonline.com is fast becoming a well-known online Fishing Tackle Store. Based in Daventry our small but highly dedicated team have many year of experience and have caught many big carp from the UK and abroad. What started out as a hobby has now become our passion and we're delighted to share it with

WINTER CARP SHOW 2025

The Winter Carp Show 2025 launches, and the chance to return for a third unforgettable year at Sandown Park! get hands-on with the latest gear.

Set across two exciting days—Whether you're seasoned Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th or just starting out, it's the November—this premier event perfect setting to meet friends, in the carp angling calendar discover innovations, and soak is back, bigger and better up expert advice. Speaking than ever. With free parking of which, special guests Neil Spooner and Ali Hamidi return enthusiasts are invited to to share insights and stories connect, shop, and celebrate that promise to inspire.

their shared passion in person. Tickets are now on sale, Founder Vince Davies is thrilled and two fantastic VIP ticket to welcome a stellar lineup bundles are available at an of brands including Korda early bird discount from July (featuring an expanded stand), 26th to August 26th. Don't miss this chance to experience the biggest winter celebration of carp angling.

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www.goodzcarpbaits.co.uk

info@goodzcarpbaits.co.uk / 07538 856851



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line roller, makes easy work of spodding at range.

The Turbospod 14000 is exceptionally robust and has a stainless-steel main shaft and a hi-strength graphite body and rotor, keeping it light 680gm for its size. Other features include open bail rotor lock, super slow oscillation for perfect line lay and three captive line clips on the spool for triple spot marking.



For cranking at speed the silk black anodised CNC aluminium handle is fitted with a comfy moulded rubber hand grip. Add in a shallow cast spool which is compatible with most modern-day spodding braids, including Soniks Subsonik Spod/Marker braid and you have the perfect long-range spodding reel.

Each Turbospod reel comes complete with a Sonik branded finger stall to protect your finger when casting with braid.

www.soniksports.com



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Over the years our Compact range of luggage has grown to accomodate every angling situation. Designed by anglers for anglers ensures that each item solves a storage solution, ensuring you stay organised on the bank, so you can focus on the fishing at hand rather than “where’s that?” We thought we would share 7 items from the Dark Kamo range, that are extremely popular and ensure you keep you key compact and tidy this summer:

- Cookware Bag - Food and Cooking kit all wrapped up into one!
- Goo Bag - A carp anglers’ briefcase - keep your options open while carrying just one bag.
- Elasticated Tip & Butt Protectors - Keep your rods secure in transit.

■ www.kordataackle.com



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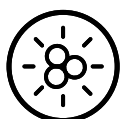


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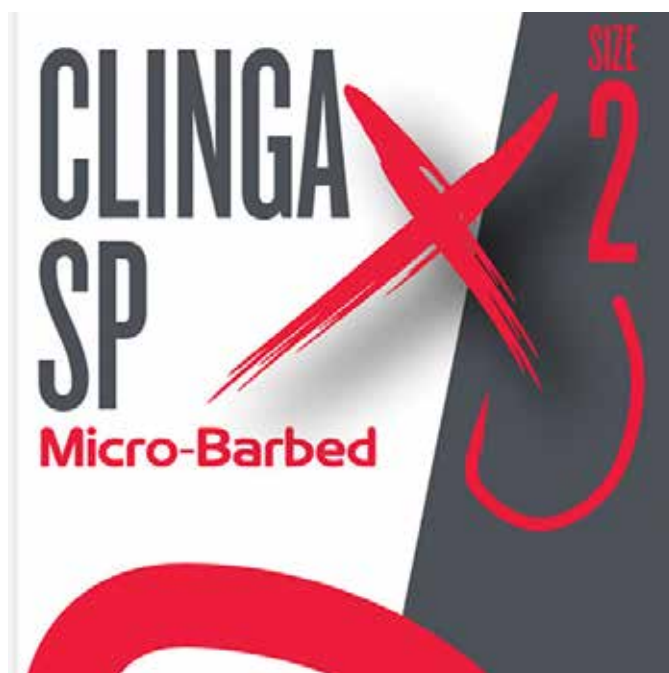
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Team member Scott Johnson is another that has been out and managed to bag a few fish. "Done 48 hours over the bank holiday, 5 fish out from 15 - 24.7lb all on slip D size 4 Scorpion solid bags." Well done Scott, great angling.



Team member James Johnson sent this update from a recent session. "First time up on Lyons Drove big res this weekend managed to bag myself three nice commons 2@20lb 1@16lb all on size 6 Scorpion Ronnie cranks fished with 12mm pop ups" Well done James.



A quality session recently for team member John Paul McCusker, after the 1st night drew a blank John was halfway through moving swims in the morning. "But I've seen a couple of fish nut out mid-move so I decided to stay. The next 24 hours resulted in 6 fish with 4 going over 30 to 37lb. Buzzing with that. All caught on solid bags. Using Carponline Scorpion ready made Ronnies and Carponline top hat sleeves for the drop off leads. Well done John Paul, Great skills.



Red letter day with a pb common for team member Scott Johnson!! "So I've had 11 fish, some high teens, with some lovely low 20s. But the star was a new pb 38.7lb common.



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INNER CITY IMPRESSES



Lewis London with a 44lb 8oz inner city common

BERNERS BEAST BANKED



Levente Onodi absolutely smashed his personal best with none other than Grumpy, the lake's biggest resident, at a spawned-out weight of 51lb 6oz!

CATCH REPORTS

'SI' OF RELIEF

Despite limited time for Si Kenny prioritising location resulted in this serious fish



AWESOME ORCHID

Sonny Keen landed "No Name" at an impressive 45lb 12oz while fishing from the Orchids Royal Box swim



THE PRICE IS RIGHT



The Beast has made an appearance for Joseph Price-Evan with his new UK PB of 51lb 12oz!

CATCH REPORTS

PARADISE FOR ZENIA



HUGE CONGRATULATIONS to our very own Zenia, who has only gone and got a complex record Common at 44lb

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EMPTY TANKS



Jon Williams ended his latest campaign with TYSON! For the record she went 49.10 proper empty but It really didn't matter

MORNING GLORY



Nice morning bite resulting In this 48lb common from one of the Chelmsford club lakes for John Pope

FRET NOT



Sean Fretwell landed the Big fully @44.4oz...it's good to be lucky

ROACH'S FULLY

Phil Andrews
with the Small
Scale Fully at
42lb from Roach
Pit



**PB FOR
AJ**



On B1, AJ Tharratt had a great session landing 6 20's to 28lb 13oz, a 35lb 7oz then his new PB of 45lb 3oz!

**SEND YOUR CATCH
REPORTS IN TO
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CLASSIC COMMON



Olly Hughes with one of Readings old guard. Spawned out at 41 lb

OVER THE MOON



The 'Buck moon' or 'Strawberry moon' comes good for Andrew Parkinson finally a furze 40!!

AS GOOD AS IT GETS!!



Do they come any better? 40lb plus of pure old English brute for Shaun Bickford

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



Report from the weekend "Hi Mick it's Dean and son Archie Had a fantastic 36 hours on swim 11 over 20 carp and about 7 sizeable bream loads of partical orange northern special pop ups doing the business , cheers". Good to hear from Dean and Archie they always do well.

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



19lb Ghostie



23lb



29lb 8oz



21lb



24lb



18lb 10oz another magic session



21lb



New PB at 30lb for Thomas



30lb 10oz for Del Boy



30lb 12oz

AM Baits doing the business for Gary with another 30+



The Big Mirror over 30lb



32lb

Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



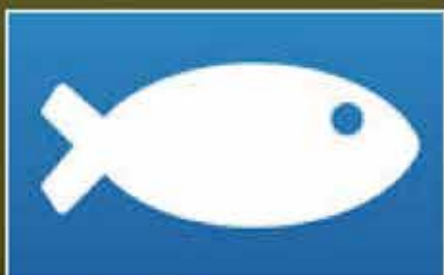
16 lbs 1oz he's having a good session



16 lbs 2oz



16 lbs 2oz



**AVAILABLE
SWIMBOOKER**



28 lbs 4 oz Dean had only had his rods out half an hour!



Double run



Had one of our Fat Boys breakfasts. 20 minutes later this nice mid double turned up >>



26 lbs 4 oz no stopping him this session



CATCH REPORTS

**NEW
PB!!**

Kris Hillier with a new
PB of 43lb 4oz from
Linear Fisheries



**SQUID
GAMES**



Mike Reynolds banked this one at 49lb 4oz from his Lincolnshire syndicate using Hot Squid barrel wafers.

NO WORDS

Garry Atkin with
51lb of old English
perfection.



KEEGAN SCORES

Keegan Flower
with Tilly at 50lb
8oz



RANGE MASTER

Alex Woodcock
with a New
PB Mirror 58lb
hooked it at
range



LOCKED UP

One half of a
brace of upper-40s
for Pete Kingsbury
on a midweek
overnighter on
Horton's Church
Lake.



SO CLOSE

The Pritty one from his Cambridge syndicate for Rick Paul UK pb 49lb15oz of power house



KING SCORES



Peter King with the Football Sutton, from Kingsmead on the Horton complex, at a weight of 50lb 2oz.

BARHAM BANGER



After seeing a big Barham Syndicate common swim through a gap between a small set of pads Mark Bell quickly boated out and dropped his rig in the channel. 5hrs later the rod was away to the right with this stunning 46lb 10oz common

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MANOR MONSTERS



Manor Farm has always been known as a big fish water. Paddy Ramsden certainly confirmed this by landing 10 carp with the 3 biggest going 38lb 2oz, 41lb 14oz and his new PB of 49lb 15oz!

B1 AND B2 BEAUTIES



Fishing on B2, Mason and Josh landed 8 then a move to B1 catching another 6. This including a PB for Josh at 42lb 8oz!! and Mason's new PB at 43lb 8oz!!



HUGE HORTON HAUL FOR BEN



Ben Barr, with one of the Church Lake A Team, Lester, at 47lb 4oz... part of a 13-fish haul that also included 5x 30s, another upper 40, and a 50-pounder, too

COTTINGHAM CLONKER



Fishery Manger
Lee Randall with the
biggun at 47lb12oz

SWAN HAUL



Ryan Woodlands landed 13 and lost 2 including 4 scale @ 41lb 10oz, 3 x 30's, even the infamous Orange Lin made an appearance

NICE ONE NEIL



Neil Spooner with a
superb 40.4lb

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Alternatively you could take advantage of flights from the UK to Nantes. Nantes is 88km from the lake. Supermarkets, petrol station, banks, post office are all nearby as is a swimming pool, horse riding, golf, a cinema and bowling. We are also just 1 hour 10 mins from the beach and 1 hour 30 mins from Futurascope.

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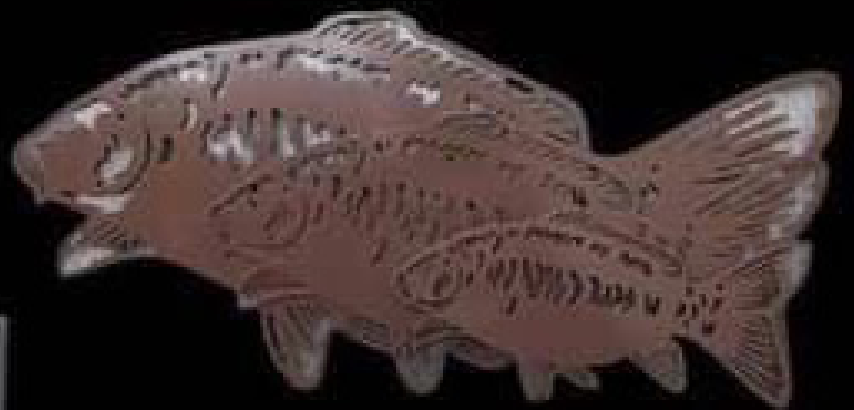
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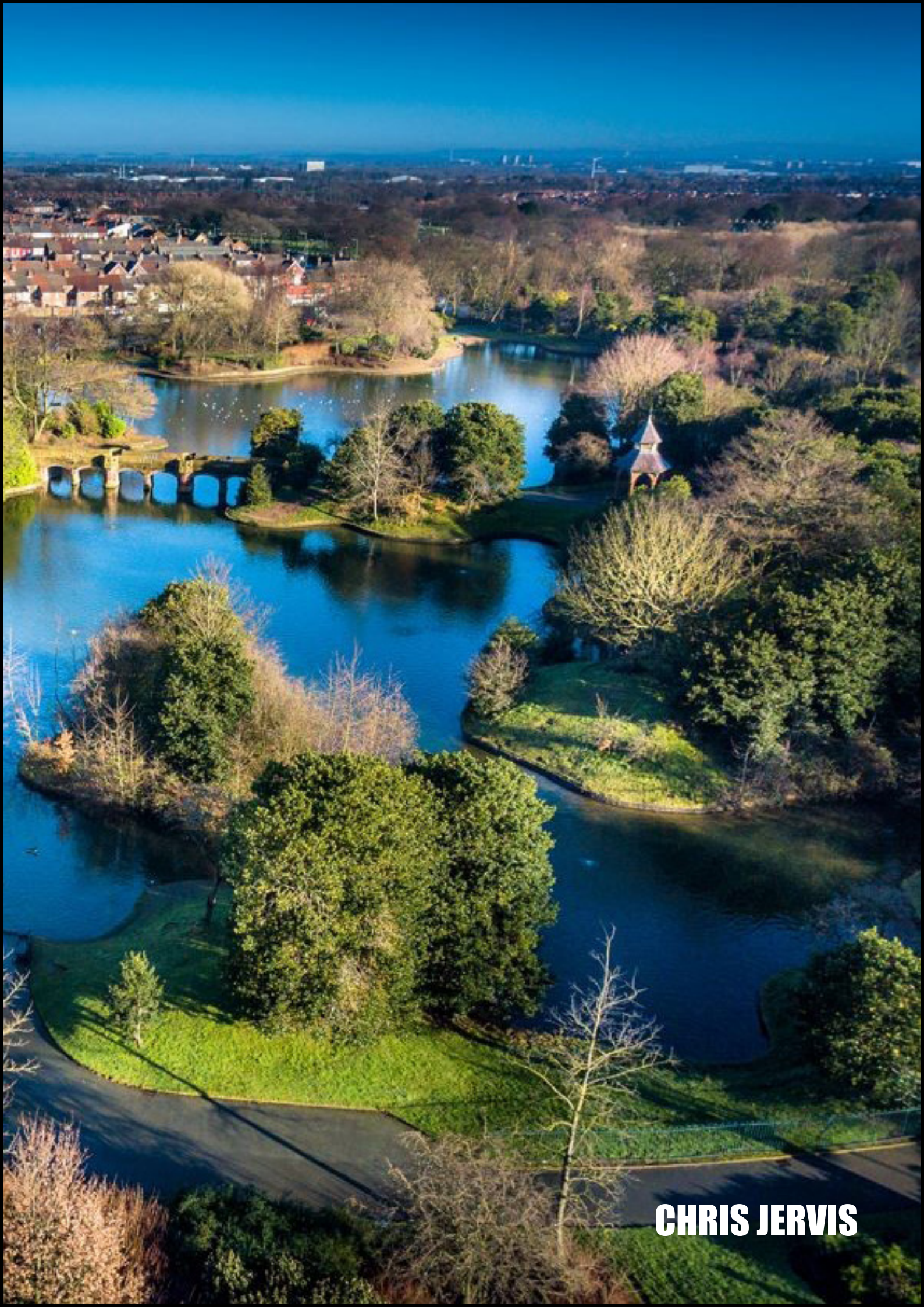


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CHRIS JERVIS

URBAN CAMPAIGN

It all started with a me to come and take the phone call. A mate of mine rang to say he'd just landed one of the park lake's most sought-after residents—a stunning 28lb half-linear mirror. Knowing how much I love a good mirror carp, he asked me to come and take the photos. As I snapped away, admiring the incredible fish, he casually mentioned, "You should give this lake a go. The big common goes around 38lb." A fish of that size from a public park lake? I was hooked already.

I decided to start my on the rods. Over the next campaign on Father's Day, three weeks, I fished four day Sunday the 15th, and took my sessions, averaging 3-4 carp youngest daughter with me. per session. It became a lovely My sights weren't set on the little routine—my daughter big common just yet—I had joining me after school, us my heart set on the half-lin sharing the moments, laughing, he'd caught the week before. I learning, and catching some even set up in the same swim. proper stunners.

That first afternoon, we There aren't many mirrors managed three carp. It was a in this lake, but we managed brilliant start, especially with five, including the baby fully, my daughter enjoying the the big fully, the baby half-lin, sunshine and getting involved and a cracking 20lb mirror.





Then the commons started showing up—pristine, chunky, and powerful, with multiple 20s gracing the net.

Throughout the campaign, I kept things simple but effective. All my bites came on the multi combi rig, which

I have total confidence in. As the third week approached, I paired this with a Garlic Elevate Baits hookbait, topped with a bright pink sweetcorn topper to give it that extra visual kick. All of this was

fished over a generous bed of OMC Paella—a proper combo that clearly got the fish grubbing. The consistency

in bites was unreal, and I honestly wouldn't change a thing. It's a setup that did the damage time and time again.

I had a free weekend and decided to squeeze in a Friday day session. I arrived early, just before first light, and landed three carp before 8am.



I sent the pics to my mate and joked, “I’m due one of the big ‘uns now!” He agreed and said he’d join me for a night session on Saturday. I pre-baited my spots and thought, why not give my first night on the lake a go?

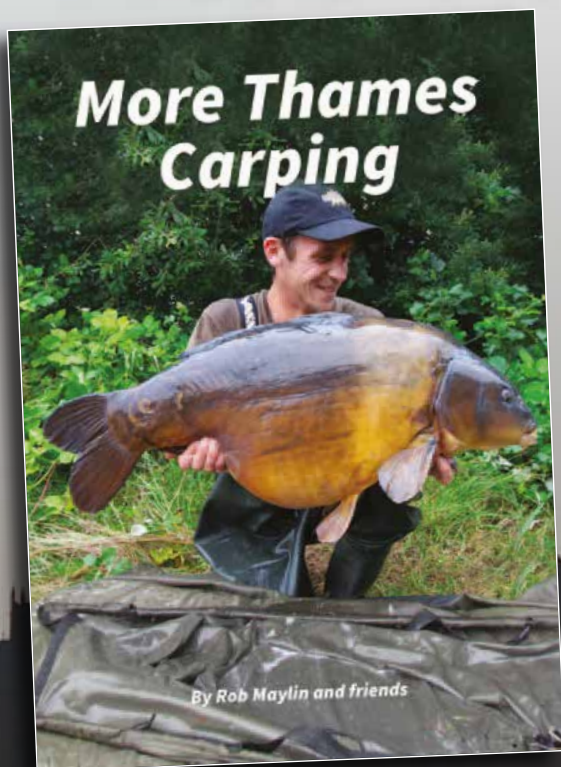
That Saturday, my partner came down with tea, and we sat by the lake watching the sun dip behind the trees, fish

showing over our spots. It was quiet on my side, though. My mate had dropped into the peg next to me and as soon as he was set up—boom, his rod was away. He had three that evening, and I started thinking maybe I should stick to day sessions, haha.

But later that night, my rod absolutely tore off. The take was savage—it felt like a

More Thames Carping

By Rob Maylin and friends



Thames Carping was our best-selling book of 2019 and for a good reason. The Thames has everything a carp angler could possibly want, plenty of water, it's the biggest carp water in the country, unknown stock, a stock which increases every time we have a flood, an element of the unknown (getting more known), very rare in today's carp scene where every carp is flogged, logged, blogged and caught by an endless stream of bounty hunters.

Yes, the Thames really is the last frontier to be fully exploited. Thames carp anglers have many attributes of old school carping, stealthy, secretive and not bothered at all by the size of what they catch, although, like the old school, still hoping it's the fish of a life time when the buzzer shrieks out!

For Thames carpers the build-up too is very old school, they still have the close season, so this time is not wasted, as it was not years ago, recce's, baiting up, getting baits established, building up swims, while always being conscious that to be discovered would be the end of their hard work, so coming and going discreetly, under cover of darkness, a covert operation. Their cards held tightly to their chests. And this is why of course that books on Thames carping are so rare and so readable.

You see within these pages are their secrets revealed for all to see. Not blatant, no map grids in longitude and latitude to the latest hot spots but within the lines, read only by anglers who know what to look for. A clue here, a landmark there. All part of the ultimate jigsaw. So why do these secretive anglers choose to write, well simply because I ask them.

Sometimes over several years. Most eventually agree, I am persuasive, arguing at their catches need to be documented and be part of the history books for years to come. Which is true, and why they do it. Not for money, to promote something or even self-gratification but to be part of our great angling heritage. So that their kids and grandkids can look back and say "look! there's grandad with a beautiful Thames Carp. He would spend hundreds, even thousands of hours fishing for them.

So, here's what we have, and may I say you will not be disappointed. Some truly amazing Thames carp, from different stretches, some urban some rural, some well in land and some tidal, but all from the amazing 'Old Father Thames'.

Let's start with Ash Geden, who takes the cover positions again. His 2018-19 season made riveting reading in book one. In this volume he is back for his 2019-2020 season with equally incredible results. Many huge carp, several over forty, the front cover leviathan being totally new. He is a great river angler with a gift for writing, you will love his next instalment. Simon Rumsey has been on a journey while fishing the Thames, like many I suppose, in search of a thirty, or even bigger!

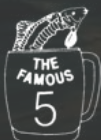
Andrew Sadler has discovered some Thames secrets during his many years on the Thames, for you the reader, he divulges all. Graham Stevens is a Thames stalwart, having written several articles in Big Carp and a couple of chapters in the first Thames book he is back in this volume to tell you how he does it. A technical A-Z for all to learn from, novice or expert Graham has some edges for you all.

The Teddington Tank by Vince Humphreys is a chapter about a huge common, that fish of a life time that he freely admits was totally unexpected, but that's the beauty of the Thames.

Thames common by Mark Cook, yes, there's a theme developing here, A huge Thames common, one never to be forgotten. River Thames, Same swim, Same carp ... 6 months apart by Christopher Stockley is a great account which proves how territorial even Thames carp can be. My Love for the Tidal Thames a Brief History, By Roger Baker. Is a trip down memory lane for all those who like the history chapters? Thirty years on the Tidal, some huge carp too. One of my favourite Thames stories yet.

A Thames Monster featuring Pete The Pirate, is pretty self-explanatory, while prolific Thames carp catcher Danny Boy Hill, shows us just what's possible with a breath-taking gallery of Thames specimens. Add to these life history articles on the Thames by Jason Townsend, Ben Frewin, Mark Anthony, Vince Humphries, Tom James and constantan Thames carp catch 'The Thames Warrior' it's obvious that this book is another must read for not only river anglers but all carp anglers interested in something a bit different from the norm. A book you will read over and over again. History in the making, our UK heritage of Thames carp.

Rob Maylin



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lump. The line ripped through the water and I had that gut-wrenching feeling. As it rolled near the bank like a crocodile, the hook pulled. I was gutted. It was the first fish I'd lost in three weeks, and I instantly knew why. The lead hadn't dropped. I always fish drop-off leads for the fish's safety, and this one time it failed, it cost me dearly. I told my mate,

"That was the big one." He tried to convince me otherwise, but I knew. My stomach was in knots. Still, I regrouped and got the rod back out. I climbed into the bivvy, determined to put it behind me.

Sunday morning, 6:00am, the alarm screamed again—a lovely common. We grabbed some pictures, then slipped it back. Then another bite. Two





carp in 15 minutes. I was back in the game.

Fish were showing, and I didn't want to waste time with photos on this one. My mate laughed, "You're getting confident now—not even snapping pics!"

Then at 6:40am, the rod absolutely ripped again. This one felt different. I knew it was a big fish. I kept steady pressure, guiding it around the weed beds. As it came in close, my mate looked at me and said, "This is one of the A-Team."

He slipped the net under it, and we both leaned over to peek in. What. A. Fish. The head alone was monstrous. We grabbed the scales, and I jumped into the lake with the sling. He didn't show me the dial at first... then I saw it: 37lb 4oz. The big common.

Three weeks to the day since I started the campaign landing 17 carp, 1 Tench and losing the 1 carp.

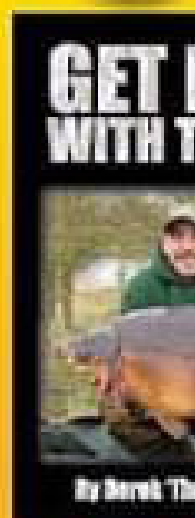
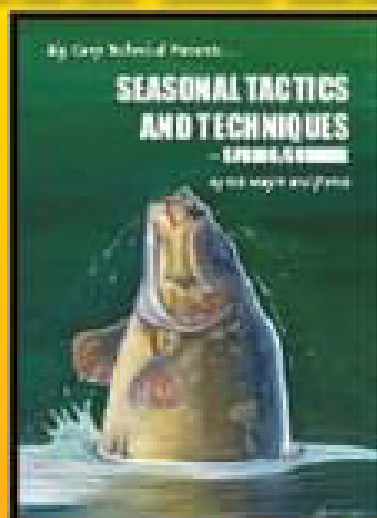
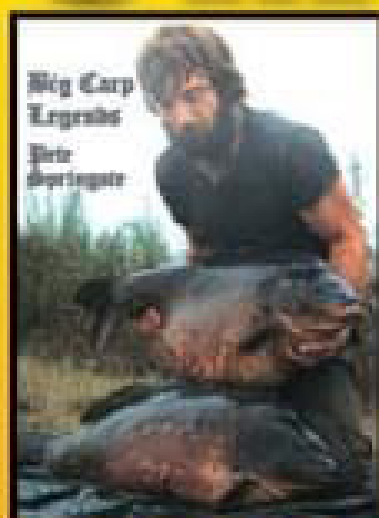
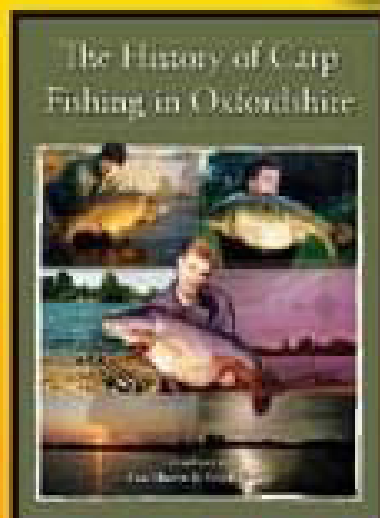
I was buzzing. I grabbed my phone and rang my partner: "Wake up i have it , Get Ameila out of bed and get down here—she has to see this." We live just down the road, so they were there in minutes. Her little face when she saw that fish—pure magic. Moments like that will stay with her (and me) forever.

Sharing these experiences with the next generation of anglers is what it's all about. I've recently qualified as an angling coach, and I now teach around 30 local kids a week. Showing them how to fish safely on the local park lakes, teaching respect for nature, and giving them something positive to focus on.

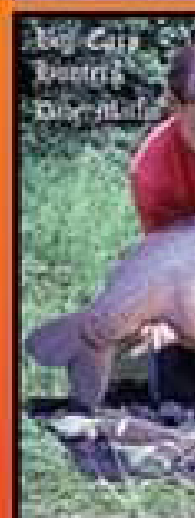
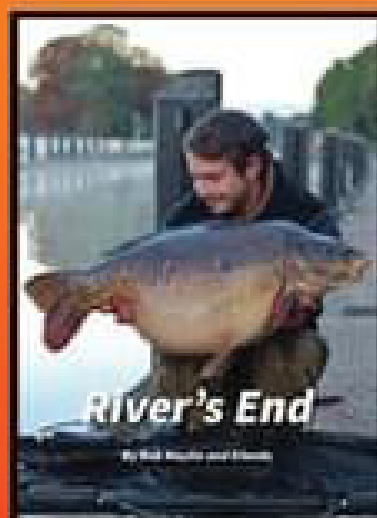
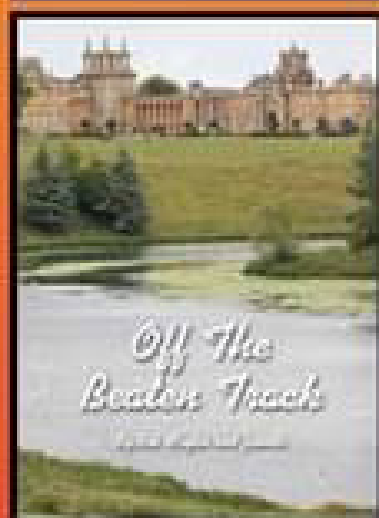
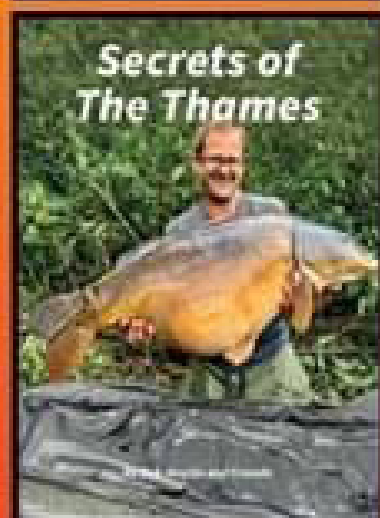
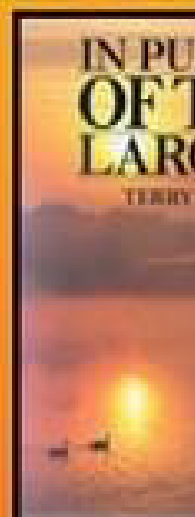
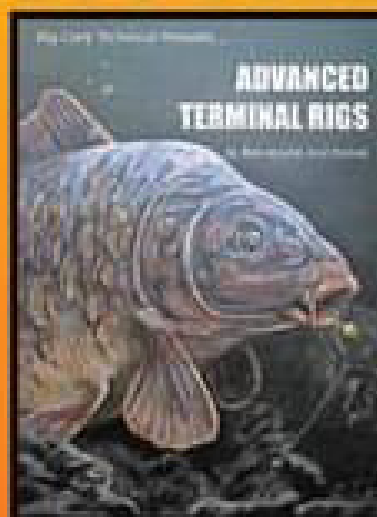
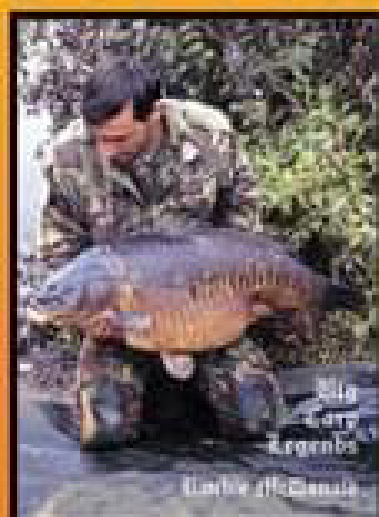
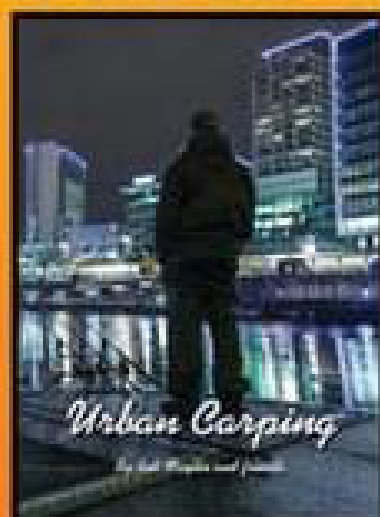
It's more than fishing. It's purpose, connection, and community.

And sometimes, just sometimes, it ends with a 37lb common in the net, thanks to a multi combi rig and a killer bait combo.

SUMMER S



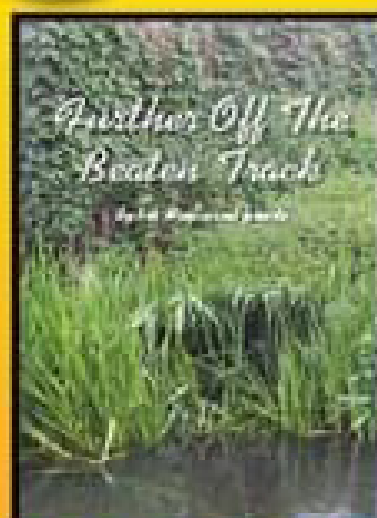
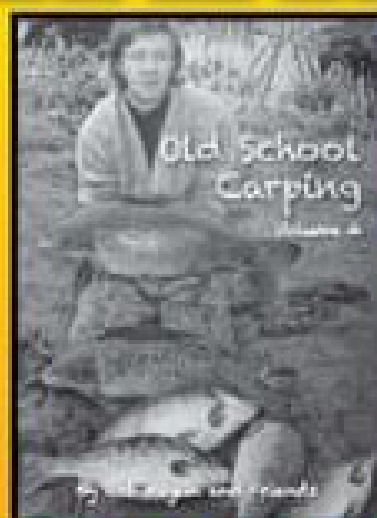
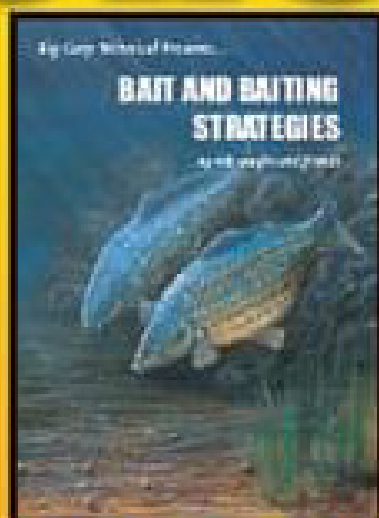
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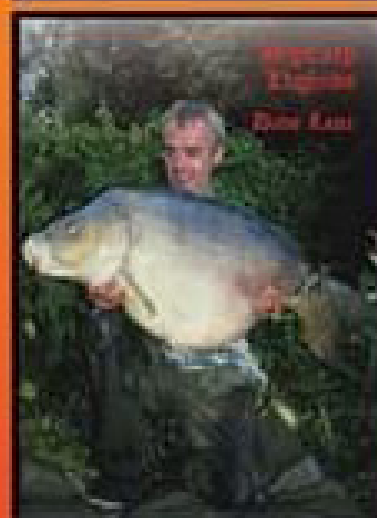
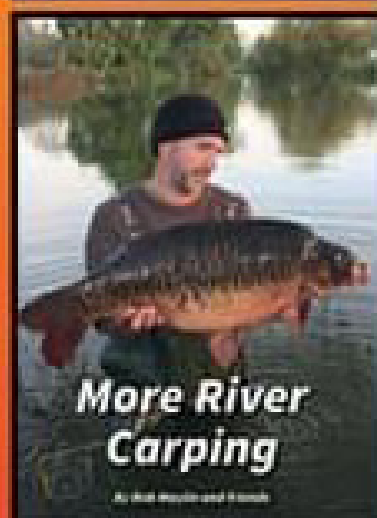
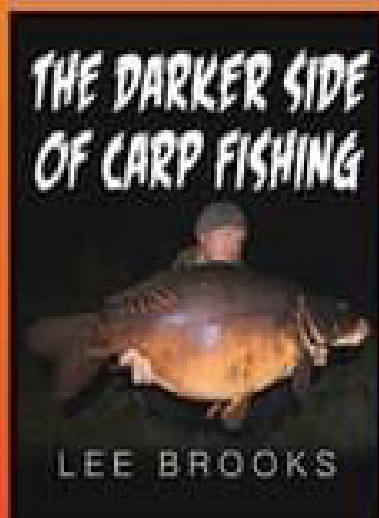
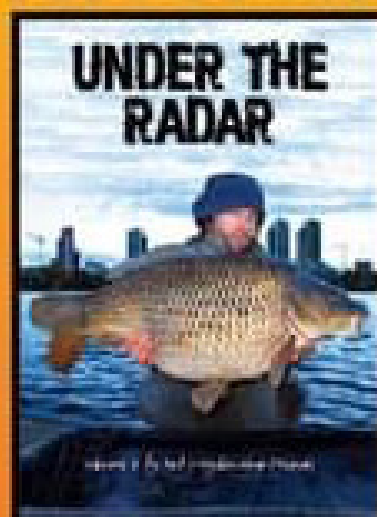
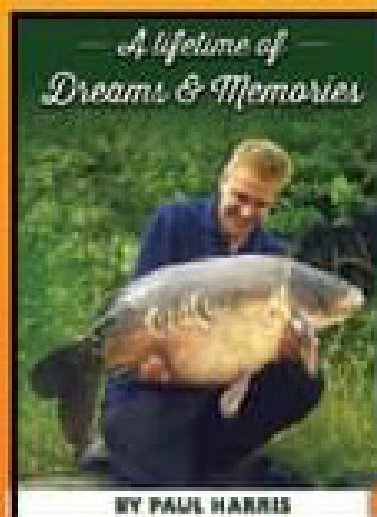
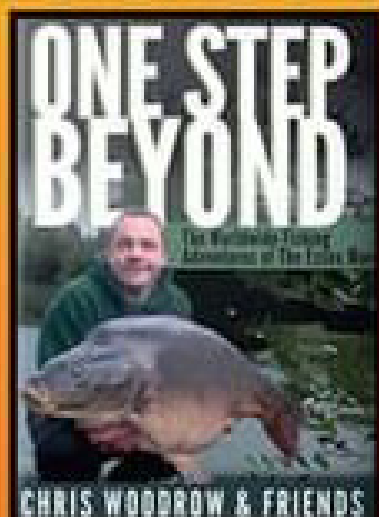
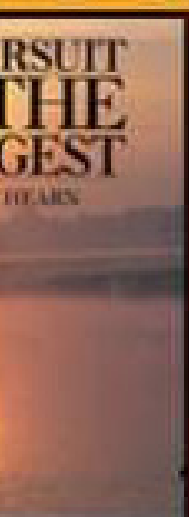
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GAZ DILLON

THE FOUNDRY

My Second trip out this year on the foundry syndicate . With big SSW winds and pressure drop forecast for the day after I arrived I hoped the lake would do few bites and it didn't disappoint.

Three rods with Pineapple & Butyric pop ups fished tight at 120 yards with 5kg of Nuti-b Boilies crushed and whole tight over the top. As forcast the near 50 mph wind arrived and the fish responded and at 2.30pm



the first rod was away with not to much trouble a lovely 32lb mirror was in net , With no hope of getting rod back out I was down to two rods but not for long as the second rod was away a much heavier slower fight this one after a long battle it was in the net and at 37.8lb I was happy with that .

With one rod left on spot about an hour later it was away with a big fish bite very steady take and fight felt different i had to take to the boat because it was

heading to a near margin snag, after a short boat battle in 50mph wind (not recommended) I slipped the net under my first 40 of the year with this lovely 40.6 common. Hopefully I'll be out angling more this year and with 100% confidence in bait it's one less thing to think about.

If anyone's looking for a new bait drop myself or the main man jason holden a message you won't be disappointed Have great year all keep at um



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

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

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GAZ FAREHAM

WORK NIGHT

When I started in Reading last spring, it was purely as somewhere local to work and a better option than a long commute every day. I told myself I wouldn't get too 'into' it, and that work had to remain the focus, which it did, but the angler in me just couldn't settle for only giving it a half-hearted effort, so I ended up walking, looking and



angling as hard as I could. If it took me two hours to find them, and another hour to get them out at 34 wraps over bait, then so be it.

They seemed to spend a lot of time out at range in the relatively safe middle zones, so it ended up being a range game, trying to nick bites during the hours I was there. The lake itself was an odd one – being painfully daytime orientated it made trying to get night bites a difficult prospect, and it took me a few weeks to work it all out.

Being predominantly silty, shallow and with vast areas of low-lying silk weed in the late spring and summer meant that heli's and long hinges were often first choice, not wanting to spend too long leading around as I was often setting up on fish. Heli Safes on a few feet of leadcore with 4-5oz leads for the range were the mainstay, ensuring I could drop the leads and not

have too many dramas with the weed.

This mirror was one I'd seen a shot of and earmarked as the 'most wanted', even though I didn't want to start thinking about targets, I couldn't help thinking this would be a mega one to add to the album. By far the best looking of the big uns.

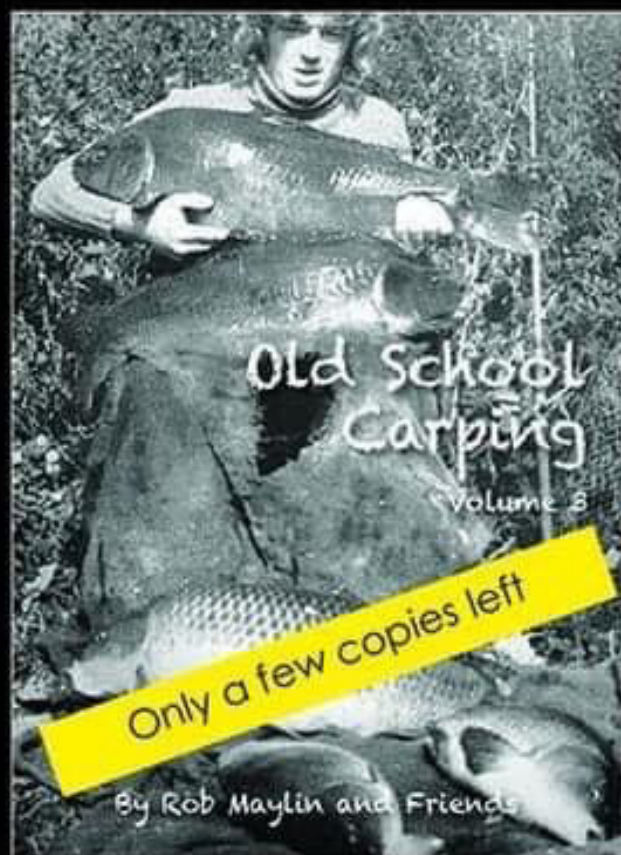
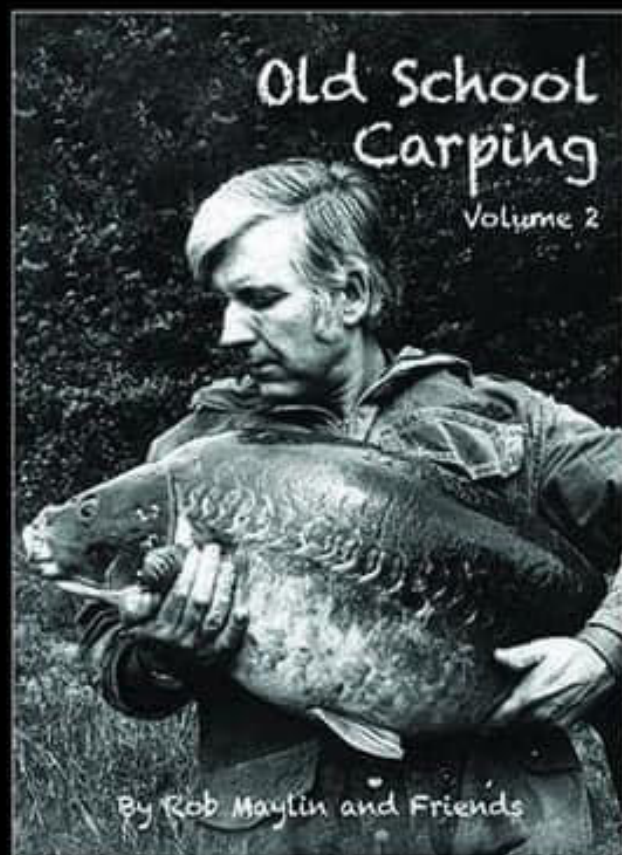
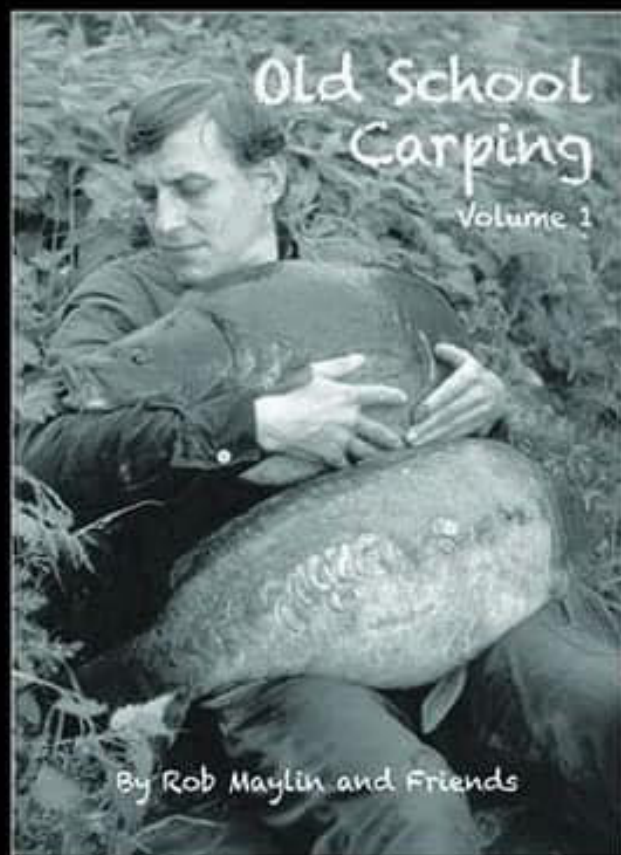
I'd seen a few shows out at range as I was packing up the previous morning and noted it for that night, arriving back around 5.45 after work. Thankfully the area was free, no one else had pre-empted the fresh NW wind and I got them all out sweet, finding a lovely firm spot amongst the silt and weed right in the area they'd shown – without doubt an area they'd freshly harvested.

It all came together perfectly. A rare one from the pit, and one I didn't expect to be crossing paths with – 'Blackspot' at 43

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HAYDN HOSKINS

WRAYSBURY'S RECORD COMMON

On a pretty hectic session, a couple of weeks ago, I actually lost this one at the net. I only mentioned it to a couple of people as that loss hurt more than I could have imagined. Knowing a 40lb common was inches away from being landed, was so painful and that the hook had pulled for no apparent reason, just stuck the knife in that little bit more.

This saturday, i looked at the weather and thought "i'm getting wet if i'm going fishing!" Having this in mind already, i knew i might as well bait up, get set up rods out etc all in one hit. Arriving to see a central area free, i was quickly getting my things together, when the rain started... it didn't stop! Not to be deterred, i spent a good hour plus putting out an entire





bucket of scopex squid and citruz and was soon relaxing the pitter patter of raindrops on my bivvy. Lyle turned up and i said to him jokingly, i am having the long sutton or that 40lb common i lost a couple of weeks ago tonight and thought no more of it. Fishing at over 100yards, i had a midnight bite. All was well until around 30 yards out, when it randomly dropped off! I was so annoyed now as i know my rigs work well and thought the chance may have gone. I was surprised there was no more action by morning and 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. The scales were pulled round to a record breaking 45lb!! I couldn't believe my luck.



The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

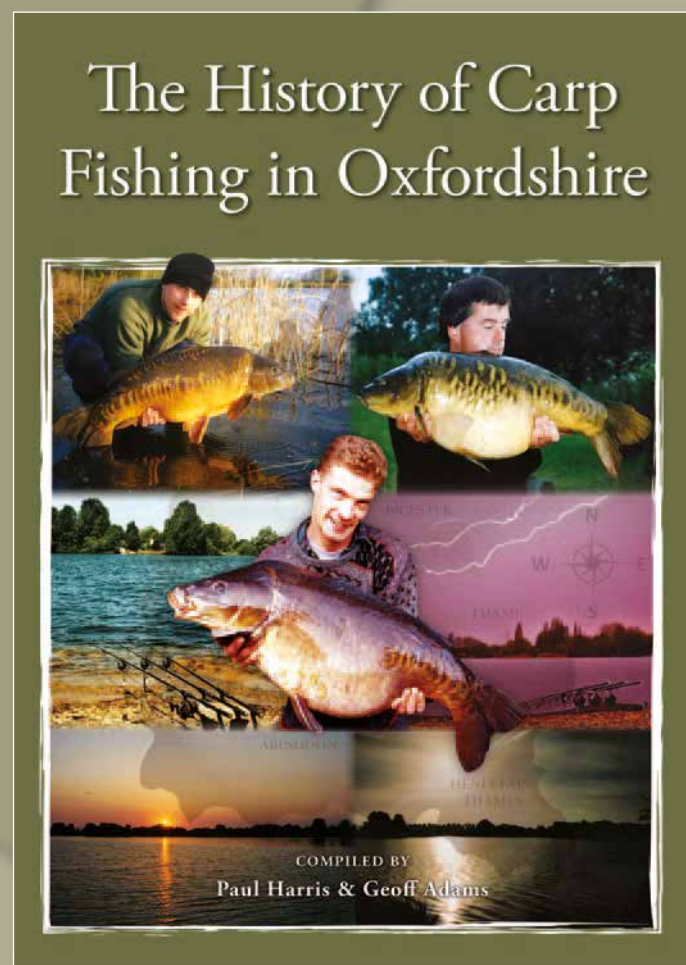
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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



JONNY OLD

BIG PIT SUCCESS

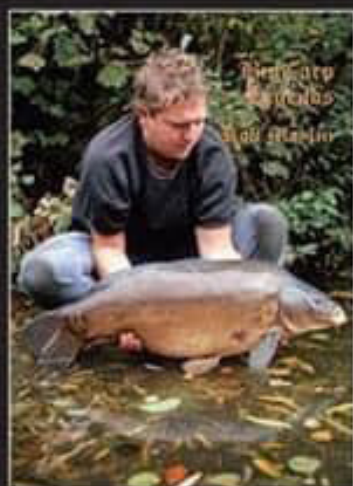
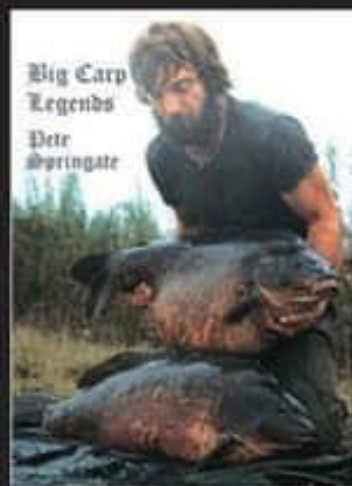
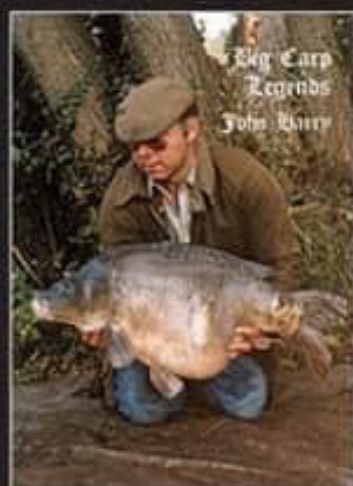
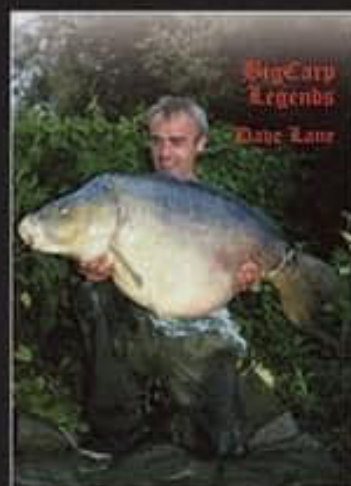
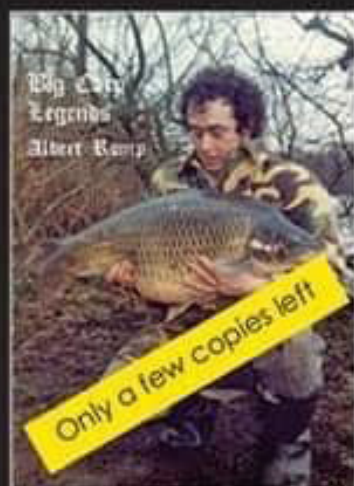
A couple of crackers from my first trip to a 65-acre sailing pit. After a quiet first night, I was awake and watching as light broke, hoping I'd see some signs. It soon became clear there were carp showing at the other end in the open water. I quickly wound the rods in and got round to where they were, just to establish exactly where they were showing. With big winds forecast, I anticipated the carp would react and move to a more fishable range, so I packed the kit down and barrowed into the new swim.

I soon found a nice firm seam in the open water, baiting with a few kilos of Cell, pellets and tigers. This appeared to be a mistake as within 30 minutes, I began catching tench and after six tench in a couple of hours, I re-baited, this time with 5kg of pure Cell 18mm boilie.



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The anglers that shaped today's carp scene



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MICKEY BEE

'ECTIC AT ECTON

Ecton lakes are a group of lakes nestled deep within the Nene Valley that are steeped in carp fishing history and heritage once owned by the late, great, Alan Taylor and now run and managed impeccably by his son Luke, the Ecton complex carries a serious carp fishing pedigree. There are three breathtakingly beautiful lakes available on the Ecton ticket, those being Jigsaw Lake, Clover Lake and the Big Lake. All offering their own challenges with varying levels of reward to the angler. All the lakes at Ecton are wild, natural lakes that have been left to mature over

decades, in a well-balanced environment to create a truly jaw dropping back drop for all that are lucky enough fish upon its banks.

I've known about the Ecton complex for many years; it was always one of those waters that I had intended to fish but never actually got around to. There was a fish that would come up in the angling press from time to time, which was an absolute pearler of a mirror carp, a real fish of lifetime, a genuine banger and I wanted it! The fish in question was an old English mid-40 mirror called "The big lin" but in this fish's instance – the weight was very much irrelevant as its colours, scale pattern and general proportions were off the charts. Having decided that I needed to catch this mega fish I finally enquired about a ticket; I was expecting to be greeted with the old waiting list mumbo jumbo but instead

was granted a full ticket immediately – RESULT.

Having secured my ticket for the Big Lake and knowing virtually nothing about it, I decided to start to find out everything that I could about the place; this was when my eyes were first opened. The consensus from people that are in the know, was that the old big linear that I wanted so bad, had probably escaped during heavy floods, as it hadn't been caught in around 5 years or so. That news initially, crushed me but I was also made aware of another linear that resided within the Ecton Big lake, equally as desirable as the big lin except this fish was ironically called the little linear. A mid 40 mirror that's long, lean, dark and scaley which was more than likely to be older than me, this fish ticked all the boxes and that fire that was almost extinguished was now very

much ablaze again. If the big lin had indeed escaped during the floods, at least I had a new target to chase around the pond, albeit the little lin hadn't been caught in almost two years either.

I decided to get myself down to the lake and just go for a simple walk around - no tackle, no bait and no expectations, just myself and a pair of polaroids. I really wanted to go down and get a feel for the place. The drive to Ecton is around an hour and half from door to lake and when I first pulled into the car park - I was buzzing. I could see the big lakes outline on my satnav, I knew that the lake was 100 yards directly in front of me, but I couldn't see it due to the dense woodlands that surround the big lakes banks. To get to the water's edge on the big lake, you find yourself following meandering, worn trails in the long grass leading

into a hollowed-out tunnels through the trees where anglers have passed through for donkey's years. As you get to the water's edge you're greeted with what can only be described as a carp fishing nirvana, the big Lake is the Carpiest lake I've ever seen; shallow reed lined bays, over hanging willows, snag points, bars and the big lake even has its very own archipelago running down the centre of the lake. The four islands that run down the centre of the big lake cover an estimated 8 acres of the 38-acre pits area, together the islands virtually divide the lake in two. With a choice of two banks to fish; the roadside and the riverside bank.

That first walk around was a real eye opener for me, I noticed that that roadside bank (that offers parking behind your swim) was very busy with almost every other swim taken which made

looking for carp very difficult. How could I find the fish if I couldn't get to the water's edge to look for them?

I certainly wasn't going to disturb other anglers just to have look at the lake from their swim, so I carried on walking and investigating where I eventually found my way to the riverside bank. The riverside bank offers no nearby parking. The swims on offer along that bank require a substantial barrow, which clearly put some members off, which could be an edge. All advantages are welcomed these days.

As I walked along the riverside bank, I began to find the odd fish lazing around in the morning's sunshine. Out of reach from the anglers on the roadside bank. Intense angling pressure pushing the fish from the roadside bank to the sanctuary of the riverside bank.

The estimated stock in the

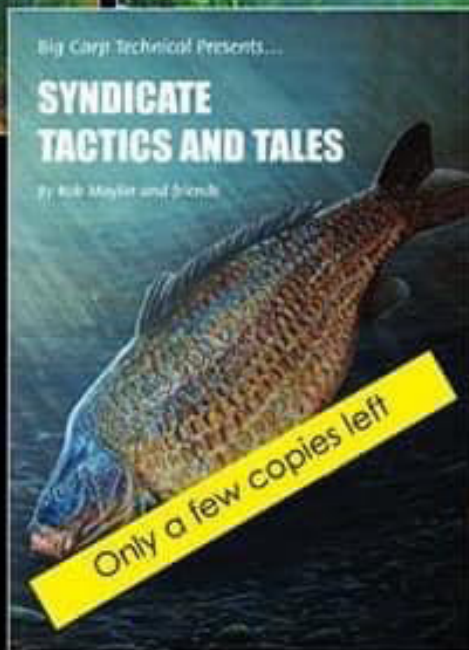
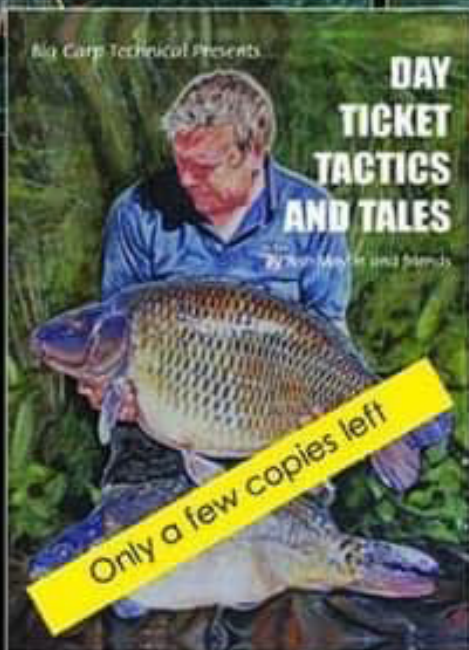
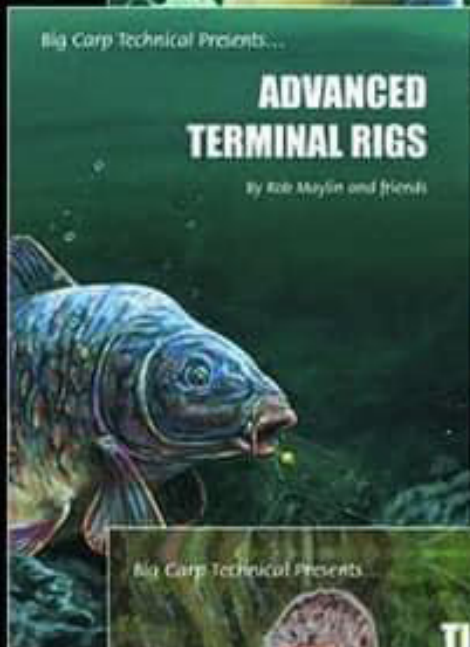
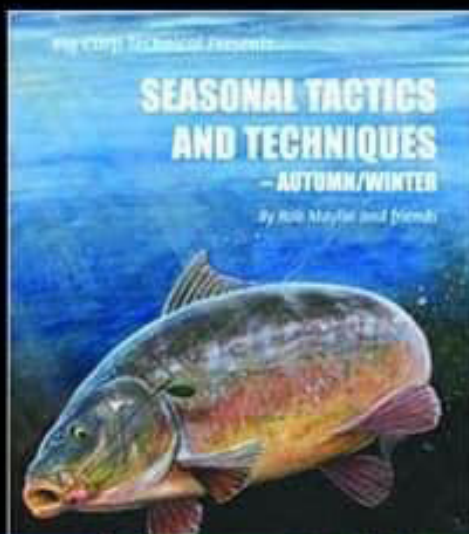
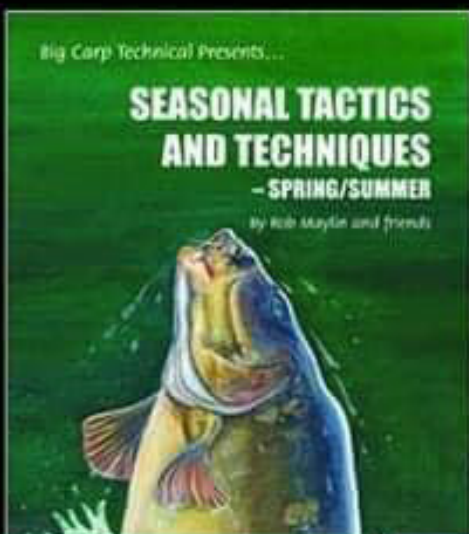
big lake is around 100 fish and made up with around 25 to 30 original carp and approximately 70 VS fishery fish. The sad reality is that due to predation and floods, nobody really knows what's still in the big lake. But I was seen 30 or so carp and I remember thinking why didn't you bring the rods?

I watched that large group of fish for around an hour or so in that swim until they drifted off to the back of an island, remaining out of reach of the roadside bank. The carp were content to soak up the rays of the mornings sun. Occasionally showing themselves whilst rolling on the surface and very occasionally dropping down to the bottom to feed, sending up large, plumes of bubbles through the upper layers.

Knowing these fish had more than likely fed very close by through the night and early

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hours. Finding the zone was my opportunity to get a bite as it was a place where the carp were happy to feed, away from the angling pressure of the roadside bank.

I begrudgingly, left that swim and continued my morning walk around the big lake. I poked my head into every nook and cranny along the way looking for carp but didn't really see any carp just the odd Tench, which isn't really a surprise considering how many Carp that I had found up the other end of the lake. The plan was simple, drive home, prepare all the tackle, set the alarm for 4 am and get down that pit as fast as my car can get me there.

The following morning, around 6 am I arrived at the complex absolutely buzzing. Driving to end of the big lake to confirm that the fish that were there the previous day were still relaxed and angler free. Not only where the fish

still in the zone but they were also kindly showing me where they wanted to feed sending plumes of bubbles to the surface around 20 yards off one of the islands.

It was around a 400-yard barrow to the swim to cover that piece of water but I knew that those carp would probably be back the following morning to continue taking advantage of whatever food source it was that they have found. Having nearly suffered multiple cardiac arrests whilst pushing my barrow through the painfully long summer grass whilst fighting off three million horse flies, I had finally made it to my chosen swim. A swim where the carp felt safe to feed, free from danger and I could see around 40% of the lakes surface meaning If the fish decided to move and show in other areas, I had half a chance of spotting them before anyone else. The start

of a half decent plan was beginning to come together; I had two nights at my disposal to start to execute it.

The marker float was the first of my rods to touch Ecton water as the float was launched to where to carp had been sheeting up just hours before, I expected the lead to donk down on that first cast, but it didn't. All I got was either, no drop at all or a half decent drop that always returned some Canadian on the marker lead, the spot wasn't clear although certain areas where just about fishable, but rig options were going to be limited for that zone.

After a few hours of marker rod work I had finally found three spots to fish. Two where gravel spots in 8ft of water and the other one was slightly weedier, deeper spot where multiple fish had shown earlier that morning. The gravel spots where baited

with a mixture of particles, pellets and boilie with a German rig and a small 10mm yellow wafter thrown over the top, whilst the slightly weedier spot was baited with around 6 or 7 spombs worth of bait and had a large solid bag deployed over the top to ensure presentation, that was the banker rod in my mind and needed to be perfect as it's the area that the carp had been most active in that morning.

After the swim had settled down and the evening began to draw in, I knew that I had a decent chance of a bite on my first night on the big lake and at 6am the following morning? My banker rod (the pva bag rod) absolutely roared off, no single bleeps, no warning, just instant bite alarm meltdown, as it powered off at vast rate of knots, the fish was on a mission to make it to the safety of the islands overhanging trees.



By the time I'd picked up the rod the line was kiting along the surface and the fish continued to take line, fighting like an absolute beast for around 5 minutes or so before finally giving up and allowing itself to be netted. It was a very welcome, low 20 mirror, one of the VS fisheries stockies but I didn't care as I was off the mark. The first is always the hardest and I had mine laying in my net – Ecton virginity, very much broken.

I took a few self takes of the stockie and slipped it back, I was so chuffed to have caught my first fish from the fishery, all the self-imposed pressure to catch a carp had been lifted. A wonderful bankside feeling. After slipping the stockie back it was clear that the fish were still in the area but had moved further down the bank to where I had found them on my very first walkaround. This group of fish were developing a

pattern and I knew that if I bait the spots that I had been reset the island trap that I fishing. If the fish were still in had a very good chance of the area the following week I repeating what I had done would simply drop back into previously that morning by the same swim. I was going getting another bite. to be away from the lake for

I saw fish showing in the five nights and decided to go area but not over the spot big on the banker spot and throughout the entirety of the try and clear some of that day, totalling around 50 shows light Canadian that plagued and they were all very close the spot. I put around 15kgs to me. I hoped to get another of bait over the three spots, bite in the morning, surely, but the banker spot saw most all I had to do was repeat the of it, around 10kgs of hemp, pva bag presentation, bait tigers, pellets, boilies and lightly and wait. corn. My first Ecton session

The excitement and completed with a second plan anticipation of a second bite developing.

ensured sleeping was not on During the week whilst I the cards. I was up very early, was away from the lake all I watching the water and ready could do was think about that for a bite but sadly, bite time banker spot, have the fish came and went; the carp were stayed in the area? Have they onto me. They came close to found the bait? Is someone my zone but just not close else fishing that swim? All enough to pick one up. things I couldn't answer until

The time to leave for home I got back down to the lake, was looming. I began to think but it didn't stop me second about the following week's guessing.

angling and decided to heavily When the time finally came

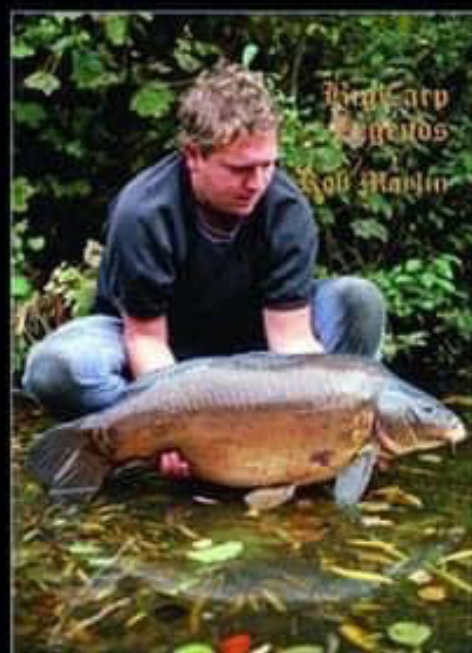
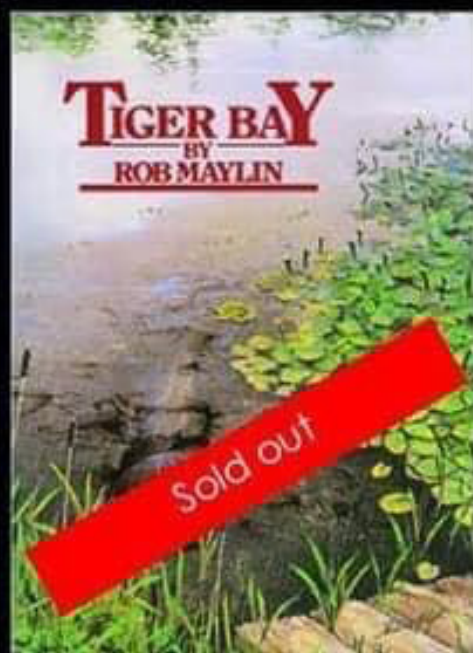
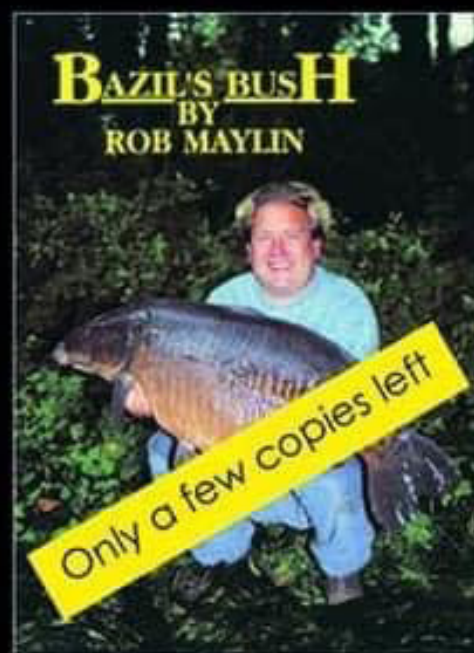
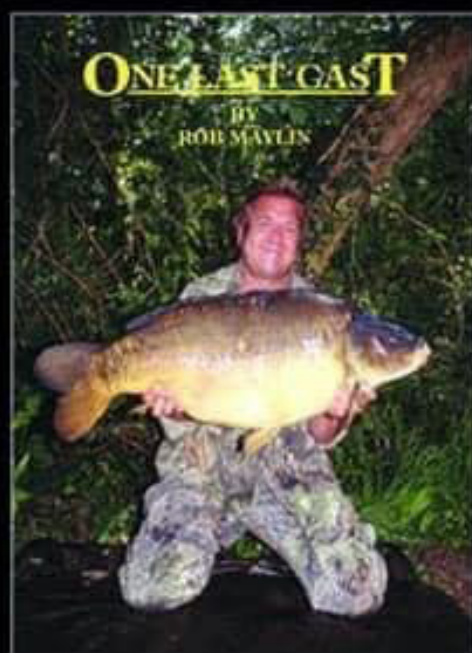
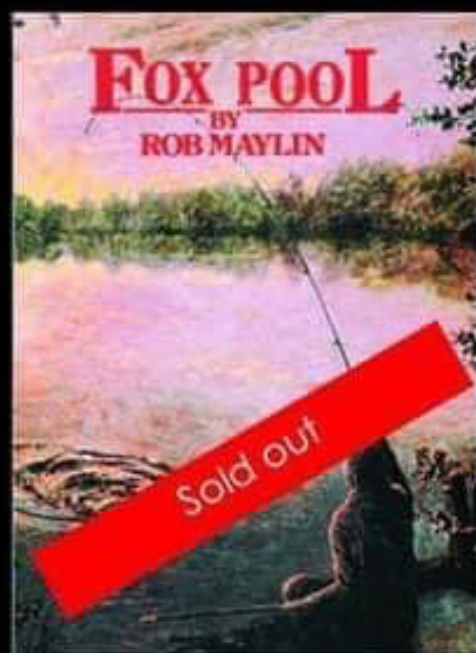
to get back down the lake, tied up and got it bang on the I had convinced my boss money with a light dusting of that I needed Friday off so bait sprinkled over the top. In I could extend the session my mind that rod is going at to three nights. I arrived in any moment, conditions are the car park knowing that perfect, it has been primed my chosen swim was free with bait and I know the carp but I couldn't tell if the fish like feeding there. I've got to had remained, due to poor get one at some point.

spotting conditions, it was During the early hours blowing an absolute gale as of the first morning, the a low-pressure system rolled worlds, most hardworking in, I couldn't see any fish but Cuckoo had me wide awake. it looked super carpy, it felt It would not quit, six times a like every fish that resides in minute for five hours. Sleep the big lake should be in this was impossible so I gave up area of the lake that I had trying and just got up, made heavily pre-baited the week a coffee and started watching before. I just had to have the water. It was clear that another one. the fish had followed the

I flicked a bare lead onto the low-pressure system down to banker spot and got a very my end of the pit, but the fish decent drop, far superior to were showing 60 to 70 yards the week prior – something behind my spots – not ideal. had clearly fed there, but I was utterly convinced on what? Having previous that first morning that I was success on the spot with a going to get my second Ecton large solid bag I didn't see Carp, but it didn't materialise, any reason to change and and I couldn't work out why. quickly had another solid bag Everything was perfect for a

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bite, but it never came. Had I over baited? Had someone else baited this swim? Were the fish on the naturals? Who knows, I should have had another one but didn't.

The second day of the session was much the same as the first, the south westerly winds battered my end of the pit, the conditions were a carp anglers dream. I had fish showing and rolling close to my banker spot again but for some reason they seemed reluctant to come any closer than 30 yards away or so, but that was close enough for me.

I knew I was in with a shout if I just repeated the process with the banker rod – large solid bag and a sprinkling of bait over the top with the other two going out on German wafter rigs. All day it looked amazing, like I should get a bite at any moment, but it just simply never came, I was beginning to question everything now: Why am I not getting bites? I went to sleep on the second night dreaming of uses for cuckoo meat, potential cuckoo recipes and seriously questioning my approach to the lake. Should I change something and if so, what? Bait, rig, line lay – something was wrong.

That third morning came around rather quickly and I was again staring at three motionless rods wondering just how I had ruined such a great opportunity, it was around 530am and looked perfect for a bite when the banker rod decided to enter the game – beep, beep, beep and the bobbin was jammed tight up against the alarm, I grabbed the rod expecting it to run for the cover of the island, much the same as the previous fish had but this one was different.

This fish just plodded about slowly, not really fighting but just kind of waddling about and staying deep. It was



initially a rather uneventful on something underwater, fight as I drew the fish toward I couldn't lift the net up! the net within a few minutes, The common was very quick but as it came closer to the to take advantage of the net, the size of the fish became situation as it turned on to apparent, it was a good one its side, showing me exactly for sure but which one? The which common it was. As it fish hit the surface for the slid back out of my net and first time; I could see that it into the lake – it was the lakes was a very decent common, big common, a fish known as I dragged the common over “white tips” due to having the net cord and I tried to lift white tips on its tail making the net up around the fish, it easily recognisable and but the net was getting stuck suspected to go over 50 lbs.’

Now it wanted to fight, the banker rod. now it wanted to escape Before leaving at the end and now I was absolutely of that session I repeated bricking it. The next two to the baiting process with the three minutes can only be banker spot with another described as torturous. I've 10kgs of mixed particles, never experienced anxiety pellets and boilie and I baited like it in fishing or life the other two rods with before. She eventually gave around 2kgs on each spot up and went in the net at the although I had no confidence second attempt. The lake's in either of the other spots big common was mine. After producing. During the week having a five-minute sit down at work I began to think about to conduct myself, I weighed my two spots that where the fish at 49lbs 12oz and not producing anything and took some self takes before decided to abandon one of the releasing the big girl back spots and look to a fish a dull into the depths from whence in colour, small single hook she came. bait in the shallow margin of

What an amazing start an island, when I say shallow to my Ecton ticket, two – it was 2.5ft deep and kept sessions, two bites, including clear by ducks and swans the rather elusive white tips but it was an area that I had at a record weight of 49lb seen multiple fish cross and 12oz! I simply couldn't wait certainly worth a try.

to get back down, confidence After returning to work on was sky high; I was making the Monday morning my boss progress, if only I could get immediately moaned about one of the other two rods to me taking the previous Friday start doing bites along with off to go fishing, what he

didn't know at the time was, that I was planning on calling in sick on Thursday to get my arse back up the lake just as quickly as I could. Thursday morning arrived, I informed my boss that I had indeed fallen ill and would see him on the following Monday, if I had recovered. All he said to me was good angling, Micky.

It was late Thursday evening when I arrived back at Ecton, the wind was still trickling down to my end of the lake and some fish were certainly present, I wasted no time getting into my baited swim, getting the house set up quickly and the rods ready to go. It was just bordering on dark now and in the twilight, with rod in hand, I lost my footing and fell in the sodding lake, waist deep, one leg in the lake and one leg out, standing there looking like Jean Claude Van Dam Executing the perfect head kick, whilst holding a

carp rod above his head - I was screwed. The only way I could get out of the lake was by pulling my dry leg into the lake along with the wet one and climb out.

My dry cloths but they were in the car, 300 yards away. I just wanted to get the rods out before I lost the light to maximise my chances during that early morning bite time. Getting dry clothes would result in a 20 to 30 min delay.

After making a run for the car and getting some dry cloths I did manage to get the rods out, the banker spot got its normal large solid PVA bag, and the other two spots got short German rigs. I fell asleep very late that night and was rudely awoken by few beeps on the banker rod around 6am, I popped my head up out of the sleeping bag to see what was occurring. I expected a coot or duck to be the culprit, but it wasn't, it was an angry mirror that was

about to give me the fight of its life. When I initially picked the rod up, I assumed it was one of the lakes many Tench but the test curve on the rod soon said otherwise. The fish proceeded to flat rod me as it began to flap whilst trying to loosen the clutch off before the hook pulled. It kited on a tight line 40 to 50 yards to my left and ended up in bay going through a tree. I only had one realistic option if I wanted to land this fish, I had to get in the lake and walk around the tree with the rod and land the carp. The problem with that idea was, I was already wearing my spare dry joggers and i didn't have anymore. As all carp anglers would, I jumped into the lake to claim my prize, I walked around the tree up to my chest, freeing the line as I went and then realised, I hadn't brought the landing net with me.

I had no option other than to dog-walk the carp as if it

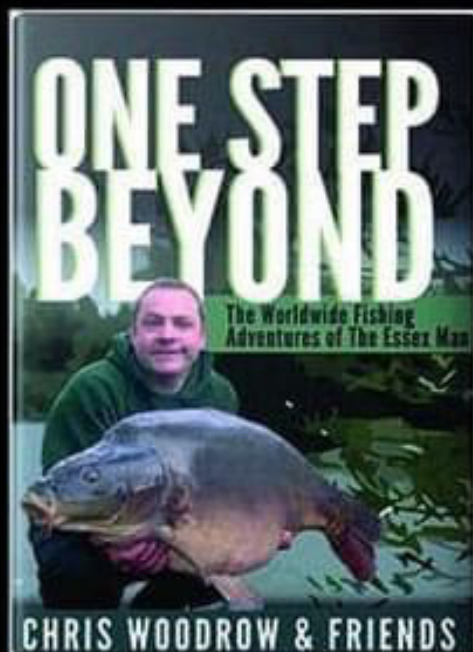
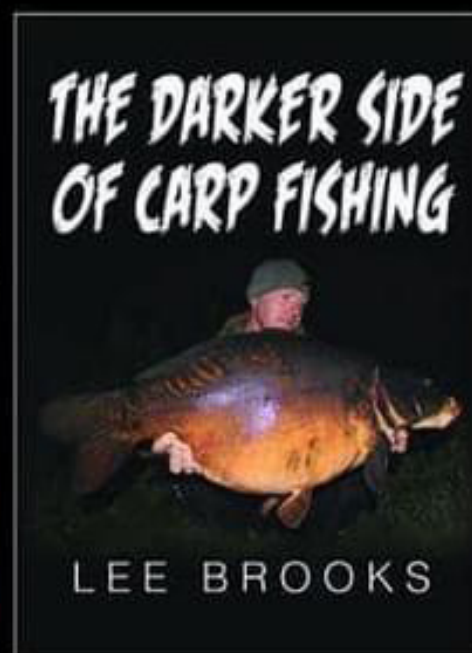
were on a lead. Around a tree, along the margin and back to my swim. Climbing out of the lake one handed, grabbing the net and land the fish. After an amazingly long faff, the fish was now residing in the bottom of landing net. As I shivered in the bivvy trying to think what to do next with my wet cloths.

It wasn't a monster by any means, a high twenty mirror but It was an old original fish, the exact type of fish I joined Ecton for. The old slate grey, scaley mirror weighed 28lbs 12oz and was a just reward for all my unsynchronised swimming efforts within the margins of the big lake. The morning sun arrived from behind the clouds the temperature reached 25 degrees and the lake, soaked joggers where dried and I was back in the comfort of dry cloths ready to do battle with another Ecton carp in no time.

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It was time to abandon one of the pre-baited, 8ft deep gravel spots that was yet to produce. Instead I chose to fish adjacent to a very shallow marginal shelf. No deeper than 2.5ft but I had seen numerous carp cutting across this corner of the island. The downside was prime duck and swan country. I'd have to fish something small, not round and dull in colour to avoid the hungry bellies of our feathered friends, so I elected to fish a small 10mm dark red fishmeal barrel wafer on a 4" long German rig. After getting that rod out perfectly tight to the island and putting the banker rod back on the money spot I

was confident about getting my third Ecton bite and I didn't have to wait long.

Around an hour so into fishing up against the island and it was very unexpectedly, away but it almost instantly weeded me up. This fish was solid in the weed and couldn't be budged, I pulled as hard as I dare and a huge weed bed began to slowly inch toward me but was there a fish still in it? Sadly, all I netted was a giant ball of weed and no carp – Ecton was fighting back!

I may have lost that fish and I was devastated at the time but now I had two spots that were doing bites and that's absolute gold dust on water like Ecton. I replaced the rig on the shallow island spot and now that had turned into to the rod I expected to go, my new banker spot. That shallow island rod was flicked in and out of the pond avoiding the busy birdlife all day, it was a real pain but had to be done. Sadly, I couldn't get that spot to do deliver another bite, but I was certain that if I could keep the ducks away, it would deliver a bite. Around 3:30 am the rod was flicked back out to my island honey hole and within 2 hours the rod was away again.

The fight was rather uneventful as the fish was covered in so much weed, it just allowed me to pump it in slowly entering the net at the first attempt. The fish itself was other stockie of around 22 lb but this one was a scaley little Ecton banger of the future – a cracking carp. The type of fish that when someone catches, they say "imagine that one at 30+" a proper little Ecton gem. The future is bright, the future is scaley at Ecton.

After returning the fish, I was eager to get the rod back onto its marginal shelf hotspot but the ducks by now where a real issue. I had



to wait until no birds were present before recasting the rod and when the moment came the cast was perfect – bang on the money. The small, single hook bait sat on that spot for the rest of the day and went untouched by not only the birdlife but also the carp. I remember thinking that I should move the shallow island rod during the hours of darkness, reverting back to the unproductive pre-baited, gravel spots as I couldn't see big carp choosing to be in 2.5ft of water during the hours of darkness but the reality was, my gravel spots where not producing during the hours of daylight let alone darkness so the decision was made to continue to fish the island spot during the hours

of darkness, all 2.5ft of it. At least I wouldn't have to wake up at 3:30 am to flick it back out to the island, as it will already be there.

Around midnight that night, the island rod let out a few bleeps, just enough to get my attention. The once slack line was now tight and the bobbin was pinned tight up against the blank, the fish had instantly weeded itself up and seemed to be just holding up tight. It didn't take much effort to get the fish out of the weed and when I saw the fish for the first time, I could see why – it was about 8lbs and not what we came to Ecton for, - now, I love my food, but nobody wants a midnight pasty, do they. It was unhooked in the net and returned without leaving the water but the real kick in the balls was the fact that rod couldn't be replaced in darkness, it needed some light to get it perfect and bang on the money, miss the spot and you are in 3ft of solid weed and in 2.5ft of water, it's hard to feel for a drop. The rod would now have to simply wait until 3:30 am before I had enough light to get the rod back onto its spot.

After slipping the smallest carp in the lake back and laying down on the bed chair for a kip, I remember thinking "If that Cuckoo starts, now – I'm going full commando on it" luckily enough for me, the Cuckoo clearly felt sorry for me and remained silent, allowing me to drift off only to be woken in a few hours' time to recast the island rod (and then get back to sleep). The 3:30 am alarm call came, and I begrudgingly got up and recast the island rod, thankfully it landed perfectly. I was shattered and needed a few more hours of sleep.

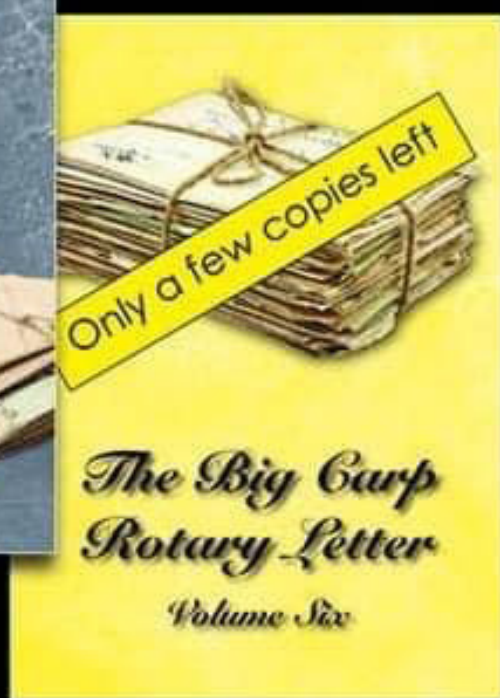
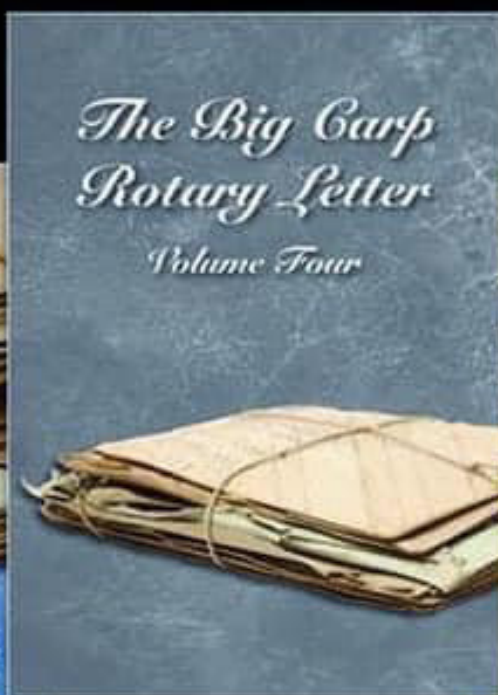
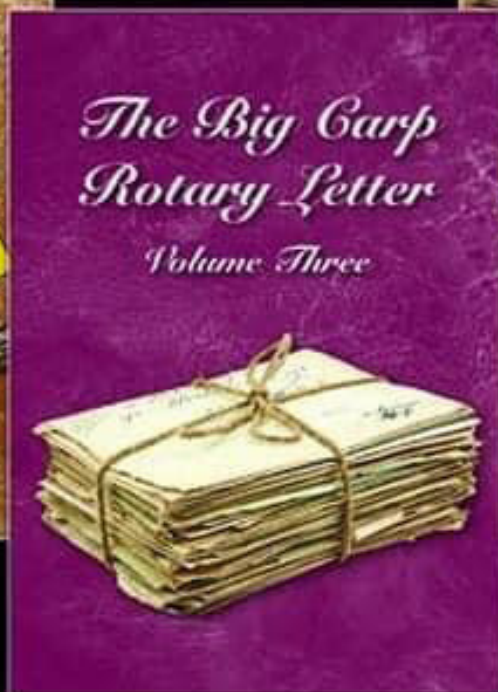
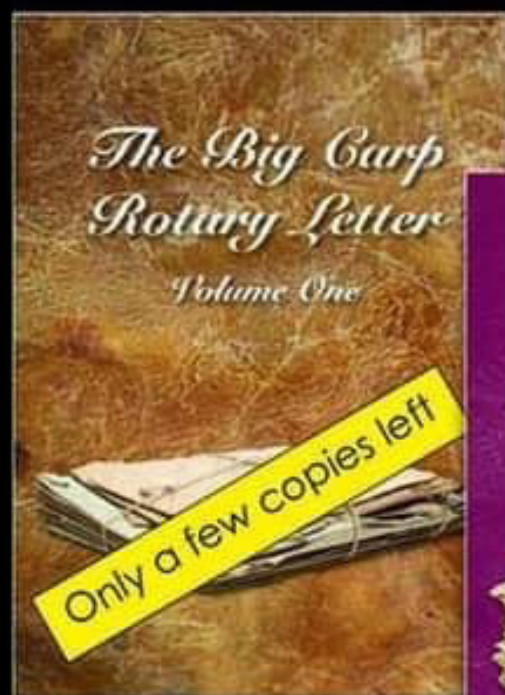
I woke up around 8:00 am on the last morning of the session. I looked out of the bivvy at three motionless rods,

I had expected to be woken by a bite alarm that morning and for whatever reason it had not happened. I was due to leave the lake around 11am so was in no rush to re-do any of rods or cause any general disturbance within my swim preferring to just see out the last few remaining hours of another successful session, chilling out.

After all I'd had three bites that session, landing two and losing one which is a top result for three nights on Ecton. The kettle was the busiest item of tackle in my swim that morning, coffee after coffee was drunk as I slowly packed the gear away getting ready for home. I was half thinking about the third rod, the other 8ft deep gravel spot that was yet to produce a beep let alone a carp when out of nowhere the shallow island rod was away. Now, as I was fishing in prime duck territory, and it was way past bite time, I didn't initially think, carp – I thought it was a duck or swan and got up slowly to deal with it, mumbling and grumbling about the birdlife as I walked up to the rod. At that point, I looked up at the spot and there was no ducks or swans – it was another bloody take! At this point the shallow island rod had only produced small fish for me (no real surprise in 2.5ft of water) and I expected this fish to be of a similar ilk, that being within the 10lb to 20lb in weight bracket – I was wrong. All the fish from the island spot had weeded me up and came in the same way, feeling very heavy and surrounded by weed – this fish was the exact same feeling through the rod. It felt like it had weeded itself up and was slowly coming toward me but the difference with this fish was, that when it first hit the surface 20 yards out, there was no weed at all

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around it all, it was a big and lin, I was met with the flank doing big fish things. One of of fish that simply took my which was a rolling on the breath away – The Ecton little surface, that roll let me know linear was MINE ! this fish was exactly what fish it was – it stunning, a fin perfect nye on was the little lin! 50 year old mirror with large

The next few minutes where thick scales running down nerve racking to say the least its dark flanks, I was shaking as she did make a few bids for with adrenaline now, the buzz freedom whilst under the rod was incredible – I'd not only tip. She eventually went into managed to fluke the lakes the folds of my landing net. I biggest common the week lifted the net up in the water prior but it would seem that I to confirm it was the little had also managed to fluke the



lakes biggest mirror too.

After a ten- minute sit down to gather my thoughts and to stop shaking, I made the

call to Luke to let him know that I had caught the little lin and that I desperately needed someone to take photos of this epic carp. Luke, along with few seriously talented camera men came down to take some of the greatest trophy shots I have within any of my angling albums. I can't thank these

guys enough for the shots they took that morning, they were truly epic shots of an epic fish.

The fish was weighed with steady hands and the needle span around to 43lb 14oz (not that weight mattered), we took few shots of her on the bank and then the water shots were taken before releasing her back to within the depths. The Ecton adventure had come to end.





TIM BARNETT

CANAL CARPING

Myself and my son Jayden have always loved the challenge the canal brings in terms of fishing, not only that you'll never know what's lurking beyond the depths of the water.

At the start of the season we were clueless as to where to find the carp as our usual spot had all the overgrowth cut back which carp love, our plan b was a 20 mile ride from Odiham up to Farnborough along the canal to see if we could find some carp hanging about. The 20 mile ride definitely paid off with at least 6 different locations where carp were spotted all these locations we pinned to maps so we knew where they had been seen. The next day we headed up to Farnborough where we had seen a few carp showing. On arrival there were two carp in front of us taking dog biscuits at will, perhaps this would be our



opportunity for a banger, Some 20 minutes later I managed to hook a decent sized mirror but unfortunately lost it at the net, we surrendered at this point as we were losing daylight. We returned the next day with the sun beaming on the water but we choose a different section at Dogmersfield, this is where we spotted the big mirror carp which became our target fish, however we would return home at about 4.45pm and have a bite to eat and then return later in hope that the mirror would show itself but unfortunately it was nowhere to be seen.

My son Jayden managed to catch a small common before we left, off the surface weighing 12lb 3oz and that brought the day to an end. 5 days of endless stalking with only 1 small carp to show for our efforts wasn't enough. The next day I finished work early which gave me an opportunity to try and locate the big mirror which we had been targeting, unfortunately on this

occasion I was without my lad as he was working.

On arrival I had noticed 2 common carp breaching the surface under an overhanging tree, shortly after I managed to bag 1 off the surface using a small amount of bread. I decided to move up to where the big mirror was last seen and again it wasn't anywhere in sight. Trying to catch this mirror was



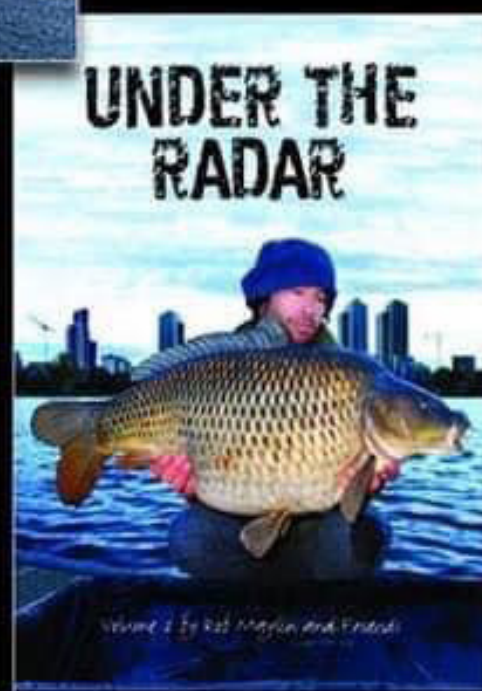
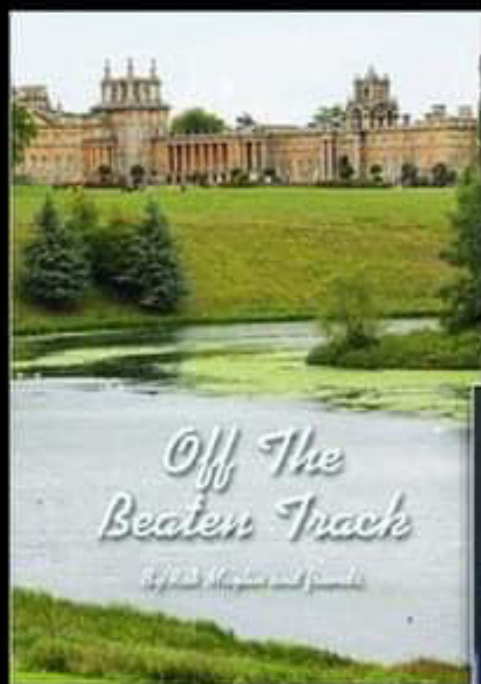
proving quite difficult so the next day I got down the canal just after 1pm and managed another small common off the surface. I decided to move back up to where the big mirror was last seen and boom there she was right in front of me, chucked in a few dog biscuits to try and gauge how confident she would be and up she came. Game on. Using a size 6 Korda mixa and a small amount of floating bread I managed to cast over a small twig which work massively in my favour, shortly after she came up with no hesitation and took it in, a wild fight would then commence as she stripped line off the reel, luckily I steered her away from any snags and within 15 minutes she would be over the net cord and my mission was complete.

(After I sent the article in I managed another mirror of the top.)



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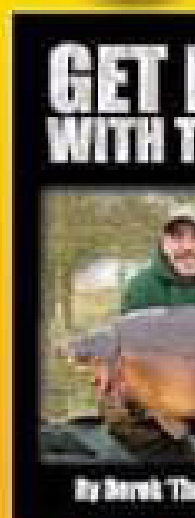
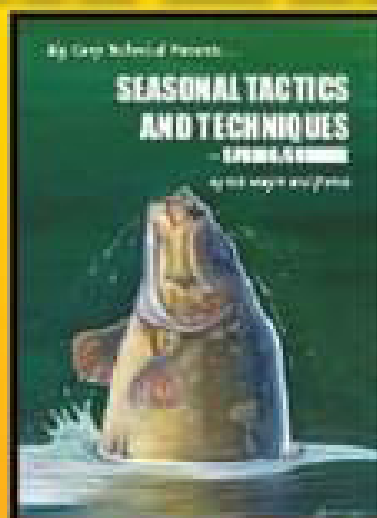
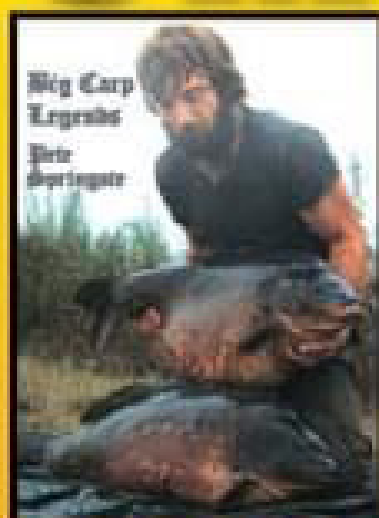
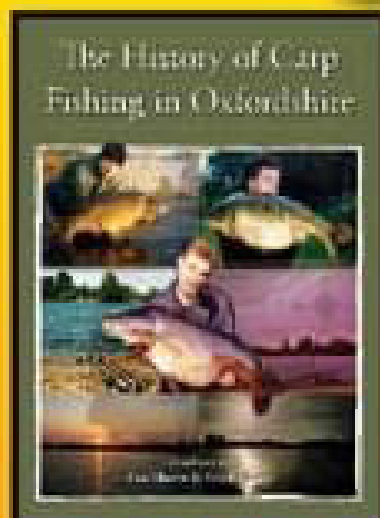
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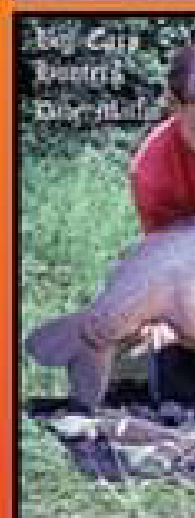
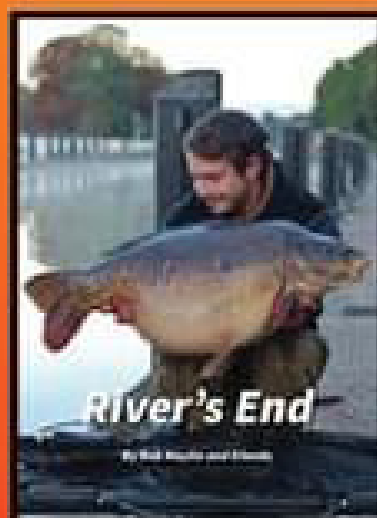
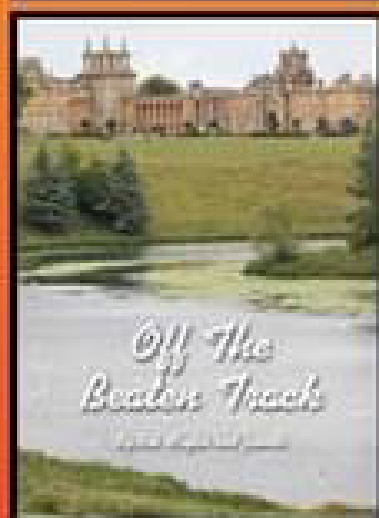
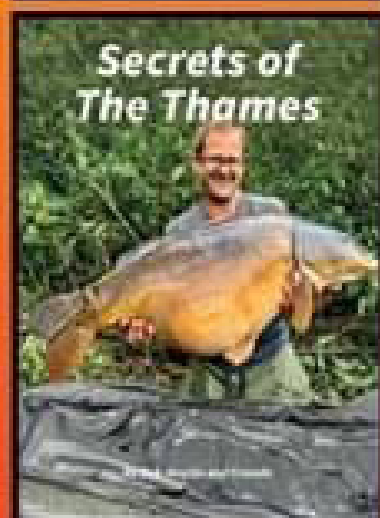
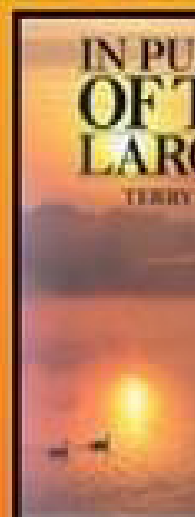
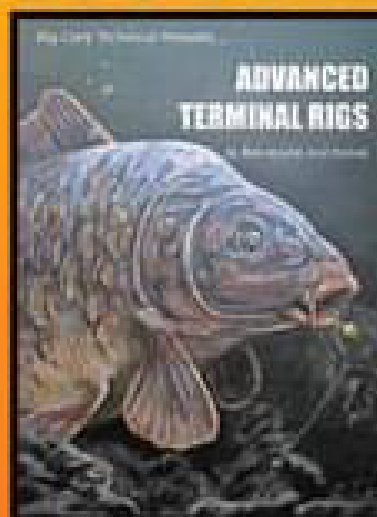
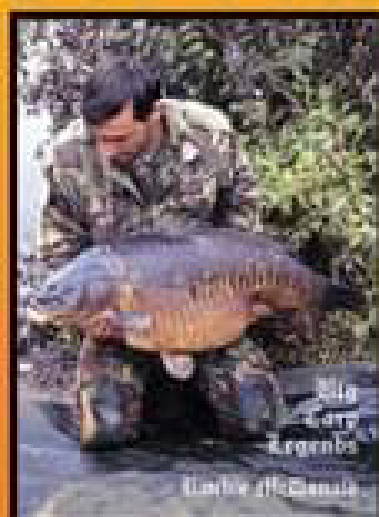
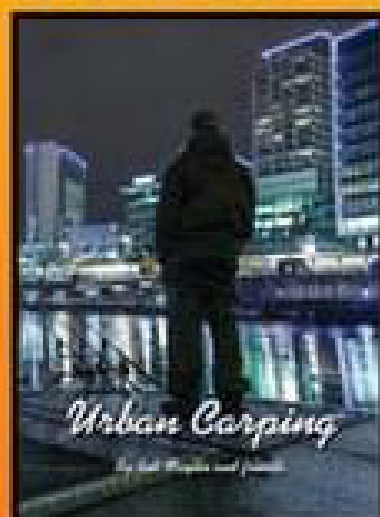
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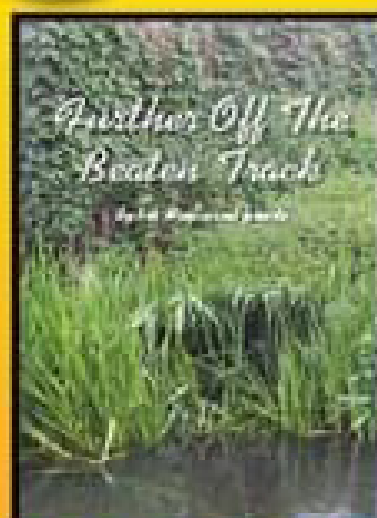
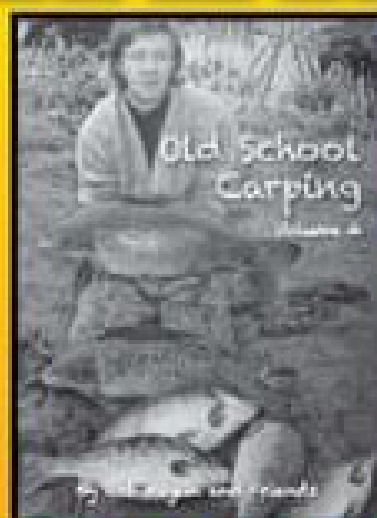
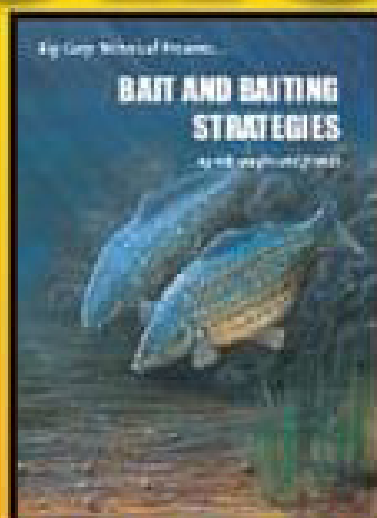
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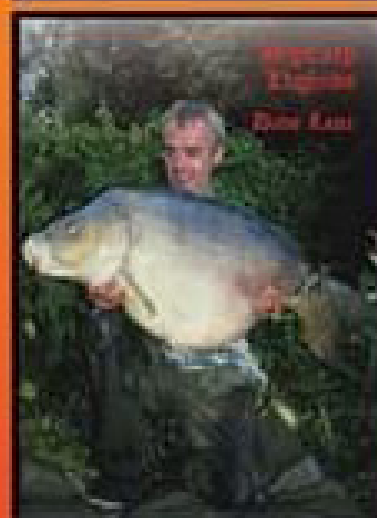
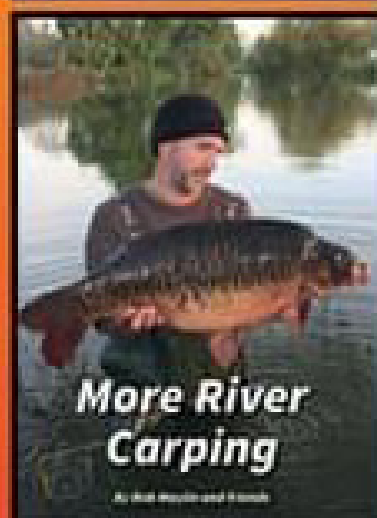
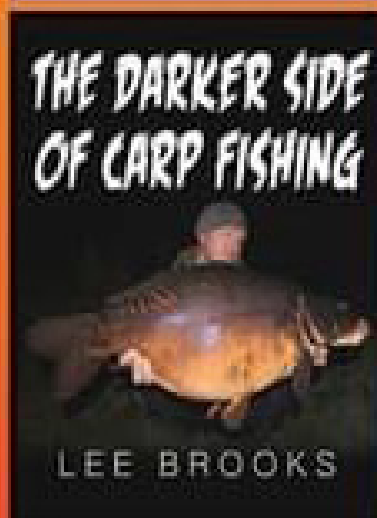
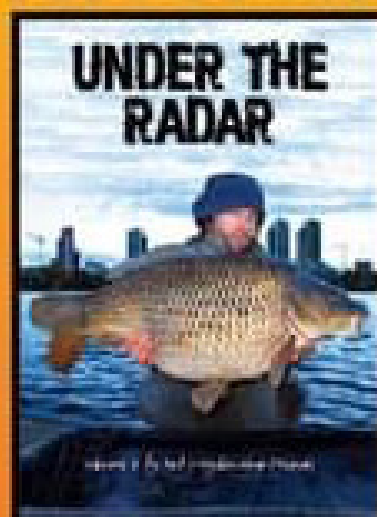
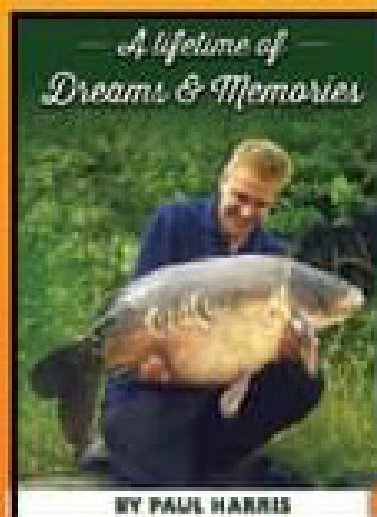
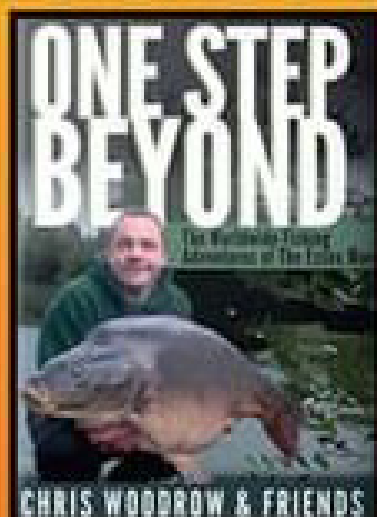
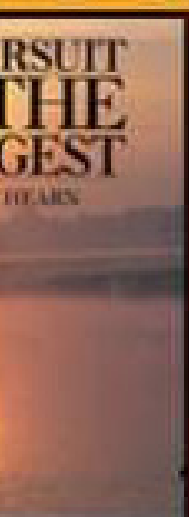
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Front Cover:
Robin Monday with a
fine brace



Intro to Angling – What a Day!

A huge well done to all the young anglers who took part in our Intro to Angling session over the past 5 weeks!

The kids absolutely smashed it – from learning how to set up their rods and cast, to safely handling fish and understanding the importance of care and respect for our waterways. Their smiles say it all!

We're incredibly proud to announce that participants earned their Bronze, Silver or Gold Get Fishing Awards from the Angling Trust!

To top it off, we celebrated their achievements with a few well-earned treats and plenty of proud faces. This is what it's all about – learning new skills, building confidence, and making positive memories outdoors.

Massive thanks to everyone who made this possible. Roll on the next sessions!

Chris Jervis, Angling Trust

8. CARP CHAT

24. CARP SCENE

40. ADAM SPILLER

50. BOBBY COOTE

68. ROBIN DIX

80. ROBIN MONDAY

98. STEVE FISHER





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CATCH REPORTS



The '180 Bait Social' which had a terrific week and we are all waiting to see them back this Autumn. Congratulations once again



This is Andy on peg 18 who spent a terrific week on the north bank, with so many takes. Congratulations



Harley was Fishing with Andy on next peg number 17 and had a terrific week on the north bank with so many takes.



This is the young Florian who had the chance to discover Fishabil and made an amazing Fishing session on the peg 7 of the East bank with many big Fish.



Sean has been back again and keeps catching big ones every day.

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

Sweep stake for pairs in 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 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

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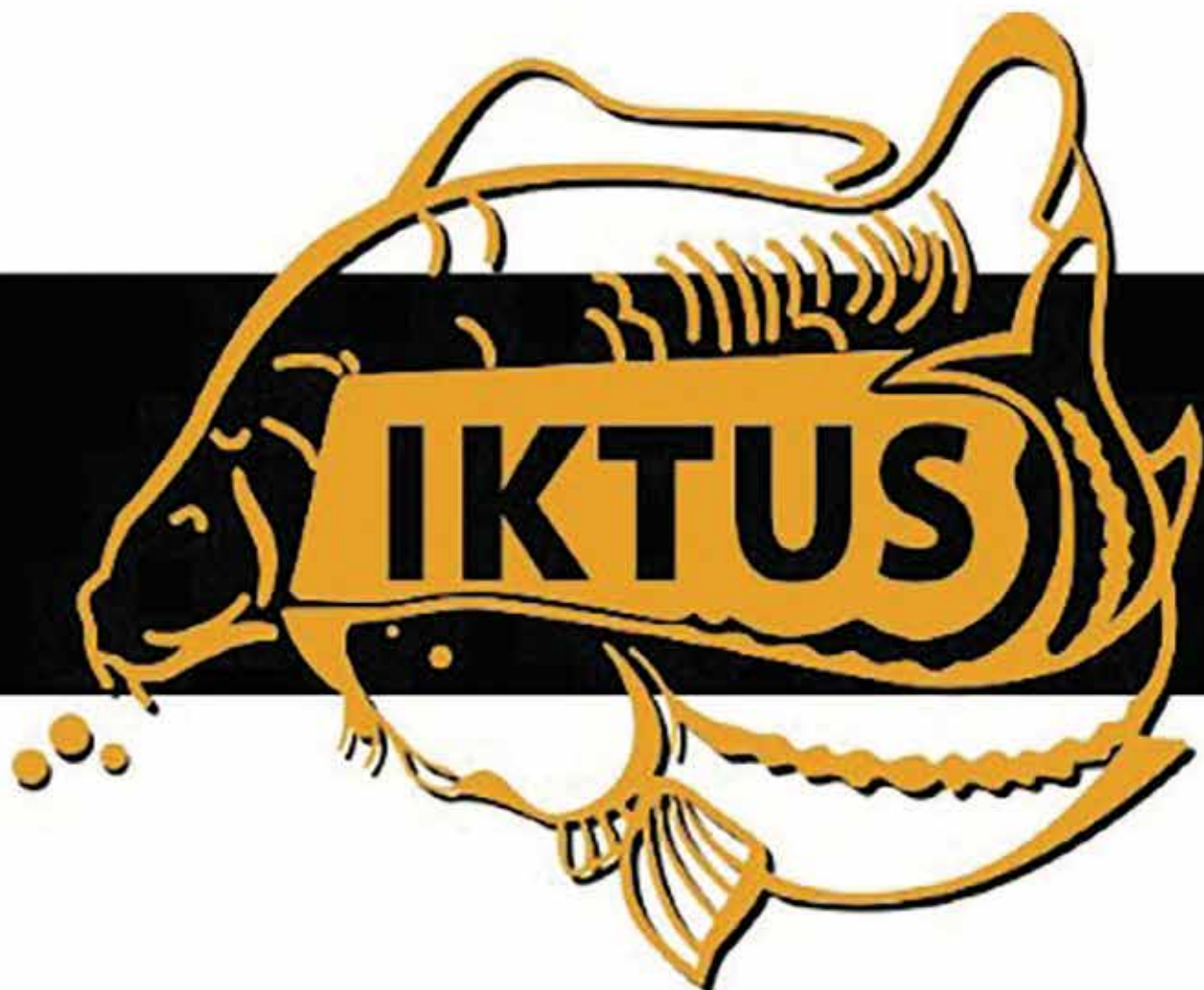


Are you a keen angler? North Lincolnshire Council are looking for applicants to set up and manage a fishing syndicate with private membership at council owned land at the Blue Lagoon, Normanby Road, Scunthorpe, DN15 9YG.

Blue Lagoon is a Local Nature Reserve. The site has open access for visitors and will remain open to the public.

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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.

Then, scroll down until you see the 'Join the waiting list' tab and click that. Finally, simply fill in the required details before submitting to pay the £40 deposit.

For those venues with 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 as soon as possible so you will be able to see your name on that list on our website.

You can join as many waiting lists as you wish but the deposit is required for each venue. The deposits are non-refundable 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 contact us on 01268 285987.

ANGLING TRUST REELS IN SAFETY MESSAGE WITH NORTHERN POWERGRID PARTNERSHIP

The Angling Trust is renewing its partnership with Northern Powergrid to help keep anglers safe on the bank this summer through the powerful “Look Up It’s Live!” campaign.

Jamie Cook, CEO of the Angling Trust, said:

“We are delighted to continue 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 but a hugely important one and Northern Powergrid are leading the way in their industry to ensure that safety messaging gets out to grass roots anglers with our help.”

As part of the campaign, the Angling Trust will share Northern Powergrid’s ‘Look Up It’s Live!’ leaflet with members via direct communications, blogs, social media, and newsletter features. Fisheries, angling clubs, and tackle shops are also encouraged to display the campaign materials and help spread the word.



Gareth Pearson, Director of Health, Safety and Training at Northern Powergrid, added:

“We’ve renewed our partnership with the Angling Trust to target and reach anglers to help keep them safe.

“High voltage currents can pass through almost all fishing rods and poles, so we ask anglers to tackle safety before they set off and look up before they hook up, to make sure fishing equipment does not contact our power network.

ALLIANCE ABINGDON AND OXFORD NEW WATER SHARING AGREEMENT WITH R.D.A.A

Following the agreement with Littlemore Angling Club (LAS) that we announced back in August 2024 the club is now delighted to announce a new water sharing agreement with Reading & District Angling Association (RDAA) that enables AOAA members to 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 Sandford-on-Thames as outlined on the map below.

In exchange RDAA members are able to fish the AOAA 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.



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Members must adhere to all fishing regulations, rules, and codes of conduct set by the club whose stretch they are fishing on. Rules can be found on the respective clubs website. Failure to comply with these rules may result in revocation of the reciprocal fishing rights granted under this agreement and may result in the loss of the guilty members permit.

Bailiffs from AOAA, RDAA and LAS are mutually authorised to check fishing permits and club membership cards on shared club stretches of the River Thames in Sandford-on-Thames, regardless of which club controls the stretch.

Not only does this agreement give our members access to new stretches of water. It also empowers the club bailiffing teams to work more effectively together to reduce misuse and abuse of fishing rights in the area.

We look forward to seeing your future catch photos and reports!

Tight lines from the AOAA Rivers Team!



ETANG DES MOULINOTS

A serene carp fishery nestled in the lush forests straddling the Champagne-Ardenne 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.



www.etangdesmoulinots.com



BLUEBELL LAKES - VOTED NO1 DAY TICKET VENUE BY OUR READERS

A warm welcome let us share a little bit about what we offer.... Who are we? We are a family ran Carp Fishery based in Tansor near Peterborough. We opened our doors 32 years ago and now remain a prestigious and well established Carp Fishery. We are set in approximately 150 acres and have 5 lakes plus optional fishing on the river nene.

What makes us a great day ticket fishery and why choose us?

We have some big ones - We have a range of Carp from 11-56lb - we hold some of the UK's largest carp but something for all anglers. We were home to the famous "Benson" and "The Creature".

Location - We are set in a green and beautiful area on the North Northamptonshire boarder, with no major roads, trains city traffic that spoils are great spot.

Facilities - We have a huge on site tackle shop stocking over 10,000 items to really enhance your experience. We have regularly cleaned toilets located around the fishery and our men's shower/toilets were fully refurbished this winter. We also offer those must have items in our shop from a toothbrush to Red Bull. Bensons Cafe



snack van is now open for our summer 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.

Committed- We are committed to continually improving our 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 and improvements we have planned for 2025

Still want to know more? We have a full FAQ listed on our website with prices, opening hours and all your questions answered.

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Team member Scott Johnson is another that has been out and managed to bag a few fish. "Done 48 hours over the bank holiday, 5 fish out from 15 - 24.7lb all on slip D size 4 Scorpion solid bags." Well done Scott, great angling.



Team member James Johnson sent this update from a recent session. "First time up on Lyons Drove big res this weekend managed to bag myself three nice commons 2@20lb 1@16lb all on size 6 Scorpion Ronnie cranks fished with 12mm pop ups" Well done James.



A quality session recently for team member John Paul McCusker, after the 1st night drew a blank John was halfway through moving swims in the morning. "But I've seen a couple of fish nut out mid-move so I decided to stay. The next 24 hours resulted in 6 fish with 4 going over 30 to 37lb. Buzzing with that. All caught on solid bags. Using Carponline Scorpion ready made Ronnies and Carponline top hat sleeves for the drop off leads. Well done John Paul, Great skills.



Red letter day with a pb common for team member Scott Johnson!! "So I've had 11 fish, some high teens, with some lovely low 20s. But the star was a new pb 38.7lb common.



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Swivel Deal



Tungsten Hooklink Sinkers

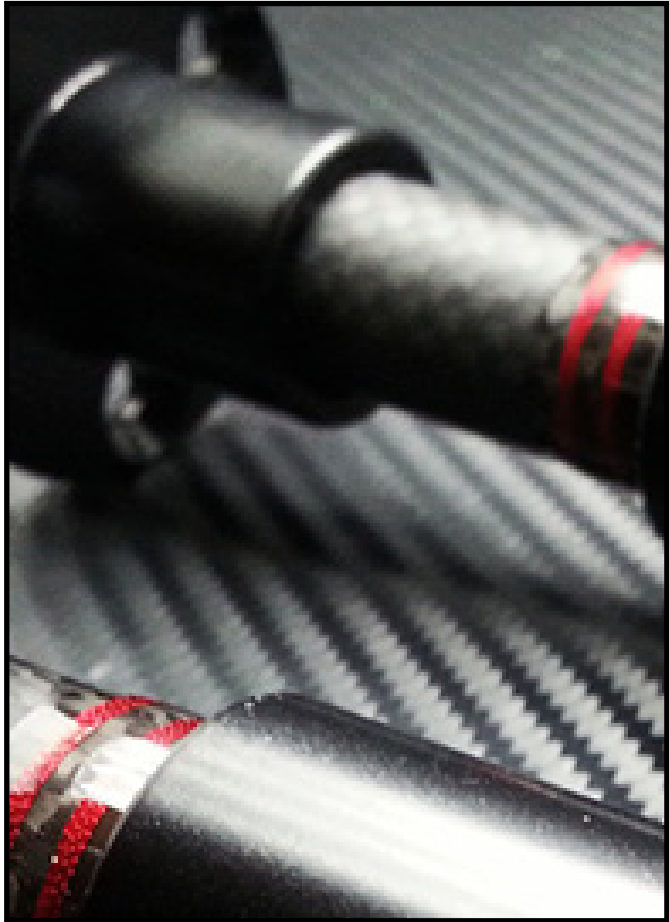


Chod Filament

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- bank sticks from £26.99
- www.kudostackle.com



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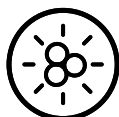


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- rrp £42.95
- www.berryuseful.co.uk

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- www.ctek.com

Aqua Lilium Clothing



It has been a while now since our last feature in the country's biggest magazine so we thought it was time to bring all of you up to speed with what the team have been up to.

So, to start we have two new designs coming out and by the time you read this they will both be in stock. The first design is called Who Dares Wins and this design as usual is full of colour. The design itself uses our beloved union Jack flag as a base followed by the Aqua Lilium logo in deep black over the top to create a unique piece. This is then outlined by a beautiful blue and white wreath to finish the design. The front of the T boasts our stunning logo in gold but the difference is with this one it has three embroidered rings red, blue and white. We also added the Who Dares Wins motto underneath in a striking gold.

Moving on, we have decided to re-release Casting At The Sun. If you don't know, this was hand drawn by Mark Quinn back when Aqua Lilium was being born. Also the main logo was produced from this very picture and is the base for all of the clothing. We asked Mark why wait until now to re-release?

Mark's reply was, he never thought he'd done the picture justice and always believed it could be better and more appealing. So he said that he decided to take everything we had learned over the last four years and take the design back to the drawing board.

All I can say is wow, Mark really has pulled out all the stops with this one and I for one can not believe the outcome. This for me is a game changer and one that will without doubt reign for some time amongst the Aqua Lilium fan base.

The design is unbelievable, and gives off a 3D effect on to a black shield with the lettering in gold stating the name of the design. The sun itself is a deep sunburst orange along with the water. Also, the rest of the image is tipped in a silvery white to highlight tint and reflection. This is then finished off with two thin sunburst orange lines around the shield to bring the design away from the fabric.

This truly is a unique piece from Mark and one to be proud of.

Lets move on to the quality side of things, and I am pleased to say as usual there is nothing to fear hear as where other companies are trying to cut costs on materials, Aqua Lilium Clothing will never compromise. Therefore all T-Shirts are made only using materials that are 100% cotton. This is our guarantee to all our customers to insure they never have to look anywhere else.

It doesn't stop there either, here at Aqua Lilium Clothing we are excited to bring you our very own collection of Jet flamed gas wind-proof lighters. These are available in black and will have various designs on them that we have released over the years including our beloved Blue Koi design. These will be available to buy individually or if you spend £60.00 or more on the website www.aqualiliumclothing.com you will receive a lighter of your choice free of charge. You can only purchase a lighter if you are over 18 years of age.

Here at HQ we are always asking our customers how can we improve?

And believe it or not a few of our trusted customers came back and said the material for the shorts is to thick and although comfortable they were just to warm.

As usual we don't like to disappoint, so we are delighted to bring you the ultra-lightweight cargo shorts, available in black or olive green. These are so incredibly comfortable and have expanding side pockets, yes you heard me correct the pockets are stitched in such away that when empty they sit flat to the side of your leg but when full they open up.

Also, these great shorts have adjustable side buckles that allow you to pull them in tighter around your waist if needed or looser if you have had one to many burgers on the bank. There are so many great features to the shorts so please visit the website for more information.

Last but not least, we are also excited to bring you our very own insulated double skinned stainless steel mug.



Again these mugs are top of the range and will keep your Tea hot for up to 6 hours and cold drinks for twice as long. These will feature the same designs as explained earlier on the lighters and will be available from mid-September.

What's next here at Aqua Lilium Clothing?

We are working on a new winter jacket along with matching Salopettes.

We wish we could mention everything but simply don't have the space so, as previously mentioned why not pop over to the web page and have a look.

Also some of you may have seen footwear on our social media posts. This is in the early stages and we hope by the end of the year footwear will be on the website.

Here at Aqua Lilium Clothing can we just say your support really does mean everything to us. We are only a small family business and really need you guys to survive. Please support all small British run businesses as your helping families not corporations.



Website: www.aqualiliumclothing.com

Email: aqualiliumclothing@hotmail.com

Tel: 07854629130

You can also reach us through our Facebook or Instagram pages





SOMETIMES YOUR LUCK IS IN

Big pits have always fascinated me. I knew my mate Nick had acquired the rights to run a syndicate on such a lake., but it had never clicked that his pit was the same one I used to drive past regularly along the M4. I'd always catch glimpses of this monstrous windswept pit through the treeline as I went past. Theale Lagoon, known as Big Pit Angling on Facebook, is a 35-man carp syndicate. The gravel pit spans an estimated 400 acres, providing a perfect size for the local sailing club. Each bank is very different: its north bank has the River Kennet running past it, and to the east the ever constant M4 runs metres from several of the swims. The south bank is a waste management centre in constant use throughout the day, and the west bank backs onto several houses and a well-known pub, giving it the name the Fox and Hounds bank. This bank also has a section of no-fishing, which is where the sailing club is.

On the lake you have large areas inaccessible to fish due to several large buoys used by the sailors. You have several islands of all different shapes and sizes; some are covered in snags and others are bare. One island is large enough that a power line transmission tower sits on it. You have thousands of underwater features/snags that you can fish to/avoid, from plateaus to bars to massive slabs of concrete blocks left from the pit's excavation days. There is even a car in the margins of the lake. You then you have the locals, from the boat users, the skinny dippers, the dog walkers and the local youths on their inflatables. You can picture that it has a lot going on down there. Nobody can be certain how many carp reside in the pit. It's never had an official stocking, but there are rumours of how some of them got there years ago. The 2007 floods no doubt saw carp come and go in and out of the pit, but from judging by what's been caught and seen, there are an estimated 60-100 carp in there with several 30s, a handful of 40s and the king of the pond, the Machine, a male carp that has slowly been continuing to put on the weight each year. However, with a lake that size, who knows what else is in there?

Last year, Nick told me I would likely be getting a ticket for this year. It couldn't have tied in more perfectly, as I would be moving from Suffolk to Wiltshire for work. However, when this year came around and I got my ticket, complications with work meant I had to briefly move to Lincolnshire for a month. Alongside other commitments I had towards the RAF Carp Team, it meant that I was unable to get anywhere near enough time at the lake. In fact I only managed three 48-hour trips during the months of April and May, with June and July being a complete write-off. However, during those trips, I fished a

different swim on each night. I fish the swims in each area of the lake to give me an idea about areas I'd mostly likely target when I did get time to fish it properly. August rolled around, and I had four weeks booked off, so I knew I would be able to get some longer sessions planned.

On my first week off, I used the times I could to get down to the lake and recce likely areas that I could target. On sessions when I have at least three nights, I tend to favour a bait-and-wait tactic. With this in mind, I decided to bait a few areas that I guessed would be likely patrol routes for the carp in the pit. A change in weather quickly saw me bring forward my trip to the second Saturday of the month, and I was in position on one of these spots. After the first night, I quickly learnt that the birds had the spot figured out. On the second evening, I assessed my options and decided to target an area to my left in front of another swim. This spot was between 1 and 2ft deeper than where I was fishing. It was the drop-off from a plateau that ran off an island. I imagined that carp would be following this plateau along the edge rather than coming onto the shallower water of the plateau. I pictured the natural foods to be deposited from any water currents between the slope and the weedbeds in the deeper water. This to me was more likely to be a patrol route. With a little bit of hard work, the spot was ready, and I put down between 15 and 20kg of bait to really try to stop anything in its tracks. With my new spot primed, and still in the same peg, I was also able to keep two rods on the same spot I had been baiting that week. However, after the second night, I knew I would get a better line lay and be able to place all three rods on the spot from the swim next door, but this meant I wouldn't be able to safely fish the spot

I'd been baiting in the week. A choice had to be made, and I decided on a move. That evening, three freshly sharpened snowman rigs were positioned out onto the spot with a few more handfuls of boilie over the top just to be sure I had bait over the rods in case I had been cleared out from the night before.

First light rolled around on the third morning, and the alarms had remained silent. By this point, I still had yet to even see a carp show, so you can imagine my surprise when 8.30am rolled around and my right hand rod started screaming away at me! In my haste to the rods, I forgot my waders by the bivvy, and with a camo net between me and the rods, there was no way I was reaching them. So off the boots and trousers came, and out into the water I went. I'm sure normally I would have been screaming in pain walking across all the gravel barefoot, but with the adrenaline pumping and hooked into what felt like a powerful fish, I was actually able to wade across most of the way to where the fish was holding out at, no doubt trying to take me out around some buoys given the chance. However I quickly closed down onto it.

I was about ten yards from it when a massive set of shoulders broke the surface. This was when I realised not only was I hooked into my first carp from the pit but also a chunk. My PB at this point at this point was 37lb, and I'd landed a low 40 for a good mate of mine a couple years back so knew what a decent carp looked like, but this thing dwarfed even those. I then spotted it had a half linear scale pattern down its sides. I knew of one big carp for certain that had this scale pattern! This is when my knees started to shake and nerves got the better of me. When I went to net it, I'd got the wrong side of

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where I'd pull the net back through the spreader and effectively shallow pan netted it, only for it to just power back out of the net back into the lake. Noddy! However, I quickly got the net sorted, and the carp played ball and went into the net the second time. At this point I was screaming my head off at even just landing my first fish, let alone a chunk. I was looking into the net, knowing deep down exactly which fish it was, but in my head I was refusing to believe myself. There was no way the Machine was in my net... not on just my fourth session on the pit, let alone my first bite.

A phone call was made to Nick to tell him what I'd caught and to arrange someone to come and help with the weighing and photos. Shortly later, Macca and Kieran from the syndicate appeared in my swim with a celebratory beer (it's never too early!), and we went about the weighing on two sets of scales to confirm the weight of 54lb 6oz, a new PB by over 17lb! We then went about taking pictures before watching him swimming off into the depths of the pit, wondering if he would ever be seen again.

I spent the rest of the session coming to terms with what I'd actually managed. Not only had I managed to get a bite from the 400-acre pit, but I'd landed a UK 50 and one of only few anglers to catch this from the pit. Do I consider it a lucky capture? Yes, without a shadow of a doubt luck was on my side for it to be the Machine. All fishing is without doubt in my eyes luck. You can't force the fish to take your bait no matter how much you have learnt about even one particular fish. However, you can certainly make your own luck by doing things right. What next? Well I'm still in search of my first 40... Will the pit treat me with Lady Luck again?



TNT

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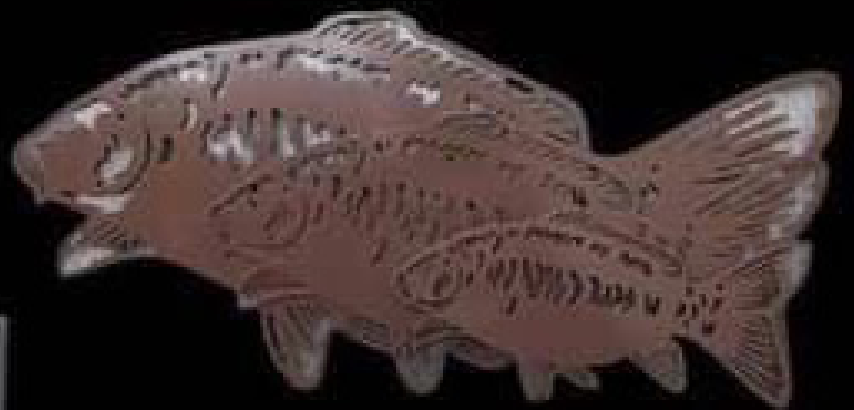
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IT'S OKAY
NOT TO PAY

trader

DOCKLANDS

I am going to start this off with an introduction to a series I have started on a new YouTube channel called The Specimen Chaser. I will take you back over the years on my channel with footage and also with these written articles in Big Carp magazine as a series of articles within the next few Off The Beaten Track issues. I never in a million years thought I would do this, as I have been out of the spotlight and been a so-called secret squirrel for many of years, fishing for real off the

beaten track for old, dark English carp in London docks waters. The reason for showing my captures now is simply because of years of fishing these docks and only seeing a small couple of handfuls of respectful decent anglers who let you get on with your hard work has changed, and I'm now locking horns with the so-called pop-up carp anglers, as I like to call them, with no etiquette, who will jump all over your hard work for a quick two minutes of fame. So I am going to take you back right to the beginning of when it all really started for me fishing these rock hard literally concrete docks.

I used to swim in these docks as a teenager, messing around with all my friends and also my oldest brother. Back then I never really knew what actually swam in these docks; I was



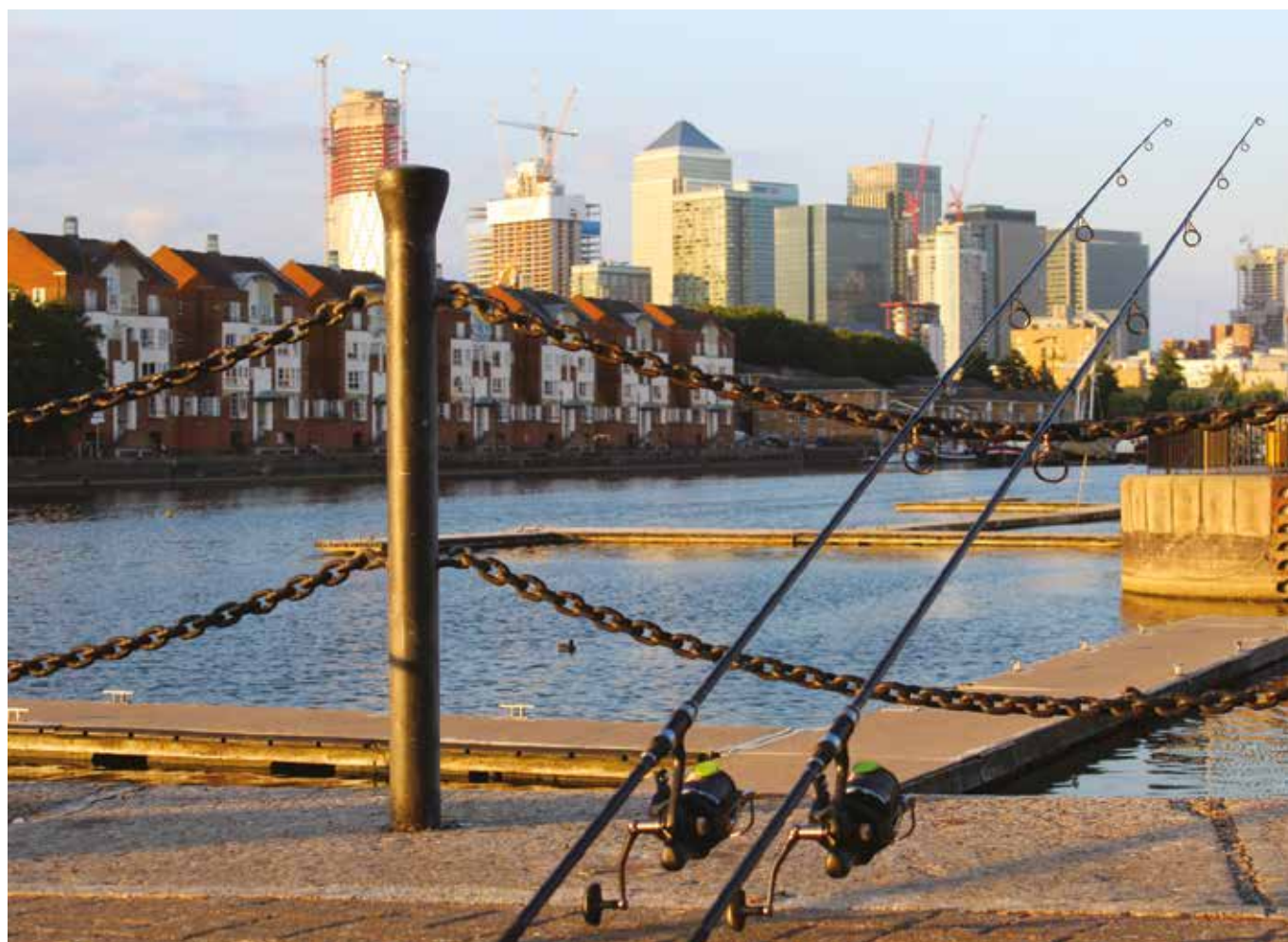
into fishing but not mega mad on carp fishing. I was more of a pleasure angler as a kid and used to just fish for whatever pulled the float under or swung the quiver tip round. I used to fish mainly on the rivers, as my dad worked in the auctions, and I used to just fish the nearby rivers wherever he was working. As I grew into my twenties and I started a small little family myself, I generally used to go carp fishing on lakes with my brother-in-law and friends to just get away for a few days here and there when I could get the time. This is when the passion just took over, and ever since I have been extremely hooked on fishing for all sorts of species all over Europe.

The problem was now as I got more and more serious and involved with the scene, the normal carp rat race of fishing day tickets and syndicate waters just didn't really appeal to me much anymore. I wasn't interested in turning up to a syndicate to catch a fish that after talking to a few members would be like, "Oh yeah, that's called Charlie's Fish, or the Big Common or the Apple Mirror." I wasn't interested in everyone fishing the same spots on the same tree line or in the same gully on the same bar at so many yards out with a certain rig because that's where the lake was producing bites. This no longer appealed to me; in my opinion it wasn't fishing anymore. I have never been a follower, always a leader, and I like to do things how I want to do things. I recently watched a clip with Adam Penning on Cypography TV, and he was talking about the same kind of thing, and it really hit home for me. I even posted on social media to say how real his talk was. So this is where it began for me – to start looking for places where no one else really fished so I could catch fish that no one really fished for, or if they did, they didn't get caught often.

So I started to tread my soles on the concrete banks of the docks very close to my home. After years and years of roaming these banks and getting to know the odd angler here and there, I started putting in hours and hours of time looking for carp or even signs of carp – where they would be or go at certain times of the year, putting bits and pieces together to try and target these docks carp.

Challenge accepted, and this is where the quest for old English docks carp began.

It wasn't easy at first, and it still isn't easy to this day, as it's really two separate docks connected by a small channel that the boats travel through. One dock is 22 acres in size, which is the fishing dock, and the other dock is around 12 acres and is no fishing... You know the score; the fish generally hang about



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in the no-fishing dock. The depth goes down to well over 30ft in places and is mega silty, so choosing your spots wisely is the key to success.

After choosing somewhere I would try and target the fish, I set about all sorts of tactics to try and catch some. Over many years, I have fished many different spots all over the docks but always go back to the one spot I chose from the beginning, as it's where I have had most success. As this is going to be a series of articles, I am not going to show off all the fish at once, but over the coming issues, I will talk you through some of the captures I have had from these docks. Every single bite from these docks is special, as it can be weeks, months, and in some people's cases, years before they land a carp from these docks. So I will talk about two different fish in this article; the first one being on a particular evening when I had come over the docks after a friend of mine had rung me to ask if I fancied a walk around the docks to see if we could see or spot any of the carp milling around on my spot or in the shallower water.

Bear in mind it was about 6pm in the evening, and most of my fishing, if not all of my fishing, was normally done between 4am in the morning and around 9am, because the actual part I fish is a boating club, and it's where they launch the boats, so you're not allowed to be fishing there with lines in the water all around the boats. I never wanted many people seeing me fishing there so I could keep my spot as low key as possible.

We had literally come over just for a look, but when we were there, we saw a few fish just milling about and grubbing around my baited area, and my friend said, "Why don't you just go and get your rods and fish for these carp?" At first I was like, "Argh, I don't really want to," but as it was a nice evening and we had



seen a few fish, I thought, sod it; I will make an exception on this occasion. As I shot off to get my rods and stuff, my friend stayed and just roamed about looking for some more fish in the area.

Well when I returned from home, he was like, "Bob, man, I have just seen an absolute tank of a carp swimming out towards the deeper water underneath the jetty that goes into a T-shape." Well I never used to fish the deeper water. The spot I fish, as you can see in the pictures, is like a small square, and it's off a slope for launching boats that runs from inches deep to around 6ft where I fish then drops off to 18ft off of a ledge and then out to 30ft past the jetties. There's a floating jetty in an L-shape that then goes off into a T-shape.

When he told me the fish were out near the deeper water, I was not too keen on putting a rod there. I never really fish there, as it's over 18ft deep and has very smelly silt that lies on the bottom. I normally only fish one rod in the square in the shallower water due to the snags in the water so I can see where I'm fishing to make it safer to land the fish. There are endless amounts of shopping trollies, bikes, motorbike chains and even a car in the water, so the snags are unreal, and the fish know where to go once you hook one. If I ever fished two rods, it would also be the kiss of death, and I wouldn't actually land any fish, but if I fished one rod, I would land them. The plan was to put a rod on the fish we had seen in the shallower water and then just drop a solid bag down in the deeper water where he had seen the bigger fish, so that's what we did.

While standing there watching the fish over the rod in shallower water, the solid bag in deep water melted off, and



when I say melted, the clutch was like an old school chimney, smoking and smoking. I grabbed the rod, and straight away I looked at him and he said to me, "That's that fish." I was like, "You're absolutely joking; I can't believe this," and straight away I was like, "What fish was it?"

Was it a common; was it a mirror? He said that it was a dark, scaly mirror. Anyway, this fish then surfaced the other side of the floating jetty, and the line was rubbing on the chains that hold them together. I had to lay down on my stomach with the rod tip as far into the water as I could get it, as you're already about 6 to 7ft above the water on the dock. I slowly battled with this fish, trying not to apply too much pressure but enough to stop it going into any of the snags, and eventually I got it this side of the jetties, and then it wanted to go again. Now, if the fish goes out to the left, it's silly deep out there like 40 maybe 50ft deep, so if the fish ever goes out there, I know I have an 85 or 90% chance I will land it, as it's relatively snag free, so I let the fish go far out about 50/60 yards and then slowly turned it around and coasted it back towards us.

As it got really close, my mate said, "That's the fish!" and as we slid the net under her, the memory will stick forever. I climbed down one of the dock's ladders to put the fish into a floating sack. We sacked the fish for about 20 minutes while I called another friend to come over and see such an immense, lovely old English warrior of a carp. We weighed her, and she went just under the magical 30lb mark, literally by ounces, but none of the weights matter of any of these fish caught out of these docks, as they are all characters.

This brings me now onto another capture of another docks stunner. It all started on a night I'd gone looking for a few fish

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and actually bumped into a guy who I knew who had also fished the docks for some years. He was a friend at the time, called Danny, but for some unknown reason, I don't see him anymore fishing the docks. He was in my opinion a solid angler for the style of fishing, and what he applied to the docks was nothing sort of breathtaking.

He used to fish the docks as if it was a runs water, somewhere that bites can be hard to come by, but he would be chopping and changing things on a regular basis. He said to me once that he loved to fish alongside me, as I gave him so much enthusiasm and encouragement, and he had learnt so much from fishing with me, and I thought the same about him. It's strange how we don't boost our own ego and all think someone else is better at doing things that in reality we are good at ourselves.

Danny also caught his fair share of fish from the docks. Danny

was fishing a spot further down the docks from where I fished, and I always called that spot Danny's Corner. He asked me if I was out baiting up, as I was regularly out baiting my spots at night so no one would see what I was doing. I was just chatting to him saying I was going to bait up ready for the morning when I thought to myself that I should ask him if he fancied doing a night on my spot with me. It would be like returning a favour, as in the autumn and winter months we would do many socials at Danny's Corner because the water was deeper, and my shallow spot would be dead and not worth fishing come the winter months. Danny was well up for doing the night, so he was going to pack up and go and get his bedchair and other bits while I went off to get my stuff.

We met up back on my spot sometime a little later to get the rods out. This was a bad idea at first, bearing in mind I only ever fished one rod in the square and Danny was going to fish the deeper water by the T on the jetty. It was a nightmare from then on, as from about 10pm onwards when we got the rods out till like 2am in the morning, we had landed in the region of 17 to 18 bream. It was relentless – double takes, the lot, and by 2am, I had just had enough, and I had said to Dann, "I'm bringing the rods in, and I will try to get a few hours' sleep." This never really happens, as it's in the middle of London, and you have to keep your wits about you, but I'd normally start fishing from about 4am at first light, so the plan was to put the rods back out again at 4am, so that's what we did.

From 4am, at first light, till about 8am, we never saw a single fish, not even a bream. It had gone completely dead. I said to Danny that maybe all the commotion through the night with the bream had kept the carp out of there that morning. So at

about 8.15am Danny asked me if the Tesco was open around the corner, and I said it had opened at 8am, so while Danny was round Tesco, I thought to myself that I'd wind him up when he came back. When he returned, I said to him that I'd just got a phone call from a mirror carp saying it would be turning up about 8.45am to pick up the rigs and then be off. He thought I was mad at first and was like, "What the hell are you on about?" but I explained that if the mirror came in to pick up the rigs then we would get a bite. We really had a laugh about this.

We literally had 20 minutes before we had to be gone before the boat club came out with the sailboats for the day. Everything was literally put away in the car, and all I had left out was the mat, the rod and the net. As I peered down into the water over the baited spot, there was a carp, literally one carp, all on his own grubbing around on the bait, and inches from him lay my white pop-up, anchored on a multi-rig on a lead clip system with a 5oz lead. I said to Danny, "This is 100% a bite," and he said, "Is that the fish that phoned you?" We laughed about it, and then all of a sudden, the fish just grabbed hold of the pop-up, and it was away. Now, all the fish I have caught in these docks fight hard, but this one particular fish was a demon, and as you can see in the pictures, the tail on this mirror was something else. Its serious rudder just gave it immense power like a miniature underwater speedboat. It shot underneath the jetty and just kept going and going, and I just couldn't stop it. I'm saying to Danny, "This is gone, mate. I'm going to lose this fish any second."

I was lying down on my stomach again, rod tip down in the water while this fish was just stripping line like an express



train. Then all of a sudden, it went completely solid, locked up, and I just felt sick, but as I looked up, I realised that the line had gone through the little crack in between the two jetties and the fish had gone all the way out to the other jetties. I said to Danny, "This fish is gone, mate. I'm never going to land it; I'm literally waiting for the line to snap." So I put the rod down on the chains and put a bottle cap on the spool with the bail arm open to see if the fish would free itself somehow. Danny was putting his stuff away in his car, and I went back to my car to get something. When I came back, the bottle cap was on the floor. I was like, "What's happening here, Dan?"

I picked up the rod, wound down the slack line, and then, boom... the water just erupted, and whatever the fish was snagged up on had now moved. It was like a massive surface of bubbles foaming in the water and a massive cloud of silt coming up over the snagged fish. I don't know what it was – maybe a traffic cone or something not too heavy, as if it was a trolley or something similar, but it wasn't going anywhere. So now was back playing the fish, lying on the floor and making sure I could bring it under the jetties. Danny was like, "I can't believe you're actually still playing this fish – anyone else would have lost it!"

Finally it surfaced this side of the jetties out to the left, and at first glimpse we thought it was a koi because of the colour. Danny did the honours, sliding the net under this unreal creature and took some shots also of this stunner. As you can see, this is a real banger that swims in these docks. There are many more to come in next month's issue of Big Carp magazine and also on the new YouTube channel (The Specimen Chaser). Be sure to stay tuned... Until next time, happy fishing!

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

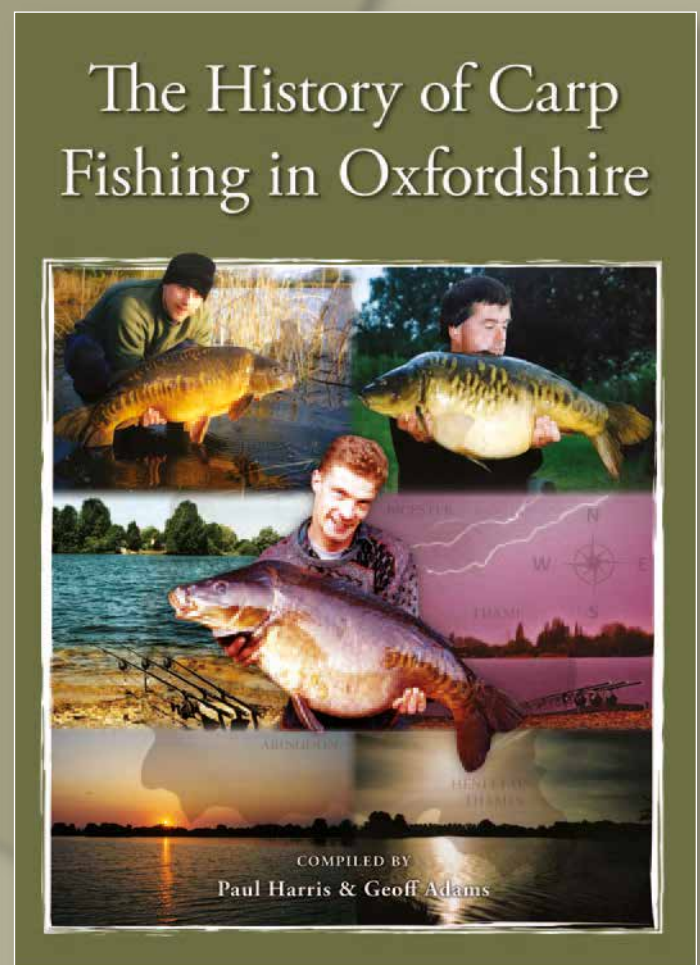
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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



OLD SCHOOL REFLECTIONS

1986 seems quite a while ago now, but as it worked out, it was quite a special season for me. During the close season, I had made plans, as I still had unfinished business on the Car Park Lake. 1985 had been good to me with seven takes, including four in a two-hour stalking session on a boiling hot summer afternoon, all from the same gravel patch tight to the Car Park bank. My plans were made, but Single Scale still evaded my capture. I had come close the previous year only to have it roll off short of the net.

Although I could have continued to bait the small patch in the corner of the lake, I wanted to try and find a spot down the far end of the lake, near the bars, that would not be disturbed with the noise of June 16th. This would mean a lot of the close season would again be spent up various trees, watching the patrol routes that these fish took. Low density stocking offers a whole new group of problems. You now have to learn to think like the fish... Yes, it is possible to bait spots in open water, but often this is wasted baiting, with it either being eaten by ducks or tench. You may see carp cruise over these spots, but it is not a natural area for them to feed in, so again I regard this as a waste of time.

The lake in the close season was a quiet place to be. The fish continued to follow their natural paths and were quite happy for me to watch them perched in a treetop. The closest place for me to intercept them was the top bar. I was able to watch them swim along the bar just under the surface, but would lose them in the sun's glare. It happened too many times to be a coincidence, and this only left one more thing for me to do: get in the lake with them.

Please don't get me wrong; I would not condone this practice now, but most of the water was not much more than ankle deep. I walked along the bar to the point that they would disappear, and lo and behold I found a step down in the bar, soft, squidgy and full of food, and I knew that was my spot. I put a small stick in the bar to mark the spot. I was now able to bait exactly where I wanted it in one of their natural larders.

No need to change my base mix, though I did think about changing the flavour. Rod Hutchinson asked me what I was looking for, and I really wanted to use a Juicy Fruit Bubblegum flavour,

but it was one he had just stopped selling, so he convinced me to use Chocolate Malt. I wasn't happy when I made the bait up, so I went back to scopex / golden syrup. This was my third year on it, but as they say, if it isn't bust...

I made the milk base into small chops, as I didn't need to fire them far, nor did I want them to roll down the slope. I also used a filler, and my staple here was hemp, maples and tigers. I would watch the area cloud up so was confident that the fish had found my spot, Not that long before the start, I went back out to the spot, and the bottom was getting ripped up and felt hard.

Chris Ball contacted me, as Chris Tarrant and Danny Baker wanted to do an item for the 6 o'clock show on ITV called "In search of the Yateley monster". There was to be Chris Yates, Chris Ball, Andy Little, Ron Buss, Jan Wenczka and me. It would be filmed at the start of the season... Not the quiet start I had expected or hoped for. At least my baiting was going to plan, and I left completing the swim digging to as close to the start as possible.

June the 16th came, and I baited my spot and put a few handfuls of the particle mix in, just outside the tree in Brute's Corner. I knew that this was their normal bolthole when pressure was on the lake. Andy, Chris and Jan turned up just after first light. After the normal greetings, Chris said, "Have you put any bait down in the corner? The gin clear water had a heavy cloud in it."

We walked down to the corner, and I crawled the last few feet on my belly... The water certainly was active! I had some tigers in my pocket, and Andy said, "Would you like to borrow a stalking rod?" I tied a couple of tigers on to the hair with hands shaking. I lowered the float into the water, and just as it had settled a giant leather drifted along the margin right

next to me and upended as it got to the cloud. The float was getting knocked around as the fish fed, and the float looked like I was trotting on a river. It dipped and slid from view. I hit it, and the rod took on a fighting curve. The fish tried to make the sanctuary of the snags, and ping! The tip flew back as the line parted. I didn't know what to say. I looked at the line and asked Andy what breaking strain it was. "8lb," he said. OMG! I didn't know what to say. I walked back to my swim in silence. Hell – all that prep work and I lost it. A cup of coffee and a smoke saw me thinking straight, and I went back down and topped up the bait with another few handfuls. I then set up my float rod with 15lb Brent. My confidence was back, and I hoped that the fish would also return.

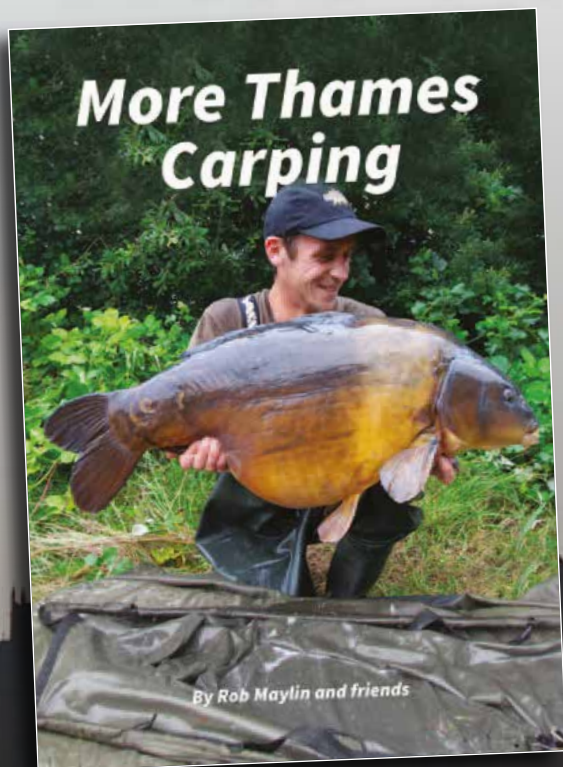
A couple of hours later, I edged along the path, stopping short by the last bush, and the water was still clouded up. Hardly daring to breathe, I looked down to my left, and a fish drifted past quite deep down. I slowly reversed and picked up my rod and net, nothing left to chance. On my belly, I inched the rod over the bank. No line was touching the water; a few tigers followed the float in, and I lay in wait.

A vortex appeared by the float, and it shot under. As I struck into the fish, I jumped straight into the lake in front of the snag tree. I was then able to play the fish in relative safety (apart from an island). Chris and Andy heard the splashing and passed me the net. The fish rolled, and I saw a leather flank. Now mentally, I was going over which fish it was... "It's not the bronze; it's not the big girl, and I hope it's the mystery leather only caught once by Derek Stritton in '84."

It was a lovely looking fish, and it was my first rig caught carp when it lived over the road in the Match Lake. To say I was

More Thames Carping

By Rob Maylin and friends



Thames Carping was our best-selling book of 2019 and for a good reason. The Thames has everything a carp angler could possibly want, plenty of water, it's the biggest carp water in the country, unknown stock, a stock which increases every time we have a flood, an element of the unknown (getting more known), very rare in today's carp scene where every carp is flogged, logged, blogged and caught by an endless stream of bounty hunters.

Yes, the Thames really is the last frontier to be fully exploited. Thames carp anglers have many attributes of old school carping, stealthy, secretive and not bothered at all by the size of what they catch, although, like the old school, still hoping it's the fish of a life time when the buzzer shrieks out!

For Thames carpers the build-up too is very old school, they still have the close season, so this time is not wasted, as it was not years ago, recce's, baiting up, getting baits established, building up swims, while always being conscious that to be discovered would be the end of their hard work, so coming and going discreetly, under cover of darkness, a covert operation. Their cards held tightly to their chests. And this is why of course that books on Thames carping are so rare and so readable.

You see within these pages are their secrets revealed for all to see. Not blatant, no map grids in longitude and latitude to the latest hot spots but within the lines, read only by anglers who know what to look for. A clue here, a landmark there. All part of the ultimate jigsaw. So why do these secretive anglers choose to write, well simply because I ask them.

Sometimes over several years. Most eventually agree, I am persuasive, arguing at their catches need to be documented and be part of the history books for years to come. Which is true, and why they do it. Not for money, to promote something or even self-gratification but to be part of our great angling heritage. So that their kids and grandkids can look back and say "look! there's grandad with a beautiful Thames Carp. He would spend hundreds, even thousands of hours fishing for them.

So, here's what we have, and may I say you will not be disappointed. Some truly amazing Thames carp, from different stretches, some urban some rural, some well in land and some tidal, but all from the amazing 'Old Father Thames'.

Let's start with Ash Geden, who takes the cover positions again. His 2018-19 season made riveting reading in book one. In this volume he is back for his 2019-2020 season with equally incredible results. Many huge carp, several over forty, the front cover leviathan being totally new. He is a great river angler with a gift for writing, you will love his next instalment. Simon Rumsey has been on a journey while fishing the Thames, like many I suppose, in search of a thirty, or even bigger!

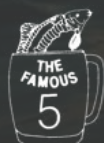
Andrew Sadler has discovered some Thames secrets during his many years on the Thames, for you the reader, he divulges all. Graham Stevens is a Thames stalwart, having written several articles in Big Carp and a couple of chapters in the first Thames book he is back in this volume to tell you how he does it. A technical A-Z for all to learn from, novice or expert Graham has some edges for you all.

The Teddington Tank by Vince Humphreys is a chapter about a huge common, that fish of a life time that he freely admits was totally unexpected, but that's the beauty of the Thames.

Thames common by Mark Cook, yes, a there's a theme developing here, A huge Thames common, one never to be forgotten. River Thames, Same swim, Same carp ... 6 months apart by Christopher Stockley is a great account which proves how territorial even Thames carp can be. My Love for the Tidal Thames a Brief History, By Roger Baker. Is a trip down memory lane for all those who like the history chapters? Thirty years on the Tidal, some huge carp too. One of my favourite Thames stories yet.

A Thames Monster featuring Pete The Pirate, is pretty self-explanatory, while prolific Thames carp catcher Danny Boy Hill, shows us just what's possible with a breath-taking gallery of Thames specimens. Add to these life history articles on the Thames by Jason Townsend, Ben Frewin, Mark Anthony, Vince Humphries, Tom James and constantan Thames carp catch 'The Thames Warrior' it's obvious that this book is another must read for not only river anglers but al carp anglers interested in something a bit different from the norm. A book you will read over and over again. History in the making, our UK heritage of Thames carp.

Rob Maylin



Bounty Hunter
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excited is an understatement; the fish went on to be named the Dustbin when Terry Pet Hybridge was looking through my photo albums and said, "Cor! I bet that eats like a Dustbin!"

As Andy and Chris took the photos, Jan said, "Have you still got a rod out?" Shoot! I had the rod in the dip on the bar! "It's ripping off," he said. "I will just hit and hold it." I said, "No, Jan. Take it! I need to get this fish back."

Back went the leather as Jan held the rod. "I think it's on and in weed," he said. I didn't argue with him, and the fish came in its head covered in weed. It went into the net first time, and I recognised it as the Small Common, a cracking fish, which I had been lucky enough to catch a couple of times previously. I unhooked it in the water and let it swim away. It had been a busy few minutes...

I was then away on holiday n not fishing, but I returned, fired up wanting to get back on the lake. A couple of things soured my return. Sometimes when you help people out, teaching them how to prepare bait, it can backfire on you, and I was told several of the fish had been out on the particles I was using, n also that the Bronze Leather had been caught, dropped and died the day after. I was bitterly disappointed and needed to get away and fish somewhere else. Andy had invited me to fish little Frensham with him, so I took him up on his offer. This I intended to do for the rest of the summer, as I already had plans to join Pete and Kenny on Wraysbury 1 for the autumn.

I decided on a change of bait when I moved over to Frensham. I swapped my base mix over to a new recipe based on the YHS mix. I like milk/bird food baits and still use them today. With this I used a powdered oyster flavour. I wish I could still get this; it was a great flavour and a very different sort of smell. I

can only say it had it had the smell of the seaside, not fishy but a kind of ozone/seaweed smell. I used a liquid colour (yellow), and the bait turned out as good as I'd hoped. The oyster powder was difficult to work with, and I had the last jar, so I needed a backup flavour. I had a ginger and oyster sauce one made up. The smell was spot-on but not a patch on the powder.

I started off fishing bottom baits and caught a variety of species, but not the carp I was after. The only plus point was that I didn't see any others catch either, so something had to change. Much has been written about Little Frensham (Burton-on-Sea), but not till I really fished there did I fully understand the complex nature of such a pretty looking, reed-fringed lake.

The lake is in a once flooded valley, and during WW2, it was drained and planted with fir trees to prevent the German air force using it to line up for bombing raids. When the war was over, the trees were cut and the lake filled again. The only trouble was that the trees were cut off at anything up to 24in from the base. The lake was stocked with carp from Donald Leney, and as you can imagine the tree stumps could play havoc. The bottom was very up and down, so when you had



a clear spot, you had to remember exactly where it was. Chest waders were an absolute must, wading out as far you could into the lake before launching your rig out into the zones that the carp considered to be safe.

When I logically thought about pop-ups, I couldn't see how they would not work. Due to the variations of the bottom, your free bait could be sitting on a tree stump, so it would be natural for the carp to find them at various heights in the swim.

When I fished it, I used my only set of Shimanos with the fighting drag, which did at least have a slightly bigger spool than my Cardinal 57, though due to the wading, casting and dropping in sandy water as I baited up, the life of these reels was not very long. I managed to get a block of aluminium, and Steve Neville turned up an aerial system, so I was able to use Monkey climbers even though my rods were 20-30 yards out in the lake. The rest of my kit was pretty straightforward: 12ft 2.75tc Boron rods, 12lb Abu test line, 2oz running leads and 12lb Abu test hooklink with a size 9 Owner.

I took a day off work midweek and made my way over to the lake. The mist was still over the lake when I got there, and as I walked passed the Beach swim, a fish crashed out in the middle of the lake. I made my way round to a swim called the Perch and set up my two rods, wading out and casting to the rough area I had seen the fish show. A couple of hours had gone by when out of the blue, my right hand rod roared off. I looked out into the lake and could see a fish boiling on the surface. This was the trouble with the tree stumps – getting snagged was very easy and a common thing to happen.

I walked out to the fish, finding a path through the stumps.

The line came off them easily enough, but the fish was still full of fight. What surprised me next was that the fish popped up only feet away from me and like a puppy on a lead, followed me back to the bank and the waiting net.

As I parted the mesh, I saw that I had done what I set out to do, and one of the original Leneys sat in my net. I was over the moon to say the least, and this fish was as old as the hills yet looked brand spanking new. It was from the original stocking and survived the fish kill. This fish actually only passed away about 18 months ago due to old age. What I had yet to find out was that this was to be part of a brace... To be continued...



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OLD SCHOOL TACKLE

Like many young lads born in the early 50s, spare time was often spent by the local rivers with homemade pond dipping nets constructed from one of your mum's old stockings. Catching minnows, sticklebacks, bullheads and alike was where it all started for me, progressing on to roach and perch with very basic tackle of rod and line. My grandad was a great inspiration to me, and even at the age of five, I can recall his stories of monster pike that broke his line on the river Medway. Summer trips to Watlingtonbury with him during school holidays saw my tackle improve to a cane rod and a cheap Woolworths fixed spool reel. Unfortunately I have no photographs from that era; it never seemed important in those days to take a trophy shot. Through junior school, I fished with a friend who lived up the road from us. His dad would often take us to a small private

stretch of the river Darent, owned by one of his suppliers. Little did I know at this time that I was only a few yards downstream from a venue that would change my future angling career.

Many years later, I was reunited with my old school friend Paul, who invited me to go with him carp fishing at Sutton-at-Hone small lake early one morning. We sat behind his two motionless rods for many hours while he told me of his obsession for catching these carp, a species of fish that apparently could only be caught by design and only by a handful of dedicated anglers. Special baits made of paste with secret ingredients were needed to catch these fish. Eleven-foot rods with pound-plus test curves were also needed to tame these beasts, should one be hooked. None of these were in my armoury, so I could only sit and watch in the hope that Paul would catch one. He used yellow washing up bottle tops for bite indication, which



he clipped over the line between the butt ring and the next ring up the rod. The rods were balanced, well off the ground, on two rod rests with rubber Mickey Mouse ears at the front and two back rests supporting the butts. Baits were free lined balls of paste that had been pre-boiled in water to stop the bream from feeding on them and cast around thirty yards out into the lake. We sat patiently waiting, while birds sang and the mist rose up and drifted over the lake. Alas nothing happened, but we both had a memorable session recapping our childhood.

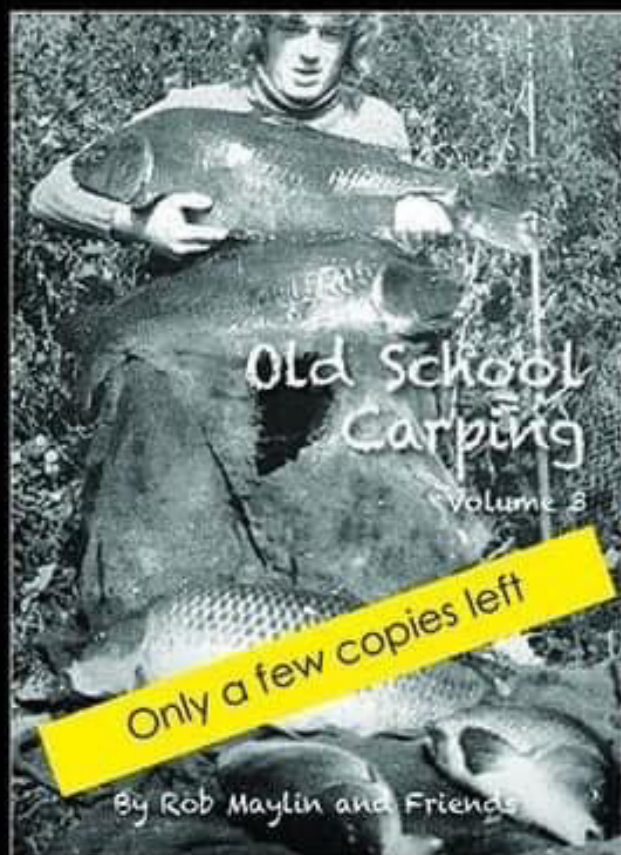
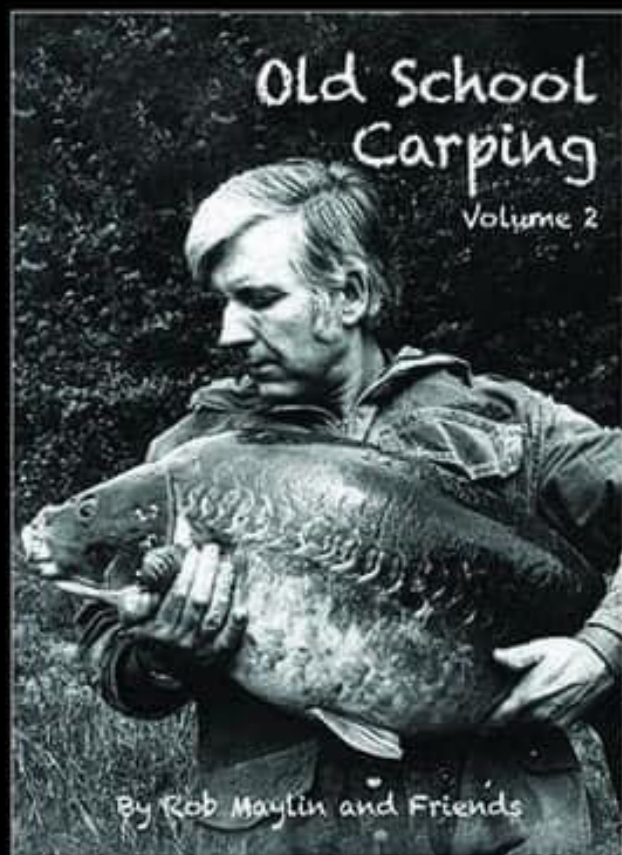
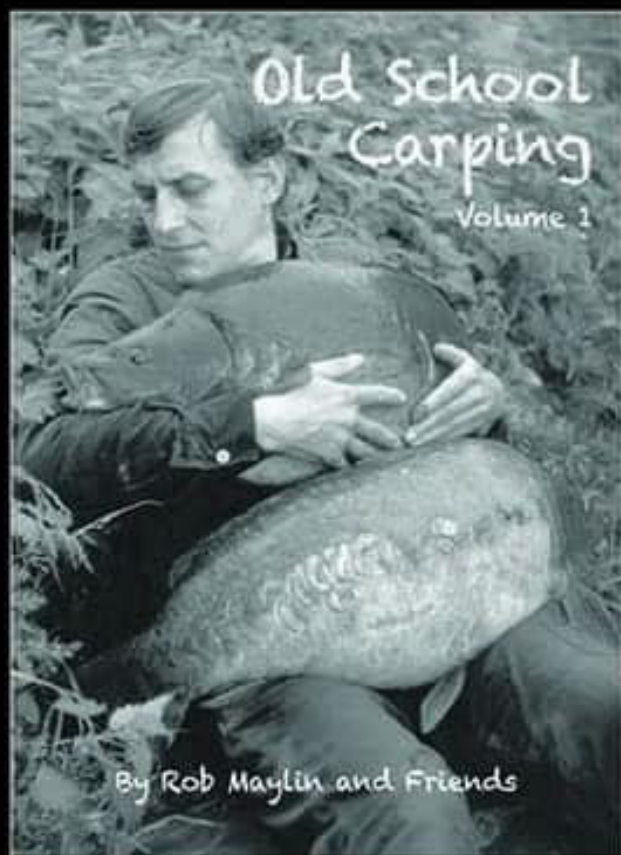
Another trip was planned for an evening session the following week. Paul hoped to borrow one of his mate's rods so that I could have a go myself. Paul's mate Dick arrived with the rods, but he had decided to fish himself, which left me as a spectator again. Darkness soon fell, and as the baits had not been visited by any carp, Paul and Dick decided to walk round the lake to see another friend fishing on the other side of big lake. I was now in charge of four baited rods while they went off to see Fred. I had been given instructions on what to do should anything happen but was told to shout and they would come running back. I reckon they must have just reached Fred when one of Dick's yellow bottle tops lurched upwards towards his rod. When it reached the rod, I struck, and all hell broke loose. I cannot recall much of what happened after I called for help, but it seemed an eternity before they returned to the swim. I was still hanging on for grim death as my new personal best fish wallowed in the margins, Dick netted the fish and then weighed it in at 13lb 12oz. My first mirror carp encounter was over, and little did I realise that I had just started on the road to becoming a carp angler. Later on, I had a visit from Fred, the



friend that Paul and Dick had gone to see. He congratulated me on my first catch, and he hoped that I caught lots more carp. Little did I know what was round the corner.

I went on to catch two more carp that winter, another thirteen-pounder and a single of eight pounds, all from the same lake. A friendship had been struck with Fred Wilton, and it was not long before he invited me to fish with him and Bob Morris the following season. I had three months to get some kit of my own together – no easy task in the early seventies. There were no tackle shops locally that stocked carp fishing tackle; lots had to be made by ourselves or adapted by others. My first rods came after a visit to Oliver's of Knebworth workshop. They had to be custom made and then collected six weeks later. Three

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eleven-foot, one-and-three-quarter test curve fibreglass rods with hard chrome guides were chosen. Mitchell 300 reels were loaded with 8lb breaking strain line and a size 4 Mustad hook completed the setup. Some rod rests, a 45-inch brolly and a landing net had to be obtained, along with a Stuart box for bits and pieces to go in. Efgeeco were the main tackle makers in those days, and choice was not an option; you just had to have what was on offer. Bedchairs were unheard of, so we had to improvise by using Argos sun loungers. An extra cover went over the top with a sheet of foam inserted between to make them more comfortable. Five or six years later, a local lad, Alan Lipscombe, who had access to a workshop did a conversion for us by cutting the legs off the lounge and fitting an adjustable one – no ratchets, just a series of holes in the leg with a split pin and a circlip. My mum had been collecting the tops off the washing up bottles for me, and red, green and yellow ones were now in my box ready for the start of the new season.

Some more of the things we take for granted nowadays were not available in the early 70s: leads, catapults, spods and marker floats. Buzzers, as we called them in those days, have probably seen more attention than any other part of your kit. Homemade versions were eclipsed when the Heron came on the market, a buzzer with a crude piece of wire that the line pulled over to one side when you got a bite. Two adjusting screws on the side gave you some sort of sensitivity adjustment, and each buzzer had an extension lead that ran back to a control box with a light on it for night fishing. Electronic experts came out the woodwork and were soon fitting GPO contacts into the heads for better control, volume and tone controls and better quality jack plugs to save on battery life. Many of you will be

shocked that we never had catapults, but it's true, we would throw out our free offerings my hand. Fred was so good at throwing them he could have three baits in the air at any one time, throwing them one at a time.

Spods, I'm sure, were first used by some Kent boys who ignored the HNV bait revolution in favour of particles, such as chickpeas and peanuts. The early construction was a plastic washing up bottle with a wedge of cork or polystyrene in the nose to make it float after it landed. Leads are another item of tackle that were only just evolving, which was why we would only freeline our baits. Freelining a bait created no resistance apart from any drag created by the line itself, which gave us the chance to actually twitch a bait back if a fish picked it up and spat it out. This was almost as exciting as surface fishing; you could pull gently on the line and a fish would pull back at the other end. It was like teasing a sweet from a child. Missing the take was a common occurrence, but at least you were actually fishing. Marker floats were not invented either; if the fish showed on the surface then you fished high, but if not, you fished on the bottom.

Anyway, back to the fishing... My first full season was started on Brooklands, formerly Ellingham's ponds in Dartford, a leased lake under the control of Dartford and District Angling and Preservation Society. Paul and I had set up in the rushes swim on the 14th June waiting for the start of a new season, two rods each set up fishing for runs. This was a different setup to the three takes I had had the previous winter. We now had silver paper coils on the line between the butt ring and the reel, the bale arm of the reel was open, and when a take occurred, a coin would fall off the spool to allow the line

ROBIN MONDAY



to come off the reel. The season started at 12pm, and baits were cast out. We alternated the rods to have an even chance of catching if the carp came on the feed. Luckily for me, Paul liked his sleep, and after seven runs, I finally hooked into my first fish of the new season. The first six runs I hit forgetting to shut the bale arm. My new personal best now moved up to 19lb 14oz – there's honesty for you. Fred instilled in me the benefits of being honest, and I've carried it on throughout my angling career. You are only fooling yourself if you adjust the weights to increase your log. By the end of the session, I had mastered the art of hitting a run – shut the bale arm, count to three and then lean into the fish. No hair rigs then; hooks were buried in the bait and a piece of pasta would be placed under the bend of the hook to withstand the force of the cast. A few more fish graced our nets that weekend, and I went back to work a happy bunny.

My enthusiasm for carp fishing had begun to rule my life. I fished at least four nights a week, and the others were spent making bait for the next session. Fred's bait made me a far better angler than I would have been, and for that, Fred, I will be eternally grateful. My first seasons total took me past 50 double-figured carp plus plenty of singles, but I never surpassed that 19lb 14oz fish from my opening session. Bob claimed the first 100 doubles in a single season after our very successful winter on Bysingwood in Faversham. We fished every weekend throughout that winter in order to keep catching. As there were no bivvies, we had to make our own. Bob's was a large tarpaulin that covered and hung down from his brolly, and mine was a plastic sheet connected to the ribs

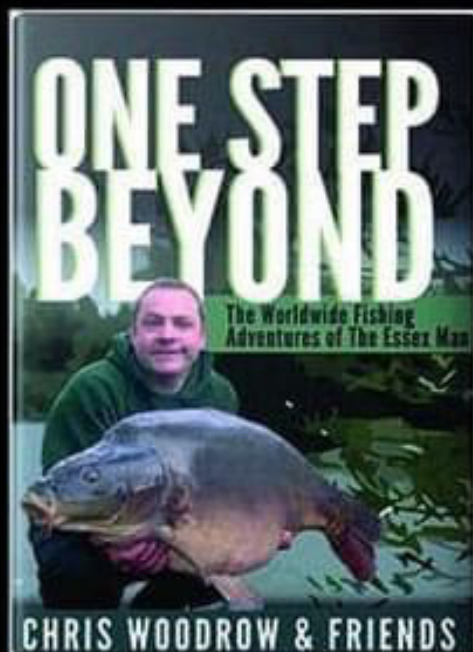
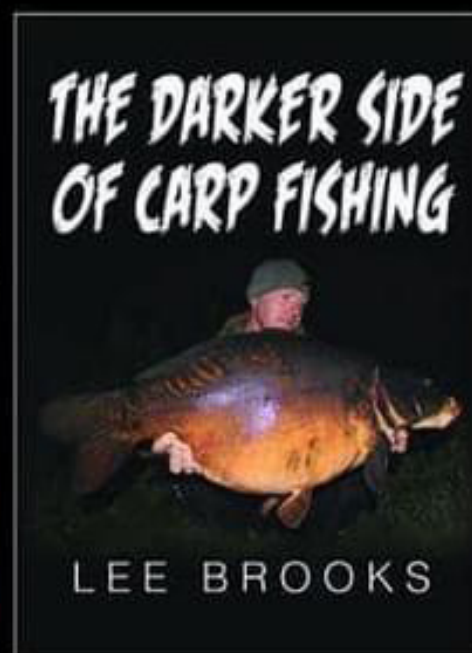
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of my brolly by means of plastic curtain hooks.

The only fishing suit on the market was one called a Dungeness for sea fishing. Fred's wife Joan was a seamstress at a flag making company in Abbey Wood, London, where they lived, and it was decided that if we dismantled one of these suits we could use it as a pattern to make our own thermal suits to protect us from the winter cold. Several layers of quilted fibre were used and covered with an industrial nylon layer to keep off a light shower. Neoprene boots were also constructed in the same way to keep our feet warm. They were no good for walking in though, and we had to wait for the Skeetex moonboots before we could walk far. Cooking was another obstacle to overcome... Camping Gaz was all you could get, and that froze in the cold. Mentholated spirit cookers became popular in the coming years but many an



angler has had his tent burnt out because you could never see the flames on these stoves.

The severe cold of the winter also led to problems with the line freezing in the rod guides, so glycerine was used to help this, and in extreme cases, we would fish with light coils of plastic on a stainless steel welding rod, later to be called a monkey climber. When the wind was blowing and it was freezing cold the last thing you wanted to do in those days was get out of your camp, so we would use a piece of sponge jammed into the butt ring to stop loose coils of line falling off the spool. I recently saw these advertised in an angling catalogue as a butt plug... Whatever next, I wonder? Looking through that very same catalogue, I could see how buzzers are now high tech alarms working on line vibration with built-in theft modes, spods are now Spombs with no spillage out of



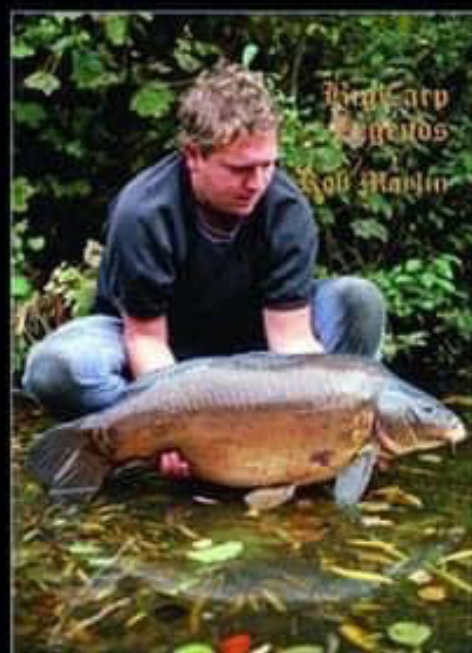
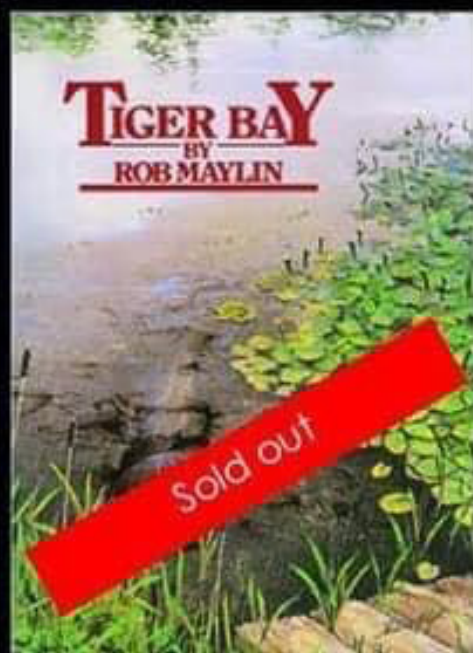
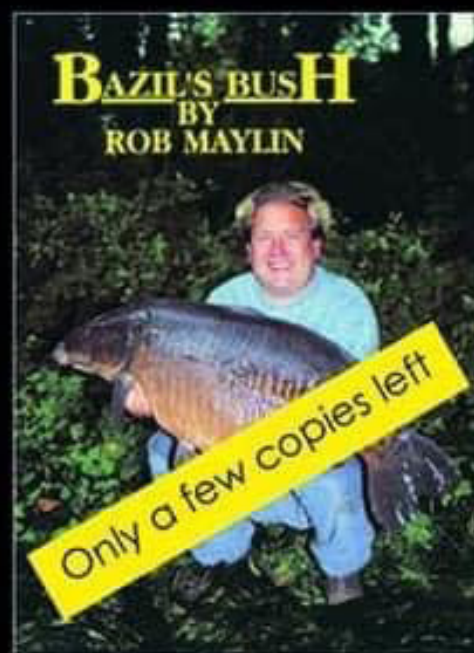
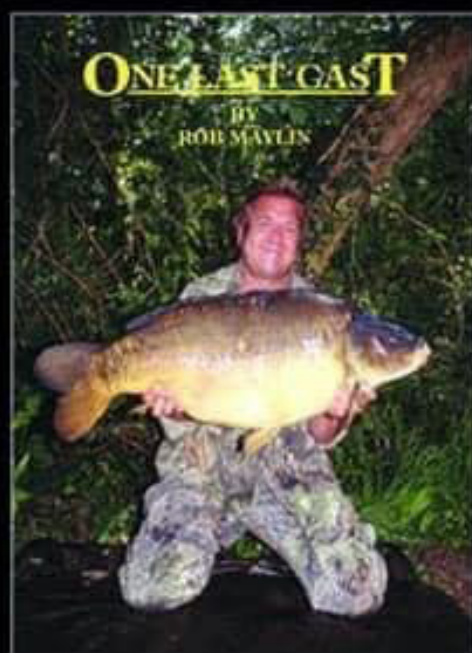
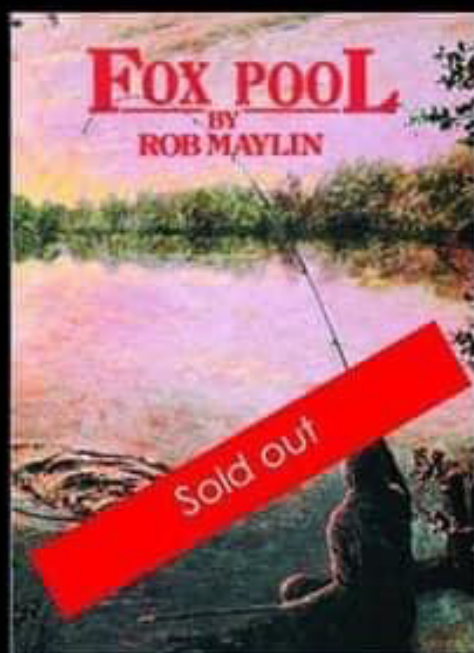
the back, bivvies can house your car and your tackle, loungers are now twin beds with built-in bedding, stoves can cook a full roast dinner and rods can cast your baits into the next county, lines are finer than silk and stronger than steel, there are indicators with lights, reels that have a fighting drag so you don't need to back wind and there are enough baits and flavours to last you lifetime.

On a real plus though is the equipment now used for fish safety: unhooking mats, floatation slings, soft mesh nets and antiseptic lotions for wounds. We have all fallen into the tackle trap; I used to carry my kit to my swim for a weekend, but now I to have an all-singing all-dancing barrow with more gadgets than the van that got me to the venue in the first place!!



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DON'T TIME FLY

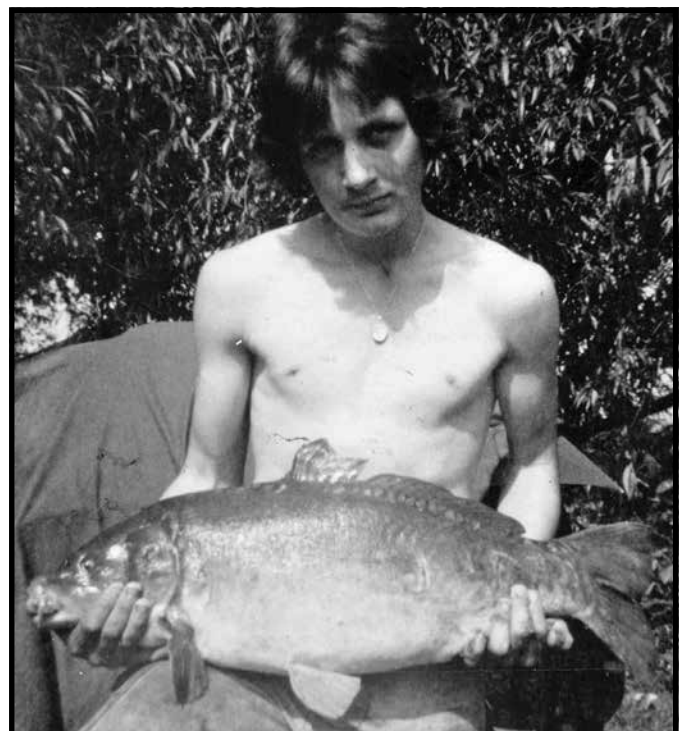
The Kent Valley, and in particular Brooklands and Darent, was a special place to be in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s for carp fishing. Gerry Savage and Jack Hilton were regulars at Brooklands, and the Hilton swim near the sandbar on the island was always a productive place to fish. Gerry Savage held the record for the lake, which he caught in the 1960s at 26lb.

In 1976, on the last day at Eltham Green School, I could not wait for the term to finish so I could get out as quickly as possible. A lift was waiting to take me to Brooklands where I spent the summer tench fishing. This was the year of the drought where the lake was so low, people were fishing in the middle of the lake on the gravel bars.

Brooklands had a good head of tench to over 7lb, which was a

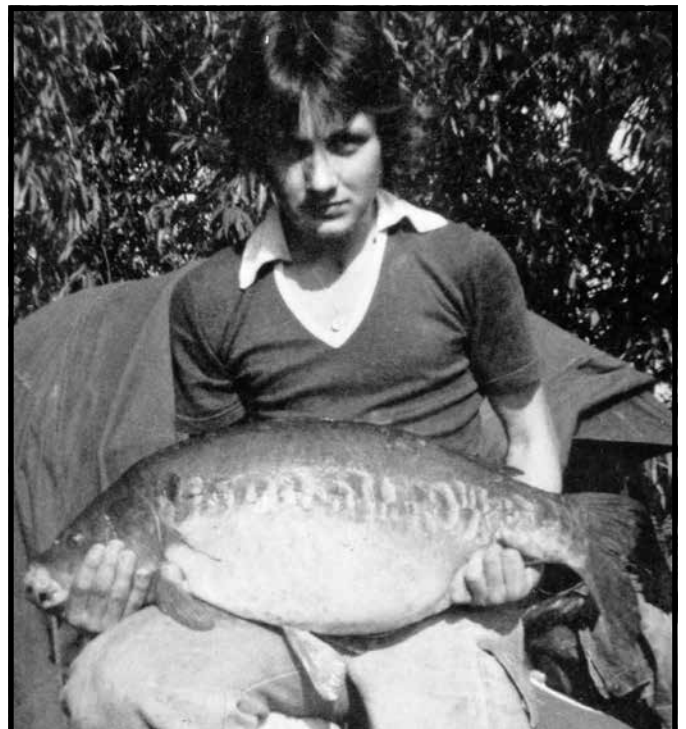
very big fish for the time. Richard Walker held the carp record, and fish caught in the upper 20s and 30s were front page news then. I caught my first ever carp in 1976 using an old split cane rod and a partly boiled potato the size of a tennis ball for bait. The following season was the Silver Jubilee, and the year of the punk had arrived. I didn't get much time to fish, as I was working for a record company at Hyde Park corner, rubbing shoulders with Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice! My cousin Bobby Etherden showed me a picture of an 18lb carp he had just caught at Brooklands. He was 11 years old at the time and the fish looked bigger than him! This really inspired me to fish solely for carp, and on 6th July I embarked on my first night of carp fishing with Kevin, Bobby's brother.

We walked along the Competition Bank, and at the corner of the Competition Lake, where it bends around to the slaughterhouse, I met up with Colin Pescott for the first time. He was just packing up. He had caught a lot of tench that night but no carp. We set up in his swim, my big, heavy



canvas thrown over my umbrella, and we were set up for the night. We both used luncheon meat on a paternoster rig with the meat cut into 2in cubes, pushing the hook through the middle of the bait. Kev caught a 10lb'er during the night, but I blanked. Just as it was getting light, I fished to the back of the Hotspot swim and I had my first run. I remember being amazed when the fish was in the net just by the size of it. It weighted 20lb 1oz. If I wasn't sure that carp fishing was for me, the next hour confirmed it. I had another three carp and lost one. Their weights were 16lb, 17lb and 24lb 4oz. The date of these captures was 07.07.77, a morning I would always remember (the 24lb 4oz was later called Gregory in the 1980s, which I caught again in 1982 at just over 28lb). I fished once more that week and had a 22lb mirror on the top using a floating crust anchored to the bottom with a 2oz bomb.

I was fortunate to get to meet some very good anglers – Phil Tibbs, Martin Woodhams, Michael “Curly” Hatchman, Michael Murray, Colin Peskett, Lee Jackson, Bill Walford and Martin



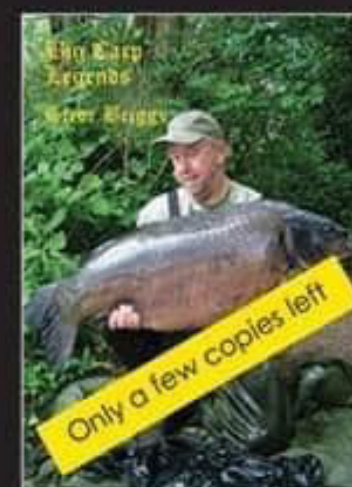
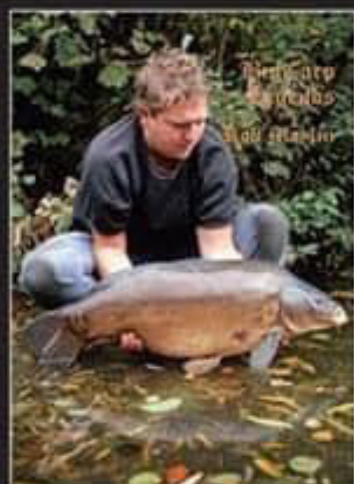
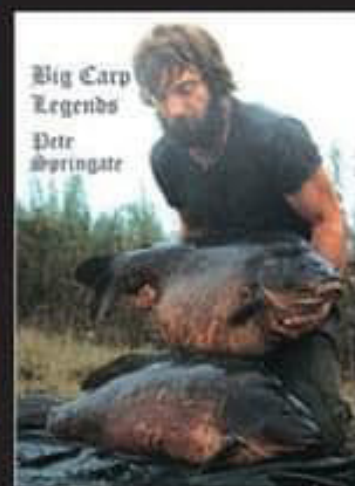
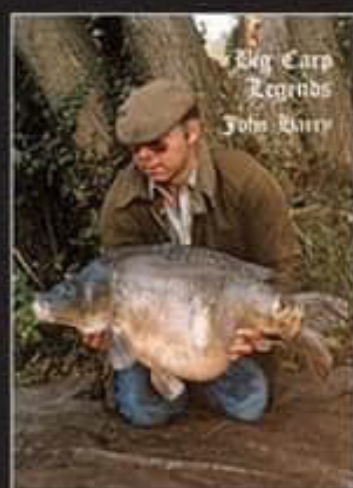
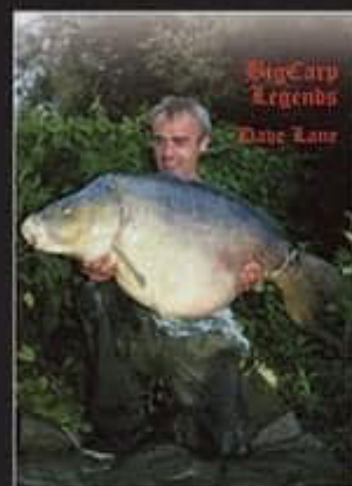


“Lucky” Locke to name a few. I also met Glen Smith, who I started up Fisher Baits with in the 1990s. Then there was “The Particle Man”, Dick Caldwell who was a real Terry Hearn of today’s standard – a great angler and friend. I remember being on the banks of Horton Kirby on the cattle bank and watching Dick with his bucket of maples (see Rod Hutchinson’s Carp Strike Back for full story... A pot of tea and a bucket of maples please). It seems like yesterday sitting there with him; where has the time gone?

In 1978, I left the record company to go fishing at Brooklands full time – fishing five days a week and just going home to sign on and perhaps have a bath (but not all the time), leaving weekends alone, as it was always so busy. Every Thursday, Lee

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Jackson and John the Taxi would come down to Brooklands and fish on the Concrete, which was opposite the back point of the island. I always thought Lee was ahead of anyone else when it came to his baits and presentation. They used rock hard fluorescent boilies, and this was the first time I had ever seen anything like it. They caught fish on nearly every trip. At the end of the session, Lee would always give me his leftover baits. With rods sitting shoulder high on the rod rests, bobbins on the deck, the runs were screamers with my Mitchell 410 spinning to a blur. I picked the rod up and struck time after time to try and set the hook, but always reeled in the boilie with the hook still nicely nestled inside the bait.



Eventually the penny dropped, I was side-hooking my baits with the hook showing. We were almost at the hair rig stage. Chickpeas were side-hooked through the tail with the whole of the hook exposed. I started Superglueing an elastic band to the back of the hook and glueing on the maples. With 3in hook links and fixed leads, the takes were ferocious. Particles



worked very well around this time including peanuts and maples. Once particles like chicks started to “blow”, we used to dye the bait other colours. The first person I saw doing this was Phil Tibbs. He was catching on a regular basis in the Hotspot in 1978. Another good bait that I used a lot in 1979 was PYM baits and paprika, Casilan and soya flour. This was used in a paste form moulded around the hook.

The “in” tackle in the mid to late seventies were SS4 and SS6 rods and Tony Fordhams with Darenth standards being a popular choice as well. These were made of all glass and came in brown or black. I also purchased a pair of Hardy Walker rods from Geoff Bucknell at Rod and Line in Lewisham. They were 10 foot 1¼ TC rods and were very expensive (I still have these today). At £36.00 per rod, this does not seem much money, but as the average wage for someone of 17-18 years of age was £25.00 a week, it is equivalent of £300.00-plus in today’s money. Most anglers were using Heron bite indicators, which later everybody, including me, gave to Bill Walford to get converted by a friend of his, Del Romang. The Herons were converted so the antenna came outside the side of the box, which helped give it extra sensitivity and like the Efgeeco rod rest were painted black. Hooks and line I used at the time was au Lion D’or hooks and 8lb Sylcast bronze or Brent line.

We used silver bobbins as indicators (which we got from left-overs at the factories behind Brooklands, which made lampshades). All you did to make these bobbins was cut the material into strips, tie with elastic bands, boil and hey presto you had a bobbin which was very light and sensitive – so basic and cheap. Whenever the bins were filled up, anglers made a rush to jump into them to collect the silver foil. I used knitting



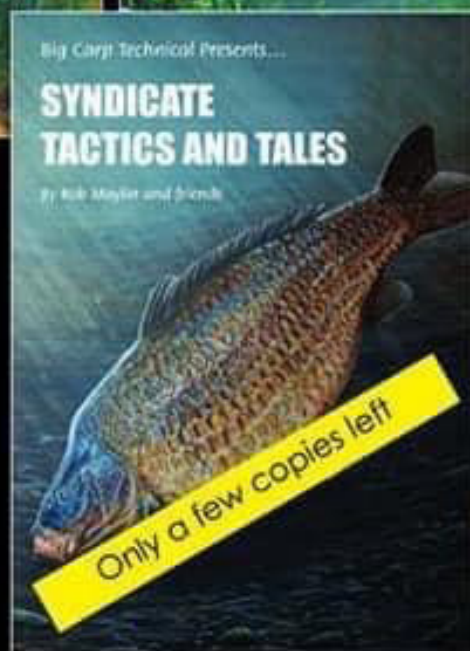
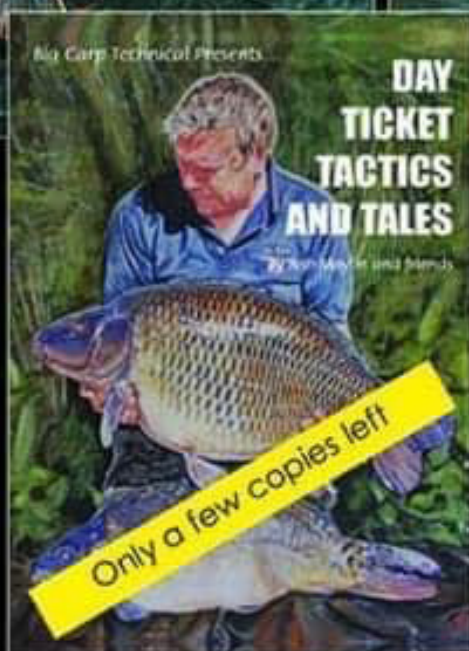
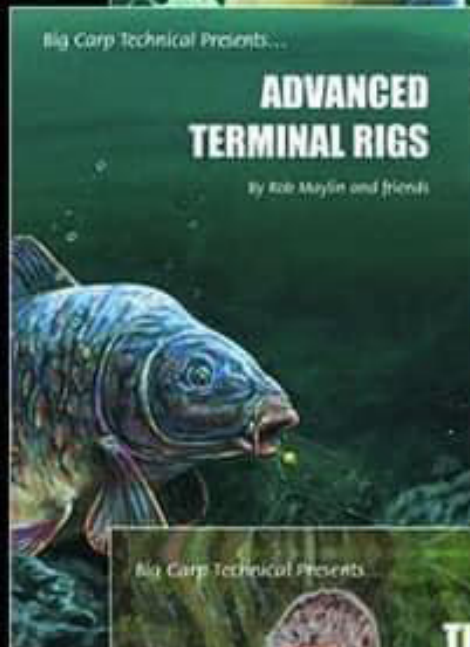
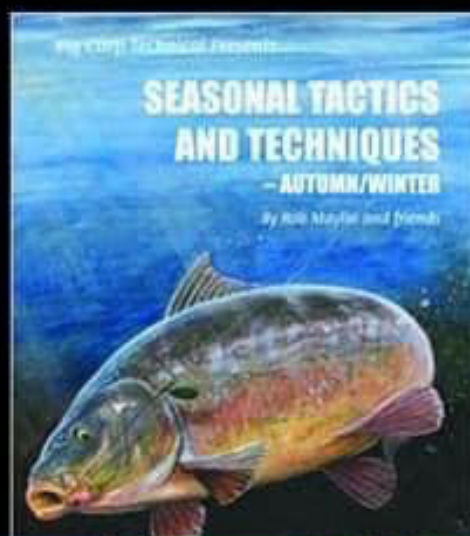
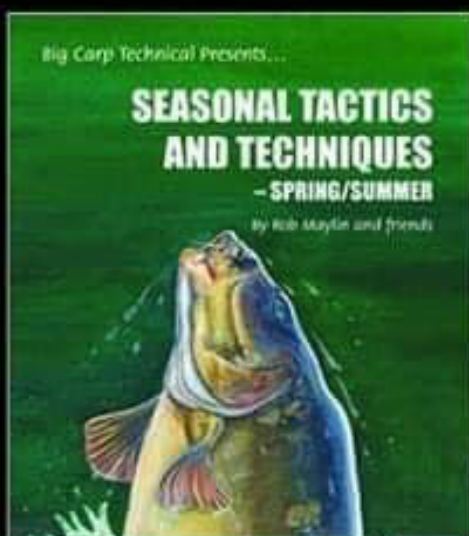
needles and old bike spokes as monkey climbers.

There was not much terminal tackle available in tackle shops at the time; it was all home made. In the 1980s, Martin “Lucky” Locke used his engineering background to start Solar Tackle and bought all his experience into tackle with buzzer bars and terminal tackle.

There was an old metal bridge that took you to the island where the Hilton and Point swims were. It is long gone now and the island is left alone as a bird sanctuary. My favourite swim, which I always fished, was the Bridge swim. This was the only way fish could get from Baldwyns into the Competition Lake. There used to be trees in the water both ends of the bridge,

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STEVE FISHER



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which made it a good holding spot as they moved through from one lake to another. It has now been blocked off under the bridge. When I fished Baldwyns, it was very snaggy and you lost a lot of leads. In the end, I used nuts and bolts or old spark plugs instead of leads. During World War II, they put camouflage netting across the lakes so the Germans couldn't use it as a landmark. That's one of the reasons why it's so snaggy, because after the war apparently the nets were just dropped into the lake.

The Point on the island was another swim everyone tried to get on, as there was a tree growing out in the middle of the lake, and this always held fish. If that failed, you would put a bait over on the Anson, underneath the bushes by the sea cadets' huts. Early morning was a good bet for the Car Park Swim, fishing close to the jetty. This was Lee (Robinson Crusoe) Morris's favourite beginning of the season swim; he always lived in there for the first week. The bailiffs at the time were Ray "Little Legs", the head bailiff and very keen ornithologist, and the person who kept us all in order was Barry Simones.

The invention of the hair rig arrived at a time when new carp products were being produced such as Richworth Boilies. Tutti Frutti was one of their first flavours, and it works as well today as it did 40 years ago. These new products were available in tackle shops around the country. It was not long after this that the massive hole in the carp products market was starting to be filled. More and more bait companies were starting up, and off-the-shelf carp fishing was born. This is not a criticism, as I use it now as much as the next angler, but it was good to be part of the DIY years in the 1970s.



STEVE FISHER

I started fishing Brooklands in 1968 and have been a member now for 41 years. Although I have fished pastures new, like Adams Mill for barbel with Bob Church and Co (until the otters came along and devastated the fish) and Sutton at Hone Lake 2, I still like to go down and wet a line or two at Brooklands, and when I do I often reminisce about times gone by.

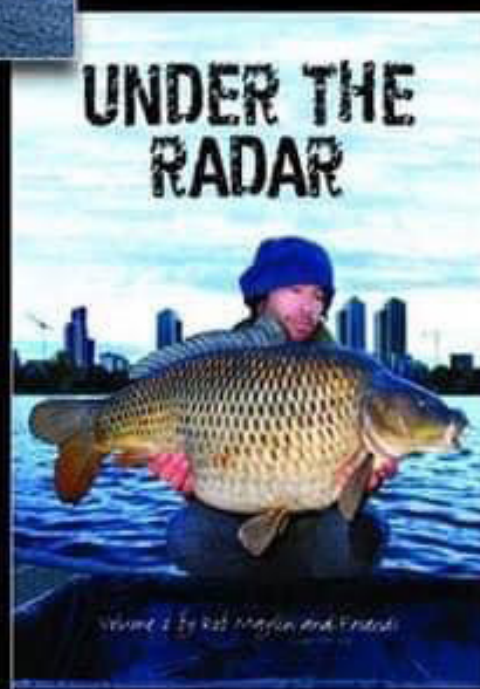
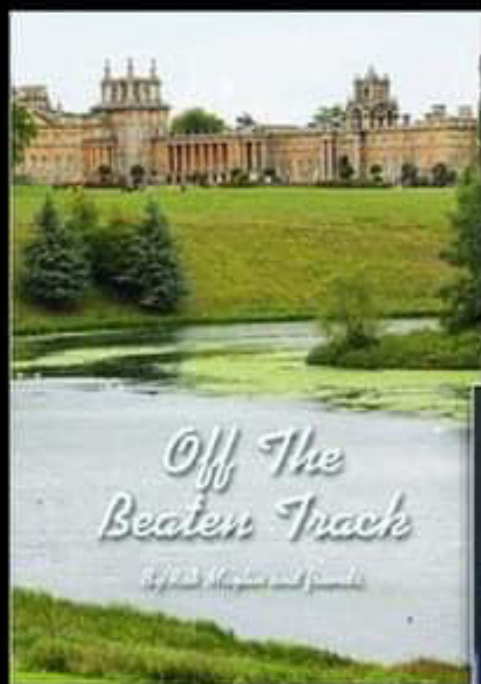
These are a few of my memories of the 70s and 80s that come to mind.

Rod Hutchinson, RIP – he was an inspiration to us all.



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