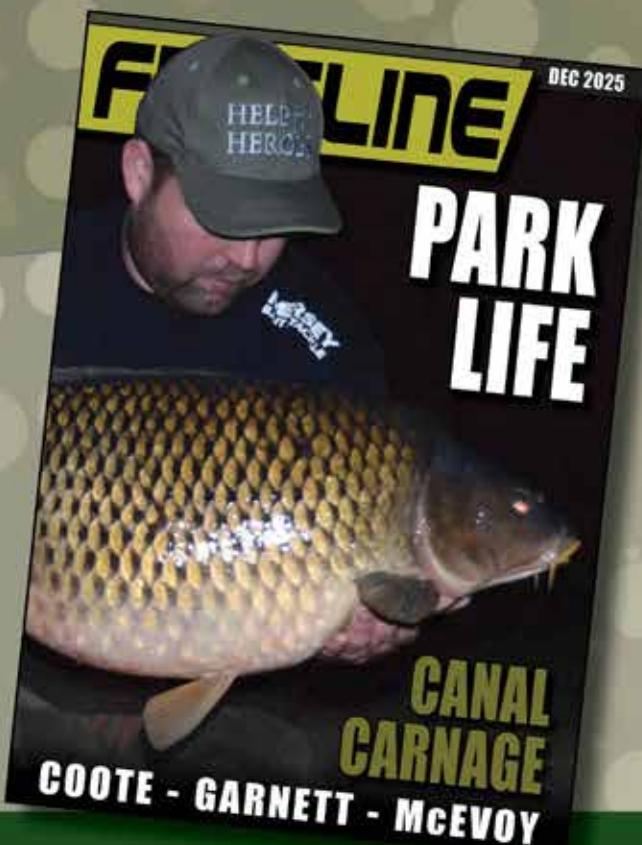


# DECEMBER ISSUES OF **BIG CARP** & **FREELINE MAGAZINES** - FREE HERE:

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**DAVE MALLIN - THE 'UNCATCHABLE'**  
**TOM STOKES - HE'S NUTS ABOUT TIGERS**  
**ELLIOTT GRAY - AUTUMN STALKING**  
**CHARLIE FERRIS - LATE SEASON BAITING**



**BOBBY COOTE - PARKLIFE**  
**CRAIG McEVOY - URBAN LEGENDS**  
**DOM GARNETT - TOWPATH TALES**

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# BIG CARP READERS TOP TENS !!

## 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 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 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 FRENCH HOLIDAY VENUES

- 1 IKTUS
- 2 ABBEY LAKES
- 3 CRETE LAKES
- 4 RIBIERE
- 5 GIGANTICA
- 6 RAINBOW
- 7 THE AQUARIUM
- 8 DREAM LAKES
- 9 THE SECRET GARDEN
- 10 BROCARD

## 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 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 ICONIC CARP LAKES

- 1 YATELEY
- 2 SAVAY
- 3 REDMIRE
- 4 WRAYSURY
- 5 FOX POOL
- 6 HORTON
- 7 CASSIEN
- 8 LINCHHILL
- 9 ROACH PIT
- 10 JOHNSON'S RAILWAY

# IBC



**BIG CARP: 353 DEC 2025**

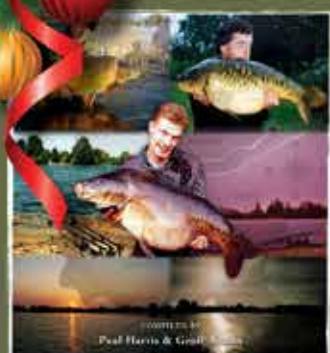
# THE GREAT UNKNOWN

**FEATURING THE BEST UK CARP STORIES**

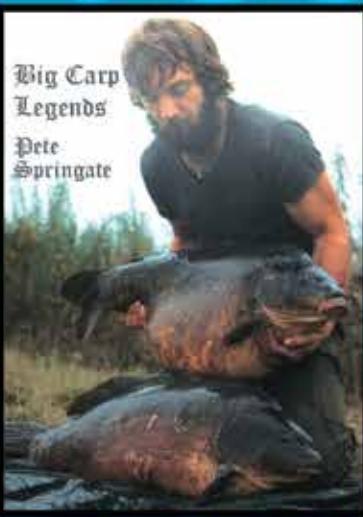
# WINTER



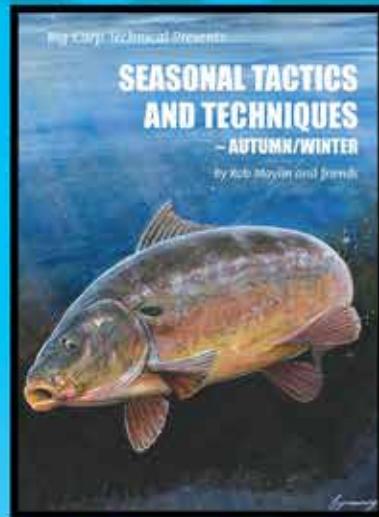
History of Carp  
in Oxfordshire



By Paul Harris & Geoff Smith



Big Carp  
Legends  
Pete  
Springate



Big Carp Technical Presents  
SEASONAL TACTICS  
AND TECHNIQUES  
- AUTUMN/WINTER

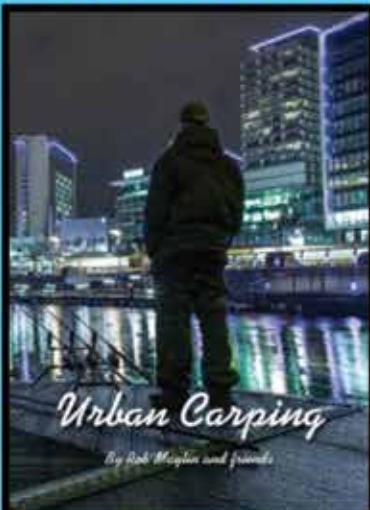
By Rob Maylin and friends

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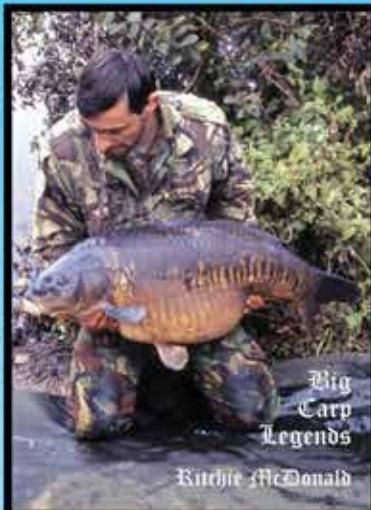
By Derek The

## ORDER ONE OF OUR BEST SELLERS A

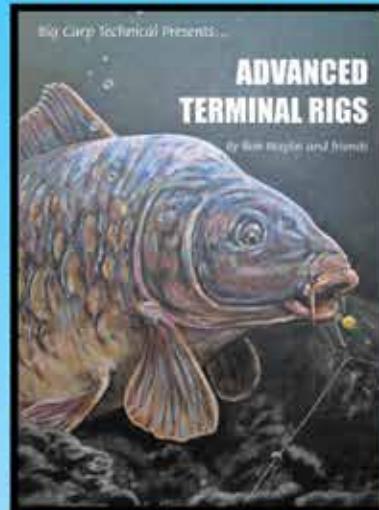


Urban Carping

By Rob Maylin and friends



Big Carp  
Legends  
Ritchie McDonald



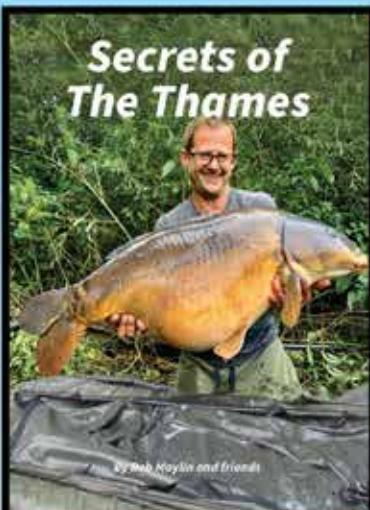
Big Carp Technical Presents...  
ADVANCED  
TERMINAL RIGS

By Rob Maylin and friends



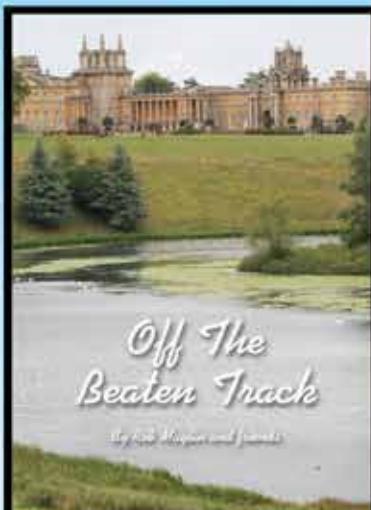
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Secrets of  
The Thames

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Big Carp  
Hunters  
Dave Mallin

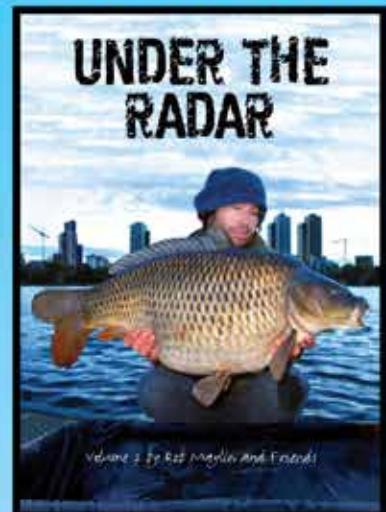
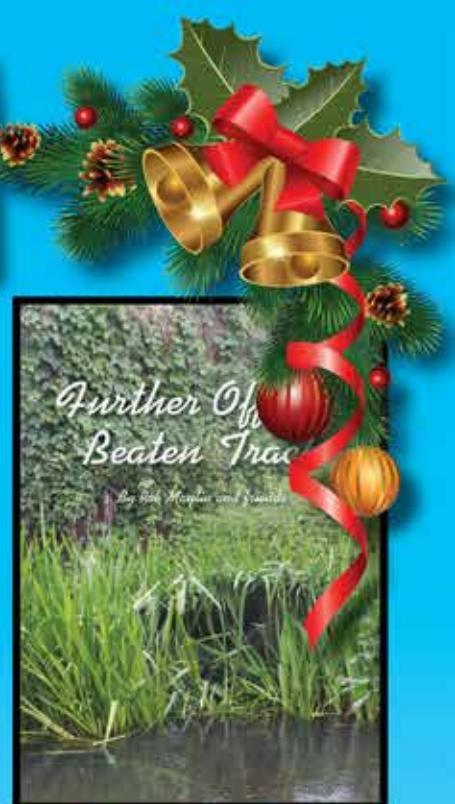
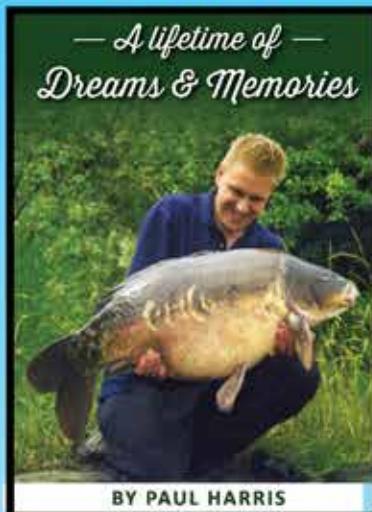
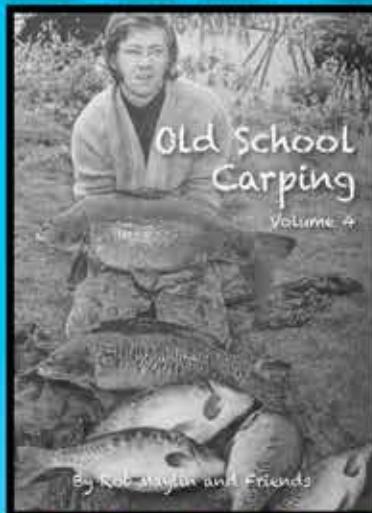
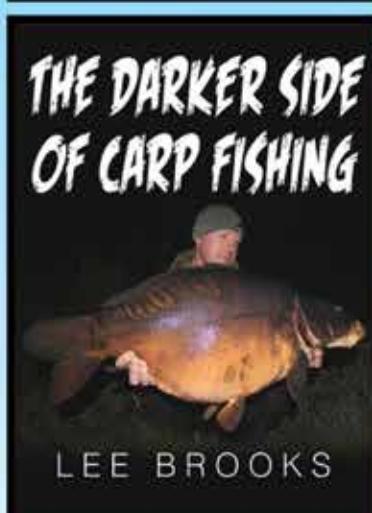
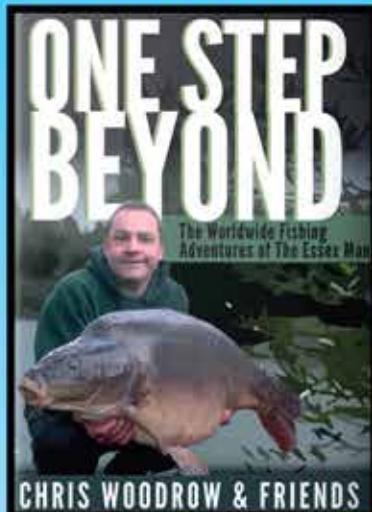
## NEW BOOKS: [WWW.C](http://WWW.C)

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

# READING



AND BE PREPARED FOR NEXT SEASON



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## CONTENTS

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Publications 2025



Front Cover:  
Dave Mallin with the  
Uncatchable.



We're now well in to autumn with the first frosts and even a bit of snow 'oop norf'. That said, I'm looking at temperatures back in to double figures for early December - what is going on with the UK weather these days? Good news is that it will slow down the cooling water temperatures and your chances of a late season fish or two are a distinct possibility. With that in mind we have a string of top anglers this month with loads of advice for getting the best from this time of year.

It's great to have Dave Mallin back in the mag. Dave gets his sights set on a local, relatively unknown carp that had gained a reputation for being uncatchable. Never one to back down from a challenge Dave sets out to bank the 'Uncatchable'. However, things don't quite go his way. Find out just how difficult the task was.

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Get prepped for the colder months.

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Don't stop stalking just because it gets colder

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Team member Scott Johnson has bagged this banging ghosty! And he is on a roll.

The big ghosty 36.6lb  
"Truly special fish to me, and it's the one everyone wants, though wrong time of year for the best weight as the its previous captures sees it knocking on 40lb door. But Buzzing with the results, That makes 19 runs and 19 fish landed from that lake in 6 nights, considering last year all i done was nothing but lose the good fish and have a nightmare, it's nice now to be finally be rewarded.

Fished two nights had 3 carp, one photo I haven't included as it was a poor night shot, using soild bags, Scorpion Wide Gapes, and the CTO Tungsten Kickers blow back."

Well done Scott!

Another lovely session up at Monk's Pit for team member John Paul McCusker. 4 fish, the biggest one's going 31 mirror and 32.10 common. And then went to a lake in the Cotswolds and had a mirror of 30lb 4oz and a common of 32lb John said all fish were caught over big beds of boilie / pellet  
Using #carponline Scorpion readymade ronnies and Lead clips doing the business  
Well done John



### NEW TEAM MEMBER

Another talented youngster joined our team lineup. Jayden Ash from Hertfordshire.  
"I'm 16, I fish Fairlands and Henlow at this time have only recently been getting into carp fishing for 4 months or so, any help is highly appreciated."  
Welcome to the team Jayden.



Regular customer Christopher Morrell has bagged his self a real stunner in the shape of this Linea using our size 4 Scorpion Curved hooks in a Slip D style. Well done

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Hair Stops



Hook Beads



Scorpion Ronnie Rigs



Composite Leadclip



Choddy Crank Hook



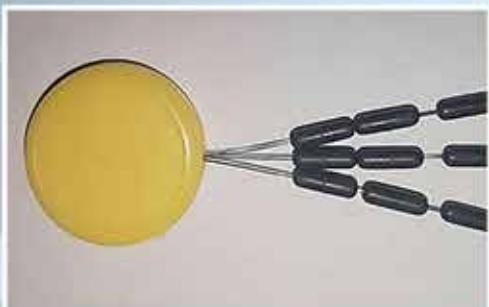
Aligners



Tungsten Aligners



Swivel Deal



Tungsten Hooklink Sinker



Chod Filament



Swivels



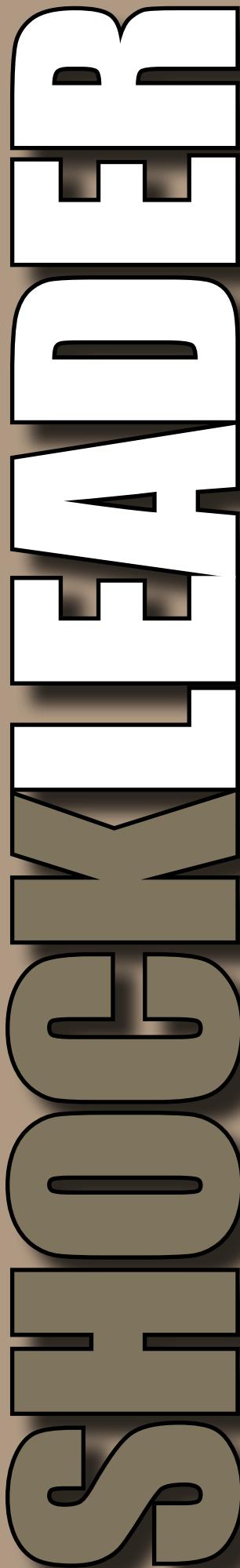
Scorpion Chod Hook



Scorpion Crank Hook



Scorpion Snag Hook



**A**n exceptional performance from our England team, taking home an incredible 13 trophies , including both the Team 50m and 20m titles, both Individual 50m and 20m titles, and

# ENGLAND WORLD CHAMPIONS



setting new records along display on the world stage. the way.

This remarkable achievement our heartfelt congratulations is a reflection of years of to the entire England squad dedication, teamwork, and , an absolutely world class precision , a truly dominant performance.

From everyone at Harrison,

# FISHING FOR SCHOOLS



## Fishing for Schools

**F**ishing for Schools in 2025-26, but places are limited. Make sure to head over to our website before schools can apply Monday 10 November 2025 for funded sessions annually. for more information and We are now accepting applications from schools >> <https://ca-campaign.org/4gEI4Hf> interested in taking part

# AWARD PRESENTED FOR A DECADE OF EXCELLENT SERVICE.



**R**egional 10 years Nick has perfectly Enforcement embodied the partnership Support Manager approach between the agency for the East Paul and our valued Voluntary Thomas was pleased to be able Bailiffs across Norfolk, and he to present a richly deserved continues to engage fully with 'certificate of excellence' the volunteers in his region. to Environment Agency We could not think of a Fisheries Enforcement Officer more-deserving recipient for Nick Beardmore. For the past this award. Thank you Nick!

# CARP TACKLE ONLINE RECRUITMENT



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DUBLIN WICKLOW CORK MUNSTER

## CARP TACKLE ONLINE ARE LOOKING FOR NEW TEAM MEMBERS - IS THIS YOU?

**WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?** Well daft as it sounds we are looking for people who actually go fishing lol, we are looking for people with a good sense of humour, catch a few fish and are happy to share their catches to the team and to be used as part promoting our brand.

**Must have Facebook / Instagram etc to be considered and to get involved, we have a great friendly team here at Carp Tackle Online and always help each other where we can, that is our ethos.**

**In return we offer some healthy discounts across the range of what we offer for your end game.**

**Feel free to send us a little about where you are fishing and how you are getting on to : [sales@carptackleonline.com](mailto:sales@carptackleonline.com) or use our Face Book page to PM us, we look forward to hearing from you**

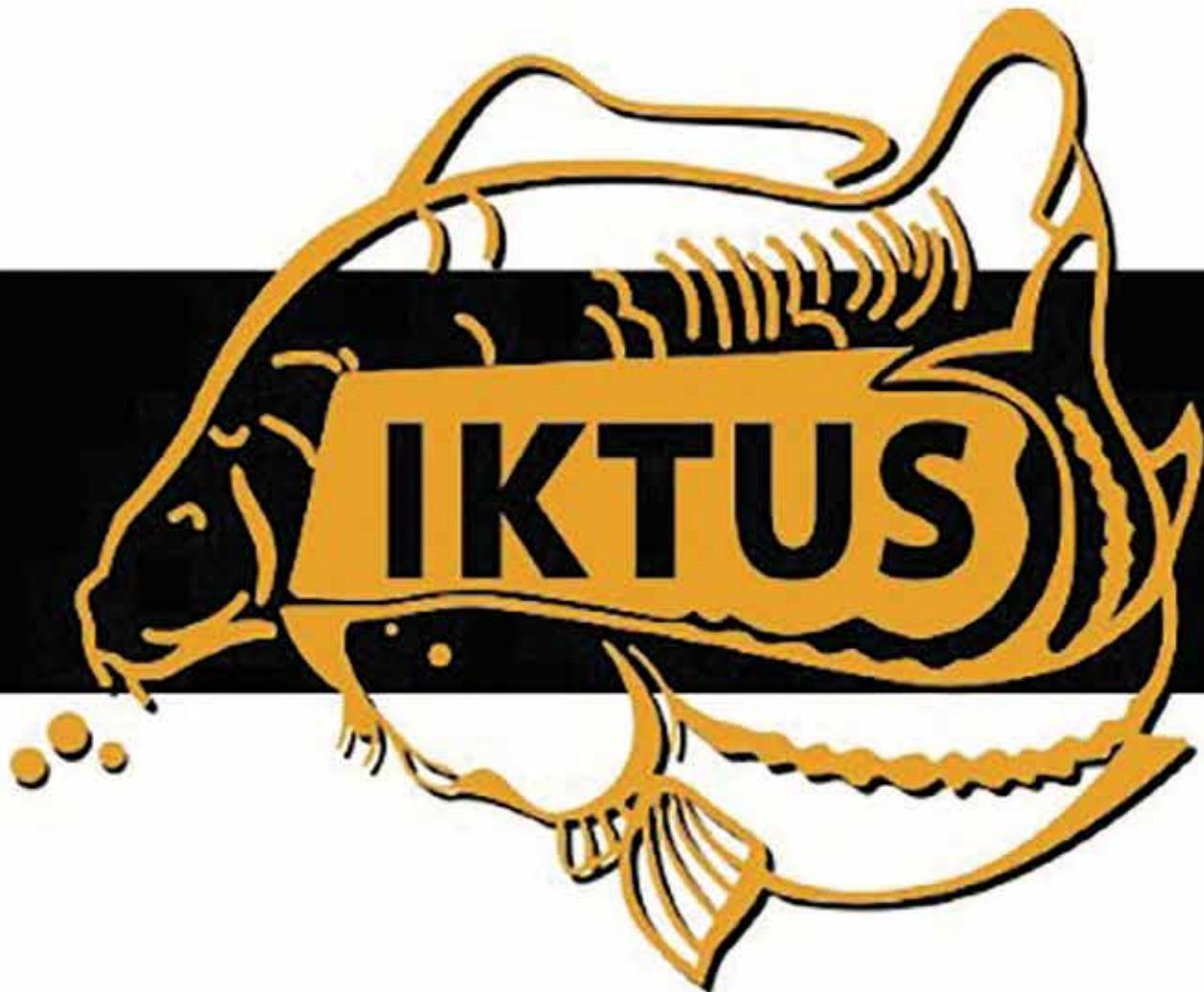


Youtube Bloggers, come join the Team  
Looking for Blogger as a priority

Lady Anglers are more than welcome to apply, in fact we would positively encourage it



Matt Tuckwell - Carp Tackle Online



# FISHING RESORT



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

# FISHING EVOLUTION FUND RAISER



With everyone's help, our last 2 store open days have now raised the incredible sum of £5,000 for St Barnabas Hospice

None of this would have been possible though, without all of the following rightly deserved mentions and thank you -

**E**arlier in the week we had the great pleasure of catching up with the St Barnabas Hospice team to officially celebrate our recent open days fundraising. All of our customers who took part in the raffle and great pleasure of our BBQ. All of our reps and catching up with brands who have supported us the St Barnabas Hospice team with raffle prizes, and joined to officially celebrate our us on the open days to make recent open days fundraising them a success. Ancaster

With your support of the Butchers for their raffle prize Charity Raffle and BBQ, we donations, and great BBQ food raised the fantastic sum of £2,900. This sum will help them to provide 145 hrs of Halverholme park lake for Hospice care, which we have seen first-hand how much that means to families in their moments of need. Heckington Angling club for their raffle prize donation and has worked with us to make these days a success.

# STEVE BRIGGS JOINS RG BAITS



I'm really pleased to also the old school style of the announce that from 1st baits with modern twists is November I am now part quite close to the old Nash Bait of the RG Baits team!! way of thinking and that means I'd genuinely like to thank all of a lot to me!! Then there's the the companies that made offers RG Baits team - I had a warm and I considered all of them feeling when I spoke to them as but really in the end it wasn't a I've worked with them before difficult decision. Anyone who and really enjoyed it, in fact I knows me will know how much found it easy as they are people importance I put on quality I want to spend time with - bait - you don't catch anything and so this is a new chapter if the carp doesn't want to eat just beginning for me and I'm your bait! The quality of RG looking forward to the year Baits is without question but ahead with RG Baits.

# **LEGACY PROJECT YOUNG ANGLERS SUPPORT GROUP FISH IN AT THE HISTORIC ORCHID LAKES**

Bit of news on next year's 15K for the Otter fencing, 'Species Challenge' prize and provided the protection presentation and weekend that is in place for the lake fish-in. I am popping over to today. Access and parking is Orchid tomorrow - to hopefully excellent - and there is a quad finalise an agreement. This is service to move gear and food one of Oxford's oldest waters (no driving to swims). This will and has huge history. Known be for us to have PRIVATE use nationally as the 'Home of the Club Lake for a Saturday 30's' it was the creation of and Sunday (Possibly for the an amazing man called Marsh Fri night also). There is a Pratley. I was good friends central BBQ area, toilets and with Marsh, and close to when plenty of space. If confirmed he passed he came to see me - this will be a FREE event at Kidlington Town Hall where for you all. Quick link below I had put on a fundraiser for to Club Lake promo: <https://Marlborough Pool - this raised www.facebook.com/share/>



r/1HBcvXKzYi/ BUT - I will be weekend and a chance for us expecting people / families to get together. I will confirm to support with the food tomorrow - and if there are and drink. We can look into restrictions on numbers, this organising this at a later date. I will also be discussed. A am looking at the last weekend yearly event in association in July - but I do not know the with a nationally known and situation regarding available loved water will provide great dates yet. Nev Griffin - will exposure to what we do. also look at the possibility of a NB. If anyone has thoughts, riverside location, as I would comments, ideas on promotion like to also put on another 'fish / sharing this as information in' during the year. This one to swell our local members - could perhaps be a bit more ideas for the weekend etc etc 'public'. 'The Orchid fish in' PLEASE voice them - this is will be superb. The prizes ARE YOUR private group. Love to superb. This WILL be a brilliant you all. Dyl.

# IT'S GOOD NEWS AT GOODZ CARP BAITS



We're absolutely buzzing to come to bait, fish behaviour, announce that the one and only and big-fish thinking.

Rob Nunn has officially joined We honestly can't wait to see the Goodz Carp Baits family! what he produces this year The OG himself is now on board, – it's going to be something and this marks a massive step special!

forward for the brand. Rob's This is more than just a experience within angling new recruit... this is a game is second to none, and he's changer.

bringing with him a serious Welcome to the team, Rob – depth of knowledge when it let's go!



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# SHOEBURY PARK REED MANAGEMENT BY DIGGER BOATS





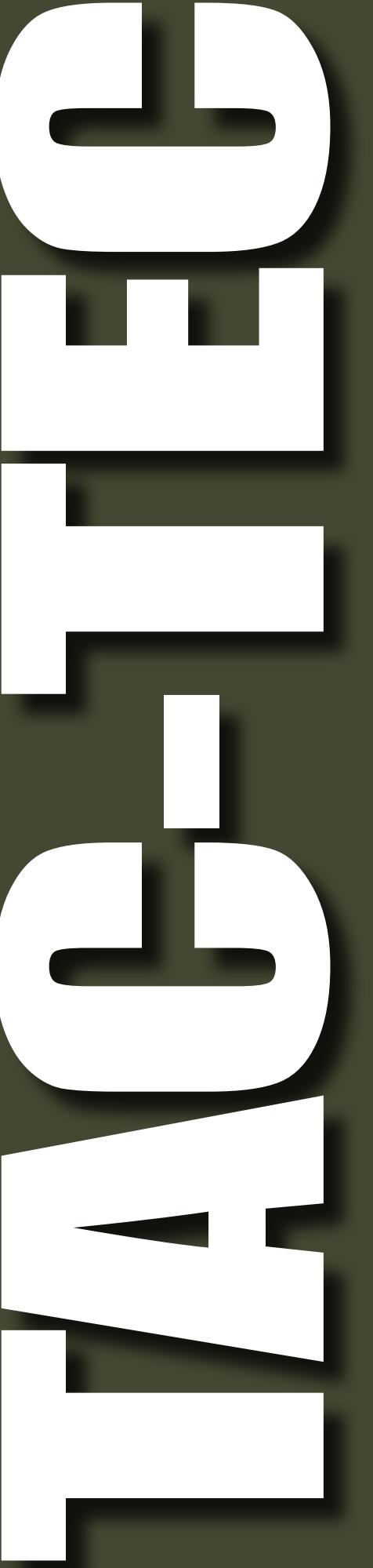
Phase 1 of the reed management project is now complete! Around 50% of the main reed mass has been removed. Although this is slightly short of our original target, I'm really pleased with what's been achieved given the challenges faced along the way.

There's still a fair bit of tidying up to do, and we'll be tackling that as soon as possible. In the meantime, you may notice some spoil temporarily floating around the lake.

The lake is open again for you to enjoy, with the exception of the swims currently within the Heras fencing.

Please note that 'Perch' will remain closed for now while we take the opportunity to revamp the swim.

A huge thank you to the Environment Agency for supporting the project with rod licence funding, and to Digger Boats for absolutely smashing the job. We're looking forward to having you back for Phase 2!



# KORDA NEW RELEASES

- COMPAC DARK KAMO POUCHES

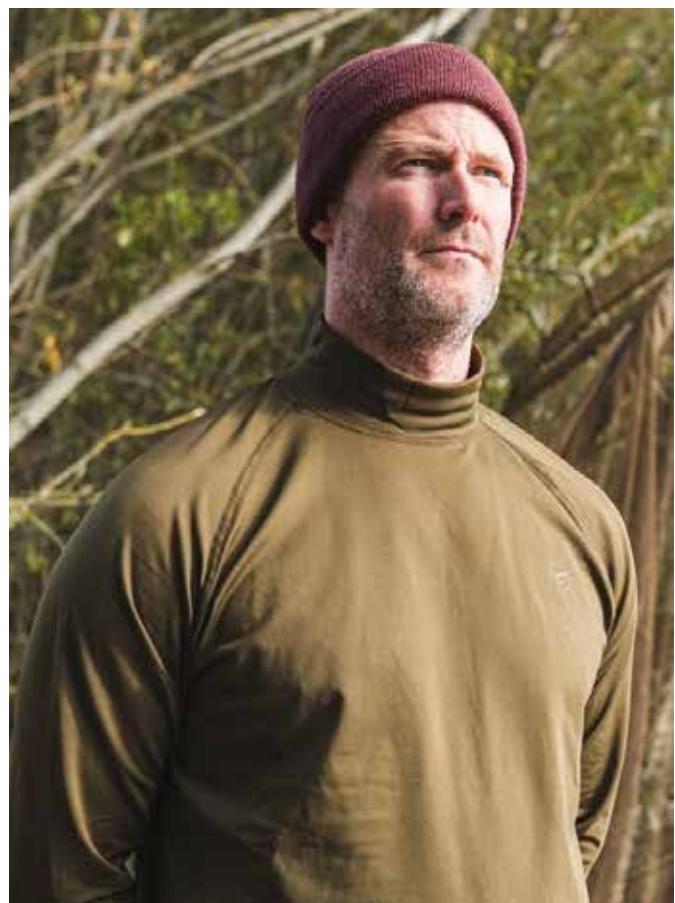
These NEW Tackle Pouches provide a safe, efficient way to organise all your tackle essentials—from terminal gear and marker floats to torches and spares. Available in six sizes, there's an option for every angler's storage needs. RRP: £13.99 - £19.99

- COMPAC DARK KAMO STOVE BAG

The Compac Stove Bag keeps your single burner stove protected and ready to go. Built from tough 600D Dark Kamo fabric with a wipe-clean lining, durable zip lid, and handy carry handle. A real Autumn essential! RRP: £17.99

- COMPAC STORMPOLE SLEEVE

Sleeve provides smart, dedicated storage for up to ten 36"/92cm storm poles. Versatile by design, it can also hold a Compac Weigh Staff and features side pockets for distance sticks. RRP: £21.99

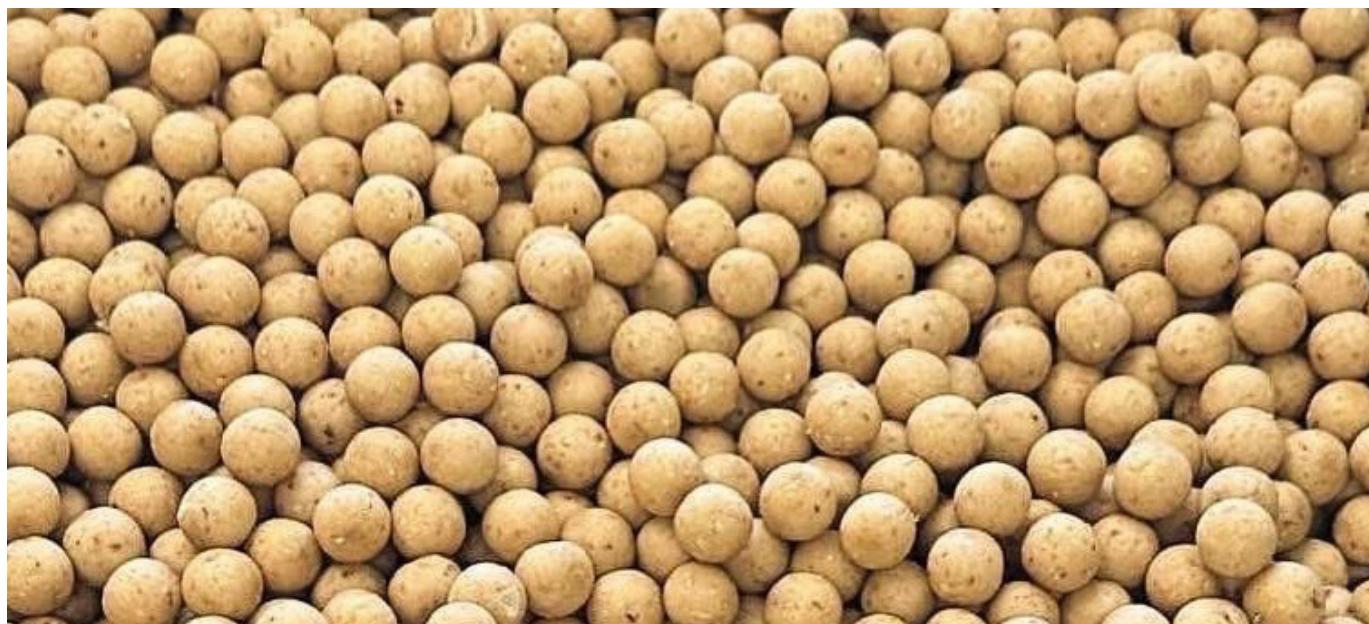


- MOCK NECK THERMAL LS SHIRT

Base layers are the unsung heroes of cold-weather comfort, and the Mock Neck Thermal Long Sleeve Shirt delivers warmth when it counts. Made from premium

quick-dry brushed jersey, it regulates body temperature, retains heat, and stays breathable. Available in dark olive and black in the UK, and dark olive across Europe, in sizes S to XXXXL. RRP: £24.99

# PROPER CRUNCHY NUT MAPLE AND PEACH



Using the same nut base mix as our extremely popular Crunchy Nut Cinnamon & Cream we are introducing a twist on this with Crunchy Nut Maple & Peach. We are initially going to run this on a limited-edition basis, however if demand shows us, we will add it to the range on a permanent basis.

Maple needs no introduction as it's a tried and tested sweet, sugary syrup! Currently only available in 15mm Freezer Bait there is a dedicated 15mm matching pop up as well as a 15mm wafter.

Combine that with the sweet, sugary Peach Oil Palatant and you have an incredible, sweet tasting bait with an unreal aroma! We are also going to add a 1ltr matching Bulk Liquid so you can boost your free offerings should you wish to do so.

# GEOFF ANDERSON UPCYCLED CHEST POCKET BAG



The Upcycled Chest Pocket Bag is a functional bag. It is a very simple shoulder bag in a simple design. In fact, you can't make a bag much simpler - it is made from a defective or worn-out jacket, which has been dismantled and upcycled. The length of the strap is adjustable, and the bag has a compartment where there is space for both a phone, wallet or keys - or your fishing gear. The bag is functional and has a chest pocket.

■ 40 Euros

# HOTSPOT DESIGN CAPS



This superior cap is Hardheaded collection, manufactured in 100% cotton symbolizing the lead to be the and features a TPU patch on head of the angler, it compares the front with "Hardheaded" lead to the obsession of the magnificent graphic, moreover carp angler, obstinate and at the center of the curved stubborn in catching a carp. peak is positioned a text in A great gift for carpfishing TPU with words "Hardheaded" enthusiasts of all ages, a piece and "Carp Angler". of memorabilia that they'll TPU patch showcases the cherish and proudly wear. distinctive skull of our [www.hotspotdesign.com](http://www.hotspotdesign.com)



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ILLUMINATION



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# WHAT IS TRITIUM USED IN WATCHES?

## YOUR COMPLETE BUYER'S GUIDE

### UNDERSTANDING TRITIUM: MISSION-CRITICAL ILLUMINATION

When you're selecting equipment that must perform in complete darkness, tritium illumination isn't simply another feature, it's proven technology that's kept military professionals and serious operators on mission for decades. If you've ever found yourself unable to read critical timing information when visibility drops to zero, you understand why this technology matters for self-luminous watches.

Tritium represents a specialised form of hydrogen that's naturally radioactive in the most controlled way possible for horological applications. These radioactive watches use tritium to create glow in the dark watches that outperform traditional luminous watches in every operational scenario. Whilst ordinary hydrogen remains the lightest element, tritium contains additional nuclear particles that create instability, which becomes our advantage for continuous illumination.

What we've found works best is when these particles hit special phosphorescent material inside sealed glass tubes, creating that distinctive glow you see on premium timepieces without requiring external power sources or charging protocols.

Swiss manufacturers have refined this nuclear engineering process to create watch illumination sources smaller than standard components yet capable of providing reliable visibility for decades under operational conditions. The technology represents precision engineering meeting practical field requirements for professional luminous watches.

### GTLS TECHNOLOGY: PRECISION ENGINEERING STANDARDS

GTLS technology, Gaseous Tritium Light Sources, represents sophisticated miniature engineering applied to watchmaking demands. These microscopic glass tubes,

some measuring less than 0.3mm in diameter, contain pressurised tritium gas alongside carefully selected phosphorescent compounds.

The manufacturing process demands extraordinary precision tolerances. Glass capillaries receive internal coatings of specific phosphor materials that determine colour output characteristics. Following coating application, tubes undergo controlled tritium gas pressurisation before laser sealing to exact dimensional specifications.

Here's what makes this technology genuinely useful: unlike traditional luminous paint that needs daylight charging and fades overnight, tritium tubes provide steady illumination regardless of what's happening around them. The brightness stays virtually constant for years.

Each production tube undergoes comprehensive testing protocols covering brightness specifications, temperature resistance ranges, and containment integrity. The hermetically sealed construction eliminates performance degradation from moisture infiltration, temperature cycling, or mechanical shock that compromises



MX10 T25 TRITIUM ILLUMINATION

### TRITIUM RATING CLASSIFICATIONS: T25 VS T100

You need to understand these ratings when choosing the right kit for your needs. T25 and T100 designations specify maximum tritium content per timepiece, measured in millicuries, directly correlating to brightness output capabilities.

T25 watches contain up to 25 millicuries of tritium, providing controlled illumination ideal for situations demanding discretion alongside visibility. This brightness level ensures clear time reading under complete darkness whilst maintaining tactical advantage through reduced signature. Military field watches commonly employ T25 ratings because they balance visibility requirements with operational security.

T100 timepieces accommodate up to 100 millicuries, delivering maximum brightness for applications where visibility takes priority over discretion. These watches produce significantly enhanced glow intensity, immediately visible at greater distances, making them suitable for emergency response, professional diving, or safety-critical applications requiring rapid time reading.

Operationally, the distinction becomes clear: T25 provides reliable time reading in darkness, whilst T100 offers noticeably brighter, more obvious illumination standing out under challenging conditions. Both ratings maintain brightness consistency over years of service, though T100 watches naturally exhibit superior luminosity throughout operational life.



alternative illumination systems. When military procurement specifies tritium watches, they're selecting technology proven reliable under extreme operational conditions where traditional glow in the dark watches would fail.

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■ £74.95



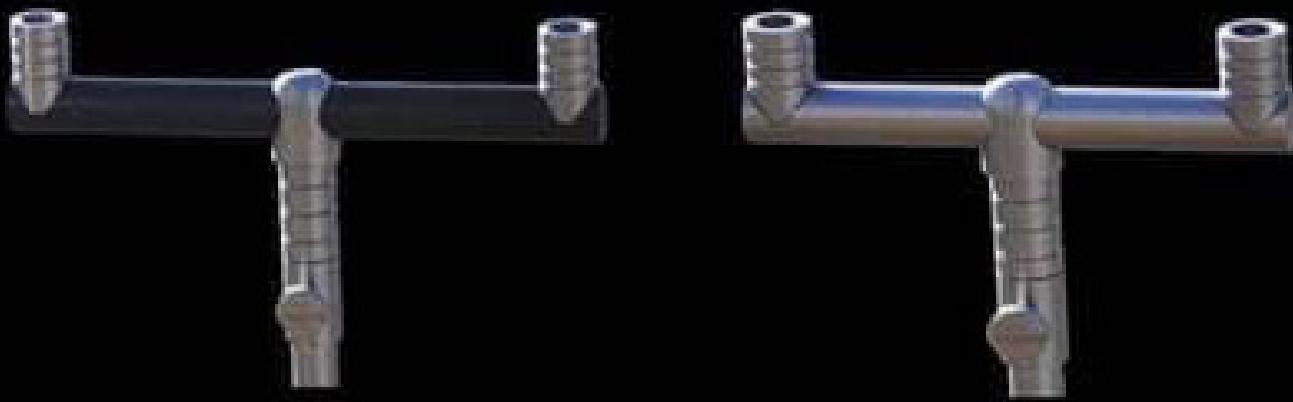
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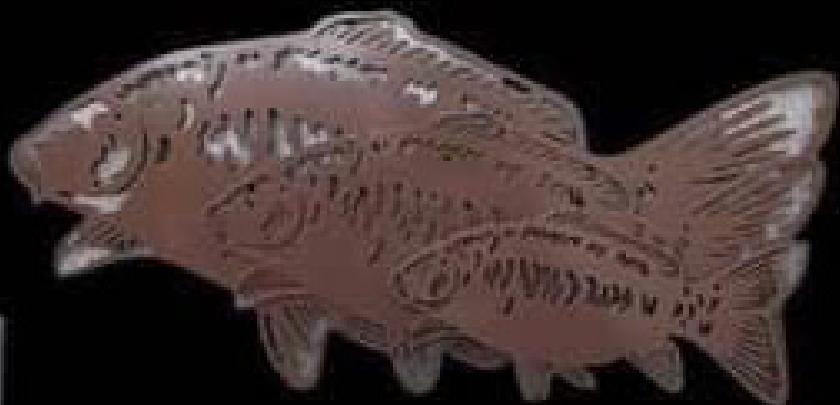
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# FLOPPY DYKE



Rob Down-Dyke with the  
Floppy Tail Fully at 43lb  
from Roach Pit

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# CLEARLY A PB



Dan Cleary smashed his UK PB with this 63lbs 14oz mirror!!



# MILLIE'S NO MICRO



Paul 'Micro' Allen banked one of his main targets in the shape of this corking mirror named 'Millie' at over 42lbs

# COMPLEX RECORD



Charlie Ferris banked the complex record with 'Kev's' weighing a very impressive 53lb 14oz. Awesome angling, Charlie.

## ERIC THE GHOST

Jake English with 'Eric' at 42lb 10oz!



## MOULSHAM MONSTER

Alex Glennie with the Leadcore Lin at a new top weight of 40.06 from Little Moulsham



# MANOR MAGIC

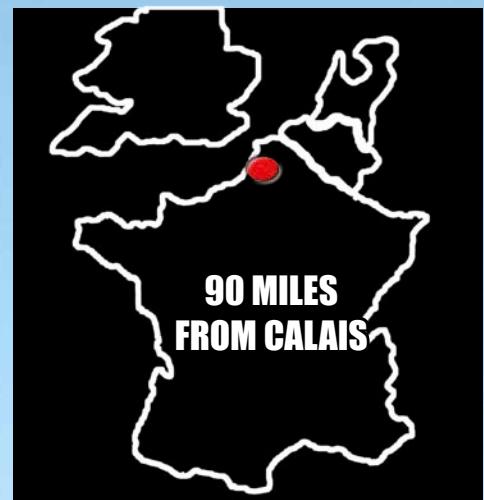


Dan Belfield had an incredible session on Manor Farm landing 12 carp. Including 2 20s, 8 30s to 38lb 1oz and 2 40s of 45lb 4oz mirror and a 40lb 10oz common!!



# Experience the big carp venue in northern France

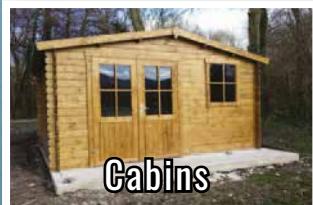
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# BLUEBELL BEAUTY



Mark Stephen's banked Twisted Scale from Kingfisher last at 42lbs 12oz

# COKING CRACKER



Paul Moss banked the Asylum Mirror at 49lb +

# GREG GETS LIPPY



Greg Kersch slipped the net under Lippy at a cracking 44lb!

Big up to Dominic Winfield who caught 'The Single Scale Illegal' weighing a lovey 44lb 10oz." from Wraysbury

# CAUGHT IN THE ACT



# CARVING THEM UP

The Carving at a massive 54lb 4oz! for Karl.



# HOLY MOULTY

Dave Moult  
with a 41lb 14oz  
scaly mirror



# FRIMLEY'S FINEST



Mitchell Miller with the BIG FULLY at 46lb on the button

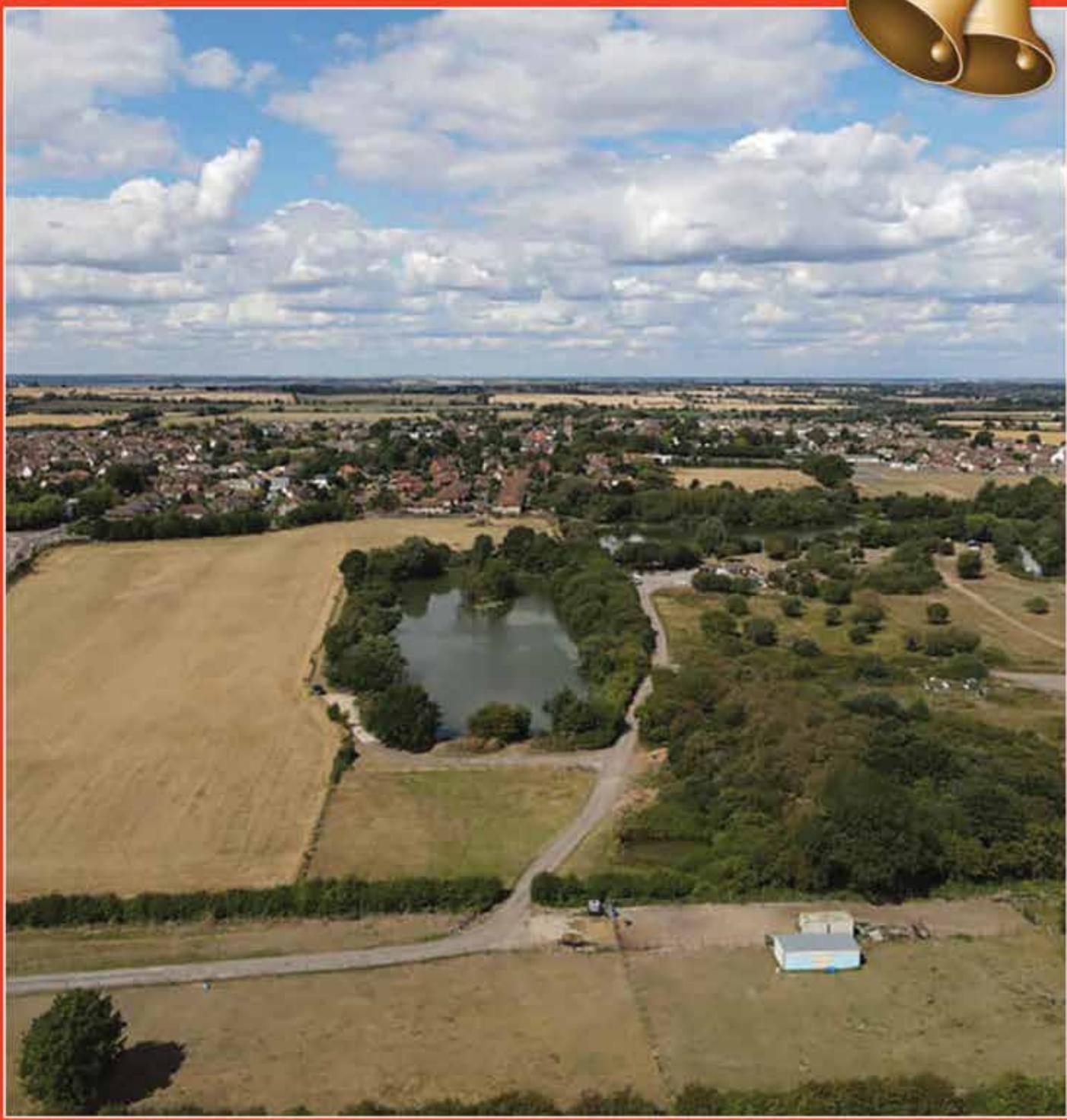
# THE MIGHTY QUINN



Mike Quinn tempted one of the Shropshire mere's most-sought-after residents, the massive AC Mirror at 47lb!

# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



A Merry Christmas from all at Oak Lakes Fishery

A huge thank you to all our valued customers

Looking forward to great times in 2026  
and to seeing you all again



# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



The blank is over for  
Gary!!



29 lb 14 oz and 26 lb  
4 oz - great catches  
by Pipe lake member  
Beansie who joked  
about the post beaver  
moon period being  
good to him! Nice fish.

Absolute stunner at  
33 lb 12 oz for Pipe  
lake member Graeme  
Edgar and a new PB. No  
change of clothes was  
a poor excuse for not  
getting a soaking!

11lb, 15 and a 26 lber



Weekend catches from swim 20 The Bay - thanks for the photos Archie

# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



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



Mark Smith had a great session in peg 10

# NOTHING TO GET GRUMPY ABOUT



John Devonshire with Berners Hall's 'Grumpy' at an impressive 56lb 12Oz

# SAY WHAT!



Say Turner dropped in for a few easy bites and the Biggun showed up! "Gwen" at 40+

# CLEAR WINNER



Dan Cleary banked an immense mirror known as the "Tiger Lin" at 49lbs 4oz

# CROW'S FLYING

Simon Crow with  
a Foundry 49.08



# WELSH WHACKER



Kev Hewitt headed back to Wales for this 48lb clonker.

# BEAST OF BRASENOSE



Out last month at 53lb 8oz to Dan Keith Ward

# ROB'S ON A ROLL



Rob Marsh with a superb 51lb 12oz mirror

# DEVON RECORD



Clint Miller said he couldn't believe his luck after landing The Silverback at a whopping 59lb 2oz



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A blend of tuna, krill and real food items with added spices and attractors complimented with GoodZ own amino booster that enhances the strong food signals emitted from this bait.

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# STAGG'S NIGHT



Alan Stagg with Frimley's amazing Big Plated at 50lb!

# TREV'S TRIUMPH



Trevor Burgess cradling an outstanding 52lb 8oz mirror.

# DES STRIKES GOLD



Des O'Sullivan with The Sovereign  
at 45.12 from Long Lake.

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## IRIS FALLS FOR MIKE

Mike Deakin  
with Horton  
church lakes',  
Iris 44.6



## SAVAGE TAKE

Wes Savage  
with Longreachs'  
second ever 40  
plus common



# WELL, WELL, WELLS

Eddy Wells,  
Made up with  
this one at 49lb



# BARCLAY BANKS RECORD



Perry Barclay with a new lake record for the  
Kent syndicate, the Blackspot Common at 50+

# GARY'S CHUNK

Gary Morris-Green banked this awesome chunk of a mirror recently at 41lbs+



# DINTON DAZE



Chris Cox caught this big common from Dinton Pastures White Swan a few weeks back weighing an impressive 47lb 4oz



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CHARLIE FERRIS

# AUTUMN PRE-BAITING

With the autumn closing in, I wanted to get some bait going in. I had an area in mind, a section of the pit with neglected swims over deep water, perfect for the autumn. I found a lovely silty strip around loads of thick weed, only 50 yards out. Baiting heavily on a Sunday before leaving kept the spot prime - I felt like I needed to do something different, and with neglected swims over this felt right.

After three weeks of baiting, I felt the time was right to begin fishing, and after a few nights in the area, I was



beginning to see signs of carp – I had a three-night trip planned, and decided to fish on the baited patch. The first two mornings saw carp showing in the area, and on the third morning, at 08:30am, the bite came.

As is often the case on Stoneacres, the carp was quickly buried in the weed,

so I took to the boat, keeping steady pressure as I got above, carefully coaxing it to the surface. Up came a huge ball of weed and a big brown head. I quickly dropped the rod and scooped everything up in the springbow.

One known as 'The Otter Dodger' at 35lb and a real confidence boost for the spot.

EXCLUSIVE





DAVE MALLIN

# THE UNCATCHABLE

This is the tale about a special bank holiday in 2024. Jamie carp in a small pond which Kelly a keen angler who uses had grown over many years my baits shared a whisper and had gone under the radar. he heard in the pub with a Living among the dense weed drunk guy about a 30lb mirror and snags. This obsession in a local lake. This two-acre began on a scorching hot may reserve was about 6 miles

from my house which to be honest I had no idea existed, surrounded by woods behind a very busy road. It's an intimate, pretty lake covered in American pondweed with reeds and marsh grass on one side and very boggy and wooded with willows growing out of the water.

We were lucky to see a few small carp but a much bigger fish caught my eye... a scaly mirror drifted under the marginal branches and as the sun light hit its flanks I could see it's big linear scales. What a fish it was it looked like a 'Leney Strain!'

These days I don't fish a lot as I am busy with the bait business but if something exciting comes along, I can be tempted out of retirement. It was only 20 minutes from my house so I couldn't resist having a go. Officially there is 'No Fishing' but it does get fished by locals and teenagers who leave loads of cans and

rubbish everywhere!

To be honest, I thought it would be easy, but after three weeks of fishing virtually every day after work it was apparent that the fish were very wary and no chances were forthcoming.

The lake was less than 3 foot deep everywhere and badly silted, the bottom so soft you daren't wade along the margin, as I found out with a life and death struggle clawing my way up the bank!

Jamie living a few minutes up the road was putting some serious effort in and doing nights but the fish never seemed to feed just swim over the baits. We were both using my pungent squid freezer baits and scattering it around the lake when we left. Trouble was with it being so shallow the ducks were having a field day, they were a big problem continually diving on the spots and I don't think the fish were getting any bait at all!



June 16<sup>th</sup> I got to the lake wasn't long before a couple of at midday it was hot and I fish and a Ghosty drifted over decided to give maggots a go the maggots but didn't show on this occasion and put a few any interest in feeding and handfuls in the edge and settled just melted away back to the back behind the undergrowth security of the pondweed. so the fish couldn't see me Jamie arrived at 5:30 and as in the clear shallow water. It we chatted I saw the Big un

start to smash his way through the pondweed and bow wave along the far margin, I said to Jamie 'Get the rod in' and he plopped his pungent squid choddy next to some reeds growing out in the lake on a really shallow spot he had been baiting. The Big un swam right to the spot, his tale out of the water, I was watching from the tree when his buzzer screamed. What a battle he had, it was touch and go as it was inches from the

numerous snags and willow branches but Jamie played it well and I netted it first time, in the net it looked big I was expecting a low 30 at best but it was wide as well as long... it weighed 36 lbs on the nose! A real whacker for our area and what a pretty fish. I told Jamie how special this fish was and congratulated him, then made him promise me to 'not tell a soul' until I had caught it as well.

This cracking old carp really

spurred me on and I carried on visiting the lake everyday looking and baiting it but didn't fish for a week to let him recover from his ordeal. I didn't go mad with the bait I found one to two kilos a day was enough spread around the lake so the ducks didn't find it all and the carp got their share too. I was fishing most days now after work even if I only had a couple of hours, it was better than not being there.

Three weeks of intense angling later I finally got my chance. I had done the night but seen nothing so packed away and went home to sort out some orders then came back at midday and decided on the bog side of the lake. I under armed a couple of choddys out by an overhanging willow just on the edge of the dense pondweed, sat down and had a violent take, I was bent double, giving it maximum strain as it stripped out line



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off a tight clutch. The power was incredible, I was shaking as I knew it was the Big un, the line was going through the willow branches but the E.S.P syncro loaded in 18lb didn't let me down the tackle was bulletproof, everything went solid the fish was firmly imbedded in the middle of the pondweed I left the rod for a while and it pulled again Then solid once more.

I spotted someone walking towards me 'Hello Dave, what are you doing here!' Me.... errrrrghh I couldn't have been at a worse time, with the Big un on the end! It was a guy called Ryan who uses my bait and although he was a sound guy, I couldn't let on what was on the end!

Ryan said.... 'didn't know there was any carp in here, I saw your van on the verge.... 'Yes' I said 'Only five carp in here and the biggest is only a low twenty and he's got me in the weed, can you watch my

gear while I drive home to get my boat?' Ryan... 'No probs'

I drove like a maniac and was back in 30 mins with my 'bic boat'. When I arrived back Ryan looked sheepish, as I'd had a take on the other rod, I'd completely forgotten about and he had landed it for me....

I said thanks but didn't bother looking in the net as I knew it was only one of the doubles. Out in the boat I traced the

line through the pondweed and eased up the lead core. The fish had gone, it had bent the extra strength wire hook just enough to escape off the micro barb!

I hate losing fish, but I have to admit this was rather gut-wrenching after six weeks of intense effort!

The small one was around 13lb and a distinctive grey colour. So I started referring to him as the grey mirror.

The next day I was back again, putting the bait in to start building the Big un's

confidence again. A few weeks real angry male!

later, I had my first sighting of the 'uncatchable' since the loss and the fish started spawning and my initial thoughts were confirmed. He was a male fish, He thrashed around after three double figured females, they were literally swimming for their lives, He was such a powerful fish. During this time, I didn't fish but kept the bait going in and after three days spawning was over. I knew they would be hungry after all the energy they had been using. So no surprise I had a take which turned out to be a small squat simmo.

August and September, the fishing was frustrating to say the least, with the fish constantly in the pondweed. The big un was such a character, he was the boss of the lake. Any coots or moorhens he would smash his way through the weed to make them scatter, literally shitting themselves, He was a

All through the hot weather I had put floaters out, mixer & bread to maybe make a chance 'but you guessed it, they never touched anything off the surface, not one morsel!

The autumn was slow, all the carp were together holed up by the snags. A large willow growing into the lake with a six foot clear channel before the dense pondweed. It was the hardest spot to get a bait to.... I decided to concentrate my efforts through the winter in this area just trickling in the bait when I left the lake and fishing single hook baits in the day when I returned.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> December, I saw the big un, clearly push out by the snags and as his head was out of the water he pushed again 'he was literally hovering in the air'. What a sight that was, the colours were stunning but unfortunately no early Christmas present for me! The only time I didn't fish was

when it froze and annoyingly being so shallow it seemed to freeze at the drop of a hat, when other lakes were ice free.

March 2025 was so warm and it wasn't long before I started to spot the carp travelling along the reed line on the bog side of the lake. It had been 7 months since my last bite but I was more determined than ever to catch the Big un which I had nicknamed the 'uncatchable' for obvious reasons!

I've never known the weather so warm for March, and the fish were loving it coming along the reedline and one particular spot, a horseshoe shape in the reeds. They went in one way and exited the other. I dropped a few branches in the bog and a scaffold board to be able to access this spot, to be able to drop a rig in there. The plan was fish one rod, rod tip up high with the rig lowered into position right next to the reeds on a tight line with leadcore acting as a

stick. If I had a take, let it run out in the lake, walk round the reeds, balance on a tyre, give it sidestrain and net it!

After more of this hot weather, the fish were swimming round slower looking for food and looking catchable. I saw the Big un for the first time and he looked 'big'. A few days later I had my first take, and my plan was executed to perfection and a pretty mirror was in the net with starburst scales on it. Another double I returned it with a pic in the net just for reference and nicknamed it 'the Pretty One'. Just two to catch now, oh and the 'Carrot' which never seemed to eat anything just repeatedly swam over the bait!

27<sup>th</sup> March the weather had turned cold and the wind was freezing. Nothing was coming into the reeds so I decided to fish further down the lake and split two rods up on single banksticks, to be honest I really didn't expect



any action and jumped out of on again !

my skin when one of the rods screamed off, it took me about 30 seconds to get to the rod, sitting in the bog in the chest waders froze to death, I felt I was in slow motion. When I pulled into it the fish I saw the Big un's tail thrash the surface, he had wrapped me round a submerged snag and the hook length parted!

I had been waiting for months for this chance and had let myself down by not being disciplined and being next to my rods, I only had myself to blame it was bad angling and I knew it, I felt terrible because I had left the tackle in his mouth... back to square one again! For the next week I walked the lake and baited it but not one sighting of the Big un at all but I saw all the others, I felt sick! After two weeks I started to see the Big un again thank God and he was swimming slowly in a catchable mood, it was game

Mid-April weather was hot, I'd started to spot them up the very narrow end of a lake, and made sure I was camouflaged and concealed myself behind the bushes as these fish knew when you were there. I watched them going to one particular spot in a crater in the bottom to scratch themselves on a tree stump protruding from the bottom, flanking up to a dozen times with each fish taking turns.

One particular trip had my heart pumping, the Big un was in this area picking up a few baits. In the corner of my eye I saw a bird in a pink tracksuit at the other end of the lake who started to walk round but turned back when she realised it was a bog. I thought no, no don't walk over here and fuck it up for me, I lost sight of her but 5 minutes later the bird in the pink tracksuit turned out to be a bloke who appeared right opposite me in an open

LIMITED EDITION • SIGNED AND NUMBERED

# Legendary Carp Paintings



- Basil
- Heather
- The Black Mirror
- The Royal Forty
- The Bishop
- The Burghfield Common
- Jumbo
- Two Tone
- Mary and Mary's Mate

gap in the trees with pink matching trainers too... I shit you not! 'Any good mate' the fish just bolted off up the lake I just couldn't speak anyd ignored him.

Next day I was back again early and managed to get my baits in position anticipating their return and return they did, the Big un and was close again I was so excited, then I heard this noise getting louder and louder and it turned out to be a low flying helicopter! What were the chances of that. The water erupted and the fish were gone bow waving down the lake to the security of the pondweed.

Next day I was back again but had to wait till the afternoon before they returned, I saw the Big un smashing his way through the pondweed in the middle heading up the lake to his favourite scratching post, with a pungent squid wafter waiting in the crater with a few chopped boilies too. The

take was savage but after a few seconds the hook pulled... I checked the rig, the hook was still sharp it was just bad luck. I'd angled well but had just been kicked in the nuts again!

I continued to bait the lake everyday and in particular the horseshoe reeds spot, again it was a week before I would see the Big un, and he was travelling the reed line again, looking catchable but further down the lake now seemed to be their new favourite spot. My tactic of lowering the hook baits tight to the reeds was deployed and after and hour or so, two of the smaller carp began feeding. Then I saw the Big un. I have to admit fishing these shallow, clear lakes is exciting at times, It was like 'Jaws' coming towards you! Anyway I had a double take as I was playing a Small un, the other rod ripped off, the hook pulled on the first one and I landed the fourth and last one of the Small uns. I didn't



even consider the 'Carrot' as he seemed definitely 'uncatchable'!

We were in May now and word had obviously got out 'Mallins' fishing this lake, we have seen his van there must be a big fish in there... blah blah blah! I had people messaging me who didn't even know me saying I'll have a go when you have finished, let me know! They didn't even know what was in there! Anglers started walking around, I had already hid my van in a nearby estate in fear of anyone seeing me here... I started to get silly, anglers approaching me in white T-shirts while I was stalking the fish in the bog. They would come up asking if I'd caught anything and what's in there... I had to deliberately blank them... I know this sounds bad but I had to do what I had to do, to make sure it was going to be me next to catch this 'special carp'. To have the lake mobbed by sheep would have

been catastrophic. The sheer stress and intensity was off the scale, I was permanently in a bad mood as I was trying so hard but not achieving my dream, All I had to show for my efforts was a few doubles !

Normal carp fishing is lovely and relaxing and enjoyable, but big carp fishing is a different animal, it's the total opposite, I was too invested in this campaign for failure, I had to push myself harder and be more meticulous and make sure the 'uncatchable' would be mine.

Towards the end of May the horseshoe reed spot seemed to be back in use with all the free bait on offer over the last month they were loving it. Same tactics rod high over the reeds, I watched the Carrot drift in and out, to my amazement it picked up my hookbait, the plan worked again and I landed him balancing on the tyre. An orange linear approximately 14 lbs but he had a bite out

of his tail which was worrying as it looked like an otter!

I could see this Big un smashing through the weed on his way to the reed so quickly replaced the rig and minutes later the rod was away, But instead of him following the plan like the other fish did and exit into the main lake, he smashed his way through the reeds parallel to the bank where no fish could pass and the hooklink broke!

Jamie had joined me earlier when I had the carrot and had watched things unfold from a tree and neither of us could speak, I'd literally had my guts pulled out and felt sick as there was tackle left in his mouth again! I got home in a terrible mood the missus said why can't you catch it? Jamie caught it! We got into an argument, and she said just admit it you haven't got it anymore... you never catch anything !

A woman's scorn, talk about kick a man when he's down!

Inside I just thought one day you will eat your words! This just made me more determined than ever to prove her wrong.

The next day I just carried on baiting but didn't fish for a week. The hot weather was terrible and the water was disappearing rapidly only about two feet deep all over, the pondweed was thicker than ever, and the fish just stayed in the middle of it as the margins were too shallow for them to swim in.

June came and went not a single chance ! I watched the fish spawn again and saw the Big un, it was looking good. One night I saw the Otter go across the lake and follow the stream bed and this made me more anxious than ever, these fish were on borrowed time! I decided to increase the bait to 3 kilos a day and get the Big un's confidence back, baiting a swim in the middle part of the lake. This seemed to work and soon had the area visited

and loads of bubbling going on. On several occasions I had them ripping the bottom up for the pungent squid but had no bites, they were very crafty. I decided to move the hookbait off the spot and seconds later the Big Un ripped off, on a tight clutch and buried itself in the pondweed solid I quickly got my boat out of the van and rowed out taking just the landing net tracing the line an eased the leadcore up, it was still on, it thrashed uncontrollably soaking me and it was off! This was the fifth time I'd hooked him in 13 months and had lost another battle, how the hell can you lose a fish so many times, but it was just the nature of the weedy snaggy lake and a huge helping of bad luck!

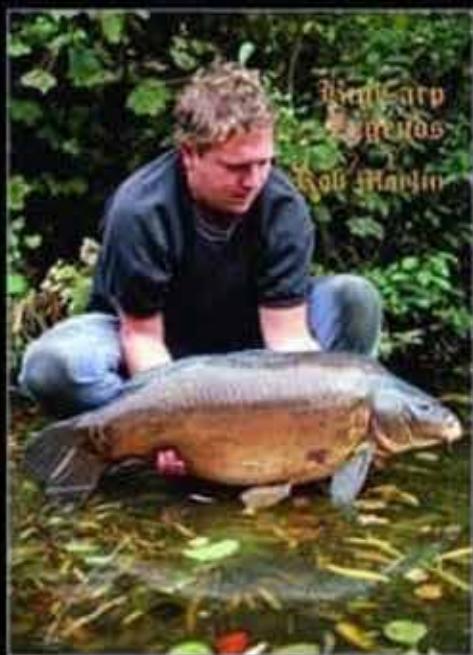
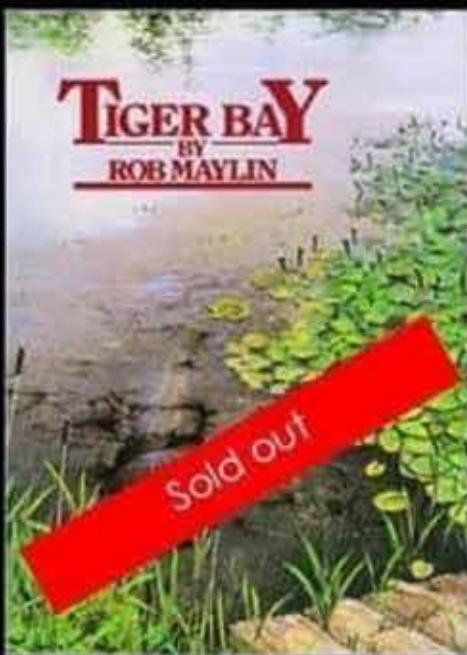
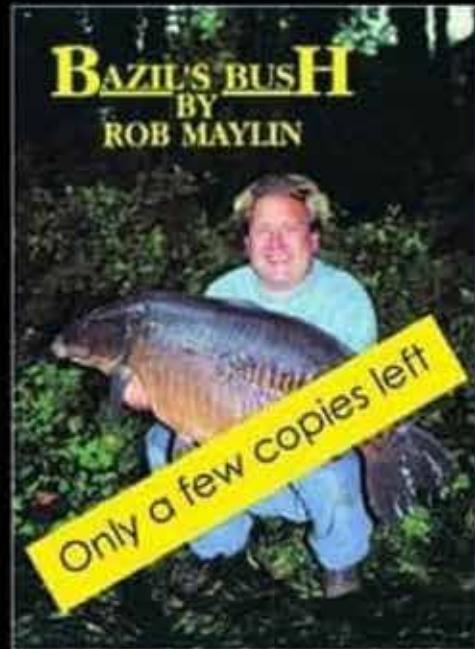
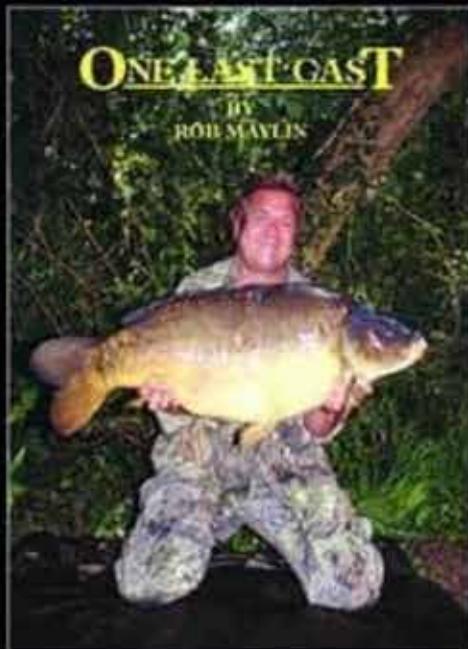
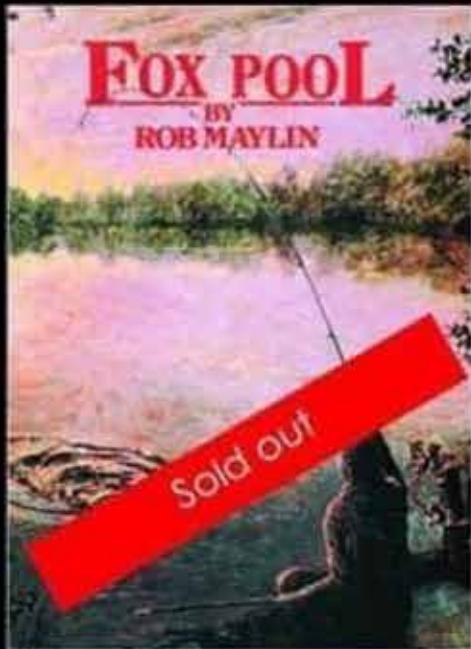
The whole of August I walked the lake and baited heavily but didn't fish. On my walks it was embarrassingly obvious someone else was baiting the lake. In fact, there was more

spod mix around the banks and boilies in the margins than "linear fisheries" The trees had been decimated, sawn down and loads of litter strewn across the banks.... Teenage kids were my first thoughts, trees had been felled and left in the lake, big, long trees that didn't need cutting, giving the carp extra hiding places....I felt exasperated !!

When I eventually caught up with them, I asked them about the trees which they denied, someone told them there were about 60 carp in there !! so that explains the baiting. They too had seen the Big un and asked me how big I thought it was, I said low 20lb, it's the doubles they make it look bigger than it really is! Anyway in conversation it emerged that one lad was a tree surgeon! I rest my case! On another occasion I was just walking on for the night and another guy was walking off with a big particle bucket, so just turned

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round and went home. This interest was certainly fucking my plans up. But after a couple of weeks of them blanking I had the lake to myself again. I started doing overnights getting there just before dark and packing away early for work in the morning but no action was forthcoming and sightings were very limited. We were now into October and time was running out.

As I was looking from a tree I noticed the Big un just appear from nowhere it looked huge, but I couldn't help thinking why I hadn't noticed it in the shadow water getting to where it was. This puzzled me so I walked round the bog side of the lake and with the polaroids I could see a deeper crater in the bottom with a gully leading back to the pondweed, the water around the crater was only one foot deep.

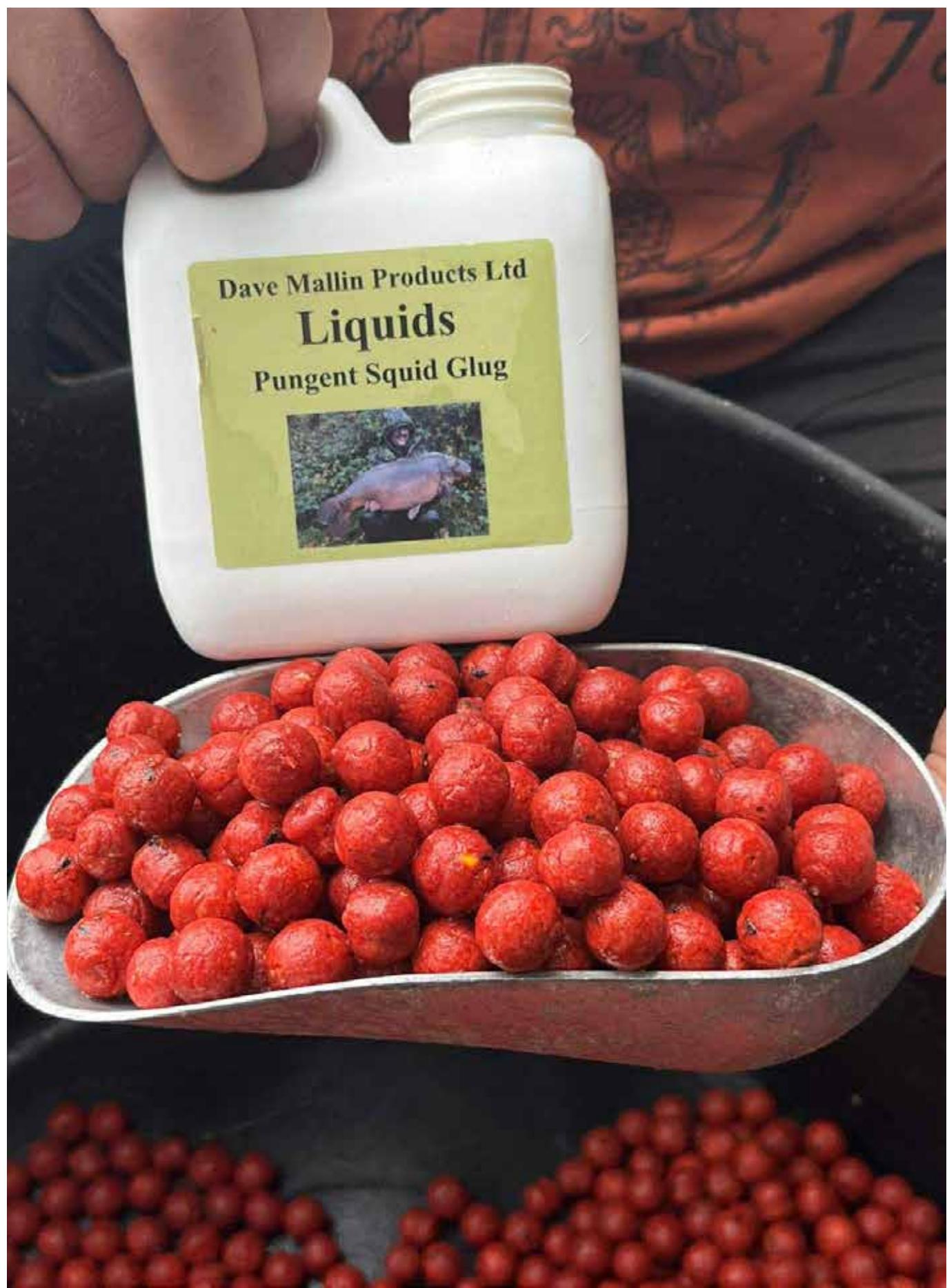
Observation is key to fishing and when you are struggling, you have to look even harder

to find an edge and this could be the answer.

I baited it with pungent squid chop ups ready for my return the next day.

October 12<sup>th</sup> was a real foggy day, my memory took me back to colne mere landing the linear in dense fog, this fired me up and that afternoon I set up on the bog side 20 yards from waters edge on a hard patch just big enough for my E.S.P low pro umbrella and bed chair, the two rods were a foot away from me and the rods were locked into the butt rests, I underarmed my rig into the crater, I could see my hookbait, the leadcore was draped up the side of the crater on the shallow area and the rods walked back 20 yards with rods high draping the semi slack line over the marsh grass and clutches up tight.

As I sat there quietly, I noticed the Big un's tail in the weed about 15 yards away from the crater, 30 minutes later as



darkness fell he was 10 yards away. I'd brought my extra long landing net with me as it was going to be a problem if I got a take as getting to the water's edge in the bog could be fatal in the dark. 6am still pitch dark, the crater rod is away pulling Even on a tight clutch I was on the rod in a flash and waders on. It was thrashing up and down the margins, But in the shallow water this time he couldn't make the weed and the 'uncatchable' was mine! I'd won our 6<sup>th</sup> battle. It had taken me 16 months and 175 visits, all my time and effort had gone into this moment, it



had been incredibly tough to catch. I screamed out 'HE'S MINE!!!' I was euphoric the emotion surged through my body. I weighed him carefully 40lbs 10oz what special carp, a hidden gem in the midlands. Jamie did me proud with the pictures he tail was perfect when Jamie had caught him, but his tail had been ottered, but it didn't surprise me he had got away! Just for the record the mouth was perfect and no other hooks were in there.

I hope this story will inspire others and hope it gives you insight in what it takes to catch big elusive carp and what you have to go through to be a 'Big Carp Hunter', Never ever give up on achieving your dreams even when you have setbacks....will always prevails in the end !!

Thank you to E.S.P for the tackle I've used since 1999, the best out there and to my friend Jamie Kelly who also caught the 'uncatchable'.





**ELLIOTT GRAY**

# AUTUMN STALKING

**G**iven the right ones with a healthy number venue, fishing of marginal snags, and the in the edge can more snags, the more spots not only become and opportunities you'll some of the most enjoyable come across. If you have both fishing you'll do, but it snags and depth, you'll often can really be quite fruitful find chances in the edge. too. The best venues in my That being said, don't be experience, are always the put off by shallow in the



edge spots, you can find carp I'm looking for.

in spots in very little depth, particularly those on south facing banks where they'll receive plenty of warming sunlight. Spending time to lap the lake to check areas, baiting various spots and then checking them throughout the day will help you build a

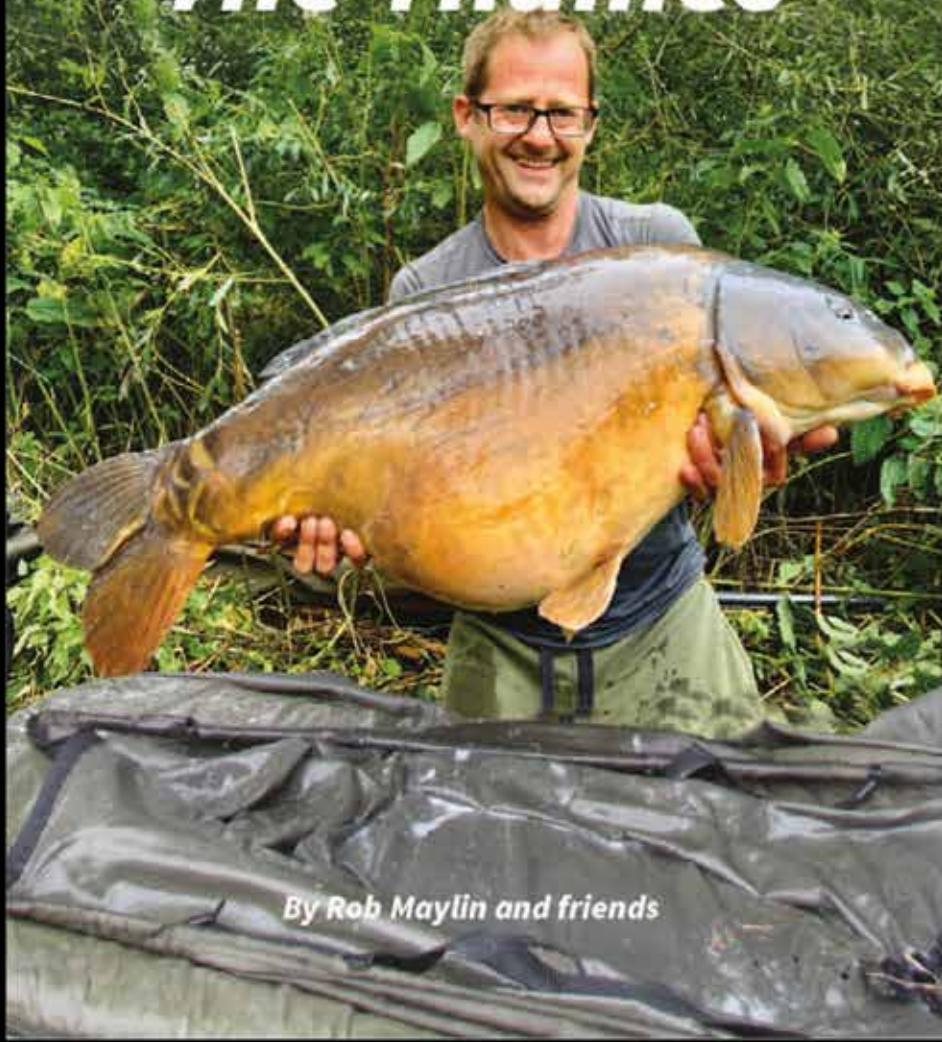
In regard to kit, arm yourself with some polarising glasses and camo clothing, tread carefully, and go looking for the carp. Areas visited regularly by fish will often have glowing gravel patches, and aside from actually seeing the carp, that's what with the carp's movements

picture of what areas the carp use and when. For example, one set of snags could be super prolific in the early morning, and then another area could be good for a day bite and then another spot for the nights. Being in tune with the carp's movements

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*By Rob Maylin and friends*

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

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

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

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

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

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and travelling super light, you can often nick a few bites in a day around the lake. catch carp out the edge and I'd make the most of it whilst you can. After three weeks of

The key is regular baiting, I felt the time was observation, regular baiting and stealth! Beyond that, it's much like any other type of fishing, train them to feed on your spots, position your rigs accordingly based on all of the above and you won't go far wrong. The autumn is one of my favourite times to baiting, I felt the time was right to begin fishing, after a few nights in the area, I was beginning to see signs of carp – I had a three-night trip planned, and decided to fish on the baited patch. The first two mornings saw carp showing in the area, and on the third morning, at 08:30am,





the bite came.

As is often the case on of weed and a big brown head. Stoneacres, the carp was I quickly dropped the rod and quickly buried in the weed, scooped everything up in the so I took to the boat, keeping springbow. One known as 'The steady pressure as I got above, Otter Dodger' at 35lb and a real carefully coaxing it to the confidence boost for the spot.

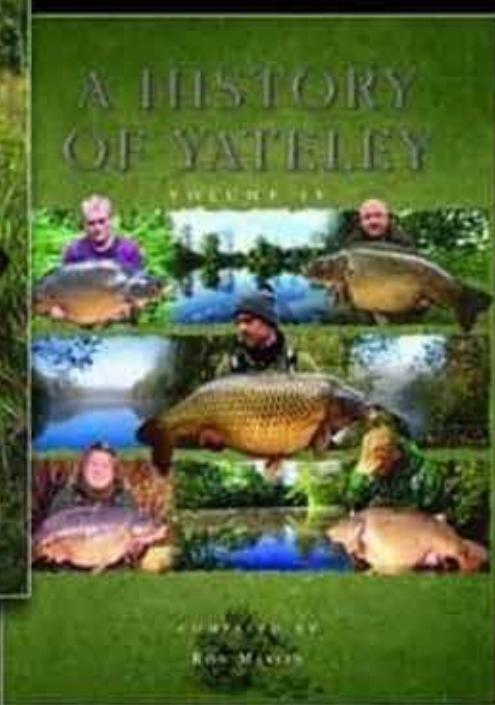
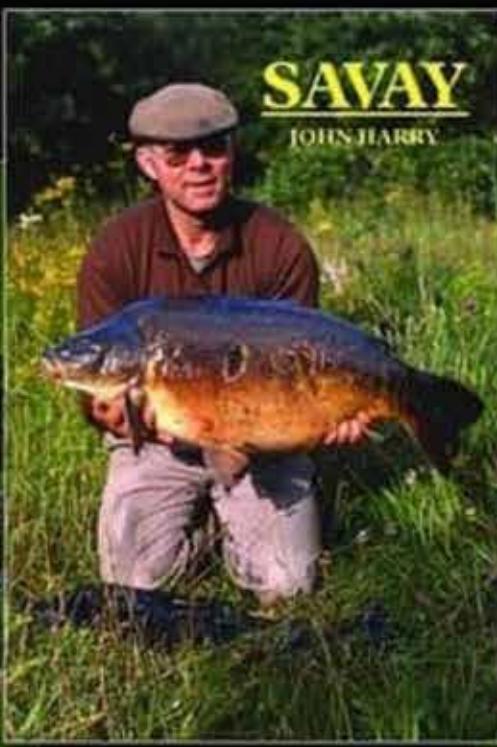
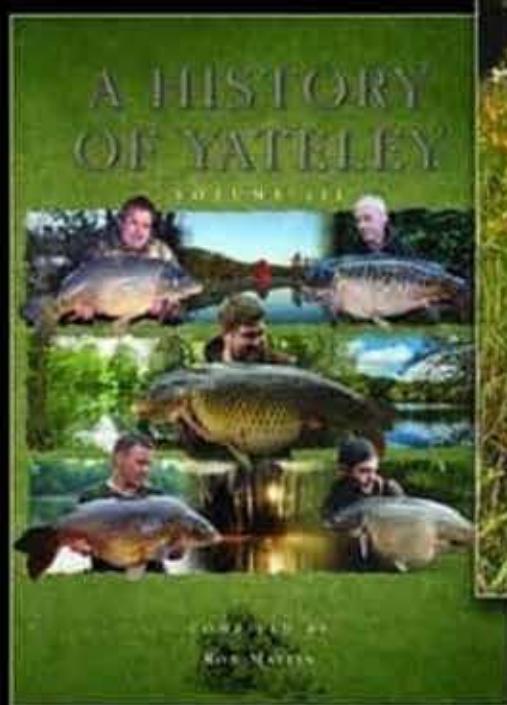
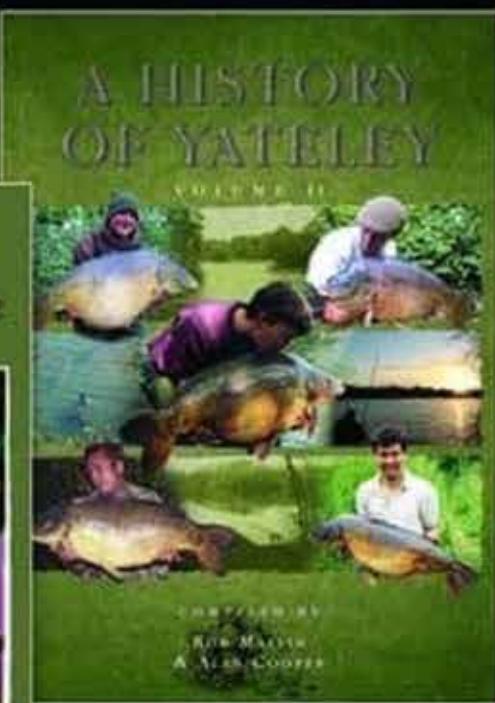
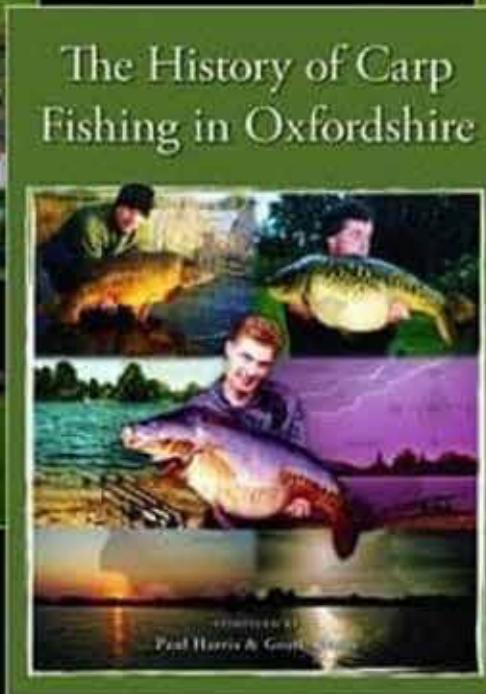
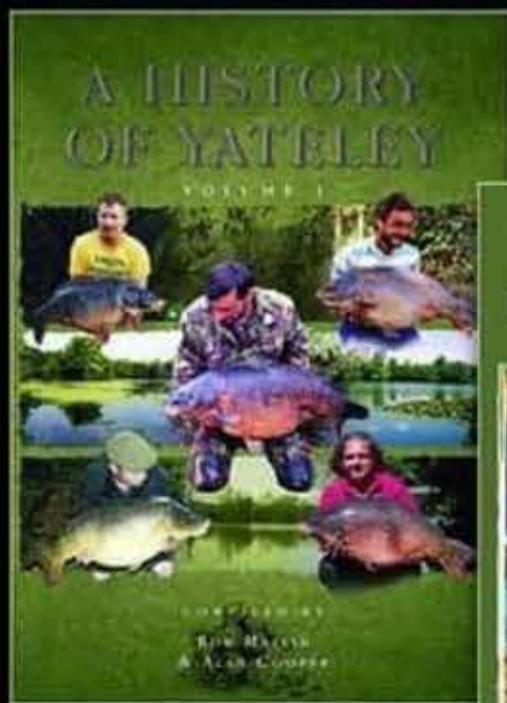
surface. Up came a huge ball

of weed and a big brown head. I quickly dropped the rod and scooped everything up in the springbow. One known as 'The Otter Dodger' at 35lb and a real confidence boost for the spot.

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IAN DAKIN

# ST IVES 'CELL'EBRATION

Ian Dakin who has had an impressive start to his new Mainline Baits life banking including a PB beast of a common. He told us: "Well, last week I ventured out using the Mainline Cell for the first time. With my chosen lake, Meadow being a little busy, I popped over to Lagoon to see my friend Lee, also a bailiff to see what he knew. I sat with Lee for an hour or so and in that time, we saw a number of fish rolling on the surface out in front of the Works swims. We headed round for a look and



soon decided he was moving, and half's, soaked in Smart and I would drop alongside. Liquid. I deployed Hinges In the middle of three swims and Ronnie's, both baited facing the island with Mainline Cell, matching

First, I had a little lead around to find it very shallow, 3.5 feet and a little weedy, fishable but patchy weed. After prepping the bait, which consisted of Cell Boilie, crumbed, full pop ups. At 6, 8, and 10 wraps from right to left, cast across the path I had watched the Carp taking when stood with Lee a few hours before. All were set and just before first light the first bite came.

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Not long after the second. Common, Callums Common. Two retainers in the swim and a very happy angler. A Brace of 30s for the first morning, and conditions were still looking prime. No changes just repeated the bait and rigs from the day before. Again, the next morning, two bites, only one of the bites was the Big Linear Mirror."

Common, Callums Common. At 44.2 it's a PB Common for me, and buzzing was an understatement!!

Not thinking things could get any better, I put the rods out for a third, unplanned night and to my disbelief managed another bite the next morning, a 28.8 almost



# Dear Santa, PLEASE No more socks this Christmas!

Wish list:

Seasonal Tactics and Techniques - Autumn/Winter

The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

The Darker Side of Carp Fishing

Old School Carping Volume 4

History of Yateley Volume 3

Under the Radar Volume 2

In Pursuit of the Largest

Further off Beaten Track

Advanced Terminal Rigs

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**TOM STOKES**

# AN AWESOME AUTUMN

**T**here's no denying that the autumn is one of the best times of the year to be out on the bank, the mornings are crisp, the lakes look beautiful in their autumnal colours, and the carp not only look their best, but are often at their biggest. But, the truth is it can often be relatively tricky when it comes to actually catching them, i've heard it a lot lately that many lakes are fishing really slow. Success at this time of year often comes down to venue choice, tactics, and location. The last few weeks have been very kind on the fishing



front for me this year, but the above points have been very much true.

Firstly, both of the venue's I have caught from have been relatively deep, and of course, deep water will retain its temperature far longer than shallow water will. In fact, from experience, I'd say October and even into November are probably the best months of the year on the deeper lake's.

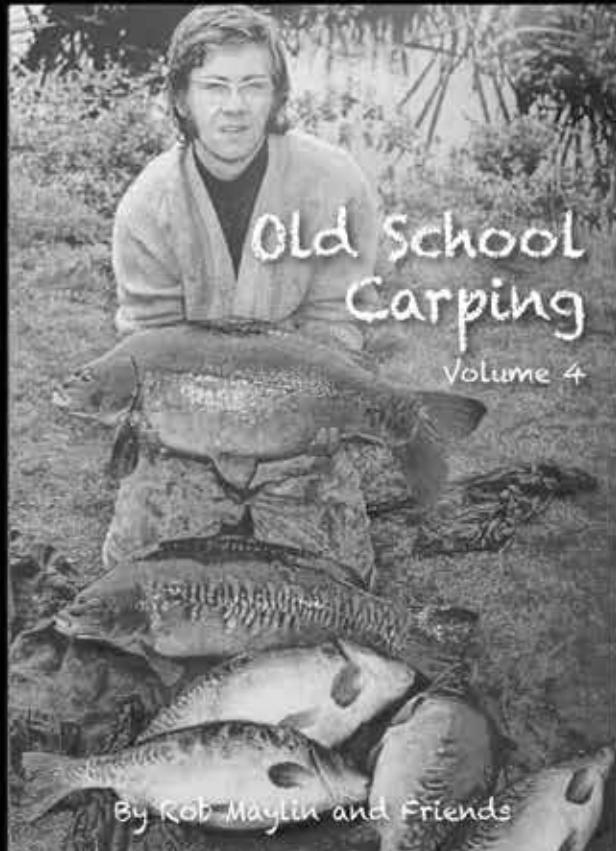
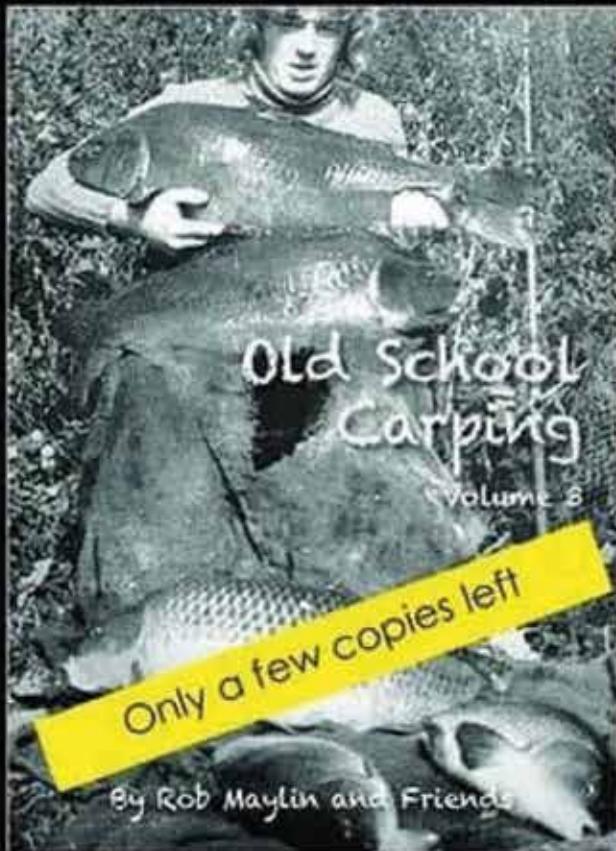
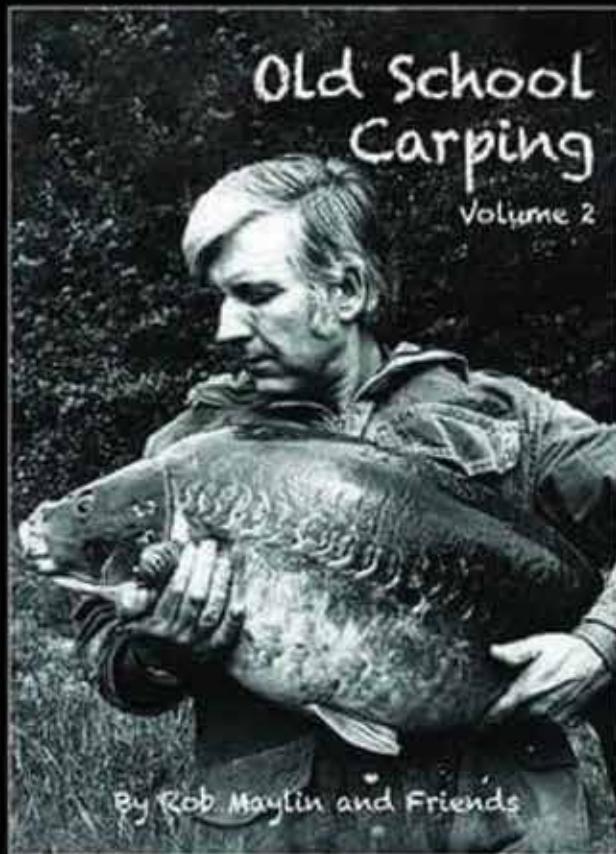
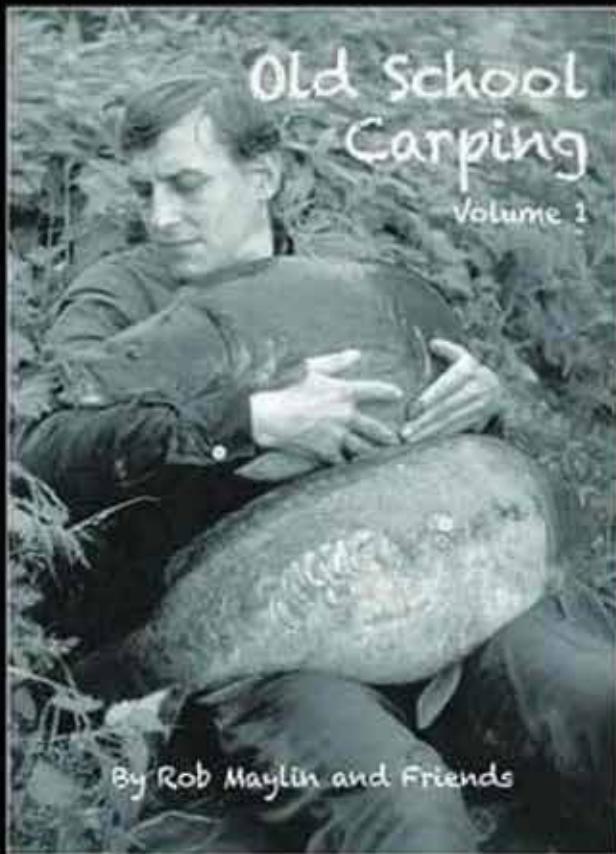
Next is tactics, all of the bites I have had in the last few trips have been over relatively small amounts of bait, yes they are still willing to feed, but a small amount of bait in the right place is definitely better than sitting over a load of bait in the wrong. In fact, just this week, I felt so confident in my location that I sat it out over a bit of bait, and ended up blanking for two nights even

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though I caught five from that exact zone the week before, they just totally avoided the bait it seemed. In the end, I switched to casting mesh bags at where I was seeing signs of feeding and caught four on the last night of the trip!.

And finally location, location can be crucial in the autumn, although the carp are still very active, the areas they are likely to feed in can be narrowed down dramatically compared to the summer, they are much more active at night, so stay up late, listen to where they are, and be prepared to move even in the hours of darkness. If you're on them, simple tactics such as the p.v.a bags, or a spread of boilies is often all that is needed to catch them, but if you're not on them the reality is you're never going to catch them!.

Get all of the above right, and a great autumn's fishing is there to be had!

If I had just one bait to use

for the rest of my life, a bait that I could take anywhere, under any circumstance, then it would have to be tiger nuts. Although I believe they're best used in the summer, they can be used all year round, they're relatively resistant to the attentions of nuisance fish, and carp absolutely love them. In fact, I don't think there's a carp in the world that wouldn't eat a tiger nut!

When it comes to preparing tigers, I've tried various different additives and sweeteners over the years, but these days I just soak them in water for 48 hours and then boil for roughly an hour depending on the average size of the nuts. A tiger nut is naturally super attractive to a carp, and always will be, so I have come to the conclusion that there's simply no need to try and enhance them in any way.

One thing that is often

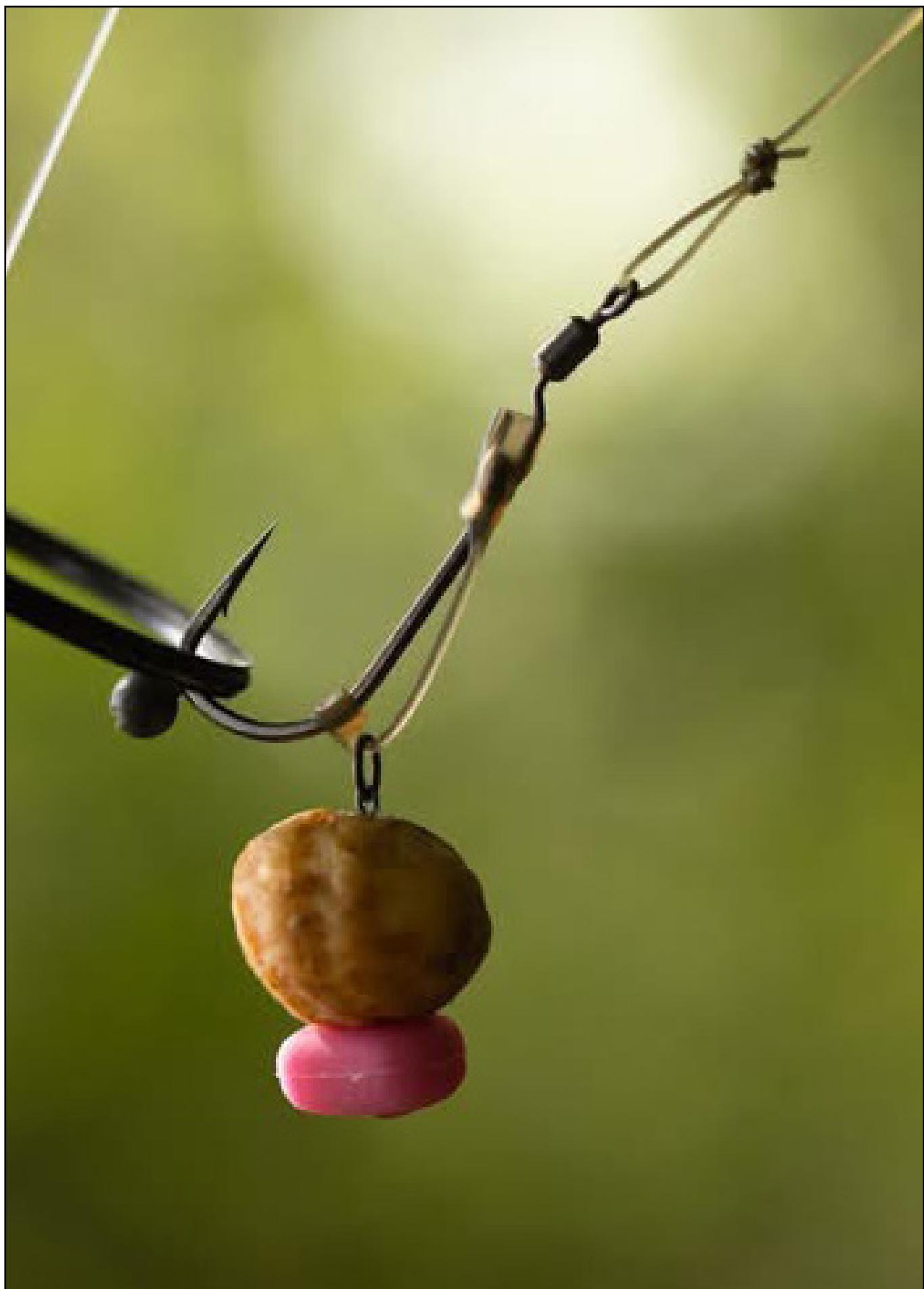
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debated, is when is a months old and would have cooked nut is at its best? Personally, I think they're at their absolute best 5-7 days after cooking, when they're in that really gloopy stage. I'm more than happy to keep tigers for weeks, if not months in a bucket though, naturally fermenting in their own juices. I have caught on tigers that are more than 6 months old and would have no worries when it comes to using them. They're just an incredibly versatile bait, allowing you to fish them straight as a bottom bait, drill with cork to act as a wafter or even as a pop up. They've stood the test of time and will carry on catching carp for many years to come'.

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LEE WHEELER

# AUTUMN ONE BITE TACTIC

**M**uch like temperature can play a big part in carp's want and need during the early part of the year, late for food, therefore, fishing for carp in autumn can be a great way of going about things during both of these periods.

- In spring, fish are slowly waking up, in autumn the fish are slowly shutting down. The effects of water

like temperature can play a big part in carp's want and need, therefore, fishing for carp in autumn can be a great way of going about things during both of these periods.

It's not uncommon to see carp harvesting areas of natural food and I've often



found myself to adopt a perfect for this.

mobile approach in autumn, fishing for bites into patches of bubbling, or showing fish. If you can eventually pin them down in area with longevity, that's when I'll begin to apply more bait (usually bits and pieces and naturals) but only when I'm sure the area is right. Until then, I'm happy to keep mobile and hunt them down, fishing simple 'one bite' tactics, in which golf-ball sized mesh bags are

An attractive hookbait, a few crumbed boilies and a palmful of white maggots is a firm favourite of mine. Once the bag melts, the maggots will disperse slightly, creating an eye-catching patch of food that often carp can't resist.

Given the choice between fishing with single hookbaits or small bags, I'd choose the bags every day of the week, you just have to be mindful of where you're

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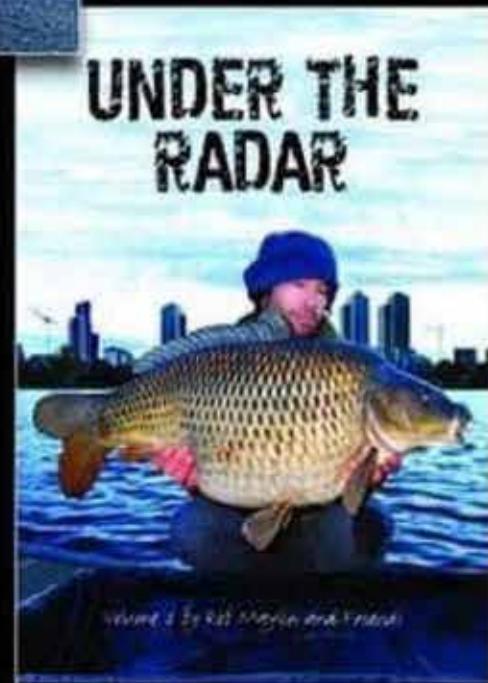
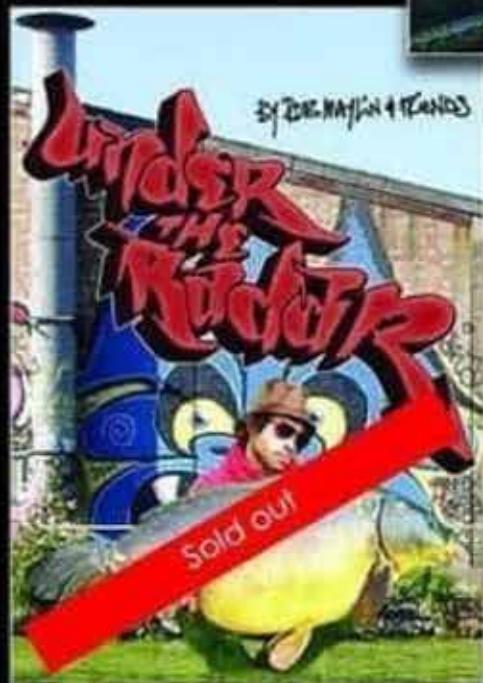
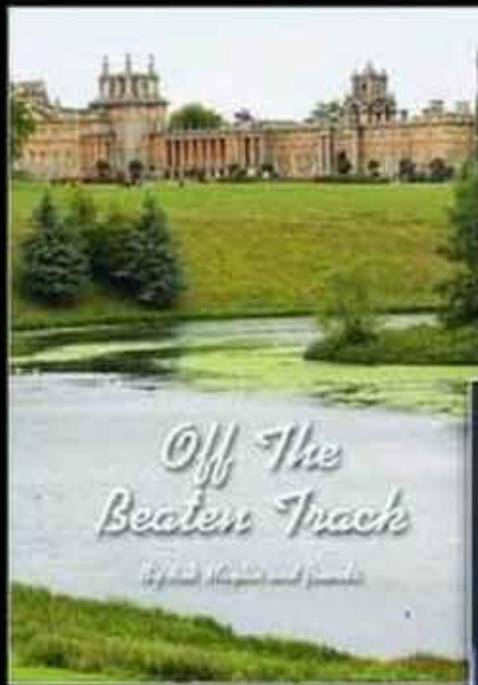




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**ELLIOTT GRAY**

# AUTUMN ONE BITE TACTIC

**M**uch like temperature can play a big part in carp's want and need during the early part of the year, therefore, fishing for carp in autumn can be a great way of suit a 'less is more approach' going about things during both of these periods.

- In spring, fish are slowly waking up, in autumn the fish are slowly shutting down. The effects of water

like temperature can play a big part in carp's want and need for food, therefore, fishing for carp in autumn can be a great way of going about things during both of these periods.

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Given the choice between fishing with single hookbaits or small bags, I'd choose the bags every day of the week, you just have to be mindful of where you're

casting them, as unlike a a good understanding of single pop-up, they won't the lakebed, and a knowing simply present anywhere of where you can and can't they land. However, moving present them. Present them into autumn you should be effectively though, in front of a position where you have a carp, and they're a winner.



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- Petrol generators
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## NEVER DO THIS:

- ✖ Use fuel-burning equipment inside your bivvy
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- ✖ Block air vents or close yourself in tight spaces

## ALWAYS DO THIS:

- ✓ Use heaters and stoves outside, in open air
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- ✓ Learn the signs of CO poisoning

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- Headaches
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*"It won't happen to me..."* Too many anglers last thought.

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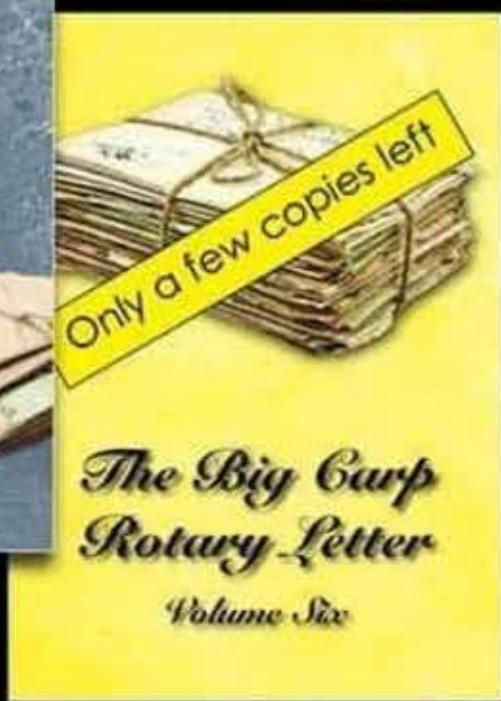
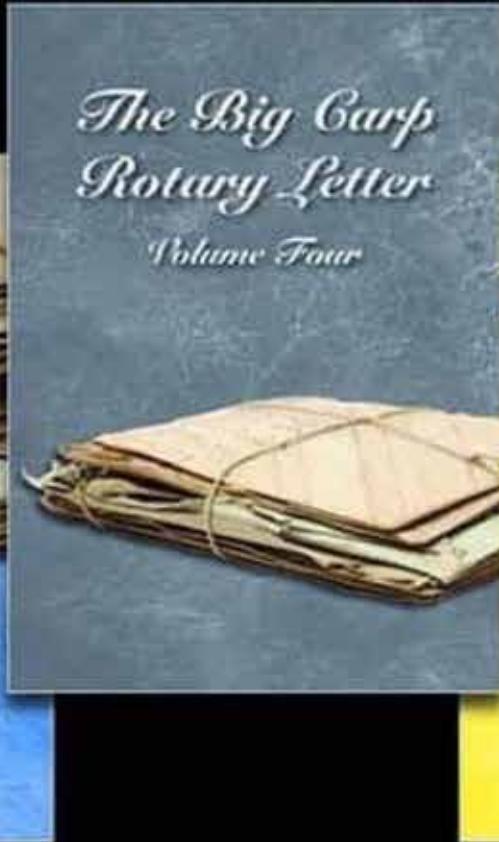
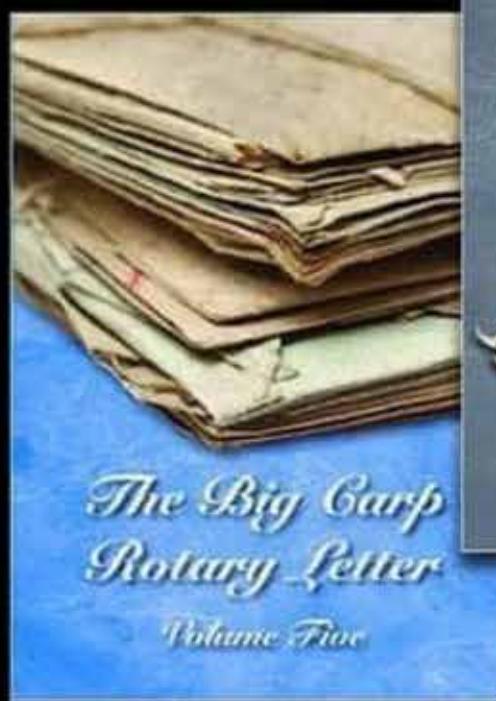
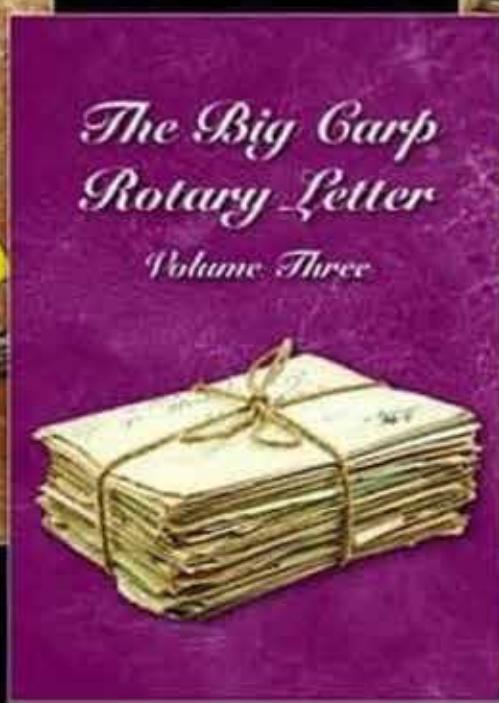
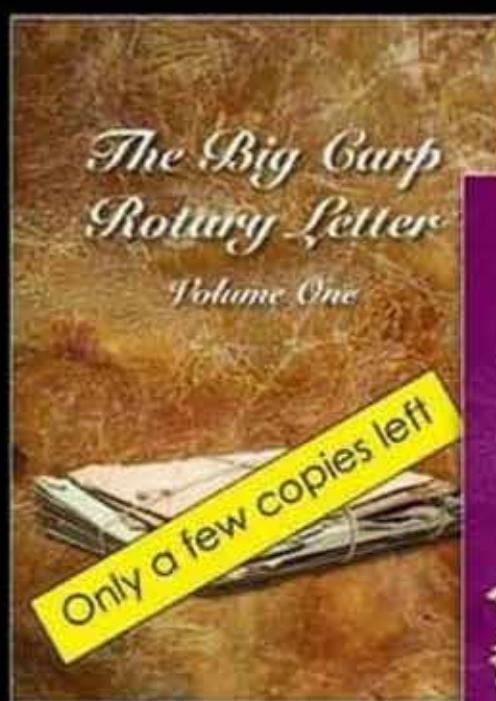


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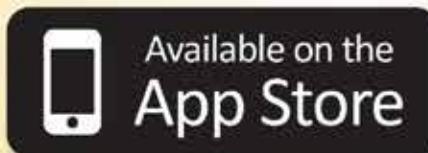
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**FRONTELINE**

**PARK  
LIFE**

**CANAL  
CARNAGE**

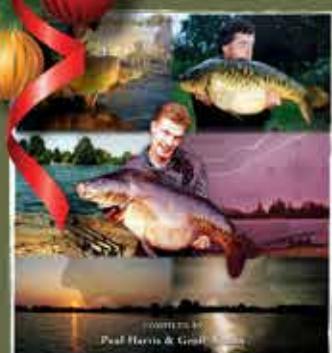
**COOTE - GARNETT - McEVOY**



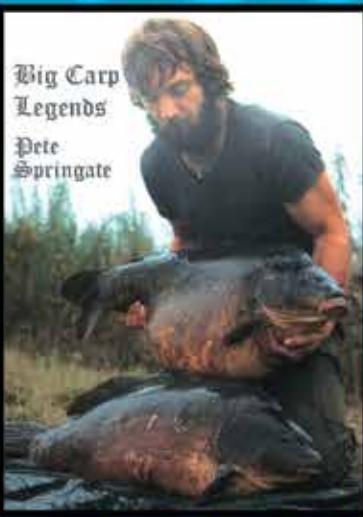
# WINTER



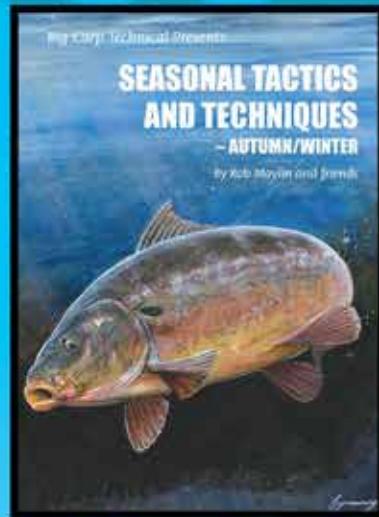
History of Carp  
in Oxfordshire



By Paul Harris & Geoff Smith



Big Carp  
Legends  
Pete  
Springate



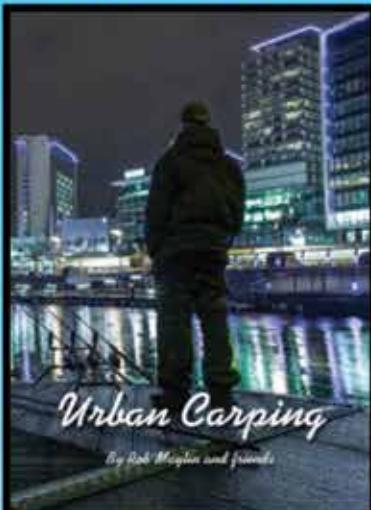
Big Carp Technical Presents  
**SEASONAL TACTICS  
AND TECHNIQUES**  
- AUTUMN/WINTER  
By Rob Maylin and friends

GET  
WITH T



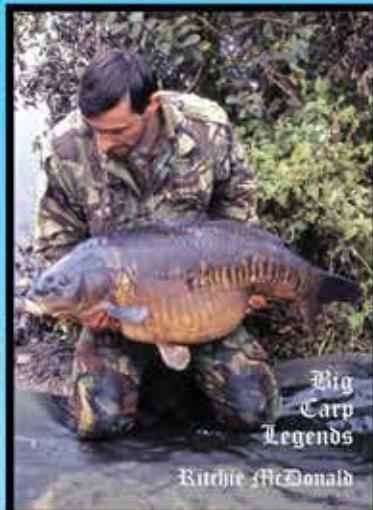
By Derek The

## ORDER ONE OF OUR BEST SELLERS A

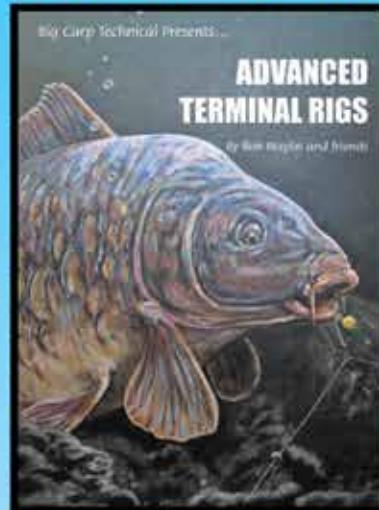


*Urban Carping*

By Rob Maylin and friends



Big Carp  
Legends  
Ritchie McDonald



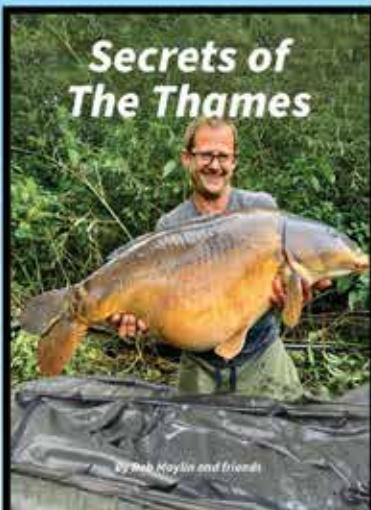
Big Carp Technical Presents...  
**ADVANCED  
TERMINAL RIGS**

By Rob Maylin and friends



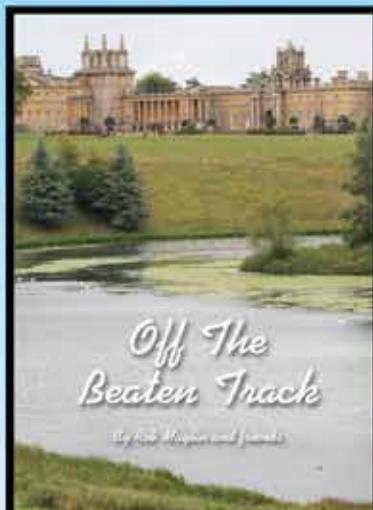
IN PUR  
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TERRY



*Secrets of  
The Thames*

By Rob Maylin and friends



*Off The  
Beaten Track*

By Rob Maylin and friends



*River's End*

By Rob Maylin and friends



Big Carp  
Hunters  
Dave Mallin

## NEW BOOKS: [WWW.C](http://WWW.C)

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

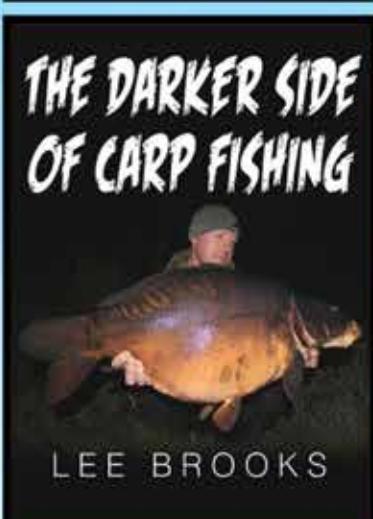
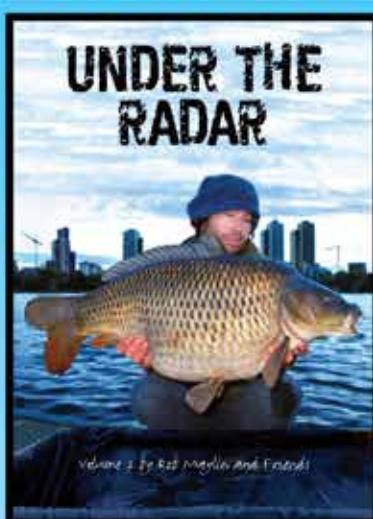
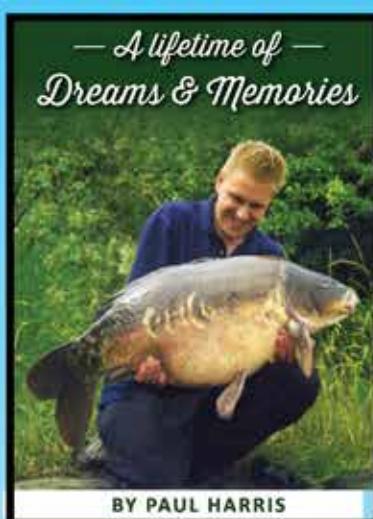
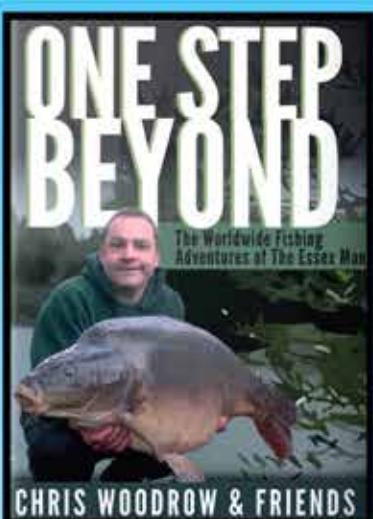
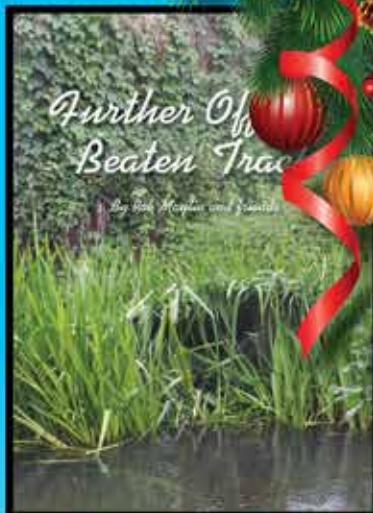
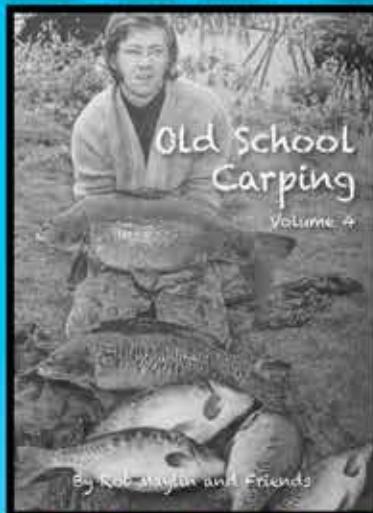
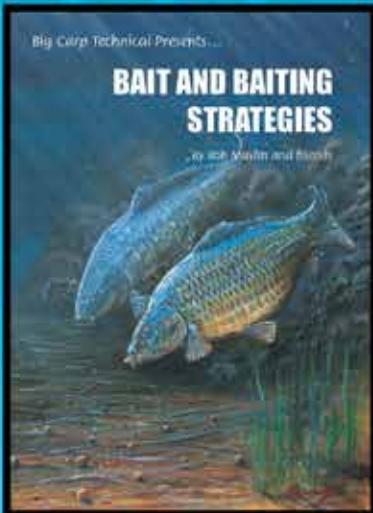
# READING



IT ON  
THE DON

The Don' Ritchie

AND BE PREPARED FOR NEXT SEASON



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

# Rob's Ramblings

Editor/Publisher

Rob Maylin

Bountyhunter

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bigcarpstudio@hotmail.co.uk

Design & Production

James Harrison

Also available this month Big Carp issue 353.



Front Cover:

One of London's hidden park lake gems



## 'OXFORD AND SURROUNDING AREA' -HELP!!

As many of you are aware I run an initiative that supports Oxfords young anglers with donated tackle for free. I am running a species challenge for the groups members with some spectacular prizes.

This challenge will be ending around June 2026. Would anyone knows of a venue I could hire / rent a small water with reasonable parking for a weekend so that we could do a fish in, BBQ and presentation for the winners of the species challenge.

I can be mailed via :

[TCConservationgroup@outlook.com](mailto:TCConservationgroup@outlook.com)

Thankyou for any support.

Dyl.

## 8. CARP CHAT



## 26. CARP SCENE



## 38. BOBBY COOTE

## 76. CRAIG McEVOY

## 98. DOM GARNETT



# CARP TACKLE ONLINE

## NEW PRODUCTS, BEST SELLERS AND DEALS

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See us on Facebook



Team member Scott Johnson has bagged this banging ghosty! And he is on a roll.

The big ghosty 36.6lb  
"Truly special fish to me, and it's the one everyone wants, though wrong time of year for the best weight as the its previous captures sees it knocking on 40lb door. But Buzzing with the results, That makes 19 runs and 19 fish landed from that lake in 6 nights, considering last year all i done was nothing but lose the good fish and have a nightmare, it's nice now to be finally be rewarded.

Fished two nights had 3 carp, one photo I haven't included as it was a poor night shot, using soild bags, Scorpion Wide Gapes, and the CTO Tungsten Kickers blow back."

Well done Scott!

Another lovely session up at Monk's Pit for team member John Paul McCusker. 4 fish, the biggest one's going 31 mirror and 32.10 common. And then went to a lake in the Cotswolds and had a mirror of 30lb 4oz and a common of 32lb John said all fish were caught over big beds of boilie / pellet  
Using #carponline Scorpion ready made ronnies and Lead clips doing the business  
Well done John



### NEW TEAM MEMBER

Another talented youngster joined our team lineup. Jayden Ash from Hertfordshire.  
"I'm 16, I fish Fairlands and Henlow at this time have only recently been getting into carp fishing for 4 months or so, any help is highly appreciated."  
Welcome to the team Jayden.



Regular customer Christopher Morrell has bagged his self a real stunner in the shape of this Linea using our size 4 Scorpion Curved hooks in a Slip D style. Well done

# CARP TACKLE ONLINE

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SELLERS AND DEALS

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Tungsten Putty



Shrink Tube



Hair Stops



Hook Beads



Scorpion Ronnie Rigs



Composite Leadclip



Choddy Crank Hook



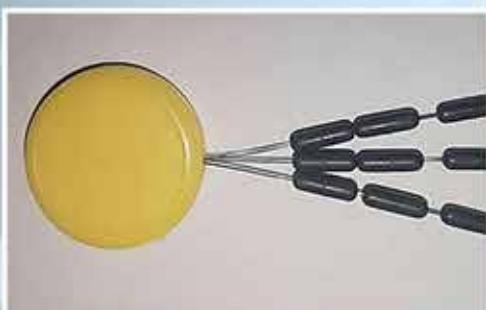
Aligners



Tungsten Aligners



Swivel Deal



Tungsten Hooklink Sinker



Chod Filament



Swivels



Scorpion Chod Hook

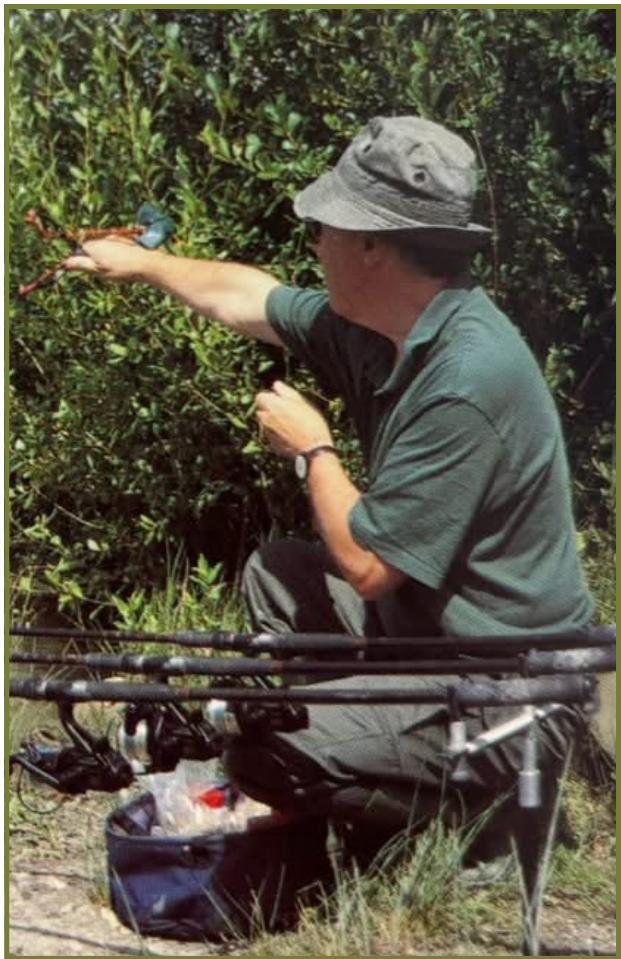
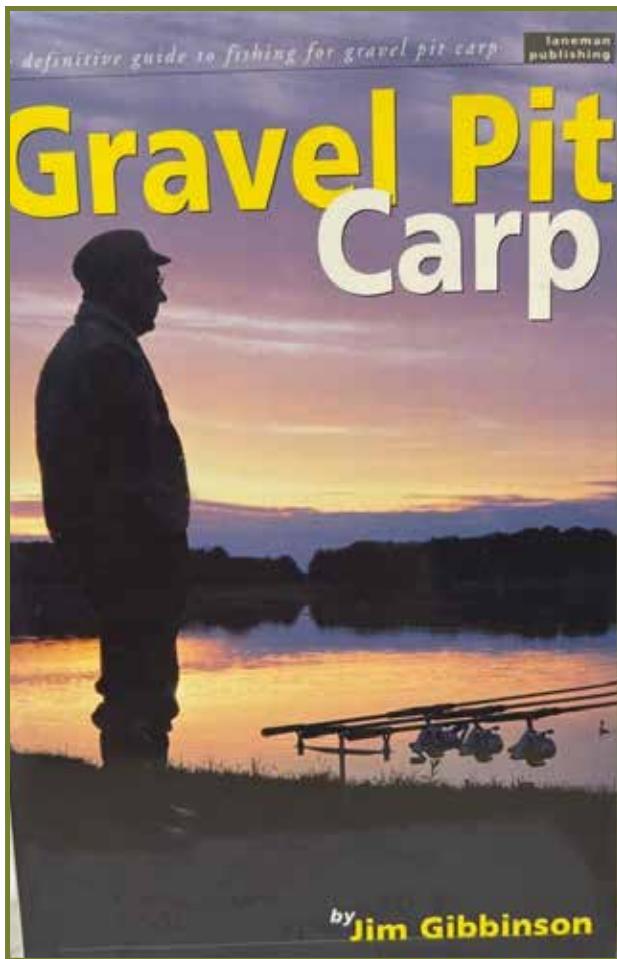


Scorpion Crank Hook



Scorpion Snag Hook

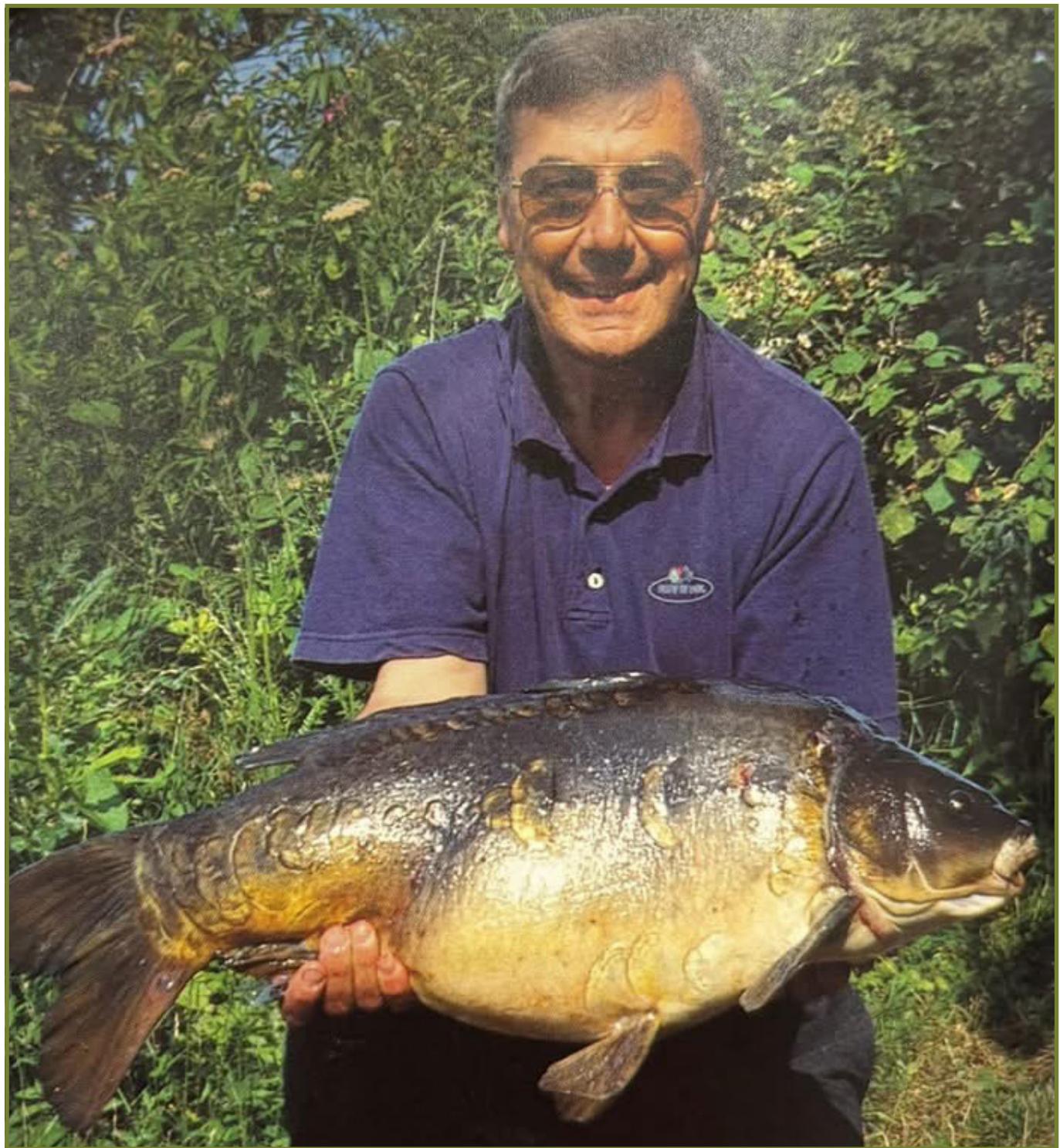
# RIP JIM GIBBINSON



I was sad to hear today of the passing of one of carp fishing's elder statesmen, Jim Gibbinson.

In late 1967, I became a member of The South East Essex Specimen Group and Jim was their chairman. I got to know him a little and shared his company at his home near Rochford and on a lake at Boreham, Essex.

I had always enjoyed his writings, particularly these articles he did for the now defunct monthly angling magazine, 'Angler's World'.



Have a read, they should make you smile, although they are very much of their time.

He was a very good writer and confident communicator; he will be sadly missed. My condolences to his family and friends.

Dave Woods

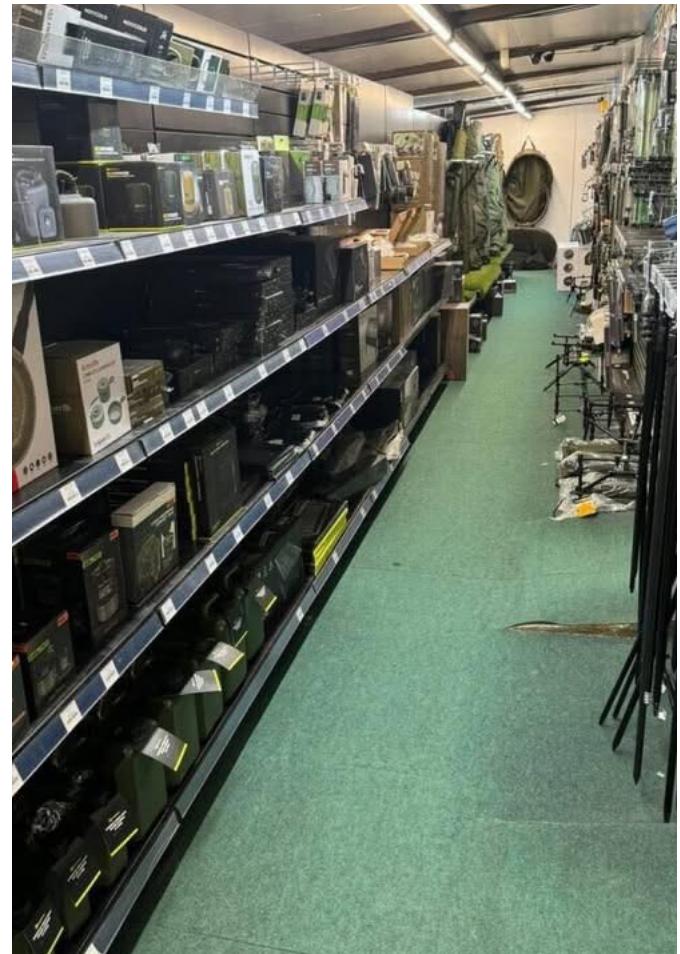
# KENT TACKLE UP FOR SALE



After 17+ years of owning and running the shop, I've decided it's time to pass it on. This is a well-established and profitable business with a loyal customer base and a strong local reputation.

I've simply lost the passion for the retail side as my focus has shifted to my other businesses — but this is a fantastic opportunity for the right person. The new owner can continue running the shop as it is and still enjoy a healthy profit, or take it to the next level with fresh ideas and energy.

There's huge potential for growth, especially for someone



looking to expand the e-commerce side, which has only ever been lightly focused on. With a solid foundation, recognised brand, and loyal following, it's ready for someone to push the business even further.

Ideally, the buyer will be a keen angler who understands the trade and wants to build on what's already working well.

If the business doesn't sell, I'll be appointing a full-time manager next year and continuing to run it as normal — so there's no rush, but I'd love to see it go to someone who can give it the attention it deserves.

**Leasehold business - £270,000 (includes all stock, fixtures & fittings)**

For more information or serious enquiries, please message the page or email: [info@kenttackle.com](mailto:info@kenttackle.com)

# TEAM MEMBERS FOR SNAG TACKLE REQUIRED



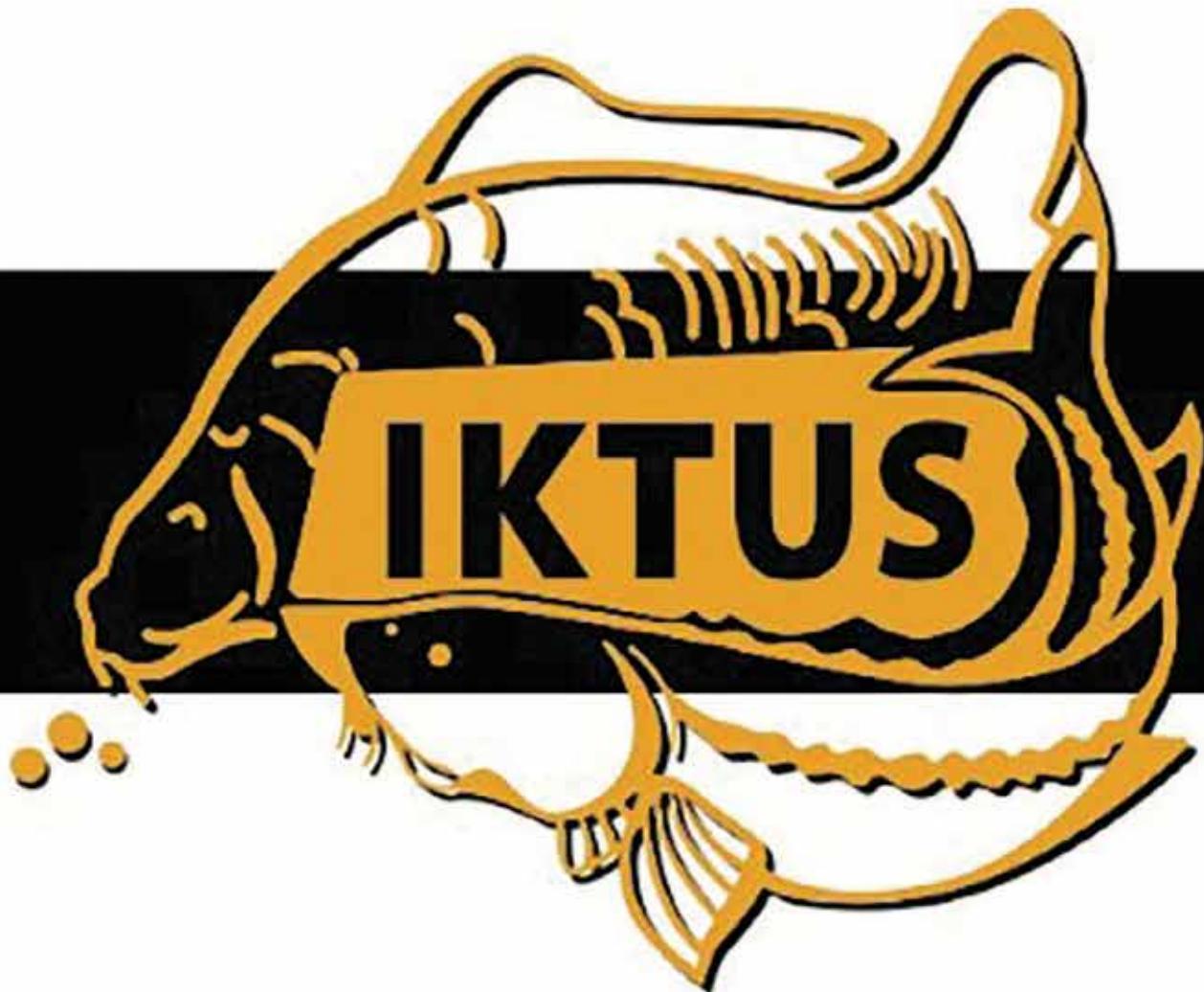
**SNAG TACKLE**  
JOIN THE TEAM

Are you a keen angler that enjoys using our products? Take the next step in your angling and join a team focused on helping each other grow and improve.

MESSAGE US ON OUR  
SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES



[WWW.SNAGTACKLE.CO.UK](http://WWW.SNAGTACKLE.CO.UK)



# FISHING RESORT



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

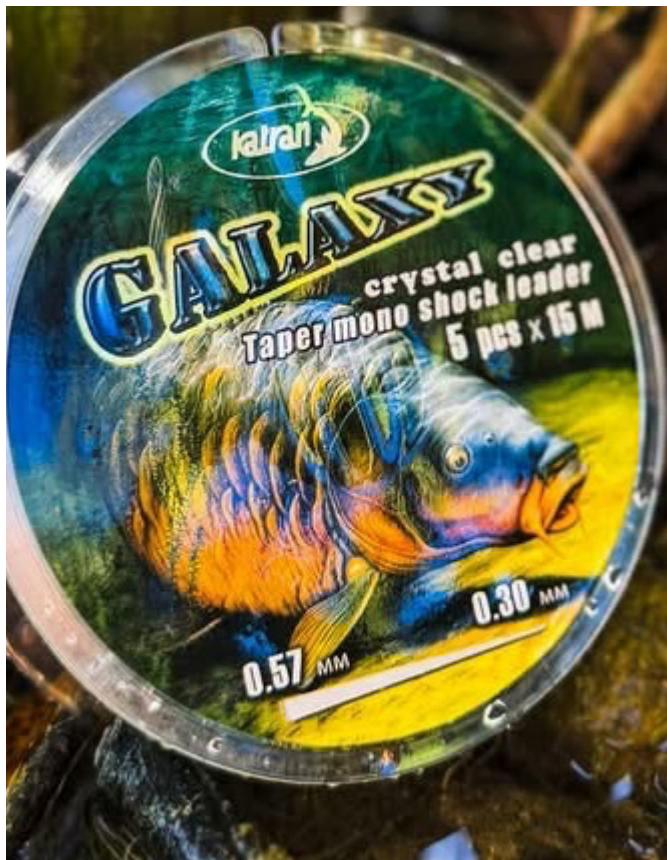
# FISHABIL CHALLENGE 2025



## FISHABIL CHALLENGE 2025

POS	TEAM	SWIM	CARP	CATFISH	STURGEON	TOTAL	TOTAL KG
1	PRO-ELITE BAITS	6	43	3		46	529.89
2	ET GIRONDIN	16	24	3		27	336.85
3	ALAN COUVERT	31	15	4		19	220.92
4	BANK TRAMPS	28	15	1		16	173.95
5	ADDICTIV BAITS	34	9		2	11	134.07
6	BURTURLEY	7		4		4	75.56
7	TIM PAUL	9	1	7		8	67.37
8	THE BLANKER	18	2	3		5	66.62
9	CASTING COUCH	17		2		2	40.44
10	NORTHERN BOYS	33	2			2	22.89
11	ESSEX BOYS	37		1		1	17.23

# KATRAN SEEKS CONTENT CREATOR TO JOIN ITS TEAM



We're on the look out for a talented angler and media creator to join the Rig Locker team in 2026 to promote Katran products.

The position will be fully funded by me personally, so no discounts but you will receive an annual allowance. On top of your allowance, you will be given all new and test products for free.

You'll need to be good at what you do, so high-quality media, both stills and video and be active on the bank for no less than 10 months a year.

I'll be personally looking after you in the main part but you will be very much part of an excellent team. If you are interested then please email: [theriglocker@gmail.com](mailto:theriglocker@gmail.com)

Subject - Media team member application.

Some demonstrations of your camera skills and angling skills are essential in the application.

Worth noting is, you'll need to fit as a person as well as a media creator and angler. The team is a very tight one and we won't risk upsetting that.

# MORTIMER AND WHITEHOUSE TAKE ON THE EBRO CARP



Don't miss Mortimer & Whitehouse: Gone Christmas Fishing this Christmas Eve on the BBC. Bob and Paul head to sunny Cahors in France, fishing for Mediterranean bass and huge carp while reflecting on the past year and what's ahead. With an old chateau, a vineyard, and a surprise-filled awards ceremony, it's a perfect way to end the day.

# EA AND AT BAILIFFS ON PATROL



Angling trust Voluntary Bailiffs give up their free time to help the work of our Fisheries Enforcement Support Service, supporting the Environment Agency's Fisheries Enforcement Officers and rural police teams in their duties.

Patrols across Cheshire have been taking place covering the river Weaver and Trent, along with the Mersey canal and a number of angling club still waters. Clubs and fisheries love knowing their waters are being looked after, and many anglers are both surprised and pleased to see our teams walking the banks to prevent issues that affect clubs and anglers.

You can always help out by reporting anything suspicious to the EA 24-hour hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

Our enforcement work is funded by fishing licence income and delivered in partnership with the Environment Agency.

# CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF ANGLERS PARADISE



What a great weekend it was...literally Fun...Fishing and Friends! The party went down a storm, our Chef Paul Casey did a great job with the food, Emma Knight did us proud with her live performance of beautiful acoustic music ☺ to start the night, great live music in the bar and then one hell of a disco!! People danced, got merry and most importantly enjoyed celebrating 40 years of Anglers Paradise!

It was lovely to have special friends attend in the likes of Mark and Judith Pitchers, Dean Macey, Daryl Hodges and Ian Jones from Dynamite, the GoCatch Team, Bob Roberts & Sue, Bill and Virginia Rushmer and of course all our amazing guests that joined us for the party of the year!!

Thank you to all that joined us in making it a weekend to remember..



**Fine quality fishing tackle  
since 1857**

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**EAGLE CLAW**  
**LAZER SHARP**

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# **RESULTS OF THE 25th WORLD CARP ANGLING CHAMPIONSHIPS 2025 CROATIA**



KEV Hewitt reported in saying, "It was never going to be easy. We saw the lake for the very first time 4 hours before the match started.

We entered our pegs with a plan, it evolved. All three swims were very different

and required a totally different tactic and skill set. Some things worked, some didn't, we figured it out as we went along, we read the situation in every peg, we adapted, that's what we do, that is our strength.

We would like to thank everyone for their support and following. We hope we done our nation proud.

We didn't win, well done Moldova.

2nd place is not winning but it is progression.

We will fight again next year in Macedonia where we will give everything to deliver Gold for our country

We rise as one, we fall as one.

We are CARP Team England"



## THE METROPOLITAN POLICE ANGLING SOCIETY (MPAS)

*Is a welcoming community of serving and retired officers and all blue light employees who share a passion for fishing. Whether you're a seasoned angler or a complete beginner, we offer the perfect opportunity to relax, unwind, and enjoy time on the bank with like-minded colleagues.*



## JOIN NOW

*New Members Welcome!*



*We're currently looking to grow our membership and would love to hear from you. Whether it's coarse, carp, Match, or fly fishing – there's something for everyone. We are always looking for new members please email the membership secretary for more enquiries - [MPASMEMBERSHIP@GMAIL.COM](mailto:MPASMEMBERSHIP@GMAIL.COM)*



# FANCY BEING STICKY BAITS VIDEOGRAPHER?



**WE'RE HIRING**  
VIDEOGRAPHER & VIDEO EDITOR

We're Hiring – Videographer our story, and bring our brand & Video Editor. We are looking to life across social media, for a creative filmmaker with YouTube, and beyond. Think an eye for detail and a passion you've got what it takes? Hit for storytelling. From the the link below for more info bankside to the edit suite, and how to apply <https://you'll capture the action, tell uk.indeed.com>

# ORBIT BAITS TEAM MEMBERS REQUIRED

As a small, innovative bait company that prides itself on crafting premium, high-performance products, we don't have the massive marketing budgets of the big names — instead, we rely on real anglers who live and breathe carp fishing to help us spread the word and represent Orbit Baits to the highest standard.

We're now on the lookout for fresh talent — anglers who share our passion, dedication, and drive to keep pushing boundaries. Here's what we're looking for:

Strong experience in the UK carp scene.

- Actively fishing and producing consistent results.
- Able to capture high-quality images of catches and products.
- Confident and active on social media,
- Professional, respectful, and passionate about promoting quality bait.

If that sounds like you and you'd like to join the Orbit baits team then drop us a message on face book with:

- A bit about yourself and your fishing background.
- The waters you fish and how often you're out.
- A few recent catch shots.
- We'll review every message carefully and get back to those who stand out.

Explore our full range of baits here:

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

We don't just roll bait — we engineer it.



Attention - parents of SEN teenagers. Underdog Crew, has just been honoured with the 'BBC Make A Difference Awards' in the Community Champion category.

FROM NEXT SPRING, selected groups of sixteen SEN (Special Educational Needs) teenagers will be given the chance to reset, reconnect and rebuild confidence during the #ucscarpcamp - a fully-catered, two-night residential escape at a stunning Essex VENUE TBC with log cabin accommodation, serious cool factor and the chance to catch HUGE 30lb+ carp!

Nature immersion

Digital detox

Empowerment workshops

Certified angling tutors      Special guests

Team-building & creativity

Fishing competition – the biggest carp wins the title

Weekend camps cost £150 per child (14+).

\*\* Families who cannot afford these breaks can apply for sponsored bursaries!

For more information please visit: <https://www.underdogcrew.org/carp-camp-retreat>



## Bluebell Lakes Gift Vouchers



Demoninations available in  
**£10, £25, £50, £75, £100, £250, £500**

Head to our website to purchase  
your Gift Voucher:  
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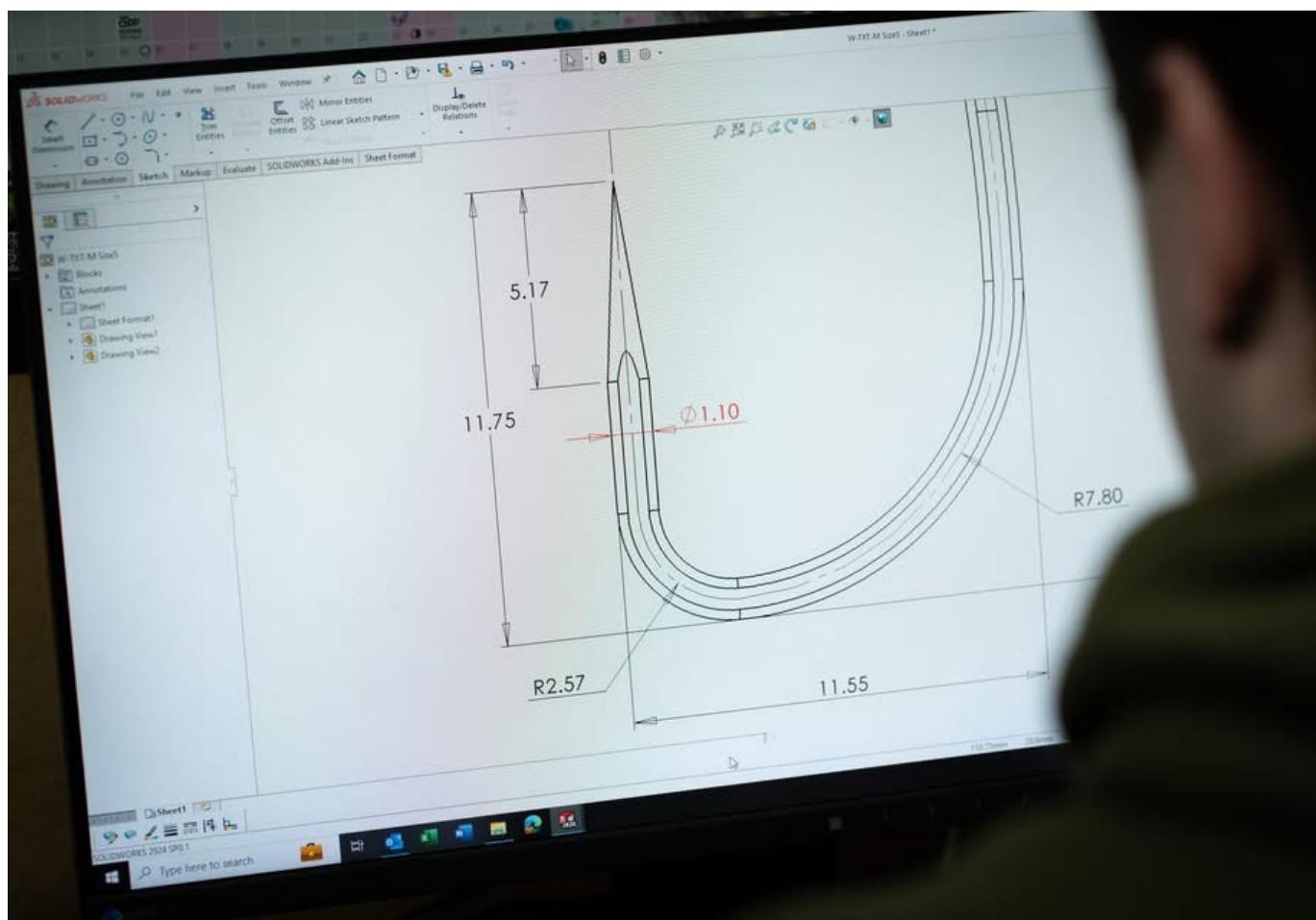
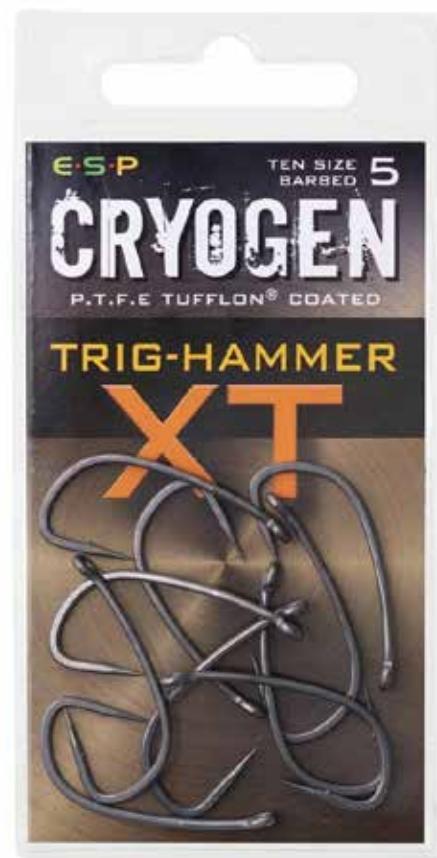
# ESP TRIG HAMMER XT HOOKS

Level Up Your Hook Game with the ESP Trig Hammer XT! Built for anglers who don't compromise, the Trig Hammer XT hooks deliver next-level strength, retaining the sharpness of the original, giving reliability on every take.

- Extra-tough long shank design
- Ultra-sharp needle points for solid hook holds
- Heavy-gauge wire with twin-tempered forging for max strength
- Aggressive shape and in-turned eye for perfect alignment

Perfect for Ronnie rigs, spinner rigs, and bottom bait setups—especially when you're targeting big carp or fishing demanding conditions.

- [www.esp-carpgear.com](http://www.esp-carpgear.com)
- RRP: £4.95



# EVOLVE TACKLE HELI-BEAD SYSTEM



The Evolve Leader Heli Bead System is for use with helicopter and chod rigs on leaders. For use with leadcore and similar diameter leaders

Three bead release fittings, so bead release can be tuned to the size of weight being used and angling situation

Long tapered base for smooth flow of the swivel over the sleeve

Tapered top to encourage the swivel pass back over the sleeve

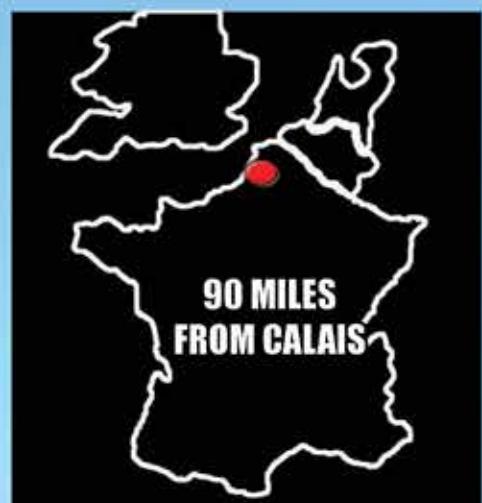
Sleeves moulded in the Evolve translucent 'dark camo' colour for enhanced rig concealment

Beads moulded in tungsten rubber

RRP: £4.99

# Experience the big carp venue in northern France

Only 1 hr 1/2  
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Restaurant

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

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- 6 lakes - 60 acres
- 24 tons of carp
- Restaurant / Bar
- Wifi - Elect on swim
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When temperatures start to drop, the Nutty Bait comes into its own! The Nutty Bait range has been a firm favourite for the past couple of years since its release accounting for numerous big hits and special captures at both home and abroad.

Suitable all year round but especially good in colder waters. A very digestible food source. Bird seed based boilie with a blend of three real nut ingredients and feeding stimulants.

- 12mm, 15mm and 18mm shelf and freezer available.
- Flouro Yellow and Pink Pop Ups in 12mm and 15mm available.
- Matching Food Bait 15mm Wafers available.
- Matching Food Bait Pop Ups in 15mm available.
- Matching Liquid Food available.
- RRP from £10.99 / kg
- [www.rodhutchinson.co.uk](http://www.rodhutchinson.co.uk)

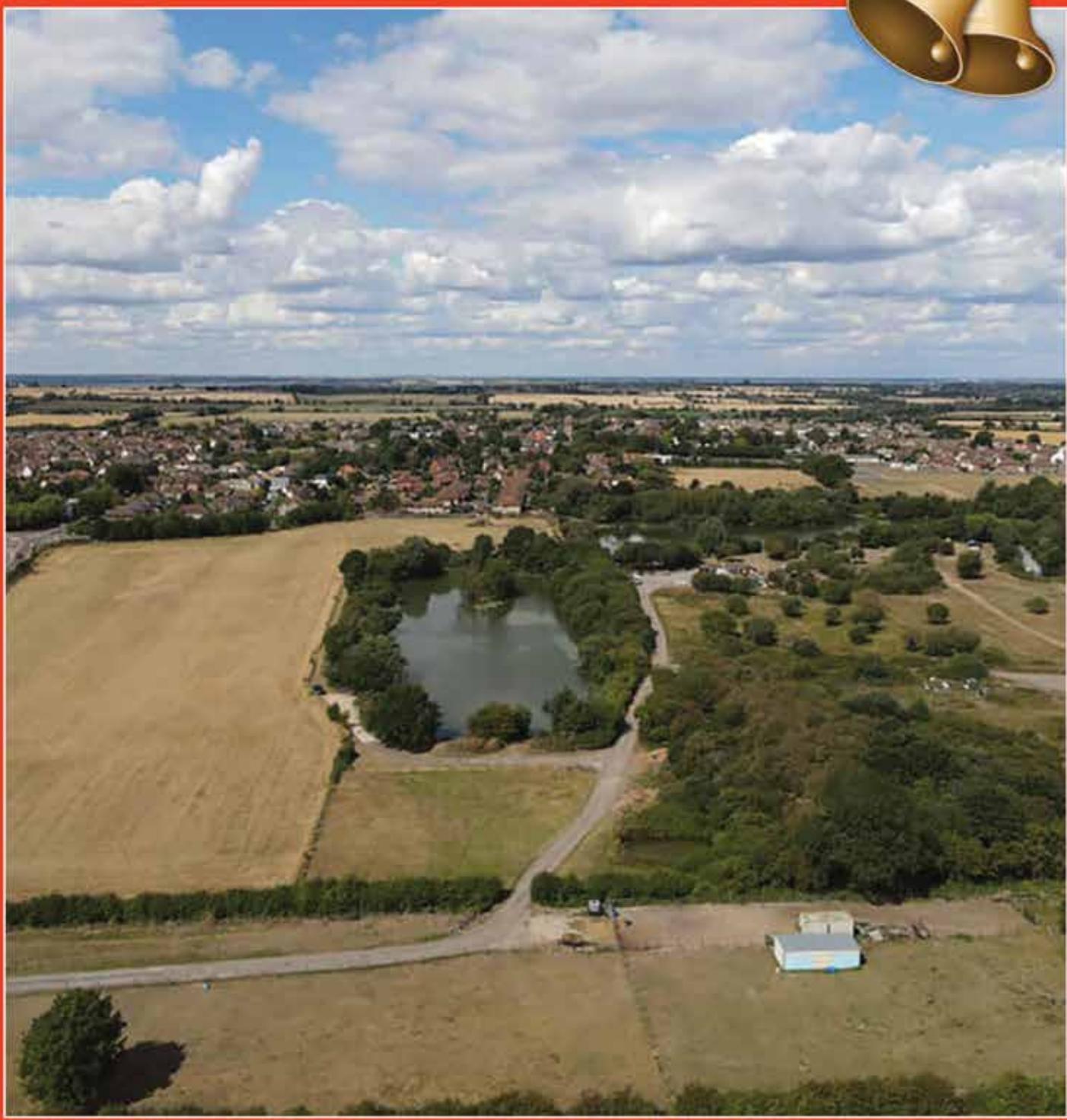


**SNAG**

JOIN TH

# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



A Merry Christmas from all at Oak Lakes Fishery

A huge thank you to all our valued customers

Looking forward to great times in 2026  
and to seeing you all again



# MILITARY AND ADVENTURE WATCH BUYING GUIDE: HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR PERFECT TIMEPIECE

## HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR MILITARY OR ADVENTURE WATCH: 4-STEP SELECTION FRAMEWORK

Choosing the right military or adventure watch depends on four critical factors: your operational environment, required durability level, power preferences, and budget range. Whether you're military personnel, emergency services, or serious outdoor enthusiasts, this framework ensures you select a timepiece that won't fail when it matters most.

**Step 1:** Define Your Environment - Arctic, desert, maritime, or jungle conditions each demand different specifications. Water resistance needs range from 100m (general use) to 300m (professional diving).

**Step 2:** Assess Durability Requirements - Combat operations need maximum shock resistance, whilst adventure activities may prioritise weight savings with advanced materials like reinforced polycarbonate.

**Step 3:** Choose Your Power Source - Swiss quartz offers extreme accuracy with long battery life, whilst automatic movements eliminate battery dependency for extended deployments.

**Step 4:** Match Features to Mission - Covert operations benefit from subtle illumination, emergency response requires maximum visibility, and professional diving demands ceramic bezels and 300m+ ratings, genuine military specification watches with advanced tritium technology at fair pricing.

## WHAT SEPARATES REAL MILITARY WATCHES FROM FASHION COPIES

A genuine military or adventure watch isn't about camouflage patterns or aggressive styling. It's about engineering that functions when everything else fails. Since 2003, Nite Watches has built timepieces meeting the standards required by professionals who can't afford equipment failure.

The MX10 field watch demonstrates authentic military credentials. This watch was supplied to UK Special Forces, including the SAS. Not for marketing purposes, but because it performed when other equipment didn't. That's the fundamental difference between watches with military styling and those actually built for operational use.



HAWK CANYON ON WEBBING STRAP

Real military and adventure watches must demonstrate specific capabilities: shock resistance surviving weapons discharge, magnetic field immunity near electronic equipment, temperature tolerance from Arctic to desert extremes, and accuracy under conditions that would stop civilian timepieces. NITE Watches recognised early that consistent visibility in low-light conditions could determine mission success or failure.

When equipment failure means operational compromise or personal danger, specifications become requirements rather than features. Testing protocols ensure reliable function throughout service life without letting users down when timing matters most.

## ADVANCED ILLUMINATION: BEYOND STANDARD GLOW PAINT

Professional illumination represents fundamental understanding of military operational requirements. NITE's tritium illumination technology provides constant

visibility exceeding 20 years without depending on external light sources. Essential for extended underground operations, maritime missions, or Arctic conditions where conventional systems fail completely.

Safety standards meet stringent military requirements, with systems contained within hermetically sealed tubes presenting no health risks during extended wear. Military equipment follows strict regulations ensuring personnel safety whilst maximising operational effectiveness.

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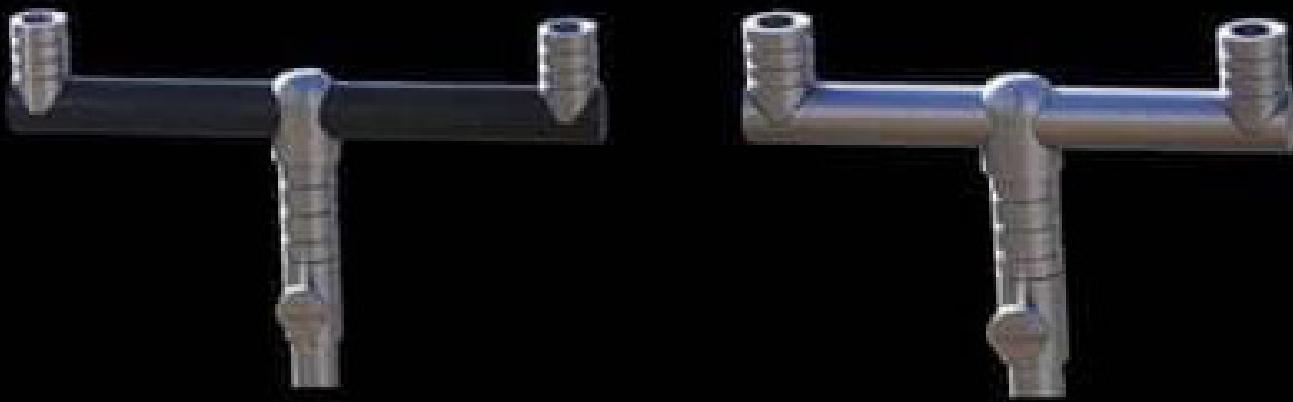
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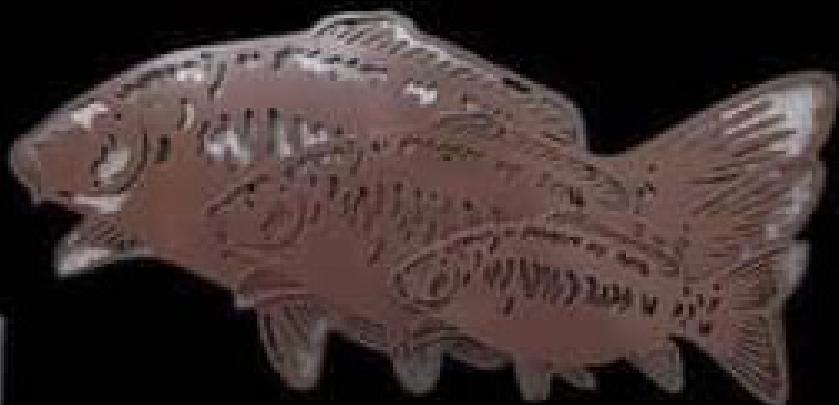
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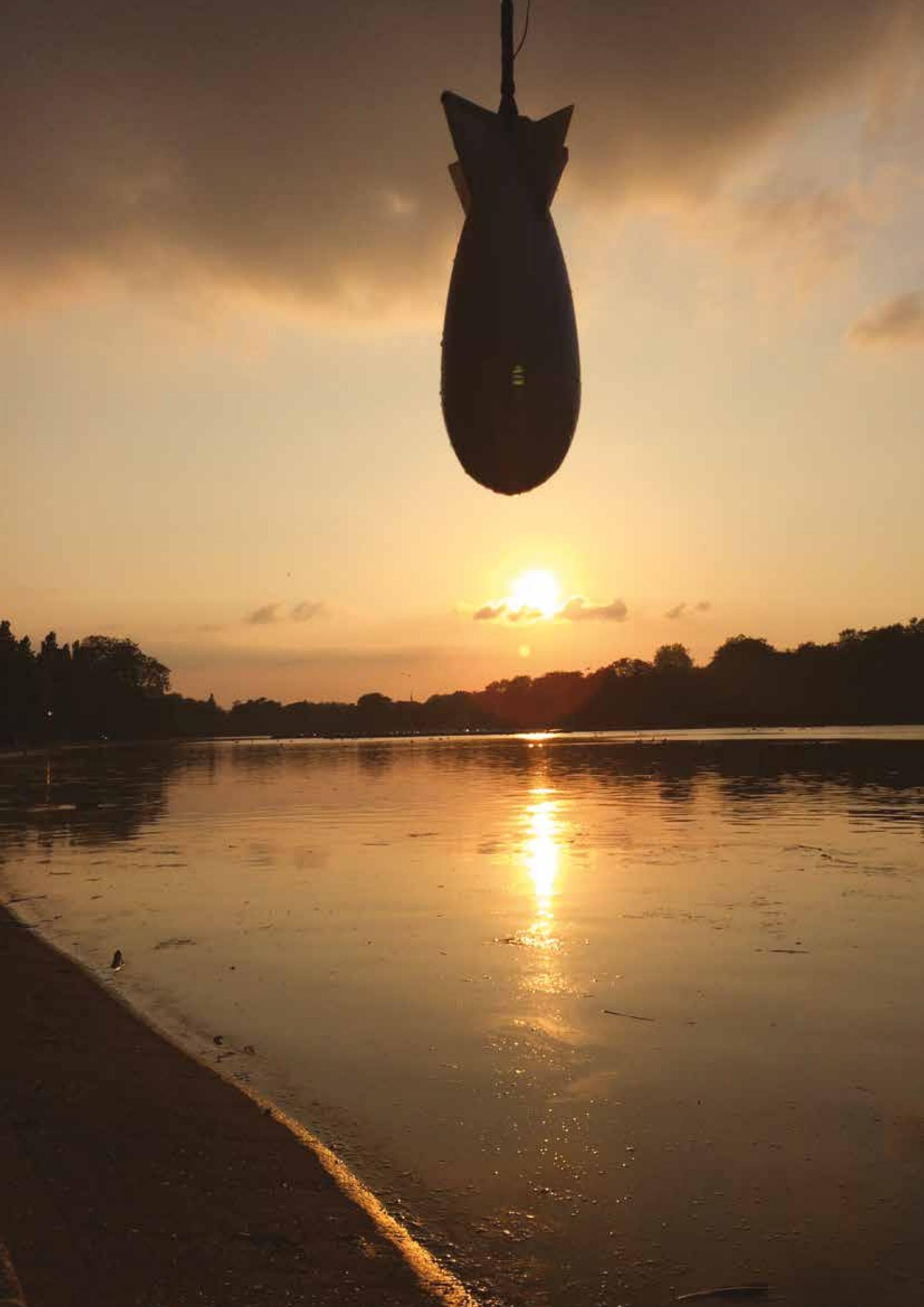


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# HIDDEN LONDON GEMS

Now for me, carp fishing has taken me all over Europe chasing unknown carp, and more than anything it's the unknown that I am really chasing. For me, carp fishing over the years has gone a kind of a different route for me in regard to people just chasing big fish in muddy puddles or just in general only fishing for big fish. For me, it's way beyond chasing big fish and worrying about catching the biggest fish in the lake. I'm not saying I don't like a big fish in amongst the bites, but what I am saying is they are all truly epic with their own little

stories to tell no matter the size. The day I worry about the size of the fish I'm catching is the day I will hang up my rods. I know truly inside that will never happen, and I will fish until I am longer be able to. I'm out here fishing for the unknown, and that's where I get my buzz and kicks. From urban dock waters, rivers, chalkstreams, drains, park lakes, dykes and anywhere I feel I can get that buzz from, I will try my luck at catching the unknown that lives in there.

This particular article will cover a story I will write from my side of the story, and my friend who I actually now call a really good friend will write his side to the story. You will embrace the magic that happens from fishing and sometimes, now and again, you meet a true angling friend on the bank, but it didn't seem that way at the beginning. Now this particular lake held some real gems, and I knew of a very small handful that had actually been caught in this lake. Many years ago I used to walk this lake when my little boy was first born, well over ten years ago now. We used to push him around in his pushchair while I went about my business, just enjoying the beautiful lake and looking at the many small commons I used to see swimming around in the edge.

I never knew much about the fishing rights here, but in general, and because of where this lake is actually located, I always thought that it would never be possible to actually even fish here. Even though the fish I used to see were very small, I always wanted to give it a go, but always just thought you'd never be allowed to. Over the years, you always seem to collect a log of so many places that you actually want to fish... well, I seem to, and I have thousands of places I want to visit, but over the years things just fade away and become a

distant memory until its jogged again and you remember you wanted to fish somewhere or wanted to at least check it out. That's exactly what happened to this lake; as my boy grew up and then my partner also gave birth to our little girl, this place became a bit of a distant memory, and I just forgot about going there.

That was until around about 2015 when a friend of mine was working just a stone's throw from the lake, and often used to walk around the lake in his lunch breaks. On one summer afternoon, I received a phone call from my friend, and he was telling me that he was walking the lake and seeing quite a few mid double sized fish in the edge. Now this brought back some memories, and I was telling him about the times I used to take



my son over there in the pram and always wanted to fish it. Now my friend and I, being the type of anglers we are, love the buzz of fishing the unknown and also the places we weren't meant to be. So this is where it all started for me.

Later in that week my friend had come around to mine later in the evening, and we went over to see if we could nick a cheeky quick bite. Now to be honest, it was so easy that we quickly became bored of the whole situation. We would just rock up after dark and catch many of small commons all in about the 6 to 7lb bracket, literally one after the other. We weren't getting that buzz from the place, so it became a little boring, and we thought we would get more of a buzz making it a cheeky baiting campaign off the radar to see if we could actually locate the bigger ones of a night. Things changed massively. My friend could no longer get the time we had planned, and I was also fishing other places at the time, so putting in the time and effort was going to be really hard.

One day a different friend who knew quite a bit about the lake told me it had thrown up some really old warriors, and this totally changed my mind. I went over one day to prebait and thought I'd just fish it for a few hours in the evening now and again. The whole time I've been going fishing there over the years, I was under the impression that I wasn't supposed to be there. Also I never saw a single angler or even a person who was interested in fishing altogether.

One afternoon I went over there on my bike with my trusty rucksack, armed with boilies and a catapult. I was kicked back amongst the bushes just slowly firing out a few boilies now and again, and I heard a voice say, "You fishing"? I stood up to see an older guy standing the other side of the fence. Straight



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away my guard was up, and my ever-faithful story that I always used was applied. "No, mate. I'm not fishing; I'm just feeding the fish. I see there are loads of fish in here, and I don't think they get fed much." He just laughed and said, "You've not seen the guy on YouTube fishing here?" to which I replied, "No."

He then explained about a few different people who fished there, and I was totally in shock. I honestly thought you could not fish here. He then told me how to get my hands on a permit for the new season, which was only a few months away. So now I was approaching this in a different fashion. I contacted the place for a permit and got myself all the info I needed for the new season.

June the 16<sup>th</sup> is a very special time indeed, as we don't all have a closed season liked we used to. I found out that the lake was actually split, and I could only fish one area and only one bank, but it didn't bother me at all because I knew that I had never actually seen another angler, so I wasn't bothered about pressure. I thought a baiting campaign early mornings a month before the start of the season would be my approach, and that's exactly what I did. I was travelling there in the early hours of the morning way before most people had even turned over once in their sleep. I was baiting up the extract same spot on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I did this for four weeks solid at the same time in the morning each time.

Now June the 16<sup>th</sup> was soon approaching, and I was very lucky indeed with timing. I was working for a bait company at the time three days a week, and luckily, June the 16<sup>th</sup> was landing on a Thursday, which was my day off, but I would have booked it off anyway. The excitement was filling up. I had to travel on the underground to this place, so I had to break my kit down

ready for the travelling. I made up a small kit, and on June the 16<sup>th</sup> at 5am I was outside the tube station with my kit ready to board the first train.

I hopped on the train and made my way to the lake, thinking the whole time that I'd got this massive great lake to myself that no one really knew about. As I was strolling along the path at 5.45am, I could see a brolly system set up about 40 yards away from where I'd been baiting up. I honestly thought I was just seeing things and being paranoid until I turned the corner and realised my eyes were playing no tricks on me.



There were two guys standing outside the brolly system with rods already in the drink, fishing. I was just shocked. I said, "Hello, lads," and I will never forget this deep Scouse accent in the middle of London.

"Hello, lad. What are you doing here?" I said, "Yeah, I'm fishing... I've been baiting a spot a little further down."

At first, I didn't really feel their warmth; I felt like I was fishing their lake and trespassing on their turf. To be fair, they had been there a few seasons without seeing anyone, as they were telling me, so I kind of understood why they had their backs up. I asked them if they had caught anything, as you do, and both were like, "Nah, mate," but in the corner of my eye, hanging over the railings was a wet sling. Good old carp anglers... I love them... different breed of human. Now me just being my friendly old self, I just said, "Well, good luck, lads" and trotted off down the bank to my spot.

I had already clipped up my rods the day before at home to the distance I was fishing. This is a style of my fishing - snatch and grab, I always like to call it. Whenever I bait spots or fish places I'm not supposed to be, everything is prepared at home even down to the distance I would be fishing. I'm always happy with one fish, leave and re-bait for another day. It's just my approach.

Now at this lake I couldn't really be standing there in the closed season with a marker rod feeling around on the bottom for features, as the place is bailiffed by the Metropolitan Police, and trying to explain to them that I'm not actually fishing during the closed season just isn't worth the hassle. So I knew the distance I would be fishing... I always use a golf scope laser, as I play golf as well, and I always use this trusty method so

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*By Rob Maylin and friends*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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I can clip my rods up at home. Shhh... don't tell anyone that little edge, but those golf scopes can be a trusty piece of kit for this style of fishing. The only thing I didn't know was what the bottom was going to be like, but a good old trusty choddy just had to be tied on, and I'd soon find out. I didn't even go to the worry of casting a bare lead over my spot first; I just thought, I'm going straight in with a chod, and that's exactly what I did.

I cast my two rods out onto the spot and scattered a small number of boilies around the hook baits. Bear in mind I had baited the previous morning. I sat back under a small tree to get some cover, as it had started to rain, and I put all my kit underneath the tree. The two boys were standing out in the rain laughing and joking, and I thought I'd go over and try to get to know them better. At first the Scouse guy who now I know as Danny was very friendly, but his mate Mark was a little cagey and didn't really talk much. Danny was very loud and just straight to the point. I like that in people, and it's probably why we are good friends to this day. Mark was very quiet at first, but as Danny was opening up with all sorts of stories, Mark was coming out of his shell and really cracking some sarcastic jokes, which was really funny.

It started to get heavy with rain, so I retreated under my tree, and as I was sitting there, I had a few bleeps on my right hand rod and then melt down. I was in on my first real session on the lake, literally within a couple of hours of being there. I picked up the rod, and straight away, I knew it was a good fish. It wasn't moving much and was just a plodding dead weight, ploughing through weed bed to weed bed. I know now I was literally fishing in a massive jungle of Canadian pondweed.

As I got the fish closer, Danny and Mark were now standing not far away and asked, "Do you need a hand?" I wasn't being funny; I just don't like to put people out and only ever ask for help if I really need it. By now the fish was out about 20 yards out on the surface in a massive chunk of weed, and Danny said, "Mate, that's a really good fish for here!"

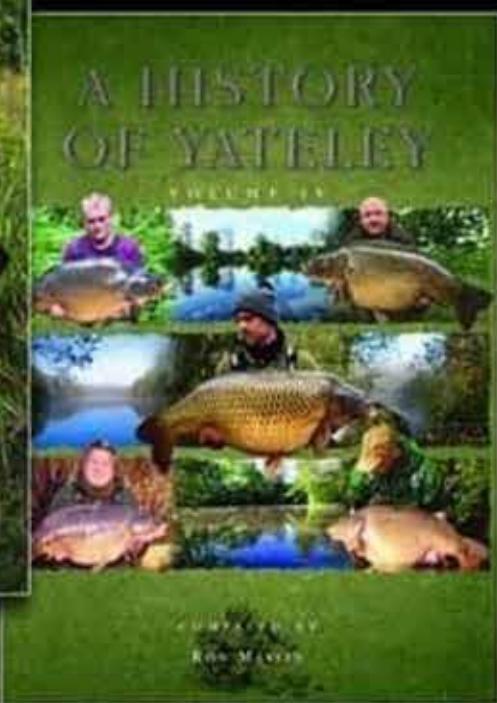
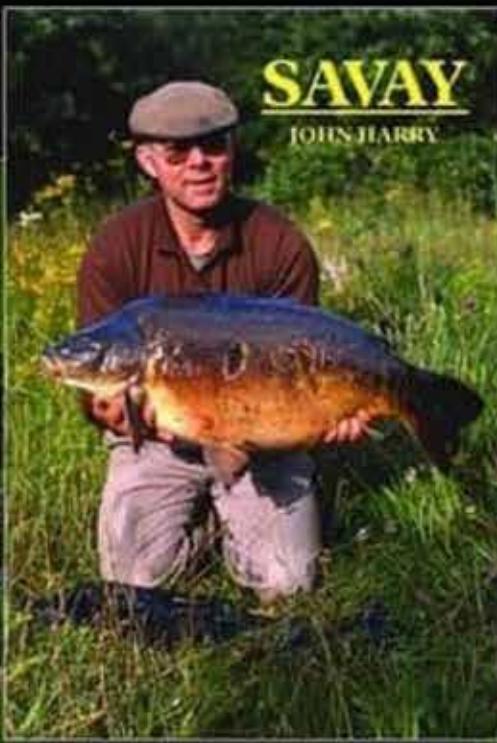
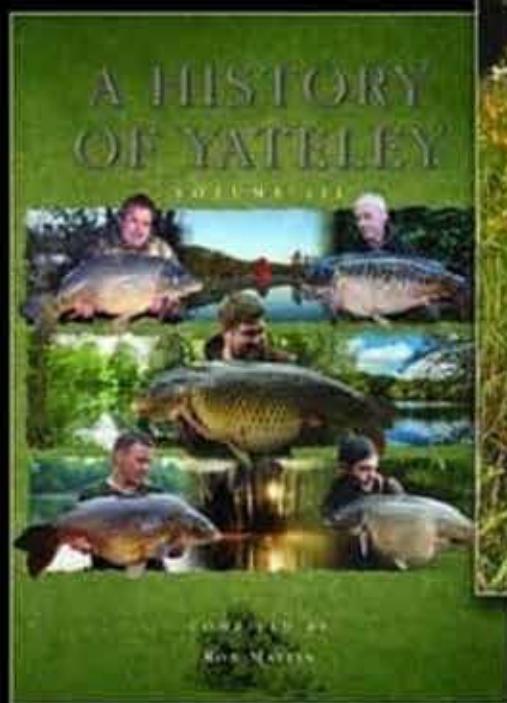
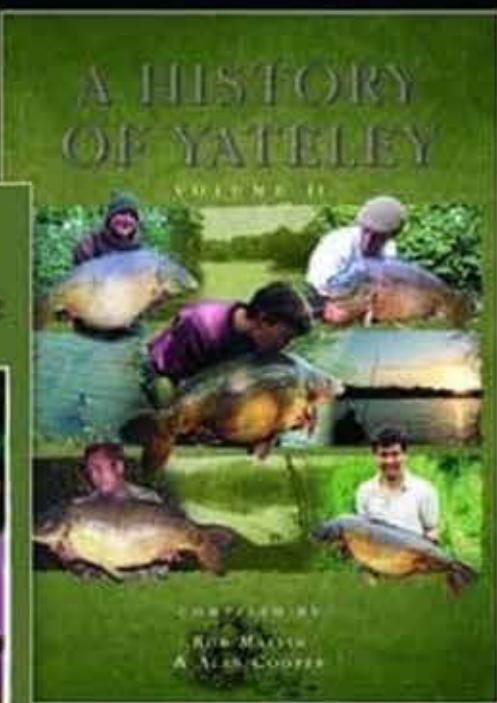
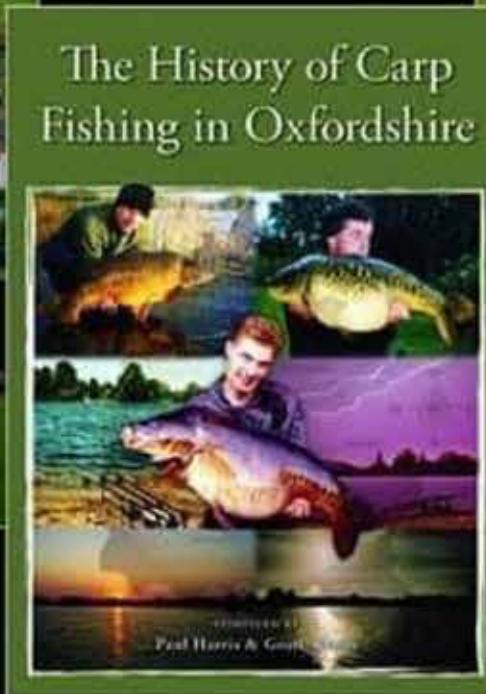
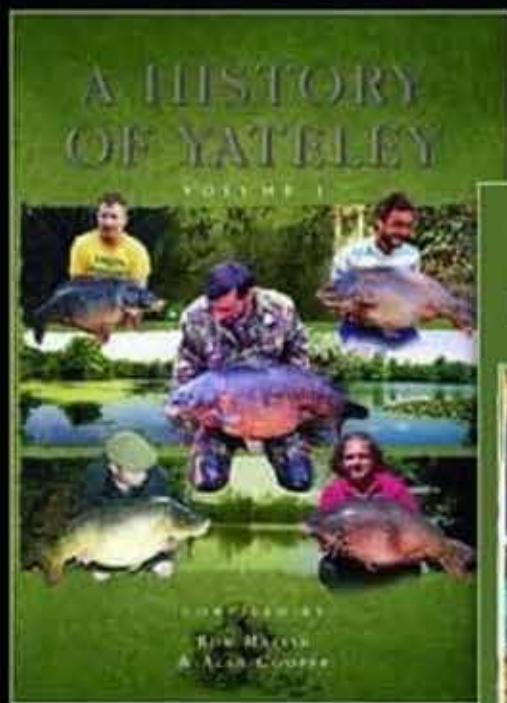
I had to strip off the trainers. Luckily I had shorts on, and I went out a little way into the lake to net this stunning fish. What a common and a true tale of the unknown. I'm pretty sure, and so were Danny and Mark, that this fish had probably never seen a hook in its life. It was a very special fish indeed,



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and a little mini crowd of tourists of all nationalities gathered while we did the pictures.

Now I can't thank Danny and Mark enough, as they really changed as people the moment that fish hit the back of my spreader block. They really helped out; they weighed the fish for me, took all the wonderful pictures, and really from this day on became very good friends.

The angler I am I was ready now to leave, but Danny and Mark made me stay a few more hours, and in this time, we really got to know each other, and we even made plans to come early hours the next morning. I didn't catch anything else that day, but Danny and Mark were having a few bites here and there.

The next morning I'm pretty sure Mark couldn't come, but Danny and I made plans to come over early hours. Danny told me how he gets around the parking situation, and that's what I went for, as getting the train every time would have been a complete nightmare. We arrived early hours the next morning, and after parking where Danny had showed me about, I loaded up the barrow and began the long, roughly one-mile walk from the car to the lake, sweating it out and then getting to the lake as the mist was just breaking off the surface and the sun was rising in the distance. These mornings were very special indeed, and sometimes it's these small things in carp fishing that the normal world don't always get to see that sculpture us as the anglers we are. It's not always about catching the fish but just being at the lake. There were even times when Danny and I would come just to photograph the amazing wildlife that's in the lake like a very special heron that Danny photographed that an elderly gentleman used to feed dead sprats to with chopsticks. It's these little pieces of the picture that make us





love going back.

Now Danny and I became really good friends over the next few weeks, but it was quite hard for us to get the correct time to be able to do the early morning socials together. We did manage a few though. I would rock up, and just by magic, like clockwork, I would nail a fish early mornings every time, and within a couple hours I was making my way home again. This is when Danny coined the phrase “doing a Bobby” for when I’d like to just turn up and nick a quick bite and leave within a few hours, as there’s basically nowhere where you can park; you’d have to keep moving your car every two hours and pay ridiculous parking prices per hour.



Now after catching quite a few of the fish and also getting to know Danny more and seeing his album of the fish, it made me want to fish the place even more, but it was just really hard going just to get a couple of hours every other day. Danny had done quite a few seasons there, and it's his real dedication and passion that shine through. There are anglers and there are people who fish – these are two different breeds of humans. Fishing is not something we do or as a hobby to pass the time; fishing is our lifestyle; fishing is our life.

I had quite a few really nice commons, but Danny on the other hand has had a few of the special mirrors that swim in the lake. When I say few, we are pretty sure Danny has caught

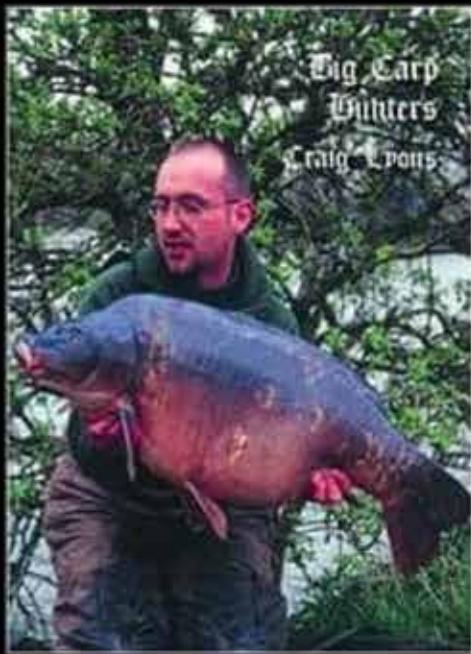
the only mirror and linear in the lake. There are no other ones. Now I got a little sidetracked from this lake, as I had another place I had now found that was much easier access and more comfortable. So sadly my fishing ended here as quickly as it had started, but I still do go over there to meet Danny now and again when he is doing the odd night session.

Just recently, knowing I was going to be writing this article has relit that little flame, and Danny and I are probably going to spend our winters fishing over here. But from this little trip, I have made a really good friend in Danny, and one that will be around for many years to come I'm pretty sure. For now, tight lines while I'm finding more adventures. I'm sorting my perch fishing stuff out for the winter. Stay safe and read Danny's side of things.

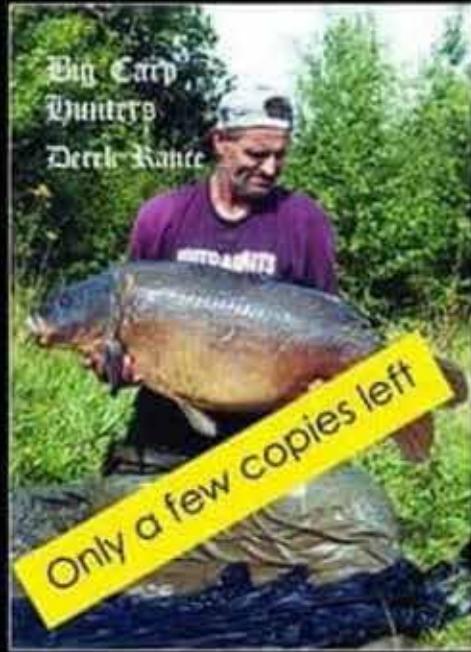
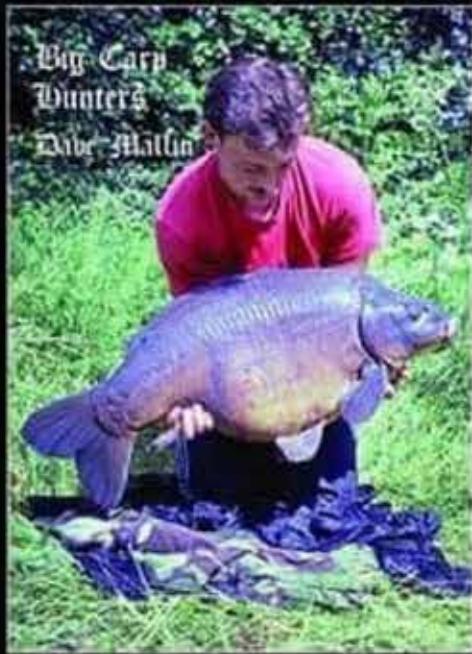
**Boating Lake By Dan:** I used to walk around this lake with my little lad Dan in his buggy, but I didn't really take much notice, as I was spending a lot of time on another water and couldn't really afford any distractions, as angling time is short for me. I work full time and have two kids; one of them, my daughter Bethany, lives up north, so we travel every other weekend to spend time with her. The fish I used to see were mainly small commons, and because of where it is, I didn't think you could even fish it.

Things changed for me one close season when talking to a guy. The big boating lake came into conversation, in particular a very large common that had supposedly been caught, but with no pictures, I took it with a pinch of salt. Well, one hot day in May, I hopped over the fence to look at a big dead tree in the edge, and to my amazement, I saw a group of fish completely different from what I had noticed before. One of them was

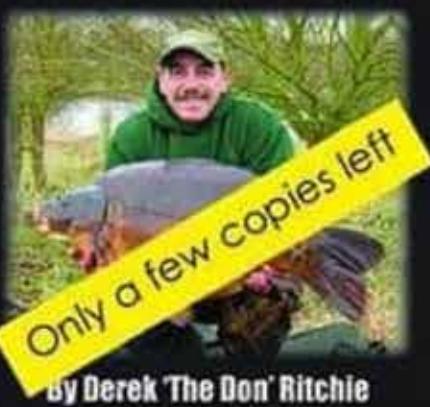
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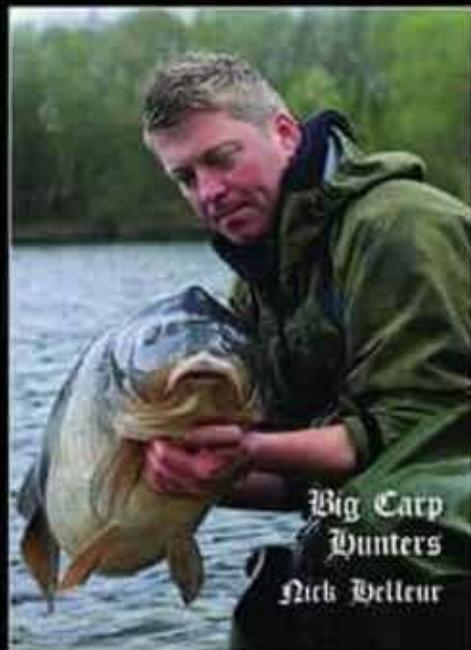


By Derek 'The Don' Ritchie

## THE DARKER SIDE OF CARP FISHING



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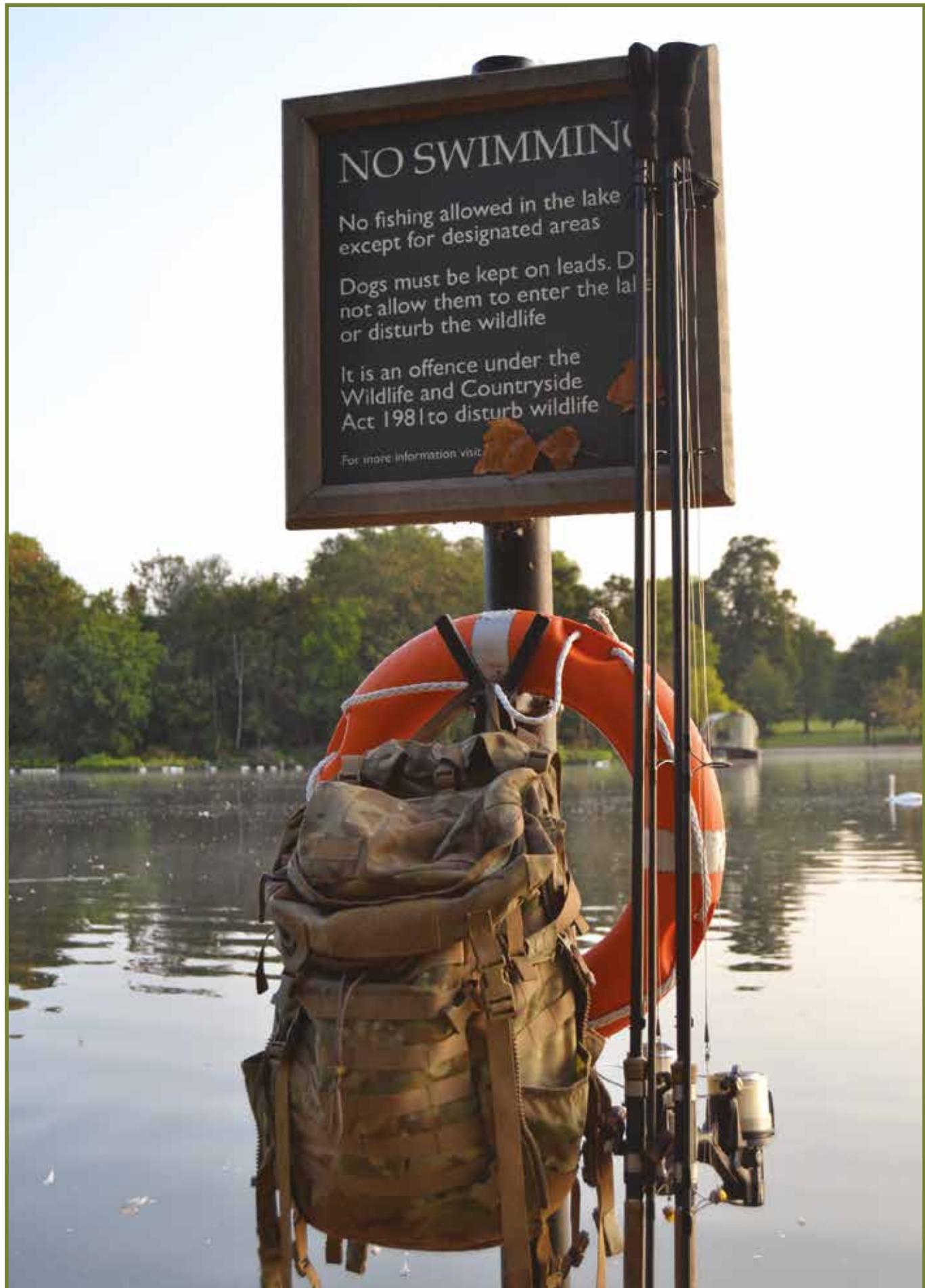




huge, clearly full of spawn with amazing colours to it. This had to be the big common I was told about. Absolutely buzzing, I said to my missus, "We need to go."

I had a big bucket of particle at home ready for a bait-up in Richmond, but that was swiftly brought back to the snag that evening, and we planned a picnic for the next day on a lawn just outside the fence with the snag. This way Leila could be sat there with my boy and give me a heads up of any unwanted attention. As I approached the baited spot, there were clearly fish feeding hard, as the silt was boiling and clouding, making it pretty hard to tell what was there. I really wanted to see this big common again; it didn't even cross my mind what else might be lurking. I hopped back over to sit with the family for a bit, hoping the silt would settle and give me a better view. This paid off because when I went for a second look, I could see a large fish. Expecting it to be the common, I kept watch having to duck into the nettles a couple of times to avoid the police cars. Leila would give me the heads up to hide. On looking closer, it wasn't the common, but something else a little special; it was a big, dark, stunning looking linear, and from the moment I saw this fish I wanted it – more so than the common.

As time passed, I started fishing the lake in the evenings after work. It was tiring and pretty hard going because of the nature of the lake, but I was consistently catching these special very rarely fished for old carp including some of the nicer commons. I actually had the linear feeding on my baited spot in the edge and photographed it for ten days on the bounce. I had to try and take advantage of this opportunity, as it was starting to cool off and she was very happy to feed on the spot.



Later that night, I went back with the gear and had a bite from hell. I could not stop this fish; it was mental. All I could do was hold on for dear life... Something was going to give, and it ended with me clamping right down as the fish went for a big snag on the opposite margin, and the hook opened up, which led to me losing the most powerful fish I had managed to hook from there. I didn't see the linear on my spot again for three months, and the length and power of that fish had made me wonder, had I lost the Big Lin?

The next season, I was back up there for my short evening sessions, hoping for another chance at that lin, but this time I was fishing the deeper open water areas of the lake. I baited catapult range heavily and was on the fish with one of them being a fish we went on to call the Black Mirror, another really





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special fish. Between all the fish we saw between fishing and walking, I came to the conclusion there really aren't many mirrors in there; in fact I have only seen three to this day.

The close-in spot was rocking, and one summer's evening, I stood there with a second rod in hand looking across the lake, wondering where to pub chuck it when the Big Lin came clean out of the water in front of me. "That's a bite," I thought, as I flicked the rod where she fizzed as she went back into the depths. I was certain when that rod went I would be in for a big battle, but this wasn't the case at first, as I got pestered by the bream, but she was about, so I had to stick with that spot. My god was I glad I carried on, as that bite from the Big Lin did come, and this really made my mind up that it was she



that I had lost the previous autumn. This fish is an animal - proper heart-in-mouth with the long runs towards the snags and powering through weed beds until she was mine. She looked incredible - big, scaly flanks and a real old warrior.

That summer, I went on to catch a lovely common that my mates Mark and Ray had both caught, so we called this chunky fish the Friendly Common between us. I fished right through the winter that year, only managing a small common in January up until the traditional close season in March. The lake is 40 acres, and fishing is restricted to one bank, which makes moving onto them at certain times impossible. You can't catch what's not in front of you. This now brings us up to a lot of prep work we went on to put in right through the close season with the common being my main focus now.

Throughout the close season, my mate Mark and I were getting to the big boating lake every other day to give it big hits of bait on an open water spot I had caught the lake's awesome Big Lin from the previous summer. Part of our big bait-ups in the open water had us flicking the GoPro over the spot every now and then out of curiosity to see how much of the bait was being eaten and how fast. On reviewing our footage over a beer by the side of the lake, we were shocked to see one of only three mirrors in the lake come in front of the camera feeding on the spot. You can even hear both our Spombs crashing above and watch the bait fall, but the unpressured fish didn't have a care in the world in the deep open water spot. That footage gave us a massive boost, and as June 16<sup>th</sup> fast approached, the spot was rocking, and the bait was completely gone by the next day. They definitely homed in on the sound of the baiting up.

June 15<sup>th</sup> came, and Mark made his way to my place with his

## BOBBY COOTE

kit and beer for a nice social, waiting for midnight signalling the start of the traditional season. We had met at Richmond Park and had decided to carry on our tradition of meeting for the season's start on the 16<sup>th</sup>. There is something a bit special about the old close season that not many anglers these days can appreciate. As midnight struck, we both flicked two rods each to our open water spot, expecting good things to happen. I should mention I had spent two seasons on the fishing bank and not seen another angler this end of the lake, so we were buzzing, knowing we would probably not see another angler and be able to get things going without the worry of someone following you into the swim.

Mark's rods signalled the first take of the season, and he managed to land a long upper double common, a lovely way to open his account. A few beers in, my rod went, and it was a



nice 20lb common. We had a good laugh that night and dozed off happy with our start. We both got up as it was getting light, and to our horror we could see another angler walking towards us with his kit. This was a bit of a shock, as we really weren't expecting to see anyone that early, and with fishing gear too...

The lad introduced himself and said he had been baiting early mornings for a while further down the bank. This was handy, as he had something going of his own, so we wouldn't clash with our angling, and with him being there early mornings that would explain why our paths hadn't crossed until now, as I was always at the lake in the evenings. The lad had not been there for long and he was into a good fish, a really good one for the lake. We went to give him a hand with the weighing and photographing of this quite special common that broke over the 30lb barrier and might never have been caught before. It wasn't one I recognised. There is something about a big carp that helps form long-term friendships, and this fish certainly did that. We were all buzzing that day for our new mate, Bobby. Within a couple of hours we went from 'who the fuck is this?' to seeing what time we were meeting the next morning for more laughs and stories.

We gave the spot another hit of bait, as it was reasonably quiet fish-wise. Mark and I managed a couple of fish through the day. We were going to sit the summer day out in the mega busy public access boating lake (not for the fainthearted) while Bobby was doing his favoured in-and-out approach doing early mornings. (We later went on to call it 'doing a Bobby', as this approach was working so well for him.

On June 17<sup>th</sup>, the spot was topped up and ready to go. Mark

had family commitments during the day, so he was going to follow me down later. Well, the spot went off that morning. Luckily Bobby was on hand to help each other out, as we were both on them big time in the morning. We had been getting bites consistently; the commons in there can be so different. Bob stopped me slipping one of the little'uns back, as he said it was too pretty not to get a picture, and he was right. Bobby was getting his share, so we were back and forth helping each other. One of his fish was another I didn't recognise, which was odd, as I had seen most of the stock in the water or on the bank at some point over the years. This fish was an ancient looking common with erratic scales, one I would love to catch one day. While all this was going on, I was urging Mark to hurry up and get back and constantly sending him pics of fish. He had spent so much time prepping with me, I didn't want him to miss out. His missus actually said to him, "What's wrong with your mate? Why does he keep calling?"

Bobby had his fill and left midmorning, both of us buzzing from a red-letter start to the season. It quietened off through the day a bit, and Mark was now on his way back to the lake. I can only imagine how badly he wanted to get his rods out after the day we'd had already. My rods signalled another bite, and after a hefty battle with a classic looking, long, deep common with a big over-slung mouth, I popped it in the sack for ten minutes to let the crowds move on and give it chance to recover and let Mark give me a hand. While sorting the fish, the other rod was away, and this fish really beat me up. It was powerful and dark, but it would not give up.

By now the crowds had reformed, and in the distance I could see Mark pushing the barrow. He knew something was up so

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socks this  
Christmas!

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The Darker Side of Carp Fishing

Old School Carping Volume 4

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In Pursuit of the Largest

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upped his pace and cleared me some space. As the fish went into the net, we recognised it as one that we called the Black Mirror. It was a fish Mark wanted to catch but a repeat for me. My pictures from my previous capture weren't great, so Mark did some proper ones for me. We also got some pics of the classic looking common before slipping them back. Mark got his rods out and managed one, as did I, and a big snotty bream, but the spot seemed to have quietened right off.

We carried on doing the odd evening after work, always catching something between us. As we went one evening, Mark had me curling up laughing... He had caught one of the known nice commons in the lake, the Friendly Common. The edge of the lake is like a bowl, and it gets covered in really slippery

weed. When Mark was releasing his capture, crouched down with the fish in front of him in the sling, I was close to him taking shots when the tips of his trainers made contact with the slippery weed. He looked at me as if to say, "Help, Dan," but instead of grabbing his shoulders and pulling him back, I laughed a lot and carried on taking pictures as it unfolded. I got some great shots, so it was worth it.

While we're talking about funny stories, here's one for Mark... I was at the lake feeling a little worse for wear in the stomach department. There is a bar with a toilet five minutes away that backs onto the lake, but there is no way you can leave your gear on its own. I was hiding from the sun, desperate for Mark to hurry up and get here so I could run the toilet. I was curled up in pain calling Mark, telling him to get a move on, when I couldn't wait any longer. I rummaged through the kit, got a spare bivvy peg, pulled the front of the brolly right down so no one could see in, squatted over a bucket and exploded. All of sudden the peg came free, the brolly sprung back up leaving me helpless trying to clean myself and pull it back down to hide me away from all the passersby and boaters, disgusted by what they had just seen. Funnily enough, Mark turned up five minutes later, laughing at me this time.

As the season went on, we started to see more anglers, and it was a little disheartening, as we couldn't always bait up or get back on our spot that had been so kind to us, so I took a more mobile approach until it cooled off and got a little quieter. Bobby was about, doing his early morning thing, so we carried on meeting up and doing laps of the lake, trying to spot the ones we wanted to tick off our list. Besides little Alfie's capture and my capture of the linear, I haven't heard of



it being caught before or after, but she is there, as I have seen her in the out of bounds. That's a special fish along with the big common; it's a uniquely coloured, amazing looking fish that I dearly want to hold one day.

With the lake getting a lot busier, it sort of lost its magic with me for a bit, especially as my Burghfield ticket came up that spring, and that place has to take priority, as I had a lot to





learn up there including how to walk round the place without getting lost. Burghfield is a mammoth task, and it's been mega hard going for me, but it's really started to come together now. It all just took a bit of time, and when Bobby asked me to help him with this piece, I sort of got the urge to get back up there. I can now balance my time at Burghfield with my longer weekend sessions and short, more local evening sessions on the boating lake chasing a very special common in each.

I have decided to bait one of my other spots I had fish from on the boating lake. You have a lot going against you up there: buoys with rusty metal chains all over steep rocky drop offs and copious amounts of boats ready to wipe your rods out every chance they get, so strong tackle is a must if you want to land these rarely fished for, hard-fighting fish. The lake is about 40 acres with only 300 yards of legal fishing bank,

which is possibly the ugliest part of the lake. It's always the case, but the out of bounds is gorgeous tree and reed lined margins to hold the fish, whereas down the fishing end, it's barren and bait, and plenty of it, is realistically the only way to hold the fish.

I have managed eight bites since going back, which I am pleased with in such a big bit of barren water. Fingers crossed, Bobby, this getting me back up there might lead to my capture of that common. It has been good catching up with Bobby, enjoying our old stories and thinking about future plans. This carp fishing game is mad; you really can meet some amazing lads that without angling our paths may never have crossed.





# URBAN LEGENDS: TALES OF WHISPERED MONSTERS

My passion for urban monsters was lit quite early in my life, way back in the days that I was still a young pup at junior school actually! There was a place that was about a ten-minute walk from my house that was an old hospital sanatorium. In the hospital grounds was a large, deep pool surrounded by woodland. Rumours told that the hospital used to use it to dispose of chemicals, medicines, waste and even the occasional dead patient! Well, as a kid you believed anything, and my imagination used to run wild with stories of monster fish

lurking in the deep, dark depths of the lake, mutating on the medicines and feeding on the flesh of humans! It was a scary place for a young Black Country lad!

One year the pool had filled with water so much that on one rain filled summer's day it broke free from its banks, and the rushing waters meandered straight into the side tributary that linked to the canal at the back of the pool. It wasn't long before stories made their way to my ears of unseen beasts that had escaped the depths of the sanatorium pool into the canal, smashing match anglers' tackle to pieces. I begged and begged my mum for weeks to take me down the local "cut", as to a poor Black Country eight-year-old, opportunities to catch such fish were virtually nonexistent.

Eventually one Sunday afternoon she reluctantly agreed, and we made our way down to the canal. I remember the walk to the canal as though it was yesterday. The excitement bubbling away inside me; I had never felt such excitement... well, except maybe for when Santa was due on Christmas Eve! We got to the canal, and I remember there being a few old guys fishing. I put down my wicker basket and began putting my old fibreglass rod together. It was a heavy old thing that was naturally bent with the weight of the actual rod. The reel was a lovely original Mitchell match reel bought for me one Christmas by my uncle Norman, and it was attached to the rod with two sliding metal rings.

I soon had a float on the line and tied a hook on with a six-turn blood knot that my uncle had showed me. I hooked on a piece of bread and flicked out the float, ever so gracefully, and watched in horror as my reel came away from the rod and landed in the oily waters of the canal! I burst into tears as

my reel disappeared into the depths of the cut. I pulled and pulled at the line but all that happened was more and more line got pulled from the reel, until I had a right old birds nest of Maxima next to me on the towpath. Mom didn't have a clue what to do, but luckily the old guy from up the towpath saw what was going on and came down to help. He had a Y shaped rod rest, and he proceeded to follow the line from the rod into the margins of the canal and managed to hook the bail arm of the reel and fish out the reel for me!

I was so happy! He smiled, and like some sort of magician, out of his pocket, he pulled out two pieces of bicycle inner tube and proceeded to slide them up the rod butt. He then attached my reel, sliding the inner tube over the reel, securing it firmly to the rods. He winked at me and said, "Ere you are, lad, you won't lose your reel anymore." And with that he handed me my rod and reel and made his way back to his blue plastic Shakespeare seat box.

I continued to fish... well, more like fly fish, as I spent more time reeling in and casting out than fishing. I must have looked more like a lure fisherman than a coarse fisherman... well, boy! The next thing I remember will live with me forever and was the catalyst to the fire that still burns strongly inside me to this day! "I'm in, Bob!" I heard, and as I looked up the towpath, there was the helpful old guy stood up, rod in hand with it bent double. My mum and I watched in awe as an amazing battle commenced. The unseen monster, on the other end of his line, tore off up and down the centre channel of the canal. If I close my eyes, I can still hear his screaming drag from his tortured old reel! The old guy held on for dear life, his rod creaking as it engaged in battle. Soon a big black back broke the surface

oil of the canal, and he quickly scooped his net around it.

I ran up the bank to see what he had caught, with mom calling after me, but I had to see it! He laid the monster on the grass next to the towpath and parted the mesh. He held her up for me, and her scales lit up beautifully in the afternoon sunshine. He smiled... “There you go, son. That’s what lives in here – a bloody big carp!” At that he returned her to her watery home, and little did he know that he had just started something within me that would live with me forever, and some 27 years later, that passion still burns away as brightly as it ever has.

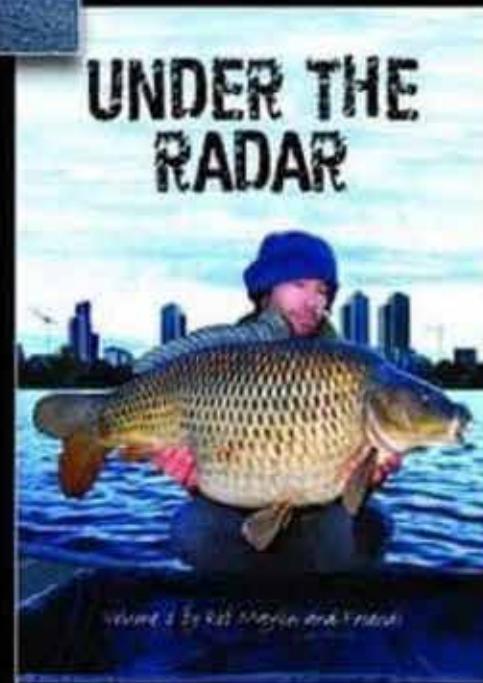
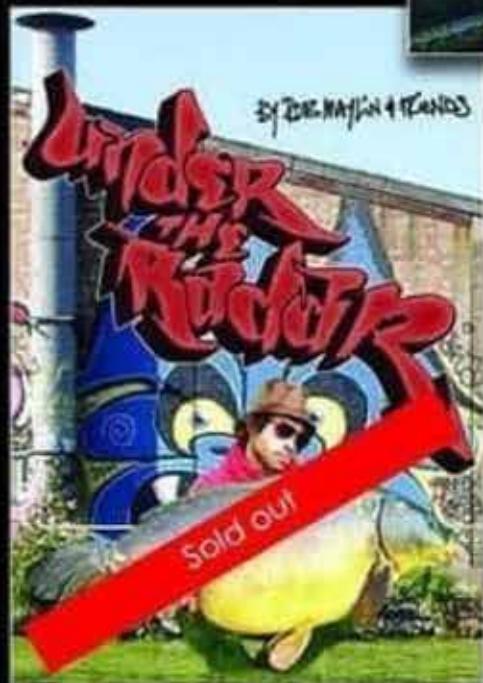
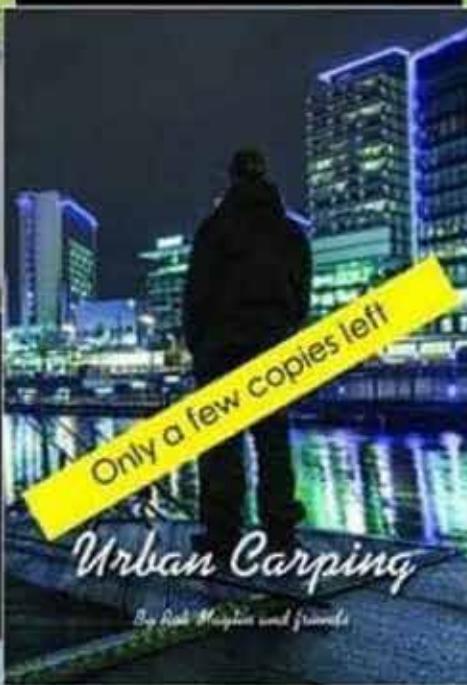
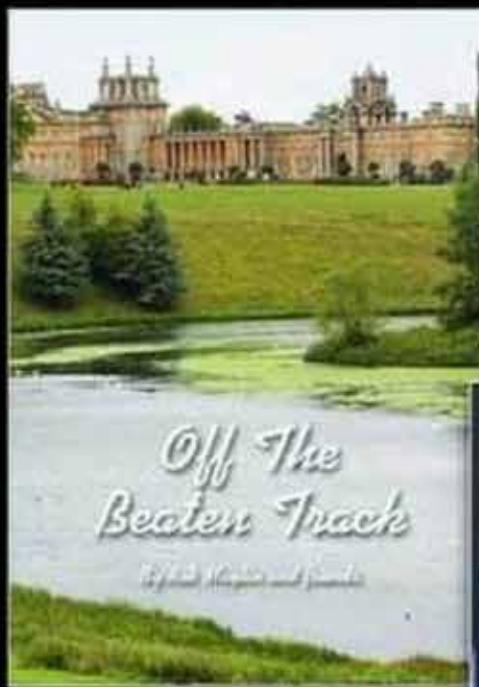
Ever since that day I have been fascinated with carp and carp fishing, but I have always had a soft spot for a bit of canal carping. I have walked many, many miles trying to catch these marauding urban legends, and every so often I get lucky and land an urban monster. Let me talk you through some of the more memorable moments from the “cut” and try to help you, the reader, catch your own urban legend!

**Doing Your Homework:** My first bit of advice I can give to anyone is to buy the angling weeklies, scour the Internet and walk the canals talking to the match guys. Look out for any information on carp catches or more so of big fish being lost. This will give you the heads up of stretches that contain carp. It is also worth sharing information with people, as they are more likely to disclose information to you if you help them with their current target.

A few years back I helped a young lad with fishing a large undisclosed gravel pit and disclosed a few secrets to him that helped him go on and catch his PB. In return he told me of a stretch of canal that contained fish in excess of 30lb and even sent me the photos to prove it! This information alone led me

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to catch my PB canal carp of 35lb 6oz! Now for the important bit... When you find a stretch that contains these monsters, you will need to do everything in your power to keep it to yourself. This includes where you have your trophy shot taken! It's amazing how many would-be detectives are out there, and they will blow up your images and look for any clue that will give the location of your capture away. I learned the hard way, and the location of my big common was soon discovered, as the next time I turned up, the banks were lined with Brotels and matching rods! It looked like a scene from Linear Fisheries, and when I spoke to the guys, they had noticed graffiti on the bridge and a blue covered fence. They knew roughly the area I was fishing, so had walked the towpath until they found the spot that matched the picture. Good angling, but I was gutted. Lesson learnt, I soon took the picture down off my Facebook page, but the horse had already bolted. Luckily I knew of several stretches that contained rather large carp, and I would never make that same mistake again. When fishing the canal I have made several observations that are worth noting and will aid you in your quest.

**Elusive Nomads:** Firstly, location... Canal carp are notoriously nomadic and can roam miles and miles of canal. However from my experience the fish will be in different places along the canal at different times of year. In winter look towards the marinas and areas of a high population of boats. Not any boats, but preferably boats that are lived on. These provide warmth, cover and regular food from the people that live on the boats.

Winter – A great tip in winter is to walk the canal when the weather is really cold, and I mean really cold. The canal should be frozen solid. Walk its banks and look for areas that are not

frozen, as this will give an indication of warmer water, and the carp will congregate in these areas in the winter. In fact by doing this I have found a stretch of canal that has a water treatment plant next to it that pumps in warm water through the winter. The result is a section of the canal that can be fished in any conditions and produces sport all winter long! Most of my canal fishing now takes part in the winter when every other water has shut up shop. But if you can find areas like these and ones that still see regular boat traffic or boats that are lived on, you may just have a winter to remember.

**Spring** - In spring I always look for tree cover and shallower water in close proximity to the winter holding spots. These will be the first spots to be visited after the long harsh winter, as the carp seek out the warm rays of the spring sunshine, but they will prefer some sort of cover to feel confident. I know of an area that lies about 200yds up from a marina that has a large overhanging tree and is 3ft shallower than the rest of that stretch, and it is here where I will visit in the spring to catch a canal monster or two! In fact I have taken several 20s from this spot!

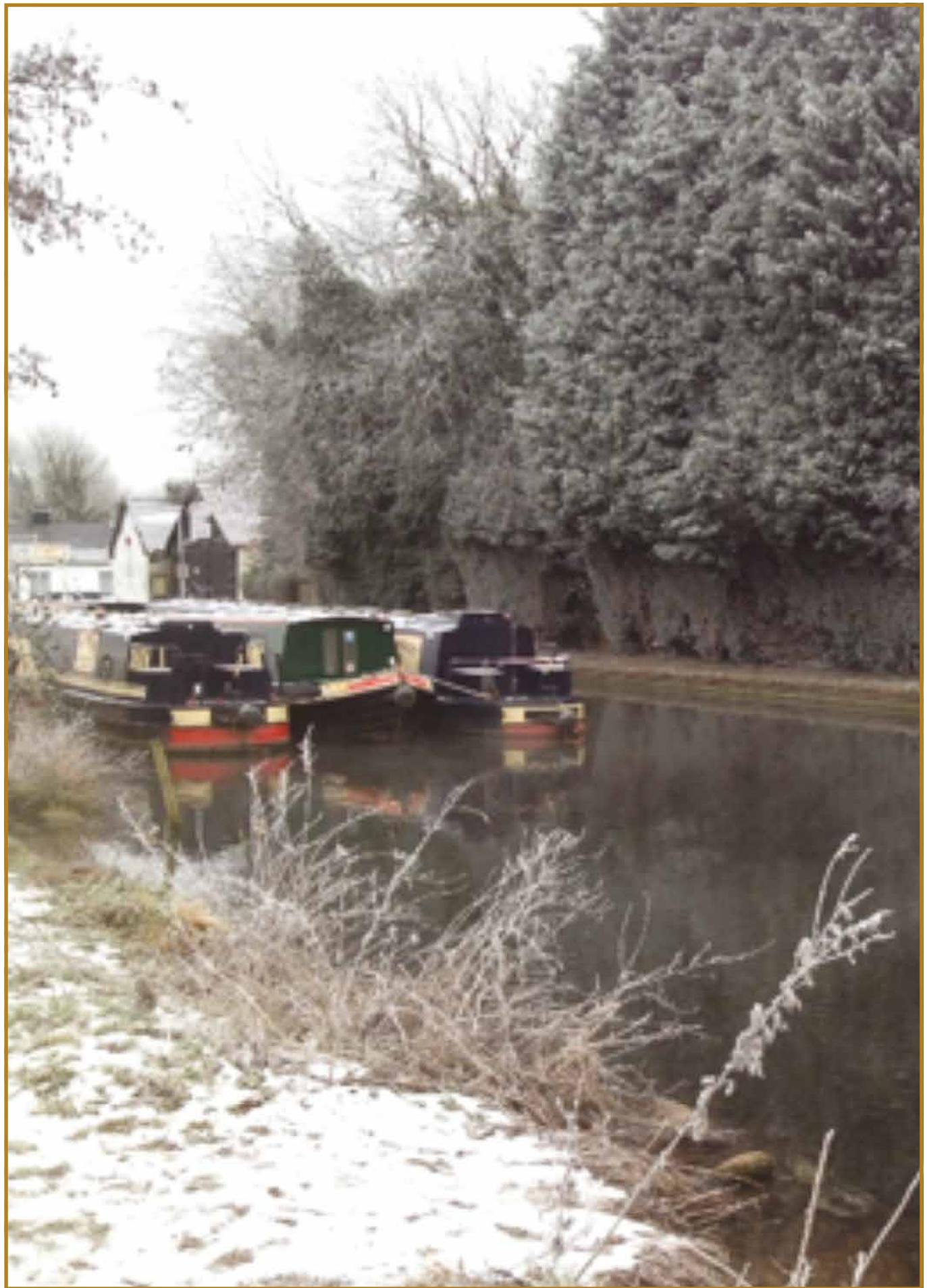
**Summer:** Look for the dead arms / quiet areas, as the carp will pack into these areas to rest up and get out the way of the busy boat traffic. I have found up to 30 carp in an arm no more than 10yds wide and 30yds long. Here the water will be still and perfect for a bit of floater fishing.

Overhanging trees are also another favourite haunt of the carp in summer, and a bait placed close to these stands a good chance of being taken. Especially look for stretches that have large areas of no cover or features and has only one tree on its length. There will be carp here!

Inlets are another prime area to look for, as the extra oxygen will have the carp lining up in the heat of the summer. Remember a carp's prime instinct is survival, and oxygen plays a major role obviously... a much bigger role than people realise. Oxygen aids digestion and helps make the fish feel more comfortable, therefore it is more likely to feed harder in these areas and a lot more likely to make a mistake with a hookbait!

Turning points, basins... the list is endless! My biggest advice is to get yourself a bike and a good pair of polaroids. Start prowling the canal towpaths in the summer, as this is a great time to assess carp stocks in the stretches of canal and from here you can formulate a plan. Another good tip is to try and be at the canal when spawning takes place, as this will allow you to see the size of the carp in the stretch.

**Preparation Is The Key To Success!**: Once your location is sorted, the next step to consider is your bait and its application. It's not simply a case of throwing in a load of boilies and then hauling them out. They may not even know what these wonderful smelling round balls are... Before you throw any bait in I suggest you follow the next bit of advice. I first pick out five spots along a stretch of canal. I will then take my marker rod with just a lead attached and donk the spots to assess the level of silt, debris, snags etc. A useful tip is to attach a bit of white string to the lead and smell this upon your retrieve. The string will tell you if the bottom is foul or presentable. Once you have found some decent spots, the next stage that I do is clear the area of any major debris that may foul presentation. I do this by clipping on a Thinking Anglers weed rake and have a few casts around the spot. This will clear the main debris of twigs and litter like carrier bags



from the spot, leaving a lovely area to present a bait.

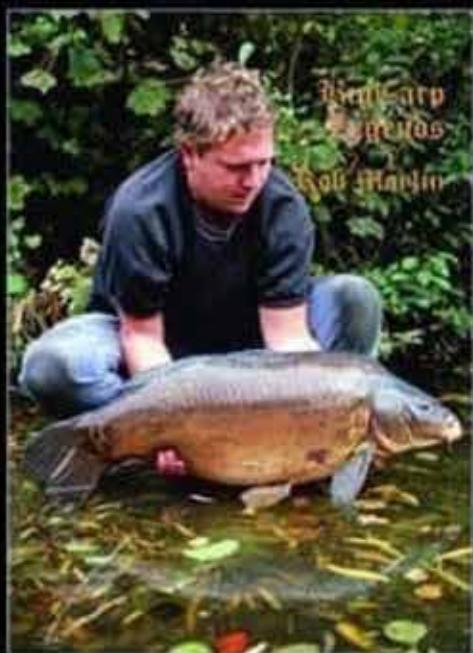
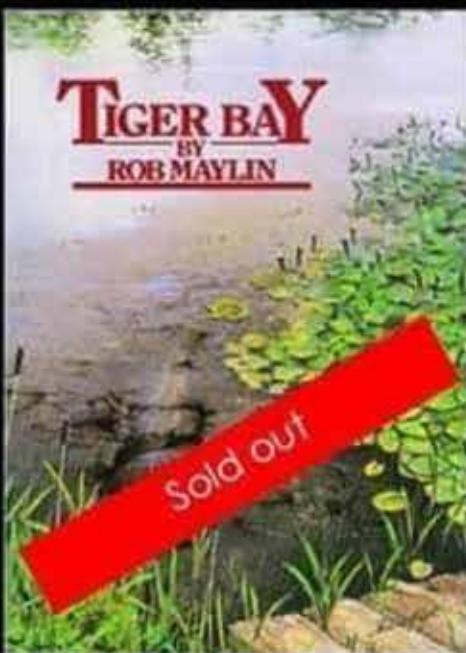
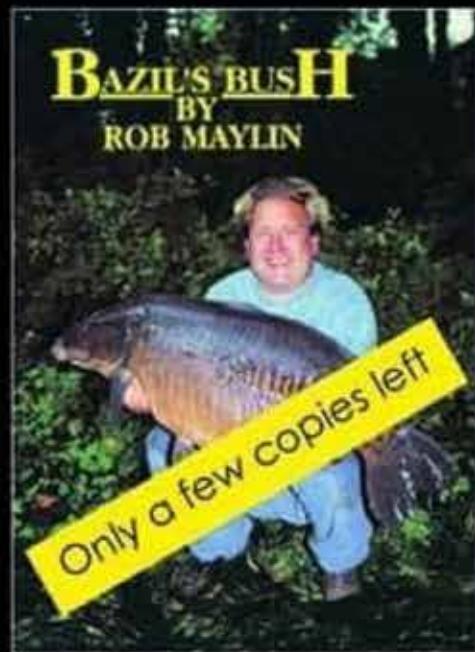
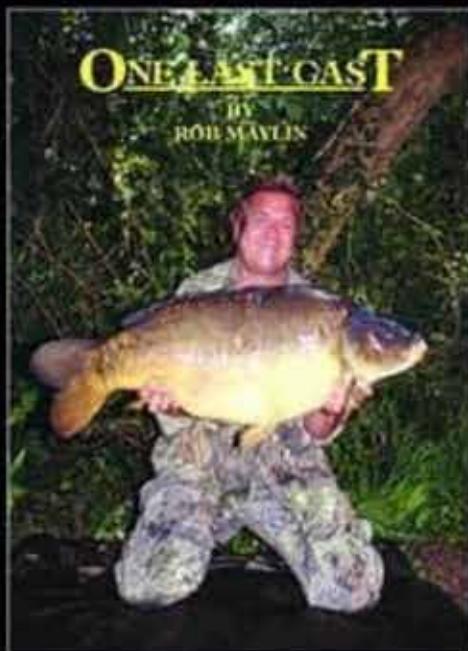
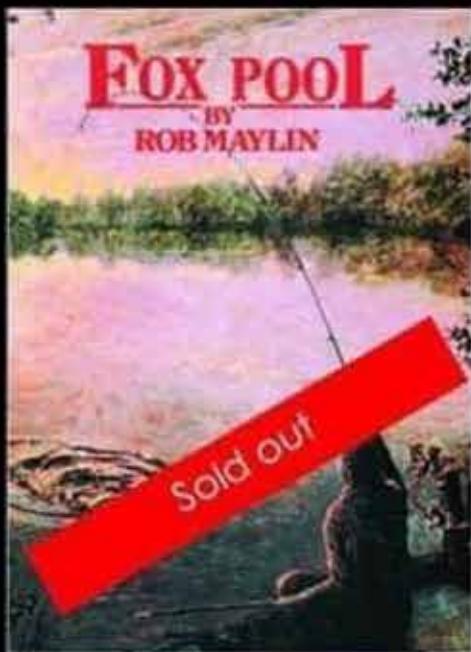
What I do next is drag the lead the length of the canal. The lead is attached to a 3lb weak link in case it snags so you can break free easily. This will identify any snags that may be present that you need to be aware of when you hook a fish. There's nothing worse than hooking a canal carp, only for it to do you in a Tesco shopping trolley or an old stolen rusty motorbike!

Right now it's time to apply the bait. I always start with using the classic combination of hemp and corn with a mixture of halibut pellets thrown in, a couple of pints of white maggots (very visual) and some crushed and whole boilie that I will be using later as my hookbaits. I apply the halibuts to the mix about 15 minutes before baiting, as this gives them time to soak in the hemp and sweetcorn juices but not long enough to turn to mush. Now for the clever bit: I add rock salt, betaine and green lipped mussel to ensure the carp are getting all the vitamins and minerals they need (especially important prior to and after spawning). I then add my chosen flavour to the mix to give it a label and to help the carp associate that flavour with food... and good highly nutritious food. This is important for the next stage of my baiting plan.

Once I have chosen my spots I first introduce this bait combo in the hope of attracting everything that swims. This does two things: firstly the feeding activity won't go unnoticed by the carp if they are near, and secondly the feeding activity will help clear your spots of any new small debris like twigs, weed and silt. I like to apply the bait over a two-week period if possible. The first week I will bait up every other day with a kilo of this mix. The second week, I drop the particle and

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pellet completely and switch to my chosen boilie only. My chosen bait is Squid and Tangerine from the Tor Baits stable. It is a potent, highly nutritious, fishmeal type bait that has caught me fish from all over the UK, France and Spain! The problem with canals is that they can be full of hungry bream and tench, and the particle/pellet approach will attract them like wildfire... not what you want when you're fishing for big nomadic carp. I will again bait twice with just half a kilo of boilies on each spot.

The day that I decide to fish I will have put in some bait the night before, but hardly any on the day I am fishing. I will only take a kilo of bait with me to last a whole 24-hour session. I will then spend five hours in each spot, and if I've had no action within this time frame, I will move on to my next spot. Obviously travelling light is the name of the game, so leave your two-man hotels at home!!! A fox Supa Brolly will suffice, and two rods is more than ample for the canal.

I am often asked if the effort is really worth it? I am on syndicates that hold fish in excess of 50lbs, but still nothing beats the allure for me of a big, wild urban monster. Let me recount a tale that proves my point...

**Monster Of The “Cut”:** It was a few years ago now when a drunken conversation in the local pub brought to my attention a tale of monster carp in the canal. Tales of 30s and even a 40 were spoken about in hushed tones. The story told of monster carp that lived in a Midland marina that couldn't be fished, but on the odd occasion they would venture out into the main canal and make a mistake...

It was a few days later that I decided to take a walk along this aforementioned canal and make my way to the marina. I know

I shouldn't have, but I climbed over the fence into the marina to have a quick scout about to see if I could see anything of any interest. My first impression was one of disappointment. The marina was only very small with about six barges moored up and that made it full! It was just like a big round turning point off the main canal. I made my way to the water's edge and I froze in disbelief. My eyes bulged and were out on stalks... There basking next to one of the boats was a carp of epic proportions. It must have weighed in excess of 35lbs easily! It was a thickset black mirror that just hung there motionless, without a care in the world! From the corner of my eye it was joined by two smaller commons. All were in excess of 20lb, but the big black mirror dwarfed them. The commons were light in colour. I was feverish with excitement, and I nearly wet myself when a huge battle-scarred common made its way through the gap of the marina and out into the main canal! The common was well in excess of 30lbs, and I just couldn't believe what I was seeing! These were easily the biggest canal carp I had ever seen by some considerable margin! Suddenly I heard someone shout, "Oi! What are you up to?" As I looked around, the marina security guard was making his way over. I quickly hopped back over the fence and made my way off up the towpath... but I knew I'd be back!

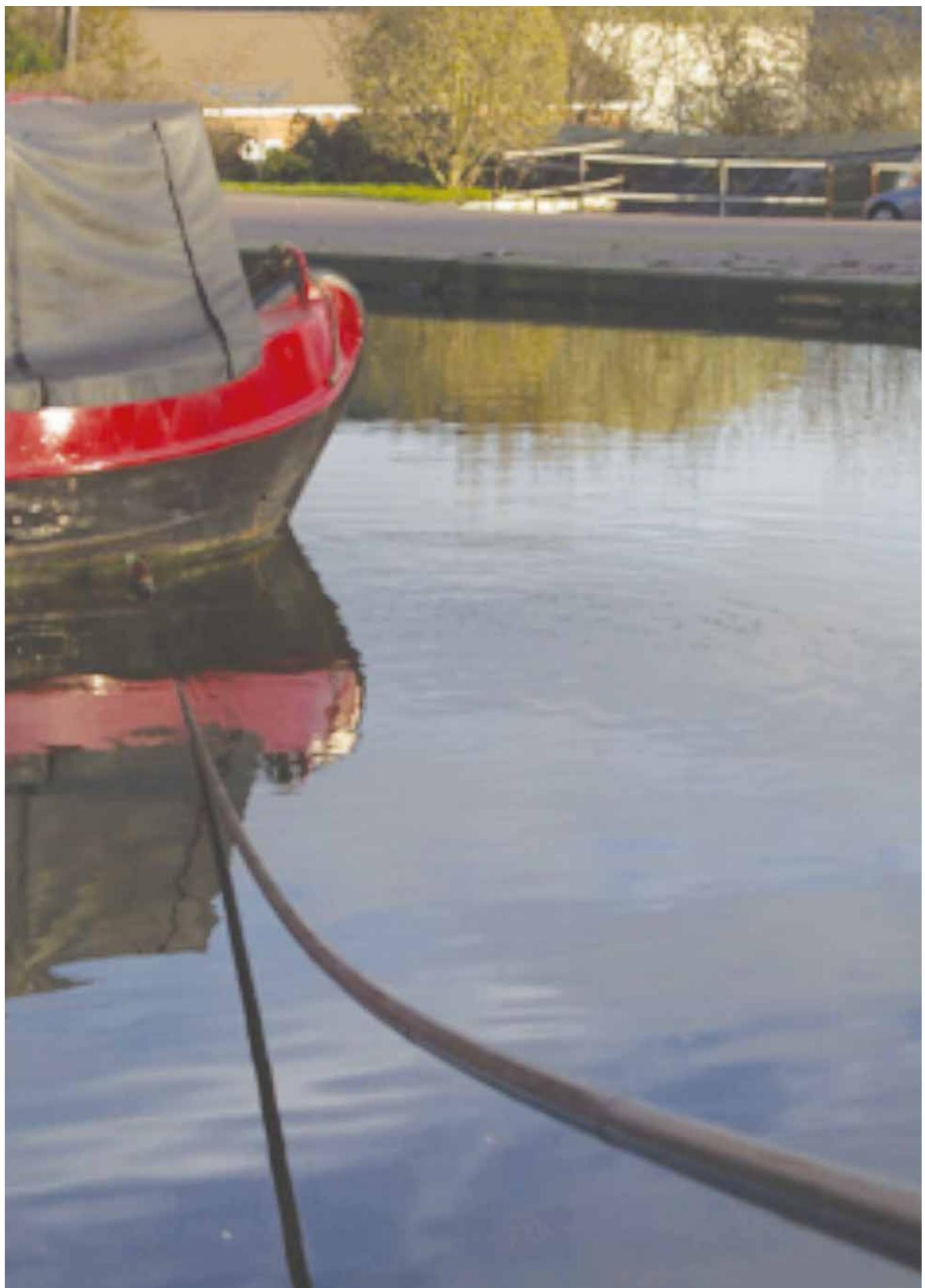
Over the next few weeks I couldn't get those fish out my mind. They occupied every thought, so a few weeks later I found myself on the towpath opposite the marina. I fished three overnights without so much as a gudgeon farting, but at night I could hear them crashing in the marina opposite. You couldn't cast far enough into the marina, as there was a bridge that went over the entrance, just high enough for the

barges to pass under. It was heartbreakingly frustrating, as I knew what was in the marina, but I couldn't get to them! I was sitting at home one night and couldn't get these canal monsters out of my mind when suddenly I had a brainwave (a rare event)...

It was my fourth visit to the "monster marina" when I put my plan into action. I arrived just on dark with my brother and cast onto the bank opposite. I slackened off my drag and made my way up to bridge, 50yds to the left of where we were set up. We crossed the bridge, and I jumped the marina fence, leaving my brother the safe side of the fence. My brother passed me the baiting pole, and I made my way to the little bridge that went over the entrance to the marina. My brother followed the fence towards the little bridge, and he quickly found my lead. He attached my rig/stick and made his way to the little bridge and waited for me. I shipped out the baiting pole under the bridge out towards the main canal. My brother put my rig and handful of Tor Baits Squid and Tangerine in the spoon and made his way back to the rods. I slowly eased the pole back under the bridge and glided it to the side of the first boat where I stealthily deposited my rig and bait right next to the boat where I had seen the monster mirror! I made my way back out the marina in full stealth mode and down over the main canal bridge to meet my brother stationed at the rods.

We sat there and giggled like two school children at our mischievousness! It took several hours and we were into our fourth brew when suddenly the tip flew round and the receiver vibrated in my pocket! I was fishing locked up with 15lb Pro Gold, and I just held on for dear life. It takes some conviction not to give any line, and my heart was in my mouth. The Fox

**CRAIG McEVOY**

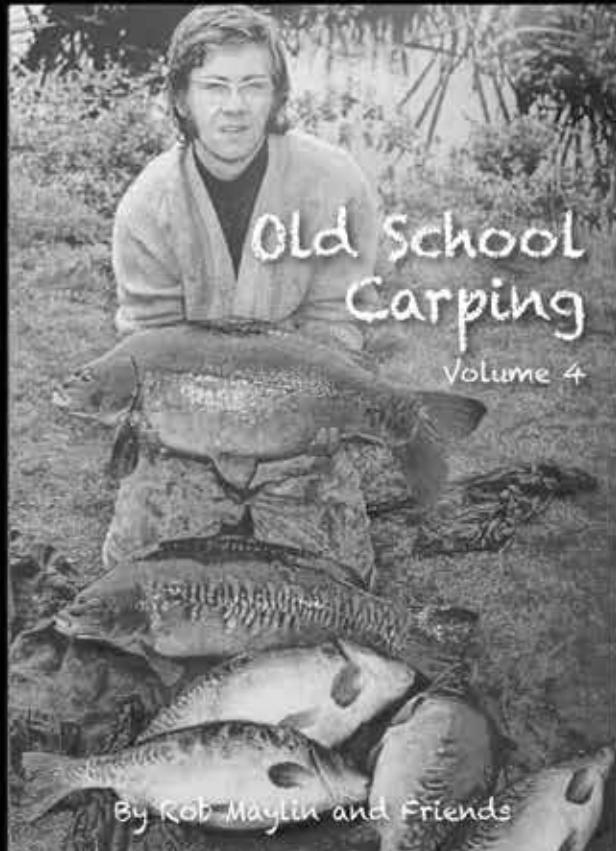
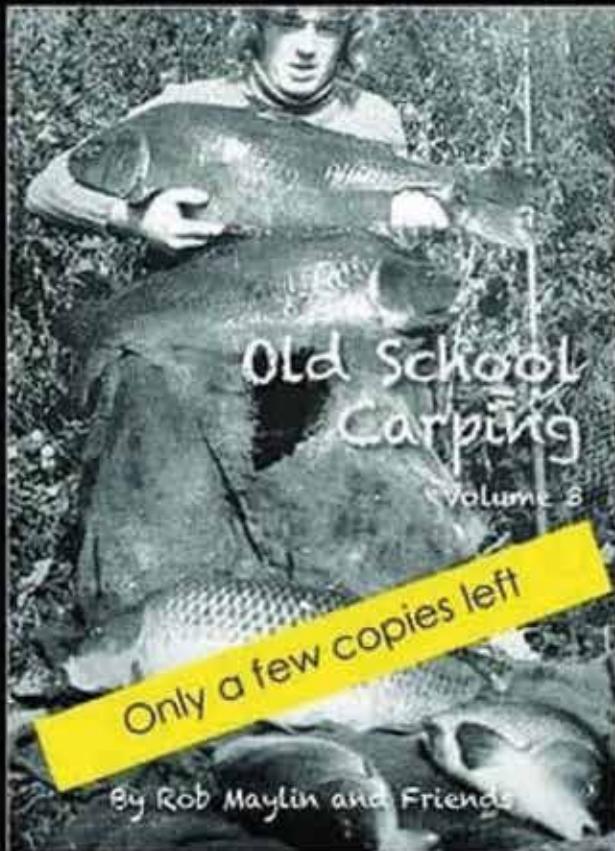
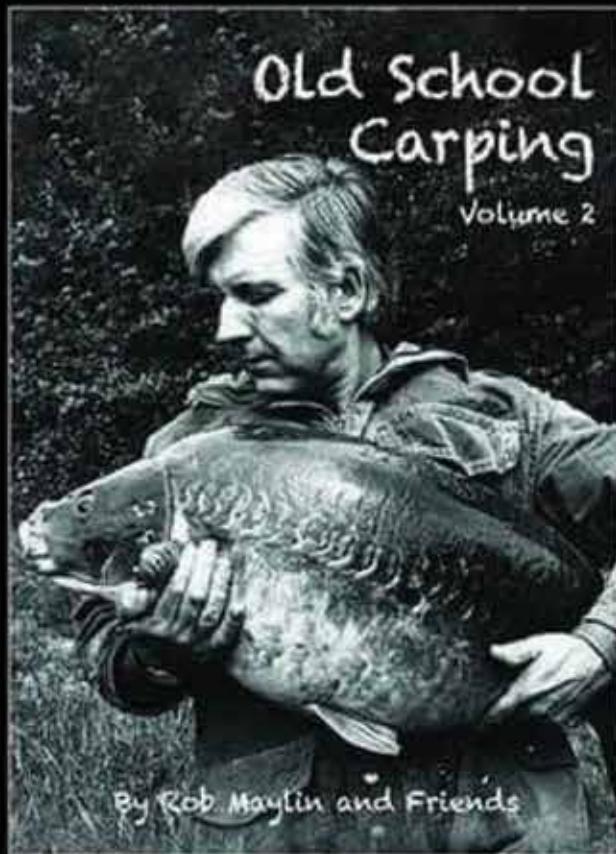
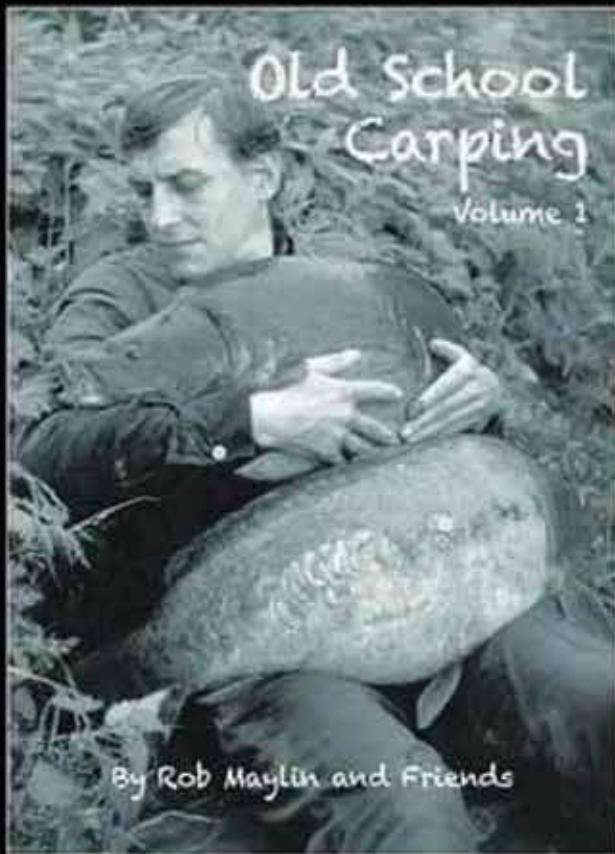


Warrior rod was bent double and my little Shimano Baitrunner was trying to give line, even though it was fully tightened. I clasped the spool and dipped the tip below the water. I had watched the match guys do this at Drayton reservoir to gain control of large carp on their light setups. It worked a treat, and I managed to turn her. The entrance to the marina rocked as the fish came through the gap to our side. I raised the rod, and she spent the next five minutes sending up huge boils and vortices in the torchlight. Up she rose, and we caught our first glimpse of her, a pale common that looked every inch a good 20. My legs had turned to jelly, and I just prayed the hook wouldn't pull. I needn't have worried, as a few minutes later, up she popped, and I led her over the waiting net!

"YES!" I shouted in complete ecstasy! She was mine! We peered into the net, and we could see that she was indeed a good 20. My bro sorted out the mat, scales and camera, as I was shaking from the adrenaline that was coursing through my veins. We lifted her onto the scales, and at 25lb 2oz she was my new canal PB. I was buzzing and smiling ear to ear as I held her up for the camera. She was a wonderful; almost ghostlike in colour with not a scale out of place. As I slipped her back I thanked her for making me one very happy carper! It was a fantastic feeling, and although I knew there were bigger in there, I was just so happy to have caught such a wonderful carp.

I did indeed go on to catch my first canal 30 from here on one summer's morning, but that's another story for another time. My brother is currently targeting his first canal 30 (or possibly bigger) so I can only disclose the night picture of my 25lb 2oz common, but watch this space... It just goes to show

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that canals do hold some truly monstrous carp! Oh and that big mirror is still there!

**Safety First:** One thing I must express is the importance of keeping yourself safe on the canal. Canals are not the safest of places, and you will find many unsavoury characters using them for all sorts of things. I have witnessed many things on the canal, from people casing local factories in preparation of a burglary and then later being visited by the police to see if I had seen something suspicious, to being visited by many a drunk, usually friendly but full of babble. I have seen glue sniffers under the bridges, frisky couples getting hot on the towpath, fights opposite at the closing time of a local pub, motorbikes speeding along the towpath... It's definitely not a place for the faint hearted, so please follow my safety guide to try and limit the amount of danger you may unknowingly put yourself in:

- Buy yourself some cheap rods and reels – leave the Basias and Techniums at home. Less is definitely more on the canal, and you are a lot less likely to get robbed!
- Leave a deterrent on show, so people will think twice about robbing you.
- Don't fish near to pubs or towns on the weekend when there is a much more likely chance of there being drunks using the towpaths at these times.
- Carry a mobile phone with a reliable contact on speed dial.
- Put the app “Find My iPhone” on your mobile if possible, as you never know when you may need this.

- Let someone know where you're going and likely time to return.
- Get your tackle security marked in case the worst happens.
- Never fish alone! Always fish in pairs or more.
- Always fish with the brolly facing the rods in close proximity.
- If people seem to be hanging about, start having a conversation with your mate, so that they can hear, along the lines of, "Yeah the boys are coming down in a bit." This will make them think twice.
- If it looks dodgy then move on... No carp is worth putting yourself in danger.

**Edges:** Here are a couple more tips and tricks for you all on the canal that I hope will help you land a monster of your own... Fish with a white hookbait. I don't know why, but white seems to catch a hell of a lot of marauding canal carp. Maybe it's because of the amount of bread that people throw to the ducks or off the boats? Who knows? But it is more than a coincidence! Next is to fish through the night... Yes, I know this can seem dangerous, but if you follow the safety tips described it will reduce the danger considerably! I have found on canals, especially some of the more pressured ones, that the carp have switched to feeding at night. They may have learnt that there is danger in the day, but when night falls it's safe to go on the munch... or so they thought!

Avoid chods – I have found that the tow on the canals can be considerable, and chods are just not the one! If you have cleared your spots, a simple KD rig is much, much more effective! Think about this for a second. You're fishing slack lines on the chods, but the tow is tightening your line, potentially lifting these off the bottom. At the very best they will be waving around unnaturally!

Use a baiting pole to fish under trees or next to boats. This will avoid conflict with boat owners, as they don't take kindly to a 2oz lead being thrown at their pride and joy, plus it's perfect bait placement every time!

Strong smelling baits seem to work better on the canals.

Avoid pellets when fishing unless you love bream!

Place a white bucket, a couple of yards up, either side of your rods. This prevents the bikers crashing into your setup. I have even glued reflectors on mine!

Use back leads to avoid the boat traffic – a must in the height of summer!

Do not set up next to water stops for the boats on the canals, as I nearly got into a right old fight as a boat nearly crashed into my rods.

Put your rods horizontal to the towpath to avoid walkers and bikers.

Keep a small stalking setup and some floaters in the van/car as in the summer when taking the missus and kids a walk along the canal, you never know when an opportunity might present itself!

Don't tell anyone anything, as you will be surprised at just how many sheep love the canal!

Well, I hope you've enjoyed this article and have taken

away some tips that will help you to catch one of those urban legends... and remember they are catchable in the canal in any conditions!

Until next time, slack lines and screaming buzzer

Daddy Mac



# Crooked Lines

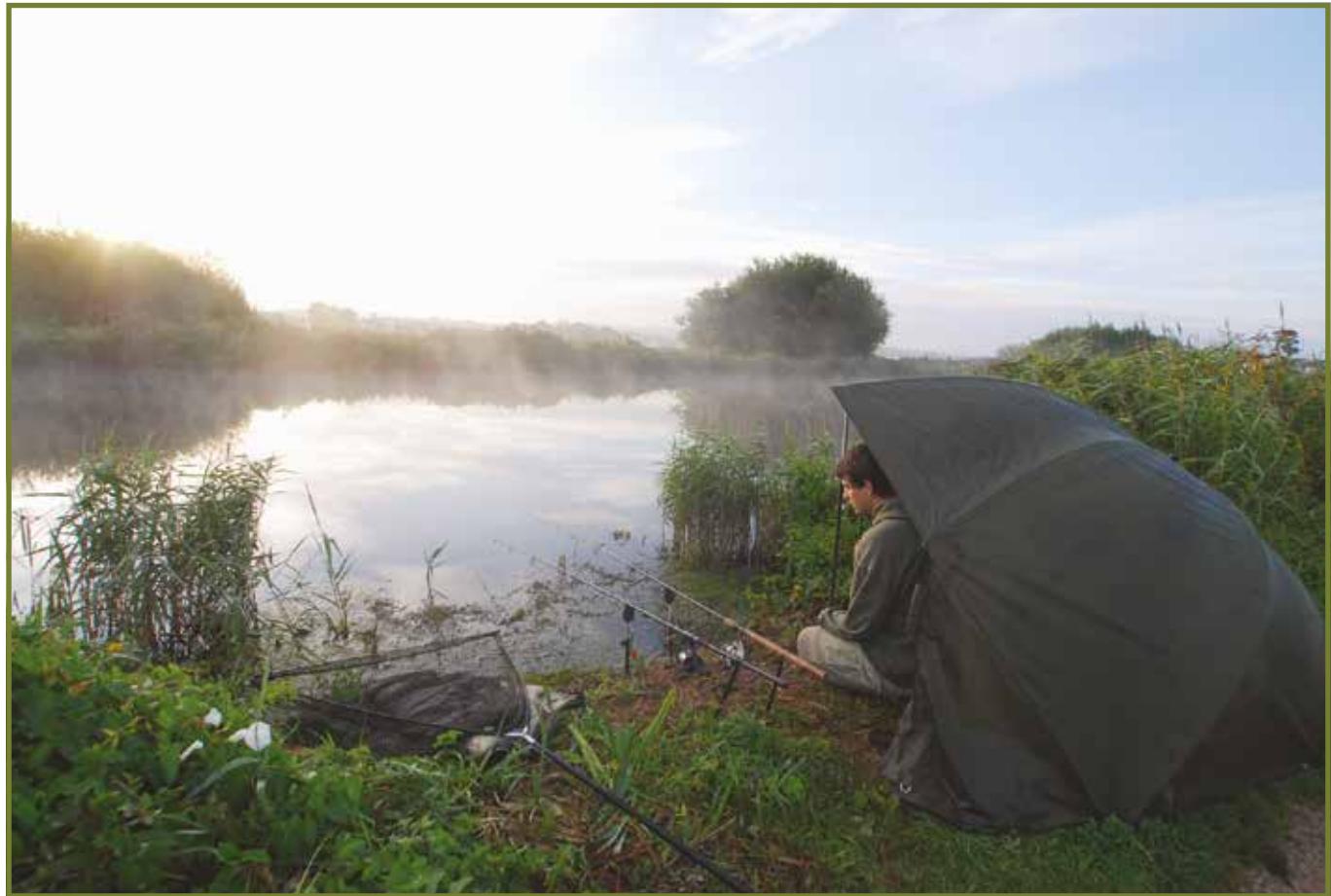
DOMINIC  
GARNETT



# THE CURSE OF THE TOWPATH

Carp fishing on a rock hard canal isn't everyone's cup of tea, but for the adventurous angler, there's no shortage of mystery and seldom-fished swims. Dom Garnett describes the highs and lows in this exclusive story, taken from his book *Crooked Lines*.

Of all the places that turn anglers into fanatics, a ship canal has to be pretty low on the list. We're not here for the scenery, the rusting lock gates or the overpriced beer at the Double Locks Inn. Exeter Ship Canal cuts a wide and weedy five miles or so from city to salt water. It is a fearsomely deep and sometimes fearsomely difficult challenge.



But I've seen them: carp so solid they leave you mesmerized. Down by the water works you can spot hulking, barrel-thick fish nosing through the clear water. On sunny days, you pick out dark backs and dense shoulders, gaping mouths that could swallow your fist. These are kind of carp that have consumed whole summers, flattened bank balances and ended relationships. And I want to catch one. Badly.

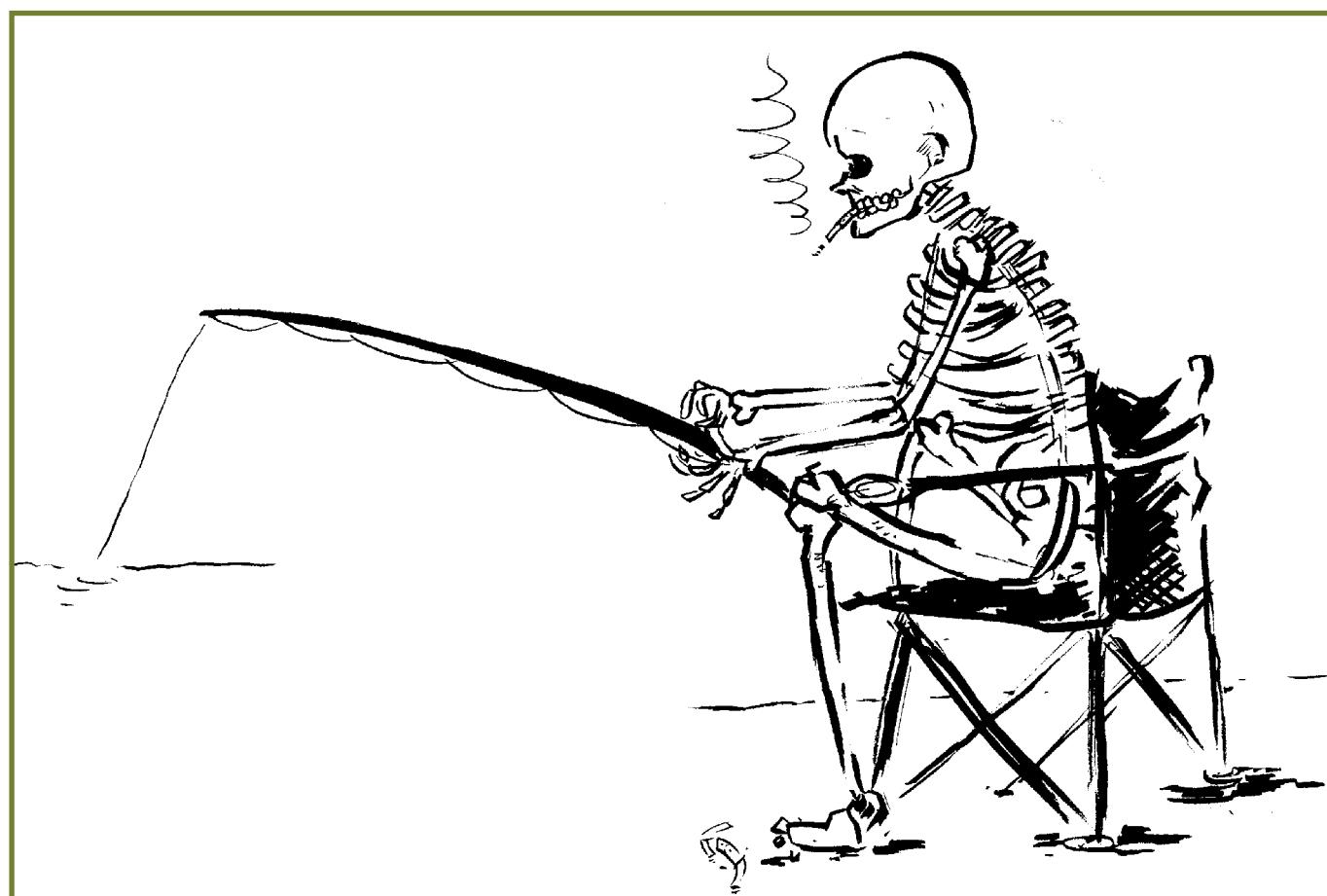
But out on this semi urban canal, it isn't just carp that make you hold your breath. I don't know many anglers who would park their car overnight here, never mind camp out and fish. A friend and a blunt object are necessities, here in the vicinity of the city's fag end as we join a cast of boy racers, drunks and the odd lost lunatic. Or is that us?

Rob Darby, better known as "Norbert", is my usual towpath companion, and an angler of unfailing humour but dubious

reliability. Over a cold drink, tackle is prepared, tactics are discussed, and we dare once again to dream of vast, unfathomable carp. Theories are outlined, debated and abandoned, cigarettes are rolled, stories swapped and mosquitoes swatted.

Our little camp is already well established from several post work sessions, as we sit unshaven like the disciples of some muddy cult. We dodge dog turds as Norbert cracks open another cider. The grass we sit on, like my patience, is thinning. Not that we're short on time. On the contrary, there's plenty of it. Time to hope and time to doubt. Time to speculate, perhaps to laugh at the whole exercise. Time itself can become heavy. The more nights you spend the more hell bent you become on seeing the plan through. But for what exactly?

Certain lessons are learned the hard way, admittedly. Tiger nuts become the bait of choice above boilies, after my bream



# DOM GARNETT



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# Legendary Carp Paintings



- Basil
- Heather
- The Black Mirror
- The Royal Forty
- The Bishop
- The Burghfield Common
- Jumbo
- Two Tone
- Mary and Mary's Mate

in the silly hours of the morning become a running joke. Prebaiting is a must too, if you hope to wean these carp off their natural diet. And while any fool can subdue a big fish in a featureless pond, the stupendously thick weed here makes anything but the toughest tackle a liability. So yes, we're great on the theory, just not so hot on catching anything.

The sun glows red before it drowns on the water. The moon is up, and in the fading light, you can follow the bridge in the distance, hear the hiss of the road and now and again the wayward howl of a siren. And here we are like hitchhikers stuck on a verge, a thin strip of green between canal and river, steel barrier one side, a long and muddy drop on the other. But these are things I try not to dwell on.

The electricity pylons loom in a great row through the fields across the river behind us. A jury of cormorants span the wires like bad language scrawled on black lines. It's the wait that is the real test, the real killer. Hanging about and hoping... waking up in the drizzle and waiting, always waiting. But perhaps it's the chasm between a huge fish and absolutely nothing that compels us. As any diehard angler understands, for the possibility of sudden elation to exist there must also be the possibility of failure.

The statistics alone are lethal. Taking a sip from a dirty mug, Norbert attempts the mathematics of the impossible: Six nights; Two rods per man, around ten kilos of bait, thirty or so mozzie bites, several litres of tea and a hundred of Norbert's skinny roll ups, three dozen or so casts for that paltry vital figure... and one lost carp, hooked for all of thirty glorious seconds before becoming nothing more than slack line and words I can't repeat. We have prime baits and specimen tackle,

lonely partners and empty wallets. But we still don't have our carp.

By eleven, the cold really draws in. By slow turns, everything grows quieter. Even the boy racers get bored until it's just me, Norbert and the mozzies left. Insect repellent is as important as any rod or reel here once darkness descends.

"It'll happen at some point. It's only a matter of time," I say. It's not the first, or even the second or third time I've used that line, along with the classic: "All it takes is one bite." But after another blank night, the talk is on the Curse of the Towpath. And sometimes as I lie there sleeplessly, I wonder if it's true and that we'll spend half of eternity here. It's even harder to drop off peacefully after Norbert recalls the night he saw a drunken transvestite wandering along the towpath.

"Feeling lucky tonight, sir?" he asks me.

"Piss off, Norbert."

It's only after a speculative night on another patch, miles away from the last useless swim, that something decisive finally occurs. Following a row with his other half, Norbert snores as he lies in a heap on my groundsheet, and I'm in that zone where I try to sleep but have a funny feeling something is about to happen. But for now it doesn't.

Morning emerges by slow degrees. It's not yet light, but soon it'll be time to pack up and be away. So I'm just lying there, wondering about things: whether to go for a leak or whether the carp are somewhere else entirely. And that's when it happens. With no warning whatsoever, the alarm goes berserk, and I see the line racing tight. I'm stumbling forward with no shoes, no second thoughts, on hands and knees, grabbing the rod and holding on. The bend is deep and urgent as the fish

plunges sideways, already several yards down the canal. The drag sputters for a few seconds before the only sensation is a dense, motionless weight.

The weed on the canal is chronic in summer, and by this stage I fear the worst. I keep a tight line and pray the fish is still there. For perhaps five minutes, all I get is the occasional thump to reassure me we're still connected. It's only as I walk down the bank and change the angle that the fish finally bolts for the central channel again, and I breathe a huge sigh of relief. As positively as I dare, the fish is guided slowly towards the bank. Along with about half its own weight in weed, she slides into the net and the universe seems to freeze.

I shout out loud; Norbert looks almost confused. The fish in the net is a fantastically solid mirror carp, all gaping mouth and gold scales. It looks as surprised as us. At fifteen-pounds-something I'm not about to win any awards but can perhaps be forgiven for feeling slightly delirious after all the nights on the bank and years of watching these solid, somehow untouchable fish in the canal and longing to catch one.

What seemed impossible only hours ago now lies in my hands, and the only thing that could make my life complete is a fried breakfast. I'm already looking forward to the call from my brother and the usual question: "You're not still fishing that bloody canal for carp are you?"

Read more tales from Dom Garnett in *Crooked Lines* (£9.99). With two dozen page-turning fishing tales from backwater Britain to the middle of Manhattan, Dom Garnett's acclaimed book makes great reading for any angler. Other stories in the collection include a journey into the Welsh hills for wild

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## COMMON SOURCES AT THE BANK:

- Portable gas heaters
- BBQs and camping stoves
- Petrol generators
- Gas lanterns used inside bivvies or tents



## NEVER DO THIS:

- ✖ Use fuel-burning equipment inside your bivvy
- ✖ Sleep with a BBQ or heater still warm inside your shelter
- ✖ Block air vents or close yourself in tight spaces

## ALWAYS DO THIS:

- ✓ Use heaters and stoves outside, in open air
- ✓ Ensure your bivvy is well-ventilated
- ✓ Carry a portable CO alarm
- ✓ Learn the signs of CO poisoning

## KNOW THE SYMPTOMS:

- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Confusion
- Collapse or loss of consciousness

If you feel unwell, get into fresh air immediately and call 999.

*"It won't happen to me..."* Too many anglers last thought.

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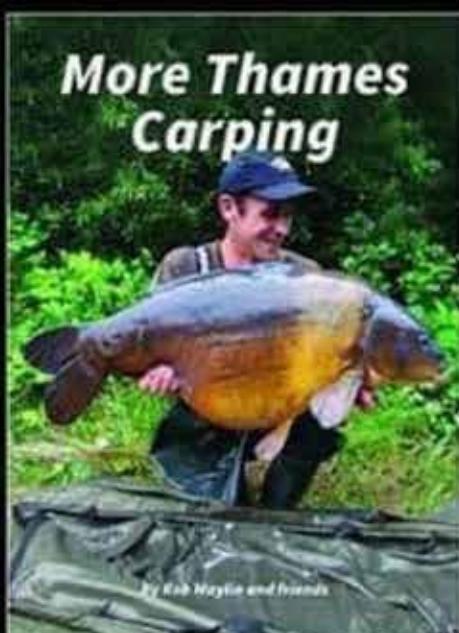
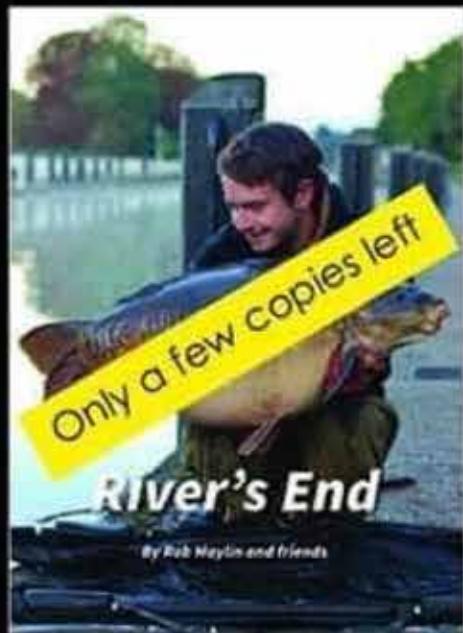
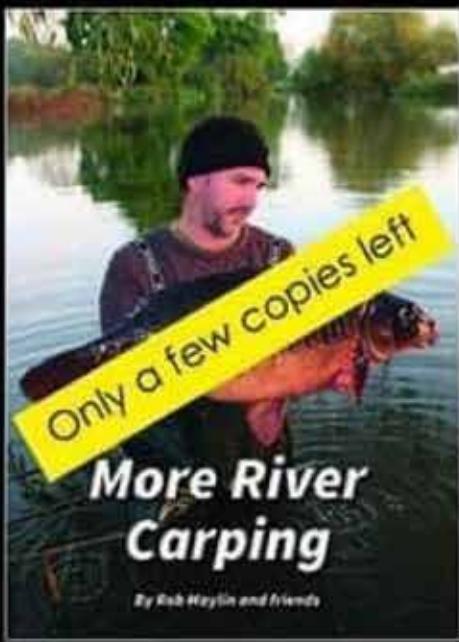
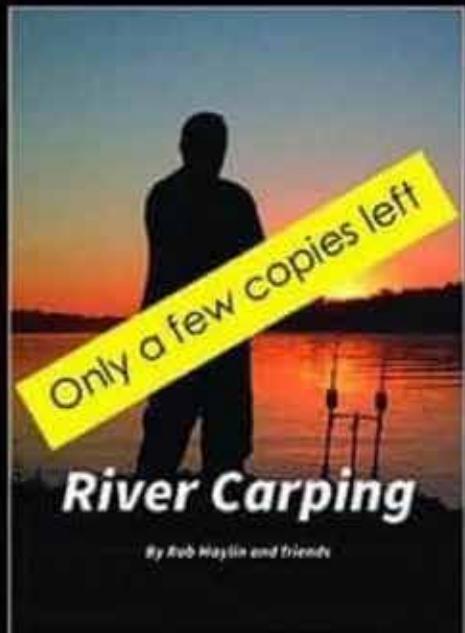
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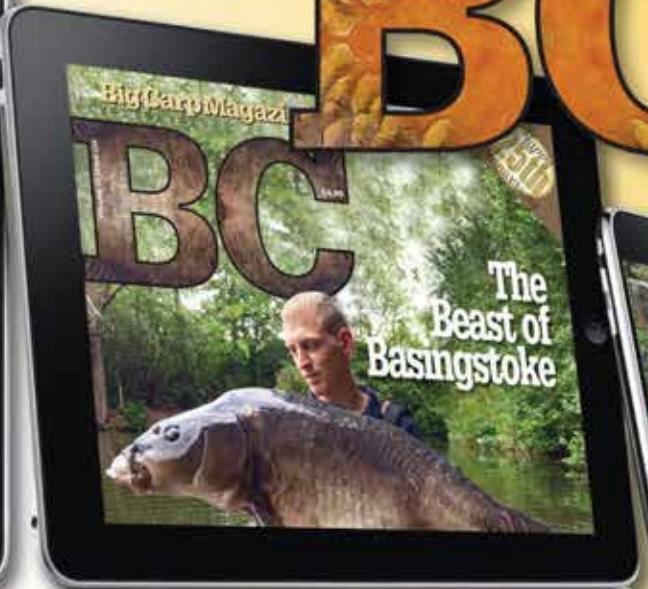
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