

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

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MARK ROSE - SYNDICATE DIARY
MARK QUINN - MEGASCALEY
MARK DAVIDSON - CARP IN KELP
ZENIA - A DREAM SESSION

BOBBY COOTE - DOCKLANDS
JACK THOMPSON - GUESTING
ADRIAN WINTLE - WRAYSBURY
APRIL CHIVERTON - BLACK BEAUTY



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BIG CARP READERS TOP TENS !!

TOP 10 DAY TICKET CARP WATERS

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

TOP 10 FRENCH HOLIDAY VENUES

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

TOP 10 BAIT COMPANIES

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



TOP 10 END TACKLE COMPANIES

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

TOP 10 CARP FISHING BRANDS

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

TOP 10 CARP TACKLE SHOPS

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

TOP 10 ICONIC CARP LAKES

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

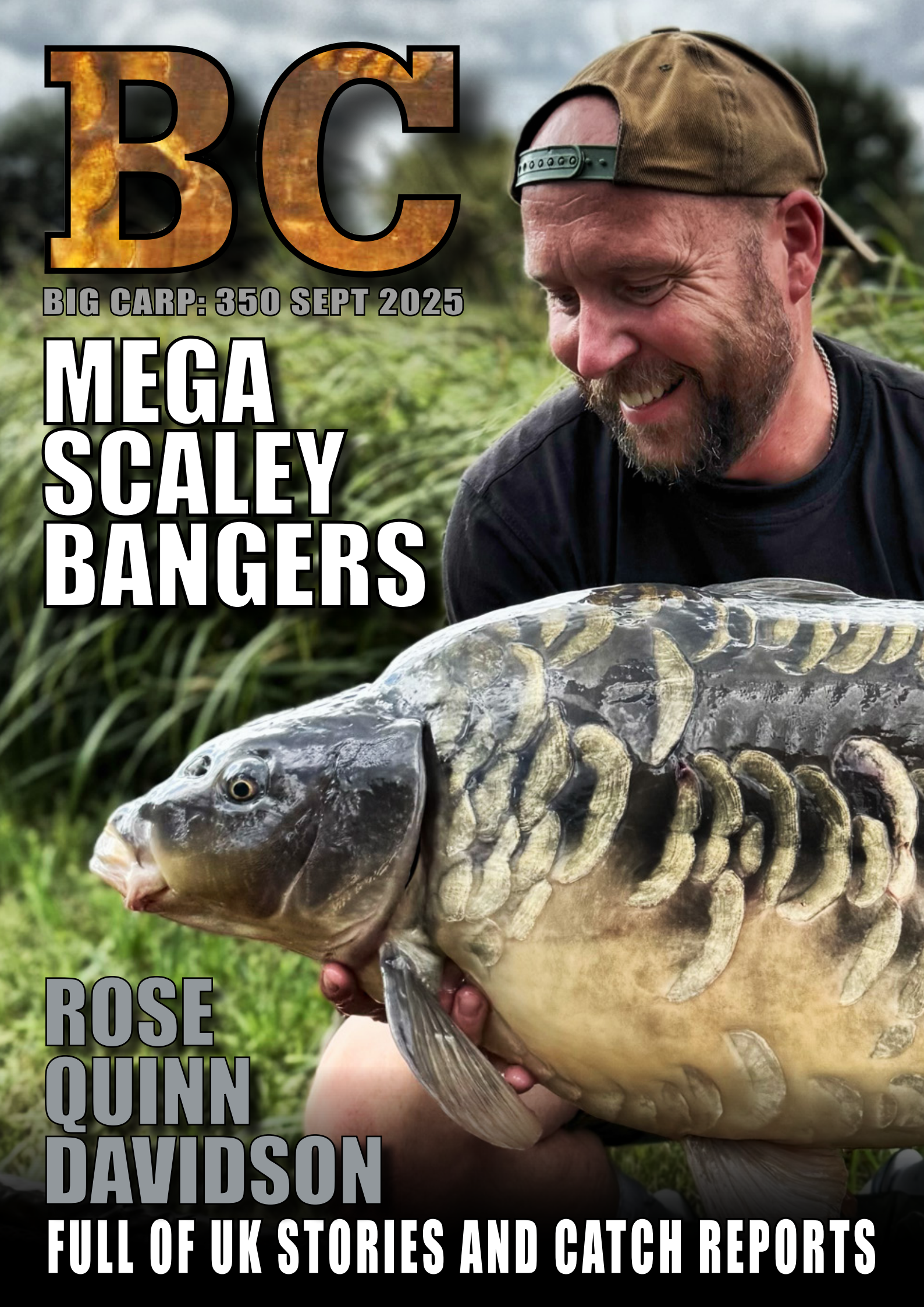
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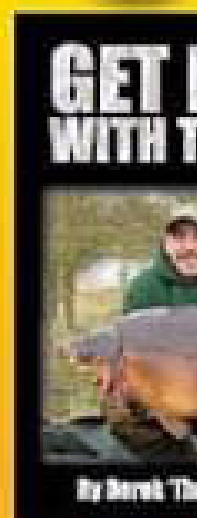
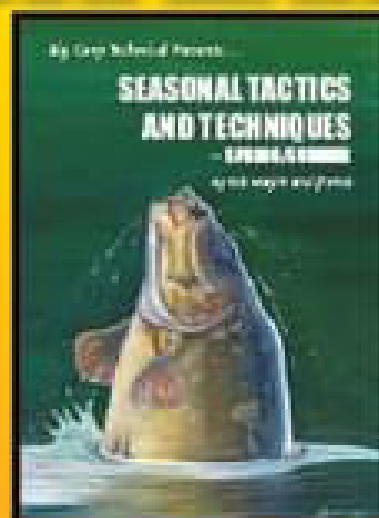
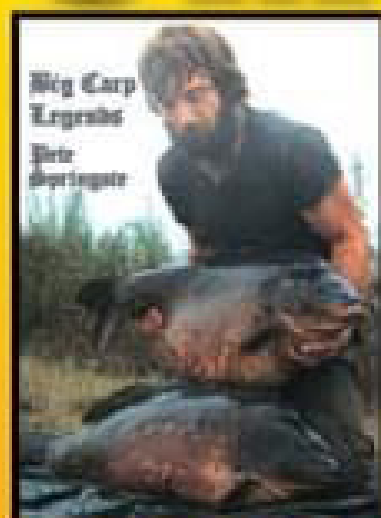
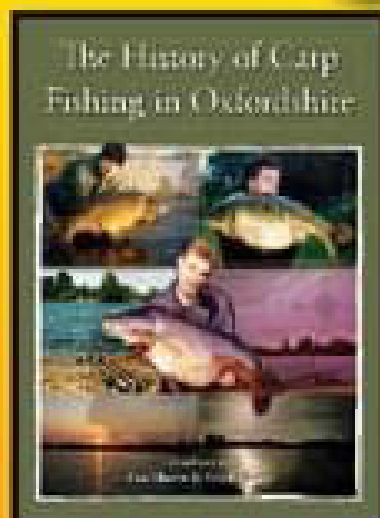
MEGA SCALEY BANGERS

ROSE
QUINN
DAVIDSON

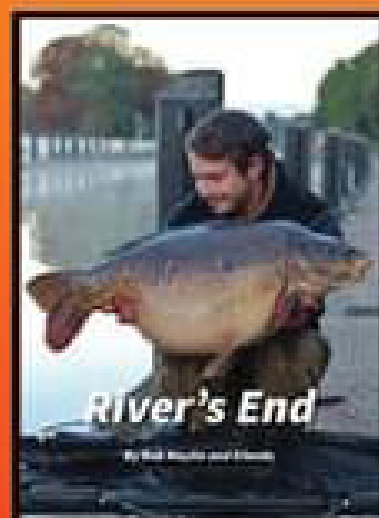
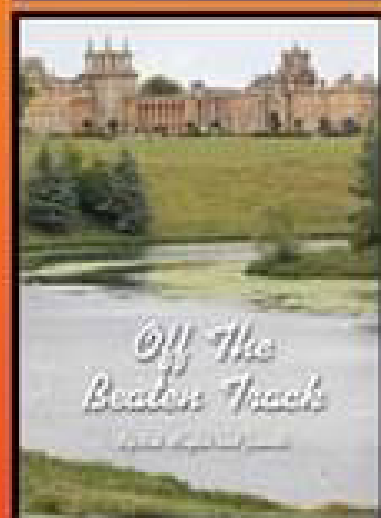
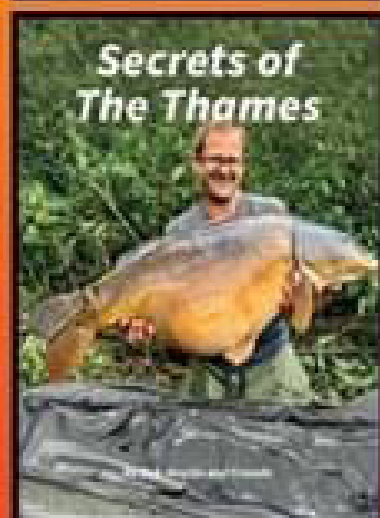
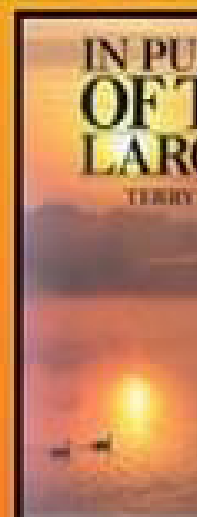
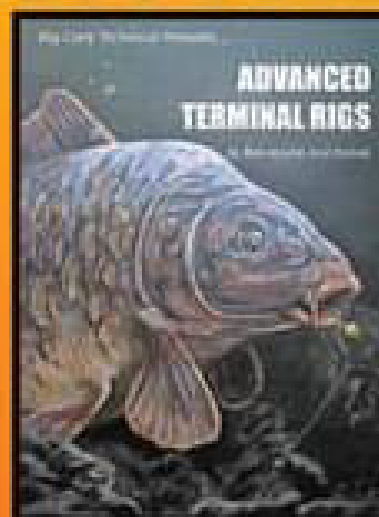
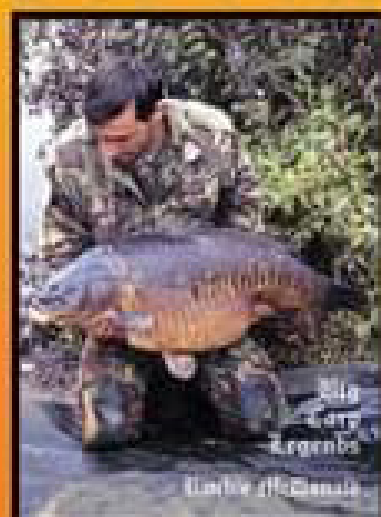
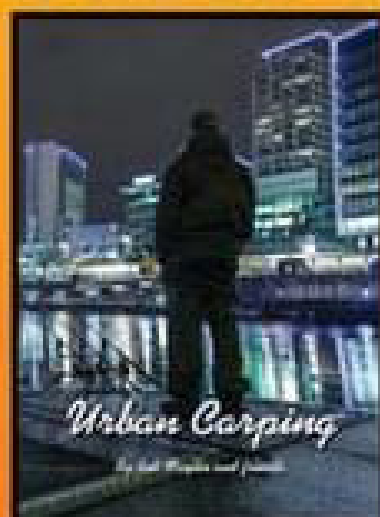
FULL OF UK STORIES AND CATCH REPORTS



SUMMER S



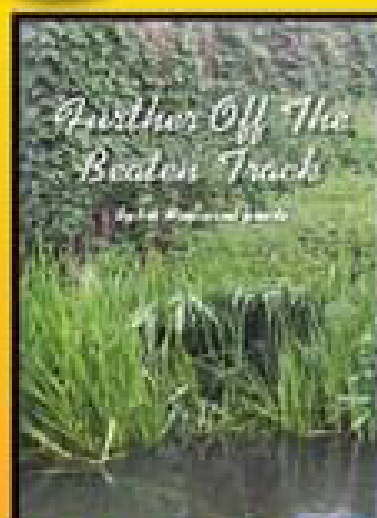
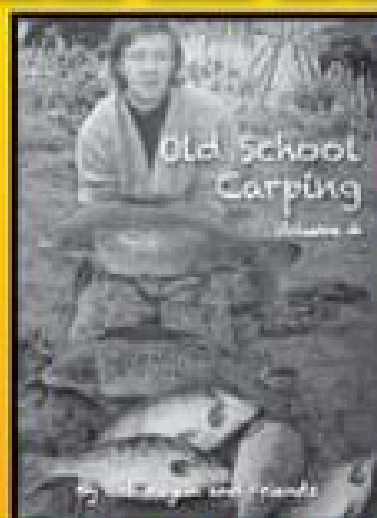
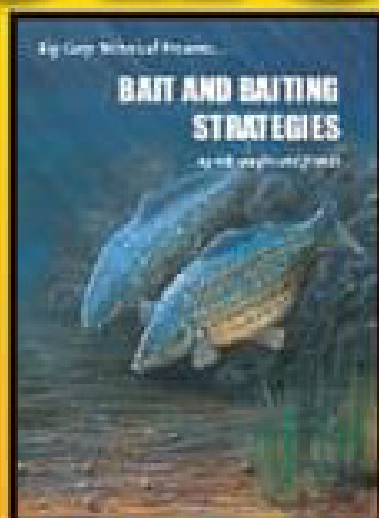
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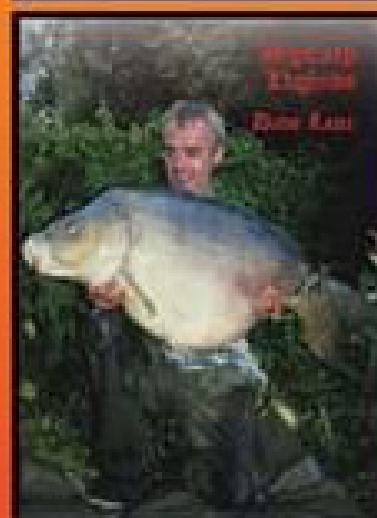
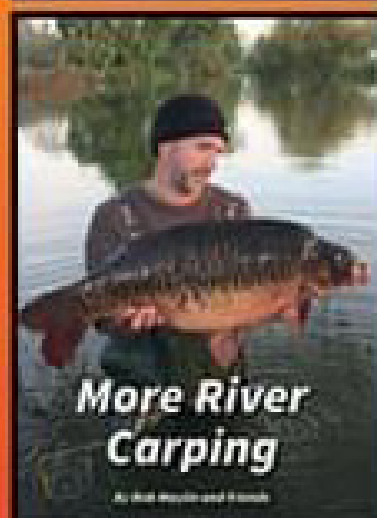
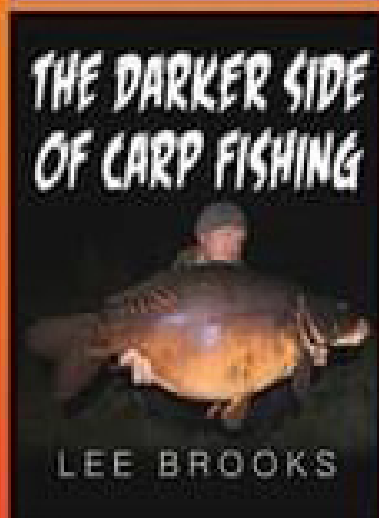
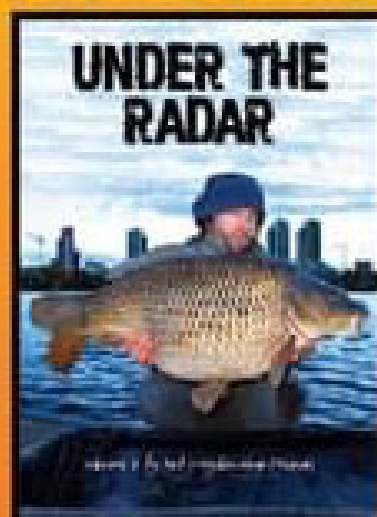
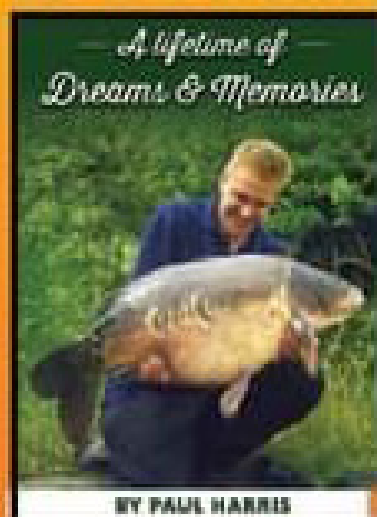
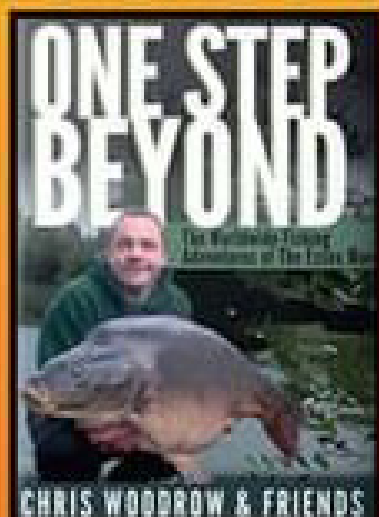
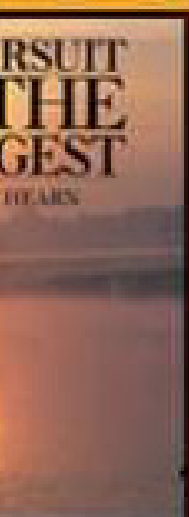
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CORCHERS



AND GET READY FOR SUMMER ACTION



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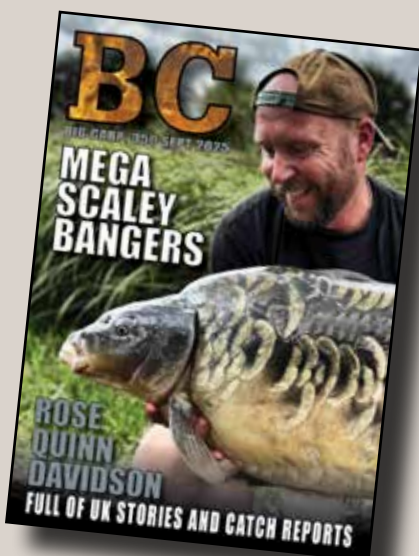
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Publications 2025



Front Cover:
Mark Quinn with The
Megascaley.



Despite the extensive algae blooms turning many lakes into pea soup, the rapidly dropping water levels and record breaking temperatures it hasn't disrupted the awesome catches we've received this month.

In this month's issue check out Mark Davidson tackling Monks Pit's kelp beds. This unusual weed is a tackle killer but Mark has a right result. Mark Quinn writes how a simple photo can fuel an obsession. Mark Rose has been back out and banking a few on his syndicate in between work and family commitments. Then we finish off with Zenia having the trip of a lifetime. Her face says it all really. Don't forget to check out the latest and coolest tackle releases too

8. SHOCKLEADER

News from around the fishing industry.

28.TAC-TEC

Our look at some of the best fishing products.

38. CATCH REPORTS

Check out some of the biggest carp to be caught recently. Including a UK 60 for Charlie Benson

64. MARK DAVIDSON

Takes on the sanctuary of Monks Pit's kelp beds and banks a few of the resident beauties

70. MARK QUINN

A photo on a new venue sparks an obsession that Mark just had to fulfil.

112. MARK ROSE

Representing the average angler with work and family commitments Mark uses his time wisely to keep banking them.

132. ZENIA

The trip of a lifetime is the only way to describe Zenia's session.



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^^ A nice week up the Cotswolds for team member John Paul McCusker. Managed 5 carp up to 32 lbs

Team member Ben Flockton also managed to coax 2 carp out this weekend, 17lb and 22lb. Ben used one of our most popular and strongest hooks, size 4 Scorpion Crank hook. Visit our shop at www.carptackleonline.com to get yourself some of the best value for money end tackle around. >>



^^ We love getting pictures from our customers and team, but even more when it's from young talented anglers like Jayden Brooker. Jayden put our Scorpion Zig hooks to great use and bagged himself this cracking looking common. Well done, Jayden, great angling.



^^ Team member Paul Gill nailed this low 20lb scaley banger using our size 6 Scorpion Wide Gapes tied in a Slip D style rig in a PVA bag. Well done Paul.



^^ Team member Lee Weldon recently enjoyed success with the capture of this cracking common, Lee used a variety of our gear, including our Scorpion hooks. Well done Lee.

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Swivel Deal



Tungsten Hooklink Sinkers



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Swivels



Scorpion Choddy Crank



Scorpion



Scorpion Wide Gape

**GIFT CARDS
NOW AVAILABLE**

SHOCK AWADE

LUCY'S BOWL RAISES £38500

Lucy's Bowl 2025 comes to an end. I still have a few auctions to go through.

What a cracking event yet again. Thank you to all that participated and all those that came. Huge thank you to all of the industry that donated prizes for the raffle too. It's appreciated and we realise how hard it must be in these times

We raised a whopping £38500 and still counting. That's all thanks to all of you!!

On a personal note, I must thank Kim Cable for the stunning artwork she kindly did of me with Wasings Oxlease Common. I'll do a separate post if you would like something done yourself or for a loved one. She can literally paint anything, not just fish.

I'd also like to thank Lewis Smith for all he's done and the memento he made in



memory of Laura and all those that cancer has affected their lives. If you want one, drop him a message.

Finally, thank you to all the Lucy's Bowl team for the plaque. I wasn't expecting that at all.

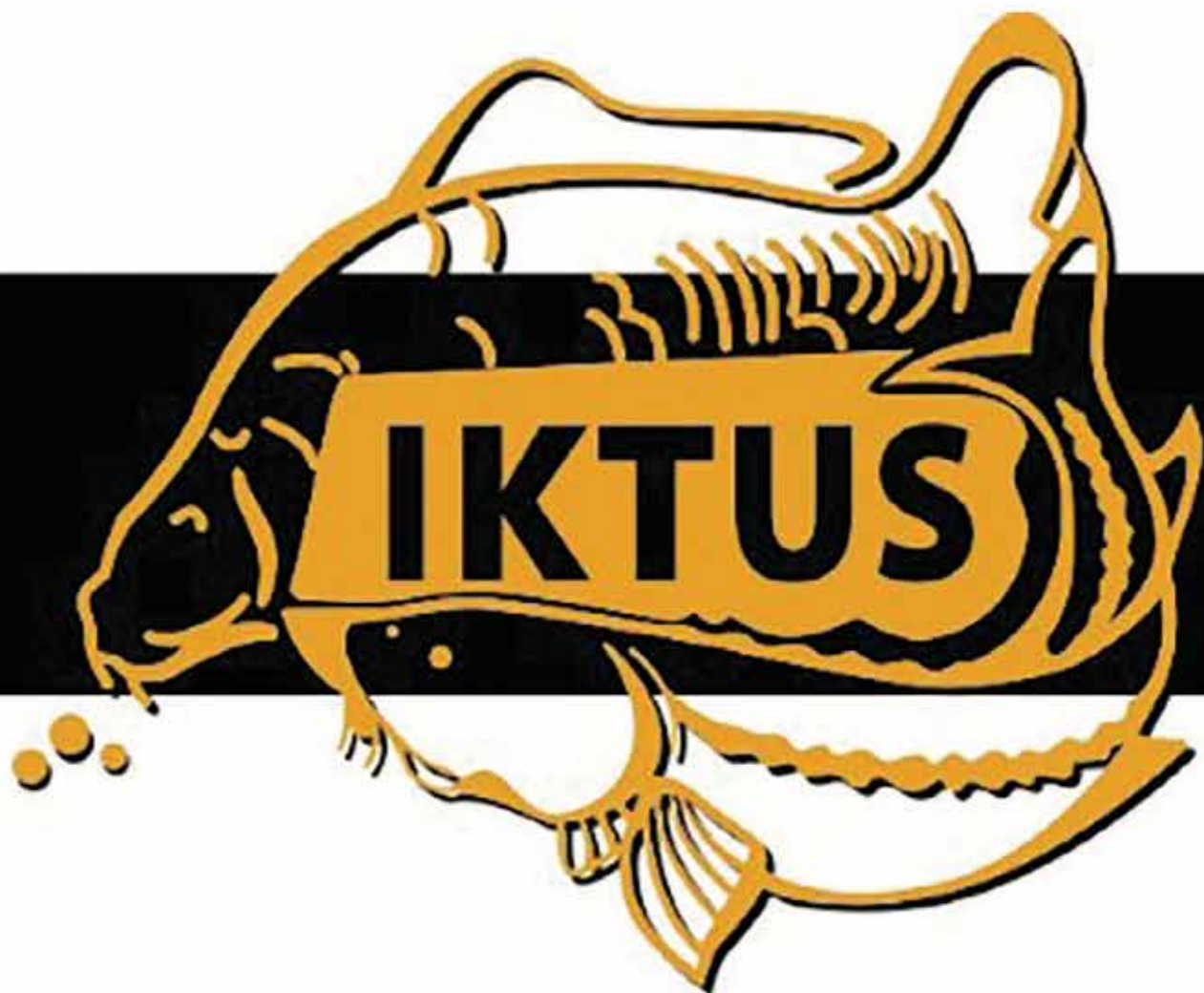
I'm shattered at the moment but I will be going through my

raffle winners and contacting them. If you don't receive a message then sadly you haven't won this time around but we thank you for your ongoing support that allows us to buy and train the guide dogs. You make a huge difference to someone's life !

Les Bowers x



Dead fish at Hampstead Heath ponds due to outbreak of suspected deadly disease



FISHING RESORT



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THE WINTER CARP SHOW 2025: A TWO-DAY ANGLING CELEBRATION AT SANDOWN PARK

This November, the UK's premier winter angling event is back for its third year—and it's bigger than ever. The Winter Carp Show 2025 takes over the iconic Sandown Park racecourse on the weekend of November 29th–30th, bringing anglers from across the country together for two action-packed days of deals, demos, and camaraderie.

With free parking and spacious indoor venues, guests can browse, buy, and get hands-on with the latest carp fishing tackle and tech. The show's founder, Vince Davies, says "This will be our biggest show to date & I'm especially excited to welcome a host of top-tier brands", including:

Korda (with an expanded stand to showcase their latest innovations)

Sonik, OMC, Trakker, Navitas, Crafty Catcher, Gillhams, NGT, Parker Baits, Sharp Tackle ... and many more!

In addition to exclusive Black Friday discounts, attendees can look forward to fresh product launches, limited-edition gear, and one-on-one chats with the people behind the brands. For many, it's the ideal chance to reconnect with friends and fellow anglers and to dive deep into the culture of carp fishing.

The show also plays host to fan-favourite guest speakers, including the ever-inspiring



Neil Spooner and Ali Hamidi, Whether you're chasing your whose talks are a must-see next PB or simply love the for anyone passionate about angling lifestyle, this is the angling. show you don't want to miss.

Tickets are officially on sale starting July 26th—with two incredible VIP bundles available at reduced early bird rates until August 26th. Follow the event on social media for updates, sneak peeks, and more surprises leading up to November. Tight lines and see you at Sandown!

JOIN ROD HUTCHINSON'S TEAM



We are looking for new Team Members (UK based) to join our already experienced Team of anglers.

We are looking for like-minded carp anglers who:

- Can create short video footage for RH social media platforms (FB & Insta Reels, TikTok, YouTube shorts) fully edited ready to go!
- Take product shots and

self take catch report photographs for use on RH social media.

- Help promote the brand (like and share posts).
- Can conduct themselves professionally both on social media and bankside.

All of which are of a good quality standard, of course

In return, we will offer you a good discount on the Rod Hutchinson range of products available on the website.

If this sounds like yourself, then send a private DM with a little bit about yourself with links to all your social media accounts and some examples of short video clips you have produced.

Please do not be offended if you do not hear back from us. As you can appreciate, we receive lots of messages, and we simply cannot respond to all applicants.

SOMETHING
IS
COMING

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EVOLVA

IT'S TIME TO EVOLVE

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



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11 - 18 Oct 2025

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Military



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All Ex..



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Three Biggest Fish to Count
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ANGLING TRUST LAUNCHES BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR FRESHWATER ANGLING

The Angling Trust is proud to announce the launch of the Best Practice Guide for Freshwater Angling – a comprehensive resource designed to promote responsible, sustainable, and safe angling across the UK.

This free, downloadable guide provides anglers of all levels with clear, practical advice on how to care for fish, protect the environment, support fellow anglers, and follow legal and safety guidelines.

Produced in collaboration with major angling organisations, including Tenchfishers, The Grayling Society, and the Pike Anglers Club of Great Britain, the guide is built around six

core principles:

- Care for the fish you catch.
- Appreciate and protect the environment.
- Help other anglers and encourage newcomers.
- Treat everyone with respect.
- Follow the rules and always fish legally.
- Fish safely and follow health and safety guidance.

The guide includes expert tips on fish handling, unhooking techniques, safe rig use, water temperature awareness, and biosecurity. It also highlights the importance of community involvement, environmental stewardship, and legal compliance.

BEST PRACTICE GUIDE FOR FRESHWATER ANGLING



www.anglingtrust.net

This guide is supported by





Carp Society In Focus

June / July 2025

CATCH UP WITH THE MOST RECENT CARP SOCIETY JUNE - JULY FISHERIES ROUND UP ON OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL



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



Great news! Mortimer & years in the north-west of Whitehouse:Gone Fishing is set England, along with their to return for its eighth series, trusty dog, Ted.

which is especially wonderful Bob Mortimer shared his given Bob Mortimer's recent excitement: "I'm looking health issues. The beloved forward to visiting old haunts show will revisit the riverbanks from my younger years as Paul that shaped the formative and I travel back in time for years of Paul Whitehouse and this series, fishing in places Bob Mortimer. that shaped our lives."

Filming will begin later this Fans can also look forward to year for six new episodes, the seventh series airing later taking the pair to Whitehouse's this year, featuring episodes birthplace of Wales and filmed in Bedfordshire, North revisiting Mortimer's early Norfolk, and Northern Ireland.

KLS BAIT SAMPLE PACKS



Fancy trying one of our bait well here your chance to with our 500g sample pack that won't back the bank.

Monster Shellfish Boilies: is a fishmeal-based boilie. This bait contains a blend of 3 high quality fishmeals, a very digestible bait including Shellfish Sense Appeal, Salmon Oil, Essential oil, GLM & Robin Red, egg shell for that added crunch - a true winning formula. Also included is a top-quality sweetener, to help finish off this highly

attractive boilie.

Chocolate Nut Boilies: is a nut based boilie. This bait contains a blend of high-quality nut ingredients, with chocolate malt, the best milk proteins available and a top quality sweetener, to help finish off this highly attractive boilie. Designed to be used in the colder months but is as equally effective in the warmer months too.

Head over to our website www.klsbait.co.uk to grab yours now!!

Chiltern Custom Rods

We are based in Buckinghamshire and we specialise in building high quality rods, hand built to your requirements using the best quality products from many leading manufacturers



Our custom compact rods are available in 10ft 3lb, 3.5lb or 4.5lb spod versions. All are built to your requirements and specifications.

We also have our own 10ft and 12ft blanks, our own guides, handles and reel seats to keep the overall cost as low as possible but still offering high quality products.

We can also upgrade or refurbish your existing rods, giving them another lease of life.



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NEW DIRECTION STATEMENT HOPES TO CLEAR UP CONFUSION

We would like to take a moment to address the confusion and frustration many of you have experienced in recent months. Legal restrictions and our responsibility to safeguard customers' interests have, until now, limited how much we could share. Today, we want to clarify the situation, explain the steps we are taking, and outline what this means for you.

Like many businesses, we partnered with a company in China to manufacture products and manage critical systems, including our website, apps, and autopilot technology. Unfortunately, over time we witnessed a decline in product quality and decisions that no longer aligned with our values. To protect the reputation and future of New Direction Tackle, our owner began the process of ending this partnership. Before that transition could be completed, our former partner took damaging steps: they blocked our access to our website, apps, and autopilot systems, and even threatened to cut off autopilot access for customers worldwide. These actions were taken without our knowledge or consent, and we

deeply regret that our customers were drawn into this conflict—it was never our intention.

Our investigation shows that these actions were coordinated by two individuals: one in China, formerly our closest partner, and another in the UK, who held a position of trust within our company but misused it. Since then, new entities—ND Tackle Capital Ltd. and Nine Tackle Ltd.—have been established. Under the brand name NDS Tackle, they are selling bait boats and making false claims of connection to New Direction Tackle. These actions are a clear infringement of our trademark rights and appear deliberately designed to mislead customers and dealers.

Unfortunately, some dealers and end consumers have already been affected. We have purchased products ourselves as evidence, and some of these even included support cards with our company details, further highlighting the risk of confusion.

We want to reassure you of the following:

- We WILL take firm legal action: Since our lawyers' letters have been ignored, court proceedings will begin within the next two weeks. This will be the first of many actions under UK and international law to address these unlawful practices.

- We ARE working to restore stability: Our small but dedicated core team is actively rebuilding secure systems to prevent further interference. We ask for your patience over the next four weeks while we complete the necessary technical work to fully resolve the autopilot problem.

We remain deeply committed to protecting our brand, our customers, and the angling community. The same passionate team that has brought many of the innovations anglers enjoy today is still here, working tirelessly to restore services, safeguard your trust, and continue developing new ideas for the future.

Aqua Lilium Clothing

Changing Seasons

As the long drought of summer is slowly ending and the daylight hours shorten.

Here at Aqua Lilium Clothing, we are already turning our attention to the cooler months which will be with us in a blink of an eye.

So, that got us thinking, what can we bring to you next?

One thing I know I cannot stand about winter is the thick clothing you need, sitting there feeling like you cannot move. One minute you are sweating because you moved swims the next minute you are cold because you are damp. I asked the team to produce a list of must haves that they feel they need for the cooler months:

1. Lightweight
2. Waterproof
3. Breathable
4. Warm
5. Storage
6. Easily pack away.
7. Built in hood.
8. Movability

This got me thinking how can we have all these must haves in one item of clothing, knowing that the list we have contradicts itself. It just so happened that the British Grand Prix was on in the background and because of the good old British weather of course it was raining.

I noticed that although it was raining there was not many umbrellas in the crowds as it blocks everybody's view. Instead, people were wearing hooded waterproof ponchos. Yes, I thought to myself that could work, and I wasted no time sketching out a design for the Poncho.

When designing the poncho, I needed inspiration, a guide on which to follow and you know what they say, if it is not broken don't fix it. This took me back to our award winning All Rounder Jacket that's not only waterproof but it's lightweight and windproof. The All Rounder

Aqua Lilium Clothing

Poncho

Coming soon

17th

August
2025



Don't get caught in the rain
**Without imagination there is
no progression**

also has a very clever internal thermal system that is not only breathable but generates your own body heat.

So, naming the product was simple, we would call the item The All Rounder Poncho, not only waterproof and windproof the poncho would feature a draw cord hood as well as the large zip up front pocket as featured on all our wonderful jackets. Not only this the poncho will come with its very own waterproof bag for you

to store when not in use or if you are already set up and you need a barrow cover, the poncho spreads out to a distance of 2 metres and has 4 holes with metal ring inserts, meaning you can roll up the hood and strap the poncho down over the compartment of your barrow.

We truly are excited for this one and cannot wait for the first delivery which I believe to be around mid-September, just in time for your Autumn campaign




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Competition Time

Aqua Liliu Clothing has maintained operations for more than four years and has been highlighted multiple times in Big Carp Magazine throughout this period. We have appeared in Britain's top carp magazine and received multiple awards for quality and design. To acknowledge Big Carp Magazine's ongoing support, we are organizing a competition where readers have an opportunity to win Aqua Liliu products:

1. A waterproof poncho worth £70.00
2. A Blue Koi Hoody worth £40.00
3. A Casting at the sun T-shirt worth £20.00
4. A Jet Flame windproof lighter worth £6.50
5. A bottle opener.

All you must do to enter is go to www.aqualiliuclimbing.com and scroll down to the bottom of the page. At the bottom of the page,

you will find the subscribe box, please enter your email address and click send. This will allow you one entry per email address to the competition however, you can also like and share the advert on all social media platforms, and this will give you an extra 3 entries into the competition.

While you are subscribing to the website, why not go one step further and look through all the amazing clothing we have to offer. I guarantee we have something for everyone - even your dog!!

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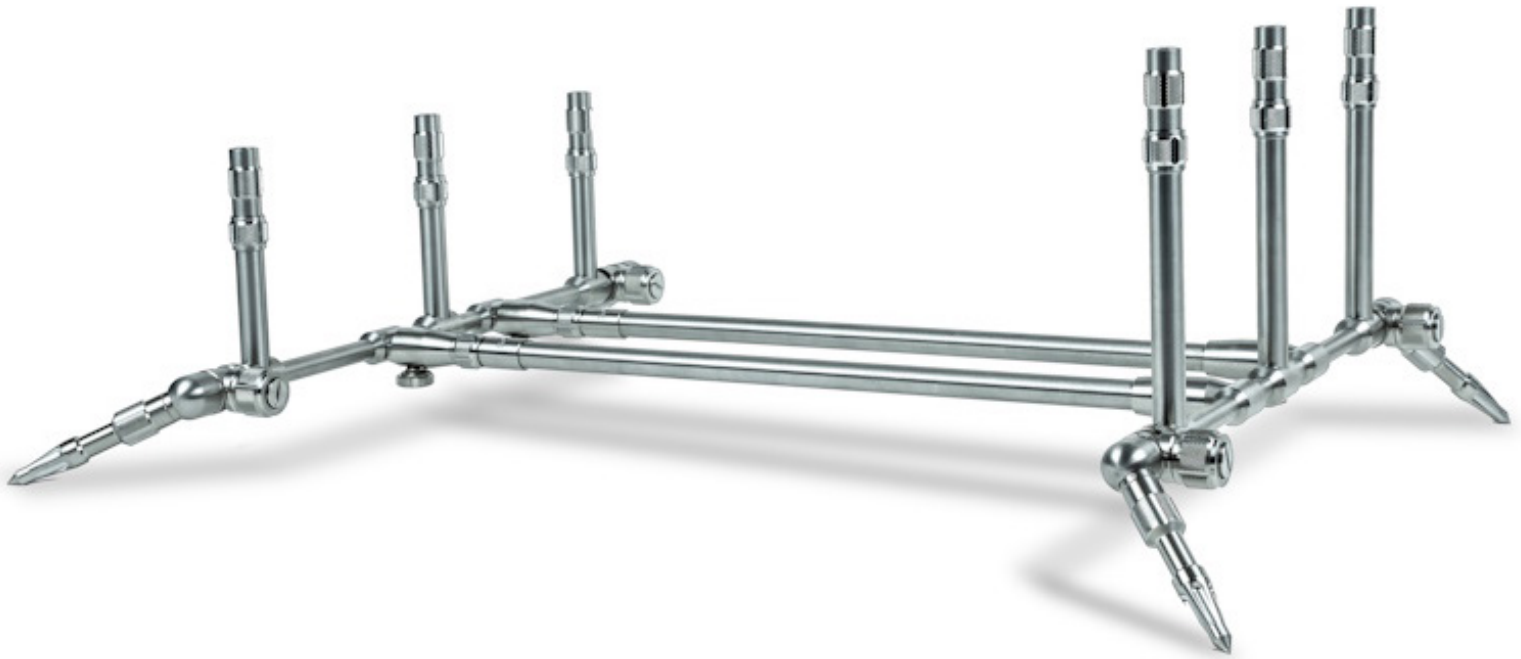
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THE
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SOLAR P1 CROC POD

IT'S BACK!! The much sought after and revered CROC Pod is back. As usual, you can tell it's 'Solar' hardware from 10 feet away. With the advanced machining capabilities and with the precision of CAD's 3D technology, it has allowed us to completely re-design this iconic 'ground hugging' pod, from the original version introduced in the 90's. We've kept the World Wide style independent leg angle adjustment system (ILAS) and added not only twin main bars for rigidity and single upright components for a stronger chassis, but with increased front and rear bar widths and outer fitted leg attachments , gives the new 'CROC' unparalleled stability and is already being labelled as one of the most stable pods in the world, solidifying Solar's domination of the bankware market. As the name suggests, it can be used as a ground hugging low set up, but as with



all our Pod range, we recognize immediately noticeable, not the need to cover all angling only do they look futuristic, situations. The P1 CROC's are the 'Super Grip' fittings serve fitted with the new semi quick the purpose of easier adjusting release 3/8 BSF thread fittings and locking of everything in on the newly styled Stubby legs position, even in the coldest (supplied) , which are fitted to and wettest of conditions. The the outside ends of the bridge CROC is a peak performance bars, enabling quick and thoroughbred, a precision-easy attachment of those , or made piece of kit, designed your chosen longer legs/bank and made entirely in the UK sticks required in any given to the highest standards that terrain , further increasing the anglers come to expect from adaptable capabilities of the Solar Tackle hardware.

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of the fixtures and fittings are ■ www.solartackle.co.uk


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THE N.M.E.

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Goodz, a company founded a decade ago, has built a stellar reputation as a premier supplier of high-quality fish bait. From its inception, Goodz has been committed to providing anglers with products that ensure success on the water, combining expert craftsmanship with a passion for fishing. Over the years, their dedication to excellence has earned them the trust of fishing enthusiasts and professionals alike. Whether it's their attention to sourcing premium ingredients or their innovative bait designs, Goodz continues to set the standard in the industry, making every fishing experience truly exceptional.

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BASIX SPOD/MARKER BRAID

The ultimate all-rounder for spodding and feature finding.

- 30lb breaking strain means no shockleader is required.
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- casts far with minimal fuss. Perfect for those who want simplicity, performance, and value
- 200m spool
- RRP: £17.99





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Built for effortless baiting, even at range.

- 20lb breaking strain – requires a 30lb Arma-Kord shockleader
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- Hi-viz fluoro green –
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- RRP: £39.99



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- subtle green finish
- 300m spools
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The background of the image is a close-up, artistic shot of a watch's internal mechanical components. It features a series of interlocking metal gears and a dark blue dial with orange and white markings. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic textures and the precision of the watch movement.

NITE
WATCHES

**ALPHA
BRACELETS
BACK IN STOCK**

PENNIES FROM HEAVEN



Gary Norton with Coins weighing in at 44lb

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000000 BETTY



Matt landed this absolute unit of a mirror carp from Betty's Lake — tipping the scales at a record-breaking 45lb 1oz!

SWAN BEAUTY



Ollie' new PB with this beauty of 40lb 4oz

NO SLEEP FOR CAV





Deciding to ignore the bulk of the shows at the main end, and focus on the bay where the fish sounded much bigger in comparison. It wasn't long before I had my first chance - A solid flicked to where I'd heard them in the darkness was away. An awesome linear called the 'Scattered Lin' at 40lb 2oz. I unhooked it in the net and quickly re-did the rod, simply looping a pre-tied one on, injecting it with the Hydro before flicking back to the area.

I was soon away again, this time one known as 'The Patch Fully' going 38lb 4oz. Whilst sorting this fish, the same rod was away again, as a very uneventful fight ensued - soon, a big common was in the net. On the scales it registered 47lb 3oz, one that was considered 'missing', a real buzz - A sleepless night at work then followed by the sleepless night spent ensuring I was on them was all worth it'.

CATCH REPORTS

MANOR MINTER!!



Jack Taylor Dodge with the Hardwick Linear out of Manor
at 41.05

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MEADOW MONSTER

Benn OConnor said
"What a cracking 40lb
8oz common from
Meadow Lake"



BIRCH BEAUTY

Lee Birch banks
"Scar" at a mega 53lb!



LUCKY LIVINGSTONE



Craig Livingstone said "so this happened yesterday lucky at 55.8 not been caught for over 3 years"

FRIMLEY TRIO

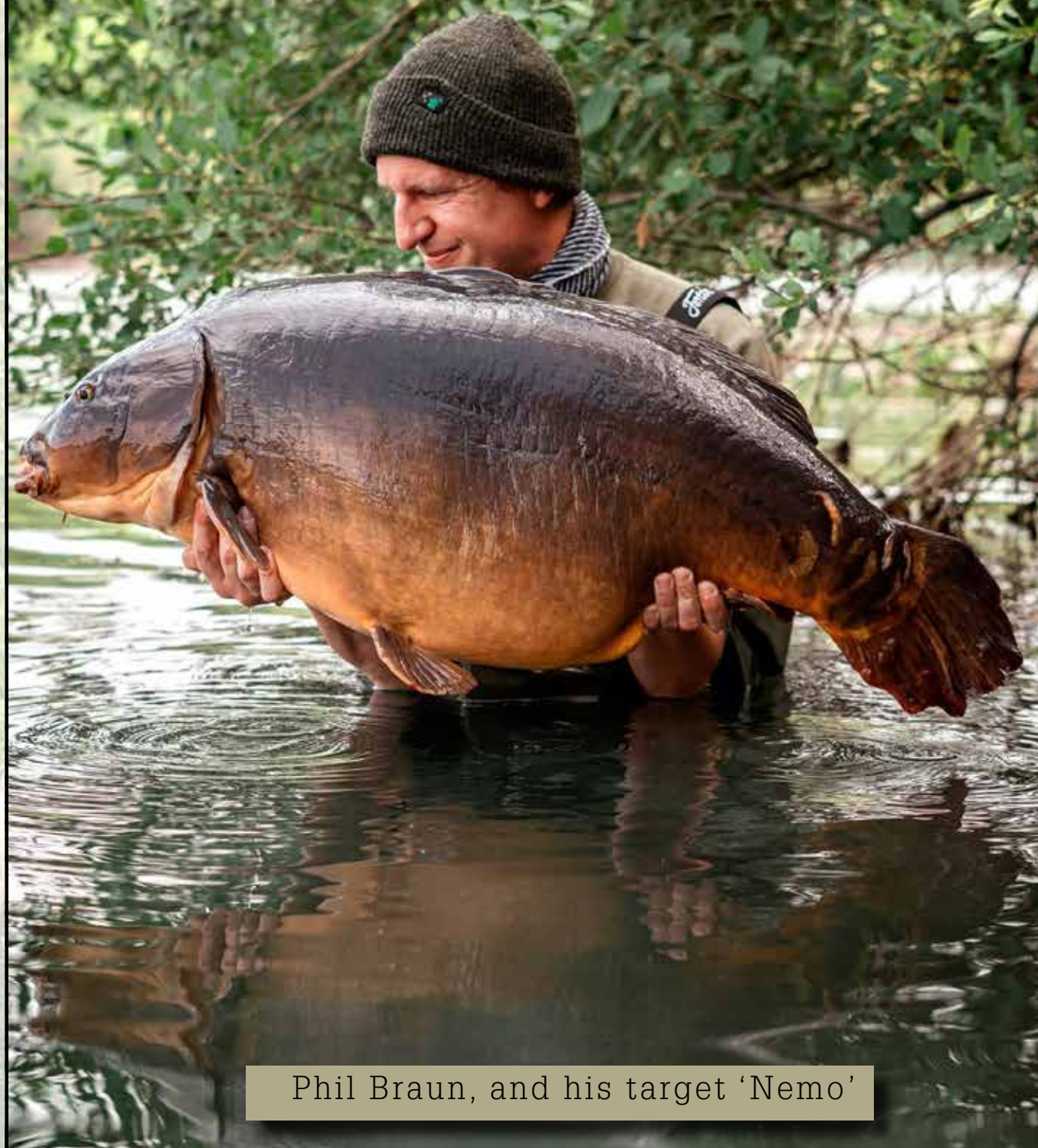




Gaz Oaks had another great 48 hours on Frimley Pit 4 landing 5 fish in 48 hrs including a 40lb mirror and common. He told us: 'I arrived at the lake and I could see signs of fish in the middle of the lake enjoying the hot weather. I decided to Fish over my normal 50/50 mix of Cell boilies and Response pellet covered in the matching Cell Smart Liquid, and a pink Cell wafer on the hook. The following morning the fish were really active providing a good dolphin show all over and i thought it wouldn't be long until i had a run. However, the morning went very slow but I did manage to get one bite just after midday.

I rebated my area late afternoon once the temperature cooled ready for the next morning and it really paid off. I had 4 takes on the second morning with all rods producing a bite. Including a very interesting boat battle, being pulled around the lake until my prize had worn itself out." Well done, Gaz.

CAPTAIN NEMO



Phil Braun, and his target 'Nemo'

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



Dean and son's weekend session on swim 10 First Finger - 7 carp up to 19 lbs. Nice to see the photos.

Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



17 lb mirror nice early morning call



37 lb 10 oz Twisted Scale. Nice catch Buddha



20.2 lb ghostie PB Graeme Edgar



18 lb 12 oz scaley mirror using AM Baits for Gary Pearman



Nice mirror 30 lb on the nose



22 lb 1 oz



18 lb common



30lb 10oz for Del Boy



Macey helped her Dad reel this in at 24 lb 4 oz so she's claiming it as her PB - Nice fish...



29 lb 8 oz new PB for Aaron Larke



31 lb 8 oz Long common

Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



Nice grass carp he'd only had rods out 3 minutes! Lucky



Nice 2 lb crucian carp on a daddy and daughter session



Another catch report from swim 9 thanks to Matty and son Maxwell.



Good session for Buddha 25 lb and 21 lb nice carp



The big ghostie 30 lb 1oz



Maxwell caught his PB in swim 9 yesterday. 16 lb 4 oz. Lovely



Swim 25 catches thanks for the photos Archie



Two Face at 31 lb 8 oz Nice one Paul



Nice fish

CHARLIE'S CLUBBING THEM TO OVER 60LB



Charlie Benson has clearly stepped in something recently. Since joining the team a few weeks back Charlie has been on a mission, banking a string of impressive fish over on his club lake. His latest session will certainly take some beating and it's pretty much mission over!

Charlie's 9 fish hit kicked off with "Roger's fish" at 45lb 2oz, the second biggest in the lake. This was backed up by 7 more fish including a recapture of "mini teardrop" at just over 30lbs. Now what happened that night was the icing on the cake and a capture that will take some beating that's for sure!

After a savage take and an epic battle Charlie slipped the net under the queen of the lake, Moon scale at a whopping 60lb 8oz.



LINEAR LUMP

Dave Owen
with a with a
gorgeous 40lb
4oz mirror



AWESOME OAK LAKE



Perry Alabaster opened his account on Oak Lake at Coking Farm, landing a cracking 44lb 4oz mirror

AS GOOD AS GOULD



Bob Goulds said "47.6 I said it looked good!"

BEST BY MYLES



This has to be one of Myles' finest carp to date! 'Mutleys'

LEE GETS TANGOED



45+ Carrot and number 1 target for Lee Whiteley'



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Tight Lines !



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MORNING GLORY



John Rushworth with a brace of forty's 43lb 8oz and 41lb. Early morning feeders



BLUEBELL BRACE



Kel Bowers with 'The Bailiff Common' at 40lb 9oz and 'Baby Bully' at 35lb.



RACHEL'S RESSIE RESULT



Rachel Mugam with one of the lake's bigger residents 'Danzack' at 44lb 8Oz

NICE SURPRISE



Seeing the needle almost effortlessly swing past the forty-pound mark and settle on 41.8 was a surprise to me.

RECORD GRASS



Jon Stevens and his son Sam with a joint effort British Record equalling 56.08 Grassie from Little Moulsham



GRENVILLE GOLD

Chris Lines
with a superb
53lb PB mirror

NIFTY FIFTY



John Stembridge
with 56lb 8oz of
Kent common

Fishing Show
Winter Carp
2025

FOOD & DRINK

MEET THE STARS

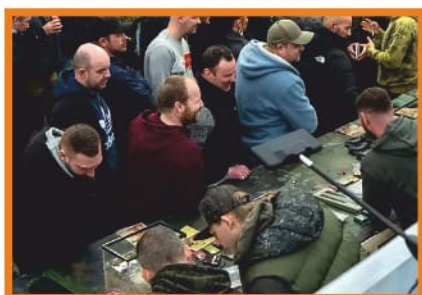
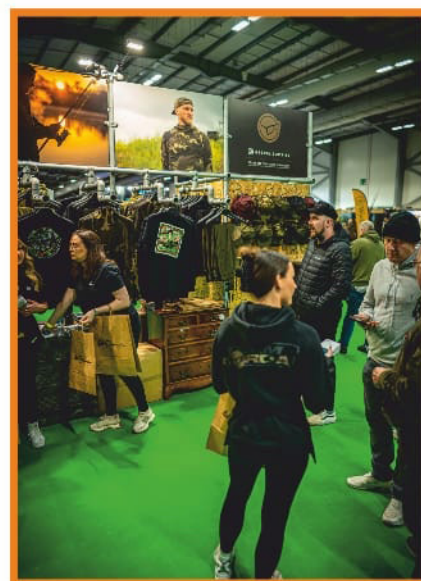
SEMINARS

BLACK FRIDAY DEALS

CHRISTMAS GIFTS

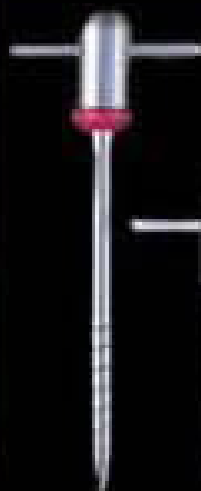
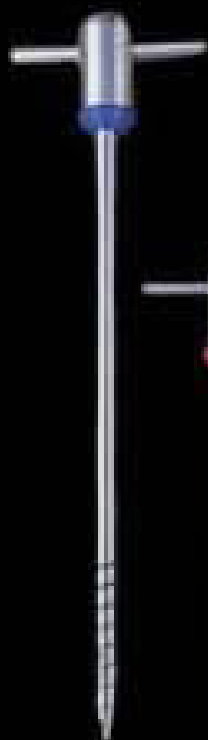
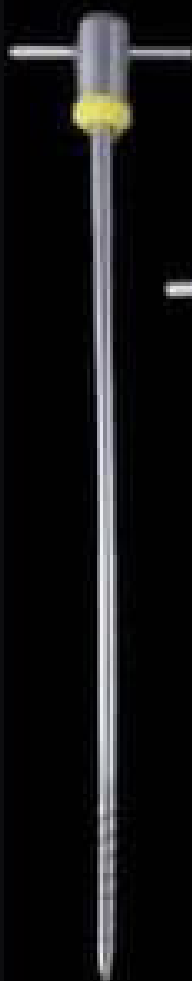
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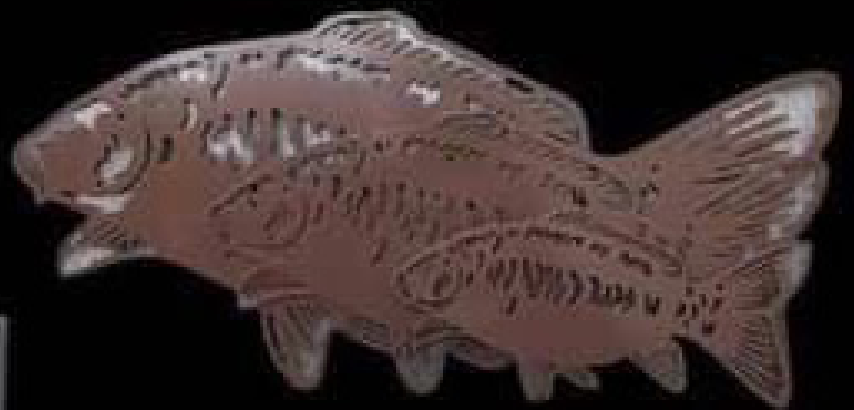


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MARK DAVIDSON

MONK'S MADNESS

The thing is when fishing the shallow end on the majestic Monks Pit at this time of year, is that it's the type of area on a lake that can feel like it's not just you against the fish but you against the lake. I'm fairly sure that anyone who has been lucky enough to do so would back me up on this. You can walk away from a session feeling like it's beaten you up, kicked you between the legs and laughed at you or, on the

odd occasion, it and the fish let their guard down giving you a sense of achievement if you do manage to meet a few of the many jewels that reside in there. Fishing the shallows you're faced with large areas of the infamous beds of Kelp weed which the fish absolutely love. It can be a daunting prospect with nighttime boat battles in tricky conditions but in a strange way can, for me anyway, keep pulling you back to fish there with the

challenge of maybe getting it right.

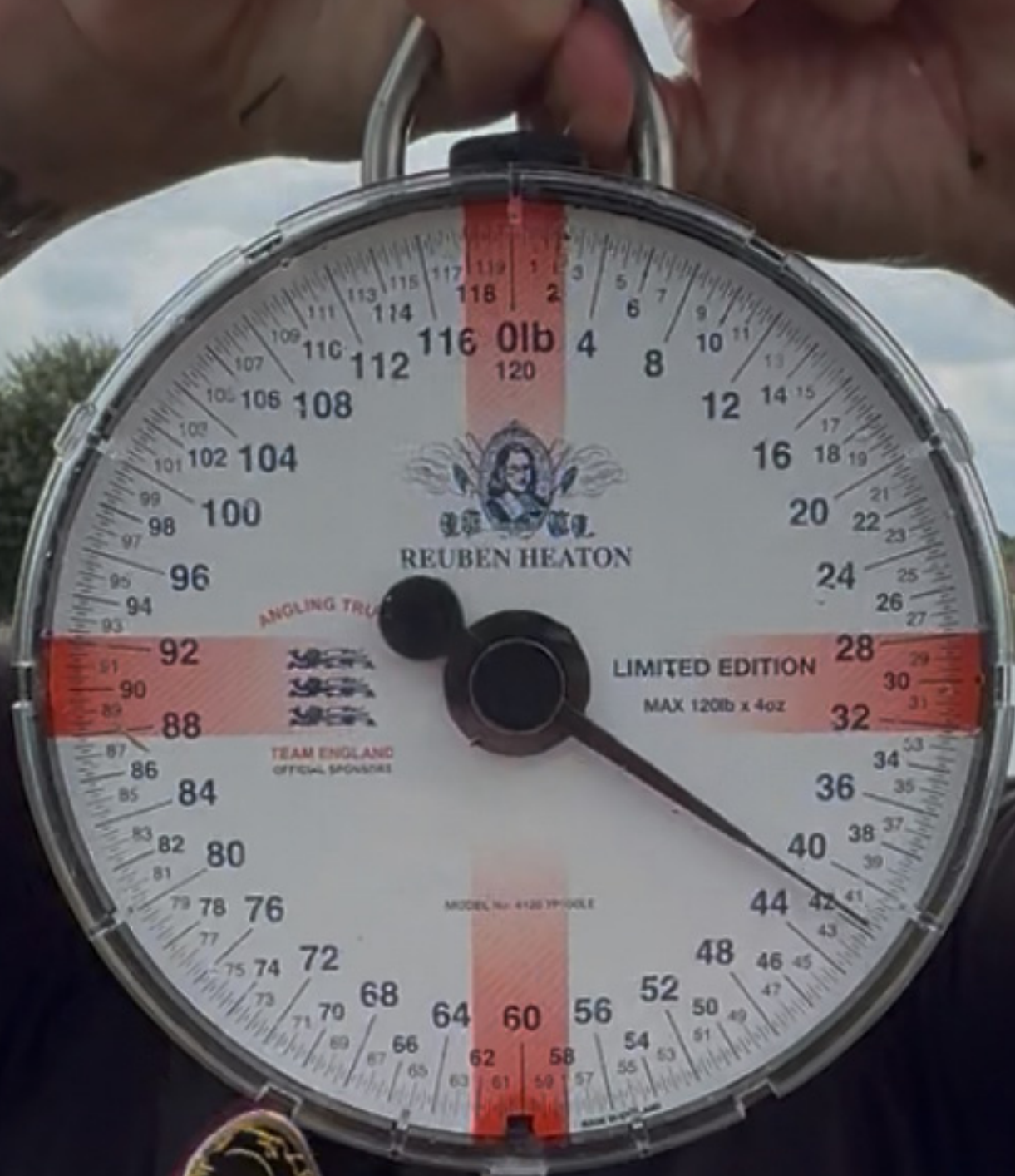
Thankfully this time, the lake seemed to be in a forgiving mood after what turned out to be an absolute crazy session! So many highs and lows but loved every minute of it, walking away with more than a few mental bruises but a massive sense of achievement....this time! Finally was a 1 Double, 3 Twenties to 27lb, 3 Thirties to 39lb and a fish known as 'Kenny' at 42lb 4oz. Thank you Monks











WHO DARES
WINS

MARK QUINN

MEGASCALEY

Forgive me carp gods but it has been over a year since my last input into carp anglings largest magazine. I need to put some context to this article, so I guess the best place to start is at the beginning.

It was back in September 2024 that I met the most amazing inspirational woman, and it wasn't long before I was spending a lot more of my time between Essex and Diss in Norfolk.

At that point I hadn't given much thought into seeing what fishing opportunities there were around the Diss area as I was still fishing 2 syndicates in Essex at the time. Not only that, but I was also getting Aqua Lilium Clothing ready for show season.

Jaimie my partner also has two sons that are also mad about fishing (what a touch) so any conversation always turned quickly to fishing. It was at this point Harry, (Jaimie's oldest) asked if I would like to join him on a day session to a small day ticket lake called

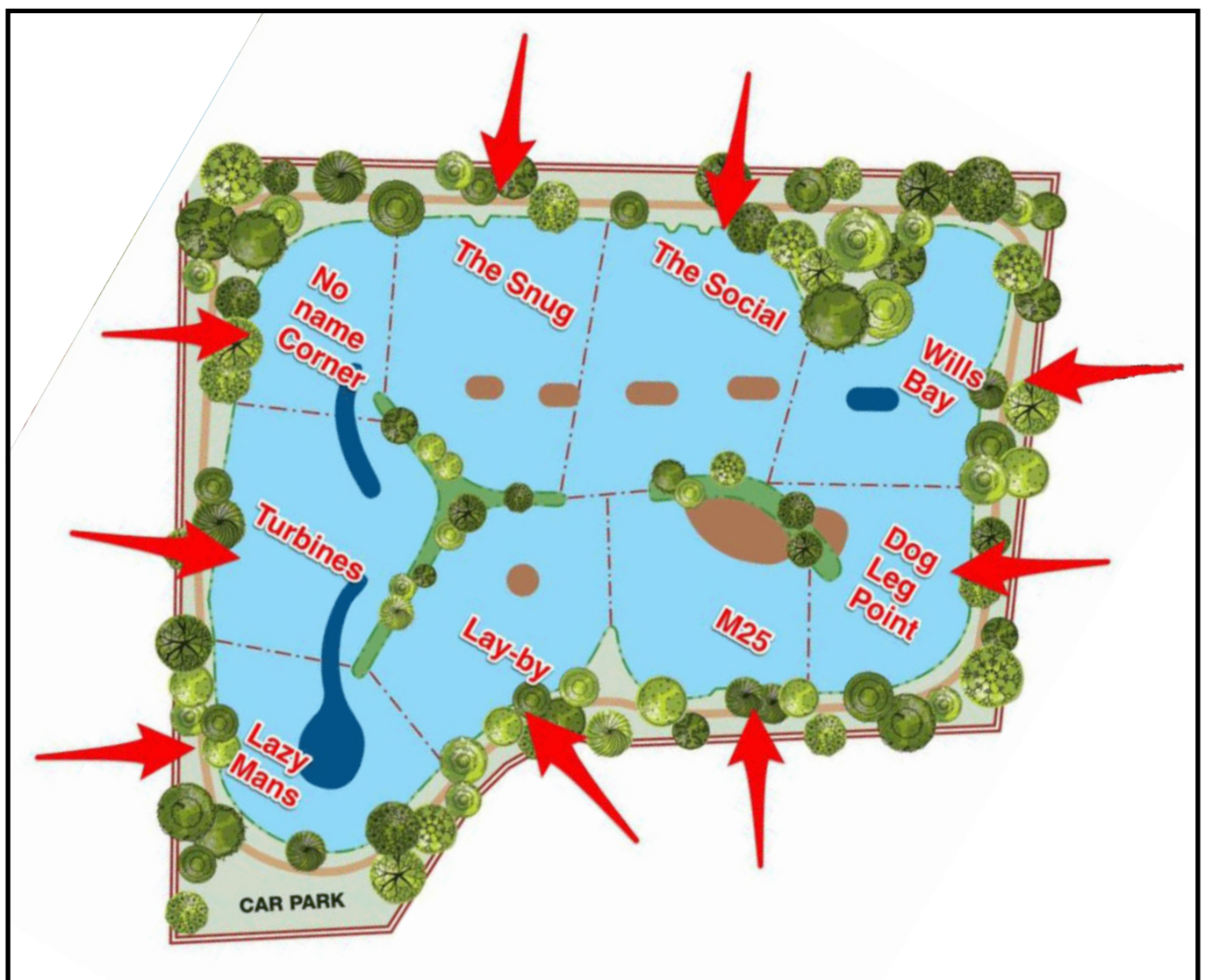
Darrow Farm Fishery.

Like most conversations when talking about a new venue, it wasn't long before my phone was out my pocket, and I was looking at the stock and swims on the lake. It was at that point I thought to myself this could be a little gem.

The lake has a booking system meaning you have to

book a swim of your choice which, having fished lakes like this in the past can always be hit and miss as you can't look round first and try to locate the fish. As it happened the lake was already busy meaning we only had the choice of 3 swims on the left bank. The choices were No name corner, Turbines and Lazy mans.

After looking at the map we



decided on Turbines and Lazy Mans as there was a couple of deeper channels in this area and what I did know was the lake was very weedy and on a short session I wanted to drop on a spot with zero disturbance and I nearly forgot to mention we were now in late October at this point.

Harry made a phone call to Will Farrer the fishery owner and we were set to fish the following Saturday.

Before I knew it the day had arrived, and we loaded Betty the van and we set off. I still didn't know Diss that well and I still chuckle to myself to this day on how close Darrow Farm is to the house, I kid you not it takes 4 minutes door to gate.

Harry opened the gate, and I drove in to a spacious stone chipped car park with a beautiful small lodge at the bottom which I will go into more detail later as it plays quite a vital role to the story.

The lake itself was dug in 2016 and currently around 3 acres in size which is completely fenced off to keep out any potential land predators. What really impressed me though, was each swim commanded a fair amount of water.

This is helped by having 2 central islands that has a gap of around 18 yards separating the 2, giving the carp easy access to the whole lake. Its always exciting seeing a new lake for the first time and I absolutely love getting that ready brek glow of adrenaline as the gear starts flying out the back of the van.

As it was just a short day session I decided to travel light, this resulted in just my rucksack and my rod bag as all nets, slings and unhooking matts are provided by the fishery and besides, in reality this mini trip was more just sussing the place out than anything else.

Once we were stood behind

both swims, Harry decided to go in Lazy Mans, and I went left into Turbines. I could see straight away the area straight away in the deeper trough around 6.5 wraps slightly to my right, the other rod took a bit more finding as this was 10.5 wraps to my left off the island to the left hand side of a bush.

Happy with the two spots I had found, in went my buzzers and I clipped a solid bag on each rod. Nothing fancy at all just an inline drop off lead with a 4" Super Nova braided hook link and a size 6 E.S.P gripper. Bait wise, I went with a washed out pink Northern special barrel wafter.

The rods went out with minimal fuss, and I sat on the edge of the railway sleeper that made up the edge of the swim. I didn't bother taking a chair. I bet your thinking why didn't you take a chair? Because, I'm a bloody idiot that's why! What a mistake

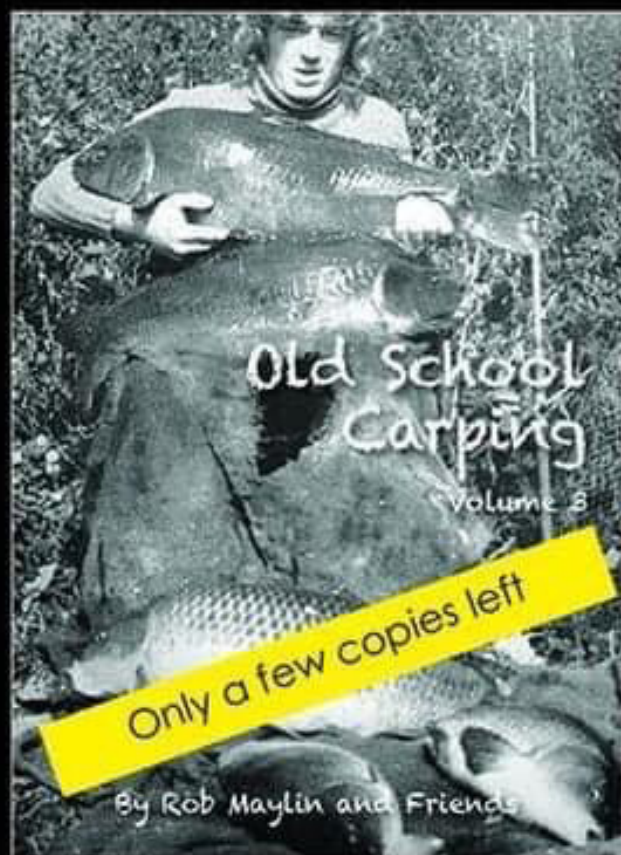
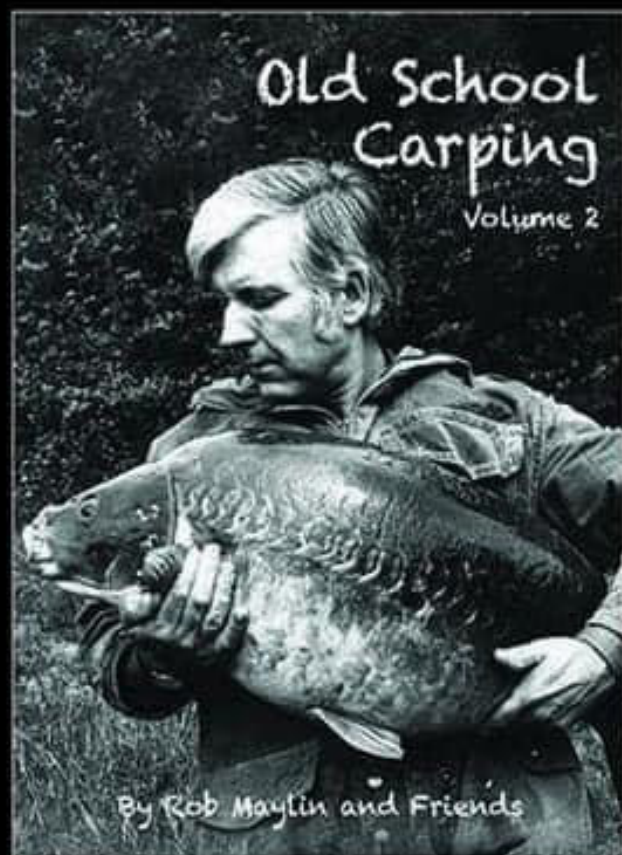
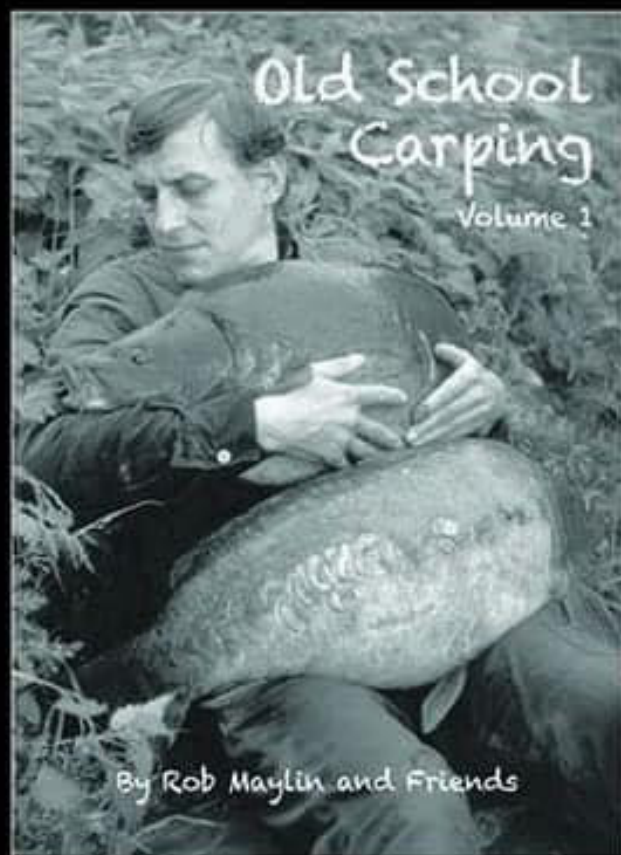
that was, I had a proper dead arse by the end of the day, let me tell you.

Around 2 hours had passed by now, and due to a visit, the night before to the local curry house. I had a rumble in the jungle and needed to go, so I reeled in and went to the fishery lodge hidden behind a beautiful hedgerow.

Now, up until this point, I had not seen any pictures of the carp, all I knew was that it held around 115 fish that were hand-picked. The strains were Leney's, Suttons, and Dinkesbuehl, along with others. These have now grown on with an average weight of 24lb to 30lb and at least 20 x 30lb plus, also at least two carp tipping the scales past the 40lb barrier.

So, as you can imagine plenty to go at, anyway by this point I am shuffling my way to the entrance to the lodge and things are starting to get a little desperate in

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the downstairs department, in your portfolio.

I then open the door to what The thing is though what can only be described as fish is good about fishing, we all porn. I pause for a split second have different tastes on what as I scan the wall looking at we think is the ultimate carp and for me, this big plated mirror was the one. Believe me when I say the I took a picture on my pause was short as I was phone of the holy grail and starting to lose the battle. walked back to Harry's swim.

Finally, I was where I needed to be and while sitting there, At this point Harry had not I had time to take in what seen any of the fish either I had just seen on the wall and on my return, I told him outside the bathroom door. to go and have a look on the One picture stood out at me, wall in the lodge.

although it was only for a Like me, he wasn't second its huge scales and big disappointed and came back frame was like a photograph mouth wide open in a kind of in my memory album. disbelief. Just for reference

I washed my hands and I asked him, if he could only stepped back out into the catch one what one would you main area and scanned the choose? He picked a stunning wall again, I must have stood full zip linear around mid-30 and looked at that picture for which goes to show carp are a good few minutes' thinking like women, we all like diU to myself that's the one. I just erent types.

want to clear this up that to To bring this part of be fair all the fish on show the article to a close, were mega and you would be unfortunately neither of us delighted to have any of them caught although a guy from

Essex did manage one of the 40's earlier that day but to this day I am not sure what beast it was. That would be the only time that year I managed to wet a line in Darrow due to the winter syndicate starting up. I did not mind though as I still had my other syndicates to finish up.

The next few months absolutely flew by with normal work and Aqua Liliu Clothing taking over as normal for the first 4 months of 2025 due to show season. The time and effort that goes into doing the shows is mental, but it's the best time of the year for me and although stressful. The sense of achievement myself and my brother Steven get out of it is off the scale.

It did not stop there either, my relationship with Jaimie just kept getting better and better, so the decision was made that I would move to Diss permanently and on the

25th of March I said goodbye to mine and Fudge's little house in Essex. For those of you who do not know and why would you, Fudge is my cocker spaniel and fishing companion. (Best spaniel on the planet). Right enough of (this is your life), let us get back to the fishing.

It was now March, and not only did I move but I also needed to decide on where I would be fishing this year. As previously mentioned, I had two syndicates, one in Clacton and one in Chelmsford. I made a choice to drop my Chelmsford ticket as I felt with work this would just be too far to travel, and I would just be chucking money away.

It was not until Mid-March I started to get out regularly again and with that said myself and Fudge found ourselves back over on the Reed Lake. After a quick walk round, we found some fish just under the surface tight up against the



reeds on the left-hand side of the lake. This sees the majority of the sun throughout the day so I decided to set up on the bottom bank as this gives you more of a direct line to them and you can pull them away from the reeds.

The Reed Lake this time of year, I only have one approach really and that is a solid bag fishing. They just love a single mouthful of food over there and this year was no exception.

The lake rules state that you can use a bait boat and yes, I know they are not everyone's cup of tea however, these carp have put on some serious poundage over the last few years and with that weariness. As well as that, I already know the spots I am fishing so it's more a case of getting the bags out as quietly as possible with minimal disturbance. I placed the furthest rod first; there is a ledge about a foot off the point of the Reed line. So, if you imagine the lake in a 2D

sketch it goes from 5ft to the edge of the ledge down to 8ft and then falls away gradually to around 15ft in the middle. I dropped the bag then slowly moved the boat away from the area as I did not want to spook anything. I then followed up by dropping the rod tip under the water and tightening the line, this is a scenario where you have to fish locked up. So, I set the bobbin and placed the line in the clip.

Now that rod was fishing, I brought the boat back to the swim and repeated the loading of the second bag. This is where it got a bit strange and I love things like this as its part of the magic being on the bank. Normally when I am getting the rods sorted, Fudge is up and down the bank having his own little adventure and occasionally waiting for me to drop a stray boilie. However, I noticed this time he was not. I looked to see where he was because I

could not hear him rustling through the undergrowth and to my surprise he was sat dead still on the platform totally focused on spot where I had dropped the bag.

Now, if you are old enough to remember A Passion for Angling, Bob James had a black Labrador called Rigsby that use to pull off his flat cap when he was about to get a take. So, if you were to ask me do dogs have a sixth sense, I would say absobloodylutely. By this point I was really intrigued as I called to him a couple of times which fell on depth ears, so I then decided to place the rod back in the bivvy strap and see what he was he was looking at. As I got level with the butt section of the rod, the bobbin slowly dropped to the floor indicating I was in. I picked the rod up off my trusty Delkim and to my delight I was with a steady tension as the fish kited away to my right. By the time I had a

chance to look down at Fudge, he was already by my side standing on the mesh to my landing net. It is funny really but this is something he has always done from a puppy.

A steady battle took place, and it was not too long before the mirror was ready for the net. To be honest I had more of a battle trying to get the landing net off Fudge than the actual fish, but I guess they have just woken up. I lowered the net into the clear water and gently pulled the sulking mirror over the cord to the net and in it went. I turned and looked at Fudge and said yes Fudgey happy days. The net was then collapsed, and the mirror was transferred to the unhooking matt where the sling was already waiting.

On the syndicate it is policy that all fish are weighed and documented so we can keep track of the growth rate. The scales spun round to a respectable 21lb 6oz and

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Secrets of The Thames

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

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

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

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

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

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

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I lifted the sparsely scaled mirror up for a couple of self takes before slipping the fish back. It's always nice to get off the mark and with that both rods went out without any dramas.

After a great start, it was time to sit back and make a cuppa. No sooner had I poured the boiling water into the thermos a message pinged up on my phone. It was Fenton, owner of a bait company. This was not anything out the ordinary as I am part of the Team and we often have a good chat wanting to know what I am up to. As I started to read the text it explained that Fenton had felt he had taken this bait company as far as he could, and it was time to sell up and move on to pastures new. He also continued to say that nothing would change, and the new owner would be in contact soon. Although I was gutted for Fenton, I also fully understood that the decision

he took must of broke him as it was his dream to own a little piece of fishing history. I just want to take this opportunity to thank Fenton for all his support over the last few years and good luck for the future.

No sooner had I put my phone down the same rod was away again, this time there was no drop back just a single bleep and I could see the 15lb mono lifting out of the water as I made a grab for the rod. No time to waste, I started to walk back up the bank as I could see the reeds starting to move as the angry carp was making its escape. Finally, and with some persuasion the fish came with me, and the fight was game on. Although still a long way out, whatever I was attached to was heavy and as I continued to play the fish it stayed deep. If you can remember me saying earlier the lake is deep and this fish had no objection to staying deep. We were stuck in a



locked tussle for at least 10 minutes before I had my first glimpse of what I was playing. It was a fish called Heart Tail an exceptionally long fish but stunning. I had previously caught this fish the year before at 36lb and although a repeat capture, you cannot be to disappointed with a Mid-30 common. A further 10 minutes or so past before she decided enough was enough and with me whispering come on baby the beautiful gold sovereign common was in the net. BOSH! That will do I thought to myself, and I left her to regain her energy. Luck would have it, I had the video



camera with me, so I took the time to get set up as I didn't have any live footage from the previous capture.

Once set up, I cut off the mainline and rolled her up in the net, it just makes it easier to transport her to the unhooking matt. Once there I lifted her up to see what the

score on the doors was, 33lb 2oz. Lovely jubbly! A little down in weight but just as impressive with her long frame and whittled down fins, still one of the loveliest commons I have had the pleasure of catching. After a little commentating it was time to return her to the depths of

the pond and with that, I said goodbye. Before I knew it, the time had come to pack up and get home although I did manage a further 2 carp both low doubles.

It's an hour from the lake to my front door so it gave me a little time to have a think about the message from Fenton, more to the point will the bait quality change. I mean for all I know, nothing may change and the bait maybe even better. I suppose the only thing I could do was wait and see.

Later, that week I received a message from Darren Hilton, who had just so happened sold Hilton Fisheries earlier on that week. I have supplied Darren over the years with various clothing items along with prizes for his charity.

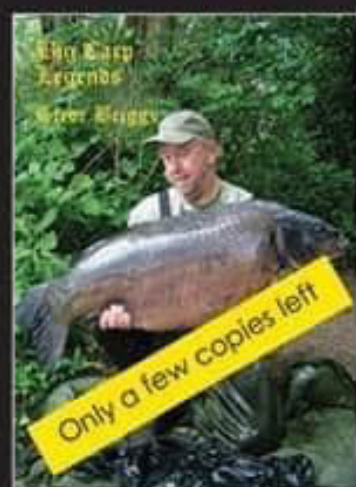
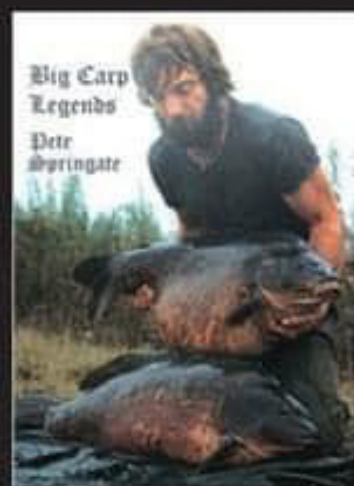
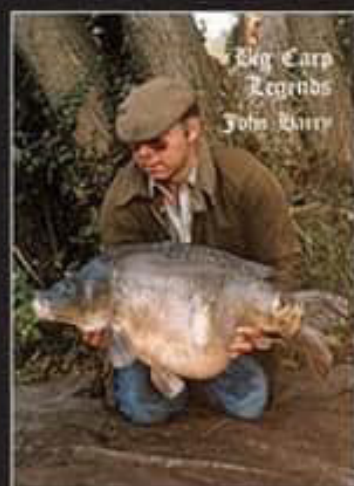
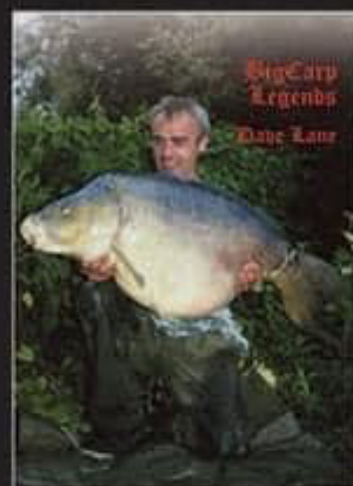
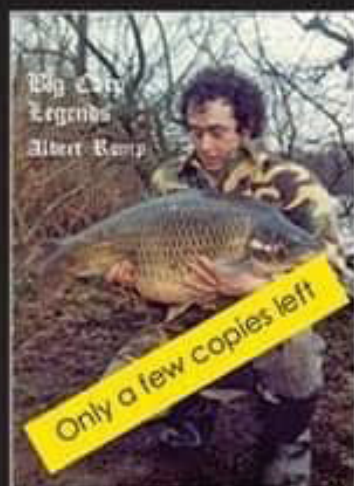
Darren had a French trip planned and needed new clothing delivered to him Friday morning as he was due to travel on the Saturday. I

laughed and said nothing like cutting it fine mate! and I arranged to meet him outside Sports Direct in Tollgate.

As I pulled up Darren was already there waiting, and we exchanged goods like a dodgy drug deal. It was not long before we started talking about his old fishery and what was next for him. Well, You know what they say, when one door shuts someone leaves a window open, this is that window. Darren explained that when he comes back from Frog land he is driving down to Devon to see a guy who has a small bait company, the reason being Darren was looking for a small company to invest in. My ears pricked up at this point and I explained my predicament regarding the bait company I was currently with. As we got deeper into the conversation it was clear Darren was really excited about this and said Mark, do not worry about finding a new

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bait sponsor as I will want you if you decide to leave. He also said look mate while I am away go on the website and have a look it is called Hunters Baits. Although the website is outdated do not let that put you off, Clark Adams who owns Hunter's really knows he stuff. He has a bait called SSK that is absolutely smashing places, see for yourself. The reason I want to invest is he needs a hand to take it to the next level, with better machinery and of course a new website. I promise you Mark if you join the team, you will not look back. I shook Darren's hand and wished him good luck in France, as I got back in the van, I thought well that was a worthwhile drop off and I was straight on the website before Darren's van was out the carpark.

Now I know this article may seem long winded but stay with me as Hunters Baits play's a crucial part into what

happens next.

Darren was right the website was out-dated however, what I read regarding the bait came across well especially like Darren said the SSK was certainly the game changer.

Around 10 days had passed before I heard back from Darren regarding Hunters Baits, the message read it is happening. Are you in? It is always a bit nerve racking changing from what you know, especially when it comes to bait and rigs. I really did like the sound of the SSK though, and replied with ok I am in.

I wrote my previous bait company an email stating it was time to move on and thanked them for their support over the last couple of years and closed the chapter.

Within about a day, I was added to the team pages on social media. Typically, this process requires uploading your portfolio. Mine did not take long as I do not catch

many lol. Clark Adams then messaged me introducing himself and the conversation did not take long before turning into my first order.

The order went like this:

20kg of SSK 15MM

10kg of Natrafish 12mm

1 pot of SSK Wafers

1 pot of Natrafish Wafers

1 pot of SSK Pop-ups

Over the last couple of years, I have come away from using just one flavour and size of

boilie, this is purely a tactic to keep the fish guessing and my god it works well. Not only this but like a lot of anglers now I am also matching the hatch a lot more. Where a couple of years ago all I ever put out was washed out pink or yellow. I do feel sometimes you can get stuck in your ways again, it's that fear of change. You think the number of anglers fishing with pink or any bright bait. If you were a



carp, you would shit yourself, wouldn't you. So, the way I see it a carp may see boilies as safety in numbers and stick more to one colour and not be spooked too easy.

Excited to take ownership of the new bait it was a couple of days before the doorbell went and the DPD man handed me a well packed box. Yes, get in, as I already had a 24-hour session on reed lake that Wednesday it had come just in time. I opened the box, and these rich smells were already filling the room, then suddenly Jaimie shouted what's that smell from the other room?

My bait I replied! Her reply was a little off to be honest and she followed up with you are not keeping that in this house. I did chuckle to myself and vacated to the garden.

Wednesday morning was upon us and before I knew it Fudge, and I was in the van wishing the journey to hurry up. An hour later and we were

bouncing up the farm track lake bound, Fudge could not wait to get out he bloody loves it as much as I do. I think if he would have had hands he would of opened the door himself as we pulled up lol.

Anyway, to our delight the lake was void of anglers which obviously meant we had time to walk about and locate a few fish. This did not take long to be honest as there were quite a few fish over the spots I had previously been fishing. Good ones as well!

We unloaded Betty and was back in the second swim on the bottom bank. At this moment, Fudge was positioned on the wooden platform, his tail wagging as he gazed attentively over the edge. I parked the barrow and walked down onto the platform behind him. As previously mentioned, the margins are deep and as I looked through the water layers I could make out a glowing clear patch in

between two low lying weed beds, around 7ft in diameter and a rod length out. Although I could see the spot it was cloudy and the next minute a stunning dark mirror drifted in to view (A lump as well).

I slowly moved back from the edge and quietly went about setting up, just before I did that though I did sneak back down to the edge and introduce a handful of mixed broken up boilies, this would be the first time the lake had seen the bait. It was important not to scare anything off, so I was putting 1 boilie out at a time with no real accuracy as I did not want it to look like a baited spot. Just wanted it to look like someone had chucked a couple of baits in after their session if that makes sense.

Approximately 20 minutes had passed, and I was ready to put both rigs out, I decided to put the reed rod in position first and just as I placed the rig with the boat Steven my

brother turned up as he was also doing the night. I was bringing the boat back when he appeared behind me.

How you doing?

Yeah, not bad I replied and told him that I had fish feeding a rod length out, Happy days he replied and said I am going for a walk round.

As he walked off along the bottom bank, I grabbed the second rod that was already to go, nothing had changed I was still using my normal solid bag with boilie crumb mixed with pellet accompanied with 5 or 6 whole boilies. I walked down onto the creaky old platform and lowered myself down onto my knees I just wanted to get as much of me out the skyline as possible.

After a bit of oohing and ahhhhing I made it to the edge and very slowly lowered the bag on to the spot. By now the water clarity was so bad all I could feel for was the solid bag hitting the lakebed.

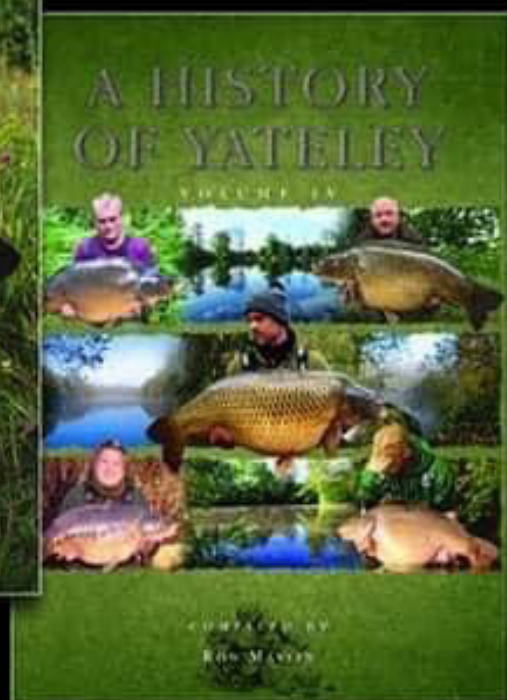
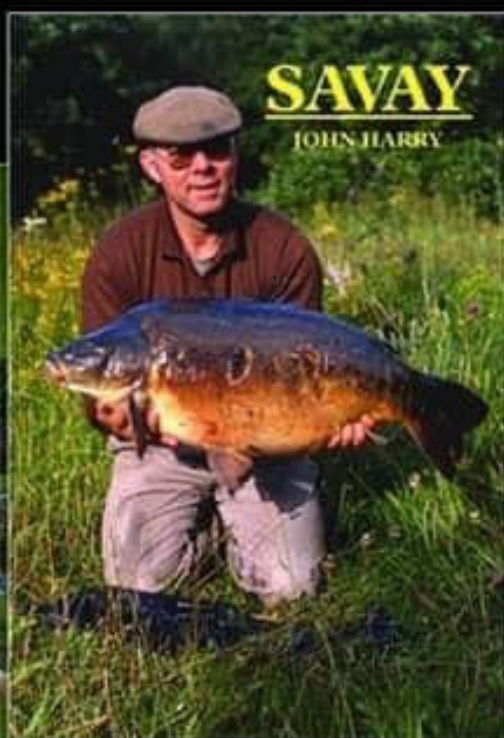
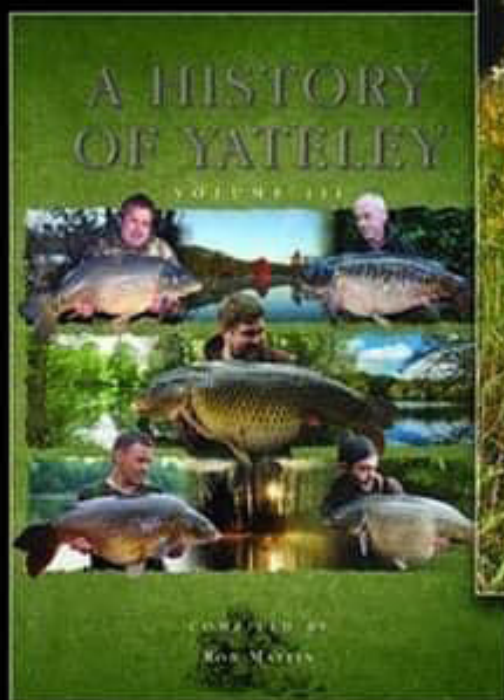
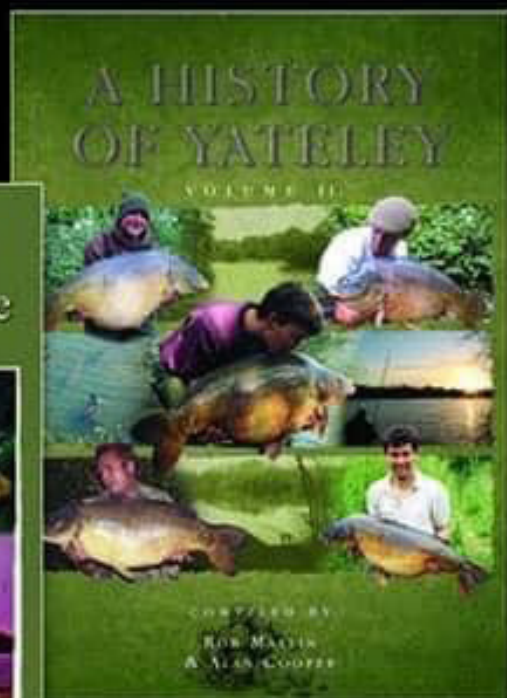
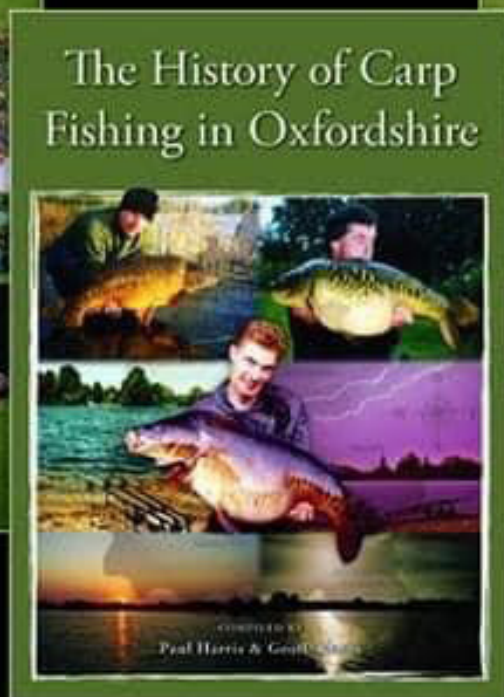
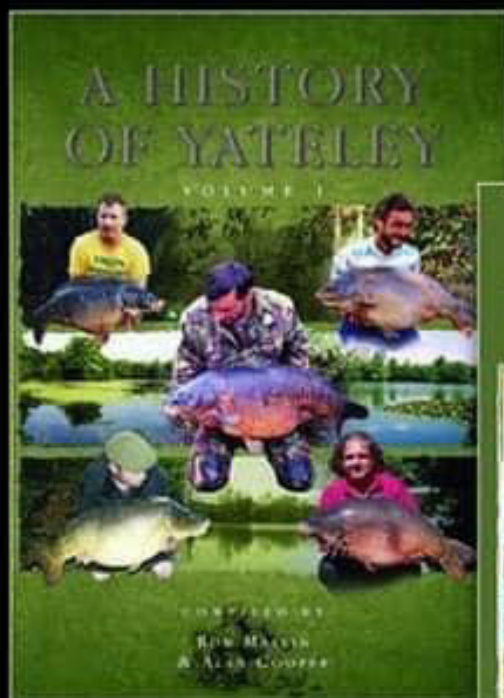
Lucky enough, you do not have to use the platform anymore to put your rods as there is a perfect little space down the side which makes it easier for a better line lay. I slackened right off and put the line in the clip, I must admit I did think that has got to go surely and I slipped back up the bank out of site.

By now Steven had returned from his walk round and decided to go in the swim next door but as no one else was coming down that night he could still fish down into the bottom right corner. This meant we could still have a little bit of a social as we had not fished together for a while. Once the bivvy was up, I reached into my bag for my receiver and put it in my pocket, I then walked the 18 yards into the next swim while holding 2 cans of cold amber nectar. No sooner had I passed Steven a can, my pocket was having its own

vibrating disco, to be honest it took a second to register what was happening before the Usain Bolt in me kicked in. Once back in my swim, I was greeted by the sound of my right hand Delkim (which was the platform rod) crying out as the angry fish done the off . I

picked the rod up and tightened the drag on my trusty 5000T, whatever was on the end felt a half decent size and already had stripped 30 yards of line. Steven was already next to me by this point laughing saying blimey that did not take long did it. While he was grabbing the net the fish kited left into the corner which was not ideal as a lily bed separates my swim from the swim in the corner. I lowered the tip down under the water and put on a considerable amount of side strain, lucky enough the carp came with me and although I felt the touching the lily

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stems a few times it wasn't Wicked!

long before we were clear After all the normal rituals and a normal steady battle had taken place, the dark commenced . Once in open mirror tipped the scales water about ten yards out, I round to 27lb 8oz which I was saw the fish for the first time. well happy with especially It was a beautiful dark mirror considering it was on the new with a buttery belly, a decent bait. After photographing, the size too. fish was released and the trap

Another 5 minutes or so reset.

past before the mirror was The session did not end ready for netting and Steven, there, and I ended up landing after doing some videoing a further 6 fish including a was there to do the honours. 29lb grass carp. (What a battle





that was)

I have now been using Hunters Baits for my last 4 x 24h sessions and Darren was right I have not looked back, in total up to this point I have had thirty-eight takes and landed thirty-four of them. Included in that was numerous twenties' so to say I was happy was an understatement.

Although I had only been fishing my syndicate up to this point, my thoughts were

never too far away from the main goal. I had always kept one eye on Darrow's social media posts, just keeping up to date on what had been coming out.

To my delight the fish I'd seen on the wall, all those months ago, still had not made an appearance. Looking at the posts, you had to scroll back as far as 6th May 2024. What I did find out though was the name, The Mega Scaly.

Wow that is good, it's obviously no mug then I thought to myself, surely, it's got to make an appearance soon. I then decided to start studying the map of the lake as we were now in the middle of July and hoping all spawning had well and truly taken place, my plan was to start doing a few 24-hour sessions. It was more just so I could start learning about the swims really, so I had a better understanding come the Autumn.

As previously mentioned, for a small lake each swim had a good amount of water in front of them however, I really fancied one of the swims out of them all. The swim is called the M25, and it just felt you had a lot more options, not only reed lined but the swim gave you access to the gap between the islands. I just had a feeling this would turn out to be important and the reason being the lake was

small so unless the fish were using the margins, then they would have to come through the gap as it is the only access.

Fully fixated on the map, I was shaken free of the trance by my phone ringing, it was my old mate, Bryan Flower. As normal the phone call started with a barrage of friendly abuse before carrying on to a normal conversation of (what you up too Baldy)? I replied with I am currently looking at the map of Darrow to work out the plan of attack.

Bryan replied, when are you thinking of fishing it and I replied to next week if there is space. I can do next week he replied so book me on and let me know what day.

A further onslaught of brotherly abuse occurred before the phone went dead. Now I knew Bryan was coming I opted for 2 swims, The Lay-by and the M25. The Lay-by was the swim to the left of the M25 but fished the other side

of the mini point. I scrolled down my Whats App list, found Will's number, and asked when the next availability is for the 2 swims mentioned. Will, got back to me instantly suggesting the following Tuesday and I replied that's perfect, so I paid the £60 via transfer and let Mr Flower know the date.

Now, I am not normally one for making plans as once at any lake they normally go straight out of the window. This lake is different though, because you must book your swim in advance you know what you're dealing with.

I planned to fish my left-hand rod in the middle of the gap between the two islands, assuming most anglers target the areas close to the islands instead. Now this is the same tactic I used on the Match Pit in Essex, and it is how I caught the Warrior. In my mind I imagine the carp using the islands as markers meaning

the space between them is like a roadway to get from A to B. The plan was also to fish the same way Adam Penning did on Sky Lakes many years ago if you have not seen it Adam scatters boilies over an area of half a tennis court. The reason for this is these fish are highly pressured and fished for every day of their lives, so I wanted them to find single baits, this would mean that hopefully they would not realise they are being fished for. They must be shit scared of seeing a big pile of boilies laying there on the bottom. I planned to fish the right-hand rod over shallow water on my right, just like the left, but with a loose line due to low water levels and troublesome swans.

Rigs wise I decided I was not going to use solid bags and opted for spinner rigs, the only difference would be I would use them with a wafter instead of a pop up. I just

felt I did not want anything standing out off the bottom, I wanted everything to feel as far away from a fishing situation as possible. Just to add as well, I was matching the hatch.

Monday night came round quick, and I must admit I was absolutely buzzing, thinking to myself what if, just what if I am lucky enough to hold that magnificent creature in my arms. Next minute I know the phone goes, its Dawn, Bryan's other half. I answered the phone and Dawn told me that Bryan had been praying to the porcelain gods all day and would not be able to make it. I done what any good mate does in that situation, called him a load of names, and put the phone down. It was too late to see if anyone else wanted to go so, instead of cancelling the swim I thought to myself I would keep it just in case I needed to move.

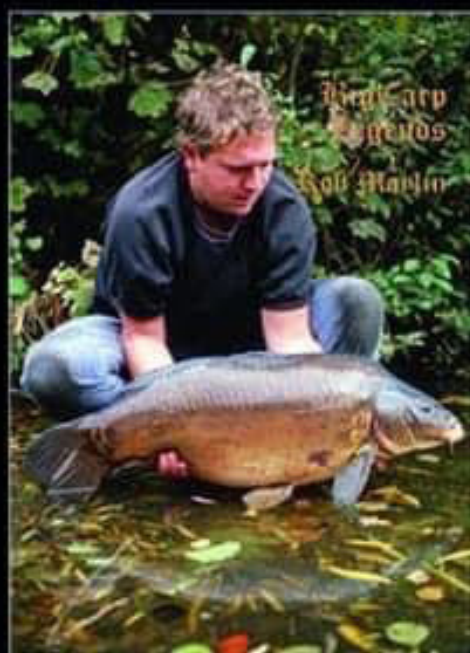
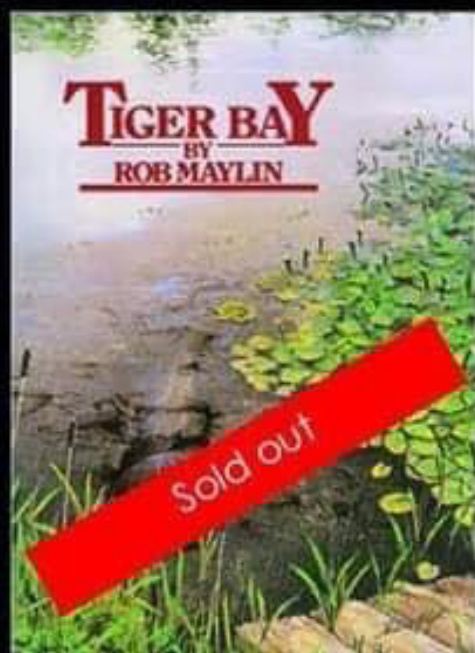
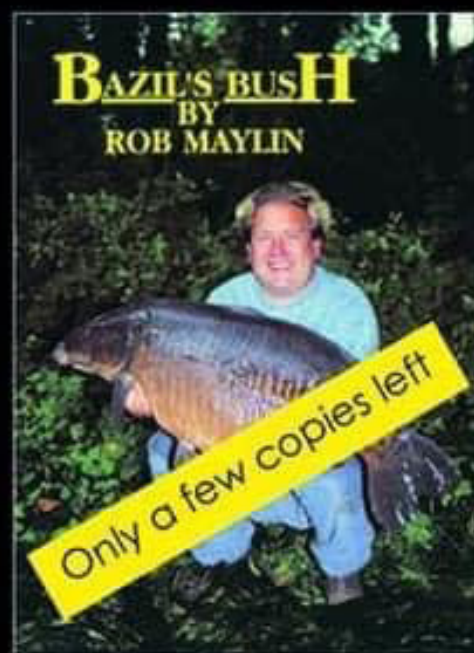
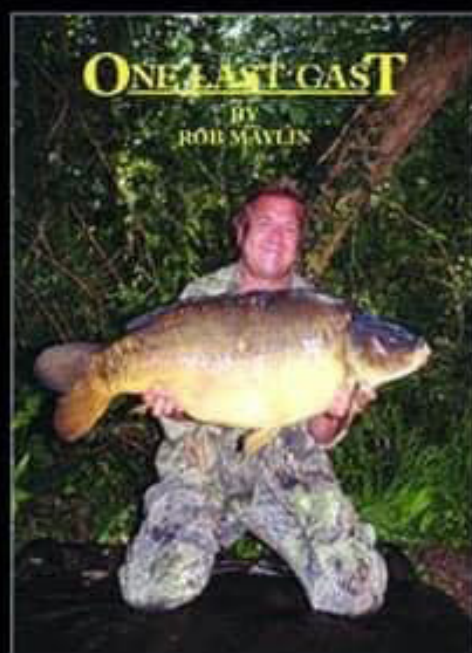
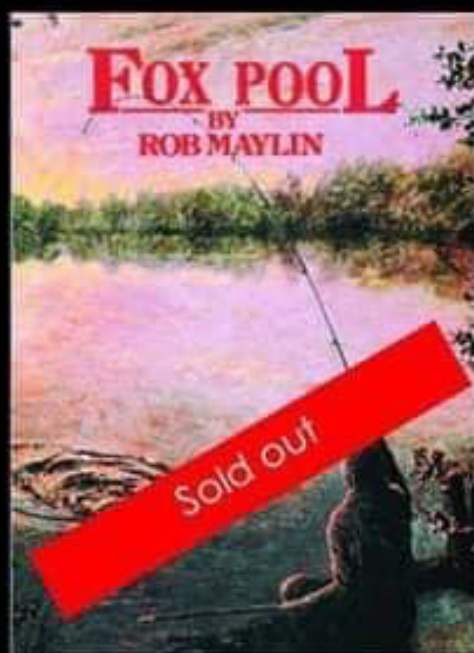
The alarm went off around

06:30 and surprisingly I slept well considering the excitement the night before. I had a cuppa and loaded the van ready to go and to be honest that was the longest wait, as you can't get on there until 09:00.

The time had come and with a hop, skip and a jump I was pulling into the carpark, Fudge already had his front paws on the dash wondering where we were as this was a new adventure for him also. I left an eager Fudge in the van, unloaded the gear, and noticed an angler standing behind his car as I pulled out the barrow. We got chatting and he explained that himself and a few of his mates had a lake exclusive for 48 hours and to my delight he also added the lake was fishing well. He added that they had 8 fish between them with the biggest being a common just over 32lb, he also told me the main bulk of the fish came out

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of swim M25.

While congratulating him I was thinking in the back of my head that's good news but on the other hand, would that of made them push out. I thought to myself oh well it is what it is and with the barrow loaded up I unleashed the rocket named Fudge out

of the passenger seat of the van. He appeared to be more enthusiastic than I was as I opened the main gate to the

fishery and proceeded around the right-hand side of the lake.No sooner had I picked the barrow up, it was time to put it back down again as it was only a short walk to the second swim. I was glowing with excitement as I connected Fudge to his long lead.

There was no time to waste as I knew I only had 2 hours to get everything sorted and find a couple of spots to place



the baits. I had my laptop with me, and I was due on a team's meeting at 11:00 which I know sounds like plenty of time but I wanted to get everything perfect so I knew I would be fishing to the best of my ability.

After 3 maybe 4 casts, I found a lovely spot ten wraps out plum in the centre of the two islands. This was perfect for the plan I had previously worked out for the left-hand rod. Next, I found a lovely little spot for the right-hand rod, this was 8 wraps and quite shallow with a little weed just to the left of the spot. Perfect!

I unzipped my rod bag and loaded each rig with a match the hatch wafter, although on the left-hand rod was a Natrafish and the right-hand was a SSK, I wanted to see if they had a preference but saying that my confidence was high regarding either flavour.

The rods went out lovely along with a scattering of

15mm and 12mm boilies over both rods, again as previously mentioned I was not baiting tight, just one here and one there over the size of half a tennis court. I did however bait the right-hand rod a little tighter but baited along the whole of the island (Hansell and Greta style).

Time was now tight for my 11:00 meeting so I quickly put up my bivvy, slid my bed chair under and pressed the on button to the laptop. I made a quick cuppa before a colleague appeared on my screen. Ahmad asked where I was? I smiled and said I am at the office in which he laughed and asked if I had caught. I replied that I had only been there for two hours, so I had not yet started fishing. After that, the topic shifted from fishing to a discussion about work. We were 30 minutes into the meeting when unexpectedly my receiver burst into song, and I was away on the left-

hand rod. I unprofessionally threw my laptop to the side while mumbling something like, I've got a take. I picked the rod up and was immediately met by a solid weight on the other end and I knew instantly I was into a decent fish.

The fish kited along the edge of the left-hand island and at this point I was worried the fish would try and get around the mini point that separated the M25 to the lay-by which for a second, I thought this was going to be achieved. I had the Torrix bent right over and right at the last minute whatever was on the end turned and started to come towards me.

My legs were shaking by now as when the fish turned, I caught a quick look at what I was playing, the carp had a massive set of shoulders and I could just make out 2 huge scales on the left-hand side near the gill plate.

Although I was not a 100%

sure it was the mega scaly it was enough to make me absolutely shit myself. The rest of the battle was terrifying and with every flick of line off its dorsal fin had me praying to the carp gods please, please let me land this. The fish by now was starting to weaken and the leader was spending more time visibly out of the water before all of sudden this beautiful plated mirror was on its side glistening in the sun light. I quickly lowered the net into the abyss and slowly persuaded her over the drawcord, she was yessssssssssssssssssssssssssssss get in!

By this point I was 99.9999% sure it was the fish I had craved all of them months back however, I grabbed my phone and scrolled for the picture. I lifted the net and all was confirmed, yes bloody yes, I whispered under my breath.

It was a sweltering day so there was no time to

waste, I cut the leader off and transferred my prize to the onsite retainer, I then filled up the bucket with fresh water and completely soaked the unhooking matt. I wanted to be as quick as possible making sure once she was on the matt I had everything to hand. Lucky for me there were a couple of anglers on who very kindly gave me hand with video and some amazing pictures. All I can say is thank you guys.

It was time to lift her out and I lowered her down on to the matt this was quickly followed



by me unzipping the retainer. It seemed like forever as I unrolled the landing net mesh to reveal what I'd caught. All I heard was the guy behind the camera go, f**king hell that is stunning, as I slid the net out from under her. The retainer was then zipped back up before I hooked on the wheel of fortune, I lifted her off the deck and the needle spun round to 42lb dead. Not a 40lber unfortunately as I still had to take off the sling, but it really did not matter she was it, the one I wanted and first fish as well. The photographs were captured during the process of bathing her thoroughly, while I quietly expressed my gratitude for the memory. I quickly zipped her back up in the retainer and returned her to the water's edge, no sooner had I been cradling her in my arms it was already time to say goodbye. The retainer was opened, and I had one last look at her

before she confidently swam away the last image being her beautiful large tail.

Again, I shook the angler's hand and please forgive me I don't remember your name and thanked him for his help. I had to sit for 5 minutes just to take in what had happened before tying on a new rig.

I pierced another Natrafish wafter and threaded it onto the bait floss, burnt the ends, and placed the rig on the floor next to my distant stick. I only got to six when I was away again, this time I looked up to see the right-hand rod taking on an alarming curve. I dropped the rod I was wrapping and made a dash down to the other rod, although I was on a tight drag the fish was still able to take line. Again, I picked up the rod in question and was met by what seemed like another heavy fish, (Blimey what I have stepped in I thought to myself) but I did not care whatever it was I wanted more lol. The

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battle was incredible with the carp fighting for what seemed like a good 10-15 minutes before it showed any signs of slowing down.

Eventually though the battle was won and I netted a stunning common of 32lb and ounces, this fish had some serious attitude and for as long as I was holding her up for the pictures her dorsal fin never collapsed once.

The fish was later identified as Neptune, a name given after it became entangled with a rake during lake de-weeding.

The new rigs were set up quickly, both rods returned to the water, and after apologising for the abrupt call drop, I resumed my meeting with my colleague. Time was now well into the afternoon when Jaimie and her youngest Oli came over to see me and as you can imagine I was eager to show them what I had caught. She said Well done and made herself at home on my bed

chair while Oli came at me with a hundred questions lol.

They had been with me for around 30 minutes when the left-hand rod was away again, I lifted the rod and contacted yet another carp. This one like the first kited left before all of a sudden, I had that dreadful sensation of a hook pull. I was gutted as I wanted Jaimie to see what all the fuss is about, oh well you cannot win them all and I put the rod back out on the spot.

An hour had passed, and it was time for Jaimie and Oli to leave me to it as Oli had a school disco that evening, so I waved them off and sat back as I had some emails to send. No sooner had I put the laptop on the right-hand rod was away, I saw the fish bail wave of the spot and I knew it was another good fish. I grabbed the rod and was met by a solid pressure followed just as quickly by a feeling of disappointment (shiiiiit)

another one had fallen off . No way I thought to myself, what's causing that and I decided to lengthen the boom by an inch, my thinking being they were feeling the lead to quick and I was just catching them rather than the hook flying back further in to the mouth.

Another 2 hours had passed, and I was away on the right-hand rod again, this time a beautiful linear graced the net which weighed 23lb and ounces. I was being spoiled that's for sure and the guys I had met continued clicking off some amazing pictures for me. The day was capped off with a further mirror, a stocky of around 19lb and I decided to leave the guys alone for this one and made do with self-takes.

The night was slow and the anticipation of further bites continuing through the night



were met by the morning chorus of bird life. There truly is something special about early morning and I honestly think it's a magical time on a lake to be awake, especially when its calm. I was playing.

The mist rolling off the water while looking for signs of feeding fish in the middle of a patch of bubbles is always the picture in my head of what heaven should be when that day comes to us all. Fishing is a strange sport really, I had a great 24 hours and caught arguably the best-looking mirror I have ever had the pleasure of catching and although incredibly happy with what I had caught. There was potential for improvement. To be continued.

The time was 06:15 before the left-hand rod was finally away again, a very powerful fish and one I could not stop. The powerful fish had made it through the gap between the two islands and by the look of the direction of the line it was at least ten yards past the point of no return. I just could not stop whatever I was attached to, it was unbelievable. Can I take this opportunity to thank the 2 anglers that helped me and to also thank Big Carp Magazine for its amazing support over the last 7 years. To show my gratitude I would like to offer Big Carp Magazine subscribers a 15% discount on all Aqua Liliun Clothing products, please use code: Megascaly38.

I could see the line cutting through the corner of the right-hand island and all my fears came true when the line went All the best
Mark Quinn

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MARK AND EMMA ROSE

BANKSIDE DIARIES PART 1

Sadly, my own personal fishing has been pretty non-existent over the past 6 months, not only due to running the 'Obsession Carp Socials' Events, but the chores of everyday life having taken over.

However, at the end of June, I found myself with 3 whole nights at my disposal. Yes, that's right..... 3 whole nights!

Something that I could have only dreamt of over the last few months.

I had two of my Syndicates in mind, but sadly both were in full spawning mode and regardless of whether a fishery shuts or not, I just won't fish for them. So these were quickly ruled out. This left me with my final Syndicate, which luckily is only 15 - 20 minutes down the road, otherwise it would have been down to the rat race of local day ticket waters.

After deciding to go with my local Syndicate. I started to prep the bait in advance to

allow the oils and liquids to really soak into the core of the bait, something I have done for 30 years plus and something I swear by. I definitely prefer it when the liquids etc, are more of a shine, rather than a gloopy mess on the outside, which I believe will pretty much wash off in the first few hours of submersion, if not sooner. I want my spot to be trickling out attraction over a longer period of time and something in my opinion, my tactics offer. So, before I send you to sleep, lol. Fast forward a few days, and with having only one more sleep myself to the trip [feeling like a kid at Christmas], it was time to give my bait of choice, 'Atlantic Heat', which as always was from Baitworks, a good dusting of their Crustacean Powder to further enhance all the goodness within another great edge in my armoury.





Well the day finally arrived and with the van all loaded , I set off on the short journey

down to the Lake. Unless you've been living under a rock, the weather has been far from ideal for a very prolonged spell, and sadly it wasn't forecast to be any better for the next 72 hours, with temperatures consistently hitting 30 degrees. Oh joy! But either way I was finally back and was going to make the most of some down time, regardless of how the fishing went.

After a very hot and sweaty set up, it was time for my customary cold beer, in remembrance of my Dad [if you are new to my articles], and to sit back and watch the water for a few hours, before putting any rods out. This is something I do quite regularly, as I like to rest the swim from the pressure



of lines, because as we all know venues nowadays see very little rest time between anglers. With that in mind, I put a very small scattering of bait on the spots, which consisted of a mix of Pellet and Atlantic Heat whole, halved and crumbed, which in my opinion, allows any fish willing to feed an unpressured opportunity.

Within a couple of hours I was getting noticeable signs, on my spot on the edge of the island. So I decided to get a baited rod on it, albeit, probably half a rod length back from where I'd normally fish to, due to a lower water level than normal. Something I'm sure most Fisheries are having problems with this year.

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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.

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With the heat pushing into the high twenties, and pretty much no breeze or movement on the water at all, I was shocked when the receiver suddenly went into overdrive. In fact, I was so shocked, that in my excitement, my lunge for the rod resulted in a nearly full can of ice cold Cruz Campo, emptying its contents all over the swim. On the bright side, I was in and as the battle commenced I was grateful to be out doing what I love once more.

After a spirited battle, I finally slid the net under a beautiful 21lb Common, caught on a Atlantic Heat Hard Hooker Bottom bait, wrapped in matching Frozen Paste.

With the pics done, but more importantly a small wound from spawning treated , I got the fish back into the water, to recover as quickly as possible. Now when I say back in the water, I don't mean released. I mean to recover. So often,

I see Anglers just open their slings and tip the fish back in [which to me is very hard to understand, especially in the warmer months]. I like to hold the Sling/Retainer, in the edge for 5 - 10 minutes where possible, to allow the Carp to regroup and get some energy back from the battle. 9 out of 10 times the Carp will let you know when it's ready, and rightly so, in my opinion. I'm from a generation, where we would hold a fish in the water, in our hands, until it gave a kick of its tail, which was letting us know it was ready to be released, normally getting a face full of lake water, as a parting gift. These creatures are magical, regardless of size, so should be handled with the care, love and respect that they deserve.

Anyway, back to the session [before I start on the unhooking mats in the sun and water in buckets, as hot as a bath, lol]. With the rod now back on the



spot and my other two rods also in position. I sat back to get some food on the go, a lovely Korean style chicken and rice Dish. Not a Pot Noodle in sight..... But before I managed to take even a bite, the same rod was in again. With two bleeps and a slight rise of the bobbin, that was enough indication for me and within no time I was attached to my second of the trip. With its constant quick turns and darts, like it was possessed, I knew straight away that this one was a lot smaller. But saying this, I soon had a lovely 14lb Mirror in the net and in these conditions, something



I was pleased as punch about. Bait was the same as before, over a small amount of Pellet and Boilie Mix.

With dinner demolished and everything tidied up, I sat back to watch the water and take in the beautiful surroundings. Something I think we all sometimes take for granted, but for me is all part of the experience. However, in no time at all, I was brought back to reality, as my left hand rod,

positioned to some nearby Lily pads, was away.

This time, I was a little shocked as the fish came steadily, straight towards me, but as it came to the surface, it then decided to commence battle, and my god this thing held deep, heading to nearly every snag in my swim, as well as the one next to me. But with a little bit of patience, as well as a few extra grey hairs, the culprit, a Common, weighing



just under 24lb, was lying in the net. This one fell, once again to a Baitworks Atlantic Heat Bottom Bait, wrapped in its matching Frozen Paste. I've used Paste since the '90s, when a friend 'Simon Pomeroy' aka Pom (Pallatrax) owned Pallington Lakes and showed me all of its benefits [definitely a no brainer!]. 'Good memories' and 'other stories' for one day, for me to write about, including playing 'Killer' on the Dartboard and 'Wibbly Wobbly' [don't ask, lol]. With lots of Pendulum and Kaiser Chiefs music being played as loud as poss whilst rolling bait.

Anyway with the light disappearing fast, I was over the moon to have caught 3 Carp, within the first 4 hours of actually Fishing. I would have been happy to go home with just the one recorded in my Journal.



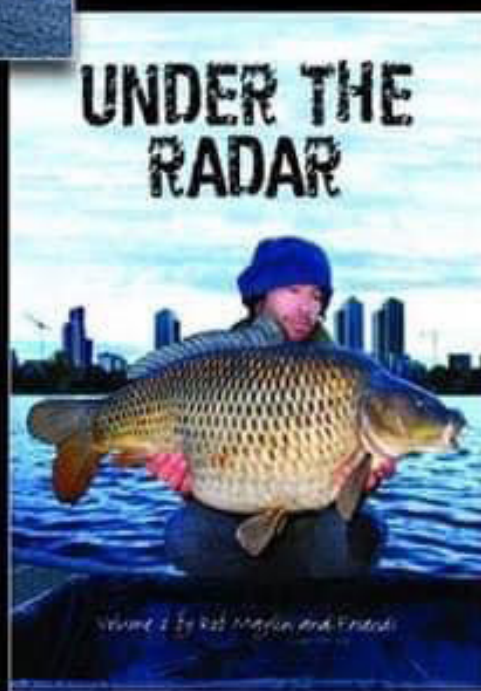
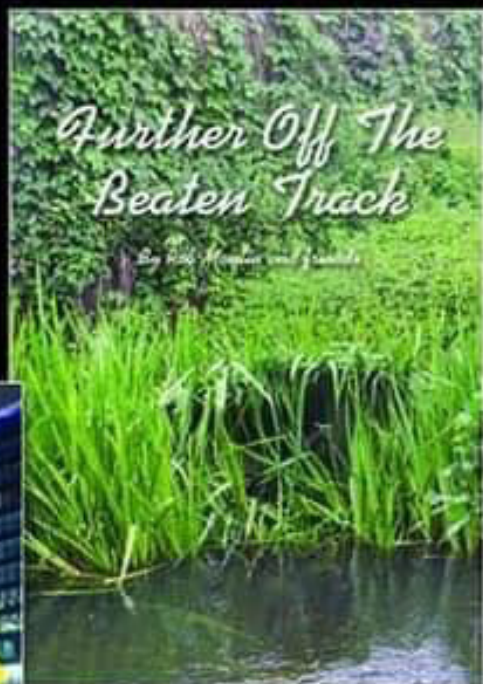
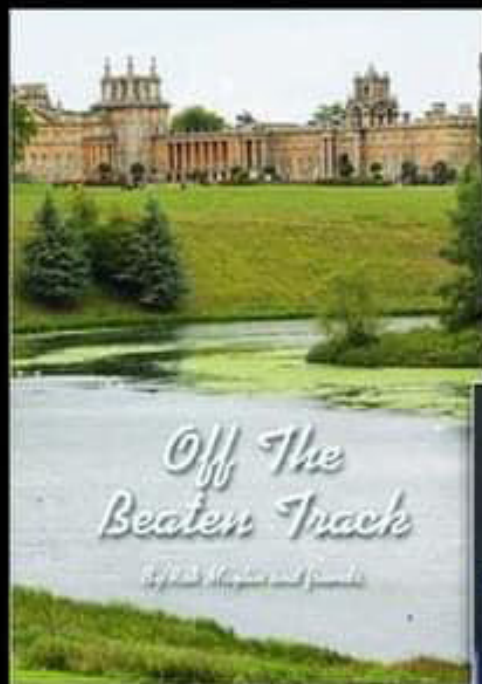
The night was muggy, with no air at all and so morning had come, with not a single indication. Which in fairness wasn't a surprise. I was up at 4am and put a pouch or two of Mix over my spots, just to refresh.

Sat in my doorway, just after my end of the lake just seemed devoid of any carp, it wasn't until about 10am when I saw the first few bubbles coming up over my middle rod that

was in between two sets of pads, that has a bar running through them. However, the fizzing soon disappeared along with, in my thoughts, the opportunity of another. But to my surprise, just an hour later, if not less, I was attached to my fourth of the trip. Going 16lb 4oz on the scales. The Mirror took a liking to the Bottom Bait and even though it wasn't a monster, it was definitely more than welcome

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after a very quiet night.

With conditions so hot and humid, I decided to put this rod back out on a Black and Yellow Zig, about half a foot from the surface. My other 2 rods were left in situ, until about 2pm when I pulled them all in to go and get some supplies from my larger 'Carp Green' Cool Box [the smaller version is always in my Bivvy]. I have a couple of different sizes of these Cool Boxes for

our 'Social Events' and they are a total game changer, I promise you. Keeping things fresh in these, is a breeze, not only fresh Meat, but in these hot conditions, ice cold drinks etc, make the conditions bearable. So a ice cold bottle of Water and a can of Fanta were quickly downed.

Getting back to my swim, after a slow walk around, just to check other areas of the lake, I got the rods back out

and sat in the shade. Just after 4pm my left hand rod was away again and after a very short and spirited battle, I had a lovely mid 20lb Mirror in the net staring back at me. After unhooking it in the water and securing the net with a storm pole, I set about getting everything ready, to weigh and photo it. When suddenly, from behind me, I heard an almighty splash.

With the realization that it could only be one of only two

options, I quickly knew it was the worst one, as this individual had decided to put on its own Sea World show. Gutted was an understatement, as it was a lovely scaled chestnut Mirror. But these things happen and you have to see the funny side or you'll drive yourself mad.

With the rod back out, my pain was soon to be rectified when the same rod was away again. Only this time with a BaitWorks Round Pineapple on. The battle was



another slow, heavy affair with the fish holding deep, with the odd slow turn to head back and forth. I soon found myself refreshing the spots, the same as the day before, at just after 4am.

With the fish safely netted, I made sure there was no repeat of my earlier misfortune and was soon holding another Common, just under the 22lb mark, for the cameras. Result. The morning was just like a 'Eat, Sleep, Repeat' moment, as the fish were soon back in the area, and just after 10am I was away again. After an albeit, deja vu sort of fight, the perpetrator and yet another one over the 20lb mark slipped gracefully over the cord. The phenomenal PineapHell Round Wafter, doing the business again. This time, however, I didn't put the rod back out as

The evening and night time passed pretty much the same as the evening before. And with no alarms beeping and just a very large noisy old Hedgehog keeping me awake,





the commotion had spooked myself, I decided to head the fish in the area and back to my swim, to regroup with the other two rods also and take a few bits back to remaining dormant for the the van to make it easier next few hours, I decided to for the following days pack reel in and go off stalking with down.

the bare essentials and just With the final night upon me, one rod, in hope of banking a I was over the moon with the bonus fish. Sadly, but not from session and with the plan of lack of trying, the Carp were leaving late evening the next only interested in one thing. day, I was hopeful of maybe Basking. one or two more. The night,

Feeling the heat a little once again came and went,



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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. 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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and as the same routine as of the last two mornings played out, I watched the water with intent.

By 8am it was already feeling ridiculously hot and truth be told, I wasn't feeling too confident. By Midday, with most of my kit packed down and my morning bite times well and truly gone, my head was already thinking about getting home earlier than planned.

Shower, unpack and take

Emma out for a lovely meal and few drinks somewhere. Brownie points, after all!

After I called her to tell her my plan, I was sorting out my last few items and heard my clutch go into overdrive (Receiver already packed away and Alarms as always on silent), I was soon on the rod and knowing this was going to be my last of the trip, the pressure was on. But in no time at all, I soon had another



cracking Carp on the bank, weighing 24lb 8oz caught once again on the PineapHell Round Wafter. I was absolutely over the moon, as this spot, although the bites had dried up. I genuinely believed that there was still fish in the area, and that it should have been producing the odd bite or two. So sometimes a simple change, like I did to the Baitworks PineapHell, can make all the difference, bringing me the

3 extra fish. Win, win. I would like to say that that was the last twist of the trip, but my barrow wheel had other ideas. It decided, on my walk back to the Van that it was having a day off and the tyre decided to blow out. So my planned early return home didn't quite work out, with everything having to be carried back by hand in the 30 plus heat. Something I'm definitely not built for, lol.

Anyway to sum up.....

It just shows that with a little effort and patience, the

fish are certainly there to be caught, even in extreme heat. Even though I'll be glad when Autumn/Winter is here, 8 fish, 6 being over the 20lb plus mark, I'll take that anytime of the year.

"Enjoy fishing your way and don't let anyone tell you otherwise". As we say here at Obsession Carp "Believe in your Dreams".

Until next time,
Mark Rose





ZENIA

FISHING IN PARADISE

Someone pinch me!!! I still can't believe it, this session meant so much to me for so many reasons, it's not easy behind the scenes and I very RARELY get these opportunities so when I do...I have to make it count!!!

Complex Record, 2 Grass Carp 30 and 32lbs and to finish with a 29lb Mirror - Dreams really can come true...

Those of you that know me, will know that even though I live at Anglers Paradise, I don't actually get much time to go fishing because of my role at AP! I literally live,

Personal best 45lb Mirror,
personal best 44lb Common

eat and breathe AP, and that is my life, but I love seeing so many different walks of life here, seeing day to day, anglers catching PB's, people making memories and of course kids and adults catching their first fish and gaining a passion for fishing from what we do...I love it! It means the world to me!

Every other week during the peak season months, I get a few hours to myself and because my time is limited, I go in search of the fish, stalking and surface fishing.

This session was a 40th birthday wish as it had been years since I was gifted 'time' to actually go night fishing and to have any longer than 5 hours, this is a big treat for me!! So a day/night/day session was more than I could ever wish for and also with my amazing husband which was a blessing on its own that we could have this time together doing what we love most!!

When my husband said that he wanted me to be the one to christen and fish the new Nirvana Syndicate, I was blown away and haven't stopped thinking about it since!

Nervous, excited and butterflies going crazy, after dropping off our youngest, the time had finally come to go FISHING!!!

I was going to savour every minute being there, and that I did, catching would be a bonus as I really had no idea what was about to happen...

The first day was extremely windy and very challenging with the baiting pole!! After the traps were set, it was time to wait after several attempts getting the rigs and bait in place. Plenty of pellet and crushed Monster Tiger Nut Boilies were planted and the Carp were already feeding which was a very good sign!

It ended up being the best Carp Red Letter Fishing session of my life!



Never did I think I would catch one forty...but TWO!!! 2 Grass Carp to 32lbs and a 29lb Mirror!

After catching my personal best and Common Complex Record at 44lbs, I honestly never expected it to get any better...

But then it happened, we'd just finished a beautiful dinner that my husband cooked, steak, broccoli,

asparagus and a jacket potato, absolutely delicious! Then, all of a sudden, my right hand rod screams off!!

Another amazing fight, I knew this was going to be a big Carp! It was one of the most nerve wracking moments in my life praying that she'd eventually caress my net, which she did.

I was literally shaking, and after seeing the size of her,



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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. 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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I cried, it was a moment I'll never forget, I looked at Joe and he was in disbelief too, we both were just in shock, this session was just insane and so special, and one I will be eternally grateful for.

My new personal best 45lb Mirror, what a Fish!!!

I'm proof that Fishing Dreams can come true, and it was the best dream EVER!!!

Thank you to my amazing husband for making this trip possible, looking after me, just being a wonderful husband and not forgetting cooking for me like a Queen, and to friends Toby and Emma for having the boys to make this HAPPEN!!! I love you all and will be eternally grateful

Ps 1 Peppered Squid Pop Up was the winning bait!!





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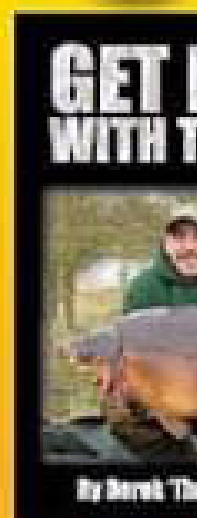
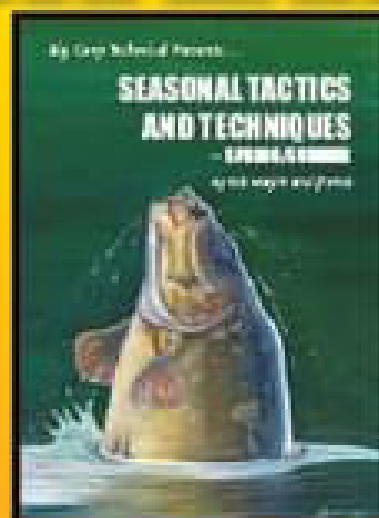
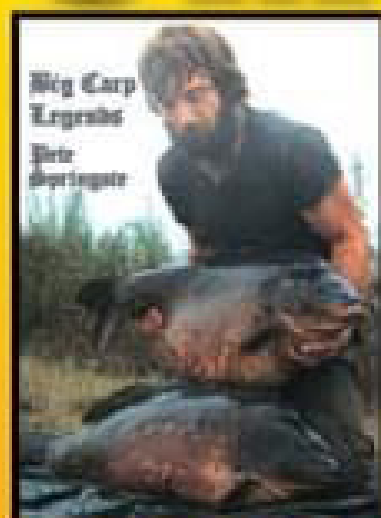
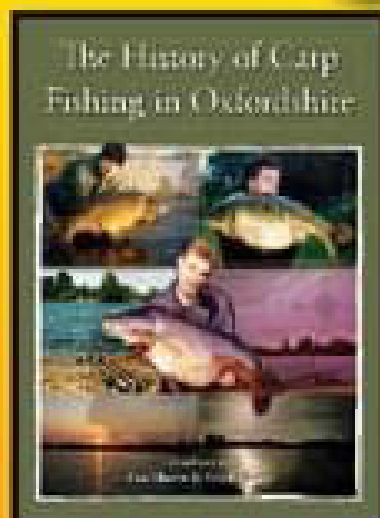
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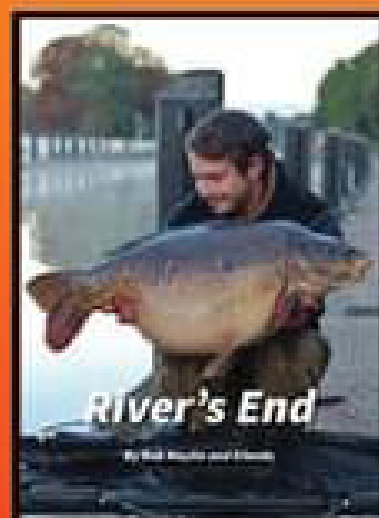
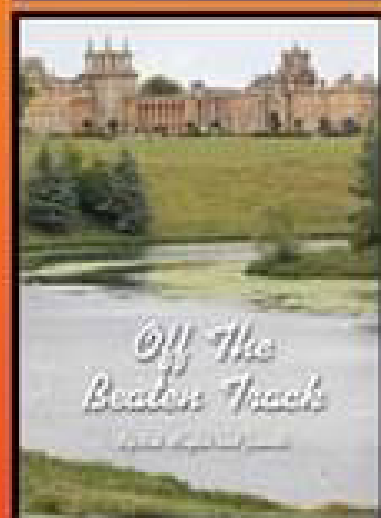
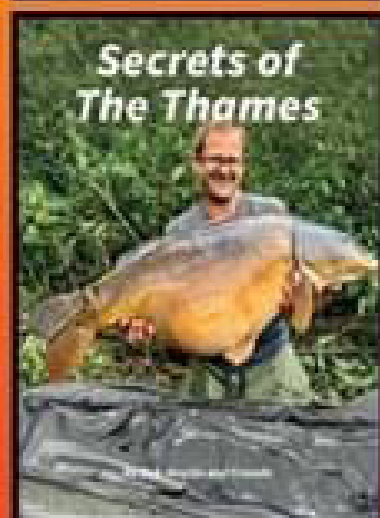
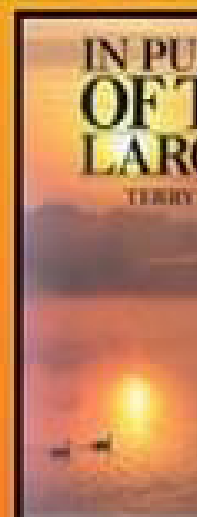
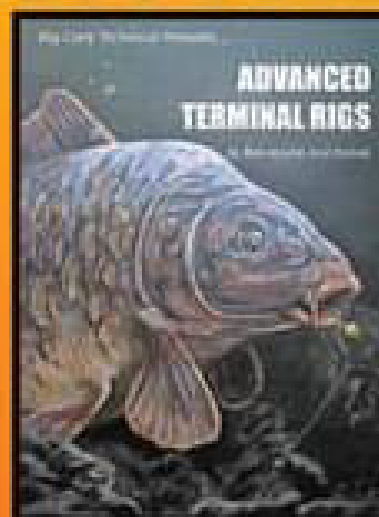
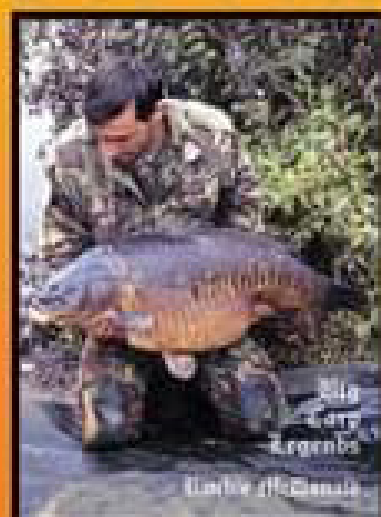
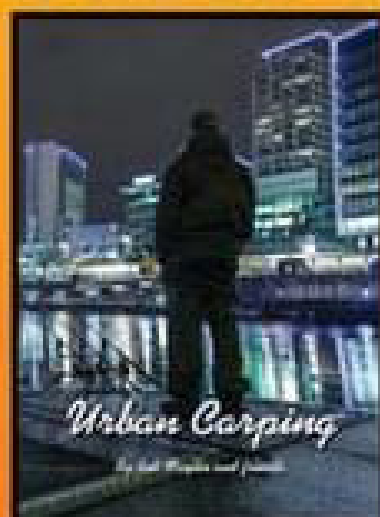


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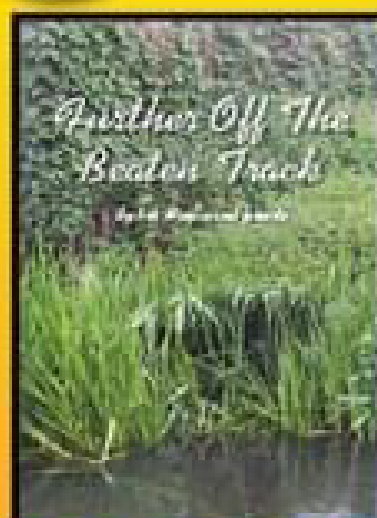
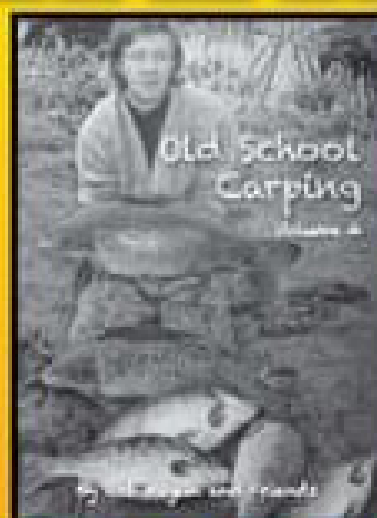
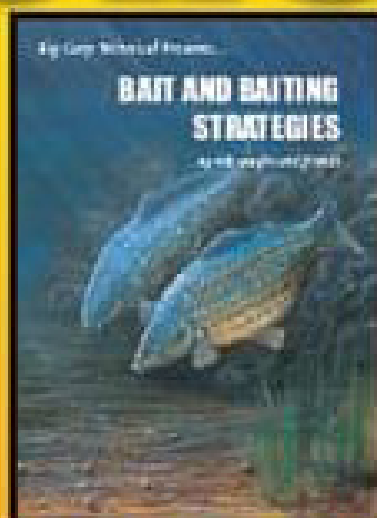
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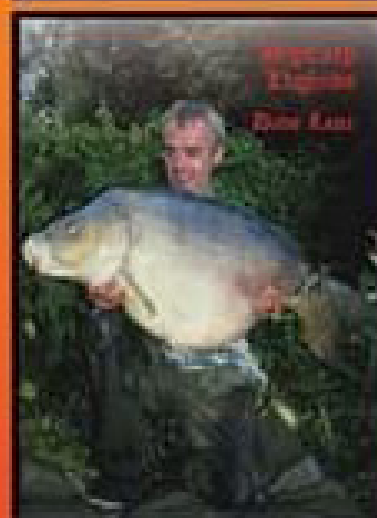
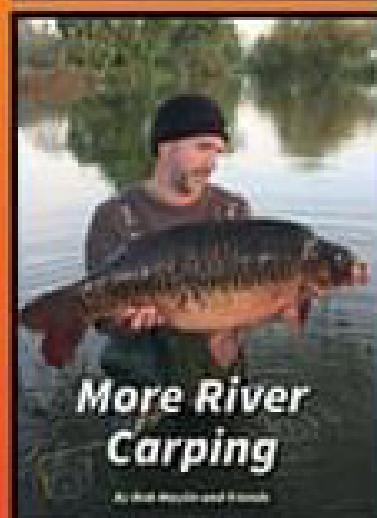
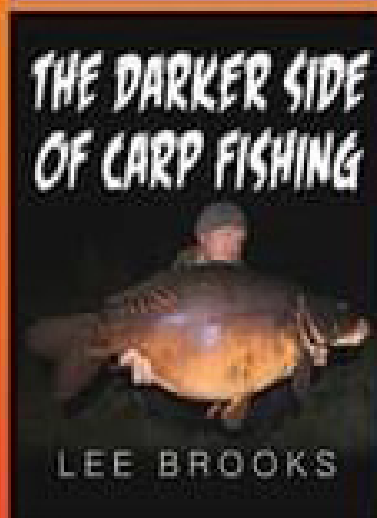
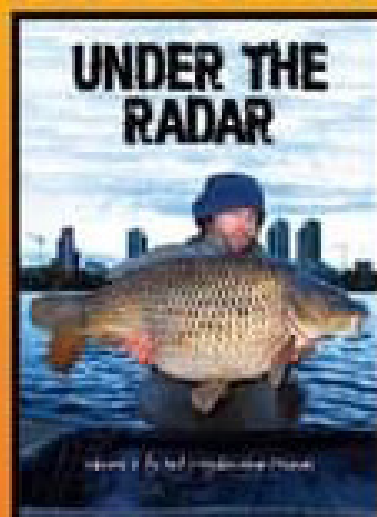
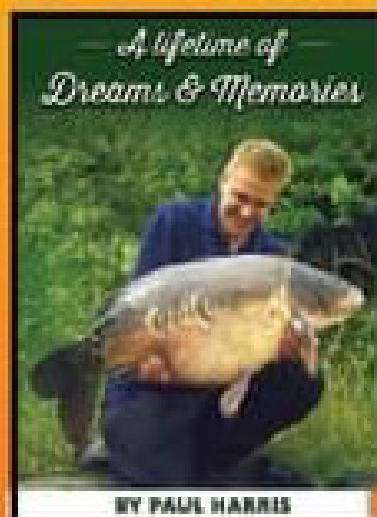
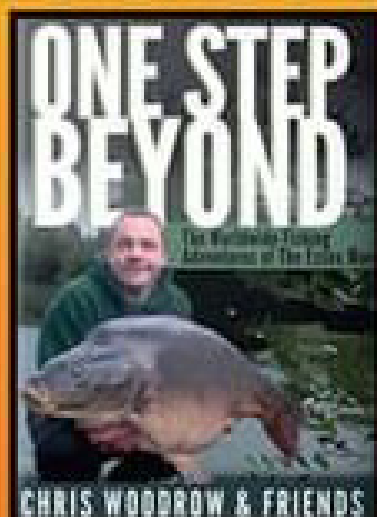
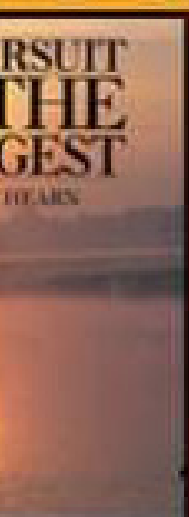
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NEW AND OLD BOOKS: WWW.EBAY.G

CORCHERS



AND GET READY FOR SUMMER ACTION



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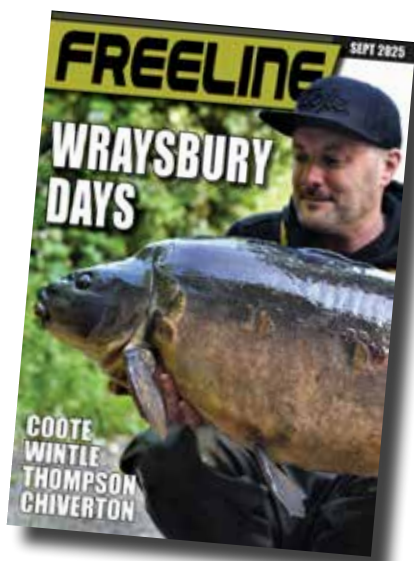
Rob's Ramblings

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GU14 9YD

07768 731425
bigcarpstudio@hotmail.
co.uk

Design & Production
James Harrison

Also available this
month Big Carp issue
350.



Front Cover:
Adrian Wintle with a
Wraybury cracker!!



What a pleasure to be able to support Dan Tasker and his lovely family.

His eldest daughter loves fishing with Dad and has been pushing for her own rods...and Dan got in touch to see if there was anything I could do to help.

So I have donated a pair of Terry Hearn's from my personal collection and put together a small bundle for her.

To get that spontaneous hug from her and a 'Thankyou'... Well... that's what it's all about. A HUGE 'THANKYOU' to everyone who supports and donates..my initiative could not work without you...and THIS is what your support translates into.

And what a priceless picture it is.

If anyone would like to donate or get involved - PM me and I will send you a link to the private group.

Dylan Harvey

8. CARP CHAT

24. CARP SCENE

40. ADRIAN WINTLE

54. APRIL CHIVERTON

64. BOBBY COOTE

86. JACK THOMPSON



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QUALITY WITHOUT COMPROMISE

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^^ A nice week up the Cotswolds for team member John Paul McCusker. Managed 5 carp up to 32 lbs

Team member Ben Flockton also managed to coax 2 carp out this weekend, 17lb and 22lb. Ben used one of our most popular and strongest hooks, size 4 Scorpion Crank hook. Visit our shop at www.carptackleonline.com to get yourself some of the best value for money end tackle around. >>



^^ We love getting pictures from our customers and team, but even more when it's from young talented anglers like Jayden Brooker. Jayden put our Scorpion Zig hooks to great use and bagged himself this cracking looking common. Well done, Jayden, great angling.



^^ Team member Paul Gill nailed this low 20lb scaley banger using our size 6 Scorpion Wide Gapes tied in a Slip D style rig in a PVA bag. Well done Paul.



^^ Team member Lee Weldon recently enjoyed success with the capture of this cracking common, Lee used a variety of our gear, including our Scorpion hooks. Well done Lee.

CHECK OUT OUR NEW SUPER FAST, OPTIMISED WEBSITE

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Scorpion Ronnie Rigs



Composite Leadclip



Snag Hook



Aligners



Tungsten Aligners



Tungsten Putty



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Hair Stops



Hook Beads



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Swivels



Scorpion Choddy Crank



Scorpion



Scorpion Wide Gape

**GIFT CARDS
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NASHBAIT RUMOURS - TRUE!!

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

It's a great brand that has provided the bait market for decades with excellent products, and those that enjoy cult status, that we will soon have to give up. With Nashbait, we also leave a brand that has written history and provided countless stories of carp anglers. Alan said " It is with heavy hearts that we announce the end of Nashbait. An iconic page of Carpfishing turns today, but its legacy will live on through the many catches, personal records and memories created on the water. This decision wasn't an easy one, but it was made to ensure the stability and future of Nash Tackle.

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





Join the Jungle Baits team

Benefits of being a team member:

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

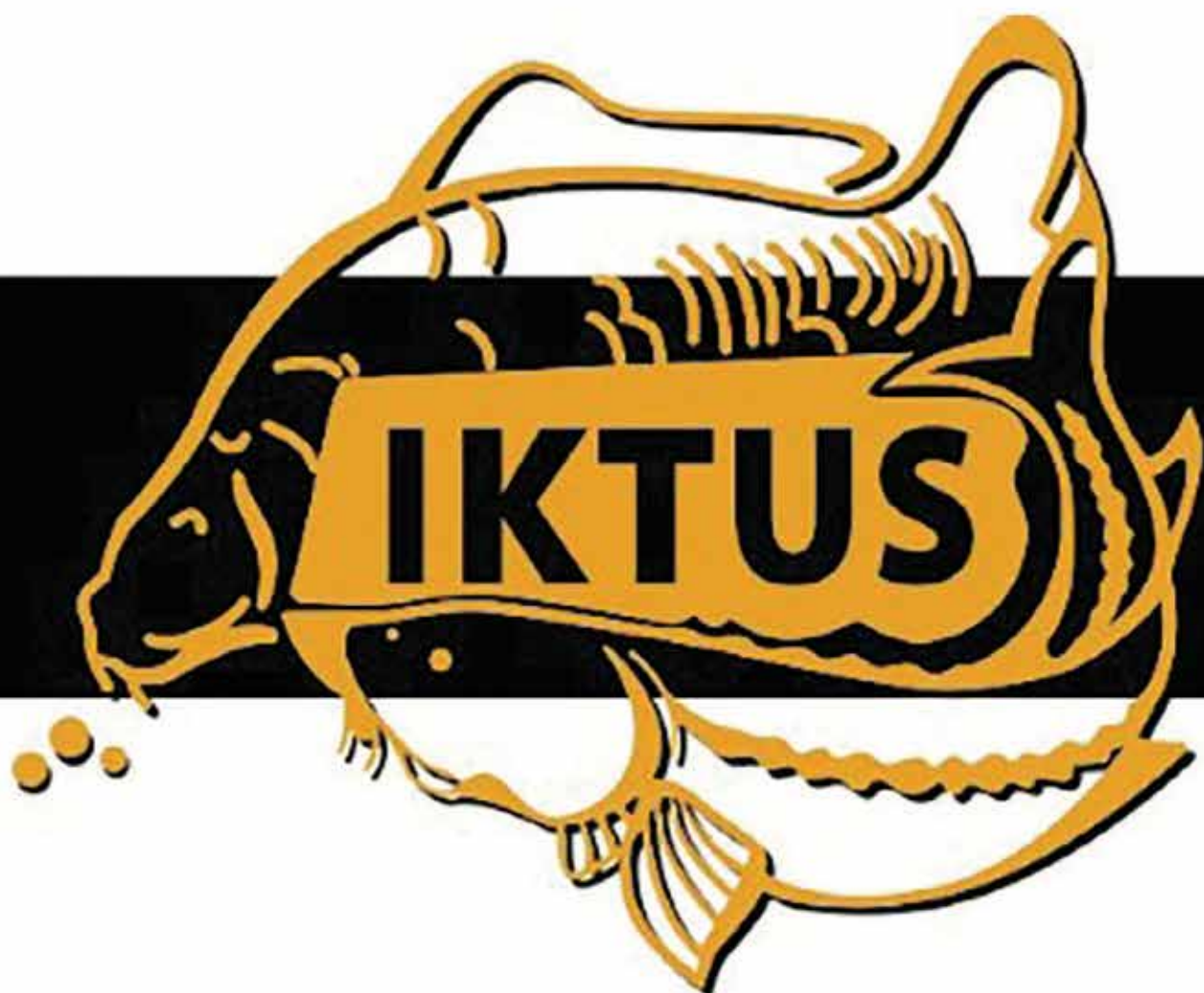
JUNGLE BAIT'S

We're on the lookout for passionate, dedicated carp anglers to join our team. If you are an active angler that is decent with a camera, then drop us a message to see what's involved.....

We offer discounted bait to team members and are always looking to push people through to being full consultants for the brand, but this obviously depends on just how active and involved you are. Face Book DMs are open.

Only accepting 18+ UK based anglers at present.

For more info check out www.junglebaits.shop



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CARP SOCIETY SUMMER SHOW A GREAT SUCCESS

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



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

DUNCAN NEWTON SADLY PASSES



“Duncan befriended me back in my Bob Morris Tackle days over 30 years ago. We often crossed paths fishing, at shows and he was always at the end of the telephone, messenger, text etc. He helped me in difficult times; he offered life advice and was always happy no matter what life through at him. His Bivvy was always like a hotel and he used it like one! He snored like a trooper on his regular afternoon siestas! He caught his fair share too.

Duncan, we will miss you mate, you gave such much and took so little. Bless you my friend, rest easy, the Darenth Valley will never be the same xxx” Spencer Humble

MARTIN BROWN JOINS VARDIS



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

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

He has the knowledge and experience of having represented other terminal tackle brands and is also backed by Mainline Baits.

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



FORCES CARP CLASSIC

ABBAY LAKES, FRANCE

11 - 18 Oct 2025

Email: forcescarpclassic@hotmail.co.uk



Military



Blue Light Services



All Ex..



Pairs & Team Competition

5 x Lakes / 5 x Events

Three Biggest Fish to Count

Cash Pot - £10,000 + Golden peg

2 x Raffles - Huge Prizes to Win

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CARP IN RECREATIONAL FISHERIES SHOW HIGH RESILIENCE TO STRESS OF CAPTURE

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

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

Although previous research by the team has revealed associations between the amount of cortisol found in a fish's scales – a sign of chronic stress in fish – and the vulnerability of fish to angling capture, this was study was the first to compare scale cortisol levels of hatchery-reared (domesticated) carp against wild carp. Professor Robert Britton of Bournemouth University led the study, where scale cortisol data from domesticated carp in five recreational fisheries was compared with data from five wild populations. Although some wild carp had scale cortisol

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

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

Professor Britton commented "Our results suggest that the fish that we considered could be most vulnerable to chronic stress from angling could instead be the most stress resilient. This is reassuring that fish welfare in fisheries based on hatchery-reared fish might not be compromised by their regular angling capture."

Co-author Dr Josephine Pegg of the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity commented "Recreational fisheries provide significant socioeconomic value worldwide, but it's important to recognise that the animals at the heart of these systems also deserve consideration and care. I'm pleased this work helps advance our understandings around the welfare of fish used in angling".

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

CARP TACKLE ONLINE LAUNCH NEW SUPER FAST WEBSITE

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

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

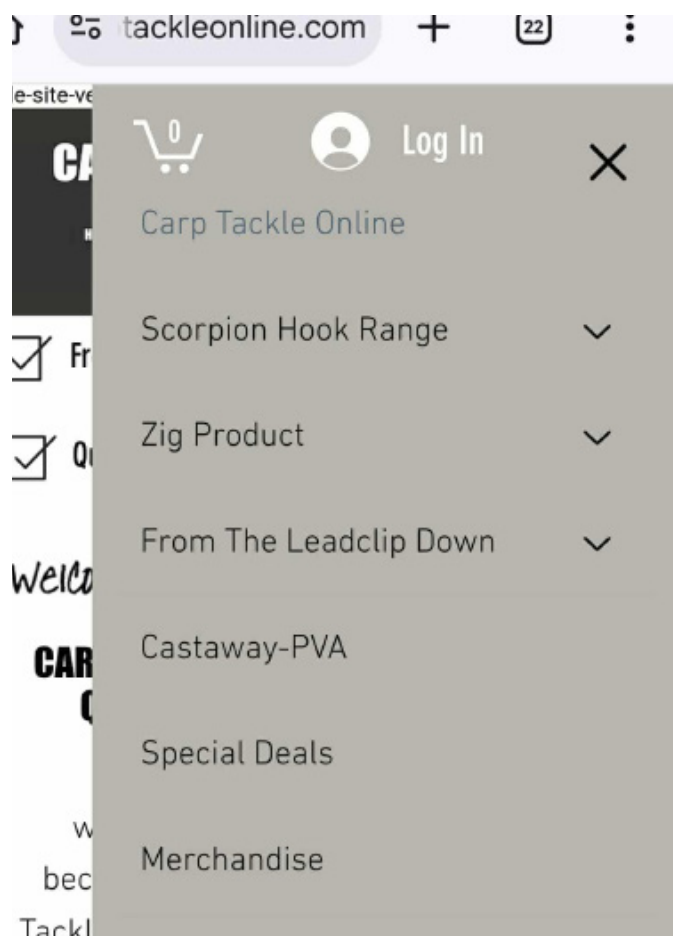
How about 3 packs of hooks for less than a tenner? When you add your hooks to the basket, select the 30-quantity option to get the best discount!

If you want quality end tackle at affordable prices, then take a look at www.facebook.com

We have listened to your feedback and have optimised the site on both the PC and mobile devices. We have also made the navigation clearer, easier, and quicker by adopting more drop-down menus to take you directly to the product you want.

Please send any feedback by emailing:

sales.carponline@gmail.com or messaging us on Facebook



- ☒ Free UK Delivery
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Welcome to Carptackleonline.com



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

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

WINTER CARP SHOW 2025

The Winter Carp Show 2025 returns for a third unforgettable year at Sandown Park!

Set across two exciting days—Saturday 29th and Sunday 30th November—this premier event in the carp angling calendar is back, bigger and better than ever. With free parking and easy access, anglers and enthusiasts are invited to connect, shop, and celebrate their shared passion in person.

Founder Vince Davies is thrilled to welcome a stellar lineup of brands including Korda (featuring an expanded stand), Sonik, Trakker, OMC, Navitas, Crafty Catcher, Gillhams, NGT, Parker Baits, and many more. Expect unbeatable Black Friday deals, exclusive product launches, and the chance to get hands-on with the latest gear.

Whether you're seasoned or just starting out, it's the perfect setting to meet friends, discover innovations, and soak up expert advice. Speaking of which, special guests Neil Spooner and Ali Hamidi return to share insights and stories that promise to inspire. Tickets are now on sale, and two fantastic VIP ticket bundles are available at an early bird discount from July 26th to August 26th. Don't miss this chance to experience the biggest winter celebration of carp angling.

www.thewintercarpshow.co.uk

Chiltern Custom Rods

We are based in Buckinghamshire and we specialise in building high quality rods, hand built to your requirements using the best quality products from many leading manufacturers



Our custom compact rods are available in 10ft 3lb, 3.5lb or 4.5lb spod versions. All are built to your requirements and specifications.

We also have our own 10ft and 12ft blanks, our own guides, handles and reel seats to keep the overall cost as low as possible but still offering high quality products.

We can also upgrade or refurbish your existing rods, giving them another lease of life.



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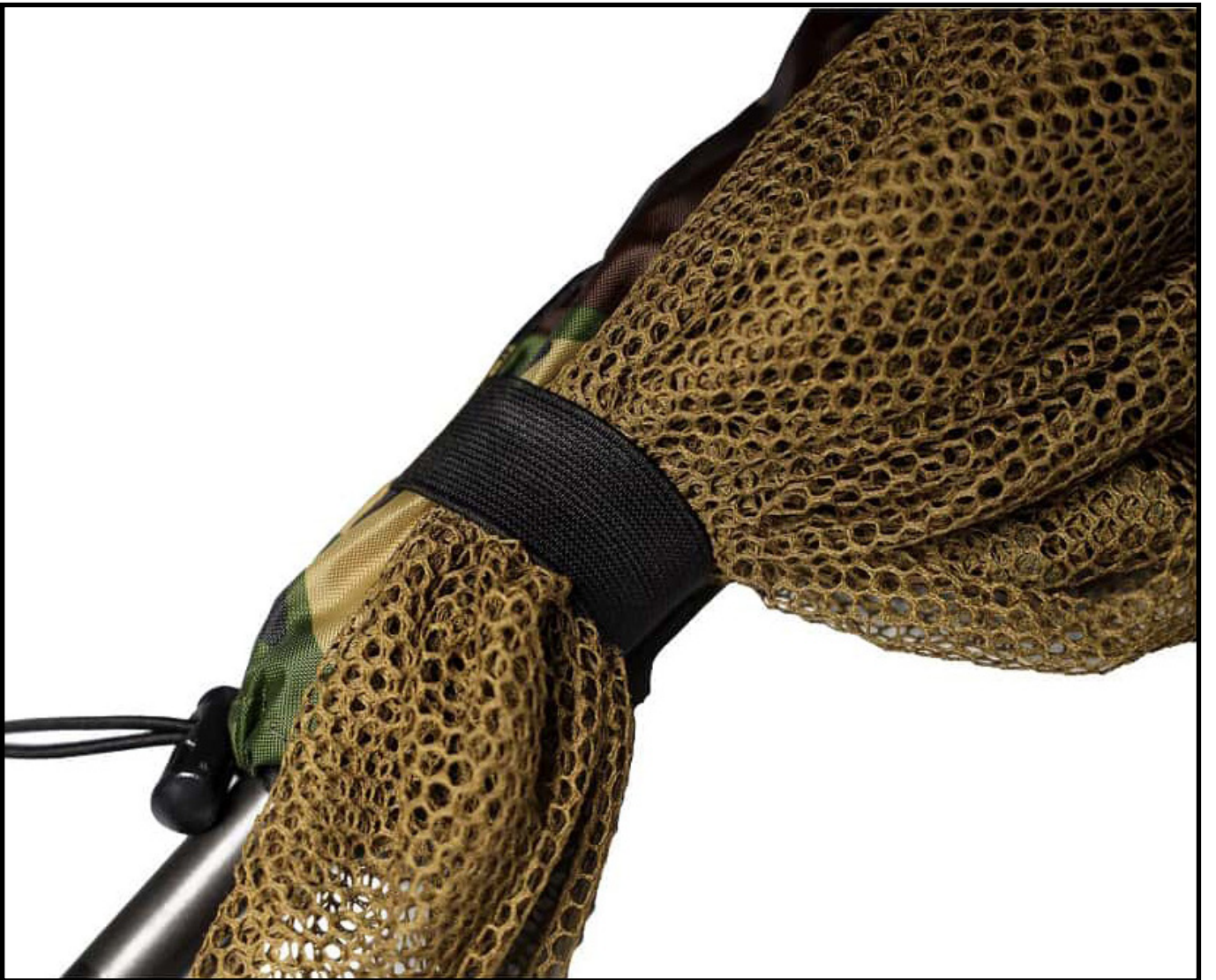
CULT TACKLE DPM NET FLOAT



Our DPM Net Floats are designed to make landing your fish smoother, even in those high-pressure moments. With a super buoyant foam core, it keeps your net perfectly positioned in the water, right when you need it most!

An elastic loop secures it firmly to your net, while the rear loop neatly tucks away excess mesh when not in use. Simple details that make a big difference on the bank.

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- www.culttackle.com



RIDGEMONKEY CONNECT COMBI & STEAMER XXL



Why use several different pans when you can use just one? Featuring a deep-sided flat-bottom frying pan, a four-section pan, and a removable steamer tray, the RidgeMonkey Connect Combi & Steamer XXL Granite Edition will help you to create a different offering every day.

Featuring a unique detachable hinge system that transforms one pan into two, cool-touch detachable handles for easy storage, and a non-stick coating that is second to none.

Our all-new granite-style coating makes our pans tougher, more durable, and offers improved non-stick properties taking compact cookware to a whole new level.

www.ridgemonkey.co.uk



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Carp Scene

SONIK TURBOSPOD 14000 REEL



Sonik Turbospod Reel, The Turbospod 14000 has been designed for spodding at speed. With its ultrafast gear ratio of 5.7: this reel is capable of a massive 1.45m of retrieve per handle turn! Built as a workhorse reel, the wormshaft gear system, floating rotor line guard and oversize twist free line roller, makes easy work of spodding at range.



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



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



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

www.soniksports.com

RRP: £89.99

KORDA DARK KAMO LUGGAGE

Over the years Korda's Compac range of luggage has grown to accomodate every angling situation. Designed by anglers, for anglers ensures that each item solves a storage solution, ensuring you stay organised on the bank, so you can focus on the fishing at hand rather than "where's that?"

We thought we would share 7 items from the Dark Kamo range, that are extremely popular and ensure you keep you key compact and tidy this summer:

Cookware Bag - Food and Cooking kit all wrapped up into one!

Goo Bag - A carp anglers' briefcase - keep your options open while carrying just one bag.

Elasticated Tip & Butt Protectors - Keep your rods secure in transit.

- www.kordataackle.com



SOLAR SP C-TECH SOFA CHAIR COVER



Fits ALL Sofa Chair models. Constructed with a water-proof SolarCam peach skin Material with Taped Seams

Can be used while seated in the chair, providing protection even during use

Provides ultimate protection while angling with pets, so now your dog can enjoy the comfort of the sofa chair too!

Can be folded within the chair, enabling protection in showers outside of the bivvy

■ www.solartackle.co.uk

the goodz carp baitz



THE T.A.S.K.

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



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A blend of highly digestible milk proteins and real food items to achieve a highly digestible, high protein all season food source bait. The Fruit and Malted Milk blend is a carp classic



THE N.M.E.

Introducing the N.M.E (Nut & Maple Extract) – The N.M.E is not just another bait—it's a revolution in carp nutrition and attraction. A true masterpiece of modern carp fishing science.

matching liquid foods, drips, PVA bag mixes, wafers and pop ups to match your chosen bait

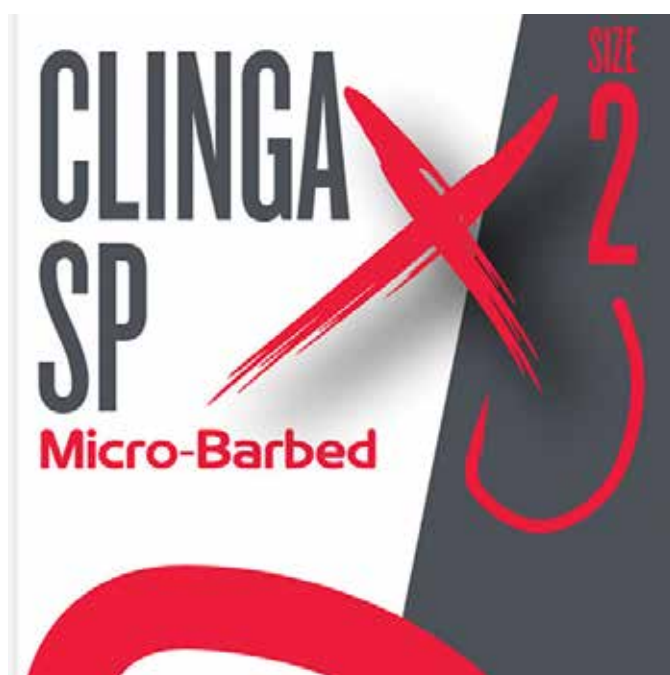
Goodz, a company founded a decade ago, has built a stellar reputation as a premier supplier of high-quality fish bait. From its inception, Goodz has been committed to providing anglers with products that ensure success on the water, combining expert craftsmanship with a passion for fishing. Over the years, their dedication to excellence has earned them the trust of fishing enthusiasts and professionals alike. Whether it's their attention to sourcing premium ingredients or their innovative bait designs, Goodz continues to set the standard in the industry, making every fishing experience truly exceptional.

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TRAKKER CLINGA SP-X HOOK



Enhance your carp fishing success with Clinga SP XS Hooks. Designed specifically for carp anglers, these hooks feature exceptional sharpness and strength to ensure reliable hook sets. The straight point design provides maximum penetration, increasing your chances of landing trophy-sized carp. Crafted with precision and durability in mind, these hooks are made from high-quality materials that withstand the rigors of demanding fishing conditions. With Clinga SP XS Hooks, you can trust in their performance and focus on reeling in your next big catch.

- sizes 2, 4 and 6
- Pack of 10
- £4.49
- www.trakkerproducts.com

DYNAMITE HOT CRAB AND KRILL



Hot Crab & Krill boasts a spicy combined with our iconic fishmeal base mix packed Crab flavour and blended fish with Antarctic Krill meal, oils, creating both instant chilli powder and chilli flakes, and long-term feeding which are some of the most triggers. The boilie has a firm attractive natural ingredients texture, making it ideal to be available. The inclusion of fed via a throwing stick and the spice ingredients also providing resilience against aids digestibility, passing nuisance species, though this the bait through the fish does not inhibit the attractor quickly, providing prolonged dispersion.

feeding. The highly attractive • 15, 20, 26mm

and nutritious base mix is • www.dynamitebaits.com

NITE MX10 JUNGLE WATCH



Our first-ever watch model was selected by UK Special Forces because of its design and the quality of the components.

Nearly 20 years later, we still pride ourselves on the quality of our components with all our watches using Swiss-made movements, Tritium illumination, and tough sapphire glass. This ensures we can always deliver on our founding promise that all our watches are built for a purpose. Our core watch collection of the MX10 (our field watch), the Alpha (our dive watch) and the Hawk (our rugged all-terrain watch) will endure anything you or the outdoors puts in its way.

- watch featured £330
- www.nitewatches.com

GEOFF ANDERSON URUS AND DOZER



100% waterproof, breathable and exceptionally light for its durability. The reinforced fabric is far more robust than other jackets and pants in the same weight class. And they keep you dry in rain, wind and waves while you chase the fish of your life.

Dozer & Urus Light is the ideal choice for the active fisherman. The weight is minimized, but the strength is still in a class of its own.

In addition, we have optimized the ventilation options, so you are guaranteed maximum comfort - even when you are very active and walking long distances.

www.geoffanderson.com

Aqua Lilium Clothing

Changing Seasons

As the long drought of summer is slowly ending and the daylight hours shorten.

Here at Aqua Lilium Clothing, we are already turning our attention to the cooler months which will be with us in a blink of an eye.

So, that got us thinking, what can we bring to you next?

One thing I know I cannot stand about winter is the thick clothing you need, sitting there feeling like you cannot move. One minute you are sweating because you moved swims the next minute you are cold because you are damp. I asked the team to produce a list of must haves that they feel they need for the cooler months:

1. Lightweight
2. Waterproof
3. Breathable
4. Warm
5. Storage
6. Easily pack away.
7. Built in hood.
8. Movability

This got me thinking how can we have all these must haves in one item of clothing, knowing that the list we have contradicts itself. It just so happened that the British Grand Prix was on in the background and because of the good old British weather of course it was raining.

I noticed that although it was raining there was not many umbrellas in the crowds as it blocks everybody's view. Instead, people were wearing hooded waterproof ponchos. Yes, I thought to myself that could work, and I wasted no time sketching out a design for the Poncho.

When designing the poncho, I needed inspiration, a guide on which to follow and you know what they say, if it is not broken don't fix it. This took me back to our award winning All Rounder Jacket that's not only waterproof but it's lightweight and windproof. The All Rounder

Aqua Lilium Clothing

Poncho

Coming soon

17th

August
2025



Don't get caught in the rain
**Without imagination there is
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also has a very clever internal thermal system that is not only breathable but generates your own body heat.

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WRAYSBURY 1 NORTH LAKE

I'd been thinking about getting a ticket for RK Wraysbury 1 for some time and managed to get one for the 2018/2019 season. As the countdown began for the draw on April 1st, the excitement mounted to finally walk the banks of the historic complex.

April 1st was finally here, and I was doing a lap of the lake and meeting a few of the members before the draw. I came out around tenth and quickly realised the popular spring swims were taken, so I settled in a swim called 'Bond's', which is where a scene from the film 'A View to a Kill' was

filmed. I got myself set up and proceeded to have a lead around. It was very deep water, and the lead took an age to hit the bottom, but I found three likely spots to fish and baited up with half a dozen spombs over each rod for my first night. With all the excitement of being on the lake, I didn't sleep too well and was waiting in anticipation for the first bleep from my Nevilles, but unfortunately the night fell silent.

Next morning, I saw that some swims had become available so decided to move up to the shallows, as a couple of fish had been caught, so I packed up and made the long barrow journey to a swim called 'Lawns'. The guy who had fished it the night before had managed a fish, so I thought there was a good chance of maybe catching my first Wraysbury carp. I cast two rods around a rod length in front of a roped-off area next to the Island and one to the right of the swim. The morning flew round, but the carp weren't playing ball.



A guy named Martin who I'd met on the draw came by with his barrow and asked how I had gotten on. He had lost a decent fish in a swim called 'Bus Stop', which covers the other side of the island and is a popular swim that has good spring form. I then made the decision to move again to that swim, had a lead around and found some spots. That night, I heard some fish crashing between the channel of the island and the bank, but once again morning was here and I hadn't had a bite. I still had two more nights left and was determined to get the first fish under my belt. I hadn't gone heavy with the bait, it the temperature was still quite low, so only put out a few pouchfuls of chopped and whole boilies with stiff



hinge rigs and Specialized Hookbaits' S2 crushed cork pop-ups.

The following morning, I was watching the water, and a fish crashed in the channel, so I put the stove on for a cuppa and the middle bobbin suddenly slammed up. I was on it in a flash, heart racing, having to give it some pressure due to the nature of the swim's snags. After a spirited fight, a common was sulking in the net. It was 21lbs, and I was off the mark.

My next trip the following week was a three-nighter, and I arrived, did a lap, and Bus Stop was free, so I bucketed the swim and made my way round to load up the barrow. The rods went out on the same spots as before with a few



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pouchfuls of chops and wholes and again three stiff hinges. The following morning, the middle rod was away, and again, firm pressure was needed to keep it from the snags. It was another low-20 stockie, and the rod went back out. Within ten minutes, the same rod went off again with a mid-20 mirror this time. I had managed eight fish over the three nights and was feeling pretty chuffed with how things were going.

My next session was another three nights towards the end of April, and I went into a swim called 'Turfs' opposite the infamous Springate's. I had a really good lead around and found some pukka spots that were covered in silkweed and full of naturals. All three rods were spread out over the area, and I deposited 30 Spombs of boilies and particle over

the top. I was settling down for the night, just dozing, when one of the rods was away. It came in without any trouble and was another mid-20 mirror. I can honestly say the stockies in there are some of the prettiest I have ever seen. I did a couple of self-takes and slipped it back into its home. The following evening around the same time, the middle rod was away, and it felt like a better fish... and it was – my first Wraysbury 30 at 30lb 4oz!

My next trip was mid-May, and I went back into Turfs. The conditions were good, so I gave them some bait – around 5kg of boilies and particle. I'd done three nights and ended up with 12 fish including two more 30s, one being a lovely scaly mirror at 37lb 2oz. The rest of May, I dotted myself around the lake, nicking some stockies and was catching on each trip. My next session in Turfs was mid-June, and a



friend doubled up with me for the weekend. For the first 36 hours, we both blanked. I was getting my head round thinking my first blank was imminent, but then the middle rod burst into life. I was out like a shot, but unfortunately it came off. As I was reeling in the rig, the right rod went off, and straight away I knew this was a good fish. After a few hairy moments, it was in the net. I gazed in with my mate Carl, and we both knew it was well over 40lb. I'd had one of the absolute gems of the lake, the 'Long Sutton'. She went 42lb 8oz, and resident photographer, Rupert, came over to take some fantastic shots. It took ages to get the rods back after all the excitement, but speaking to friends about what had just happened, I was on cloud nine! I caught another mid-20 common and went home already thinking about my next trip.

I was back a week later and had three more nights at my disposal. Luckily Turfs was free, so I wasted no time sending out 60 Spombs of bait and getting the rods out. The rods were barely out two hours when the left hand rod was away, and after a good fight, one of the Redmire commons was in the net, and at 35lb 6oz, I was buzzing. I got the pictures done and released it. The night was quiet, but by first light, I'd had some savage liners so knew the fish were on the feed. My friend Carl had arrived, and he doubled up with me again. By late morning, I'd had three stockie 20s, and then it went mad... I'd got a 30 in the net and two of Wraysbury's finest in the retainers, one called 'Pawprint', spawned out at 37lb 12oz, and another rare Redmire common at 37lb 2oz. I couldn't believe it! I called Rupert, and he came round to do the pictures.







The following morning, the right rod was away. It felt heavy and put up a good scrap. I netted it and recognised it straight away as a fish called 'Broken Lin', another 40lb'er ant 43lb 4oz. I knew this session was turning into something very special. A few more stockies had their pictures taken, and I topped up the swim with another few kilos of bait. I went for a shower after all the action, did a lap of the lake, and saw a mirror known as 'No Name' in Sunnymeads corner. It's got a two-tone colour so easily recognisable. It looked huge, and when I got back to the swim, I joked to Carl that it would be in my net by morning.

At around 4am the following morning, the right rod ripped off, and I could feel it was another good'un'. As it neared the net, I saw the two-tone colour and knew it was No Name. I couldn't believe my luck! This was something else! It went over the net cord safely, and No Name was mine. We got it on the mat, and the frame of the fish was huge. We weighed it at 43lb 6oz, and I went home in an absolute daze. I'd had 18 fish over three nights and five more of the 'A-Team'. Considering I had joined Wraysbury hoping to get through the season catching just one of the gems, I have exceeded my expectations and feel very pleased with myself. Since then, I've had a couple more sessions, and by mid-July had totalled up 52 fish. Sadly, due to other commitments, I haven't been able to get over to the lake lately, but as autumn approaches, I am ready and waiting to see how the next few months pan out, and the hunt for the elusive King Fungus and Jacko's continues... and surely my first blank.

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MAKING MEMORIES

I joined my syndicate back in April this year. This lake a no-publicity water and is in the deepest Norfolk, home to some of the most stunning, darkest carp I've seen. I was hoping to catch some of these amazing looking carp. As the season has gone on, I've been lucky enough to have had carp up to 30-plus on a regular basis. Only dreaming of catching bigger, little did I know this was about to become a reality and this sixth session would turn out to be one that would stay with me for the rest of my life. This is how my dream really did come true...

After a few big storms the week before, the hot weather was back, and so was I. I arrived at the lake mid-afternoon and found only a few cars in the car park of my syndicate, so I grabbed my bucket and walked down to the shallow end of the lake where I found a few big fish milling around, happy but not feeding. I climbed one of the trees and looked over a huge weed bed, and then out of the corner of my eye, I spotted a big mirror as it cruised underneath me. I then saw a massive common join it. This carp looked like a real lump, and I almost fell out of the tree! I scrambled to the floor and dropped my bucket into the same swim as the last session.

I set up and found the same spots as last time, but the one difference was the lead went down with a crack, so I thought the carp must have been feeding on my bait from the session before. I baited my pop-up rigs, balanced it out with some putty, and I cast them out on to my spots in the margins and under a tree, and then like before, I baited heavily. The evening passed with only a few bleeps, but I was convinced that the carp were feeding on the bait. As darkness fell, the rods became dormant, and a sense calm came over the lake.

I was awake at first light, waiting with a cup of coffee in my hand, when my right hand rod just went into meltdown and a huge bow wave erupted from my baited spot. I was on the rod in a flash, and it ripped off around 30 yards of line on the first run. This was big! The fish crashed through three weed beds, leaving a trail of destruction behind it. I was now ten minutes into the fight, and the fish was still so strong. Then I saw a huge flank turn in the water, and my knees went to jelly. I knew this was a big fish... I was now shaking! This carp did not want to give up! I slipped on my chest waders, grabbed the



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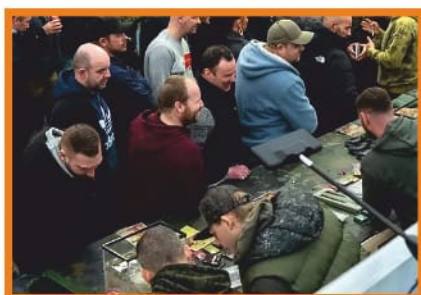
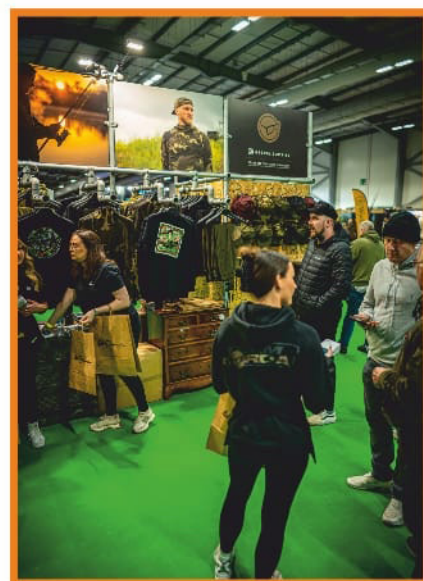
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net, and I managed to get the fish to turn in the deeper water and head back to me. The huge fish took a gulp of air, and I slid the net under and lifted... Yesssss!! The beast was mine!! I folded back the net, looked at my prize, and looking back at me was the biggest carp in the lake. I placed the fish in the cradle, still shaking, and lifted the scales. It went to a whopping 46lb 2oz. Wow! A massive new PB for me, and what a dark stunner it really was. Photos done, I kissed it goodbye, and it slowly swam off! I was still in total shock! I returned the rod back in the water, and as before, heavily baited up. The day was once again slow in high temperatures, and I was only catching a tan, totally still in shock.

The evening came, and I recast all the rods and put another few boilies over my other spots. Night fell, and it plunged into darkness. I heard a couple of fish jumping and crashing throughout the night, but they seemed a long way off my spots. This time I was ready... I was up at first light, watching the sunrise with a hot cup of tea, waiting for the carp to make their appearance back down in the shallows. Bang on time, my middle rod was away with a massive one-toner, again making me jump a mile. I spilt my mug with tea all over me...

I hit the rod and took on this angry carp. The fish must have found every weedbed in front of me, but with a little pressure, I eased her over the net. As I looked down, I could see a fair sized dark common. No wonder she fought so well! I wet the cradle once again and weighed her. She went 31lb 5oz and was as black as your hat. I was so happy that my plan had worked again! I slipped her back, buzzing. Wow – what a session! It just proves that you don't have to cast to the horizon to catch – just a gentle flick could make memories forever.



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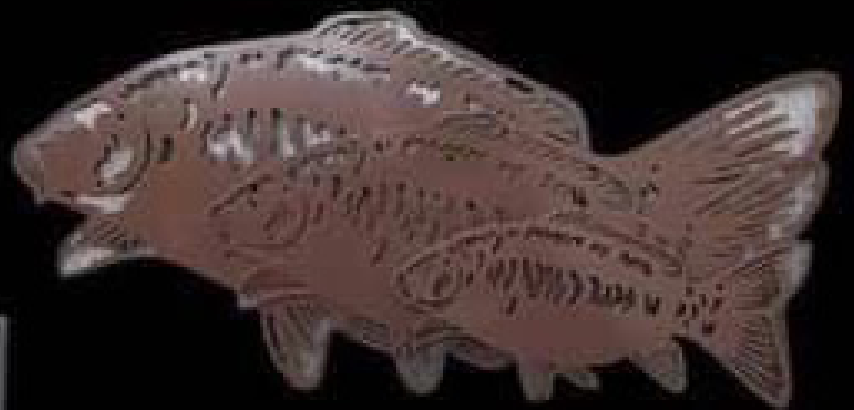
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DOCKLANDS

PART 2

This month I'm going to start off talking about one fish in particular that has lived in these docks for many of years now, like most of the fish, but this one in particular has been around the block, dock and also the clock. It's a fish I like to call the Friendly Ghost Common and others also call her the Big Ghostie. The reason for calling her Friendly Ghost Common is that I've had the pleasure of actually catching her at loads of different weights and shapes over the years, so to me she's become friendly.

BOBBY COOTE

She can be a very greedy fish at times and also one I'd call a bit of a bully. I've seen her smashing into fish at full speed, ramming into them like as if they were spawning, but she's doing this purely to push them out the way of the bait that's laid out like a buffet in front of her so she can destroy what's there before they can get the chance of having a few mouthfuls themselves. She's a very powerful big-framed fish but really does fluctuate with weight very oddly. I've never really known fish in these docks to get caught as much as she has; she's by far from rig shy and neither is she really bothered about line being in the water, as I've seen her many of times swim into my line as if nothing was there without even bothering or spooking her.



The first time I actually had the pleasure of landing her she was only 19lb, and I had known of a friend catching her only a few months before at 26lb, so I thought it was a little odd that she had lost so much weight, and this was not around spawning times. I then caught her about seven months later full of spawn at 24lb and thought she looked a lot bigger than she actually weighed. Then over the years she has been caught quite a few times at loads of different weights, and I've also heard stories of this fish being over the magical 30lb barrier, but I myself have only ever caught her up to 28lb, which by today's standards is not a massive fish, but any fish caught from these docks are very special to me and all have their own stories to tell.

That's why fishing these docks is so special to me and holds a place close to my heart. I don't know what brings me back here all the time, but something does, and there are months throughout the years when I can't stay away or let a couple of hours go by without thinking about the docks carp. I absolutely love fishing there, and mainly I'm only ever using one fishing rod, so for months of the year that I pay a license to fish with three rods, I end up only using one. Crazy, I know, but I just love being there. It's got something that lures me back for many years, and I just don't know what it is. Maybe it's the challenge of sometimes months without a bite?

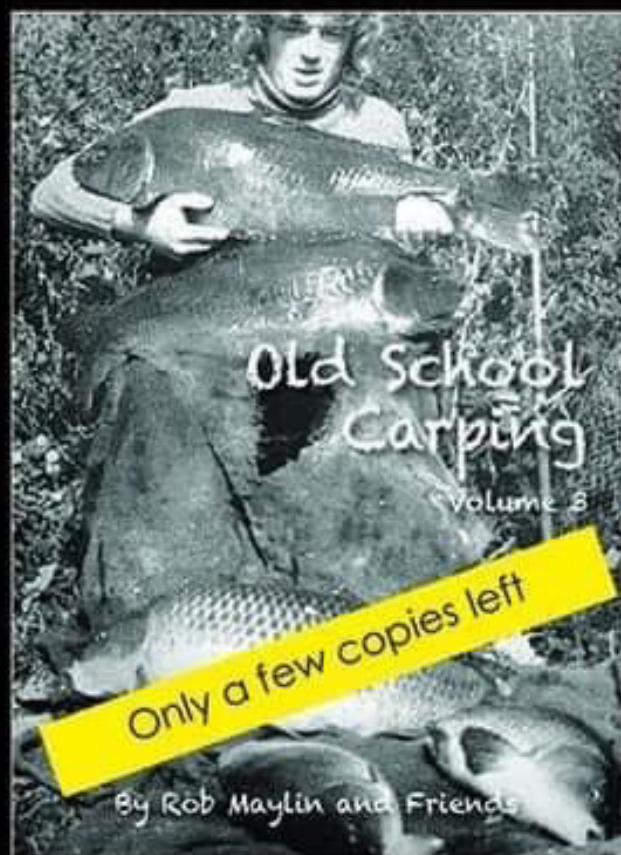
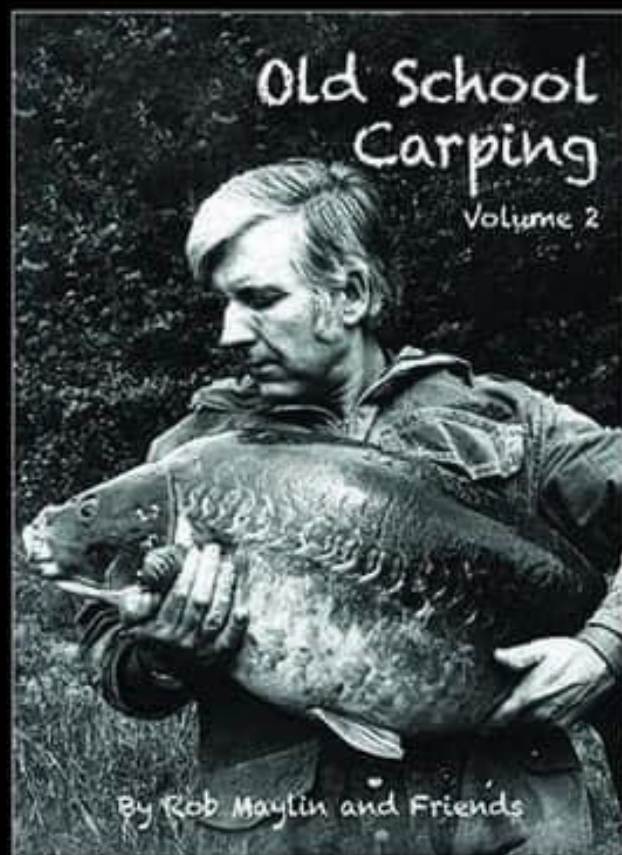
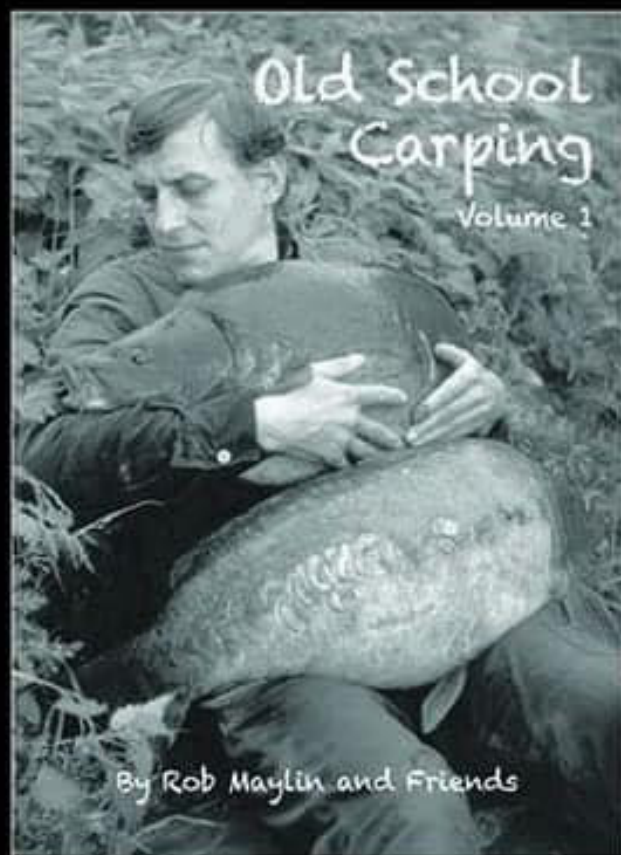
Now when I wrote about this fish being around the block, dock and clock, I wasn't joking. It was like pinpoint clockwork on timing with when and where I could find this fish. This happened for quite a few years and still kind of does to this day. I could bet money with friends to say that the Friendly

BOBBY COOTE

Ghost will be here soon to the exact minute, and she would roll in like as if you were waiting there for a bus or a cab to turn up. She was also so greedy at times that if the other fish were there tearing up the bottom and she rolled in, I could see she was going to cause carnage and get straight on the bait, so I would remove the baited rig from the water to stop another recapture because she would just destroy what's in front of her at any cost. I would often go to a certain spot at midday after work many times in the week to feed her bread, as she absolutely loves bread, and sometimes I'd have to stop throwing it in because otherwise she would eat the whole loaf, and that can't be good for her all at once. She was pretty used to being hooked in my opinion, as I know of quite a few anglers who have caught her, and my friends



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Danny and Jack have also caught her on my spot on one of her clockwork morning arrivals. But I hooked her once, and I didn't know it was her at all, as this little story will point out... I'd been at the dock from 4am as usual, but the water quality on this particular morning was very murky and dirty looking, and I couldn't see a thing in the water when I got there. Bear in mind I'd been over the night before as always, prepping my spot for the morning's fishing, filling it in with some bait and could see perfectly clearly then. In the morning, I checked the tides on the website and they were not even due in until around 6am, so I thought it was really strange that the water was so clouded up.

Anyway, I got a rod in position, and you guessed it, the cloud was a full-on bream party. It started from the moment the lead hit bottom in the middle of the dance floor. Within a couple of minutes my bottle cap had slowly fallen off my reel and was bouncing along the concrete, as the bream never really take line when you're fishing 5oz leads; the tips just bang a little and the line tightens up. So I was into a bream, and another and another and yeah, you got it, I had arrived at the docks while the bream were having a full-on lock-in at the local pub and having a party on all my buffet food I'd laid out the night before. I thought I couldn't handle too much of this bream party and was thinking I'd shoot off home and help out with dropping the kids off to school.

Then out of nowhere, the heavens opened up, and it absolutely poured down hardcore for about 20 minutes, but luckily on this morning I'd brought my brolly with me as there was a forecast for heavy showers. So I'm now sat under my brolly filming this rain absolutely smashing me to bits, and as



quick as it turned up, it disappeared, and the sun was soon back out blazing again down into my spot.

I thought, sod it, I'll put the rod back out, hoping that the rain would have pushed the bream out of the shallower water and down off the shelf, and it did, but I never had a knock or any sightings for a good hour or so from any fish at all. I was now just chilling, enjoying the morning with a few coffees and reading a carp fishing autobiography when all of a sudden, I had a very steady take, very slow, not aggressive at all. It was a very constant take from when it had started to when I picked the rod up. Because it had taken line though, I knew straight away it was a carp. The fish put up a little scrap, nothing too major, and I knew it was a smaller fish by the way it was fighting. I landed this stunning little linear and did a few self-takes, nothing spectacular, just pictures for my records. I put the fish back as soon as I could so I could get the rod back out on the spot. Where there's one and all that malarkey...

I always tend to favour the multi rig when fishing the docks, and a lot of my fishing mainly involves the multi rig. I tend to couple it up with an 18 or 20mm pop-up to try and deter the bream, but it doesn't always work; in fact I don't think it works at all, but in my mind, I like to think its stopping them. I try and stay away from using solid bags and PVA mesh bags with pellets and other similar items when I know the bream are around; I just cast out a single pop-up over the baited area to try and single out the carp. This is the exact method I was using on this morning.

The time was getting on now, and I didn't have long before I was going to have to leave. As always, I tend to put some



things away in the car and leave the one rod out fishing with the net and mat to hand. I was over at the car, which was only about 10/15 yards away from where I fish when all of a sudden I heard the bottle cap hit the floor and the reel just started going into overdrive. I had to run over and grab the rod and leave all my stuff on the floor at the back of my car with the boot wide open. Bear in mind it's not the safest of places to be leaving your stuff all over the floor and your car boot wide open, as your stuff can easily grow legs and disappear if you're not careful.

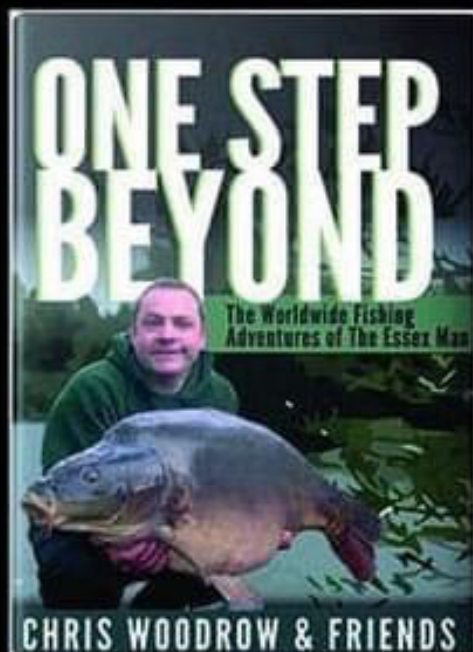
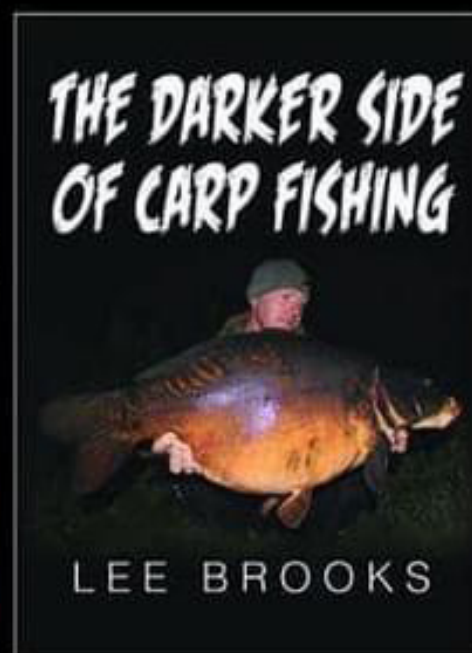
Now I'd hooked something that at first I thought wasn't a carp at all; I thought it was a catfish. I was now trying to concentrate on playing this fish as well as trying to keep a close eye on my car and all my stuff. Luckily, at first, this fish never went the usual carp route underneath the jetties or around the snaggy area but went left where I like all the fish to go, as it's relatively snag free, but this fish was steaming like a train and just going and going without any stops or breaks in between. Then she slowed down, and I was getting the upper hand when all of a sudden the line went really slack, and I was winding down as fast as I could but feeling nothing at all, and I thought at first the fish had come off. I was winding and winding, proper cranking the big pit reel, and the fish must have been swimming so fast towards me that I just couldn't catch up with her.

Then all of a sudden the rod just bent around to the right, and the fish was now under the T part of the jetty. I quickly dropped the tip down into the water as always, but now I couldn't see my car properly, and I was getting in a right pickle worrying about my stuff as well as trying to play

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this carp safely. I was thinking to myself still that this was either a catfish or a unit of a carp because the runs this fish was taking were just stupid. Luckily an old boy who always walks through early mornings with his dog and has a little chinwag with me was coming along the dock, and I just felt the relief that he could watch my stuff as I dealt with this fish that was on speed or steroids of some sort. So while he was keeping watch for me and I got the better of the fish, I then saw it coming up through the water.

It was then that I realised it was the Friendly Ghost, and at first I honestly thought I was seeing things, as this fish never really put up much of a fight in the other five or six times I'd caught her. I netted her quickly and just wanted to get her into a sack so I could put my stuff away in the car, but when I went to remove the hook I couldn't believe what

I was seeing, as the hook was basically nearly straightened all the way out. It was like removing a sewing needle from her mouth, the type of needle my mum would use to stitch things up for me. I've still got that rig to this day in a spare tackle box in my cupboard as a trophy, and as you can see by the picture, I was very lucky to land this stunning old docks carp at the biggest weight I'd ever caught her. Maybe that's why she fought like a demon. What a character – the Friendly Ghost Common.

This now brings me onto another docks character that follows up from the mirror I talked about in the first article I wrote for Big Carp magazine. If you haven't read it, be sure to try and source a copy. I had a banger of mirror the



BOBBY COOTE



morning before and also had the next morning free to come and fish for a few hours. Likewise my friend Danny had said to me, "Sod it! I'll go into work a little later and join you for a few hours in the morning as well if you don't mind." He said he wouldn't fish but just join me. Something you always really need over the docks is a spare pair of hands, as it's really hard to net the fish alone and deal with them, as the banks are quite high away from the water. So we made a time to meet up and both met down the docks on that morning. We we'd literally been there about two to three minutes, and as I peered over the edge onto the baited spot there was one fish all on its own absolutely tearing up the bottom, bubbles coming up and the silt being clouded up in the edge. Straight away I said to Danny, "This is a bite, mate. We will land this fish within a couple of minutes," and he was like, "You reckon?" I told him, "100%," and he said, "If you do that, it will be the quickest bite I've ever seen over these docks."

So I ran straight back to the car and grabbed a rod, the mat and the net. I always fish unleaded snag leaders, so I attached one, coupled with my favoured multi rig on a size 4 hook with a 4 or 5oz lead and a 20mm white pop-up and lowered it in slowly behind this fish's tail... Bang! Within 30 seconds this fish turned its head around and just grabbed hold of the white pop-up and took off like Concorde. Now luckily, at first, it never went underneath the jetties; it just powered off to the left and just kept going left with immense power. Like I said, if the fish go left, I've got a 85/90% chance I'll land them safely, but every time I tried to stop the fish and turn it around, it just wasn't having any of it and just kept

going further and further away.

Well eventually the fish slowed down for like five minutes, and I got it really close to the square where I actually fish for them, but then he just woke up again and now caused complete carnage for me. He was charging from left to right like a complete nutcase, and I was just trying my best to guide the line away from all the trolleys, bikes and snags that I know are there through experience of fishing here.

Now the problem started, as he came charging towards me where I was standing on the dock. Underneath my feet I knew of four or five shopping trolleys and also a bike that are really close in the edge. As he came swimming in, he just swam straight into the back of one of the shopping trolleys and was now inside the shopping trolley like a human inside a shark's cage. So he'd now snagged inside the shopping trolley and the line was all wrapped around the wheel of the trolley, and Danny and I were like, "You have got to be joking - this fish is a goner!" Now the fish wasn't fighting anymore of course, as it was just caged inside the trolley.

I said to Danny that all we could actually do was either lower in the net behind the trolley and hope he swam out into the net or just wait for him to swim out on his own accord, but to be honest I was saying to Danny that this fish is a goner. I can remember Danny saying, "I've seen you land some brutal fights, but you're never going to land this one." I just hoped for the best and couldn't really do much other than wait for the fish to release itself from the trolley.

So we were just standing there watching the fish just chilling in the trolley in the crystal clear water, and we couldn't help but notice the sheer size of the tail just rocking back

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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).

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and forth in the water. The fish had now been in the back of the trolley for a good five or more minutes, and he was just sitting there in the basket of the trolley. All of a sudden, he started trying to turn around so he could swim out the back of the trolley. Very calmly, which I found very strange, he started swimming out of the back of the shopping trolley, and the line, which was caught up on the wheel, rolled over the back of the wheel, pinged off the trolley and was now back out in open water. I grabbed the rod and closed the bail arm on the reel, and the fish just woke up again after its lovely rest inside a so-called metal trolley net. The fish was now charging around again, going from left to right, and it was just like trying to guide a plane down an alleyway full of snags. Danny looked at me and said, "Never! I actually can't believe you're even going to get a chance at landing this fish; you're unbelievable, son." So as he came in closer, we finally got a good look at this incredible docks creature as it flanked up on its side, and Danny got the honour again of slipping the net under one of the truly special carp that live in these docks.

Now recently, I have started a YouTube channel called "The Specimen Chaser" for my own fishing and have also done a throwback series to the docks carp. Recently, I bizarrely went over to film an episode for this particular fish I've been talking about, and while I was there, I put out a rod on the spot, so I was fishing while I was there just putting some video footage together. Strangely enough, I ended up having a recapture of the exact same fish I was going over to talk about, so I have also put in a picture of when I caught him for a second time recently.



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FORBIDDEN ROUTES PART 2

It's that time of year again when I get to sit back, reflect and write about the journey I have undertaken in the past year. Pure thrills, fright and adrenaline have all been experienced, leaving me mentally and physically drained by the time I cross the finish line. But I have written about why I do the whole guesting style of fishing many times before, and I won't bore you with that again. It is still the type of fishing that I desire, crave and love, and if you think there is a dull moment to my angling then you need to experience it firsthand for yourself. If you relish the idea of heart pounding, blood pumping and nail biting experiences, then get out there and

capture the carp that reside in these undoubtedly amazing venues. Let's start by saying just how amazed I was by the reaction of the first instalment of Forbidden Routes and the great feedback I received by other anglers on social media. This certainly did excite me that I was producing a good quality edit that people enjoyed. This is the fuel to the fire for me and is exactly why I do it.

In early spring, my hardest decision was to make the correct choice of which lake I am going to tackle first. I had three in mind over the next few months, one of which was the golf course lake, and the other was the beautiful old estate and finally the big, wild sand pit. The reason I like to plan what lake I will be visiting first is to get the most out of the water on the short time and sessions I will be there. There was no



point going for the 40ft sand pit first, as this takes ages to warm up, the fish are still acting very lethargic and hitting this off the surface can be a deadly attack, as proven in the previous season.

Taking it back to early April when the trees were still bare and the temperatures were just starting to increase after we had encountered a crazy winter, I had been planning a few sessions on the most amazing estate lake set inside the depths of the woods. This is a place I visit most springs when the bluebells are most prominent. It's always been an absolute dream of mine to get a photograph with a wild, uncaught carp submerged in the colourful growths. My mate that joined me on these missions last year managed to steal the spotlight with some incredible photos when he managed to catch two beautiful old carp, one of which was probably twice our age. This really had me absolutely blown away and was going to be my target for early spring this year. I've mentioned in the past just how spooky this place is at night, having had some very sketchy moments and coming extremely close to being caught on more than one occasion. This is something I didn't want to happen again, and I was going to try and spend as little time as possible at the lake doing short sessions instead of overnights. Prebaiting and stalking was going to be my plan of attack.

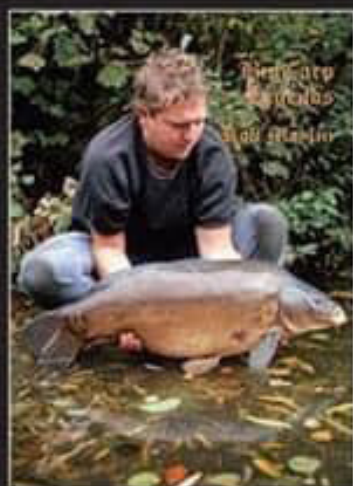
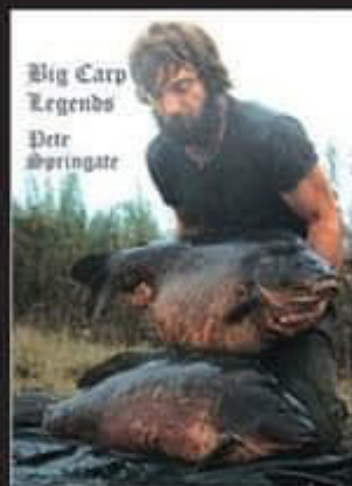
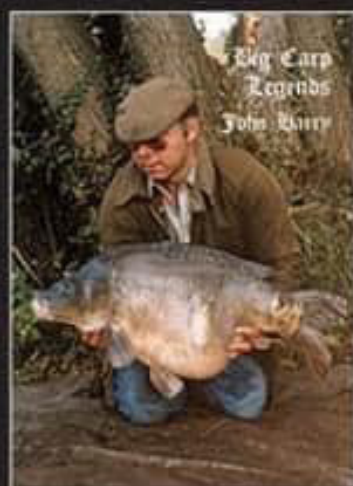
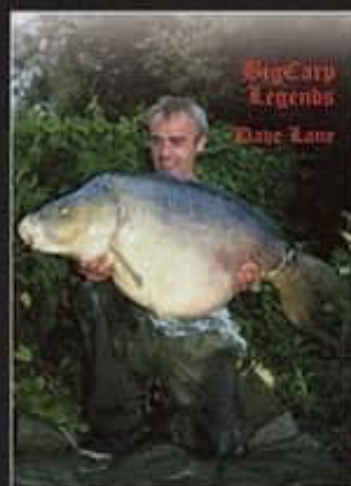
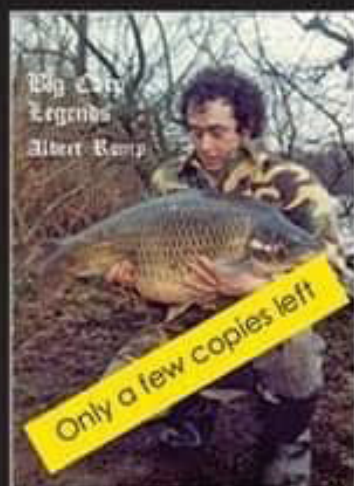
I remember arriving on my first decent session of spring when the temperatures were high and had increased dramatically over a short period of time. It was looking prime for the fish to be awake and mooching in the upper layers. When I pushed my way through the swamp that surrounded the shallows, I could see the most amazing sight that every carp angler

craves – three fish mouthing at the scum that had collected in the corner of the lake. I wasted no time whatsoever, and I grabbed a slice of bread, a sharp hook and my trusty 6ft sawn-off. This is the quickest and easiest way of stealing a bite in that situation, and it surely was explosive when I buried my hook inside the mouth of a very angry mirror. It was the most incredible fight, being flat-rodded on more than one occasion as I tried to slip the net under it. As I peered into the net, I could see it really was a remarkable fish with heavy scales and big, long barbules. I was absolutely buzzed with excitement of the thought that the bluebell photograph was to become a reality at long last. Whilst keeping my eyes peeled as usual for unwanted company, I broke the net down, checked the fins and lifted the full net from the water and disappeared into the



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surrounding trees. As I peeled the mesh back, I could see the sun reflecting off the plates of this incredible fish. It was only a mid double, but what a looker, and an incredible moment and photo I managed to capture. I checked the coast was clear and returned to the lake to release the fish into its natural environment... of course only after giving it a little peck on the head.

There was something about this first day of spring that brought out the greed in me; the sun was still blisteringly hot, and I could see the fish hadn't spooked off the other fish being caught. When I say greed, normally I would be packed up and on my way before I got my collar felt, but I just couldn't resist one more cast. After managing to get back to the water's edge, I could see a big, dark shape heading towards me. It looked a pretty reasonable size, but I couldn't quite make out if it was a common or mirror. I quickly pinched a bit of Hovis's finest on to the hook and made that cast just in front of the shape, letting it sink slowly down through the water. The next thing I knew, I saw a big pair of lips engulf my bread, so I lifted into it and connected with the moving object.

Then all hell broke loose with the water erupting as if someone had dropped a barrel into the lake. The fight was explosive on a little 6ft rod, but so much fun, and the best part of it was I managed to capture the whole thing on my GoPro, and it was shown in my latest video. Again when the fish was netted and unhooked in the water, I moved off to the same spot that was surrounded by beautiful wild flowers. I couldn't believe my luck that in one day I managed to bag two of the lake's banging residents, as this place has a very low stock. This was a very special fish, as I had never caught a big common from the lake



before. There literally was not a scale out of place, and to say this fish was pristine would be an understatement. After a few photos, I let the fish slip through the palms of my hands back to the depths of the estate. I then packed up the little gear I had and made my way back to the van and disappeared from this place for another year.

Now the big sand pit had had time to warm up, it was time to start introducing a bit of bait to a spot I had a few from last season. Out came the trusty inflatable boat, which hadn't been blown up since the previous year, and I set sail out into the very deep, snaggy pit. When I was out in the pond introducing my buckets of bait, I could hear a sharp whistling noise coming from beneath me. As I looked down, I could see bubbles jetting out from one of the ribs that was submerged in an inch of water. Obviously at this point it was only natural to start panicking, and as I looked for shore it seemed to be a long way off. I grabbed the oar and paddled as fast as I could towards the swim. It seemed to be a long journey back rowing what seemed to be like a bag on water. Eventually I did make it back drier than expected, which didn't matter anyway, as this was only a baiting up session, but I was shortly to return for my first night.

A couple of days had passed, and I was heading back up to introduce some more boilies to the spot, this time armed with my sawn-off and a bag of floating trout pellets. The weather was warm and the sun was shining bright – perfect conditions for stealing a bite off the surface. The previous year, I'd managed to stumble across this very special section of the lake that you could only access through the overgrown jungle between the lake and the path, something that doesn't bother



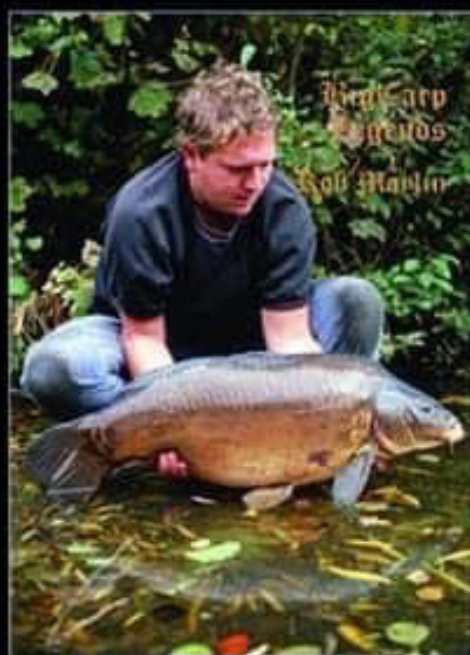
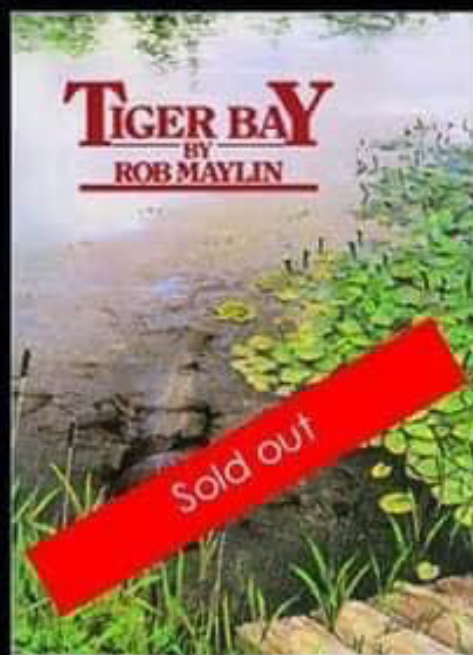
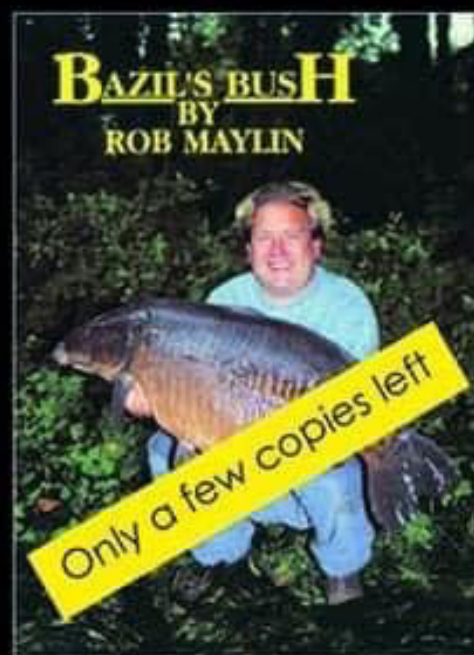
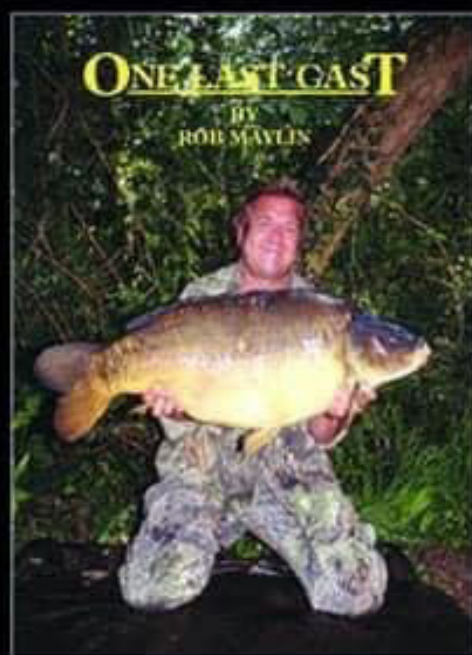
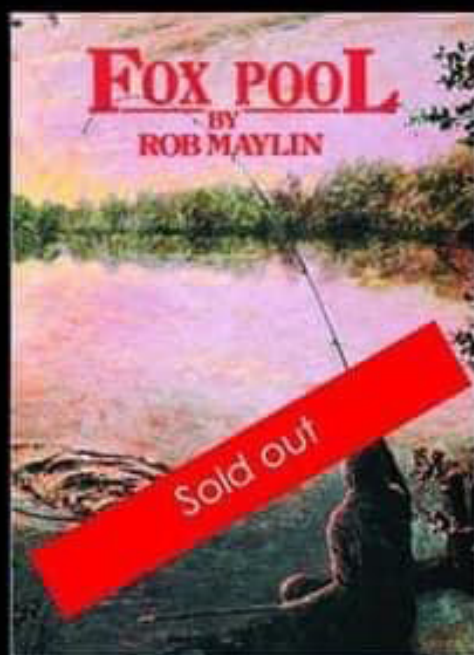
an angler like me – if there's something between me and the fish I will make sure I get through it. Nevertheless this section of the lake was full of submerged trees and flooded snags – carp heaven – and they did seem to be very happy to feed in this area. I started to introduce a few catapults full of pellets over the top of the grazing fish, and it wasn't long before they were competing for the food and feeding confidently. I wasted no time in threading a controller on and tying a surface rig. I put a soft hookable pellet on, cast out past the feeding fish and slowly dragged it towards them.

I turned around for a split second to the noise of passing walkers, and the rod was almost pulled from my hands when the fish managed to hook itself from the full impact from the large controller. I was into what felt like a good fish. I could see this was a very dark common around mid twenties, as the water was absolutely gin clear, and it made me really concentrate whilst playing the fish. What an amazing fish to start off the campaign.

After a very hairy fight on light tackle, I managed to finally get the fish in the net. I couldn't believe what I had managed after such a short time fishing. I quickly weighed the common, and it pulled the needle around to twenty-five pounds. I took a few shots and gracefully slipped the carp back to her home. When being involved with the fish on the bank, I totally forgot where I was, and as I looked up, there was a speedboat going full throttle towards me. I broke the rod down, gathered up the mat and pushed it as far under the bushes as I possibly could, leaving only my camera bag out. I unzipped it and swung the camera around my neck, pretending to take photos of the bird life. When the man confronted me, I told him I was just

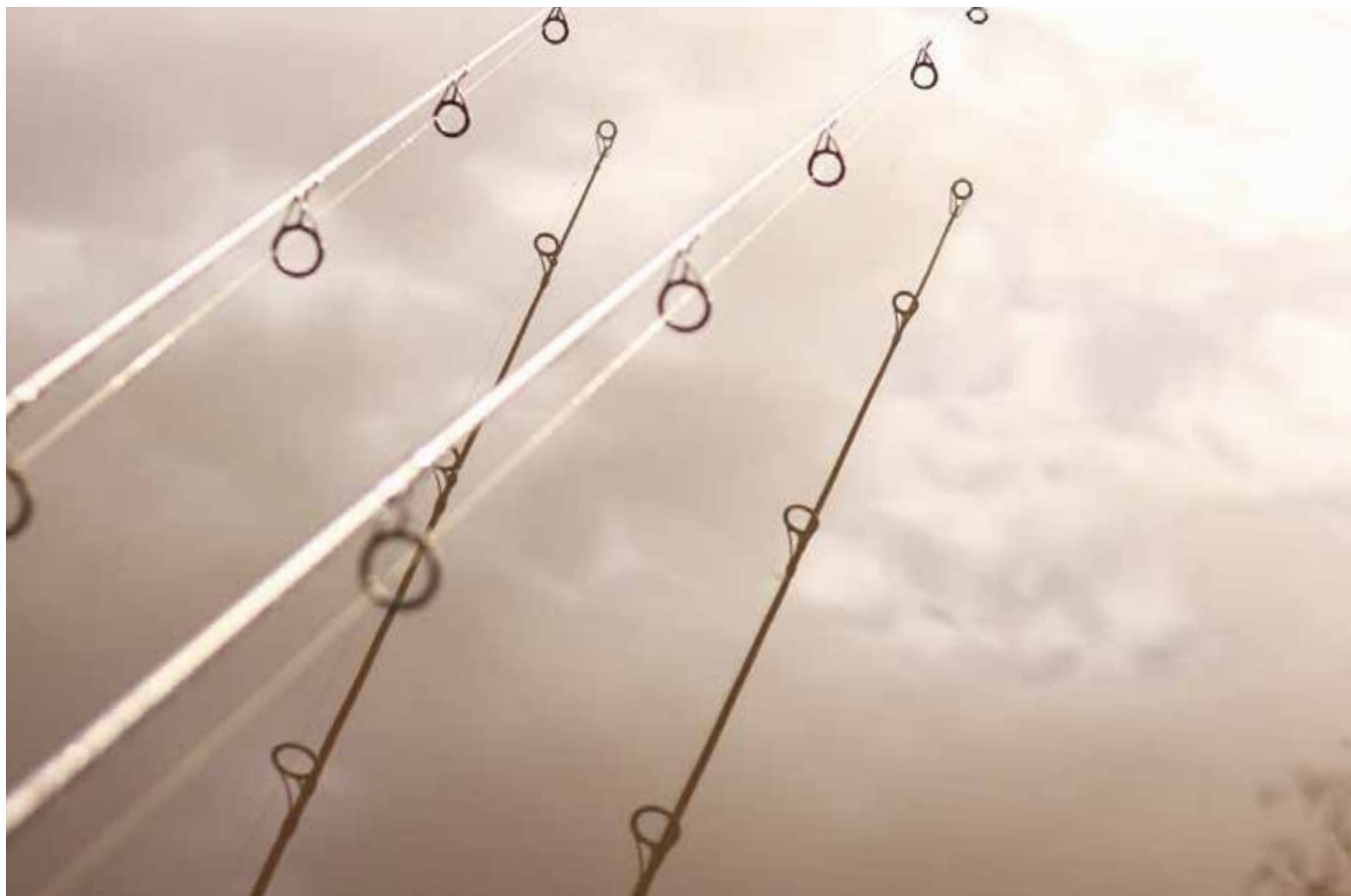
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interested in the nature and what beautiful scenery it was for photographs. You could see the confusion and frustration building up in him, but he seemed to buy it and told me to get back to the path where the public were allowed to walk. With this said, I disappeared quickly and returned later that day for the rest of my gear.

With the previous session almost ending in being caught, I decided to pick my times more wisely. They seemed to host sailing on the lake during the day, but they did stop frequently for breaks. This is the time when I would target that spot when the lake was quiet and there were no floating vessels snooping around.

On arrival for my first night, I was extremely excited about what it had in store for me. I couldn't wait to wake up to the peaceful park that it is in the morning regardless of it being eventful or not. It has the most amazing sunrises and sunsets I've ever seen,

absolutely full of colour. You don't often awake to the sounds of parakeets perching in the trees above, and what a wonderful sound it is to me, as it's not something I often hear, so just being there is enough sometimes. But I am here to catch the beasts that time forgot, which lurk in the pit, so without too much disturbance, I managed to get all my rods out on the spots. I tucked up into my bed, full of anticipation for what the night was going to bring and hoped for a bite during the night. As I learnt from last year, the feeding spells seemed to come early morning, and this was exactly what happened.

Just as dawn broke, my right hand rod burst off from the prebaited spot. I lifted into the rod and could tell straight away this wasn't anything massive. Don't get me wrong; I love catching all sizes of carp, and you have to make your way through the smaller fish sometimes to get to the prize – this is what makes your journeys. When it hit the surface, I could see it was a mid double common and managed to slip the net under it. Just as the fish went over the cord, I was disturbed by my middle rod melting off. I couldn't believe my luck on the first night. It was just another mid double common, but I was very pleased with how my first night went, and I was looking forward to the next session already.

A few sessions had passed, and I was starting to build up quite a tally of cricket bat commons. It was starting to concern me that the bigger mirrors were not visiting the spots or simply getting beaten to the bait. So my game plan during the days was to stay hidden as much as possible and try to stalk out some of the bigger residents. Shortly after, this actually became the only way I was fishing it, as a very eventful night occurred whilst I was having a little social with a friend. About 11pm,

the park became very quiet, like it does when the walkers go home and the boats moor up.

My friend popped back to the van to grab something whilst I watched the rods, only to find two men acting very strange and sniffing around the vans. He came back and got me, and as we approached the guys, we asked them what they were doing creeping around the vehicles in the middle of nowhere. With this they became extremely aggressive and went absolutely berserk. They were shouting and hollering at us saying they were going to take our heads off with the metal ball bearings they had loaded in their catapults and how their traveller community would block us in and torch the vans. With this we tried to calm the situation down, as it was getting out of hand, but it didn't seem to work. Luckily for us, a passerby who miraculously knew them managed to deflate the situation and steer them away. As you can imagine, this resulted in a very restless night, and as soon as the light broke in the morning, we were out of there. I didn't want this to ruin what I had worked hard to achieve so far on the lake and felt blessed that I had a mate with me during the event. But I couldn't let this stop me, and I focused purely on the days for a while, which turned out to be the best decision I made.

It was very early one morning the following week, and you could tell it was going to be a scorching day – exactly what I needed for picking out the better fish. I do remember this day because it was the day after a wedding, and my head was slightly sore, leaving me feeling rather vulnerable, but I just had this feeling it was going to be a great day. Just as the temperatures were starting to rise, I returned to the spot I previously spoke about, which to my surprise lacked numbers of fish, especially



any big ones. So without wasting time, I carried on walking around the park and popped into this little bay on the back of the lake. I climbed the tree on the edge of the bank to get a better look over the bushes and could see a couple of good fish partnered with one that looked considerably bigger. Armed with just a packet of hooks and a loaf, I didn't think I was going to be able to get the bread out far enough.

A few minutes passed, and the temptation grew stronger to have a cast at the fish, as either way he was going to disappear shortly. I pinched on a bigger bit of bread around the hook to get a slightly heavier bait to cast, leant back and cast it as far as possible, and to my surprise I made the distance with it landing a couple of feet to the side of the bigger fish. It certainly disturbed him, and just as I thought I'd ruined my chance, the fish turned towards the slowly sinking bread and sucked it in. I was so amazed and in shock that I felt my reactions were slightly behind on the strike, or maybe it was the sore head, but I did make contact with it, and the fish went absolutely mad, taking line and running straight into the snags. I kept steady pressure on and managed to keep the fish moving, which is half the secret.

When it came free, I wasted no time going for it, which luckily ended up with a net full of an amazing old dark mirror. I just was totally amazed at what was lying in the mesh, a type of carp that doesn't come around that often. With the park getting busy, I wasted no time getting the fish weighed and photographed, and to my amazement, it went over the 30lb barrier. What a fish, and what a way to catch it! It was the most incredible old, dark warrior that had been left alone for years and years.

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.

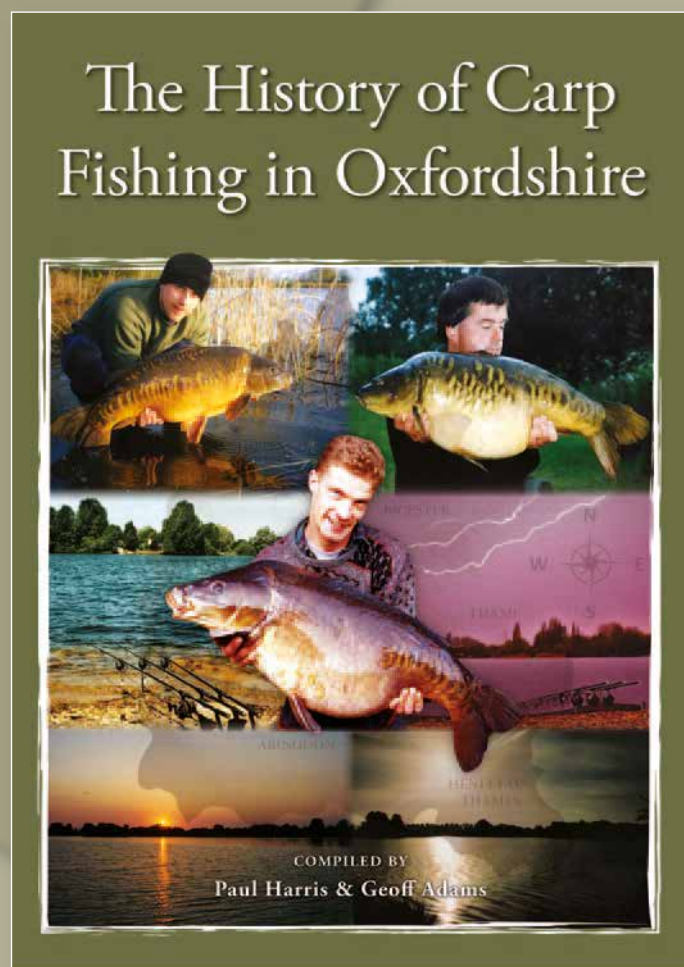
Nick Stansfield is a brilliant young Oxford carper who doesn't shout about his catches. We have two incredible chapters from him from two of the county's most iconic lakes, The Leisure Park and The Big S! Josh Chatfield has written a fantastic chapter which really gives you an insight into how fishing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

JACK THOMPSON



FREELINE 104

In the next couple of days, I received a bit of information that was to change my plan on this lake for good. It was about to open in the next month as a very small syndicate, and I knew my chances of getting a ticket was extremely slim. Like I've said before, I don't guest lakes that are being run as fished waters, so I was going to make the last trip my last, as I didn't want to be associated with poaching a syndicate and wanted to give myself plenty of space by the time it opened.

The day after I caught the thirty, I was back at it. I wasn't to know this last session was going to be so brilliant and rewarding and be everything we carp anglers dream of. Again, I turned up at first light, slipping in quietly to the banker spot. I got the mixers going out sharpish and they seemed to be quite slow coming forward on that morning. When more fish turned up in the spot, things heated up, and they started to compete for the food. Watching patiently, I could see there wasn't anything massive in the swim and wanted to wait it out for something decent to turn up.

About an hour had passed feeding the swim when out of the blue, a fish that looked the size of a whale arrived in the swim beneath my feet. Again, I lowered a slow sinking bit of bread onto its nose, and it wasted no time in taking the bait. When I hooked it, it went like a train heading down deep towards a sunken tree, I tried to put as much pressure on as possible but the fish was becoming unstoppable, and I could feel it getting further and further around the tree. I just hung on for dear life and prayed the line wouldn't part when suddenly the fish came to a halt. I reeled down as fast as I could, pumping the rod hard, and then I managed to get the fish moving. I really thought there wasn't a chance of getting this fish out, but

miracles can happen, and when the mirror surfaced, I scooped it up in the net and let out a massive sigh of relief. It looked as if I just bagged myself a second thirty in two days! Happy was an understatement when the scales confirmed it. You really couldn't have written it that two amazing mirrors would turn up and all that was needed was a bit of bread, but this still wasn't the end to this unbelievable day...

I packed up the stalking gear and headed back to the van to get some lunch whilst I rested the swim. I headed off to another lake, which is a secret for now, and found myself catching another beautiful fish from this venue before trying my luck back at the sand pit for my very last afternoon. When I arrived back at the spot, it was black with fish, like nothing had gone on earlier that day. It was full of mid double commons, but there was one very special fish I had been watching for weeks that had evaded me – a big, scaly mirror and probably the best looking fish I'd seen cruising around. It was hanging around a bit further out from the other fish, so I managed to climb along a tree that had fallen over into the lake, which was still alive, but this gave me the extra reach I needed to get a bait to it.

There was something about this sinking bread that they couldn't resist... First cast, and I was attached to this crazy character doing the same as all of the others and giving me a savage run around. Only this time in mid-fight, a boat decided it was cruising by, so I had to keep the rod submerged and pray the fish wasn't going to find safety, or worse, I'd get caught attached to one of the residents. I'm not even sure what I would do in that situation – probably still get the photograph I desire. When it eventually passed, I was lucky enough it didn't find any snags and managed to get the prize in my net. The amazing mirror bounced the scales



around to 26lb! I really couldn't believe I had managed a brace of thirties and a mid-twenty in two short days. What a perfect way to end my time at this magical place and walk away with a big grin on my face and my head held high.

I had pretty much finished editing my video of Forbidden Routes 2 when one hot evening after work, I thought I would pull into the golf course lake for a look. Over the years I think I have caught pretty much everything that swims in the very low stock lake, all except a 20lb fully scaled mirror that I've seen countless times. That look turned out to be one of those hours that couldn't have gone any better. After spotting the fish, I ran back to the van to grab the kit. There is one rule I set myself when fishing this lake, and that is to keep to one side, which is covered by woods. The other side is literally on the green of a golf course, but seeing the fish on that side was more than enough encouragement I needed to break my own rule. This fish was rather wise and took a lot longer than expected to entice with the bread, but eventually I managed to get him to take it. I'm not sure why, but when people are getting close and time is of the essence, everything seems to go wrong with the fight. This fish managed to weed me up for around five minutes, and I could hear the golfers getting closer and closer. With very little time to spare, it came out, and I managed to get the fish netted and disappeared into the woods with my prize for the shot. As the lake continues into this area, I could release her safely without being caught. This fish was just as incredible as I believed it would be and surely was the perfect end to this instalment.

I really don't know how I am going to top this amazing spring, but I am certainly going to try! Bring on Forbidden Routes 3!



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