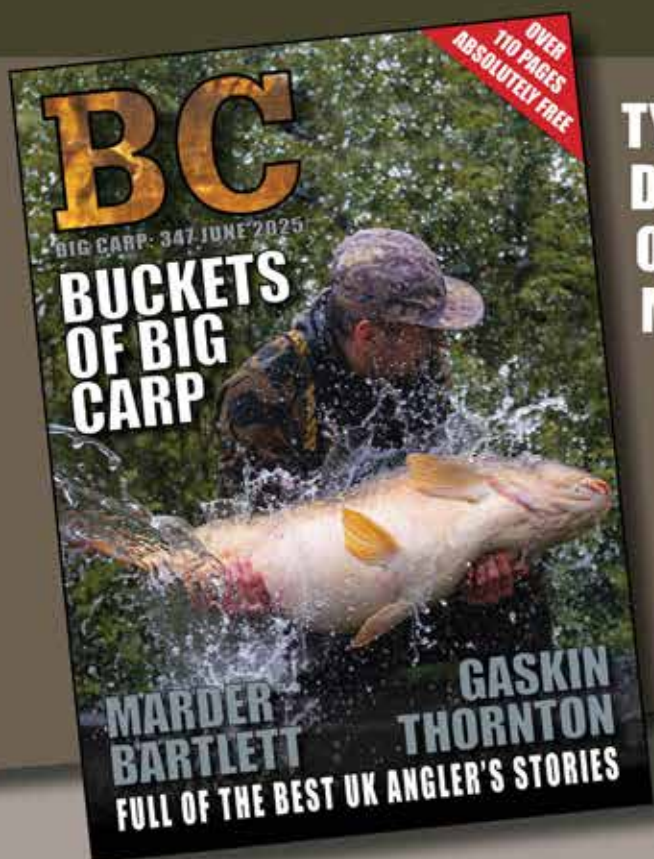


# **JUNE ISSUES OF **BIG CARP** & **FREELINE** MAGAZINES - FREE HERE:**

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**TYRON MARDER - HAINAULT YETI  
DAVE GASKIN - KING OF THE POND  
OSCAR THORNTON - MY GO TO RIG  
MARK BARTLETT - WELSH WHACKERS**

**KEITH PICKET - KENT TALES  
MICHAEL BOND - BLUE LAGOON  
MARTIN COLUMBO - CARPIN' USA  
PAUL BENNETT - LAKE OF DREAMS**



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# BIG CARP READERS TOP TENS !!

## TOP 10 DAY TICKET CARP WATERS

|    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| 1  | BLUEBELL LAKES    |
| 2  | LINEAR FISHERIES  |
| 3  | SANDHURST         |
| 4  | COTTINGTON        |
| 5  | FARLOWS LAKE      |
| 6  | HORCOTT           |
| 7  | COKING FARM       |
| 8  | OAK LAKES FISHERY |
| 9  | ELPHICKS          |
| 10 | ORCHID            |

## TOP 10 FRENCH HOLIDAY VENUES

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

## TOP 10 BAIT COMPANIES

|    |                   |
|----|-------------------|
| 1  | STICKY BAITS      |
| 2  | DYNAMITE BAITS    |
| 3  | MAINLINE BAITS    |
| 4  | CC MOORE          |
| 5  | TARGET BAITS      |
| 6  | NUTRABAITS        |
| 7  | PROPER CARP BAITS |
| 8  | URBAN BAITS       |
| 9  | DAVE MALLIN BAITS |
| 10 | NASH BAIT         |



## TOP 10 END TACKLE COMPANIES

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

## TOP 10 CARP FISHING BRANDS

|    |               |
|----|---------------|
| 1  | DIAWA         |
| 2  | SHIMANO       |
| 3  | REUBEN HEATON |
| 4  | SOLAR         |
| 5  | JAG           |
| 6  | FREESPIRIT    |
| 7  | FOX           |
| 8  | TRAKKER       |
| 9  | CHILTERN RODS |
| 10 | KUDOS         |

## TOP 10 CARP TACKLE SHOPS

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

## TOP 10 ICONIC CARP LAKES

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



# BC

BIG CARP: 347 JUNE 2025

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GASKIN  
THORNTON

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HOTEL TOTALLY  
RENEWED



# CATCH REPORTS



A quiet approach paid off, with consistent baiting in both opposite and near margins with soaked 20mm Fishabil Skittles boilies.



A 46 pounds mirror carp caught in the mouth on a 20 cm orange bait by Yann.



Quentin a regular and his son came for a week end and caught many fish.



Absolutely amazing fishing session for Mathew. Coming from Ireland and fishing on peg 32 on the dam wall. Many carp over 40 pounds including this 48 pound mirror caught in the night







ALL PEGS  
JUST REDONE



HOTEL TOTALLY  
RENEWED



# BOOK NOW YOUR NEXT FISHING HOLIDAYS

ALL INCLUSIVE FROM UK OR DRIVE AND SURVIVE OR SIMPLY FAMILY HOLIDAYS



NICE HOTEL ON  
THE LAKE SIDE

BEST FACILITIES  
ON THE MARKET



## 8 WORLD RECORD - 2 WORLD CARP CUPS



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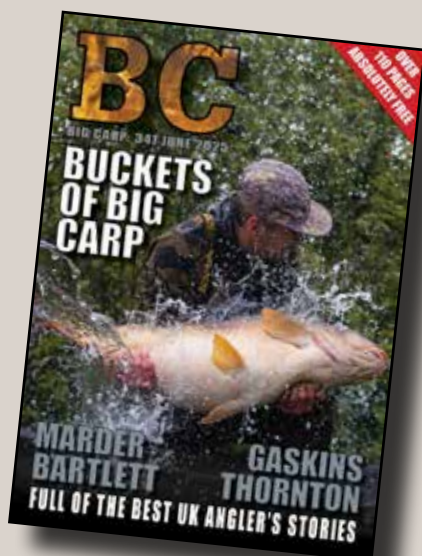
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BIG CARP 347:  
June 2025

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Publications 2025



Front Cover:  
josh Marchant cradles a  
big common



The weather did a full u-turn this month and Summer arrived with the shortest Spring ever. Some lakes were spawning early this year making the window to catch the carp at their biggest weights very narrow. Judging by the catch reports many of you have had a fantastic time on the bank the past few weeks.

Check out the captures from Dave Gaskin, Harry Palmer, Haydon Hoskins and Mark Bartlett in this month's edition of Big Carp. Tyrone's piece, looking back at the characters he's met reminded me very much of the early days of carp fishing and some of the fun and games we used to get up to on the bank. I'm sure we were a lot less serious about carp fishing back then. Don't forget to enjoy it - I know we certainly did.



## 6. SHOCKLEADER

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

## 22. TAC-TEC

Our look at some of the best fishing products around. Are you looking to tart up your set up or a new bait to try out?

## 28. CATCH REPORTS

Check out some of the biggest carp to be caught in the UK, the last few weeks. They've really started to wake up with lots of amazing carp coming to the banks.

## 52. DAVE GASKIN

After a phenomenal result last month Dave carried on his run of amazing form by banking the King of the Pond

## 60. HARRY PALMER

Once again those deadly zigs trip up a fish that had been on the missing list for some time.



## 64. HAYDON HOSKINS

Wraysbury is steeped in carp angling history so you can imagine Haydon was over the moon when he landed one of the lake's most sort after carp

## 70. JOSH MARCHANT

Our cover star smashed his PB with an incredible half linear mirror recently.

## 76. MARK BARTLETT

One of the most consistent anglers around and a regular in the British team has been having it off at his welsh syndicate.

## 82. OSCAR THORNTON

The Blow-Back rig is an absolute classic. Find out how Oscar ties his and how he deploys it.

## 88. TYRONE MARDER

Tyrone takes a look back at his early carp fishing days and some of the unforgettable characters he's met along the way - both scaley and human

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## WORLD CARP CLASSIC OFF TO CHINA

**T**he World Carp Classic has come a long way since I founded it back in 1998. From humble beginnings to now having 57 countries represented and thousands of passionate anglers taking part, it's been incredible to witness the growth of carp angling across Europe.

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





Great Hall of Arundel Castle, rolling out in 2026. With 90 on a table beautifully inlaid with jade—a truly symbolic moment.

Our first event in China is set to launch later this year, with a full national structure

million registered anglers in China and a phenomenal team on the ground, I'm confident we'll build the same success and legacy that we've achieved in Europe.



# **FESTIVAL OF CARP 2025 SATURDAY 12TH JULY**

**HORSESHOE LAKE, LECHLADE, GL7 3QQ**

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

This year there will be:

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



# Hay Fever? Dust or Pet Allergy?

*June is Peak Hay Fever Season*



*Helping Anglers  
Tackle their Hay Fever*



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[Cocado](#)

[Boots](#)

<sup>†</sup>Proven to trap over 1/3 of pollen, plus dust & pet allergens, National Pollen & Aerobiology Research Unit, 2012.

<sup>\*</sup>80% said HayMax works, 134 of 166 respondents, Allergy UK survey, 2016.



# TICKETS FOR THE PHYLIS TUCKWELL CHARITY EVENT AT FRIMLEY



**T**he Frimley charity event in aid of Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice is on the 29th-31st of August.

This is an absolutely fantastic event. The atmosphere is amazing. Lots of smiles and plenty of big big fish are caught every year. The raffle has 1000's of £'s worth of prizes. The bbq is the best you'll have seen !

**Pit 3** carp to over 56lb. About 27 x 40's and about 3-4 x 50's or more

£300 per space. Draw on the Friday morning of the event. Watercraft draw.





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

**Pit 2** is filled with carp to near 40. This is a perfect water if you want to catch. They love a surface bait in

here too. Again some lovely dark scaleys in here.

£150 per space

If you want in, be quick. Spaces go fast. Once they are gone they are gone

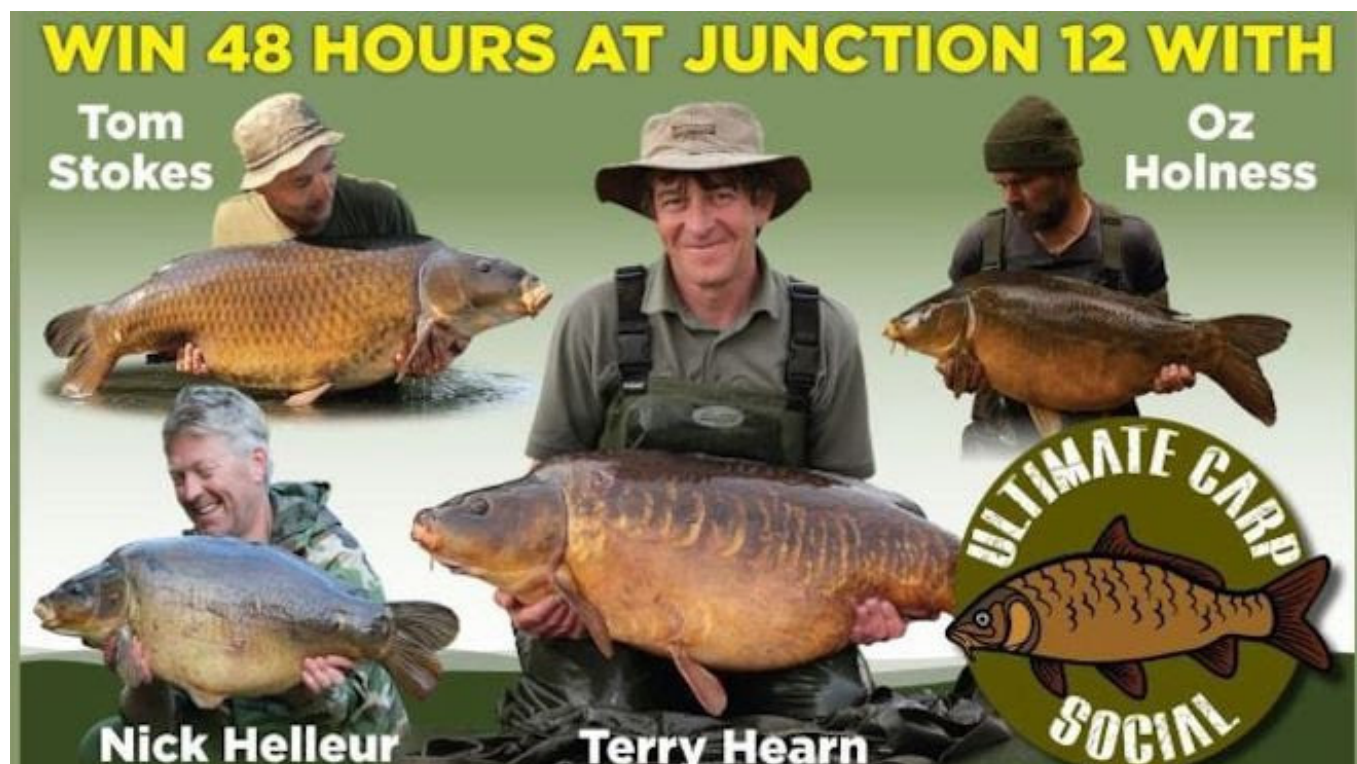
Call 01252 598411.

Payment at time of call.

Or message Rain Frimley



# ANGLING TRUST MEGA COMP



Offered in generously donated their time association once to give 4 lucky winners the again with Reading ultimate carp session. The and District four prize winners will have Angling Association, take exclusive access to Junction part to win exclusive access 12 on Friday 20th to Sunday to their renowned 'Junction 22nd June 2025. The 15-acre 12' carp lake for 48 hours lake is reported to hold up accompanied by four legends to 500 carp with 12 different of carp angling. known 40lb+ fish present.

As in 2023 and 2024, Terry In addition, our winners will Hearn, Oz Holness, Tom enjoy homemade stew by the Stokes and Nick Helleur have bank on the Friday and a social



## 'MORTIMER & WHITEHOUSE: GONE FISHING' IS RETURNING FOR SERIES 8



BBQ on the Saturday courtesy of RDAA. These are great opportunities for everyone to get together, meet one another and ask questions of the other anglers. Tickets for a chance to win

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



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# FISHABIL CHALLENGE 2025

 *Fishabil Challenge* 

4th of October  
To The  
10th of October

1st : 6000 £

2nd : 3000 £

3rd : 1500 £



I am pleased to announce that the Fishabil Challenge will commence on October 4th to the 10th

Full Details to follow

If you are interested, please use and subscribe to the email [fishabil.challenge@gmail.com](mailto:fishabil.challenge@gmail.com)

J'ai le plaisir de vous annoncer [fishabil.challenge@gmail.com](mailto:fishabil.challenge@gmail.com)



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a reliable, resourceful, With some details about  
professional and trustworthy yourself and we will contact  
team who have the fishery's you



# MANAGE YOUR HAY FEVER WITH HAYMAX

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

"Stay well hydrated. Make sure you drink plenty of water on your fishing trip, as this will help

symptoms; being dehydrated makes symptoms feel worse."

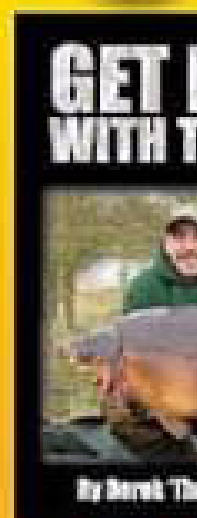
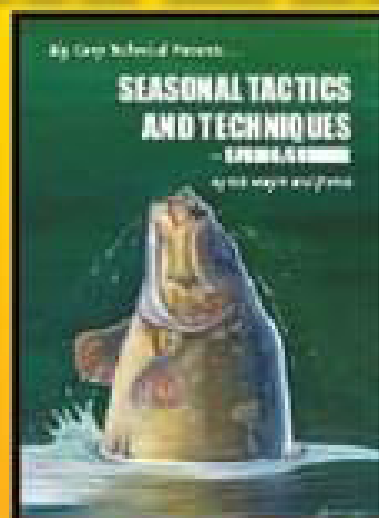
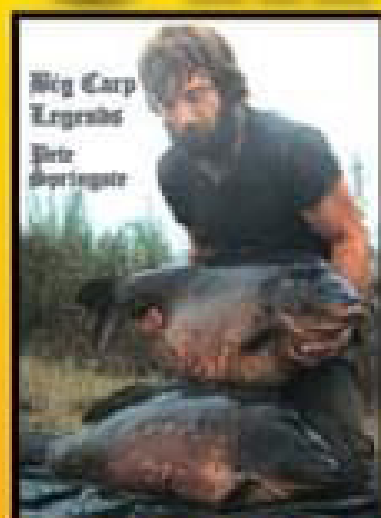
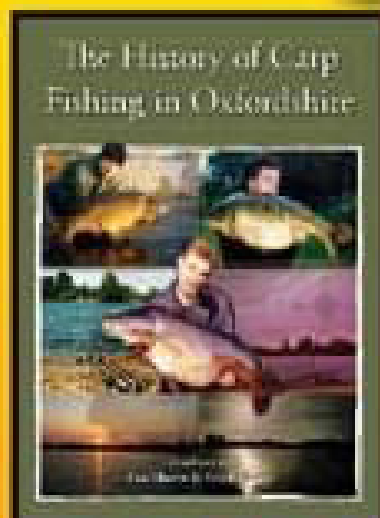
"Eat lots of fruit and vegetables. This will help you stay healthy and support your immune system. Red onions, kale, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, blueberries and apples are good sources of quercetin, which is thought to limit the release of histamine, the chemical that sets off allergy symptoms in your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

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

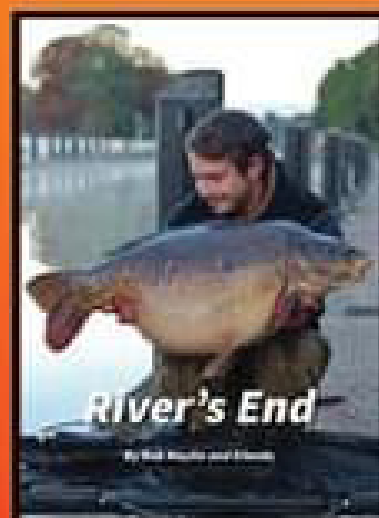
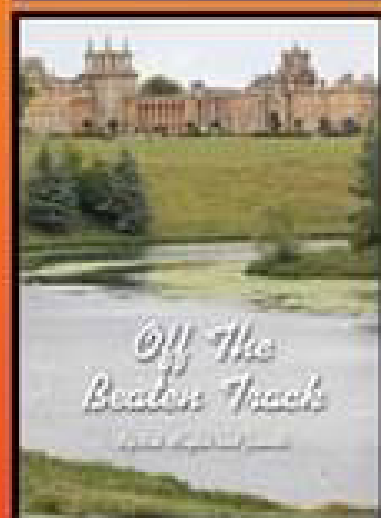
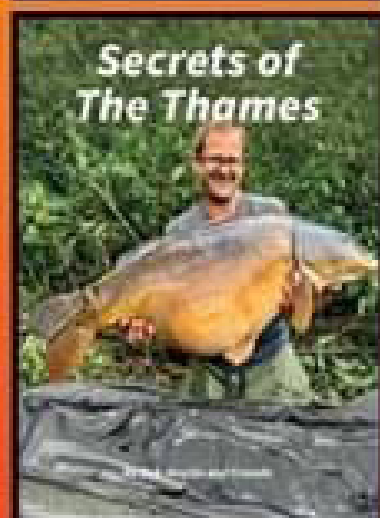
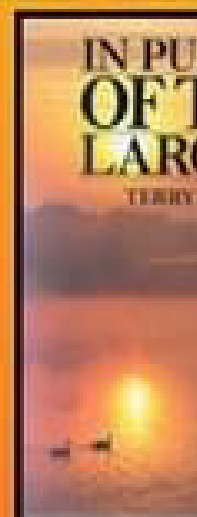
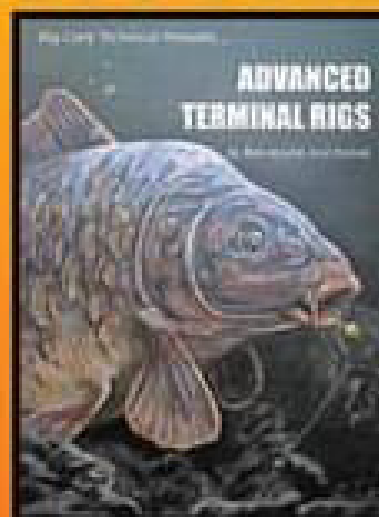
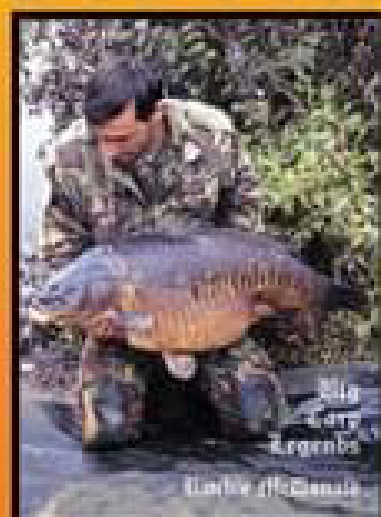
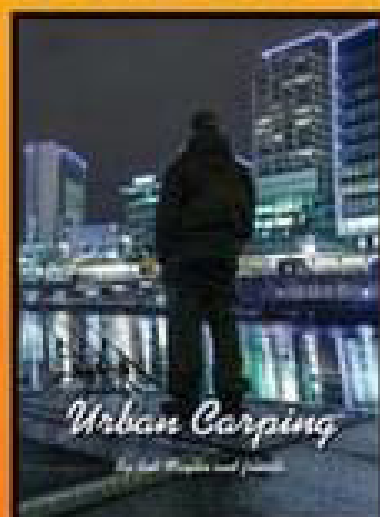
"So, there you have it – a few simple ideas that could make all the difference to those nasty symptoms and help you enjoy your angling despite your hay fever! If you would like more advice on helping deal with hay fever symptoms, visit my Hay Fever Guide at [www.haymax.biz/hay-fever](http://www.haymax.biz/hay-fever)."



# SUMMER S



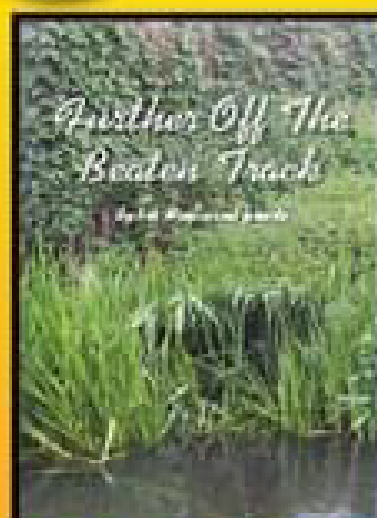
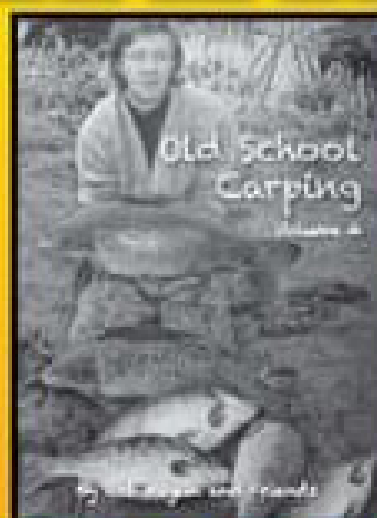
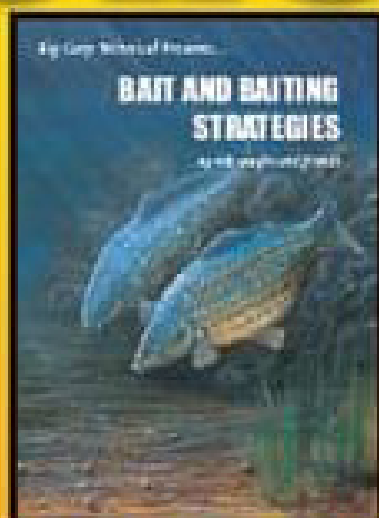
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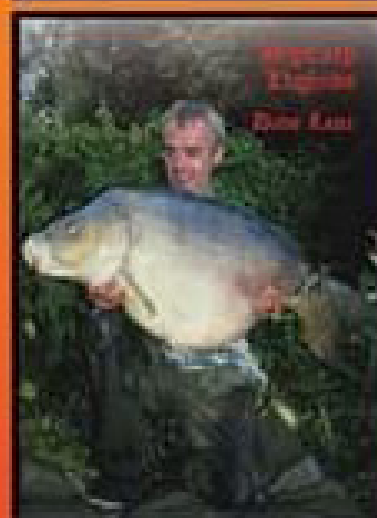
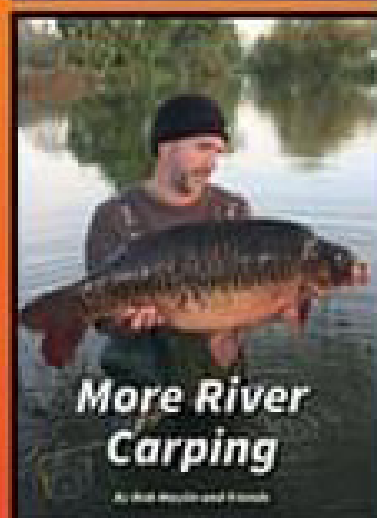
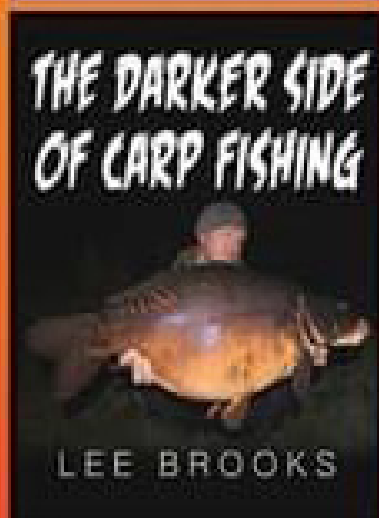
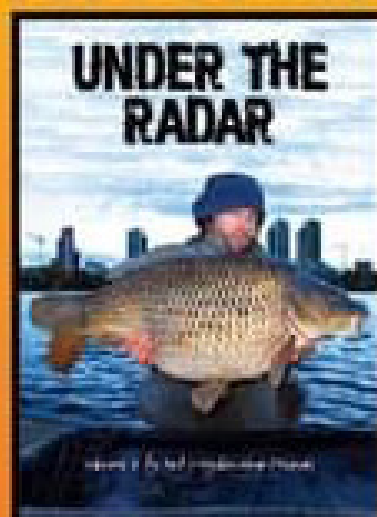
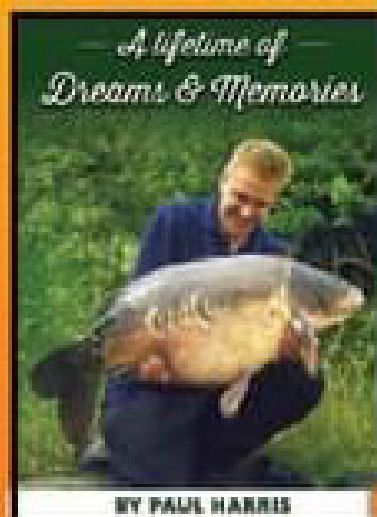
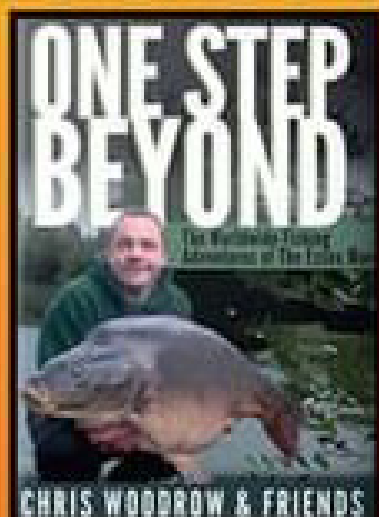
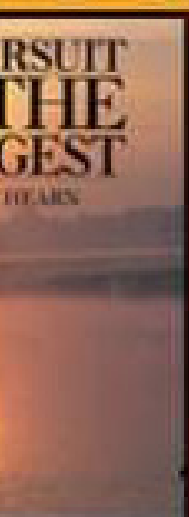
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# CELESTIAL

## NITE WATCHES OPTIONAL STRAPS

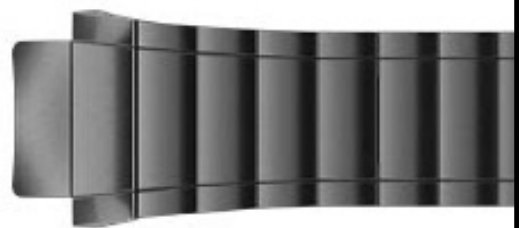
Nite watches now offer a range of straps for its watches. You can match up the watch you like with the strap that suits your style and needs.

The range includes rubber, leather, webbing and bracelet alternatives often with a range of colours to suit.

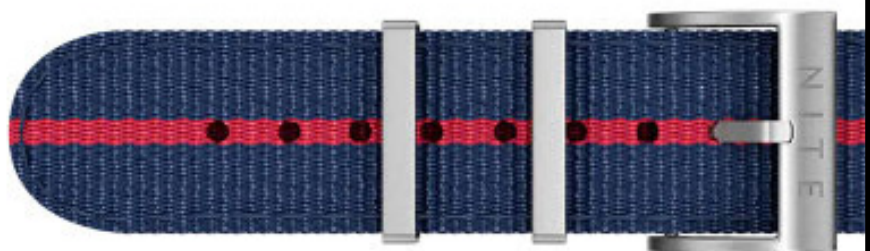
As a British company, we craft classically designed watches that are built to endure all conditions, from the elements to the ocean, wind, and cold, ensuring confidence in every situation.

Nite Watches have only used the finest components. All our have Swiss-made movements & self-powered Tritium illumination, the very best watch illumination technology.

▪ [www.nitewatches.com](http://www.nitewatches.com)



**NEW  
STRAP  
NEW  
LOOK**





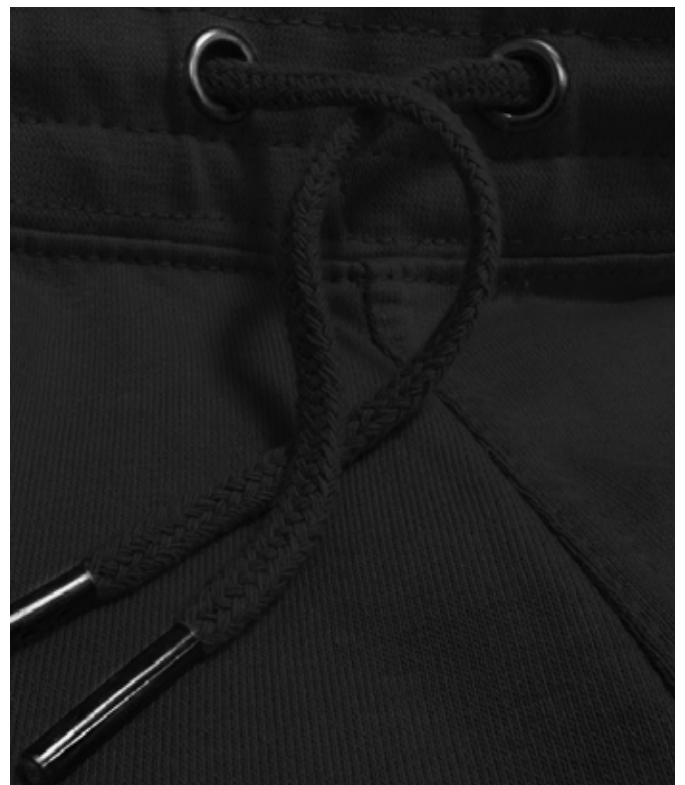
# HSD FRENCH TERRY SHORTS

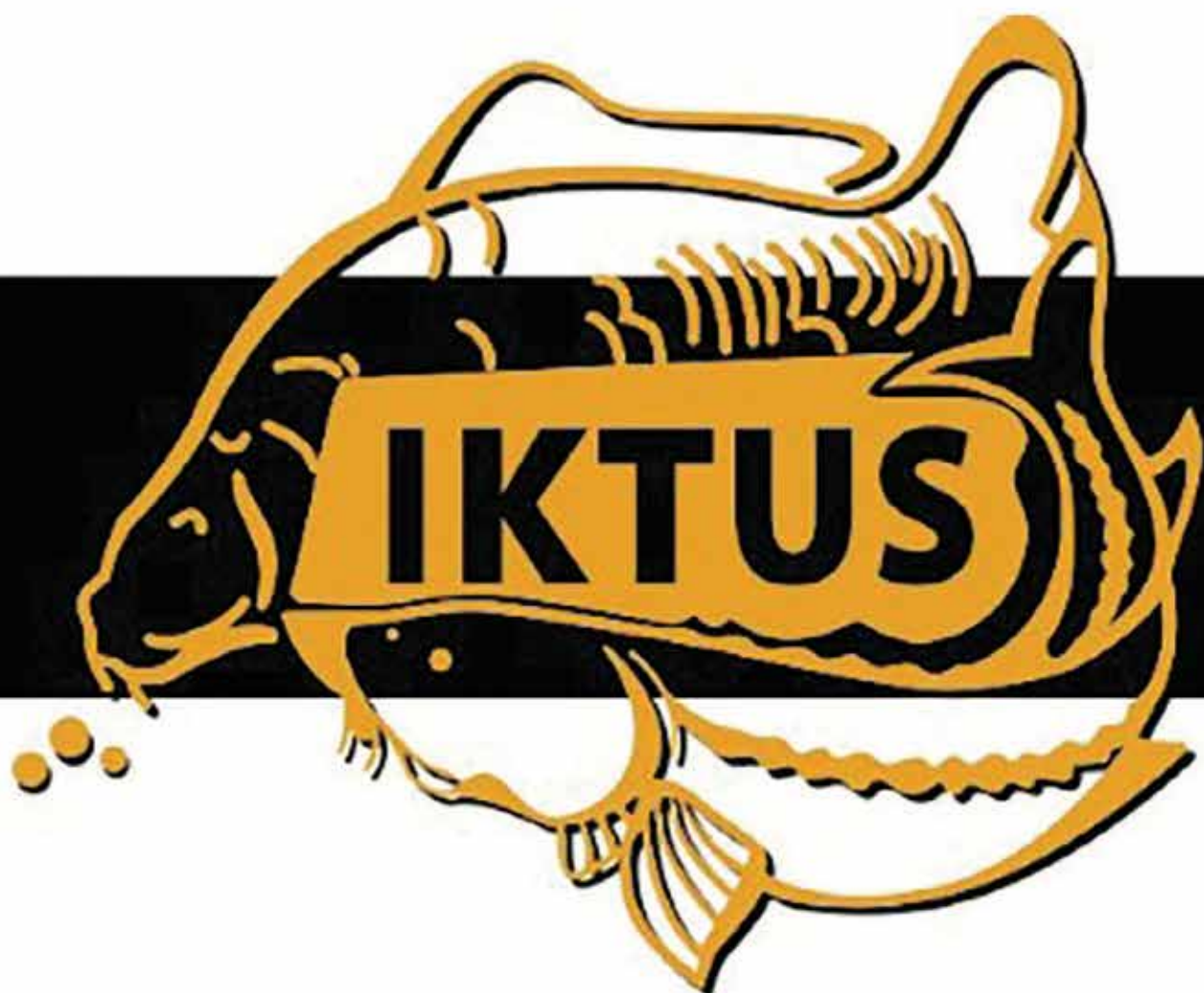


HSD have manufactured five new shorts, they are designed for summertime ease in midweight cotton terry. The HSD french terry shorts offer a comfortable fit that lets you move

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

■ [www.hotspotdesign.com](http://www.hotspotdesign.com)





# FISHING RESORT



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# CAMELBACK FLIP STRAW AND FLIP CHUG BOTTLES



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# LAGOON PB



Luke Pazik with the new lake record at the Blue Lagoon and a new PB!! at 42.3

# GHOSTIE PB



Tom Maker broke his PB at Creedence with this 40lb 3oz Casper

# MANOR BRACE FOR MARC



Marc Twaite On Manor Farm landed a cracking brace of carp with a 40lb and 36lb



## CATCH REPORTS

### IT'S A GOAL

Ian Wheatley kicked his week off work with a fish known as Annie's Common at 42lb 12oz.



### SECOND 60



Nathan Jackson said "The one I really wanted the mighty "PITCHERS" at 60.8 and my second UK 60 pounder feel's mad even saying that!! "



# FREAKY



Mark 'Des' Diment with The Freak at 44.04, this fish has not been out for a few years, last out at 29.



# MORNING GLORY



Nathan Westwood enjoying a session of a lifetime. Brace of 40's this morning. Ruby @ 43lb 7oz & Nemo @ 44lb makes for a mega mornings hauling.







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**HAWK NIGHT FALL**

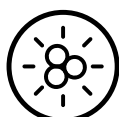


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# MARRS ATTACKS



Anthony Marrs said "This low 40 was the biggest of 4 fish from a short spell feeding frenzy before it all went quiet again."

# EASY ROSS



On his third night fishing a Berkshire syndicate lake, Ross Bancroft with the pit's largest common weighing 42.02



Simon Loveridge did an overnighter on his syndicate and managed one bite - a new UK PB of 60lb.

# PB 60



# SOCIAL 40

Andy Flower landed 'Average Joe' at a cracking 44lb 6oz





# ALRIGHT JACK



Nathan Jackson said "As I was packing up the other morning I had this unit at 44 and then the other rod went with a 33!"

# CRAFTY CROFTY



John Croft visited Old Mill Lakes, and winkled out the Big Lin at 40lb



# ON THE CASE

Steve Casey with 2-Tone at 44lb from Little Moulsham



# BELLE OF THE BALL

Kieth Newton caught Sandmartins' cluster at 43lb





# LINCS LUNKER

Macca at 41lb mirror, a new forty for The Foundry in Lincoln for Simon Crow.



# WEEKEND WHACKER

Steven Sinclair said "Some Saturday nights are better than others. Repeat for me but over 40lb this time"







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### PAUL'S PB



Paul Wilkinson landed his PBt and set a new lake record at Blackcomb, Adh Fisheries, tipping the scales at 40lb 14oz!

### TARGET ACHIEVED



Billy Brickell banked this cracker of a mirror recently at 42lbs+ from his southern syndicate



# WRAYSBURY RESULT

First 40 of the year for Liam Morgan, 40.14lb! Biggest off 8 over the bank holiday weekend from Wraysbury north!



# WELLY ROYALTY



Josh Sanders with Willow, the queen of the pond, a true giant of Welly at 57lb 1oz.



# FULLY COMMITTED

Ben Oakes  
banked Manor's  
Official 'Big Fully'  
at 44lbs during a  
recent trip



# BEAM ME UP



There's units and there's UNITS! Dan Savill with 'Scotties' from the increasingly jaw-dropping Stoneacres!



# 40'S CLUB

Louis Matthews banked his first 40lb fish on a trip to his chosen club water.



# KRACKER KEV

Jake Gallagher with 'Kev's Fish' from Stoneacres at 48lb+.. taken on a zig!







# **FARLOWS 2 RECORD**

Max Kite (aged 12) set a new PB and Lake 2 record with an incredible 41lbs 2oz catch!





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# C SCALE RETURNS



Josh Sanders caught the first of the big old girls to show up after that mental session, another familiar face, C Scale at 45lb 8oz.

# TURNER'S TRIUMPH



Ash Turner is buzzing with this one, his 2nd 40 of the year going 44.2.



# KING GEORGE

George Pembple banked this long 44lb+ mirror recently from his southern syndicate



# KING OF K1



Al Myles with everybody's favourite K1 carp, 'The One', at a weight of 41lb 10oz.



### FLYING START

To say Luke Wallace has got off to a flying start would be a 56lb 10oz understatement! Job Done



### KENT'S KRACKER



The stars aligned for Jed Kent landing a 51lb 8oz common whilst taking your daughter fishing for the afternoon! New UK pb since I had a 50lb mirror well over 10 years ago now! The luckiest, most loveliest of times indeed!



# PAVYOTTS PERFECTION

Shane McGill with  
a superb 40lb 4oz



Dan Drewry with 48lb  
2oz of angry UK common

# MR ANGRY





# RICKY'S BRACE



Jordan Duffus banked a brace of 40's from Bayeswater day ticket lake. Jordan's common weighed in at 40lb 4oz and the mirror weighed 40lb 6oz





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**DAVE GASKIN**



# MIKE'S PET

**A**fter his recent undisputed king of the pond success landing at a new all-time high of 51lb Shoulders at 6oz! 47lb, Dave Gaskin “Arriving at the lake and returned for an overnigher light fading, I had a quick look with high hopes—and he around and it was evident wasn’t disappointed when that the warmer day-time he slipped the net under the temperatures had encouraged



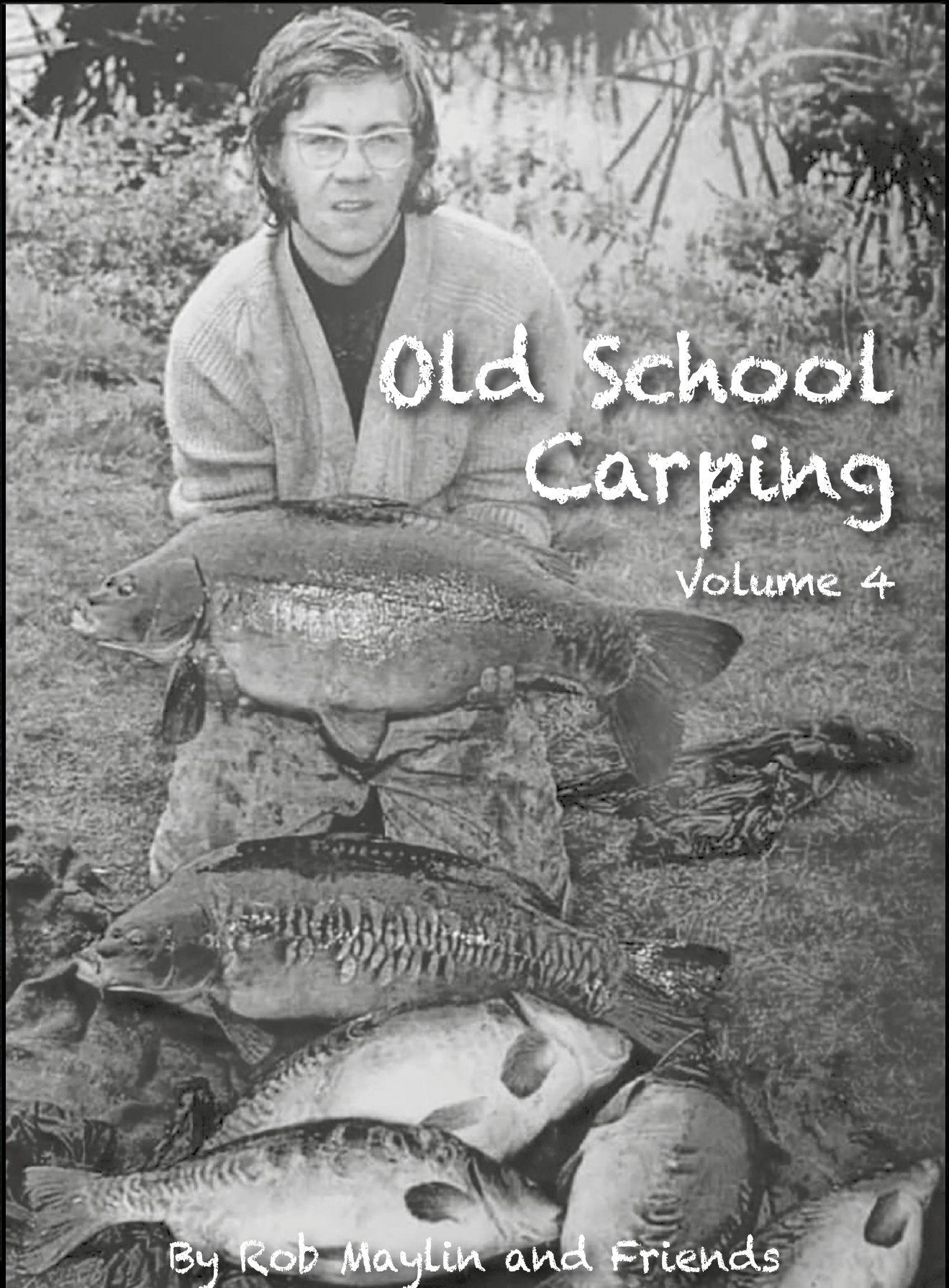
the carp to congregate in the upper layers. There were enough subtle signs to make it clear that there were a few carp in the area and with temperatures still cooling significantly during the night, I hedged my bets and fished 2 on the deck and 1 on a zig.”

“Later that evening, a fishing showed not more than 20 yards out in a fashion rather, carp in the area and with attempting to shed parasites, so I wound in the zig rod, changed over to a bottom presentation and repositioned it where





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I saw the fish show. With a firm enough thud on the lead I was confident the rig was presented and given the short range it was easy enough to catapult a few manilla freebies around it." I recognised it to be 'Mike's

as I had the work alarm traded for a Delkim hitting the high note. After a dogged fight the big angry mirror was in the net and after inspecting each flank

"The simple tactic worked Pet', the king of the pond!"



# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



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



In his own words, Pipe lake member Paul Slade said "Wow that's a red letter session mad 36 hours - 26 lbs 8 oz common big ghostie at 31 lbs Del Boy at 31 lbs 4 oz small common then the big mirror at 38 lbs 4 oz weights all witnessed by another member....been after these for ages so to have caught them back to back blow my mind....thank you carp gods





# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



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



17lb



24lb 12oz



23lb 10oz, 24lb 8oz and 26lb+  
- smashing it as ever. Nice  
one mate



20lb 8oz



17 lbs 8 oz gonna be cracker  
when older and bigger



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# Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



30 lbs 3oz new PB for Alan Roberts Nice one Alan



First UK 40 for Gary Pearman using his trusted AM Baits. This carp from the members lake is known as Twisted Scale



Del Boy out weighing 31 lbs 12 oz



16lb cracker



31lb 4oz



18 lbs for young Archie Kemp well done



26lb







**HARRY PALMER**



# ROGER THE DODGER

That's right, folks, the usually elusive Roger the Dodger has been out twice in quick succession, with Harry Palmer continuing his fine start to life on Horton Church Lake by nailing the coveted mirror on a zig!

Harry said: "I got down on Wednesday and had a low twenty on a zig within an hour, so thought it was gonna be a good session, but a few days later nothing else had happened.

"I was on the phone to my dad and said I was thinking about coming home a day early, but he talked me into staying, then the next morning I ended up having two takes on the zigs, the best one being Roger the Dodger at 48lb 8oz, which was a new PB for me, and a 27lb common. I was absolutely made up with it!

"Zigs fished 6ft under the surface with black foam soaked in Bug Amino Smoke did the trick!"













**HAYDEN HOSKINS**



# WRAYSBURY MAGIC

A truly magical Monster Shrimp popup was moment. Arriving the hookbait, fished over to a fairly busy lashings of free Monster lake, I was Shrimp offerings, flake, pellet surprised to see a couple of and hemp.

good areas free. Wasting no I was a bit surprised when I time, I put out half a bucket hadn't had a bite by morning of bait over each of my rods as it looked and felt good fished at over 100yards for it. As I lay on my bed range (effort in itself, let watching the water, one of me tell you). A small yellow my rods burst into life, with



line being stripped at will. As soon as I lifted into the fish, I knew it was a good one. It was pulling so hard, but not in a maniacal way as the smaller ones often do, just a heavy, relentless plodding. Seeing the brown colours and shoulders, I thought it could be Single Scale (one of Wraysbury's most sought-after carp). As she shook her head violently, I saw the single scale and knew it was her. A few more nervous seconds and she was finally in the net. I was going to do my usual self-takes but thought this moment was too good to share. @thehappygolucky1 was soon making his way round to take





some pics and with the help of Billy and another member, we weighed her in at 42lb. We were all blown away by just how good looking this carp is and, to share the moment with people happy to share the capture was beautiful. A true reminder of what carp fishing can be.





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

**DESIGN**  
**C**

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Legends  
Are Made

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**JOSH MARCHANT**



# NOT SUNK IN

I never thought I'd be writing this but I now have a UK PB of 53.05lb and to be honest it still hasn't properly sunk in.

After arriving to the lake for the yearly social I was eager to get the rods out after seeing a lot of fishing present in my swim. Although it didn't go as planned and with 36 hours passing by without a beep I upped sticks and moved down the so called deep end. It was apparent that there was a lot of fishing holding in the middle but the margin looked too carpy to ignore. I placed a solid bag a few rod lengths down the margin



narrowly clipping the reeds and after a few hours the rod tore off and I sadly lost what looked like a very big common at the net. With no hesitation I got another bag deployed and the next morning I received a few beeps and the bobbin pulled up tight and I was hooked into what I believed to be a small one until it rolled and then burst into action. After a short lived hairy battle I slipped the net under the fish and I looked to my pal and said "Yeah that's a seriously big fish". She went 53.05lb after the sling and I couldn't quite believe what had just happened. It was great to share it with a load of mates and a memory I will cherish forever.

My solid bag consisted of Baitworks Edge minimix with a Royal Marine bottom bait mounted onto a simple slip d made up loads of Atomic Tackle parts.









# BIG CARP

## *fine arts*

### WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS

*The Legendary Big Carp Series*



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

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**MARK BARTLETT**



# WELSH WONDER

Oh WOW! Wales' finest for lovely carp a nudge under Bart! 47lb of red belly, black 40lb I was itching to get back and sunken golden back for another go. However scales, this carp is about as that wasn't meant to be with close to perfection as you other commitments so the can get! Braced with a 40lb may trip it was.

common and three others, With this time of year have a word!!!! depth of water is a huge

Bart sent us a few words: importance so I split my rods

Mark Bartlett said "After my up to cover as many spots first trip to my llyncaetynant as I could. Small patches of fishery syndicate in February attractive bait was key but going so well catching a at the same time you're not



committing to a spot with large amounts of bait.

Some mini pellets, 8mm boilies and some crushed boilie was just the ticket for this. A 12mm pink hookbait was my choice fished on spinners with size 6 Wide Gape Long Shank hooks, 35lb Coretex hooklinks with Slik clips.

I ended up catching five fish over the course of a couple of

nights from 4 different spots.

Including a brute 36lb linear, a lovely 37.4 glass common, another common over that magical 40lb barrier and the cherry on the cake being a colossal 47.2 mirror called "the carving".

I was fishing with Trev who managed a few lovely fish himself too. So good times all round and a lovely bit of fishing."









# BIG CARP

*fine arts*  
presents

## WATERCOLOUR CARP PAINTINGS



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

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

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# BIG CARP

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

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

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**OSCAR THORNTON**



# THE BLOWBACK RIG

I always favour a longer rig, often fishing waters holding big carp, I want my rigs to offer plenty of movement. Fishing this rig, I can be super versatile with my hookbaits - I can fish big snowman baits, smaller baits or wafers, or even maggots. This means in pretty much all my fishing situations, my rig will stay the same. I use an overhand knot on the shank of the hook acting as the 'blow back section' and the reason I use a knot rather than the

more commonly used swivel, is I feel a knot just looks much neater, and is less bulky than having a swivel on the hook.

I always fish with Kamakura Wide Gape X's, I've used Wide Gapes for years and they never let me down. They are immensely sharp and the thicker gauge that the 'X' range offers, gives me peace of mind I'll land what I hook.

I use a short section of medium shrink tube, steamed in at a pretty tight angle to close the gape of the hook,



with a small section of N Trap tripped back to create more movement, helping the hook catch. I use the Weed Green or Silt coloured N Trap, usually in 20lb, but will go heavier in weed or snaggy situations.

At the lead end, for me it's a Hybrid Lead Clip every time. I've so much confidence in them and never fish with Heli's. It's always worked for me so I'm not one to change for the sake of it. On this, I'll add the heaviest lead I can get away with, when casting I favour a 4oz Distance Lead., which remains true in flight, stretching the line out lovely when it hits the clip and there's no denying a heavy lead is going to anchor that hook when the time comes!!.

Then lastly, my mainline of choice is 15lb Kontour, which I'll fish straight through to my Lead Clip, fishing it super slack so it's pinned to the lakebed and out of sight.

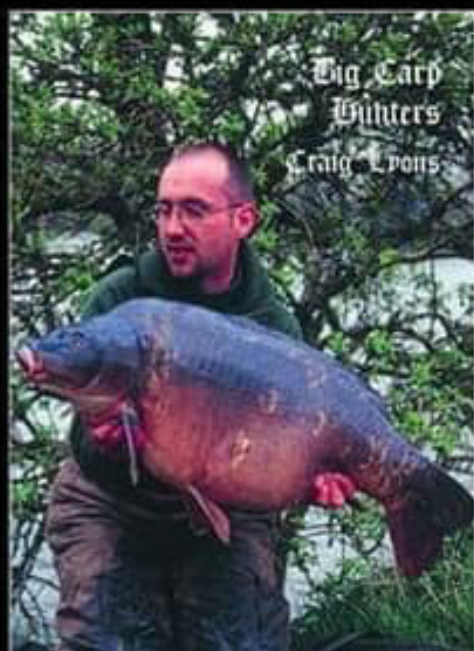




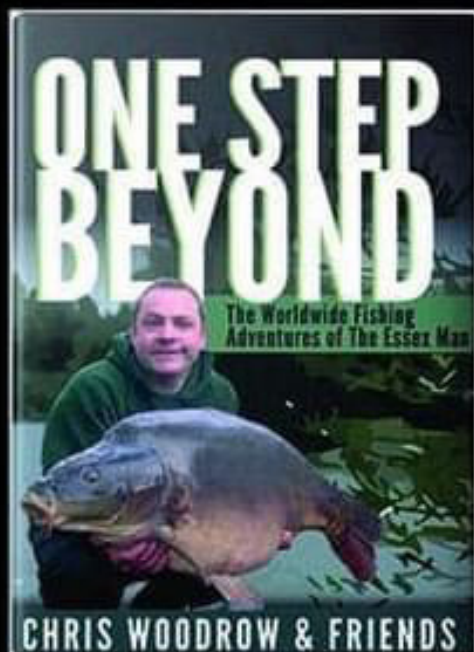
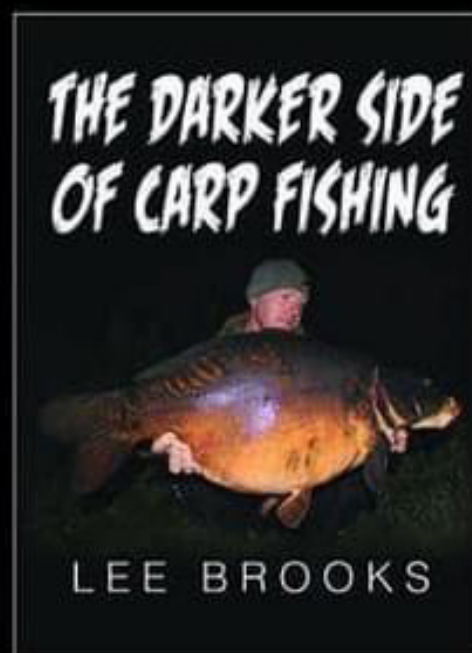




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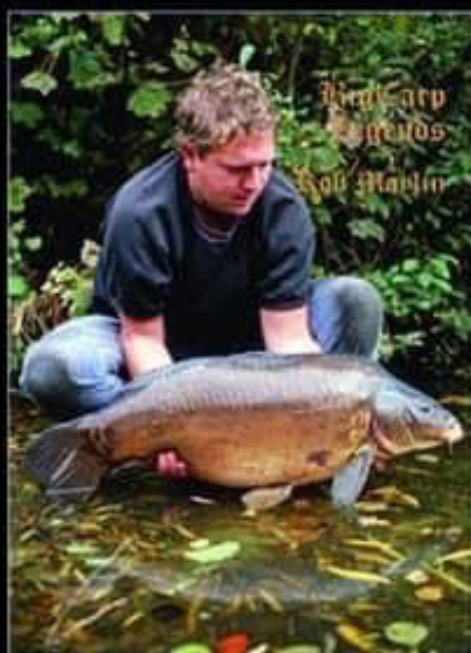
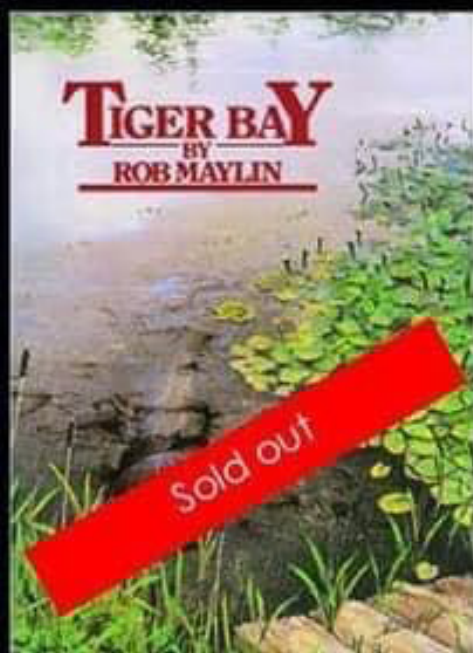
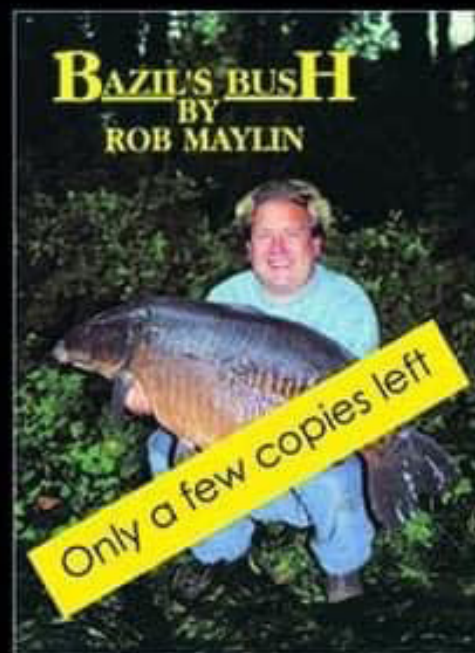
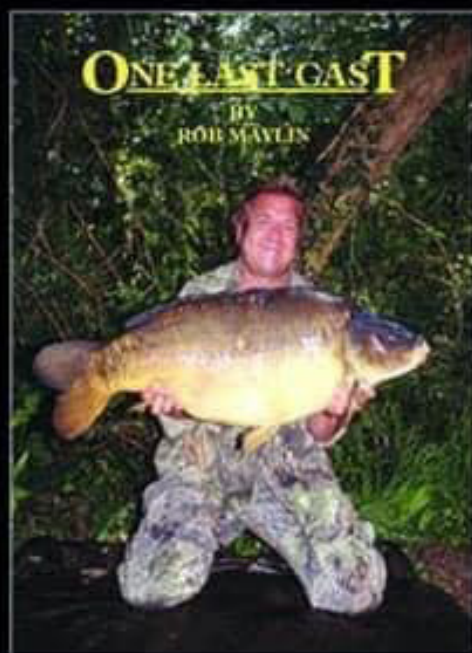
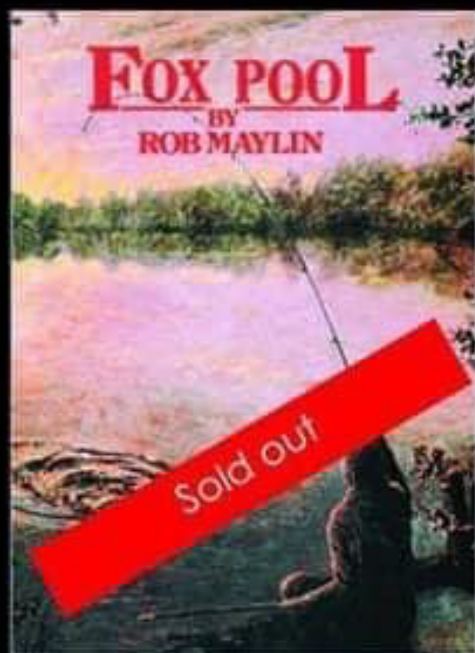


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**TYRONE MARDER**



# HAINAULT YETI

My angling journey started at the age of 7 in the year 1978, tagging along with a couple of my friends of a similar age; off we set, gradually wading through a small stream hunting stickle backs, using our cupped hands, whilst having our socks and trainers wrapped around our necks, while trying to coax those tiny fish into the silkweed, where they then would not have been able to escape easily from our plan of capture and to place them in our stream filled jam jars. The time was taken to see if any of these little fish would slip up and be captured by our plans. Funnily enough, even back then whoever ended up with the most sticklebacks



in their jar were the winner, but all fish were returned to their natural low water filled home. Catch and release was obviously in my DNA even at that very young age in my first angling journey, obviously this was a natural response and not nurtured.

My grandfather on my father's side was the only fisherman in my family and he at times had mentioned he would take me and teach me how to fish, but disappointingly he never followed through with this offer, for whatever reason, which as a child longing to get my first experience on the bank was upsetting; however what it did make me realize was that if I was to actually go to go and learn about fishing it was down to me to go it alone..... So armed with a cheap 6ft rod, reel and end tackle (all included from Woolworths), I persuaded my mum to take me to the River Lea, where I continued to

struggle my arse off trying to learn and muddle through the set up, let alone catching anything!! I certainly then realized this wasn't catching stickle-backs in the river with my hands. After a couple of fishless experiences using bread pinches and having no clue about balancing my set up with lead shot, along with not knowing about the different types of river fish and how they interacted at different depths and their preferred areas of their habitat.....I then stumbled across an equalizing bait advantage when it came to not having a clue – the bait in question was maggots! So with a newly acquired quill float; the stubby type, not the classic pointed painted and glazed quill, this one was unpainted white and crudely chopped at both ends, where a rubber float band was attached to the bottom, a lead shot put on just enough to get the float



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to cock itself, and now I was fishing with maggots on the River Lea at last, at an area near the Broxbourne Lido. Guess what; hey presto the quill float and the maggots smashed it and I caught my first fish, a Gudgeon of about 1oz! I caught another 3 and was very happy with my first fishes, caught through my own research and reading. My mind racing surely a great white shark capture was on the cards!!

I continued my captures using maggots, amassing Bleak, Dace and Roach, making their way into my keep net. I learnt about surface feeders, mid and bottom type feeding fish, also predatory fish such as perch and pike, learning it wasn't a good idea to put perch in a keep net with Gudgeon and silver fish as they seemed to disappear when taking the keep net out, whilst the perch had doubled their size!!

Someone had told me about

River Lea at Pickett's Lock and I was informed that below and above the lock were good spots to catch a lot of fish, that there were big: Bream, Carp, Tench and even Barbel, so liking the thought of catching some of these exotic monsters I again got my mum to drop me off there (during the school holidays) with my tackle and bait in hand. I was now regularly catching Gudgeon, roach, perch and the odd small bream. On this occasion I had picked to fish at the bottom side of the lock, opposite the footpath bank, it was early for me at 8am. The section I had picked for my fishing endeavors was a long concrete manmade bank, which was in fact a very easy and convenient place to fish from, especially armed now with a 10ft Shakespeare glass fibre rod and Mitchel reel with a professional shop bought red tipped black bodied stick float. A big pinch of bread was



# SECRETS OF THE THAMES

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## Secrets of The Thames

*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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molded onto my size 12 hook and I was now targeting big bream, Tench or carp. Within 20 minutes of casting out I had a walk up the bank to a lad I knew, who was fishing with his dad (who was deaf and had limited speech). After a chat, I returned to the concrete bankside where I had placed my rod after casting out, to find that it was in fact missing!! I immediately felt at a loss as to where it could have gone. Was it taken?? I went back to my friend and his father, exclaiming that someone must have taken it! In seeing my distress they walked back with me to my casting out area and I was tapped on the shoulder by my friends father, whilst he gestured to the water area below the bank (which was a steep straight drop off the concrete bank, about 5ft down) and there was my rod floating close to the bank! I leaned over to see if I could reach it, but the drop was too much and it was evident there was no chance of me reaching it this way on my own, so all of a sudden I was grabbed by my legs and dangled over the river by my feet being held onto for dear life by my friends dad; which allowed me to reach my rod and save it from a watery grave, at which point I was pulled back up the bank by my feet with my rescued rod in hand!! When I got back onto my own feet, I was taken by surprise by my rod actually hooping over and the reel handle starting to spin backwards!! Whatever was on the other end was not giving up easily! What seemed like forever (more like 5 minutes) a landing net was slid under the fish, (by the rod savior) which revealed to be a beautiful silver Common Carp, weighing in at a scale spinning weight of 4lbs; the joy, shock and elation of going from rod possibly stolen to



landing my first monster carp (for me)! Imagine this stunned 10 year old boy, taking in these events and I was now a carp angler for life.

There were a couple of lakes I had been told about, containing a good head of carp, which really piped my interest, one was Boxers lake in Enfield, and the other was Holyfield lake in Waltham Abbey Essex, both of which contained plenty of fish of single figures, doubles and the possibility of a 20 pounder!!

Boxers Lake in Enfield was closest to where I lived in Edmonton so this is mainly where I got to fish, and managed to catch carp up to the 8-9lb bracket.

At this time I managed to get a position working on a Saturday, in Don's of Edmonton (a coarse angling shop), as a behind the counter extra pair of hands. So it was a bit of a ying and yang situation as i couldnt fish Saturdays but it

meant that I got a discount on bait and tackle aswell as learning about how to keep maggots fresh, i enjoyed watching Paul on the fly-fishing section, tie up every different type of fly imaginable for trout and salmon.

This was in 1983 and I remember us having Richworth baits in stock and some Kevin Nash tackle equipment; such as overwrap and Bivy, foam lined rod hodall's and carp sacks. I also remember the first Fox Mk1 bed chair coming into the shop and thinking it was my new goal to get one of them when I had enough money! I actually still have some swivels, pattern oster type booms, with beads and a spool of Dacron from back then.

Back to the actual fishing..... armed with a ball of paste and some tutti fruity boilie I got dropped off at Holyfield's Lake, had a look around and seeing that the left hand bank had no one



over there, I decided to hump my gear around there, picked a swim with a nice size weed bed about 35-40 yards out to the left and as I only had 1 rod I decided to put out some hand rolled paste baits, these were Honey Yucatan and yellow. The hook bait was a tutti fruity 18mm boilie, that was cast just in front of the weed bed. At this time there was a boilie bait ban in place, hence the use of paste bait free offerings, but there were a lot of small carp in the lake; I'm talking fry and ounces so I knew the paste bait probably wouldn't last long enough as a hook bait, hence the tutti fruity boilie, which was a bit cheeky, but in my mind this wasn't doing any harm as I wasn't firing lots into the lake. Area baited, rod out for the first time using my Efgeeco optonic bought from Dons with my wages and discount; I sat on the bankside, no chair just free style. Don,

came round for the day ticket money, which was around £2.50 a rod, I remember him appearing to be a bit fed up walking around to me seeing I only had 1 rod and saying something along the lines of it being a long walk round for just £2.50!! I got my ticket, put my fairy liquid bottle top on it, with the necessary blue tac putty rammed into it, to weight it down and I then felt all good fishing with my red bottle top in place and ready for some action.

5 minutes after Don left, the rod ripped off bottle top smashing against the bottom of the rod and the optonic bleeping not very loudly as they were really quiet, hence the Les Bamford conversions that came afterwards.

Anyway, carp on and it gave me a good run around the weed bed. After 10 minutes battle I have my first double figure carp on the bank at 10 LB eight oz and a new PB.





Holyfield was a dream lake in my head at that moment, surely there are more to come?

In fact Holyfield Lake was a big part of Carp angling history in regards to carp stockings and carp rearing in the early 1970s through to 1982. The Simmons family headed by Norman Simmons, acquired the Lake Fishers Green in 1975 and created a purpose run fish farm specifically for carp, this

being Holyfield Lake.

In 1976 Norman's son Martin, who now runs Homers Field Complex in Suffolk, caught a carp from Holyfield Lake that weighed 45 LB 12 oz and at that time the biggest rod and line caught carp in the UK. However this weight was not officially declared or recorded as this would taint Dick Walkers record with Clarissa!

The strain of carp Norman



Simmons had imported to the UK were a Belgian strain. These imports stopped in 1974 due to UK authorities clamping down on the importation of fish from abroad in 1983 to 1984. When I started fishing at Holyfield the big carp had been removed by the Simmons family and the remaining stock were singles, doubles and maybe a 20 or two.

While I was fishing on the bank, which was adjacent to the cottage owned by the Simmons, I would hear carp crashing and jumping out of the lake in the cottage garden. The carp must have been big as the noise's they made were loud enough to get my heart pumping and adrenaline racing and thinking of the size of these 'unknown carp', made me really tempted to grab my rods and net, jump the fence and see what was in the lake, however I refrained from temptation and always

wondered what was in the cottage garden lake?

Another lake came to my attention at the same time, and it was open in the closed season. It wasn't too far from Holyfield's and had a stock of trout along with other species including a good head of carp present, again with fish up to around the 20 LB mark. This lake was run by a guy called Harry who also had another lake near Dobbs Weir.

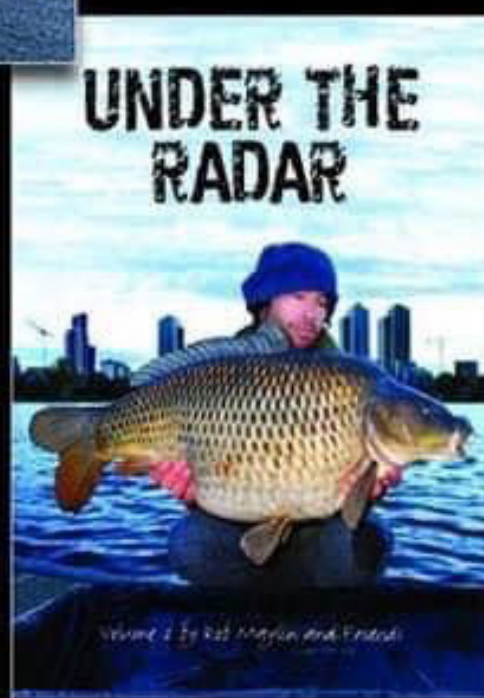
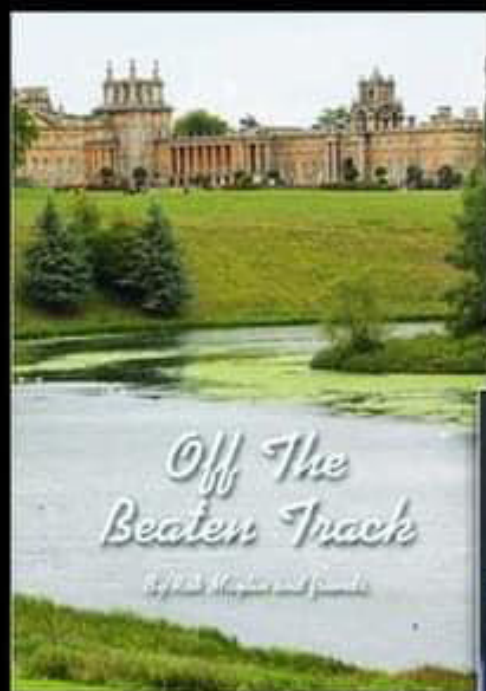
The Lake I fished was about 8 or 9 acres and was square which you could drive around nearly the whole lake, which made getting your tackle to your swim a lot easier no barrows in those days.

Between Boxers lake Holyfield and Harry's Lake and managed to catch quite a few fish up to around the 18 LB mark, which was from Harry's Lake. Typically, with me and photos, I didn't get a shot of my first double from



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Holyfield or the 18 LB PB from Harry's as i had no camera first time and at Harry's I'd run out of film. So, I let the fish go as it was October dark, cold and I was using my carp sack as a cover to try and keep warm until my mum would come to pick me up at an arranged time. In fact, I never had incredible picture's that have come out in perfect focus or perspectives as at this time i never had a decent camera. Having said this i have plenty of pictures that i love from this time.

It was around this time; I got into football as well as my fishing and got quite sidetracked playing on Sundays, winning the league title and cup finals in the year 1984. So, fishing took a little back seat for a few years. I also discovered girls and the pros and cons of girlfriends and fishing not quite mixing well.

Through a friend of the family, I was told about

Hainault Forest Park Lake and that it contained carp over 30lb but that it was quite a tricky water. This was late into 1989 so I had split up with my girlfriend had been with for a few years and decided to take up the challenge of trying to catch a 20lb plus carp and hopefully bigger! The ticket for Hainault could be purchased on the bank from the head bailiff, who was an older gentleman who went by the nickname of Tuska. It was only when he started talking to me when issuing my permit that I realized why he had this nickname. He had one big tooth left in the middle of his mouth and lots of spittle came flying out either side of his big ivory Tusk tooth, hitting me straight in the face. Ha ha ha. In fact, he was just the first of a whole lot of characters that fished and visited the banks of this historic and special Public Park Lake. Also the stock of carp being no less interesting



or magical like the anglers that fished it past and present.

My first season was probably late May to early June 1990. I loved an island, and Hainault had a fair sized one at the rear end of the lake so I opted to fish to it from the far end bank which is about 40 to 45 yards cast to get to it tight on the island margin. I only had old gear from my younger teens fishing so I scrambled together

a couple of rods that were totally different lengths and test curves to each other. Some black painted bank sticks and buzz bars, with some white bodied monkey climber's to complement the setup, I had a 45-inch leader nylon umbrella and my Nash overwrap. Not ever getting around to purchasing that fox bed chair, I had to settle for stealing my mum's sun lounger which





was an Argos special with realtree patterns and roses and chrysanthemums style padded cover. A sleeping bag which was again from Argos, and red and blue reversible that looked shit whatever color you had on the outside. All this said and done, I was able to fish the lake with my mythical monster within my grasp. So it didn't matter what my set up looked like – I was fishing once again!!

It was either my first or second visit when I met the now well known carp angler Jerry Hammond. It was at the rear of the island section of the lake. He didn't quite have a complete set up either. He had matching Rods and buzzers and a decent British Army issue sleeping bag but not quite sure if he had fox bed chair on Argos Lafuma type thing. Anyway, set up wise he was looking better than my mishmash of tackle and come to think of it, he was built like

a Greek God compared to my 19 year old skinny white pasty body and spotty face lol. The kind of bait I chose to fish with on Hainault was a catchum heavy type fish meal-based mix with high flavor level fruit flavor, presumably PG based, but I can't remember the actual flavor. The fishmeal bag was 1kilo and I used these baits sparingly as they were well over flavored. I was fishing tight to the island with both rods and noticed a few times carp would roll over or lunk out over my baited areas. But no take would transpire. On my third session using same bait and tactics, I fished a swim on the corner of the island, which was on the tree lined bank, here I got my first bite. My Optonic erupted, my rod shot forward as the clutch on my reel tightened, I went into my first Hainault Carp, and boy did this carp put up a struggle! I somehow managed to get it away from



any dangerous snags and overhanging tree branches that were extending into the water and i gave it the butt; not realizing that the Carp in Hainault had very soft mouths, as it was a deep silted bottom type lake bed in 95% of areas and so they had no hard gravel type aggregates to pick up in their mouths when feeding and toughen their mouths up. The carp is now in front of me in the margins giving deep boils and vortexes. Occasionally it's back fin paddle would break the surface. It was a good-sized carp and I instinctively knew it would probably be a new PB, but I didn't relax off from the pressure I was exerting on it. It then hit the



surface briefly flashing its right-hand flank at me and with a cluster of beautiful golden scales and pinky blue grey side and shoulders. At this time a member the public walking past stopped and asked if I needed help; I said yes please and asked if they could grab my net and place it in the water to my left, which the young fellow did. The fish then kept its depth, however I put too much pressure on as it hit the surface once more. Then ping twang. My hook promptly pulled out of its mouth at a rate of knots and came down with a loud fud in front of me. B\*\*\*\*\*s, s\*\*t, F\*\*k, we all know that empty feeling and helplessness and finality of its over, gone, done! No weighing, no picture, no holding it aloft in your hands, your hard faught over trophy was gone; the lad with the net pulled it out of the water saying unlucky and left quickly leaving me just like

that scaley leviathan had just done. Although it being my own fault for putting too much pressure onto the hook hold, looking back, I think the fish I lost was a carp I never got to see on the bank, im sure it was the carp called the Peach due to its heavily scaled body on the side. A fish that to my knowledge was last caught in the autumn of 1989 by a lad called Richard Box, who I later met on my travels in the Lee Valley. Richard was a very good all-round angler and what they call now a thinking angler. Also on this water i met the Wilkinson brothers; but thats for another story!

The next character I came across was a guy called Terry Butcher. He was a quiet mild-mannered person. Always seemed to have a sadness about him. He was a bit distant to begin with, however we had good chat's but i felt he didn't give up too much. Anyway, his set up was incredible to mine



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or even Jerry's!!! Consisting of stainless steel buzz bars and rod rests, top match bite alarms; rods and reels all immaculate and as straight as a Plumb line. He was part of a group of local anglers that were baiting and fishing collectively together. The other members of the group didnt really know of me, which is fine as I just wanted to be fishing and try and land one or two carp.

My next trip was a very hot morning, sun-up first thing and then the heat and the humidity really built as the day progressed. There were plenty of people around, surprisingly as it was a weekday. There's something about park lakes and sunny days. Making people just gravitate to water in heat and this day was no different. The carp had gathered at the back of the island on the rear open field side. There must have been 90% of the lakes population around there and

me realizing my bait on the bottom of the lakebed off the islands was going to be ignored by all these surface cruising carp, I decided to reel a rod in, grabbed my pot of tutti fruity pop ups and took the conventional 9-10-inch braided hair rig off and the lead, putting on a 2-ounce lead, a bead stop at about four feet depth; as the carp were in waters of 4.5 - 5 foot depth, but were positioning themselves on the surface or just below. So, I basically knocked up a whats known as a modern day zig rig and mounted my nylon hair rig Tootie fruity pop up and targeted the slowly moving carp swimming in front of me. I watched a dark decent size looking fish coming across of me. I cast well beyond the carp and slowly reeling in, using the tip of the rod to get the pop up to glide directly in front of the fish hoping, and anticipating the plan to work! To my surprise, it actually



worked and all of a sudden, I'm again playing a Hainault carp in blistering heat and this carp was seriously shifting some water, but because of the distance between lead and hook was so long, the fight felt totally different any other I'd had before. At one point around 30 minutes in I was thinking maybe it was

foul hooked as the line kept going under the middle of its body and it just felt strange. After another 10 minutes, of playing the fish I eventually got the carp into the margins thinking this has got to be over; but learning from my first loss and not bullying the carp like I had previously helped me eventually landed



this carp which when getting onto the bank (with about 20 people around me) turned out to be big scaly Hainault Biggun as she was called. I pulled the net apart and clearly could see it wasn't foul hooked at all. The hook was embedded in its bottom lip, but more amazingly it was as if someone had looped by hand, my nylon line around and under the bend of the hook. Basically, that hook was not coming out this time no matter what. The only way I was losing that carp was to the line parting or getting into a snag. The weirdest hookhold I've ever had or seen in all my days of the carping. The carp was just under 34lbs, my first carp over 20 lbs and 30 LB all at the same time. I was on cloud 9 and buzzing my boobs off! After catching that amazing carp I came to learn of some of the previous catchers of it and plenty of anglers that targeted it and never got to hold her in

their arms, amazing, how just some things are meant to be or not. After this beautiful catch I was asked for my presence before a fellow who was the lead character of the main group of carp anglers fishing the lake, and he was the next character I met. previously feeling almost invisible and no doubt writing me off as another noody angler who would fade away when the going got tough. His name was Peter Driscoll and on speaking to him after my capture of the big girl, he invited me, a touch reluctantly, I sensed to join their group and get onto the bait they've established into the lake over the previous few seasons and become a Fully-fledged Driscollite Disciple. Hahahahaha

So following this 10K of Hainault Premier Baits custom made red fish meal was acquired from Pete and my indoctrination into heavy baiting and big beds of bait





had begun. Looking back now I had done quite well on my own using a shop bought fish meal-based bait and high fruit flavor overpowered boilers by losing one of the A-Team and bagging the biggest fish in the lake on a Tutti as my nickname then became! The Lads in our group fishing and baiting together were Peter Driscoll, Terry Butcher, Dave Pike, Rob Pierce and then Steve Newman joined up after me and he became one of the lucky few to end up capturing both the biggen and the fish they called the Small 30, which was a rare visitor to the bank, normally around the 32-33 LB mark. There were in fact a few groups of anglers that were fishing together around that. Period and some other famous names in carp angling circles had come and gone on Hainault such as Kevin Nash had fish there, Terry Dempsey, Tony Moore, Leon Bartrop, Paul Pynen to name

but a few. Some catching the big carp they were targeting and others not. One thing for sure Hainault wasn't a piece of cake to catch any carp, no matter the angler or reputation! Other groups were Jerry Hammond, Jay Wills, and a chap called Gary.

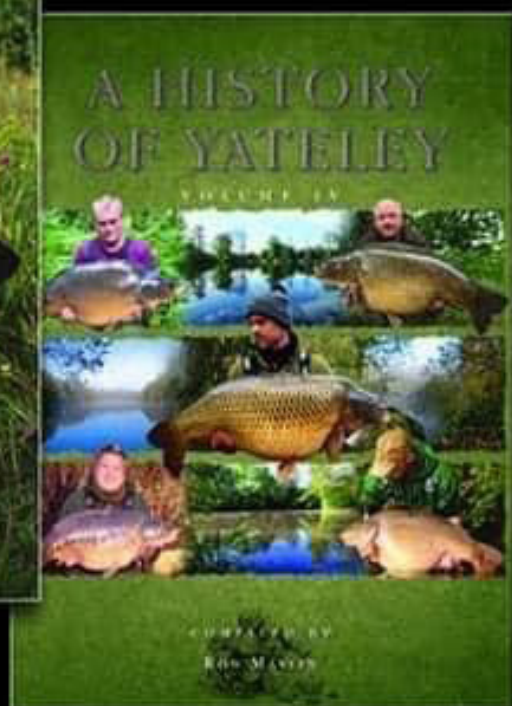
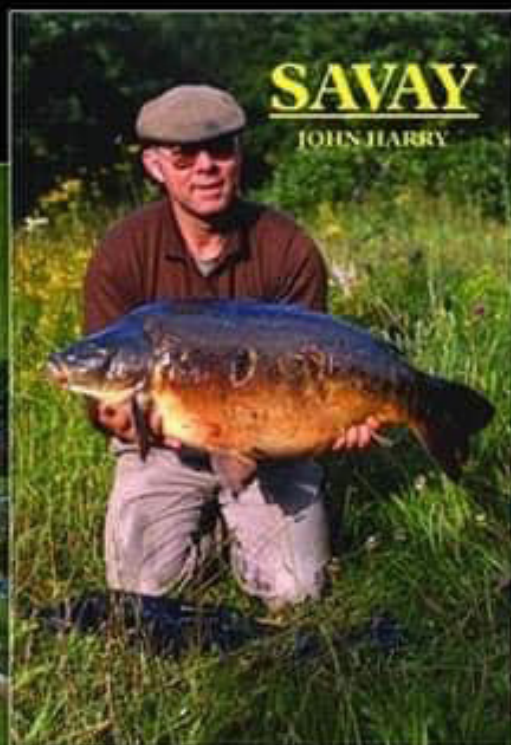
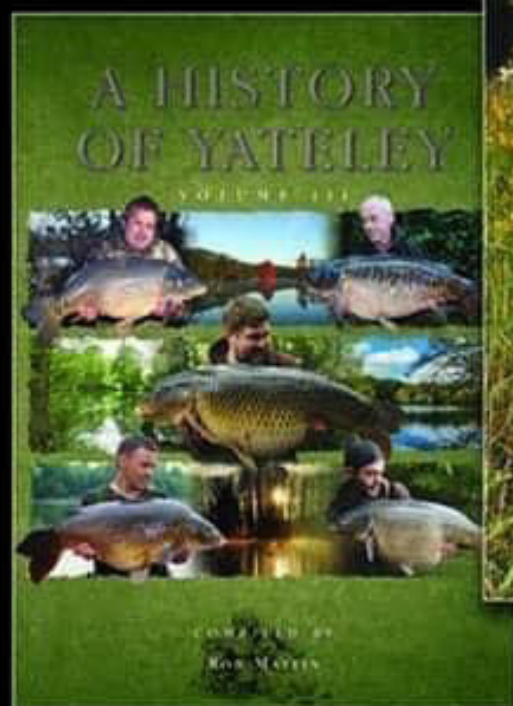
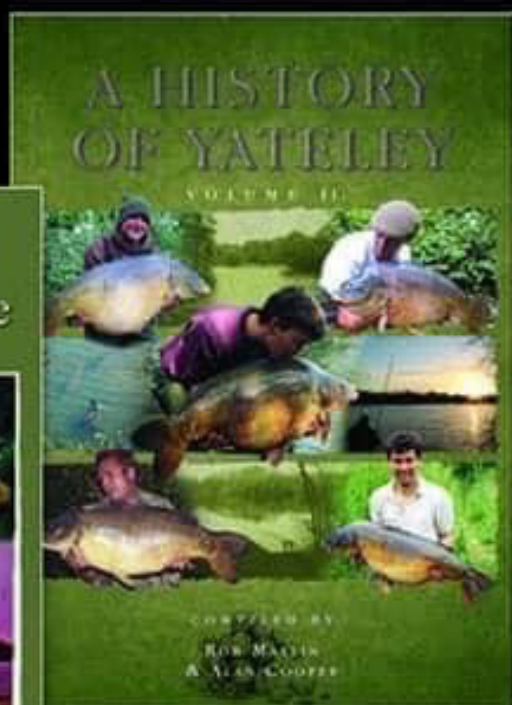
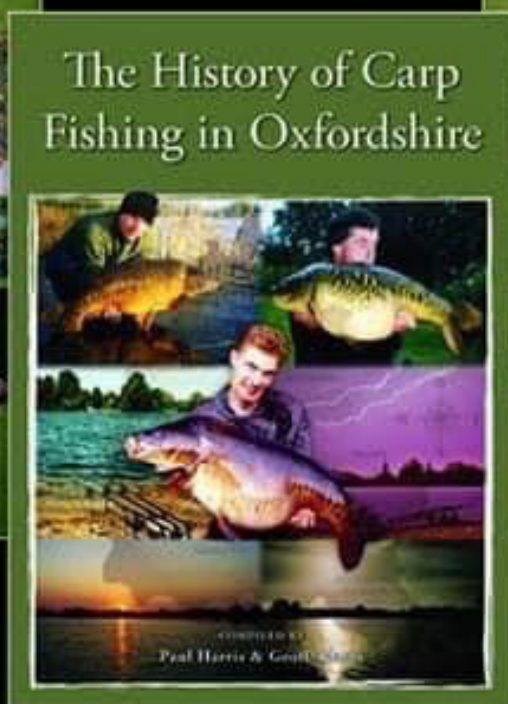
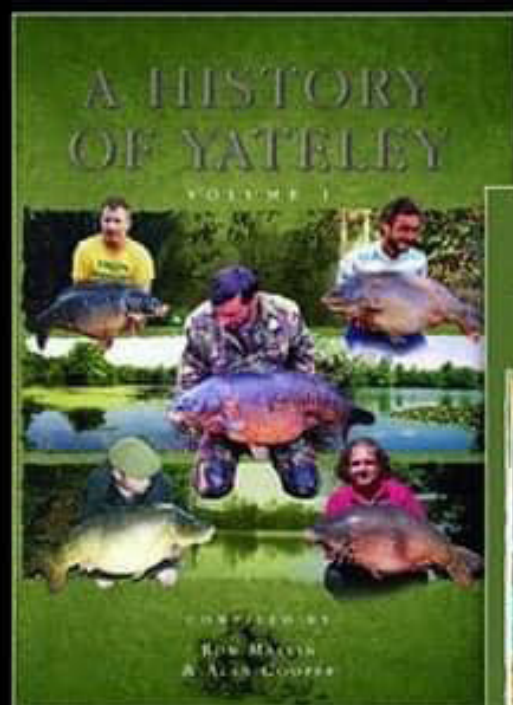
Then there were the Savvy Toad Rota lads and that was Bernie Heerey and Simon Ball fishing alternate weekends due to their Savvy commitments.

Another group of local lads were Scruffy (Mark), Paul Stapley, Steve Tyler, Dave Geary with guest appearances from Terry and Tony, Larry and Gary Davies. Also, Paul Pynen would walk around at times chatting about carp and football mainly, he was a really nice fella, as was Mick Germain who would pop over, but I never saw him fish Hainault from memory.

I only remember fishing the Chase front lake in Dagenham one night and Mick and



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Robbie turned up to fish and I think Mick had a savage take on one of his rods and it was promptly pulled into the lake! Somehow after casting about trying to find the renegade rod with carp attached with no joy, the following day that rod was retrieved with an angry 19 LB common still attached.

Hainault had its strange occurrences after darkness. There used to be a guy walk through the forest with his torch on, and he would go around the lake, walk across the steep incline hillside and off through the opposite forest. He did this ritual every night. He never had a dog with him and never uttered a word, even after being faced off and asked directly by different anglers, what was he up to? What was he looking for? he never uttered a word.

One night on a full moon I mean a real bright one, the type that makes the night seem like daytime. I heard fish

lolloping out what sounded like at the back of the island where I'd previously caught the Big Girl. So, I decided to reel my rods in, it was about 11:30 PM; grabbed my net and walked around there, keeping quiet and gently resting my backside on the damp grass bank. A carp slammed out and over, then another and another. So, gently popping a couple of rigs into place about 30 yards apart, I sat back gazing at the moon in all its heavenly glory when out of the corner of my eye to my left was a big, strange animal that seemed to run like a silverback gorilla. The moon was bright. Whatever this thing was, it moved with purpose and speed and was heading towards the lake, it had come out from the upper forest section, bounding down and across the field. I remember it leapt towards and into the water heading towards the island. I saw it



surface once halfway across and then all hell broke loose with the sound of terrified geese that regularly nested on the island. I was stunned I couldn't believe what I had just seen; surely not! Then suddenly I realized I'm sitting there on an open field, bright moon lite backdrop and this thing that looked like a yeti is on the island in front of me and only 40 to 50 yards away at the shortest distance!!! Fuck this, and the fishing..... I wound my rods in the fastest way my trembling hands would allow, picked up my net and started a good, paced jog, which turned into a full-on Sprint back to my bivy halfway down the forest side bank. I threw my rods towards my buzzers, definitely not bothering to cast them back out, and jumped into my bivies, zipped the door, up dove into my sleeping bag, zipping it up and had a bank stick in the bag with me, very hoping whatever was on that island didn't come over to check me out! The break of



dawn seemed to take forever and to be honest I was still shaking a touch when it finally arrived. I got out the zipped-up fortress thanking the Good Lord in the sky that I've been saved being eaten alive, just a few short hours ago!

Pete was in the swim they called the Trench hole, and I walked up there to see if he was up yet, which he was. So, I told him what happened, really expecting to get the piss ripped out of me and laughed at, only to receive the exact polar opposite response of yeah, I know all about it Tutti says Pete. It has been seen by a few of the lads that have fished over here and to hear that other anglers had seen and had a similar experience calmed me down straight away and gave me some much-needed relief in my own mind that I wasn't a raving looney nut job after all! Pete made me a Cupa, and I downed that and went back to my swim to put

my rods out. Not that I was properly focused on catching anything now! My mind was now wondering who the other anglers were that had seen the creature and what had actually happened with their encounters. It turned out that Richard Box was one of the small group of anglers that had encountered the Hainault Yeti while he was fishing the Dame end of the lake and was having a social with Larry and another lad. I'll just mention that on the occasion I saw this creature I wasn't drunk or been smoked anything or chewing mushrooms. I am unable to say the same for the other lads and they may have participated in the famous Hainault Sport known as Bucketeeering!!!! (if you know... you know!!) Not for the angler that had the odd tote on a joint, that's for sure. You'd be coughing your lungs out for hours after one of those bad boys. Even having



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said this the three of them saw what they described as a gorilla type creature coming out of the forest area near the dam end (I think the swim there was called the post) The creature turned to look at them, pause, then ran semi upright using front arms and legs to move. It ran across the open field side that sloped from the opposite forest, which was Hainault Golf Club side and into the trees and was gone. Rich, Larry and the other lad all looked at each other, mouths wide open and Rich asking the other lads if they saw that and they all confirmed they did. It sounds mad and crazy and if anyone reading this has an inquisitive mind and wants to try and find some local newspaper reports, of sightings of an apelike creature in Hainault Forest, I think it was in the local newspapers over the years!!

Back to the fishing side of

things, at Hainault, Carp stock was at that time maybe 50 to 60 fish. Most of these had been recently stocked. The main A team were around 8-9 fish, the biggen, small 30, Wallers fish, peach, friendly fish, the flop (Fairlop fish), the silver common and one that got put in the season I was there, that someone had rescued from a lake near the Dartford Tunnel that was going to be backfilled, it was 22/23lb and it ended up in someone's pond for a night or 2 before it was released into Hainault. All the other carp were a mix of young mirrors and older supposedly stunted commons around the 10-13lb mark, and without doing an injustice to another older member of the group I nearly missed Dent Head, a common of around the upper double size.

Quite a few of the commons got moved up the road into Fairlop Waters big lake and those fish flourished and went



on to become a lot bigger than they would have been left in Hainault Lakes. Alot reaching the 30lb+ mark. The Tunnel fish opened my eyes to carp being predatory at times with smaller fish, as a couple of weeks after being introduced to Hainault a member of our group, Steve Newman (Skinhead Steve) caught it from the Tench hole; which was not far from the damn end, on a boiled bait. He slipped it back only for us to hear the cheer of a pike angler fishing the opposite bank and other end of the lake virtually 20 minutes after Steve returned it. It had taken a dead bait and showed why fishmeal baits are so effective.

My second encounter of the 'big girl' was 2 weeks after the first capture and this time it was on a bottom bait which was Premiere Baits custom made by Pete, containing sardine, anchovy meal amongst others and some nice milk proteins,



lactalbumin and both rennet and acid caseins, the special ingredient was kelp powder! This was meant to help keep the fishmeal ingredients preserved for a longer period due to the salt and other properties it contained. The previous season using the fishmeal's the lads had noticed after a short period in the water the baits would take on the silt smell and taste due to the lake being acidic in ph. The introduction of kelp into the mix with Robin Red made a big difference and even after 48 hours the baits sitting in the silt, would come back smelling and tasting OK, amongst other group of lads using it.

The bait dominated fish captors amongst all the groups fishing there. We would fish weekdays mainly and come Thursday night, we would put out a big, scattered bed of baits normally around A 50 egg mix which was roughly around 10

kilos wet weight as large eggs were used. I know quite a few anglers fished weekends and the fishing was slow due to our Thursday night baiting ritual. So, I'm not sure exactly what captures occurred on the weekends between June and August of 1990. If you were fishing it and it was hard going, apologies as the Thursday baiting wouldn't have helped the Friday to Sunday fishing if you weren't using our bait!

The corner swim field side, opposite the post swim there was a type of weed like Canadian pondweed introduced to help give the carp some cover and to try and promote natural food for them. This weed had gathered on the field side and in the corner, there was a couple of thick beds of it. Placing my baits not too far in front of the weed I scattered some hand rolled 20-millimeter hook baits around the area



and hey presto; right-hand rods off.....the carp powering out to the middle of the lake. Same procedure implemented, not giving the carp too much stick and letting it go where it wanted, as I didn't have any anglers close to me. After it dives into the weed bed to my right, I eventually persuaded her to come out and someone netted her for me, the fight lasting around the 40-minute mark. I knew I had a big carp in the net and was hoping it was a small 30 but it was the biggun again!! I'm not 100% who was on the net, it could have been Jerry Hammond. I just remember being told it was the big girl again and could I stop catching her?

Fast forward, a week later, same bank, but a swim a bit further up from the corner swim, I settled into, a rare weekend session for me. The weather was sunny and warm, so the park and the lake were busy with people and anglers.

The Friday and Saturday nights passed uneventfully. Then on the Sunday afternoon fishing with left hand rod at 11:00, right hand rod at 1:00 in a deep silty area with bottom baits on, 8-inch braided hook links so my baits were probably 4 to 6 inches buried into the silt. My right-hand rod tore off in the afternoon sweltering heat. This fish was shifting water again. Another big canal carps on!! This fish was towing me around, diving into weed beds when opportunity arose. As previously mentioned, it was the weekend and busy, meaning 20 minutes into the fight a crowd had gathered in my swim. Typically, the carp wasn't giving up easily and continued for the weed bed hopping for another hour. I had a crowd of about 100 plus people watching me play the carp and other anglers wading in to try and get the fish to come out of the weed beds it kept diving into. There were

children rifling through my gear in the bivvy, just complete madness around me!! People shouting come on mate get it in, we want to go home!! Eventually to the delight of the crowd or onlookers and hecklers, someone put the net under the fish on the edge of a weed bed and finally the ordeal for the carp and me was over. There in the bottom of the net lay the big girl again!!! Third catch of her in four weeks. Someone weighed her after unhooking her, she came in this time just under 33 LB I think, and because of the length of battle and hot conditions, I chose to take pictures, and she was returned straight away. All I could hear in my head was the roar and applause of the gathered crowd and was left with a double-edged sword of a feeling of liking the attention, but liking more the fact it was all over, and the peace had arrived in my swim. Although

there were bits of my tackle that had disappeared due to unwanted visitors in my bivvy, little gits!! To have caught that carp was amazing but by the third capture it was a bizarre feeling and experience that affects my attitude to catching a carp more than once to this day! I try to avoid it as much as possible but as we all know it's not an easy thing to avoid. I think a recapture is a dream taken from someone else and if I can avoid that, to me it's a good thing.

As for the Hainault Torch man, did he find the Yeti? Was he looking for the Yeti?

Did anyone else see this strange creature after me?

Who knows, but it was definitely fun and interesting!!

The childhood dream of catching the 'Great White Shark', disappeared over the years, but I did get to go on a Shark dive while in South Africa, and wow, what an amazing experience it was!!







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*A 46 pounds mirror carp caught in the mouth on a 20 cm orange bait by Yann.*



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Also available this  
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347.



Front Cover:  
Michael Bond with a  
Blue Lagoon chunk

## AN ODE TO LUCY'S BOWL

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In the partnership of human and canine might.  
With wagging tails and gentle eyes,  
Guide dogs offer a love that never dies.  
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In Lucy's Bowl hope never lies.  
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Lucy's Bowl extends a helping hand.  
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With guide dogs by their side, they transcend.  
So, here's to Lucy's Bowl, a beacon of grace,  
Empowering the blind in life's race.  
Through trials and triumphs, they embrace,  
With guide dogs by their side, leading the  
chase.

Lee Tomkinson 2024



**8. CARP CHAT**

**18. CARP SCENE**

**26. ADAM KITCHEN**

**32. JOHN ANDERSON**

**48. JOHN VICKERS**

**60. KEITH PICKETT**

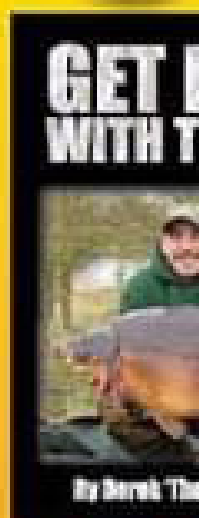
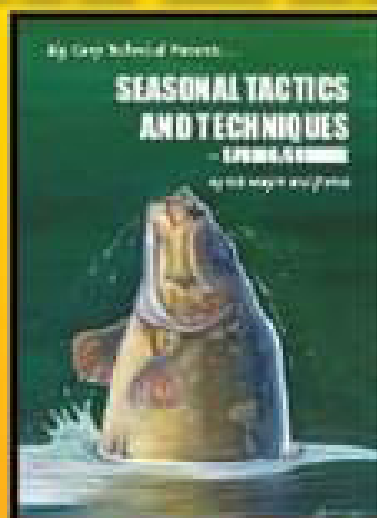
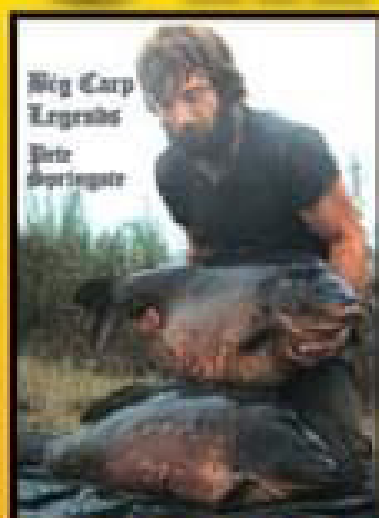
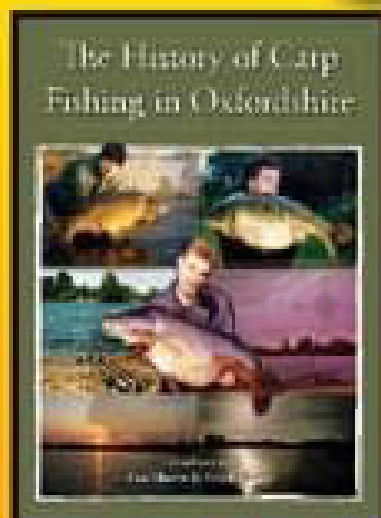
**70. MARTIN COLUMBO**

**78. MICHAEL BOND**

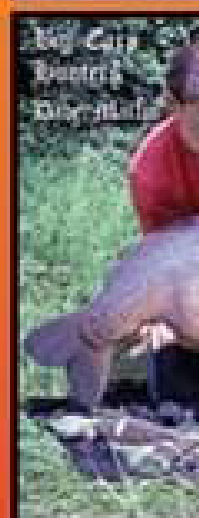
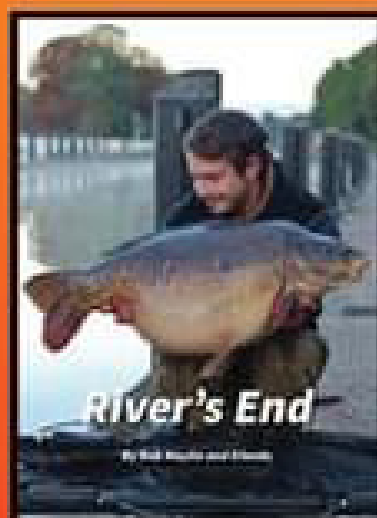
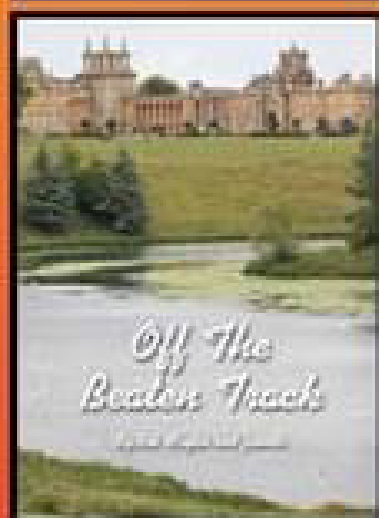
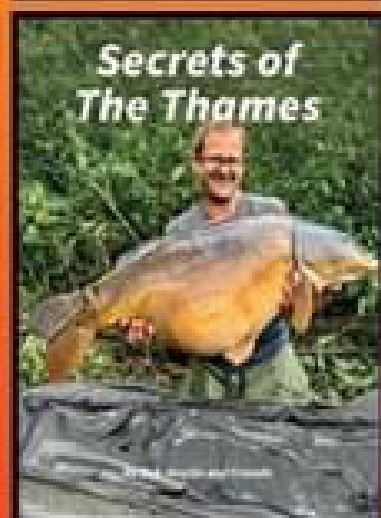
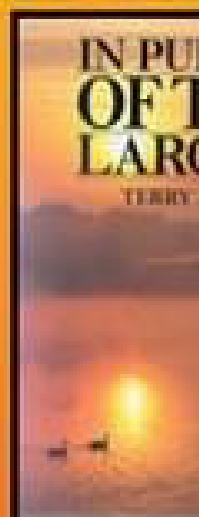
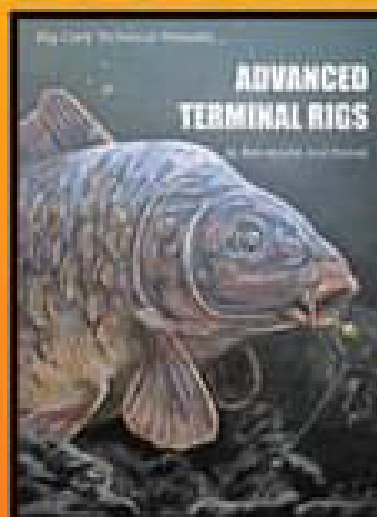
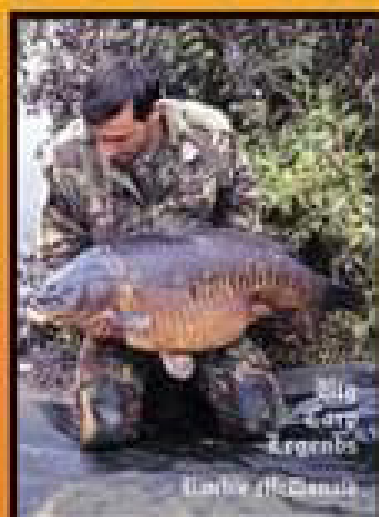
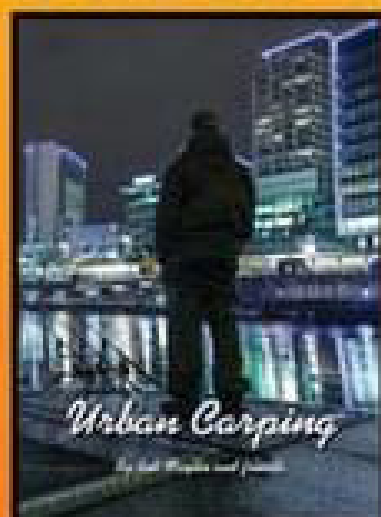
**96. PAUL BENNETT**



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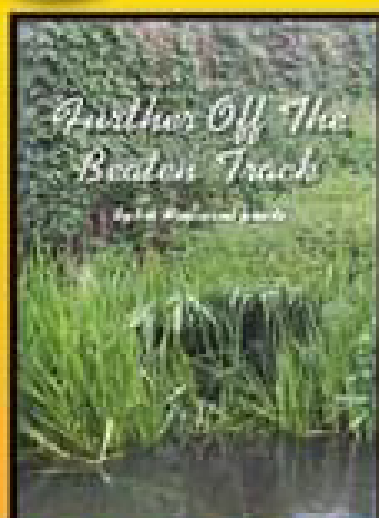
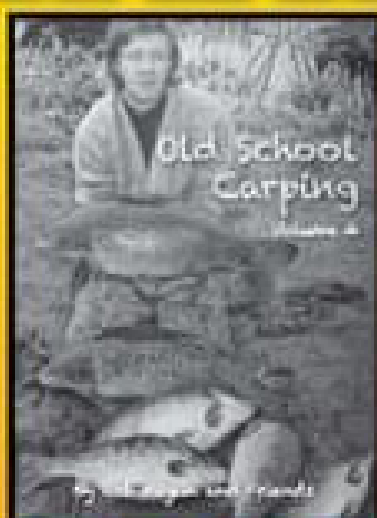
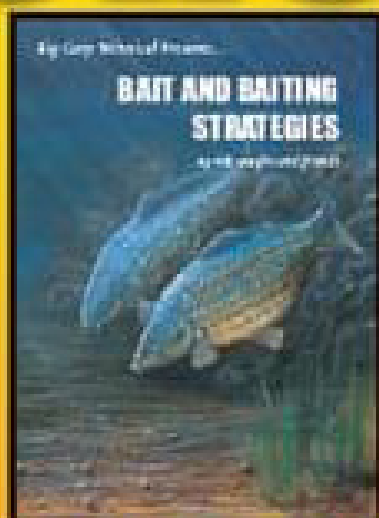


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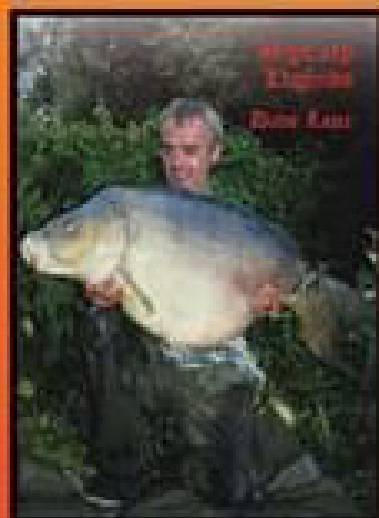
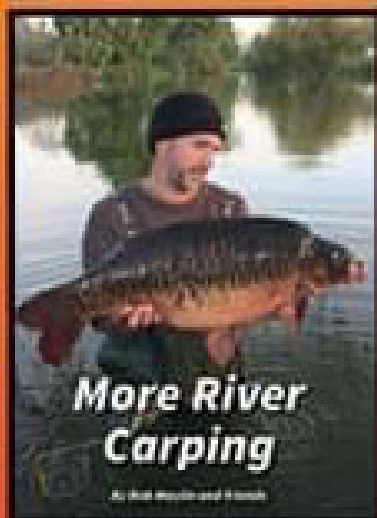
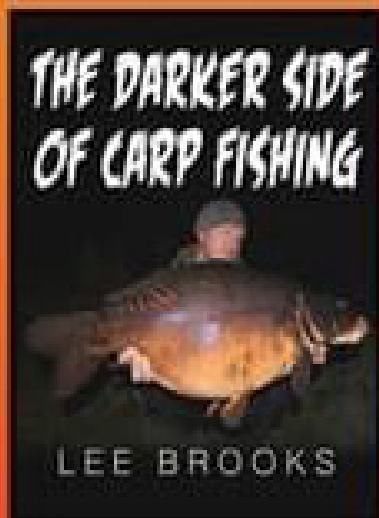
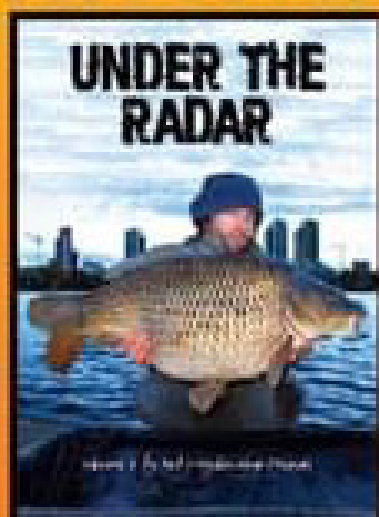
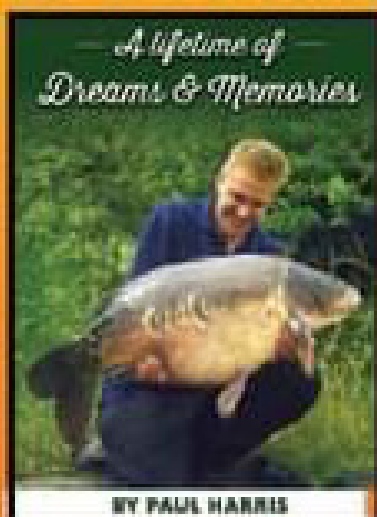
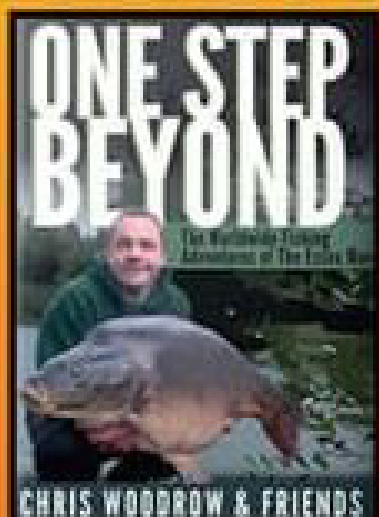
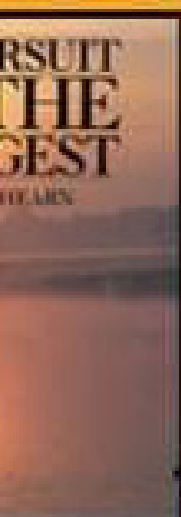
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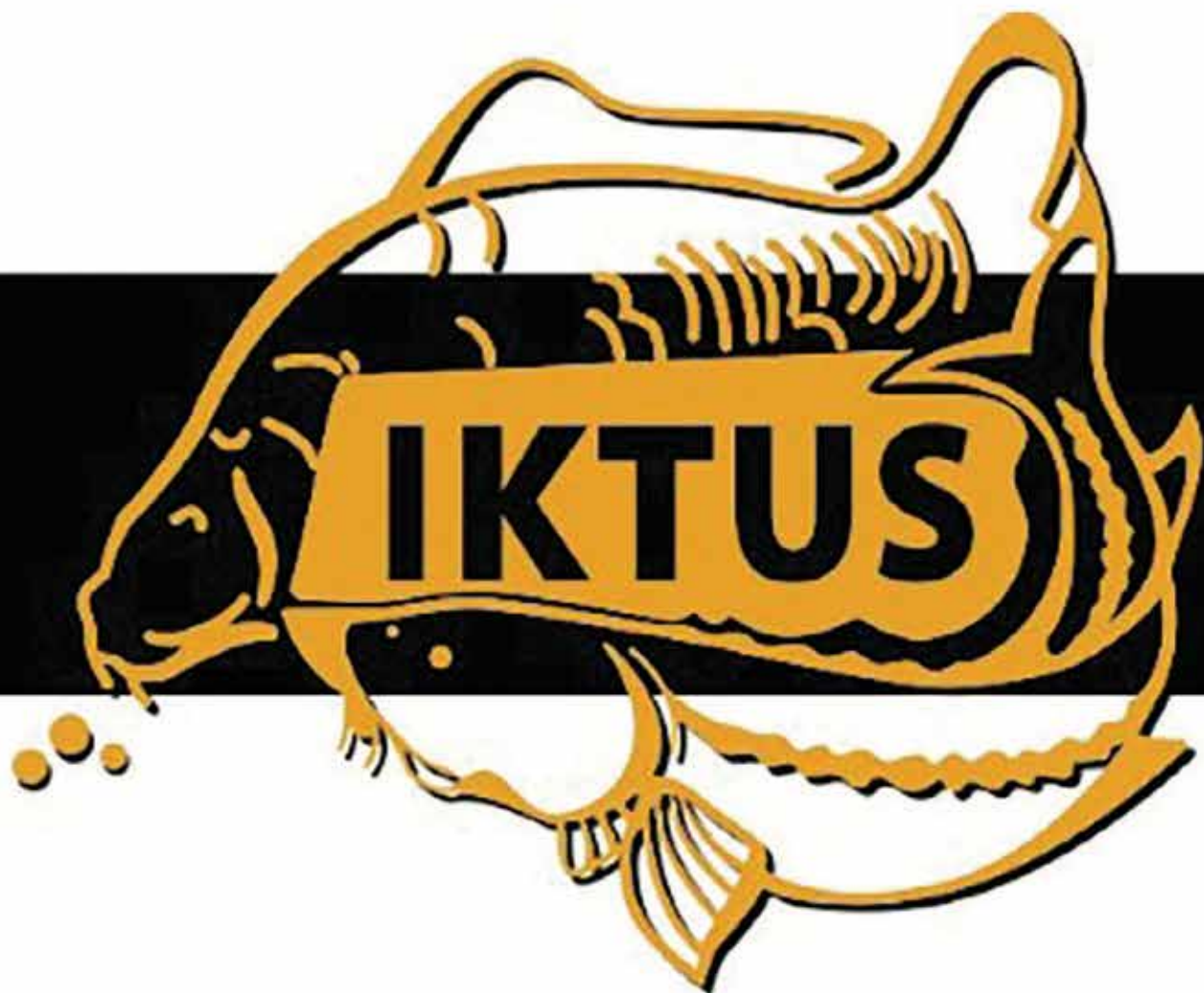


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# NATIONWIDE DRIVE TO PREVENT FISH THEFT AND ILLEGAL FISHING DURING NATIONAL COARSE FISHING CLOSE SEASON



The annual coarse fishing close season for rivers and streams is now in operation and runs until 15th June.

The close season affects all rivers, streams and drains as well as some stillwaters and some Sites of Special Scientific Interest (or SSSIs), including part of the canal network, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads. It is important anglers check regional rules for each area for more detail as there will still be many angling opportunities for the next three months, including most stillwaters and canals.



Throughout the coarse fishing close season, Environment Agency officers will be conducting patrols to ensure anglers respect the no-fishing period and prevent illegal fishing and poaching. As usual, the Angling Trust's Fisheries Enforcement Support Service and Voluntary Bailiffs will be supporting the Environment Agency throughout the close season, with teams across all areas of the country conducting joint patrols throughout the close season.

To remind anglers about the start of the close season, a joint patrol involving the Environment Agency, Humberside Police, Angling Trust and members of the Voluntary Bailiff Service was held on waters run by Scunthorpe Amalgamated Anglers.

Angling Trust Fisheries National Enforcement Support Manager Nino Brancato said:

"It is necessary that we all help protect our sport from harm, especially with matters relating to poaching, fish theft, theft of fishing rights, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping. At the Angling Trust, our aim is the protection, promotion, and development of angling and anglers, encouraging all anglers to fish legally and safeguard fisheries and fish for generations to come."

To understand the enforcement issues faced across the country, last year the Angling Trust's Fisheries Enforcement Support Service organised a public questionnaire on fisheries-related crime. Results showed an overwhelming majority of anglers indicated rod licence evasion as their main concern. Other areas of issue were close-season fishing, theft of fish, fishing without permission, poaching and the illegal taking of fish.



Our New, 2025 Linear Fisheries Brochure has finally arrived and is now available to order FREE online or collect a copy at our onsite Tackle Shop - Within its 72-pages you will find everything you need to know about the Linear's amazing complex of waters and the fish that reside within them, articles, rules and much more..... It's free to order via the link below. <https://www.linear-fisheries.co.uk/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.brochure>





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# **SELK'BAG WEARABLE SLEEPING BAG**

Selk'bag, the pioneering brand known for its wearable sleeping bags, is launching its latest innovation: The Swytch, a new design that brings insulation versatility and comfort to the world of outdoor gear. Available in three styles and designed for everything from family camping holidays to festival trips, or simply lounging at home, the Selk'bag Swytch stylishly adds practical function to the brand's original iconic product.

The key new feature of the Swytch is the mid-body zip, which allows users to easily split the garment into two parts: A cosy jacket and a separate bottom half. This design has a very practical purpose, making it easy to answer nature's call while using a Selk'bag, without having to remove the entire suit. And when the full bag is not needed, the top half can be worn as a standalone jacket, delivering the signature comfort and warmth of Selk'bag.

Selk'bag has introduced several other new features with the





Swytch, including: A softer, more luxurious hand-feel; waist adjustment; and a larger, adjustable hood, to ensure a perfect fit, whether using it as a jacket or as a full wearable sleeping bag. The new straighter zip design also eliminates snags, making it easier than ever to put on and take off.

Available in three versions, the Pro, Original and Lite, the Selk'bag Swytch is designed to meet the needs of every outdoor adventurer who values warmth and comfort. The Pro features an insulated adjustable hood, balaclava, removable booties and dual zips for ease of use, while the Original provides the perfect balance of warmth and flexibility. The Lite has a lower weight, but maintains the same level of comfort, making it ideal for those who want a more minimalist option.

Sustainability remains at the core of Selk'bag's ethos. The Swytch is crafted from 100% recycled materials across all

## Carp Scene



models, reinforcing Selk'bag's commitment to eco-friendly practices. The Pro version features Primaloft® insulation, which is warm, water-resistant, and made from 100% recycled materials. All versions of the Swytch are equipped with SBS® recycled zips and are fully PFAS-free, ensuring each bag delivers both high performance and environmental responsibility

The Selk'bag Swytch Pro will come in Volcan Navy, the Original in Azul Midnight, Pasto Green and Maipo Burgundy, while colour options for the Lite will be Cobalt Blue, Damasco Teal and Cobre Black. All will be available from April at [www.selkbag.co.uk](http://www.selkbag.co.uk) and from selected specialist outdoor retailers.

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# HAYMAX HAY FEVER RELIEF BALM

Many anglers experience hay fever symptoms because of their allergies to grass pollen. For most people the worst months are May, June and July when grass pollen release is at its peak. HayMax is an organic allergen barrier balm that traps over one third of pollen before it gets in the body where it can cause a reaction. It's perfect for anglers as it's drug-free and certified organic and won't affect your ability to concentrate.

Hay fever is a result of our immune system's overreaction to innocuous antigens such as pollen. The body's reaction to pollen is to produce histamines. Normal amounts of histamines in your brain are good – they keep you alert, attentive and awake. But, when there are too many in your





body, they produce the various symptoms common to hay fever sufferers including sneezing, a runny nose, nasal congestion, itchy eyes, watery eyes, streaming eyes, swollen eyes, itchy nose and throat.

HayMax is applied around the rim of the nostrils and bones of the eyes and works by trapping airborne allergens, including pollen, before they get in the body – less pollen, less reaction. Independent university studies show that HayMax traps over a third of pollen before it enters the body, in addition to dust mite allergens and pet dander [1]. In an independent survey by Allergy UK (the leading national charity providing support, advice and information for those living with allergic disease), 80% of hay fever sufferers say HayMax works [3]. And 94% of people find HayMax quick to be effective; 44% say that it works immediately and a further 35% say that it works within an hour or two [2].

HayMax is natural, organic and drug free, with no drowsy-side effects so it's suitable for anglers and won't affect your ability to concentrate.

2025 is the 20th anniversary of HayMax's launch. Back in 2005, HayMax was ahead of its time, a natural prevention for hay fever – and indoor allergies too, such as dust and pet allergies. It is different from most other hay fever treatments and remedies, seeking to stop allergens getting into the body before they can cause a reaction, rather than attempting to treat the symptoms or the effects of the allergen once they occur.

Apply first thing in the morning, keep a pot with you and re-apply throughout the day and/or whenever needed. It depends on the pollen count, the temperature and lots of other things can have an effect, but most people seem to find applying 2 or 3 times a day does the trick. Some people apply more often, and some less often. Apply before bed to trap pollen particles that are blown in through your window, or that might have landed on your pillow during the day.

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<sup>†</sup>Proven to trap over 1/3 of pollen, plus dust & pet allergens, National Pollen & Aerobiology Research Unit, 2012.

<sup>\*</sup>80% said HayMax works, 134 of 166 respondents, Allergy UK survey, 2016.





# A SESSION TO REMEMBER

The season on the new water has started, and what a couple of weeks I've had so far! The first weekend was very hot with fish cruising all over and not interested at all. I was putting zigs out with nothing to show for it, so I opted to fish on the bottom and hope for that early morning bite. On the Saturday night, I flicked a rig under a snag, and away it went at 4am, which resulted in the Baby Big Girl at 28lb 8oz – a mega fish, and I was buzzing to get one on my first session.

The following week, I was itching to get back to the lake. My pal was there in a swim but was waiting to move, and I fancied



the swim he was in, so I got in there after work on a Friday. It was very slow that night, and the fish were just holding up in front of me on Saturday, so I was sitting on my hands waiting for that bite... but nothing. That night, I put out a lot of Mainline's new test bait, and the next morning was something I won't forget...

A couple of beeps on my middle rod, and I knew I was in, as I was locked up. I struck into it, but didn't feel anything. Thinking I'd been done, I was winding in when the rod bent over. The fish had swum towards me, and it felt good. After a ten-minute battle, the fish felt ready. I didn't have a clue what the fish was till it came up ready for netting. I saw it, and then my legs went to jelly. I knew which fish it was, and she bolted again towards some snags. I was flapping so badly! Then she





finally went in my net at 4.30am. “Yessssssss!” I screamed out. I felt sick, and I was shaking. I sat down and rang my pal in the next swim. I said, “You’ve gotta come here and check this out!” We both new the rough weight of the fish, and she comes out maybe twice a year if you’re lucky, but I had her on my second session. We zeroed the sling and got her weighed at 37lb 9oz – a new lake record! I was buzzing! I wasn’t fussed about weights; I was so happy to catch a mega fish that’s on everyone’s target list, and I’m still buzzing to this day.

It didn’t take long till news got out, and I spent hours getting calls and messages. As I was watching the water, I noticed fish over my right rod, and they were going down. I said to my pal, “I think another bite’s on the cards!” Within minutes of saying that, I got a beep, the rod tip was bent round, and I was in

again. I couldn't believe my luck! It was a mega fight, and the fish beat me up good and proper. Then I saw it was a lovely common. In the net, she was angry, fins up and tensing. It was a fish called Rosie, a mint common, which has been caught twice, and she hadn't been out in two years. I just couldn't believe the morning I was having - two of the lake's most wanted fish, and I'd had 'em in a morning!

We weighed her, and she went 31lb 15oz - one of the best commons I've had. I'm writing this with a big smile on my face, and there will be more of these stunners from me this year. There are some mega fish in there! I just want to say thanks to Mainline for the test bait - it's a winner - and Jamie at J Precision hooks for supplying me with the best hooks about. I hope you lads enjoy the photos and what's to yet come.

Cheers,







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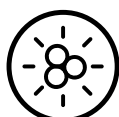


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# WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN

Having an opportunity to write about your lifelong passion is about as good as it gets really. My interest in fishing started when I was just six. Dad had shown me a picture of a carp he'd caught. Of course, I nagged him relentlessly that year to take me. I think we all remember that first trip, probably better than others. For me, it was being woken at 5am, unaware of it the night before. "No school today, son! We're going fishing!"

We set off to a place Pippingford where this carp had been caught, arriving at the car park full of excitement. A silent early morning walk around the lake looking for feeding fish apparently was one key to success. Trying to be as quiet as I could, we set up our rods well back from the water. I cut my teeth with a float while Dad launched sausage meat and bread paste baits to a reed bed that seemed so far away. My first fish

came, a ¾lb bream, then another, then a chub.

I remember the bailiff arriving later that morning, and talking of big fish, we'd already seen carp that looked huge to me. I sat glued to my float all day in the hope of a monster. I was hooked from that moment, and Dad realised it too, as when it was time to go home eleven hours later, shocked that I lasted as long as I did, I still didn't want to leave!

I remember countless evenings flicking through books by the greats like Jim Gibbinson, Jack Hilton, Peter Mohan to name a few, not forgetting Richard Walker's Stillwater Angling and that huge Redmire common – an angler, book and a fish that we all know has been more influential on carp fishing back then than anything else. Would I ever catch a huge 40lb carp like that?

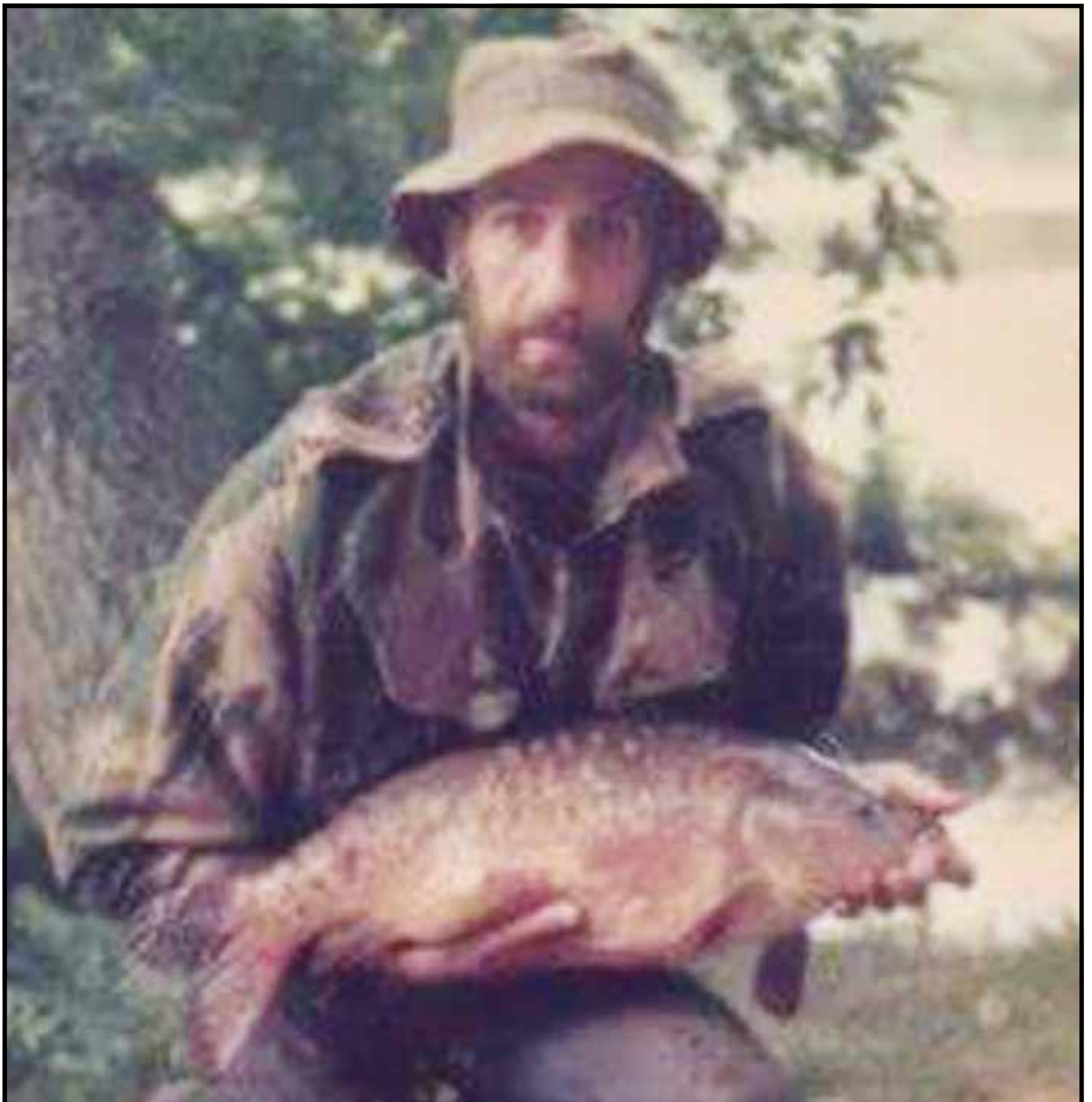
From there on, wherever we went, time was filled with that excitement that only we anglers can describe. I remember that excitement the night before, leaving the house before dawn in a loaded car to Pippingford, Burghfield, Longmoor or anywhere he took me, then that quiet walk round and learning those watercraft skills feeling like you always had that chance of a big fish... To me, there just aren't many feelings as good, still today. By the age of nine, after numerous trips catching tench to 3lbs and carp to 4lbs, like my dad, I was obsessed with the specimen side of fishing.

Later that year, we moved from London to the Isle of Wight, unbeknown to us that carp fishing was pretty much nonexistent back then. Most anglers were generally in a boat or on the beach somewhere, but it didn't stop us searching for them. After a few years of exhausting most stretches of a local river and several lakes catching countless wildies to 5lb, as enjoyable



as it was, we soon realised that there probably wasn't a single king carp on the island, and the need for that chance of bigger fish got under our skin again.

Trips to Norfolk were planned, and from the age of 11, we were having week-long sessions at places like Waveney Valley Lakes, Weybread Pits and other venues in search of those dream fish. Those were the days of running leads to Dacron hook lengths, no alarms and isotopes in monkey climbers



playing tricks with your eyes in the night whilst hoping for one of your Mitchell 300s to start churning, lying inside a bottle bank-shaped bivvy, wrapped around a brolly pole and freezing your tits off in a polyester sleeping bag on one of those blue garden sun loungers! How times have changed! I still reflect on those days with my old man being some of the best parts of my life.

Years went by, and countless hours were spent as the fish got bigger through the 80s until came my first double. Then I caught my first twenty at Broadlands Lake, back in the day when Mark Simmonds had slightly more hair and might have even been fractionally better looking! Back on the Island, and in 1988 Hale Common Farm opened two very old lakes of about an acre each for fishing. With carp fishing still being quite poor at the time, a few of us worked hard there over the years, winking out the smaller carp, moving them to the top lake for day ticket fishing, keeping the bigger ones in the lower lake and introducing some young fish. I spent most of my days there for several years, and when I look at the logbook, it's amazing to see how far things have developed.

Around that time, a good friend of ours, Ian Lee, formed the I.O.W Carp Society Group, which I have great memories of with talks from some legendary anglers. We fished at Horseshoe Lake for the charity fishing. Good stuff was happening and things were on the up with the Island carp scene! However, for me, through 1994, other things were brewing, and the only thing that's ever stopped me fishing happened big style, which took me by storm! My rods were replaced at weekends with a record box and my headphones, and playing tunes and dancing till sunrise every weekend had consumed me for





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several years. In fact 1998, I went off to Holland for quite some time, then Cyprus and Majorca. Even though fishing was often talked about often and opportunities came to go while abroad, I didn't fish once!

In 2002, slightly burnt out but grinning from some awesome, if not a tad crazy, experiences, I moved back to England. About eight years had passed since I last fished properly, and I was busting to catch up with my old mates and dust down my gear. Lots of things had changed such as PVA foam... how good was that? Gone were the days of drilling Chum mixers and threading three onto PVA string. Some great new things had popped up, but again, I decided not to get too clouded by new stuff and keep it simple with the important things like watercraft stuff, the way I remembered being taught.

I fished most Thursday nights for several years; doubles were commonplace, 20s came often, which blew me away, and my first 30-pounder was incredible. I even had a 30-plus common on my float rod! This was the dream fishing that Dad and I had always talked about, and I was well and truly back on it, spending time with my old mates and making new friends too. I found new venues to try too: Hunts Corner, Sandhurst and my first foreign trip to Survija in Belgium, not an easy water by any standards, but on my second trip I managed two commons of 24lb 2oz and 29lb 15oz for my efforts off the surface and a massive 48lb 4oz mirror from a bottom bait. Chris's Juvigny at Marne Valley was good too, rewarding me with several carp to 44lb 10oz and a 52lb 10 oz Wels catfish.

Reflecting on those first few years back from my time abroad, I had to take my hat off to friends with their continued passion and effort during my absence, creating some great waters



here on the Island. My old lake, Hale Common, was looking awesome, and by now it had a good head of fish, the same ones I was catching at mid doubles. I set about reacquainting myself with them to low 30s, and they were still growing. One mate in particular, Tim Oatley, has done so much for carping here. Yes, undoubtedly it would be well on its way by now, not forgetting also the passion and efforts of other good people too, but nowhere near what the Island's fishing offers without his dedication and hard work that he still continues with today. Hale Common, Rookley, The Haven, the amazing Monks Pool and Blackwater all now have an incredible head of fish, some already some tipping that magical 40lb barrier.

When my Blackwater ticket came up eight years ago, I was more than excited. The chance of my UK 40 was closer than ever; there were four or five in there at the time. I always try to keep in mind those simple watercraft skills. Of course, from time to time I have varied stuff but always tried to maintain that old school approach. For a very long time now, and still today, a simple running lead of 2 or 3oz maximum is still a big thing for me with a combi-link/line aligner hook link completing my end gear for most of my fishing. I can't go to a venue without having a walk around first, and I'm just amazed how many anglers, even today, don't possess a pair of binoculars!

Blackwater has roughly a nine-month season, closing from spawning until the first week of September. The results in their health and growth rates speak for themselves, and although I have other places I can fish, I rarely fish for carp during the summer months. I just love the autumn/winter and through till late spring, and that nine-month season had been more than kind to me over the first years with lots awesome fish



to mid 30s. I'd seen, netted and photographed fish over that magical barrier for friends, and have of course always been chuffed to nuts for them too. I've never been disappointed with what carp fishing has blessed me with either, but in the back of my mind, I longed for the day that one would grace my net.

The travel bug has always been in me, and fishing does not just lie with carping. I've had four trips to Norway, catching numerous big cod and halibut, and a trip to the Ebro in 2008 absolutely stunned me with a massive 203lb Wels! At the time, I remember thinking at the time, "How was that even possible?"

Then in 2009, after a month in Australia, I went to fish the amazing Gillhams Fishing Resort. When I arrived, I was in awe... It's definitely one of those places that photos do not do justice – the whole resort, people, food and fishing you dream of. Over eight days, I had nine different species totalling 43



fish to 210lb! The place just blew me away; I didn't want to go home. I stayed in contact with Stuart and the crew.

For the next three seasons, I fished Blackwater and Hale Common a lot, having my fair share of blanks but some amazing results all in all with commons to 35lb-plus and mirrors to 37lb. I was getting closer. At the back end of 2012, an amazing opportunity came when Stuart Gillham offered me a job, learning to guide at his lake. I think I had it all organised within three months, and in Jan 2013, I set off. It was more beautiful than ever; the lake and vegetation had matured into a paradise. I had warm welcomes from everyone, the food tasted better than I remembered, and the fish had grown dramatically. Meeting, fishing and working with some amazing people, it was safe to say I was the happiest I had ever been.

Then suddenly, eight weeks into my trip, life's balance tipped and showed its other side upon hearing the news that my dad





had fallen quite ill. I sorted a flight back home within three days of the news, but tragically he died the night before my flight. My dad was my best friend, and undoubtedly without whom I would not have been where I was standing that day, was gone. I will never, ever forget how amazing my work colleagues and customers were that day. After the longest ever flight home, I spent the rest of that year with Mum, helping her so she could downsize and move. That year was of course a bit of a blur in many ways really, but I still fished often.

I was having fun doing it 70s style too, going back to the old school, putting some new line on Dad's Mitchell 300s. Those cotton reel sized spools made it a challenge! Hi-Lo Compacts were coupled with my old 2lb TC rods, pod and monkey climbers. Even though I had fun and several fish to 32lb, it made me realise why we lost more fish back then compared to now! A year later, and with Mum feeling a little more settled, the need for chasing dreams felt stronger than ever. I had unfinished business at Gillhams, so I set off for 15 months. 11 months into



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paradise, yet again trouble struck, but thankfully this time for less upsetting reasons. A struggling business back home from bad management in place with my finger off the pulse meant that on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2014, I had to go back.

I could write for hours about Gillhams, but you simply have to experience it yourselves. In three visits there, I caught in excess of 50 Siamese carp to 132lb, Mekongs to 180lb, arapaimas to 240lb and a number of stunning smaller species. For me, I had a lucky opportunity, the whole experience was an incredible chapter in my life. I met some truly amazing people and will be eternally grateful to Stuart Gillham for everything he made possible. Happy as I am today, I will miss it always...

Back to reality, and after a few months getting the business buzzing again, I'd missed most of that season. Feeling overwhelmed as I am still today, being so lucky to experience what I have over the years, my 'healthy obsession' and thirst for that UK 40 was now bigger than ever. Some 70 % of my fishing life has been carping. Surely my chance could be soon? I was loving Blackwater more than ever, taking that walk round with binoculars permanently around my neck. My first season back was more than great, bearing in mind I didn't start until January. I only lost one fish, landed 26, broke my PB twice with five over 35lb including one at 39lb 10oz before closing at the end of May for spawning and rest! I was so close.

September 2015 came and Blackwater reopened, but then came a much a different story! I didn't have the chance to fish a great deal that season, and the following season had me totally stumped. Yes, we've all had our share of blanks; a fruitless week in France can happen, but five months on your own water without a sniff? Something really wasn't right. Now



I'm not one for blaming anything but myself, but I had changed nothing! All I could think of that was different that year was the bait I'd used for more than 20 years was definitely not the same. The texture was drier, and that classic strawberry smell was way different. The company had recently changed structure, and with about six weeks until Blackwater closed, I had to do something. After some consideration, 20kg of Mainline Cell was delivered, and I caught instantly. In that last few weeks before they spawned and we closed it, I took six fish to 35lb 10oz.

So by mid September last year, the new season hadn't come quickly enough. With confidence in a bait again, my enthusiasm was through the roof after cycling to the lake several times during that summer closure. First session, and within three





hours I'd caught a stunning mid twenty ghostie. A week later, I was back a few hours before dark, and low pressure and strong southwesterly winds helped my decision to plump for one of three swims. Rods positioned and after a good feed, I was settled. Night came, and I climbed in the bag...

Just two bleeps woke me at 6.45am, and I was up like a shot. Running leads showed the rod tip was slightly nodding, so it was boots on in a flash. I picked up the rod up, and I connected with something heavy. After a few minutes of open water battle, it kited left towards the margins. Now there aren't many snags in Blackwater, but this fish found one, so it was rod down, and I slipped into my chesties. With net under my arm, I slowly waded 30 yards down the left margin. Sleeves up, arm in and sinking the tip, I freed the line from a tree root.



I was still connected, and after a few minutes of heavy lunges, it surfaced for the first time. My heart was in my mouth as I saw some frayed line some 30 or so feet from the business end. A few turns of that line around the spool, and it was in the net. I could see it was big as I gently waded back, trying not to get too excited. I put it in the retaining sling and called Tim... "Mate, I've not weighed it, but I think I've got my first 40. Please come down!"

He was less than half an hour, and everything was ready. Onto the scales it went, and even though I knew it was big, I was still shocked to see that needle settle at 46lb 12oz! Buzzing was an understatement of course. Tim, the poor old sod, suffered the obligatory man hug. This fish had not been seen for nearly two-and-a-half years too, and being a new forty for the lake made it even more special. I went home that day thinking that if I didn't catch again this season, it wouldn't matter.

It's mad to think that after more than 40 years of dreaming, not giving up and most importantly of all not losing sight of simply enjoying why we do fish, eventually my dream came true. However, the magic of this passionate pastime will never ever cease to amaze me, as before the season ended this year when the fish grouped up and spawned, would you believe, amongst several big fish, I had two more 40s?!

Now at 50 years young, reflecting on those past years, another 40 years is of course very unlikely. It makes it all the more important for us all to chase our dreams. I'm fortunate to be able to write and share my lucky experiences with others who also love this amazing life of fishing, and whatever time is left, I'm fairly certain nothing will change for me. I sincerely wish for everyone reading this to continue fulfilling their dreams too.





# **PADS LAKE SESSION**

Nutrabaits team members Jonathan Vickers, Jordan Vickers, Baz Brashill and their good friend James Smith enjoyed four nights on Yateley Pads Lake last week where they landed seven fish from nine bites. Here is what they had to say...

We arrived at the lake at 10am, and after walking the lake twice in the rain and not seeing any signs of carp, we didn't have much to go on, but we had all made our minds up while walking the lake which swims we fancied. The only problem now was hoping the peg draw was kind!

First out of the hat was James Smith who chose to fish a swim called Between Pads, a lovely swim with pads either side, as you probably guessed. Second out of the hat was me (Jonathan Vickers) who chose to fish The Point with plenty of water to fish and a nice bay to the left that looked like it could do an

early morning bite. I was happy with what was my first swim choice, but it was one hell of a trip with a fully loaded barrow in the wet muddy conditions and one I was starting to regret half way around when I had to stop for a breather, much to the amusement of Jordan seeing a 18 stone sumo wrestler-like figure struggling.

Third out of the hat was Jordan Vickers who opted to fish Pole Position with reeds either side and pads out in front to the left and a swim he had fished before in 2014. Last out of the hat was Baz Brashill who chose to fish Waiting Man's with lots of overhanging trees and bushes on the right hand margin – a proper carpy looking swim.

With the pegs drawn, bailiff Ray came to meet us, and after a chat, it looked like Jordan and James had the pegs to be in. With Ray saying the fish had been in that area most of





the winter, Jordan and James were both full of high hopes now, and right on cue, a fish showed out in front of Jordan's peg. With everyone set up and rods in position, it didn't take long for the first fish of the trip to be landed, which fell to James. A solid bag cast into the dead pads over 12mm Trigga with added black pepper with added GLM freebies produced a 24lb-plus mirror.

Then just as the light started to fade, Jordan got picked up by a coot on his left hand rod to the reeds. After a quick rechuck, he was just setting the bobbin when it proceeded to pull up tight and he was away with probably the smallest carp in the lake, a pristine common of 14lb 2oz, coming to one of his home made Trigga with GLM cork ball pop-ups that had been glugged in Trigga liquid booster fished on a stiff hinge rig with around 20 12mm Trigga freebies.

Not a bad start considering we hadn't even been on the lake for 24 hours and we had already had two fish. Expectations were high for the night ahead, but to my surprise, it was very quiet, or so I thought, only to receive a phone call from Jordan letting me know he had one in the net. I reeled in and went over to his peg to see a nice upper-20 sulking in his net,. Out she came for her photo and to be weighed, and the scales spun to a respectable 27lb 8oz. A solid bag tactic had tripped this one up with the hook bait being a trimmed-down Liver Supreme pop-up inside a bag of Trigga pellets, Trigga carpet feed, crumbed Trigga boilies with a good helping of GLM powder and a good splash of Trigga liquid booster. With the fish safely returned, Baz told me he had lost a very good fish in the night, which he has not forgotten and still mentions now!

It was time for a cup of tea! Well, that was until we heard



Baz's Delkim scream off. He was now doing battle with what turned out to be his first fish of the trip. After taking him from left to right of his swim and nearly taking out Jordan's rods in the next swim, he landed a mirror of 16lb, this one picking up a Saffron & Cream pop-up over 12mm Trigga, black pepper and GLM freebies.

That was three of us with fish to our names and only me left to land one. After seeing a couple of fish show in in front of me at first light and casting a chod rig towards them with no joy, I decided after dinner I would find a spot in the general area they had been showing out in open water. After a good lead about, I found some firmer ground that I was happy I could get a good presentation on out at 13 wraps. A Pineapple & N-Butyric pop-up mounted on a Ronnie rig was the approach



# The History of Carp Fishing in Oxfordshire

Paul Harris and Geoff Adams

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

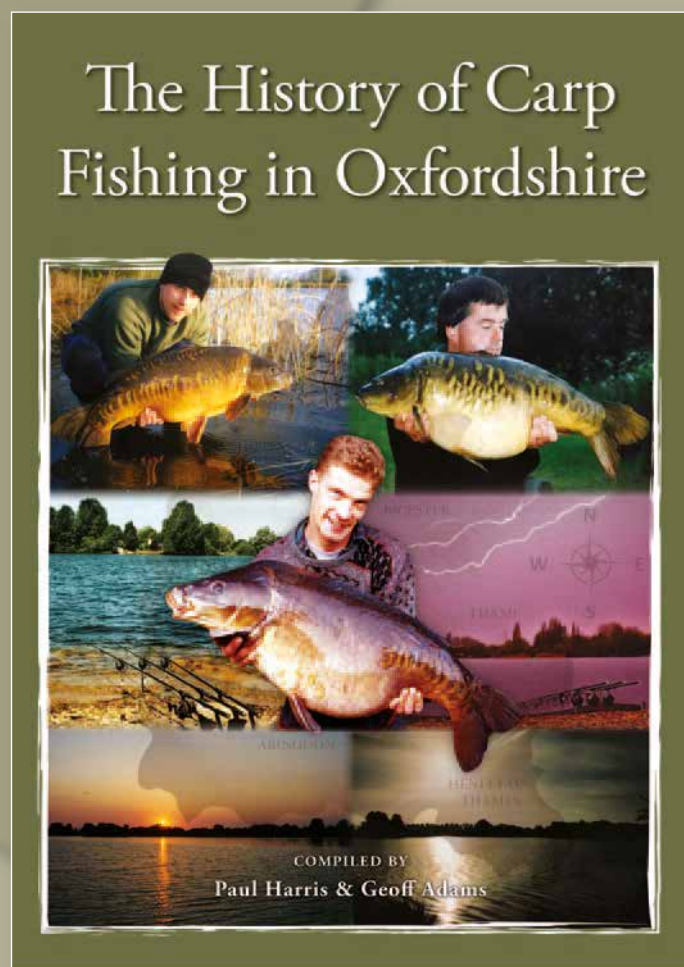
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

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

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

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

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



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**A V A I L A B L E   N O W**

with around 50 mixed size Trigga freezer baits that had been glugged in a generous amount of the Trigga liquid booster as free offerings. At around 6pm, my Delkim received a couple of beeps followed by a steady take and a good battle, and my first Yateley carp was in the net, a stunning long, dark mirror, which was also a new personal best of 26lb. It was time for a celebratory beer with Jordan who had come around to help with the photos and weighing!

I quickly got the rod back on the spot, and knowing Jordan really wanted to get back to his swim, I told him to get back and get his rods out and we would have a BBQ and a social the following day. He got his rods out just before dark, and I was just nodding off when I heard the sound of a Delkim in the distance. A quick look to the far bank, and I could faintly see some commotion in Jordan's swim. I made a quick phone call to Baz, who turned out to be tucking into a burger and was none the wiser about what was happening in the peg next to him. He popped over to Jordan's swim as he was just slipping the net under what looked like a good fish that yet again had fallen to his solid bag approach, but this time a trimmed down Saffron & Cream pop-up was the hook bait. A long lean mirror of 29lb 14oz was his reward. A few night shots and the fish was returned, leaving Jordan a happy angler going to bed that night.

The next morning we made the phone calls to each other expecting at least one of us to have had a fish in the night, but nothing, other than James losing one to a hook pull. We decided we would pop to the local shops and pick up some bits we needed and pop into Yateley Angling Centre to refill our water butts and a quick stop off at the local butchers for some







BBQ food, which I must say was beautiful. We got back to the lake and all gathered in James's swim for a bit of food and a social. He cheekily put his rods out while we was there, which the resident swan must have also thought was cheeky, so he decided to continually wipe them out and take advantage of the miscast solid bag freebies to the annoyance of James who eventually gave up! Mission accomplished, Mr Swan

With a sudden wind change and temperature drop, the fish seemed to stop showing and shut up shop for the next 12 hours. The next morning arrived and the sun came out for what turned out to be our warmest day of the trip. Polaroids on and it was time to go find them and stalk one out. It didn't take long to find them... While up a tree, Jordan saw what he could only describe as two donkeys, probably upper 30s or



even possibly 40s, just milling around the end of the newly sprouting pads. The fish swam out, so it was time for Jordan to place his solid bag! It went in perfectly, with a bite written all over it... or so he thought!

Baz was also trying to take advantage of the sun and the chance to rest his swim. He had three rods out on zigs in the next swim, but with no luck after a few hours, he decided to try zigs back in his swim, and within 30 minutes of having one out, he was into a fish. After a good scrap, the fish was in the net, but Baz was disappointed upon seeing the hook embedded in the pectoral fin. A fish of 20lb-plus but one that didn't count left Baz deflated that he was the only one of us that had not had a 20lb fish. Seeing this, Jordan decided it wasn't going to happen, and as he reeled his rod in, an almighty bow wave and swirl exploded from over the top of his bag! NO! Disaster! Had he just spooked one of the two lumps he had seen earlier from off his spot? We will never know!

I decided I was going to move swims for the last night after not seeing any fish in front of me for a while and seeing fish consistently show in the End of Pads swim. After moving around, I tied a couple of bags up ready to drop in, but first it was time for food. Jordan had done a chilli, so I was not missing out, although Baz and James decided they would make their own food and keep their rods in the water. I was just tucking in when the guy fishing the Car Park Lake shouted to let us know Baz was playing a fish. Was this going to be the monster he had lost a couple of nights before?

After a steady battle, Jordan slid the net under the fish for Baz. A quick look in the net would tell us this was another decent fish. Scales were zeroed and pictures done, and the

needle settled on 27lb 2oz. This fish was the last of the session! What a great time we had! Ee all caught, and we also all had a 20lb-plus fish, some of us a couple. Roll on next year when we will be returning to hopefully catch some more of the beautiful fish the Pads Lake has to offer! Special thanks go to Ray and the Yateley Angling Centre staff who made us very welcome.





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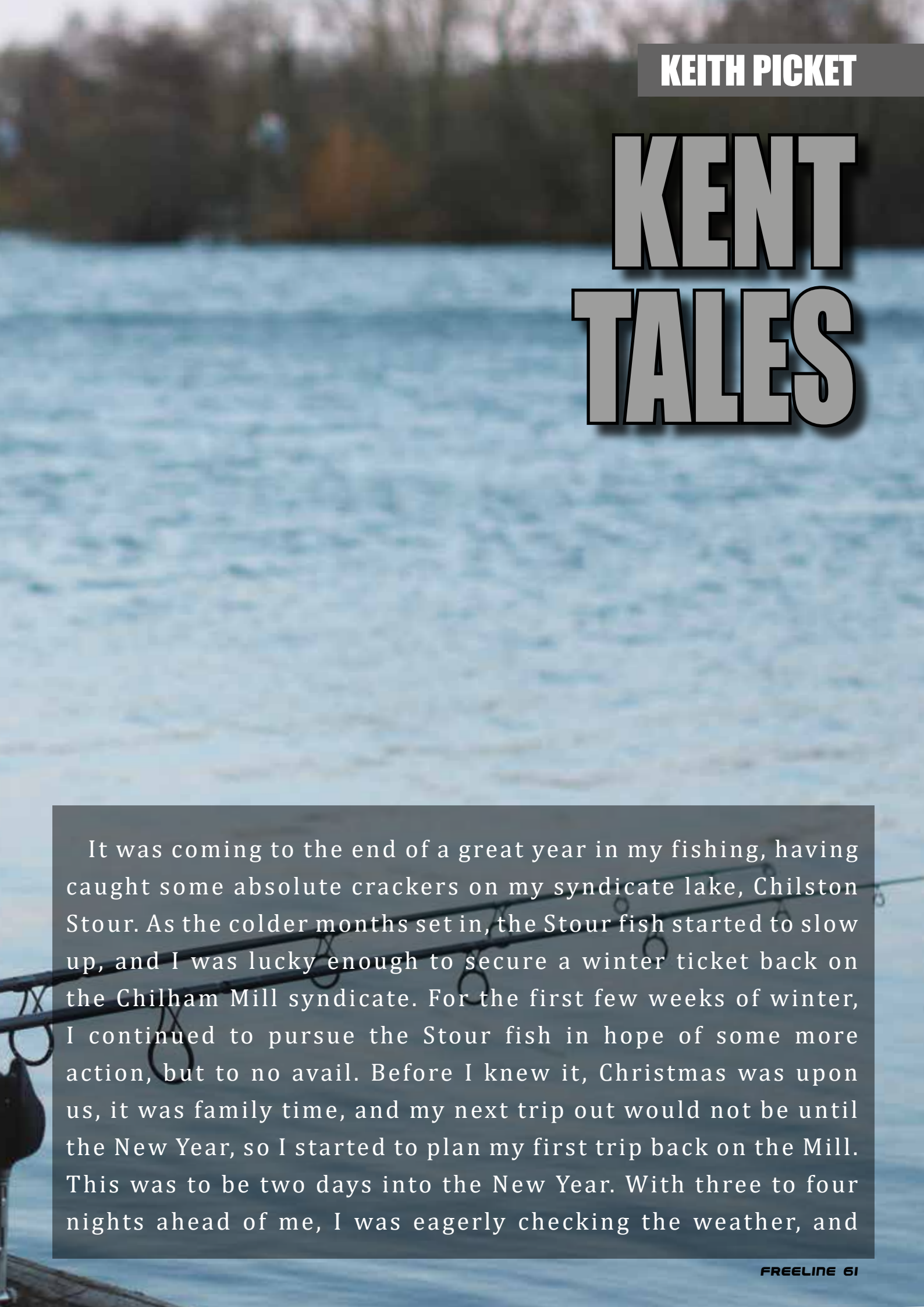
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**KEITH PICKET**

# KENT TALES

It was coming to the end of a great year in my fishing, having caught some absolute crackers on my syndicate lake, Chilston Stour. As the colder months set in, the Stour fish started to slow up, and I was lucky enough to secure a winter ticket back on the Chilham Mill syndicate. For the first few weeks of winter, I continued to pursue the Stour fish in hope of some more action, but to no avail. Before I knew it, Christmas was upon us, it was family time, and my next trip out would not be until the New Year, so I started to plan my first trip back on the Mill. This was to be two days into the New Year. With three to four nights ahead of me, I was eagerly checking the weather, and

it looked spot-on for it. I couldn't wait. It was forecasting big southwesterly winds up to 60mph, temperatures of between six to twelve degrees and a big drop in pressure – perfect.

So the morning came, and I was soon in my van with my carp dog 'Kooper' ready to make the hour's journey down to Canterbury. I arrived at the lake around 6.30am. After having a good look about, I didn't see much to go on, so I decided to go in a swim called the Right Hand Bailiff's, a swim I had fished in previous years and knew it had good winter form. After getting set up and having a good lead about, I had soon found three spots with some decent depth between four-and-a-half to six feet, which was good, seeing as though the Mill is a fairly shallow lake and the water level was particularly low at the time. All three rods were set up the same, using blowback rigs fished snowman style with the awesome J Precision wide gape hooks that have been a massive part of my armoury this past year. My bait of choice was my ever-faithful Xcel Baits VNF boilies, fished over a light scattering of crushed VNF, soaked in VNF liquid.

It was only couple hours until my middle rod let out two bleeps, then another two bleeps!! I was straight on it and lifted into a steady, plodding carp, but as quickly as it started, it was over. Hook pull – gutted! Feeling devastated, as that could have been my first fish since October, I soon set about getting the rod back out on the spot, as I was clearly on some fish.

Night soon set in, and oh my god, it has to be one of the worst nights I have spent on the bank from a weather perspective. The wind was insane; I managed about an hour's sleep. At 5.30am, the same rod absolutely went into meltdown. I was on it like a shot, and before long I was standing in a storm, wet



through and playing what felt like a decent fish. After a good ten minutes and a good battle, I soon had her gliding over the cord of the net, and it felt so good to have my first fish of the New Year. What a cracking fish she was at 27lbs.

That day then passed by uneventfully. Just after dark I had another chance, but unfortunately, I lost my second fish of the session – gutted! I managed another take around 10pm, and a 22lbs common was soon in the net. Time to catch up on some sleep.

Like déjà vu, the next morning at 5.30am, my middle rod was rattling away. This fish gave me right runaround, fighting hard under the rod tip, up and down the margins. After about fifteen minutes, she was mine! At this point it was hammering it down, so I slipped her in the sling to wait for a break in the



weather and get those all important pics. At first light, the rain was easing, and a mate of mine, Jake, had just turned up and was at hand to help with the pics. At 30lbs 10oz, she was an awesome old warrior, a carp known as Cut Tail.

An hour or so later, I took Kooper round the lake for a walk and spotted a few fish opposite to the area I was fishing and slightly up the lake. Now normally I wouldn't even contemplate moving swims when I'm catching, but something in my gut told me I had to. So before long the day had passed, it was 4pm, and I was all set up in my new swim with all three rods out along a deep gully at the base of a shallow bar at around a hundred yards.

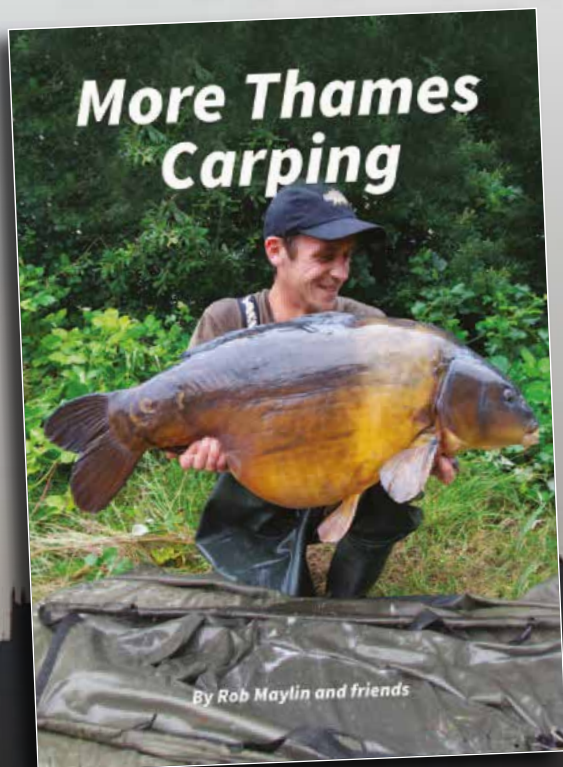
A few hours into darkness and one of my indicators dropped back, only an inch or two, but it was enough to have me out standing in the wind and rain with anticipation. A couple more





# More Thames Carping

By Rob Maylin and friends



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

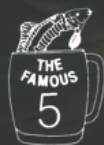
Andrew Sadler has discovered some Thames secrets during his many years on the Thames, for you the reader, he divulges all. Graham Stevens is a Thames stalwart, having written several articles in Big Carp and a couple of chapters in the first Thames book he is back in this volume to tell you how he does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

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

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

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

*Rob Maylin*



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bleeps and the line tightened. With that I was leant into what felt like a decent fish. Slowly pumping her back, she came in fairly easily. As she came up towards the net, I could instantly see it was one of the Mill's A-team. Then all of sudden, she had other ideas and decided she was having none of it. She stripped line off my reel and headed off to my left straight towards some margin snags. So tightening up, I had to apply pressure and then the unthinkable happened – the rod flew back, and she was gone! I stood there in the dark, soaking wet, being battered by the wind and was absolutely devastated. I couldn't believe what had just happened. I threw the rod down, went back to my bivvy and sulked for a while, going over and over what had happened and what went wrong, but I knew I had to pull myself together and get the rod back out on the spot. Once all was sorted, I was back in my bivvy, wet, cold and still gutted! Like we all do, I was soon on the phone to my pal Stuart, telling him the story, and like all mates, he was trying to cheer me up, telling me I was on them and would soon get another chance.

Sure enough, 5am, and that same rod screamed off. I was all arms and legs trying to get to the rod, heart pumping through my chest, but I was eventually bent into what felt like another decent fish. Similar to the last one, she was just plodding and doing deep lunges, but I wasn't taking any chances this time.







With caution, I slowly guided her towards the net, and after a couple of heart-stopping moments of her twisting and turning under the rod tip, I had her head up, and she was taking her first gasp of air. Over the cord of the net she went and a big sigh of relief before I peered into the net to see what my prize was, and wow what a prize – the Fat Lin – I was in awe of her. A four-year quest, and I had one of my main targets and the best carp in the lake lying in the bottom of my net!! Standing there on my own, in the dark, soaked through, covered in mud, just me and her, is a memory I shall never, ever forget.

She was safely placed on the mat, unhooked and slipped into the sling to recover and wait for first light and for Gary from the next swim to come and help with the weighing and pictures. I then set about getting the rod back out, so as not

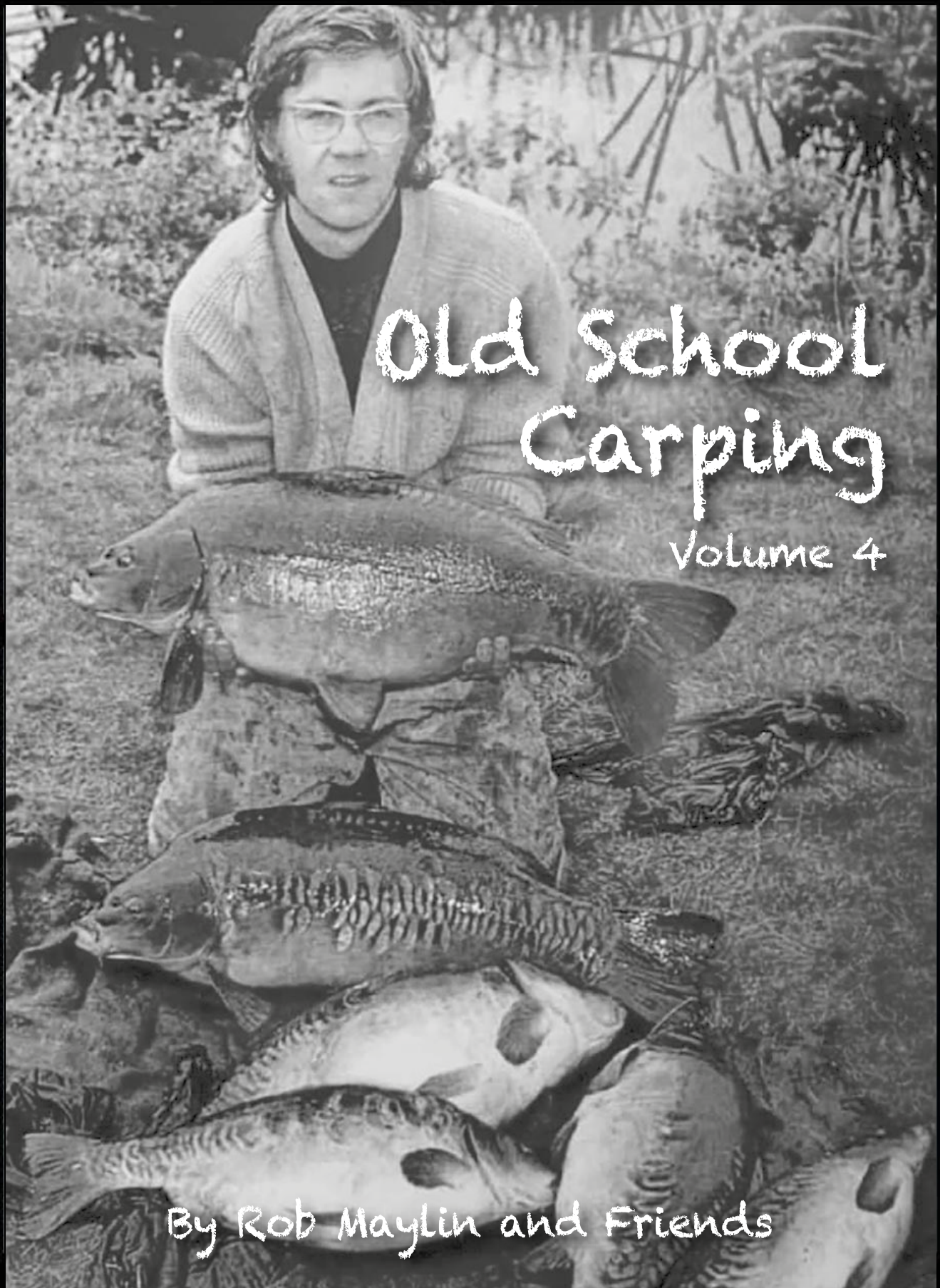


to miss another chance. A little while later, at first light, Gary came into the swim, camera in hand. Once ready, we got her out, lifted her onto the scales at all time top weight and a new PB for me of 44lbs 4oz. I was ecstatic, and my god, she looked immense in her winter coat. Shortly after returning her, that day I landed a further three fish – an 18lb common, a 26lb common and another cracking linear named Tigger at 28lbs.

I still had another night but decided to cut my session short, as I was wet through and covered in mud and had to be off the lake the next morning at 5am to go and stock some new carp into the Stour. I walked away from the Mill so happy with a 20, a 30 and a 40 on my first session of 2018 – buzzing, and a January PB. I can't wait to see what the rest of this year will bring for me, so watch this space. For now, Happy New Year and tight lines.



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# THE AMERICAN DREAM

When thinking about carp angling abroad, do you think about the States? Well, you should! America is underrated although I have a feeling that is going to change very soon. The sport is growing bigger and bigger here every year, and anglers all around the world are starting to catch on to the potential America has to offer. This is “The Land of the Free” and fishing here is free... literally! You will however need to purchase a fishing license for each state you wish to fish in of course. Sure there are a couple of pay lakes in America, but for the most part, the US is 90% public waters with no shortage of

venues. Think of it this way: there are 50 states in America, with over 3000 ponds and lakes and over 45 different rivers just in my home state of Massachusetts! Within three lifetimes you would not be able to fish every body of water here.

If the free fishing was not enough to intrigue you, I am sure the quantity and quality of our carp will. Unlike fishing a pay lake or syndicate in the UK where you know the size, species and amount of fish present, it is absolutely the unknown for us, with the thrill of never knowing what will be on the other end of the line – whether it's a 40lb mirror or 60lb-plus common, you really just never know. I have caught mirrors, commons, grass carp, kois, hybrids... you name it, we have it here. I would also like to point out that in my opinion we have some of the best looking scaly mirrors in the world, but I will let you guys be the judge of that.







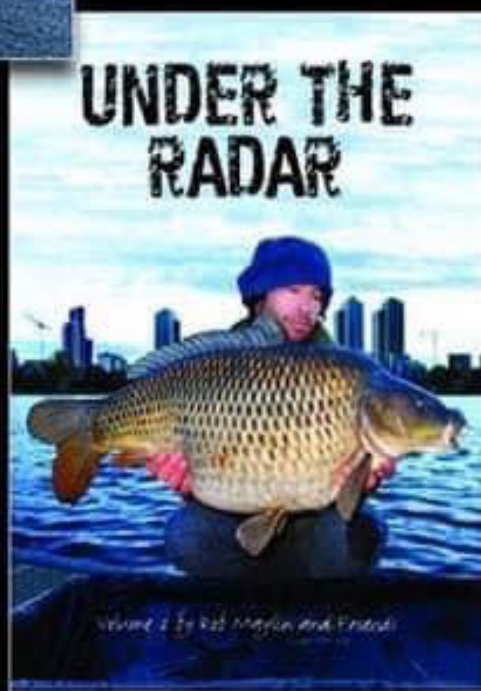
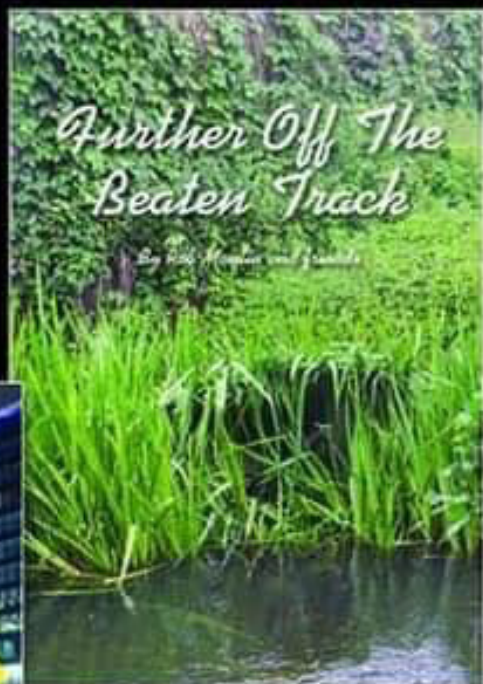
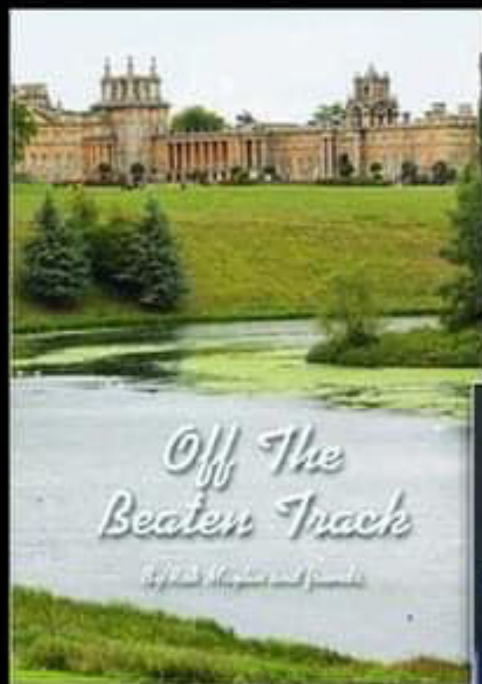






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Like I said, the sport is getting bigger in the US, but the number of carp anglers is still extremely small when compared to other countries. As carp fishing grows each year, more and more fish are being caught, shedding light on what's swimming in these waters. Through the help of social media, we are able to see what's being captured. Just last year, a new US Record for carp was broken. A massive 62lb 4oz common was captured from a public water by my friend Luis Montes of California. There is no doubt in my mind that there are bigger fish here that have yet to be discovered. Only time will tell what's lurking in all of these unexplored, unfished waters!

When planning a carp fishing trip abroad, maybe you will now consider North America? I think so! I am very privileged to live here and look forward to what the future of carp fishing in America has in store. To me, this is a carp fishing paradise with loads of potential and endless possibilities.













# THE BLUE LAGOON

The Blue Lagoon is probably one of the most infamous pits in the UK, more famous for illegal raves and tragedy than any “known” carp – a deep flooded chalk pit with all manner of snags and obstacles lying beneath its crystal clear blue water all just waiting to cut you off. The pit is full of scrap metal, hundreds of tons in fact, some left from the quarry when it flooded in 1934 and some added by the general public over the years. It has four cars lying on the bottom in one corner, a sunken boat, two sets of train carriages and an old hopper along with large amounts of rusty old mining equipment dotted all over the pit. Essentially the Blue Lagoon is just a flooded industrial estate from the 1930s with carp in – around 25 to 40 is my best guess. I swear in some swims you’re better off using a magnet to hold bottom than any type of lead!

I remember walking around it in the late 90s early 2000s looking for any signs of carp, but all we were ever greeted with was lads on motocross bikes, multiple cars blaring out music all tuned in to the same station and four million empty beer cans from past summers gone by. During one of those walks I witnessed a tragedy, a car was driven off a cliff into the pit dropping around 40 ft into the cold waters of the blue lagoon, the car contained three adults and three young children, the children sadly never made it out of the car.

A few years later during another stroll around the Blue (it kept calling me back), I got chatting to two tench anglers who informed me that a few days prior, a decapitated body had been found in a wheelbarrow, just left on the banks awaiting some poor soul to find it – can you imagine that? So far this pit had seen more police officers than carp anglers, but strangely, it just added to the whole experience for me in those early days!





I just couldn't believe that there in the middle of a village lay a gem of a place just left to ruin, a place of natural beauty with untold potential just waiting to be given some much needed love. In 2013 the lake was given the love it so rightly deserved, and the huge task of creating a secure fishery began. Over four years later, the fishery manager (Jay) has cleared the site of all the rubbish, certainly keeping the local skip hire company's busy, created fishable swims and is slowly working toward securing the entire site for any anglers wishing to fish there in the future. The work the Blue Lagoon team has done to get it to this point is nothing short of a miracle.



I didn't hear much about the Blue Lagoon during those early years of Jay running it, just the odd fish coming out here and there, some scaly mirrors and some really nice old commons but nothing of any real magnitude. Then it did a cracker, a scaly 40-plus fish (think Kempy's Linear meets the Client), a real banger of a fish, and I just knew that I had to have it.

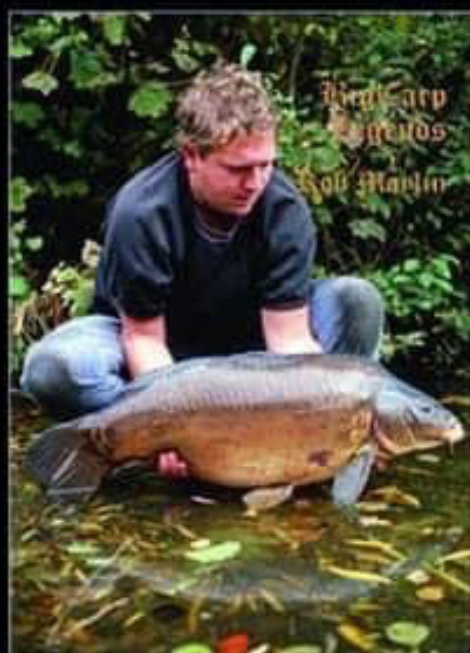
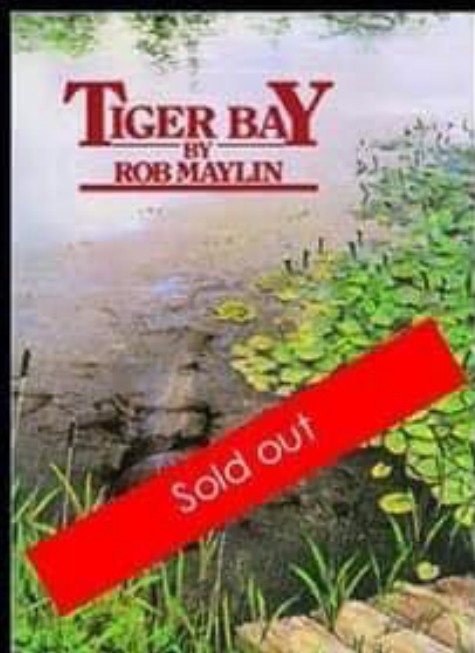
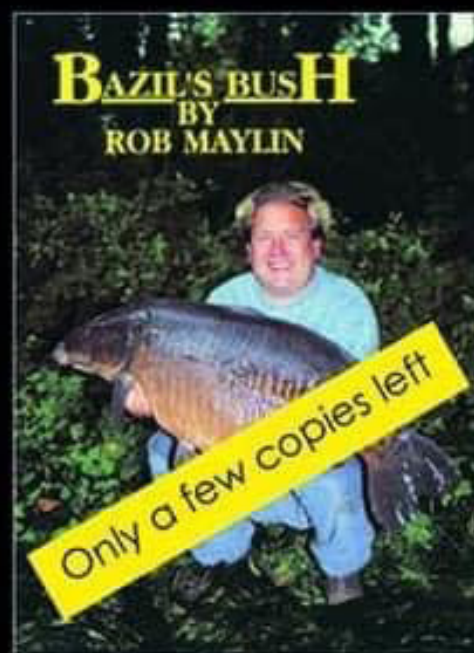
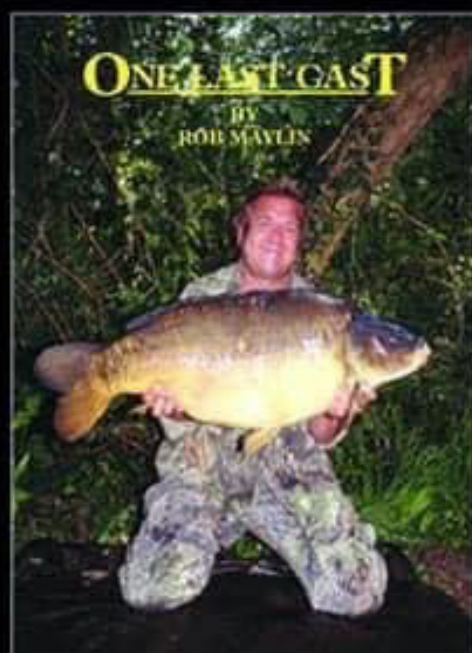
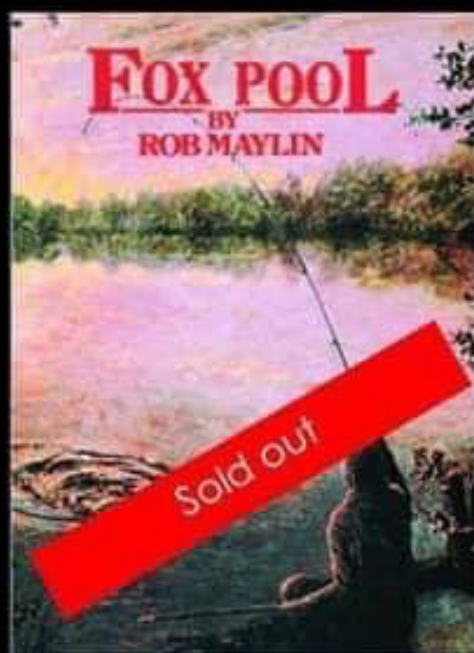
I contacted Jay and asked about the availability of tickets. It would seem that the infamous reputation of the Blue Lagoon was still running rampant, as when I finally got down to actually fish in April, the banks were virtually empty! I couldn't believe my luck – just two or three likeminded anglers on the pit, each with their own little plan to outfox this unnamed and relatively unknown mid-40 scaly. The lads I met on the banks of the Blue lagoon, normally during prebaiting sessions, were very respectful of each other's "little plans", and we just left each other to get on with our own little zones and reported back to each other what we were witnessing around the pit (well... almost everything anyway).

I had heavily baited an area known as the Shelf for a few weeks prior to actually fishing with hemp, boilie and pellet, popping down every other night to top up my spots. It's an area with a very shallow margin up to about 5ft deep that extends around 20 yards into the pit, an area that the fish love in the sun, before dropping off sharply to around 22ft at the bottom of the shelf (where I had been sneakily baiting). The first warm spring southwesterlies were hitting the pit that weekend, and I chose to fish all three rods at the bottom of the shelf. I was sure that the fish would be patrolling up and down its steep side as the warm wind SHOULD push them my way, I thought... I went to sleep that night thinking that it was only my first



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night on the pit, but I seriously fancied a bite!

I awoke early that morning to fish feeding on the shallow shelf right in front of me, no further than ten yards out! I couldn't believe it! There were eight fish (up to mid-20) grazing amongst the blanket weed, clearly working their way through the swim. I knew I had messed up massively at this point, choosing to fish all three rods off the shelf in 22ft where I had baited over the last few weeks. I should have been on the shallow shelf or at least had one on it anyway! The fish moved out into open water, and I had missed my first opportunity on the Blue Lagoon, but it was enough to make me change my plan of attack.





After the missed opportunity that morning, I quickly reeled all three rods in, changing from a leadcore leader and boilies to a more refined fluorocarbon leader and sweetcorn. I waded out onto the shelf, looking for the tiniest of clear spots to drop my subtle rigs on, placing the lead in the blanket weed with around 2ins of hook link lying off the clear spot – the trap looked perfect (I remember thinking “That’s a bite!”). I placed around ten to 15 grains of corn around each trap and waited for the carp to come back and graze on the shelf... I didn’t have to wait long!

The following morning, at first light, the carp came back onto the shelf. I was seriously excited knowing I was about to get a bite, and I even filmed the whole escapade! The group of fish slowly worked their way towards my left little clear spot, and the first few fish fed very lightly on the spot but managed to swerve the hook bait. They moved on to spot number two, picking the odd bit of corn up as they moseyed on through the swim, but again, no pick up was forthcoming. I couldn’t believe that these carp that are hardly fished for hadn’t picked up either of my hand placed, perfect little sweetcorn traps! What was going on? What carp swims past sweetcorn? Stupid ones, that’s what – ha ha!

That morning the fish repeated the pattern from the previous day in coming onto the shelf, having a little graze then sliding back off into the depths of the Blue Lagoon (and rather annoyingly, still not getting caught). I waded back out on to the shelf to look at my subtle little traps, and there they lay, totally undisturbed. I sat there scratching my head, thinking, what’s going on? I could get them feeding, but I couldn’t get them to eat a little yellow piece of plastic corn, so I changed





to real corn – two large grains fished KD style on a little size 8 Kurv Shank and simply repeated the process. I waded back out to my little clear spots (each the size of a tennis ball) and hand placed my newly tweaked rigs. Both the rigs and spots looked amazing; if those slippery carp ever came back, I just had to get a bite...

I waited with great expectations for the next morning to come, convinced I was going to nail my first Blue Lagoon carp since coming back. If they followed their previous patterns from the previous two mornings, I just had to get a bite! The morning came, but it didn't look good, as the wind had turned. Sadly they didn't return on that last morning, but I had seen them feeding and had a newfound respect for my quarry. These carp were clearly catchable, with a little effort.

The following weekend came round in heartbeat, and I was back in my prebaited shelf swim, traps reset (with real corn hook baits this time). All I needed was for Mr. Carp to come and say hello. The first morning of that session they came back onto the shelf along with a grassy of around 20lbs – I remember thinking, oh no, PLEASE NOT THE GRASSY! These fish were becoming predictable, and predictable fish are very catchable... With that my alarm let out two beeps just as the outdoor swimming team went by (very rare to see a shoal of humans swimming through your swim, but not on the Blue Lagoon).

I picked the rod up, thinking it was one of the lake's many large tench, but no – it was most certainly a carp! After a short battle, a pristine low 20 common went into the net, and I was buzzing! The little tweaks here and there had produced the goods – four nights in, and it was one nil to me – come on! A friend came round to do the trophy shots, and the little

common was thanked for his kind visit then safely returned to where he came from.

That weekend, the scuba divers were out in force (as they are most Sunday mornings on the Blue) on the pit and were obsessed with my deep water spots (heavily baited spots), spending what seemed like an eternity investigating my areas. I knew then that they were looking at something, and that something was more than likely my old bait, meaning my bait had lain there uneaten for nearly three weeks! As the scuba divers moved away, I realised I was in the wrong zone. Before going home that session, I identified an area that looked great – 15ft margins that would be battered by a decent southeasterly.

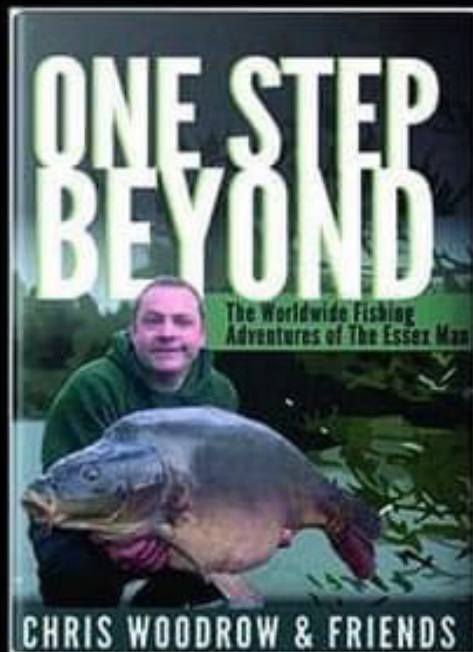
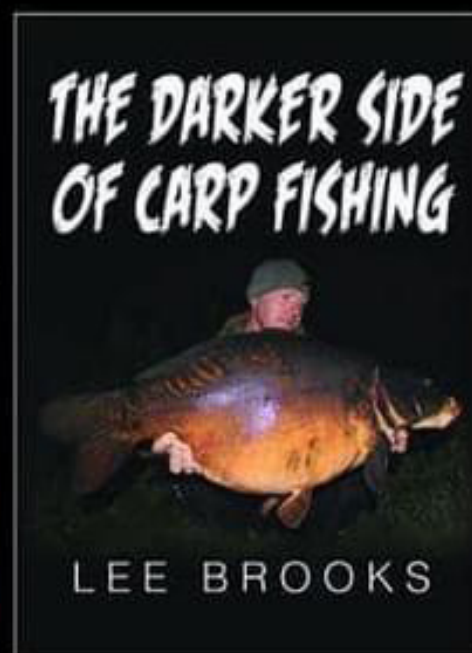




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With the plan formed, I just needed to get the bait going in – out with the corn and back in with pellet and boilie.

Every night for the following week, I made it back down to the pit to prebait with 2-3kgs of Mainline Cell and pellets carried across the fields and Spombed out, all being dumped on to my new spot. I couldn't wait for the weather to play ball, and it didn't take long at all. Just one week later, a big southeasterly was due in, and his was what I needed! I managed to blag the afternoon off work and headed straight for the Blue Lagoon. I arrived mid-afternoon and found a new member fishing my prebaited swim... I'm not going to lie; I was devastated! I was going to go home for a professional sulk when the chap in question moved pegs – what a result I thought, get in there, Micky! (We all deserve some luck sometimes)!

I dropped straight into the baited swim and flicked three singles out to the spot at around 20 yards' range, all fished on the ever-faithful stiff hinge rigs with a 15mm diamond white pop-up topping it off. The leads donked down really nicely, better than they had done a week ago, indicating something had most certainly been feeding there! Game on! As the afternoon dragged itself into the evening, the wind was getting stronger. It was really beginning to hack into my little area as the weatherman had predicted, and it looked savage! Something just had to happen! A good fish nudded out to my right over a similar depth of water I was fishing in, so they were here and by the looks of it, and feeding too. I eventually drifted off to sleep that night thinking about all the Blue Lagoon carp and just what could be lurking within the depths of this pit, as it almost most certainly holds some special uncaught whackers just waiting for a cuddle and photo.





The following morning, I was woken by my alarm absolutely one-toning, and the spool was in meltdown – the type of run you just know is a carp! I grabbed the rod and lifted into a powerful fish. It had kited right during the initial run, taking around 40 yards of line. I had to wade out into the pit to change the angle before it took me through an overhanging tree to my right. As I clamped down on the fish, stopping its first run, it came up through the water layers and rolled on the surface about 50-60 yards out. The distinctive scale pattern was clearly visible, and I knew exactly which one it was – the big'un – the whole reason why I was there! I just eased the clutch off on the reel and gingerly dragged her toward my hungry net.

She charged up and down the margin for a few minutes but eventually went in the net second time after some desperate last minute bids for freedom, the type of powerful kicks and lunges that convince you it's about to fall off and leave your poxy rig in a tree. But in the net she eventually went, and I knew I needn't recast – the job was done. The other two rods were wound in and the call was made. Now I had a choice of three people I could call that morning to come and do the shots, including a guy 200 yards down the bank, but when you have a pal who lives ten minutes away, a pal who's been chasing the same fish for three years, a pal who's birthday it was that morning too... how could I not call him? So Sam was called, and he arrived in his car around 20 minutes later. I was greeted with the "death stare" (I'd caught his fish on his birthday), so there were two anglers sat by a lake at 7am in the morning – one is ecstatic and the other? Hmm... not so much! Ha ha ha! Thankfully Sam took some amazing shots that morning and really did the scaly mirror justice



On the scales she went 43lb 12oz, slightly down in weight from her normal mid to upper 40, but I really couldn't have cared less – she was mine! She had a scale missing on the top of the wrist of her tail, which had been missing a while, as you could clearly see the whitish mark about size of a stamp when she was swimming about in the pit. It was the easiest way to identify her from distance whilst out fish spotting. The hook hold and missing scale were both treated with propolis before she was released, but not before the obligatory water shots were taken. She looked immense swimming back off into the depths of the Blue Lagoon that morning. Catching target fish has always been a double-edged sword for me, as by the time I normally catch my desired fish, I have fallen in love with the lake that I'm fishing and don't want to leave! Strange really, but it was time for a new lake...





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# **GRENVILLE: LAKE OF DREAMS**

It's some five years since I first stepped onto the banks of what I now passionately call the lake of dreams, the phenomenal Grenville Lake. Having made an appointment with its creator, Paul Ward, and being shown around for the first time, it was plainly obvious the passion and hard work that Paul had invested in Grenville. For me it was simply love at first sight. As I walked round with Paul, the lake oozed excellence in every department: the fishing platforms, the thousands of shrubs and trees planted, the stunning wildlife that now inhabit this metropolis and not forgetting the most important aspect, the



three-miles of otter fencing that protects the very special inhabitants that reside in this 72-acre gravel pit with depths in excess of 40ft. What a forethought that has proven to be given to today's issues with the return of the native otter.

It being my fifth consecutive year and the last week of Grenville's season before closing, I'd already squared it with Paul to do the last five nights before the fish were to go about spawning in peace with plenty of time for recovery before reopening in a couple of months time.

It was a very early start as I made the 320-mile round trip down the A1 for my final trip of the season before the lake closed. Now, I'm always confident, but never in my wildest dreams did expect the events that were to unfold. Having previously made a few phone calls to members already on the



lake, I was hoping to get a spot on one of my favourite swims and planned to arrive early doors. Off I went, car packed and ready for an early start, hoping to be first in the queue and give myself the best opportunity of getting my first choice swim. As I drove down the track it became apparent that my efforts had been rewarded, as I was indeed first in the queue. However, it wasn't long before another member pulled up behind me, and then the waiting game began.

7 o'clock arrived, and the other member and I made our way to the lake. Surprisingly we were the only two there besides those already on the lake. All that was left to do was for each of us to choose our spots. After much deliberation between peg 17 or 12 and a flip of a 50 pence piece (several times, I might add), I decided on peg 12. I got the camp set up and had a quick cast around with the marker rod. I then deposited 5kg of Mainline Hybrid and Essential Cell boilies at range. Having spoken to other members, it was clear that there had been lots of fish showing well in the margins with one or two being caught.

As my session commenced, it was a case of two rods long and one short. This changed quickly as a small group of carp drifted past me in the margins, so it was two rods short and one long. I quickly catapulted out three pouches of Hybrid and Essential Cell boilies and chops over each rod, which were baited with my usual Mainline pop-ups on my ever-faithful combi multi-rigs and hand sharpened size 6 hooks.

It was now late afternoon, and I was just getting myself settled in when a fellow member, Wayne Earlam, came over with the news that he'd just landed a lovely scaly mid-30. He asked if I could do the photos, so I reeled the rods in and made my way to his swim. On returning to my swim, I recast

with a further three pouches of chops over the two margin rods before cooking my tea – homemade burgers from my daughter – lovely! Suddenly my left hand rod gave out a series of bleeps from the Delkim. I thought I was away but was left disappointed. Pike, I was thinking, as this happened a couple more times with the same outcome.

Anyway back in the bivvy, it was stove on and the burgers were cooking away nicely. I received a single bleep on my right hand rod, which then melted away with a full-blown take. It soon became apparent that I was attached to decent fish, as it took 30 yards of line off a tight clutch and powered off down the reed-fringed margin as I struggled to put the brakes on. This continued for what seemed like an age.

Eventually I started to get the upper hand, and with steady pressure, I began to win the battle. After several more powerful





# SECRETS OF THE THAMES

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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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runs in the deep margin, it finally rolled. I knew that this was a good fish, possibly a 40, I thought. Once I got the fish in the net, I was able to take a better look and soon realised how big it actually was. As I went to lift it from the water in the recovery sling, I knew this was no 40. I quickly did a rough weigh and the scales went past the 50lb mark. I then phoned the creator of the phenomenal Grenville Lake, Paul Ward, to inform him that I had caught a good fifty.

Fellow member Wayne Earlam was soon on hand to help me do a proper weighing. The scales settled at 59lb 1oz, and it was confirmed that not only had I hit a new UK PB and my second UK fifty, but I'd also smashed the lake record out of sight. I was feeling pretty euphoric! I mean, it's not every day you go and bank a near UK sixty, is it?





After speaking to Paul Ward again, the rest of the cavalry arrived in the shape of longstanding syndicate member Phil Calloway (who immediately gave me a very carpy man hug) and Paul Bowers. Between them they did a fantastic job with the photography, videos and sharing the special moment with me, as I was completely blown away.

Over the rest of my session, I kept a steady trickle of Mainline Hybrid and Essential Cell boilies going in, working the swim. The rewards kept on coming, as I went on to net a further four carp at 37lb 15oz, 37lb 9oz (stunning scaly) as well as a couple of 20s and of course plenty of photographs of the local wildlife, which is always a big part of my time spent on the bank wherever I may be. And so the curtain came down on yet another incredible season that will live long in the memory on



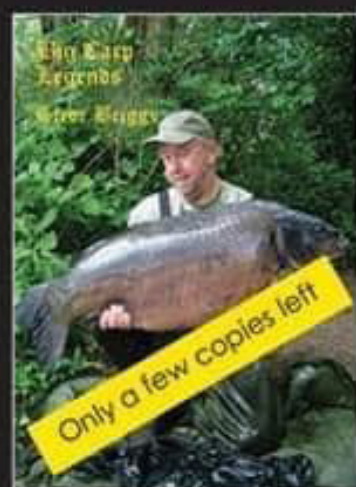
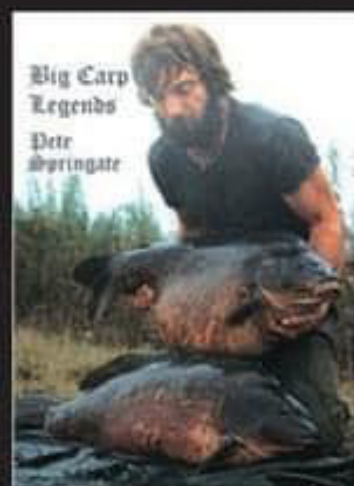
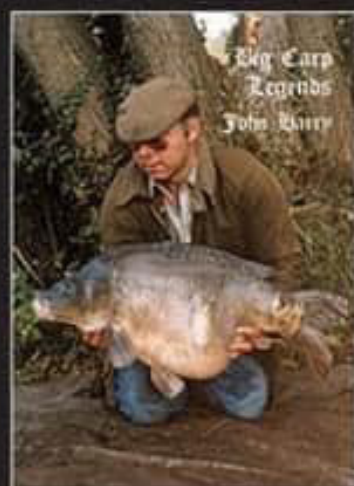
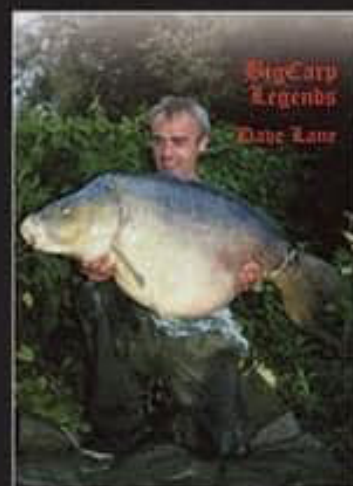
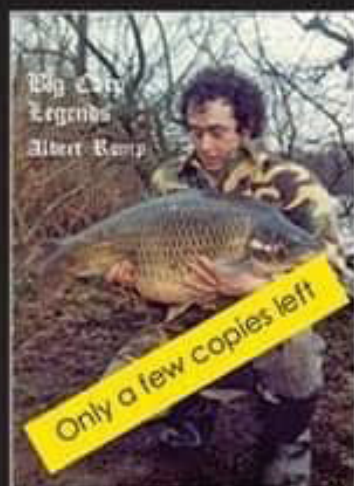
the lake where dreams do come true...

Many thanks once more to Paul Ward the creator of what is in my humble opinion the best carp syndicate lake in the country bar none as well as Mainline Baits, Handmade Carp Leads, Rhinotech and J Precision Hooks. Last but not least, the members old and new that I've had the good fortune to share the bank with, helping make those special memories on this phenomena that is Grenville Lake where a dream is but a cast away...



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