

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

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BARRY OCONNOR - COKING'S BIG MO
CRAIG STONES - BRACE OF FORTIES
ADAM JOHNSTON - OBSESSIONS
BRETT MARSHALL - LEA VALLEY

TOM STOKES - BURGHFIELD
JOHN BARNES - LIMITED TIME
RYAN MCGREGOR - MONKS PIT
DARREN BLUNT - SWAN VALLEY



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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

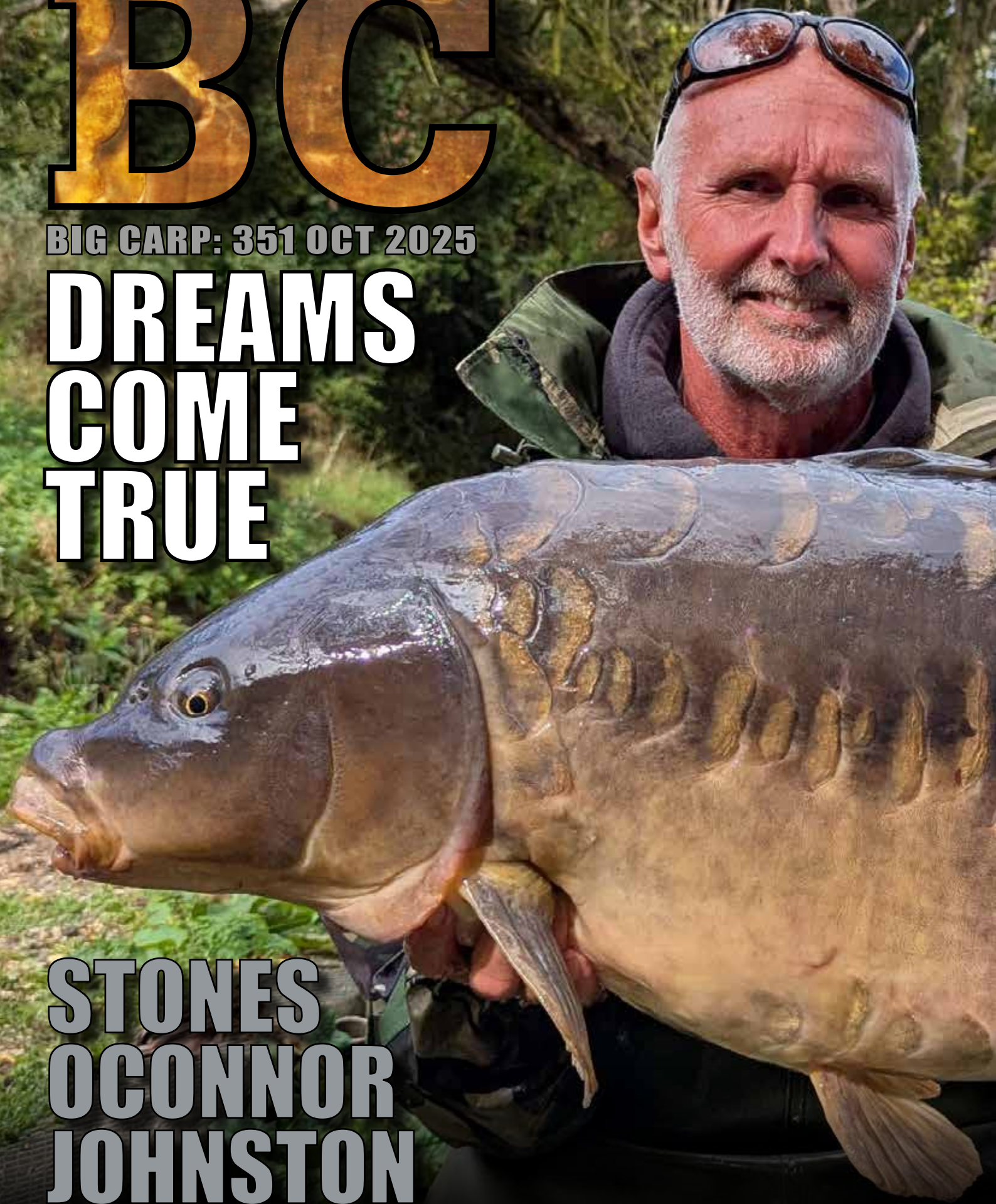
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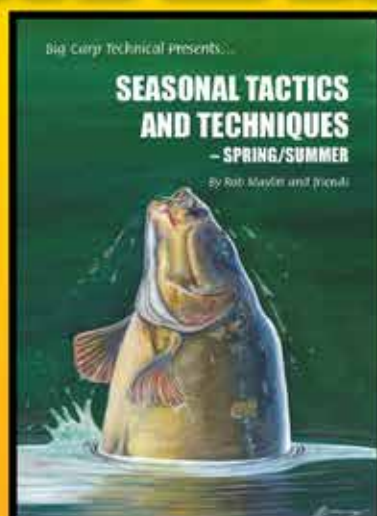
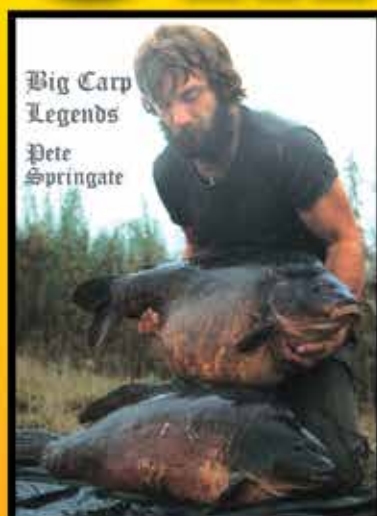
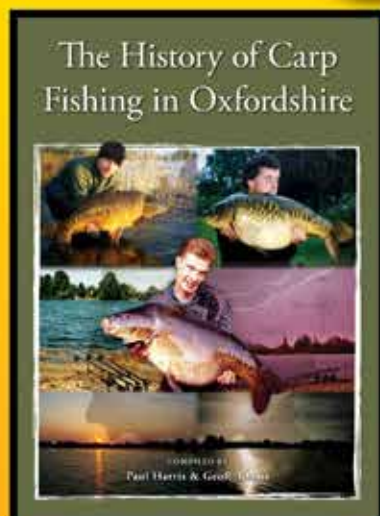
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TRUE**

**STONES
O'CONNOR
JOHNSTON**

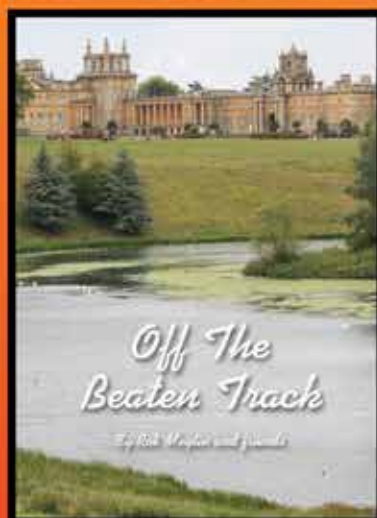
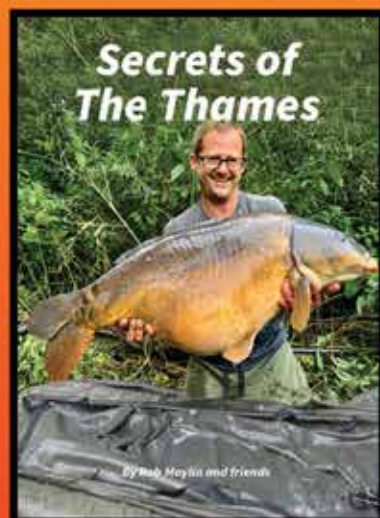
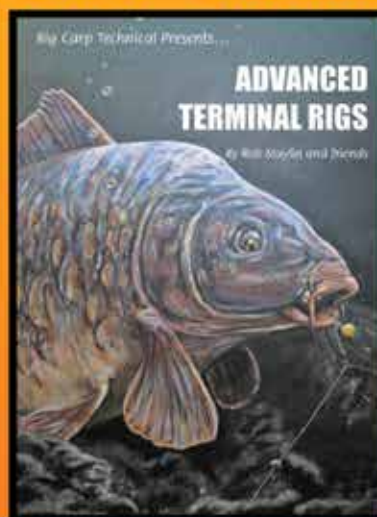
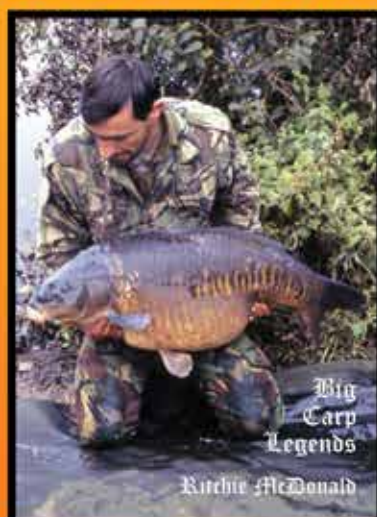
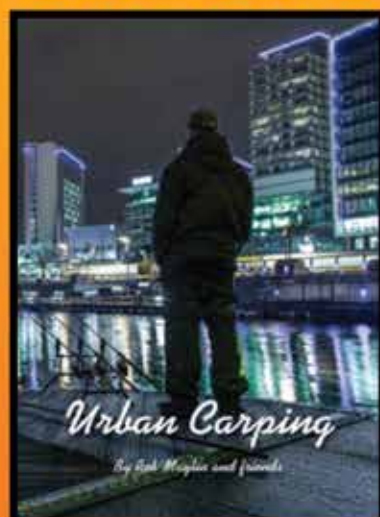
FULL OF UK STORIES AND CATCH REPORTS



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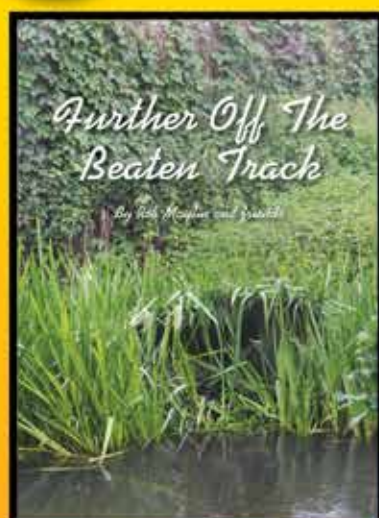
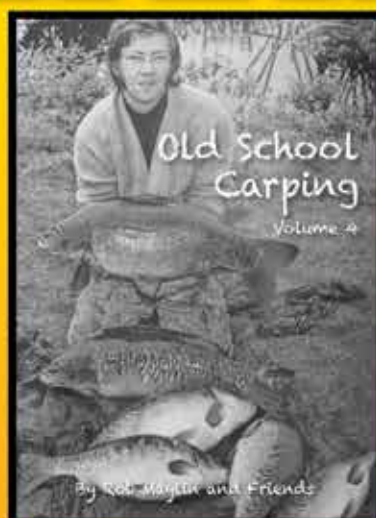
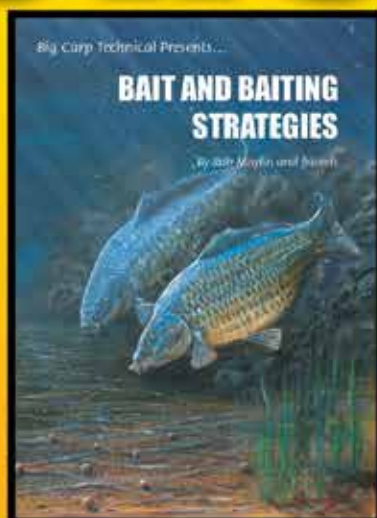


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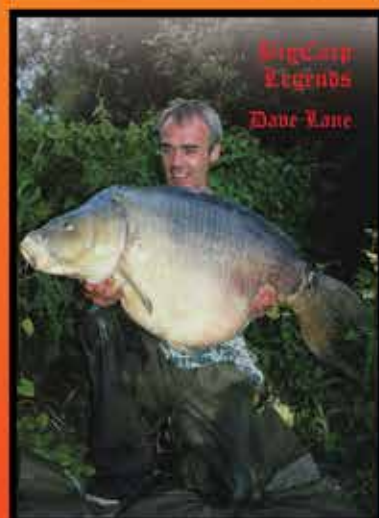
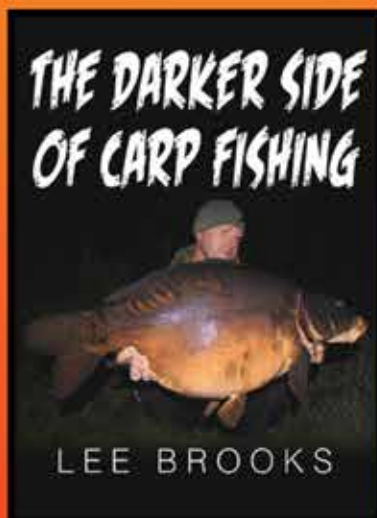
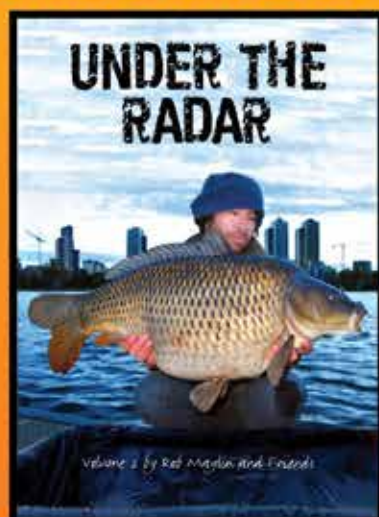
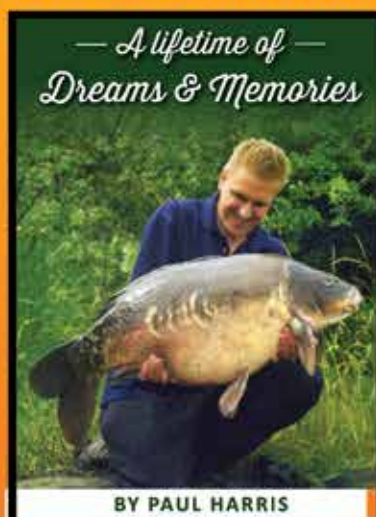
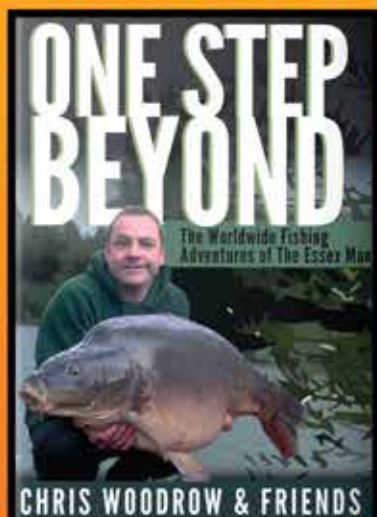


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NEW AND OLD BOOKS: WWW.EBAY.C

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AND GET READY FOR SUMMER ACTION



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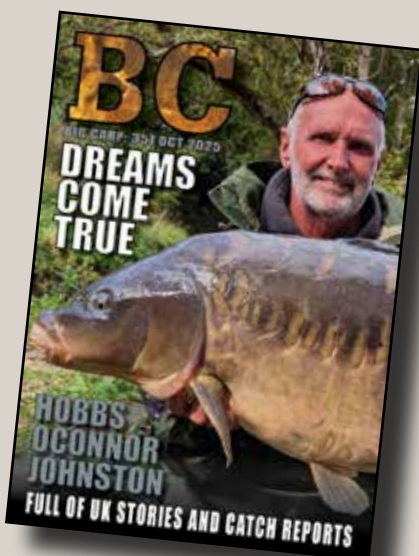
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Publications 2025



Front Cover:
Craig Stones with a
cracking 40+ linear



Well what a long summer that was!! The temperatures are finally dipping below 20 degrees and you can even see your breath some evenings. The temperature drop is a great trigger for the carp to get on the munch to get through the winter. Now's the time to be maximising your bank time if you can. Those that are out are reaping the rewards judging by the catch reports. It amazing to see how many big carp we now have in this country. Even the North is producing 60lbbers!!

On a sad note, out the blue we lost one of the UK's finest carp anglers, Jonny Mac. What a character he was. If you were lucky enough to know him you were always entertained with his antics and boy could he put some big carp on the bank. Makes you realised how fragile life is and that you need to go out there and enjoy it.

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^^ Two cracking 20's for team member Lee Weldon. Lee bagged a 22lb 11oz common and this 24lb 15oz on a recent session using our size 4 Scorpion Curved hooks and other end tackle items from CTO. Well done Lee.



^^ Team member Alan Morton managed one from Ecton's Jigsaw Lake, "Not a of the huge ones at 15lb 4oz, but very welcome after a dry spell. Alan used our Size 4 wide gapes, Tungsten Kickers, micro swivel, coated CTO Pro hooklink, anti tangle sleeves, basically everything from CTO" Well done Alan, nice work.



^^ Team member Paul Gill and family had a cracking second week at Bois de Printemps. The gite was outstanding. The fishing didn't disappoint with some crackers throughout the week. I am looking forward to returning in 2027." Well done Paul and family

<< Mrs Gill getting in amongst the carp on their recent trip out in France, with this cracking clean common. Well done Donna.

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Tungsten Putty



Shrink Tube



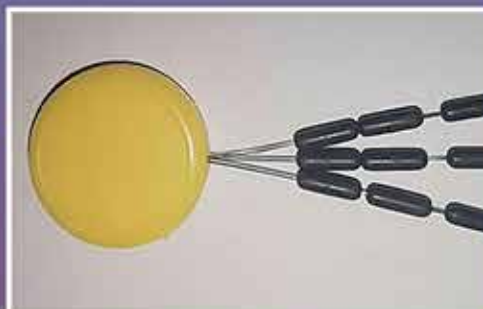
Hair Stops



Hook Beads



Swivel Deal



Tungsten Hooklink Sinkers



Chod Filament



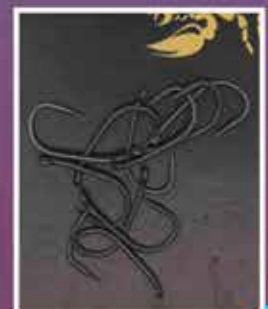
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Scorpion Choddy Crank



Scorpion Crank



Scorpion Wide Gap



Scorpion Ronnie Rigs



Composite Leadclip



Snag Hook



Aligner



Tungsten Aligners

GIFT CARDS
NOW AVAILABLE

SHOCKFADE

THE 2025 WORLD CARP CLASSIC MAP

THE FULL BREAKDOWN: @primitiv. corp pegs 1 -13, Rippton Smart Fishing Tackle pegs 14 - 26, @specimenbaits pegs 28 - 40, Nikl - Specialista na kapry pegs 41 - 53, Ultimate Products pegs 54 - 66, MEUS Polska pegs 67 - 80, the NEW addition of The Key Carpfishing pegs 81 - 93 and PB Products UK pegs 94 - 106

.. the FULL GPS map, assisted in its creation by Polish qualifier organisers and World Carp Classic competitors @grzesiekkozal & @tommy_carplifer, is coming shortly so make sure you're following!



CARPTACKLEONLINE WANT NEW TEAM MEMBERS

We are recruiting new team members, so if you want to join our small but steadily growing team, you can get on the bankside regularly, put a few carp on the mat, handy with a camera and video get in touch. We offer a discount of between 10% to 25% off our products range. Email us at sales.carponline@gmail.com with a bit about your angling



CHRIS JERVIS

Led by an Licensed Angling Coach.

We're excited to launch another 5-week block of angling sessions at Mill Dam, Kirkby.

Cost: £25 for the full 5 weeks

Session length: 1 hour 30 minutes each

What's included: All bait, tackle, and equipment provided.

Over the 5 weeks, participants will learn:

- Watercraft skills
- Equipment set-up
- Rig making
- Plus much more hands-on angling knowledge

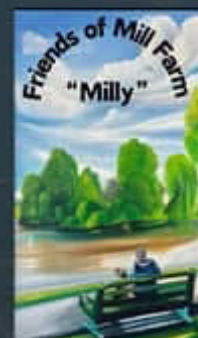
Dates & Times Available

Every Monday	Every Wednesday
4:00pm - 5:30pm	4:00pm - 5:30pm
5:30pm - 7:00pm	5:30pm - 7:00pm

Location: Mill Dam Park, Kirkby, L32 2bh
Places are limited, Booking is essential



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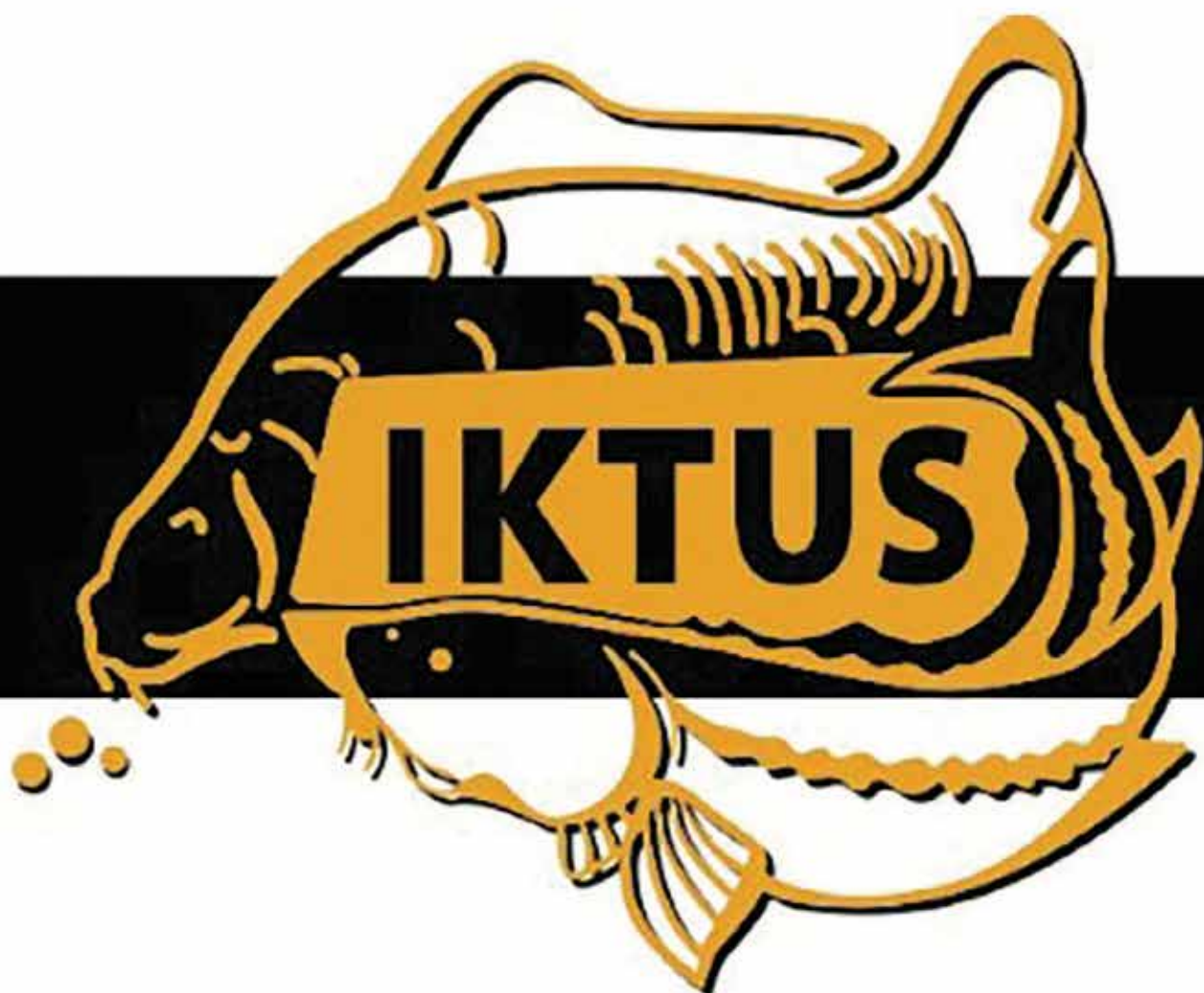
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CATCH OF THE DAY



Jamie and Harry Redknapp and Europe, competing in are heading off on a new real fishing tournaments adventure in ITV's Catch of everywhere from Scottish the Day, a six-part fishing lochs to Scandinavian fjords series airing in 2026. and Mediterranean shores.

The father-and-son duo Their goal is to reel in the will travel across the UK prized "Catch of the Day."

GET YOUR PROSTATE CHECKED - IT'S EASY



To all the anglers that showed an interest in and supported my Angling Projects over my 50 years of leadership I am pleased to report that in addition to the £10,000 pounds we donated to Great Ormond Street Hospital I can now report we have just made a donation of £8000 to

prostate cancer research. This has only been possible with your support. To all of you thinking of getting checked, just remember prostate cancer can kill, get yourself checked. It's only a blood test. BETTER BE SAFE THAN SORRY Les Webber

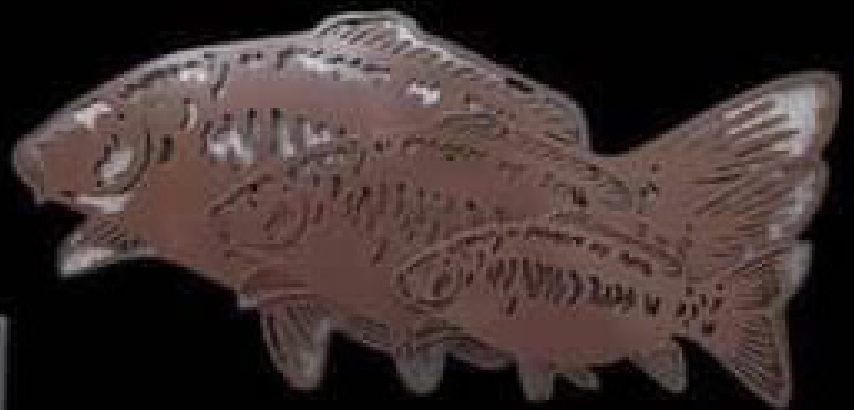


**A family run online business, based in Bedfordshire,
specialising in the design and manufacture of stainless steel
fishing tackle and bespoke work.**



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STAGE STANDS, ROD PODS, BANK STICKS, WALL ART & MORE.**

WALL ART - NEW!



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The Toslon XR500 is an all-in-one system for your bait boat.

- Support up to 8 channels of remote control
- Autopilot system with the 10th generation high accuracy GNSS receiver
- Advanced echo sounder with HD image, 8 Colour Palette for daytime & dark night fishing
- Route plotter with depth information, the route can be reload as 2D map
- Compasses at boat & handheld side, the boat heading is also given when in stationary state
- 5 favourite spots can be defined out of 100 save waypoints
- Quiet arrive feature to eliminate the noise when boat approaching the spot
- CCS mode to free your hand, one button to active cruise control system, boat always run in straight line
- SD card storage support import/export



settings, waypoints, and the boat run with lower speed software upgrade.

- *.tslw log file support, can record all sonar & GPS info to SD card
- Google kml file support
- High reliability, standard 8 channels remote, support MIXER
- Start cruise control by one click on joystick
- Autopilot mode, allow [arrive actions] and [auto back-home]
- [Quiet-reach] mode enable
- Pick a point on the map and start autopilot at anytime
- 6 buttons can be mapped to any channels of the remote control, easy to use.

Boat comes with full upgraded electronics, speed controllers and new batteries as standard plus charger

[www.https://anglingtechnics.myshopify.com/](https://anglingtechnics.myshopify.com/)

KORDA COMPAC DARK KAMO UMBRELLA



With a generous diameter, touch of style. you'll have plenty of all-round cover, and unlike a clunky golf umbrella, this one's purpose-built for anglers. Crafted from durable, waterproof fabric and finished in a sleek dark kamo matt design, it blends perfectly into your setup while adding a touch of style. When the weather turns, the one-touch opening system gets you sheltered in seconds. Practical, reliable, and made for the bank – the Compac Umbrella is one piece of kit you'll be glad to have at arm's reach.

■ RRP - £27.99

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.



THE F.A.M.M.

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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SOLAR UNDERCOVER CAMO BROLLY

Solar's best selling Undercover Camo Brolly System. Made from 10,000 HH camo material, the front of the brolly features a rain gutter, twin storm poles and front support bar. There are multiple door options with full fabric and mozzi-mesh, which can also be set-up letter-box style, roll-back sides and the entire front infill panel can also be removed.

The drop-down rib extensions on the sides remove the need to fit short storm poles on the side of the brolly. There is a mozzi-mesh vent in the rear for improved air flow. Supplied with heavy-duty pegs, storm poles and an over-sized carry bag.

- 10,000 HH Camo fabric
- Rain gutter on the front to direct rain water to the sides
- Rear Mozzi-mesh air-vent
- Two Velcro rod straps
- Seven-spoke hub system with maximum head room thanks to the low-profile hub
- Heavy-duty pegs supplied
- Drop-down rib extensions (removable)
- Multiple door options with full fabric, mozzi-mesh, roll-back sides
- Front can be completely removed
- Dimensions (m): 264cm x 150cm x 150cm
- Weight: 7kg
- RRP - £294.99



WHAT IS A FIELD WATCH? HISTORY & KEY FEATURES OF THE MILITARY CLASSIC

WHAT DEFINES A FIELD WATCH?

A field watch is essentially a military timepiece designed to be read quickly and survive tough conditions. Think of it as the Land Rover of watches: built for purpose, not for show. These watches were originally created for soldiers in World War I who needed to check time whilst fighting, and they've evolved into some of the most practical timepieces you can buy today.

WHAT MAKES A FIELD WATCH DIFFERENT FROM OTHER WATCHES?

Three things really matter: you can read them instantly even in poor light, they're tough enough to handle whatever you throw at them, and they keep accurate time without fuss. Unlike fancy dress watches or chunky dive watches, field watches focus on one job: telling time clearly when it really counts.

Modern field watches have come a long way from their wartime origins. The best ones today, like those from NITE Watches, blend authentic military looks with modern technology. We're talking Swiss quartz movements that are incredibly accurate and tritium illumination that glows constantly in the dark without needing any charging. It's not about abandoning tradition, it's about making these watches even better at what they've always done best.



MX10 NIGHT ON RUBBER STRAP WITH TRITIUM ILLUMINATION

TRITIUM ILLUMINATION: THE MODERN ADVANTAGE

One of the coolest features of proper modern field watches is tritium illumination, and it makes a huge difference in real use. Most watches with glow-in-the-dark features use paint that you need to "charge" by exposing it to light. Tritium is completely different - it glows constantly for decades without ever needing charging.

NITE uses professional-grade tritium tubes that provide constant visibility in complete darkness for over 20 years. No button-pushing, no light-charging required, just constant, reliable glow.



MX10 GREEN TRITIUM ILLUMINATION VIALS

MODERN PROFESSIONAL APPLICATIONS

Field watches aren't just military history pieces. They're actively used by people who need reliable timekeeping in demanding jobs. Military personnel still rely on them, but you'll also find field watches on the wrists of police officers, firefighters, paramedics, outdoor guides, and industrial workers who need watches that won't let them down.

Today's military operations need watches that go beyond traditional field watch specs. We're talking GPS that works properly, night vision that doesn't interfere with your equipment, chemical resistance for nasty environments, and temperature stability from Arctic cold to desert heat. Professional civilian roles have expanded well beyond traditional military use too.



MX10 JUNGLE ON RUBBER STRAP

The appeal extends to civilian life as well. If you're into hiking, camping, or any outdoor activities, a field watch makes perfect sense. They're also great for everyday wear if you prefer practical, no-nonsense watches that focus on function over flash. The clean, simple design works well whether you're in work clothes or casual gear.

NITE offers various collections that serve all these different users through designs that balance authentic military heritage with modern performance.

CHOOSING THE BEST FIELD WATCH: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

When you're researching the best field watches available today, a few things really matter when separating quality options from marketing hype. Quality field watch makers concentrate on proven reliability rather than flashy features or lifestyle marketing. Traditional American heritage manufacturers offer entry-level options, whilst European tactical watch brands create specialised military contracts and Japanese manufacturers produce robust alternatives.

NITE occupies the unique position of authentic military heritage combined with cutting-edge technology. Unlike mass-market brands using basic luminous paint, or expensive alternatives offering similar features at inflated prices, NITE delivers genuine military specification watches with advanced tritium technology at fair pricing.

[READ THE FULL ARTICLE >](#)



THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A FISHING WATCH
UNLESS YOU FISH AT... NITE!

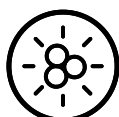


ALPHA Z BLACKOUT

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



SWISS-MADE
MOVEMENT



TRITIUM
ILLUMINATION



SAPPHIRE
CRYSTAL



5 YEAR
WARRANTY

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With our WizWool socks you really get a lot for the price. The socks are cheaper than our top series, but both comfort and durability are still at a really high level.

The WizWool series consists of three models, all of which are made from certified Woolmark wool blends.

■ from RRP £29.95

RAVEN NIGHTVISION MONOSCOPE



This monoscope is a durable design, making it ideal for a wide range of applications, redefines night vision from outdoor recreation technology. This compact and powerful monoscope leverages security and surveillance. Its cutting-edge infrared imaging lightweight and ergonomic to provide unparalleled form factor ensures comfortable clarity and detail in low-light conditions. The Raven Monocular boasts a robust and RRP - £TBC

QUEST MK4 2 MAN BIVVY



The Quest 2 Man bivvy was inner capsule option ensuring released in 2017 and since its the best comfort and keeping launch, 1000's have been sold out those unwanted bugs and with excellent feedback received wildlife. Comes with the very from our customers. Now, this best 210D 10000HH material has been upgraded even further with blackout lining inside. for the Mark 4. Now with fully zipped in groundsheet and RRP - from £289.99



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**MY, MY,
MY...**



Don Taylor with Delilah from Orchid at 35lb 2oz

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2nd TIME LUCKY



Liam Morgan with Mikes Pet for the second time, but this time over 50 at 50.4lb!

WELLY WANGER



Jason Massay with his 2nd UK 50

ZIG PIGS





With time being limited recently due to the arrival of my second child, getting on the bank has been tough. But as soon as we had some mild weather, I knew it was game on for zig fishing!

Starting at 02:30 and packing up by 06:45, I deployed adjustable zigs into the central zones and the first trip turned into a red-letter session – 7 carp landed, topped by ‘Arnie’ at 38lb 13oz.

Knowing the opportunity was too good to miss, I was back the next day. At just after 05:00, the alarm screamed and, after an intense battle, the one I wanted most – ‘Stella’ at 43lb 2oz – was safely in the net!

Over the next couple of mornings, I added a further 5 fish, bringing the tally to 13 carp in just 16 hours of fishing!

CATCH REPORTS

JUNCTION BRUTE



Jake Anderson with a mega 41lb Mirror from Junction 12

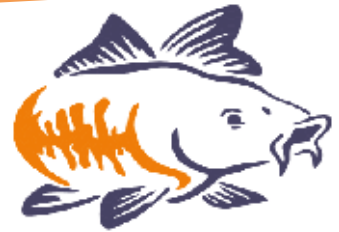
BIG NEWS FOR ALL CARP ANGLERS!

THE MOMENT YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR IS FINALLY HERE!
WE ARE THRILLED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE WINTER CARP
SHOW 2025 WEBSITE AND TICKET SALES ARE NOW LIVE!

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Fishing Show
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2025



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This show is an experience you won't want to miss, so spread the word, tell your fishing buddies, and let's make The Winter Carp Show 2025 an unforgettable angling adventure!

CATCH REPORTS

GAV CAN CATCH'EM



Gavin Cantrell with one of the big girls at 40lb 8oz

BUNDY'S BEAUTY



Liam Gingell with Grey patch at 43lb it's been over two years since it was last out

IT DOESN'T GET MUCH BETTER



What a year Darren Davidson is having! Every single one of his fish has been top tier, and this one is no exception!

CATCH REPORTS

Kev Med with
'Spike' and
a new PB at
41lbs+

**NEW
PB**



**CAMBS
CHUNK**



Dan Stacey banked this chunky old mirror recently, tipping the scales at 41lbs!

SPARKS FLY



Luke Stevenson with the unmistakable Flint Common!!

DAN THE MAN



Dan Coffey banked this lovely Welly mirror of 43lbs+

BEAKER BANKS BEAUTY



Jonny Beaker said "Lovely seeing this one's spawned so well healthy at 50lb 8oz"

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



Blind Veterans UK - £3,420 raised over the weekend by Carpers for Veterans Support. Fantastic achievement, now well over £20,000 raised over last 7 years. Roll on next years event!

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk



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



20 lb 6 oz nice carp



31 lb mirror for Scott



30 lb 8 oz new PB for Pipe lake member Steve's son who was a guest. Dad pleased but perhaps a little jealous!!



Lovely weekend catch from swim 12 The Long Finger 23 lb 6 oz



Busy night for Pipe lake member Nick with fish of 29lb 12oz, 25 lb 12 oz and the Long Common 31 lb 12oz



10-year-old Freddie having a great time at Oak Lakes



26 lb 1 oz - over the moon with this catch is Pipe lake member Jim



19 lb and then this 32 lb 8 oz for Del Boy - good session for Graham after the 24 lb he had from Pipe lake

Oak Lakes Fisheries



www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



The big ghostie 31 lb 2oz



29 lb 7 oz



26 lbs 4 oz



23 lb 2 oz



30 lb 7oz



On her 4 ft rod a new PB of 22 lb 8 oz. One proud Dad Charlie



21 lb 4 oz



29 lb 4oz - cracker



23 lb



26 lb 4 oz



35lb 4oz

Oak lakes bailiff Gary Pearman invited his mate Steve to fish Pipe lake and he's landed this stunner.



26 lb 6 oz

ALEX BANKS A BRUTE



Alex Bransby said "So the other morning this majestic beast of a common carp paid me a very welcome visit

Richard Lofthouse said "Pretty blown away by this one from the Rise. Half Lin 44.8"

LOFTY'S LUNKER



BUCKING HELL!!



Steve Ott banked one of the UK's biggest commons weighing 65lb from Waterside Fisheries, Buckingham

BUDDIES BONANZA



CATCH REPORTS



The Carp Buddies Social on The Res turned in to a haulathon by the look of it. The lads banked 1 x 50lb, 2 x 40s, 2 x 30s, 7 x 20s and 5 x mid doubles.

CATCH REPORTS

KNOCKOUT



Boxing icon and all-round good guy Daniel Dubois getting some well-earned relaxation this week down at his local fishing lake — landing this awesome 52lb mirror carp!

FOR SALE



Brittany Forest Lakes

£675 000 (€815,000)



- 80 acres with 4 lakes of 12, 2 x 6 and 4 acres in unspoilt countryside.
- Approx 650 fish to 95lb, inc 20 x 50lb's, 8 x 60lb's 2 x 70lb+
- Ex theme park containing various buildings and structures. The property retains a leisure land classification with mains water and 3-phase power.
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- The bathrooms occupy a separate building, freshly painted, a recently installed 300L boiler and male and female facilities.
- A one-bedroom cosy cabin with an enclosed security fence.
- Planning consent for a house from an existing structure (8.5m x 24.4m).

A rare opportunity to acquire a top tier French carp fishing venue. The stock alone is worth in excess of 500,000 euros. The site is beautiful and unspoilt and provides a tranquil and unique experience to the visiting angler. Significant bookings already in place this year. Additional information, please email **ONLY** if genuinely interested info@brittanyforestlakes.co.uk

www.brittanyforestlakes.co.uk

CATCH REPORTS

EFFIN' EL

Big El @ 46lb 2oz
for Giles Howard



THE BIG LIN

Callum Allen and the
Big Lin going 48.1



LOVELY
TIMES



Chris Hill said "Enjoyable times on the new syndicate- especially when one of the special ones rolls over the net cord !"

**SEND YOUR CATCH
REPORTS IN TO
bigcarpmagazine@hotmail.com**

CATCH REPORTS

GAME, SET AND CATCH



New lake record at 40.03 for Dave Lloyd

THE DARK SIDE



An incredible and hard earned Dark park special un for Robbie Briers

SAY CHEESE



Nick Cheeseman said "How's that :) lovely wake up call to get, a carp called "Chunky" at a tad over 44lb"

BLUE MOON



Sam Morgan with the incredible Moon Scale from Broom Blue

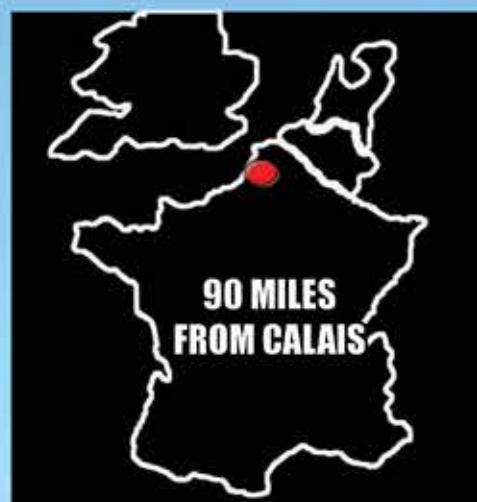
THAT'S A BELTER



Darren Belton with an awesome 50lb 8oz scale perfect common. which hadn't been out for two years.

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RIP JONNY MAC



RIP Jonny Mac, such a lovely guy. So sad, so young. So sorry for his family. Sometimes things happen that just make you fall on your knees, this is one of those times, just cannot believe it. One of life's truly nice guys. Gutted! Will miss his cheeky smile so much. One of the best anglers I've ever known.











ADAM JOHNSTON

MY CARP OBSESSION

Well, here she is. The one I truly wanted - the original common.

Back in April last year, I photographed this fish for Tom and couldn't get it out of my head. This season, that interest turned into full-blown obsession.

Rewind to winter 2023, before my ticket even started—I had a gut feeling about one quiet swim on the back lake. I saw it as a place that might one day do me a special one. But I never fished it. Everyone said the back lake didn't do

big fish. The original common had never come from there.

Still, this season I started baiting it. Not for a lump—just for the odd quick night where I could nick a bite. I kept feeding it, week after week, without even casting a rod.

Last week, I finally did. I turned up after work, got the rods out during a break in the rain, and while scattering my @trent_baits SAS and pellet from the island I clocked a big common cruising under a snag. I assumed it was Black Eye—she likes the back lake.



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That night, I was so confident I even filmed parts of the session and sent videos to mates saying, "Tonight's the night."

At first light, I had a bite—but it was only a small one. A few mates popped round, and as we chatted, fizz began pouring off the spot. Then came the take...

From the funny take to the first kick, I knew it was a better fish. After a heavy

but uneventful scrap, a big common rolled on the surface. As it hit the spreader block, I saw the milked-over left eye. It was her. The original common. A dream I'd played over in my head so many times... now a reality.

She went 39lb—spawned out, but I couldn't care less. What a fish. What a moment.

Big love to the guys that came round to enjoy the moment and grab some awesome pics











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Team 1 21 BOWED

BARRY OCONNOR

THE TALE OF BIG MO

I along with Ben I have booked up several sessions on Coking Farm's Meadow Lake. There are many big carp in Meadow including seventy carp over thirty pounds and fourteen carp over forty pounds. A carp called Nelly is the biggest carp in there. She was last out (at the time of writing this article) at fifty pounds twelve ounces. Ben had her last year at 50lb 2oz. There is also a Common of 44lb 8oz in Meadow. There are quite a few back up carp of twenty pounds or more to have a go for. I was going on Meadow to target some of these massive carp. Meadow Lake has ten swims on it and is usually very busy. At Coking Farm Fishery, you are able to book swims in advance. It's best to book because the whole complex can be very busy at the best of times. Anyone who has fished Meadow Lake will tell you it isn't an easy lake to fish. It doesn't give up its residents very easy. A small lake at 4.25 acres but holds some stunning monsters.

I arrived about half an hour before my allocated start time and was lucky to find my swim empty. I had booked

swim 61. There was someone in peg 62 which is very close to peg 61. Although the pegs were close you both have your own area to fish and don't get in each other's way. Ben was coming after work and was going into peg 70. I sorted my gear and got set up. You can use three rods on Meadow.

My approach was going to be using solid pva bags. A four-inch length of braid is tied to a size four Barbless hook with a loop tied on the opposite end to the hook. A piece of shrink tube is placed over the eye of the hook and steamed to form an angle. A Steamies TNT Wafter was put on the hair. I use a Steve Morgan inline lead for my solid bag fishing. They are purpose made for this style of fishing. I remove the stem from the lead and replace it with a longer one. To complete the set up I tie a lead-free leader to a swivel and thread the leader through the stem. The swivel

is pulled into the wide end of the stem. I then put a snap-link through the eye of the swivel. The snap-link enables me to change the hooklink very quickly without breaking down the set up. I might want to change to a smaller hook or a longer hooklink or even a different hooklink material.

It's a game changer. The hooklink is attached to the snap-link via the loop. The hooklink with the hookbait on is lowered into a corner of the bag but not the lead. I then put some Steamies Rapid Response pellet into the bag to cover the hookbait. The bag is filled to around half way and the lead is then lowered in. More Response pellet is added to the bag to just cover the lead. With wetted fingers I twist the pva bag until it becomes tight. I tie the top of the bag with pva ties or pva string to secure it. The pellets are then tapped down to make the bag more solid. After this





is done, I take the corner of the bag and wet it with my fingers. The corner of the bag is then pulled over tightly against the bottom of the bag and stuck down. The other corner gets the same treatment. I now have a very solid pva bag that I can cast a long way if need be. Before the bag goes out, I get a flavour or liquid to put in the bag. In this case it was TNT Rocket Fuel. The guys at

Steamies were clever enough to make the bottle with a fine pointed spout which is ideal for piercing the bag and squirting the liquid into it. The pellets soak up the flavour. This can be done with any pva friendly liquid. The bags are now ready to put out. Bait boats are allowed at Coking Farm and as I have one, I'll make use of it. One rod went on the tip of an island. Another

SECRETS OF THE THAMES

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Secrets of The Thames

By Rob Maylin and friends



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

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

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

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

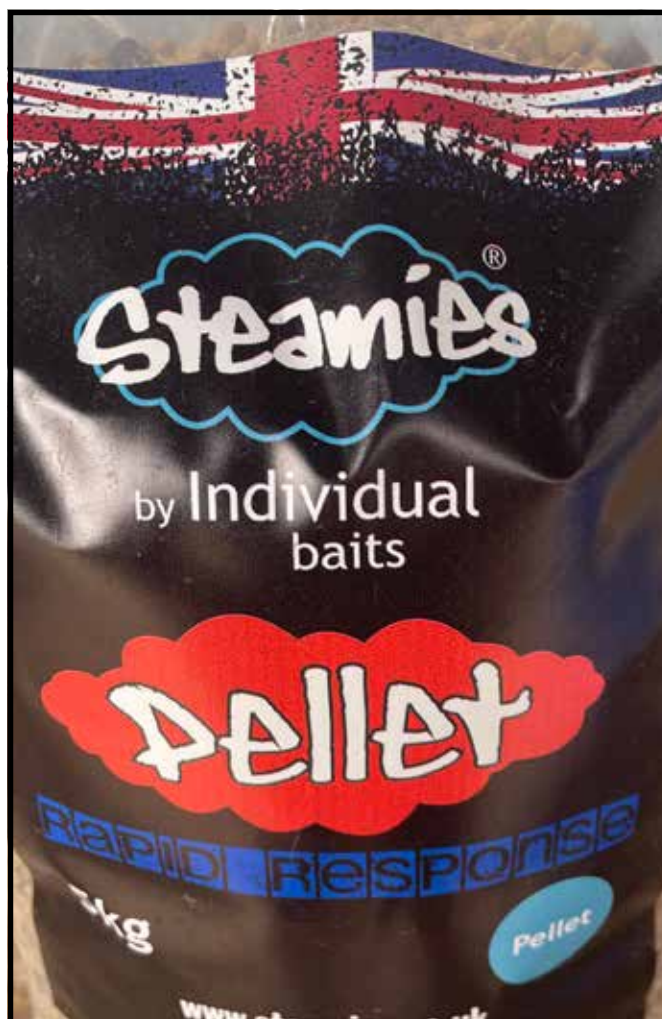
via the Thames Estuary. On its way, it passes through London, the country's capital, where the river is deep and navigable to ships; the Thames drains the whole of Greater London. Its tidal section, reaching up to Teddington Lock, includes most of its London stretch and has a rise and fall of 7 metres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

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

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went to the same island but near the other end and the third went down my lefthand margin. The hookbaits were in depths of between two feet and four feet. The bags were placed in the boat on top of one scoop of Rapid Response pellets. This helps to keep the bag away from any water that gets into the hopper. I want the bag to land on the lakebed and then dissolve and not

before. A few TNT boilies are loaded into the boat as well. With the baits on the spots, it's sit back and wait time. The kettle goes on and it's a cup of coffee for me. The guy in the next swim is a friendly bloke and so is his mate. They said they had watched my videos and we got chatting about them. It's quite sunny and warm but luckily my swim is in the shade.





The rods had been out for about three hours when all of a sudden, my right-hand rod was away. The alarm had gone into melt down. I have my alarm remote turned down so as not to bother the other anglers. No one heard it but me. As I went to the guilty rod the line was peeling off at a rate of knots. I clamped my hand around the reel spool and stopped whatever it was in its tracks. The rod bent over and I now had contact with the fish. The clutch was set and the battle began. The carp took some line via the clutch but I managed to keep control of the situation. Whatever was on the end of my line was pulling very hard and at one point it tried to go behind the island. I lowered the rod and pulled back which seemed to stop the carp and turn it back thus preventing it from going around the island. By this time Ben had seen that I was playing a fish and came round to net it for me. The rod still had a healthy bend in it and I slowly managed to gain line and gradually bring it to the net. Ben did the honours with the net. As the net engulfed the carp Ben said it was a goodun, one of the A team. At first glance we thought it was Little Mo, but on closer inspection Ben said it was Big Mo. This carp usually goes around forty two to forty three pounds. On the scales it went forty two pounds and eight ounces. Spot on. After taking several photos and filming it, Big Mo was returned to the water safely and without any harm coming to him. It had put up a very good account of itself. I was over the moon about it. What a lump! I actually said to Ben "we can go home now I'm not going to beat that on this session. Although it certainly was possible on this lake.

This was the first forty I had caught not only from Meadow

Lake but also from Coking Farm Fishery. I'd had plenty of thirties but not a forty until now. To say I was over the moon was an understatement. I carried on fishing for the next 40 or so hours but nothing more came my way which is perfectly normal for Meadow. As I said, Meadow is not an easy lake to fish. The carp don't get caught that easy. At the end of the

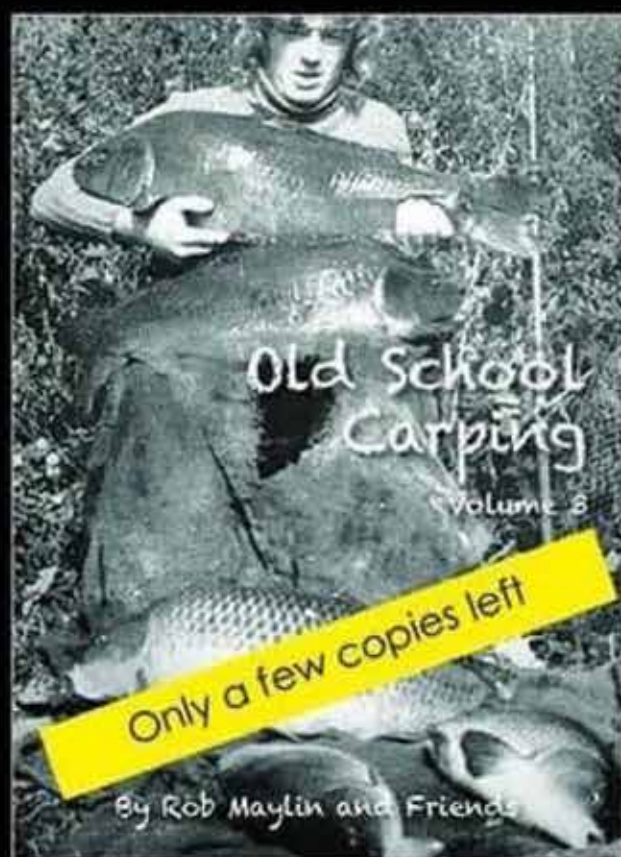
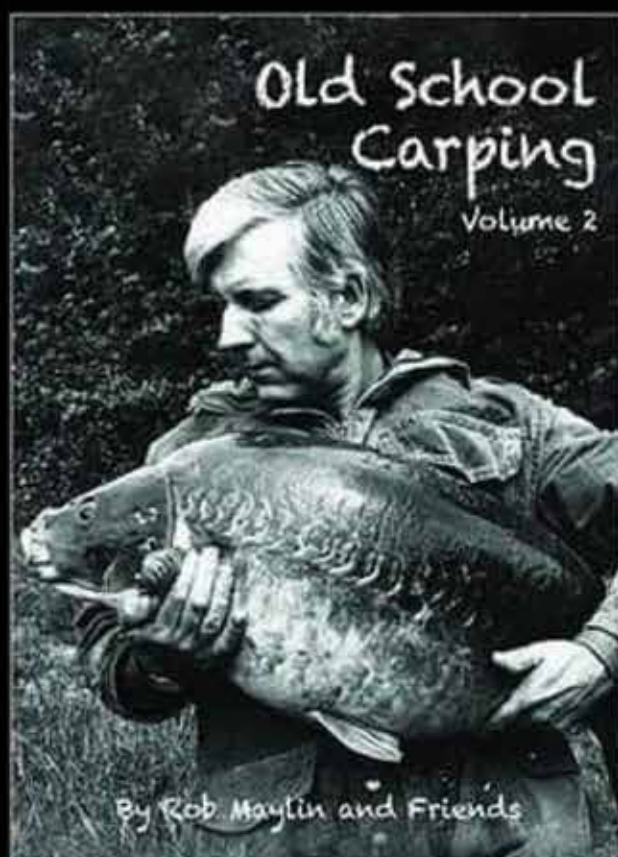
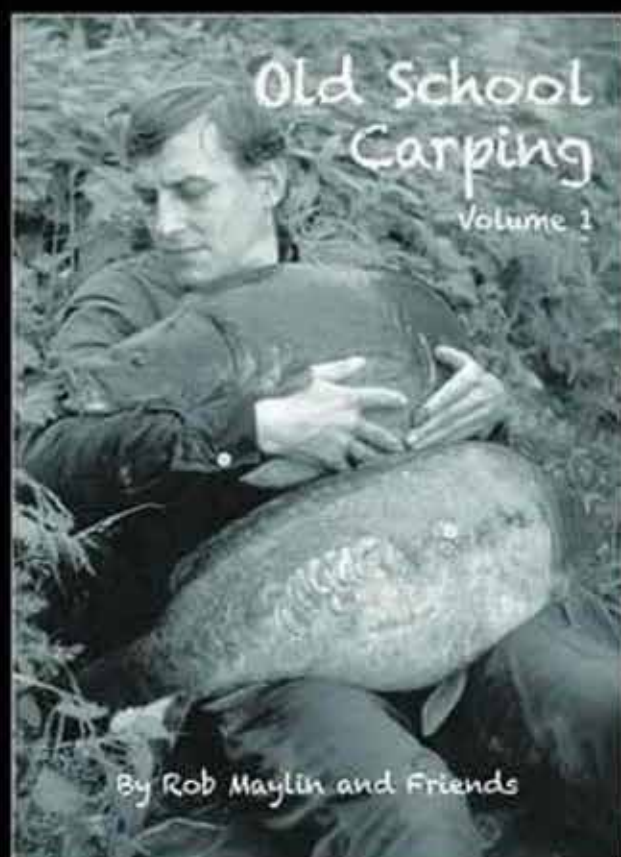
session I was definitely going home happy. I'd caught one of the A team from this lake. I can't wait to get back.

If you would like to fish on any of the lakes on the Coking Farm Complex please go to their website at:

www.cokingfarmfishery.co.uk and all the booking details are there. Good luck, I might see you on the bank.



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BRETT MARSHALL

SUMMER CAMPAIGN

So after a long break from time on the bank as I saw the miserable weather breaking early in the year, I set a goal to get out onto my local syndicate water in the Lea Valley Herts as much as possible and whilst juggling the tasks from running two different businesses and being a single father. I'd had a long lay off from fishing due to life getting in the way of bank time and hadn't wetted a line since last October. I set about trying to get out in the early spring to no avail but my circumstances changed slightly and I went on a bit of a mission doing a few weekdays over nighters and going to work in the morning plus any weekends I had free.

The campaign I had planned was going to start mid May but as luck would have it the fish started spawning so the lake was closed and that put me back a few weeks.

Finally, the time had come where I knew I had some spare time it was the 9th of June just

before the magical 16th of June where normally I would like to do the opening of the season on the local canals and rivers in and around Hertford but not this year. I had my heart set on some of the beauties in my local syndicate,

I'd had so much down time from fishing the last few years i wanted to make the most of it and try and get a few on the bank and get the bug back for my fishing.

I had done a bit of a pre-baiting leading up to this small window to start my summer campaign highly risking when it's a busy time of the year on the water and I could never guarantee I could get in that swim and onto my baited spots but that's fishing these day isn't. Anyway, I set out on a mission to get amongst the carp for the first time in what seemed like long well overdue time.

It was a Monday night on the 9th of June the moon

was 98 percent that evening and due to be a full moon the following, so I had to get out. I had got myself prepared beforehand and was fishing out of my work van. I managed to get in the swim where I had been baiting got my rods out and went about setting up for the evening. It was a beautiful summer evening the traps where set and I sat back and admire the beautiful surroundings and thought to myself god I've missed this and it was just what I needed.

Time went by I made myself some lovely chicken salad wraps, and it was getting to around dusk, so I decided to get plotted up in my van on the bed chair and banged the iPad on. As I was nodding off for the night, I was a woken by the sound of the right-hand buzzer tearing off. That was the money spot over in the weediest part of the lake next to the snag where I had been baiting I jumped up and



out the van and was into my first fish since October the last time I was fishing. It was a great battle thru the weed but managed to slip the fish over the net cord and was met with a beautiful zip lin and what a pukka start to my campaign it was.

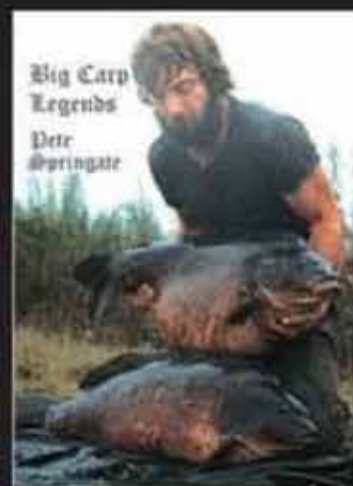
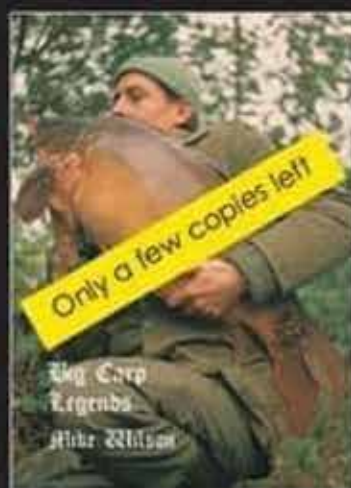
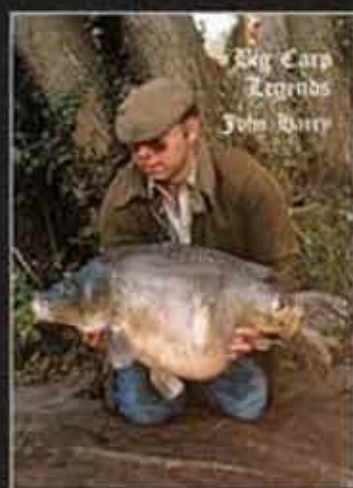
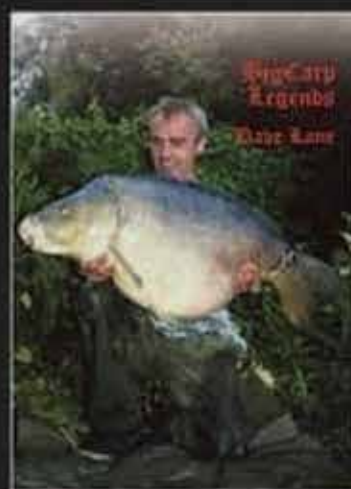
The big carp buzz was fully alight again it was great to be back. After I dealt with the fish and got some self takes I

got that rod back on the spot and got my head down ready for work the next day. The rest of the night was quiet, and I woke up at my normal 4:30am had my coffee and get ready to pack my gear back into the van and get to work for the day but all the while thinking when I can get back. I went to work that day working out what days I had free next for the next planned mission



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CRAIG STONES

A TALE OF TWO 40S

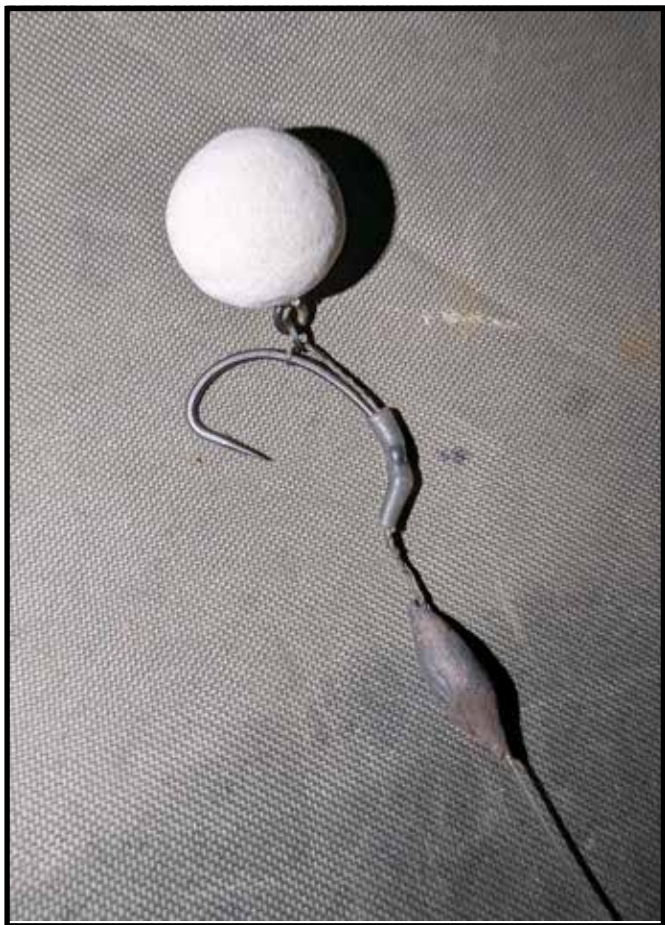
I'd like to take this opportunity to dedicate this little article to a good friend who sadly lost his life recently. Rob Smith or "Big Rob" as he was affectionately known, had recently obtained a ticket back on the Quarry Syndicate in Essex where I've been fishing this year but sadly suffered a massive cardiac arrest last Saturday while over the lake. I had spent a few nights with Rob last week and he photographed my fish and celebrated with me after catching these two magnificent carp, he also had a beautiful carp of 37.14 himself which was another cracking fish know as the

Immaculate. To put you in the picture I had a ticket on this Syndicate back in the day from 2003 until 2010, it was a special Syndicate back then as it still is today, some lakes just continue to be very special and I'm sure it's not only about the fish that reside in them, it's also down to the quality of the members that fish them. This being the reason after all these years I was still attracted to re-join.

The reason I hadn't been out fishing much of late was because back in 2023 I was hit with a double blow of bad news, in January we were told the other lake I fished "Shotgate Angling Club's lake "reservoir" was to be drained down and filled in!!!! I'd been a member there since 2002 and had been acting fishery manager for the past 15 odd years, when everything you striven to achieve gets pulled away from under your feet it does affect you massively plus

Obviously the fish would have to be moved!!!!!! This was going to be a massive task for a small club that had been on there since 1977.... To make matters worse while all this was going on I'd been diagnosed with Prostate cancer and was preparing for the prospects of surgery in October!!!

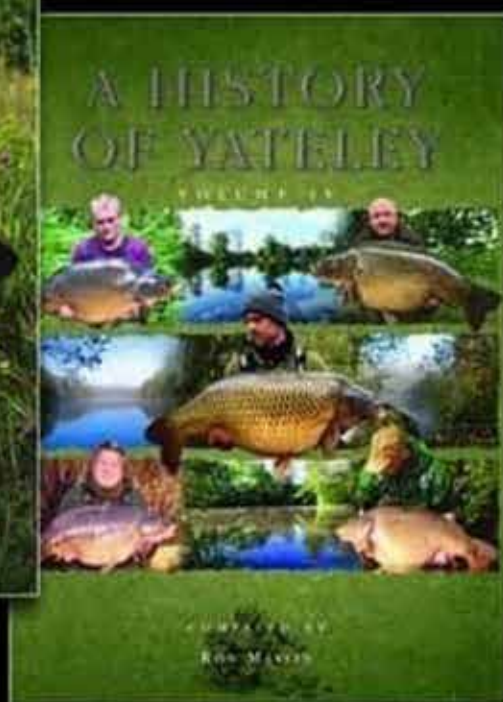
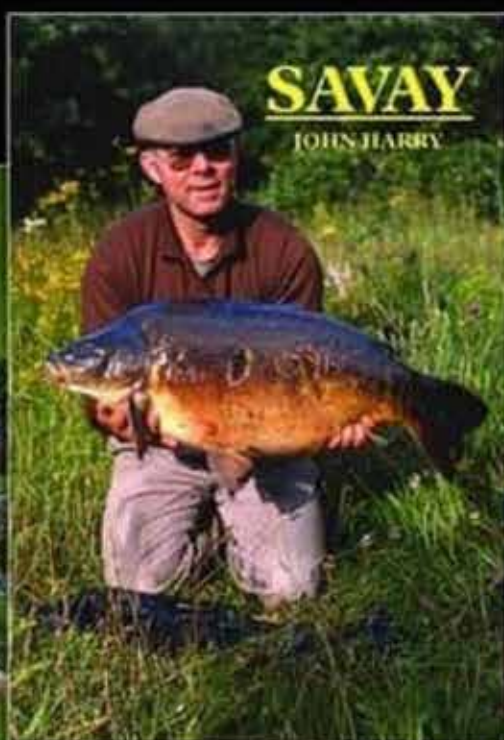
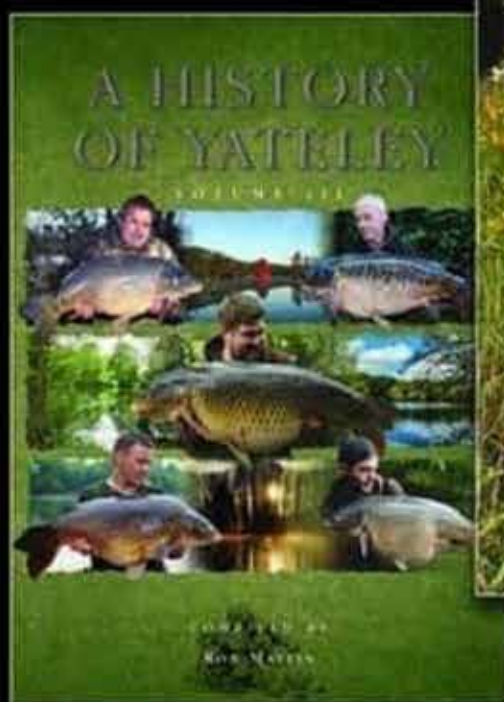
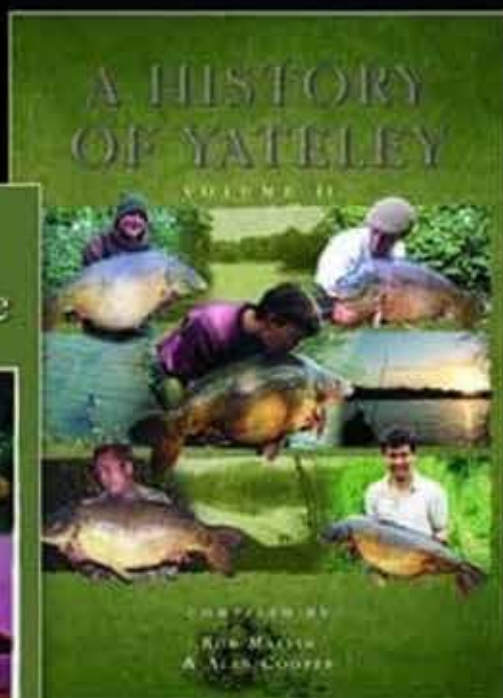
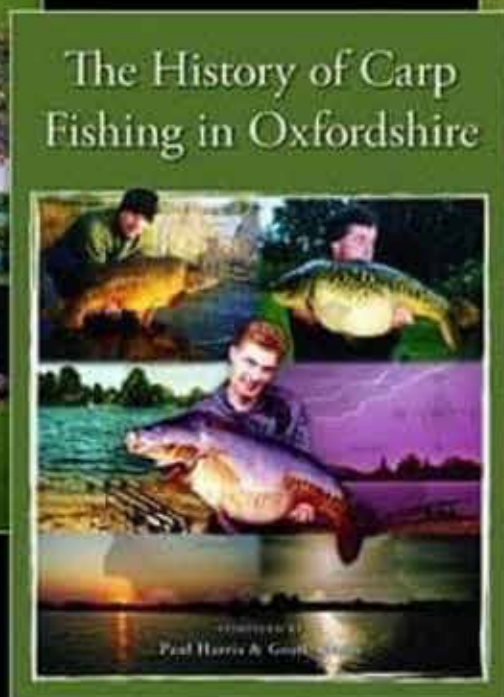
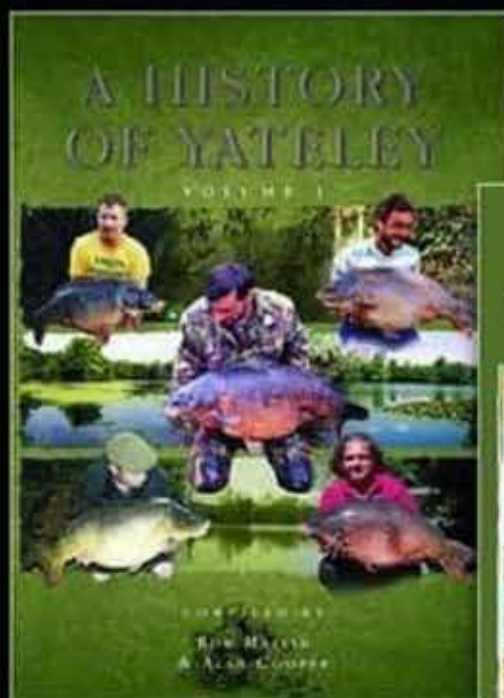
Skipping on 2 years to the present day, id finally got all this out of my system and have been cancer free. Since this I've just started to get back out fishing again properly. Last Tuesday Sept 2nd 2025 I arrived at the lake at 6am meeting two other good friends Andy and Jon, I was planning on dropping in behind Andy as he was going but it was raining and I didn't want to put pressure on him to pack up in that so I opted to have a walk and have good look around, I was so glad I did as I saw a few good fish show out long in a swim called the



Willows, I immediately shot back and told Andy then made my way back round to the swim. Rather than thrashing the swim with a lead I opted to put 3 rods out long on single white pop-ups just feeling for a decent drops, this done I proceeded to put 2.5 kilos of boilies out with the stick all over the area. This done I sat on my hands and set out my stall for the night ahead feeling confident that I hadn't spooked them off. At 3.15am my right hand rod was away dragging me from my bed resulting in a tremendous battle with a big old carp, once netted I immediately popped next door to get Rob who to my amazement was up!!!! Quote, "you got one Bruv" he said in the darkness..... We did the pics and slipped her back but unfortunately on inspection it



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was a recapture of a carp I'd had in the spring "Two-Tone" at 44.8 but this time 43.8. We celebrated with coffee and sat up putting the world to rights until dawn broke, he kept saying "get that rod back out bruv" but I couldn't because I hadn't clipped it up earlier as I was just fishing for a drop and need to see the lead in the air the stop it with my fingers before hitting the water!!!!!! Eventually I got it back out and Rob went back to his swim next door, I decided to leave all three rods out until midday as there had been a couple of bites around that time the week before.

At 12.30pm the left hand rod burst into life with a lively fish on the end, it kited left towards Rob next door and through a small weed bed, luckily it came back through

no trouble and waddled it's way back to me with no more drama, slowly it came in and in the net it went, on inspection I could see it was huge, a big framed scaly fish called "The Big Lin" I phoned Rob, Scott and Jon as I felt I needed some help from these guys. Indeed it was confirmed to be that fish "The Big Lin" at 47.8. Rob and Jon did the photos once again and we

got her back. The afternoon flew by with the tea flowing enjoying the moment.

The next morning Rob had a tremendous boat battle with a cracking 37.14 Immaculate mirror!!!! What a session!!!!!! After the elation of these captures we receive the bad news that the syndicate Bailiff Jim's beloved spaniel "Dylan" had passed away after emergency surgery to





remove a foreign object that he had swallowed..... But things turned even worse on Saturday morning!!!! Rob, myself, Scott and some others had arranged to meet Jim over the lake to help him bury poor Dylan, afterwards we gathered around Robs van and he got to work making tea for everyone with the words ringing out "Get that kettle on bruv" lol. Before the kettle had even boiled poor Rob collapsed suffering a massive cardiac arrest, Jim called 999 while Scott performed CPR until the paramedics arrived shortly after, they continued working on him for almost 2 hours but despite ours and the paramedics efforts Big Rob sadly didn't make and passed away a few hours later in Broomfield Hospital in Chelmsford. Xx RIP Rob.





DARREN PULLMAN

MY CARP OBSESSION

So it started in the mid 80s , brolly ribs and 15mm wast
After years of float fishing pipe for monkey climbers,
and ledgering small ponds Foam pushed into the first eye
and the rivers, I discovered , Solid stiff tubing, And garden
the carp , I suppose it was sun loungers with a bin bag
inevitable really, But back over your feet, The 45inch
then there was a mystery and wavelock brolly was just a bit
a sense of excitement that too small, But it was great,
I've struggled to repeat and Exciting nothing else
find today, Don't get me wrong mattered, But as with most
I still love it, My heart still things , Like all things they
beats when the alarm bursts move forward and progress, I
into that unforgettable sound, started fishing a lake in
It was just different then, It Hampshire it was called
was all new, Still raw, Old meadow lake , Most would

know it as Somerley , A tench with the odd double beautiful 20 Acre gravel pit , figured carp thrown in . They Known for carp bigger than I say effort equals reward and could of possibly imagined, there at last a mirror of 22.lb, lots of 20s with a handful of If my memory is correct and 30s ,if I'm correct in saying the photos taken by the late Shaun Baxter, My first 20 yehhhhhh, It was like turning first taste of a proper big carp on a switch after the first one water, It was a bit daunting they seamed to follow but very exciting and a bit of nerves also thrown in, I , Whatever I was doing was struggled at first, It took me a working or was it just a while to find my feet, confidence thing I'm not sure, Eventually I was starting to But now I wanted a 30, Of get to grips with it , Still using course I did, It took a few richworths tutti fruit boilies, more years to catch that But eventually moving on to elusive fish and become part mainline Active 8, wow what of that special club, It seemed a bait,I lost a few regularly to it was never going to happen, start with, very frustrating, It But back then there was fewer was my inexperience that was of them, A friend by the name costing me fish but I kept of Danny said to me one day, plugging away, So I was It will come, And when you actually after my first 20 that have your first one your catch was my aim, As time passed another and sure enough he learning from my mistakes was right, My first 30 a mirror watching and talking to some called Fold over top tail was of the regulars I started followed 2 weeks later by a catching slowly at first mainly mirror called CND a fish made

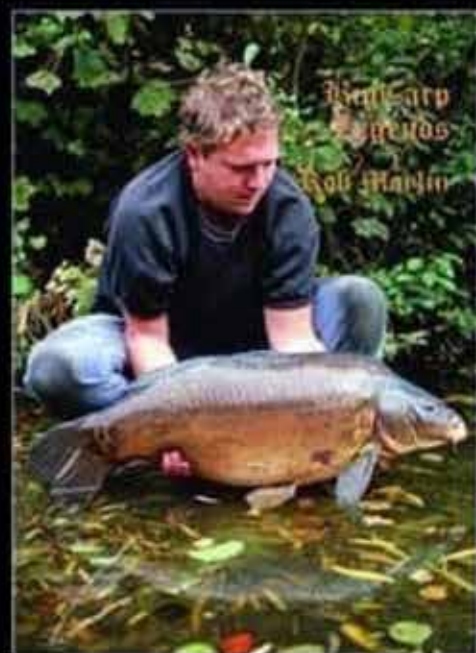
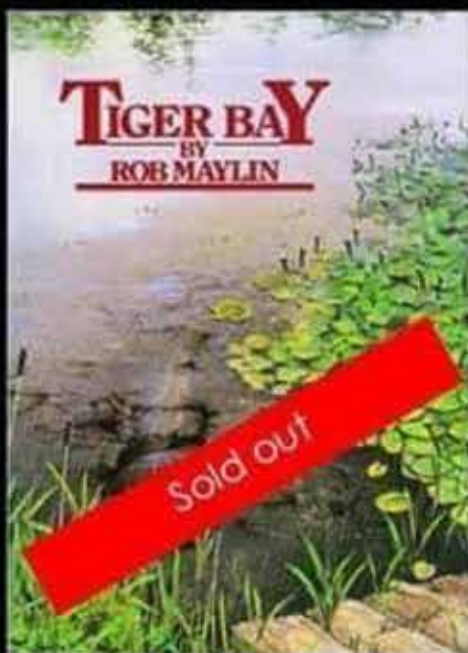
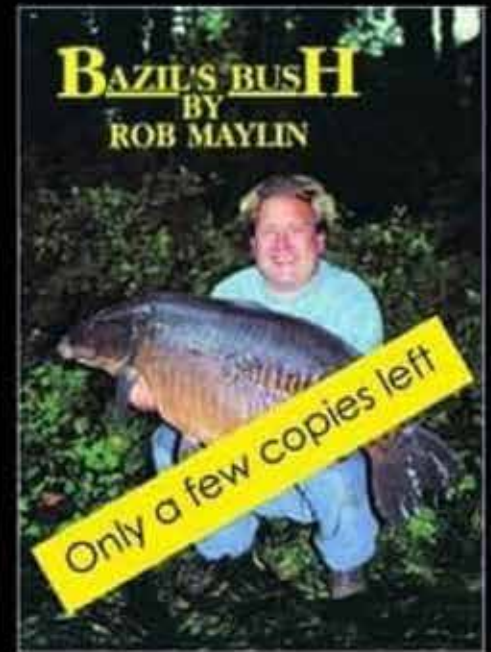
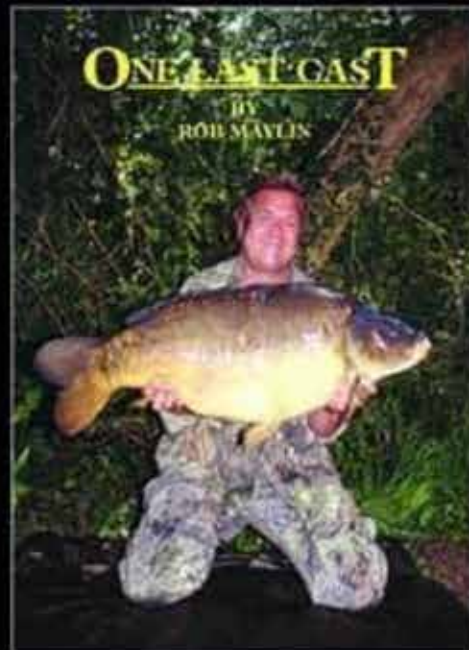
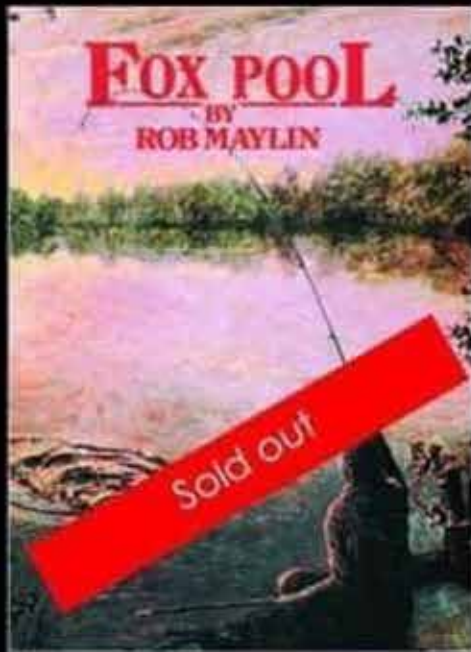


famous by Bob James on a very famous fishing series to those that new , If you know you know, So after many years fishing Somerley getting my confidence to a new high becoming friends with a really good bunch of lads with plenty of laughs along the way , Great socials , lots of takeaways the odd drink well maybe a few, And laying on our backs lighting our bodily gases laughing uncontrollably bizarre I know ,But they were great times, But the carp were always at the forefront of our thoughts that's why we were there for these mythical creatures, so in between Somerley with my confidence growing I would take myself off to some other club waters just to mix it up a bit , The Roach pit back then was on a club book before cemex took



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it over and it became a syndicate, It was nice now with the confidence high and a sense of I now what I'm doing , It was nice to branch out after a few years fishing and try my luck with places like the Roach Pit, Spinnaker, Rockford, Sway Lake, Northfield most in the Ringwood area, Including my first trip to France,I did spend some time fishing a stretch of river by the name of Throop fishery, on the stour, First the mill pool , The winters on the pool were great for carp to high doubles, Great fun, Good for a bite on a cold frosty day, There also were a few trips further afield with some of the lads, The pads lake and South lake at yateley, Being two of them, Stepping on to these waters





with so much history and with the car park lake right next to the pads was unforgettable, Especially when Arfur was caught from the car park lake while we were on the pads lake just incredible, But back home there was one water that got hold of my inner soul, A place I loved away from the rat race that was growing faster by the year, I couldn't get it out of my head, Obsessed, A great friend of mine who I've known since I was 12 years old, His name Dave Watkins used to take me fishing as a guest on this special place, once I got a bit older 2-3 times a year, I'm sure he got fed up with me keep asking when we going to my special lake, This place was lovely a well kept couple

of lakes only a couple of acres each, Both behind the owners house set behind a face- brick wall with large electronic gates, I used to think of it as Dorset's own Ashley pool, well manicured, And quiet ,just bliss ,The back lake was the one with the larger fish some lovely mirrors and 2 large commons, At the time of fishing the owner only let 3 on at any one time so it was never busy which was a real treat, I did ok catching from the off really, I used to think to myself for some reason this place likes me as much as I liked it, You ever fished a place and you've just jelled with it ,Sometimes it just clicks, This was it for me , I'm for ever grateful to Dave for introducing me to this lovely place, After a good few years of fishing it with Dave I made the decision to speak to the owner myself after which he let me fish any time on my own ,I felt like I'd one the lottery, now I'm really buzzing, well let's just say I fished it as much as I could, On and of for a few years regular but still never really a proper campaign, Also with the odd trip to France thrown in for good measure which was also becoming addictive, But sometimes things Do change And I think to myself how did that happen,I was now married with kids and working long hours and unfortunately my fishing slowed down but the urge to still do a proper campaign on the special lake was always strong inside my head, It would never leave me ,But sometimes other things in life become priority and fishing takes a bit of a backseat I just had to be patient, A few years later the opportunity came that I could now do a good amount of time on there, so fast forward to 2009, I'd book every Thursday till Sunday every week, 3 nights a week through March



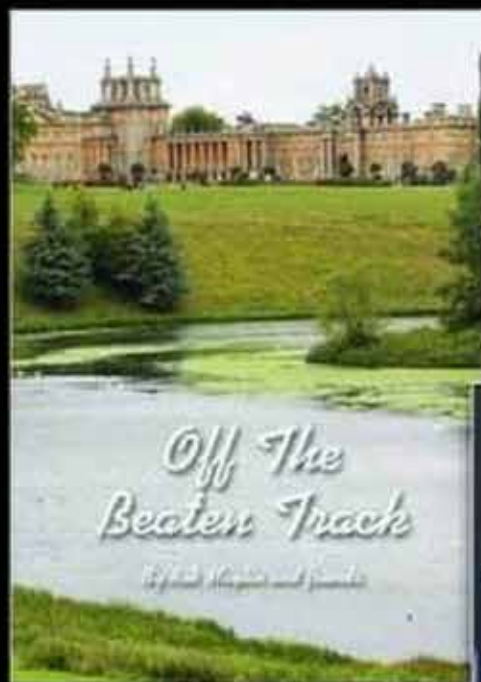
,April and May, My wife not too impressed not with me going just the amount of time, But I had to do it, I couldn't control the urge, Selfish I know but then carp fishing is, Its trying to find that happy balance but for the next 3 springs unfortunately that balance wavered, so March 2009, The chod rig was still relatively new, And these are what I went in with all tied to perfection like little soldiers with yellow pineapple pop ups soaked in betain, My first session early March started with success a 32 dark

common, I was catching in the evenings, lovely green regularly, The carp certainly lush grass like a well didn't know how to deal with manicured golf course, All the the chods they were working stresses of life gone for that a treat,I couldn't go wrong, I moment in time that I was was getting so in tune with there, Over the next 3 years I the place it was heaven, More fished it regularly as much as often than not I was the only I could, Taking the piss one there, And of course the sometimes with me neglecting dear which were often stood my home life and family, But behind the Bivvy when I woke it does that to you, I did well early on a beautiful spring catching fish going through morning ,As well as the owls the stock now also using the



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stiff hinge rig and the KD rig and tigers, The chod starting to waver a small touch, But eventually catching the one I was really after a beautiful coloured golden common by the name of black spot at 43.lb, job done, But sadly Just after this time my wife got very ill and heaven was calling her, I used to keep thinking I wish I knew before, I wouldn't of gone fishing, But the fact was neither of us new , After my wife passed away I didn't fish at all, I wasn't interested in anything really, life can be shit sometimes, But eventually I decided to get the rods back out, it was very emotional and I felt Julie would of wanted me to carry on fishing,

There was also a certain amount of guilt as tho why should I enjoy myself when my wife can't, But life can be very strange and things turn out that are inexplicable, somebody maybe Julie didn't want me on my own and I

have now met and married again a lovely lady who has to endure all the carp fishing and everything that goes with it, To this day I still fish my special lake and still have a syndicate ticket on Somerley and the roach pit, But as I've got older I don't do as much as I did , And that's fine I'm ok with that, I was once told 40 years ago there's more to life than carp fishing, At the time I didn't believe him but he was right, And ironically that was the very man that introduced me to my paradise, the most special lake to me There is more to life, so when I do go fishing and the couple of weeks away in France, It makes it all more special, So this is a snapshot of just an ordinary bloke, Nobody special who just likes to go fishing, It's just finding that balance, well tight lines as my dad would say and take in everything that's good, just enjoy it and I hope your dreams are fulfilled.



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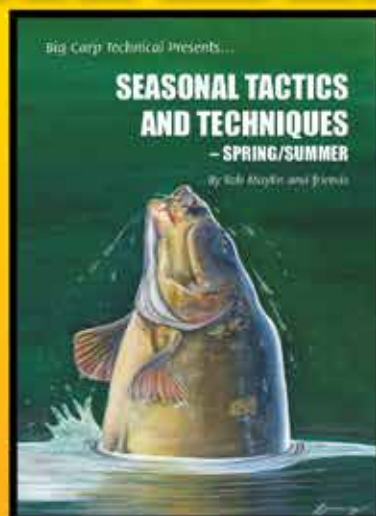
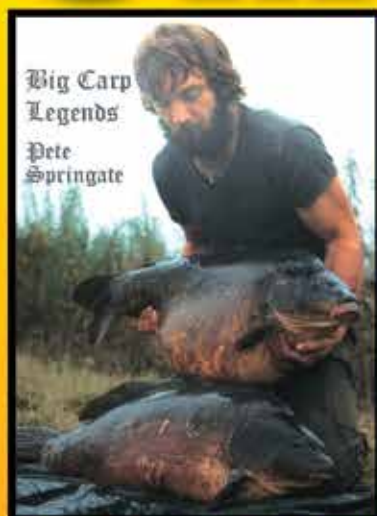
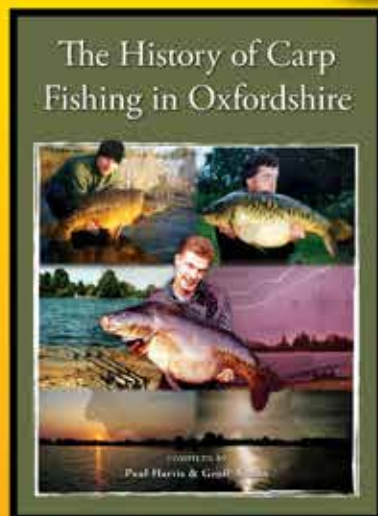
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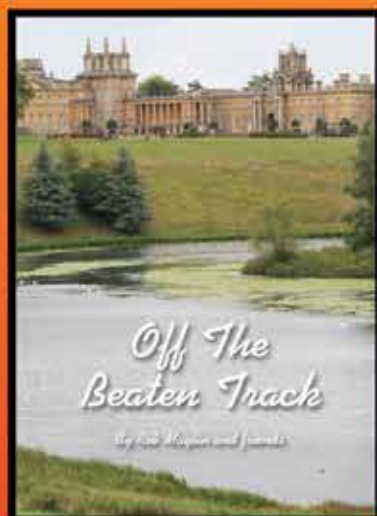
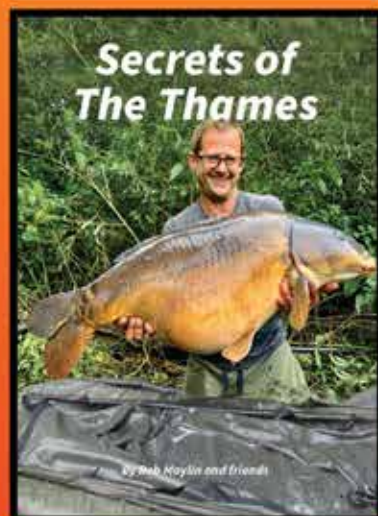
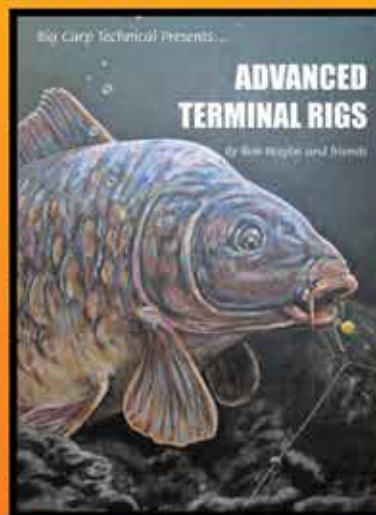
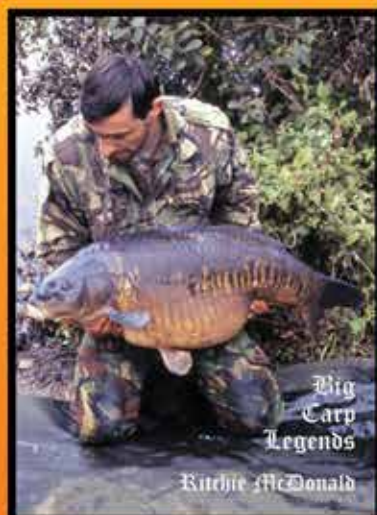
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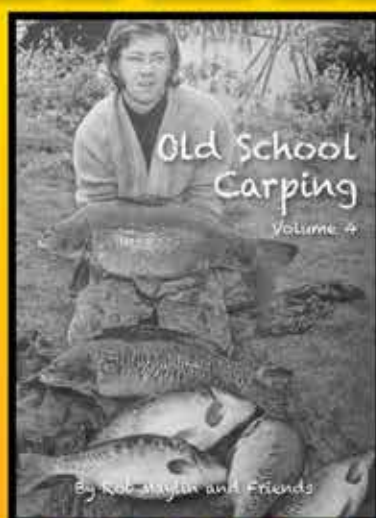
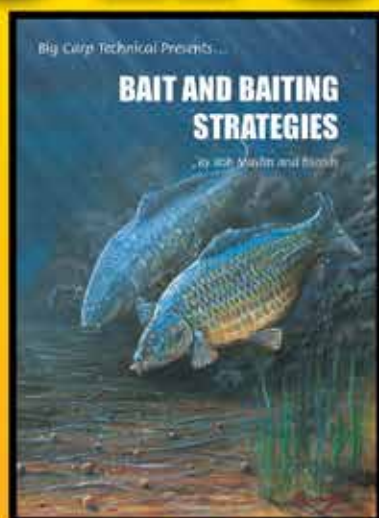


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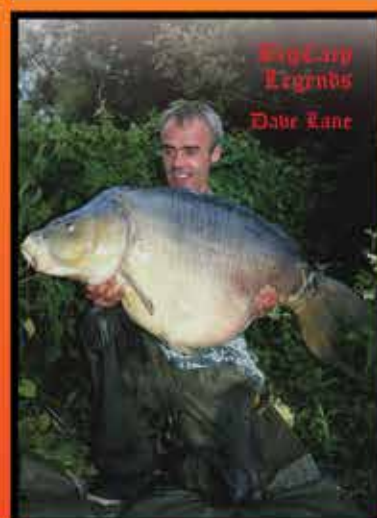
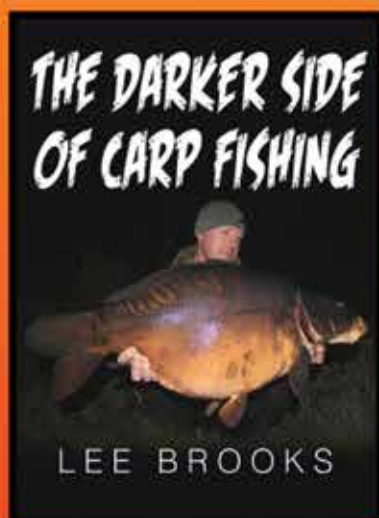
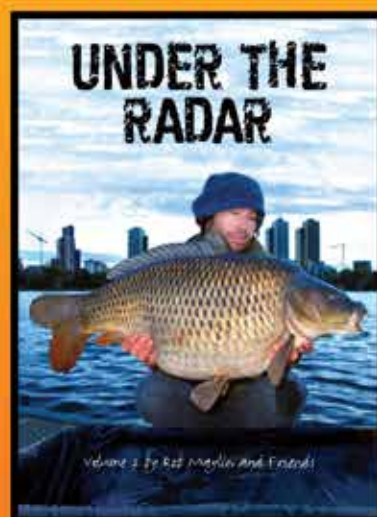
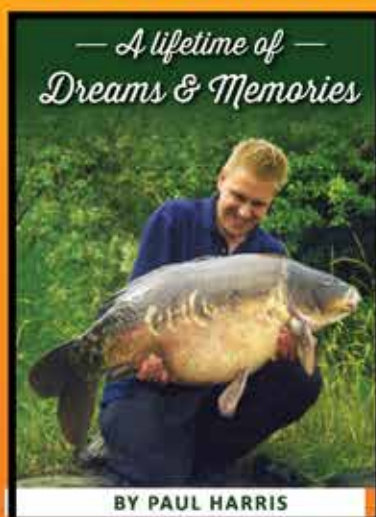
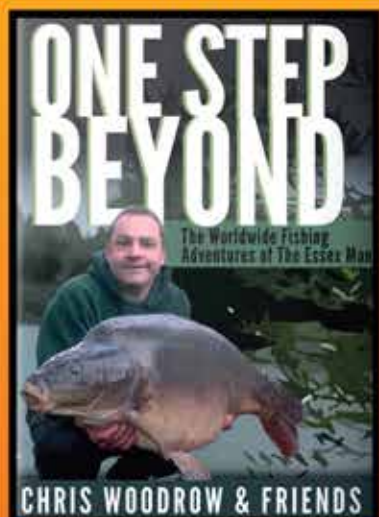


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HELP US GET A MINI BUS FOR PRIMAL ANGLERS YOUTH PROJECT!

At Primal Mentality CIC, we run Primal Anglers — a community project giving children and young people the chance to experience the benefits of fishing for their mental health, confidence, and wellbeing. Right now, our biggest challenge is transport. We're fundraising for a mini bus to: Take young people to fishing venues across the UK Carry all the rods, tackle, and equipment needed Make sure no child misses out because of transport barriers Every donation, big or small, will help us make this dream a reality. Businesses donating £500 or more will get their logo on our mini bus, seen all over the UK on our trips! Please support us at: <https://gofundme.com/f/cast-a-line-change-a-life-support-our-mini-bus-fund?>

8. CARP CHAT

28. CARP SCENE

38. DARREN BLUNT

44. JAKE LUND

58. JOHN BARNES

66. LEE GRIFFIN

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^^ Two cracking 20's for team member Lee Weldon. Lee bagged a 22lb 11oz common and this 24lb 15oz on a recent session using our size 4 Scorpion Curved hooks and other end tackle items from CTO. Well done Lee.



^^ Team member Paul Gill and family had a cracking second week at Bois de Printemps. The gite was outstanding. The fishing didn't disappoint with some crackers throughout the week. I am looking forward to returning in 2027." Well done Paul and family



^^ Team member Alan Morton managed one from Ecton's Jigsaw Lake, "Not a of the huge ones at 15lb 4oz, but very welcome after a dry spell. Alan used our Size 4 wide gapes, Tungsten Kickers, micro swivel, coated CTO Pro hooklink, anti tangle sleeves, basically everything from CTO" Well done Alan, nice work.



<< Mrs Gill getting in amongst the carp on their recent trip out in France, with this cracking clean common. Well done Donna.

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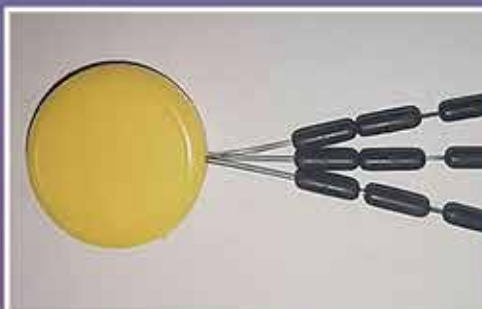
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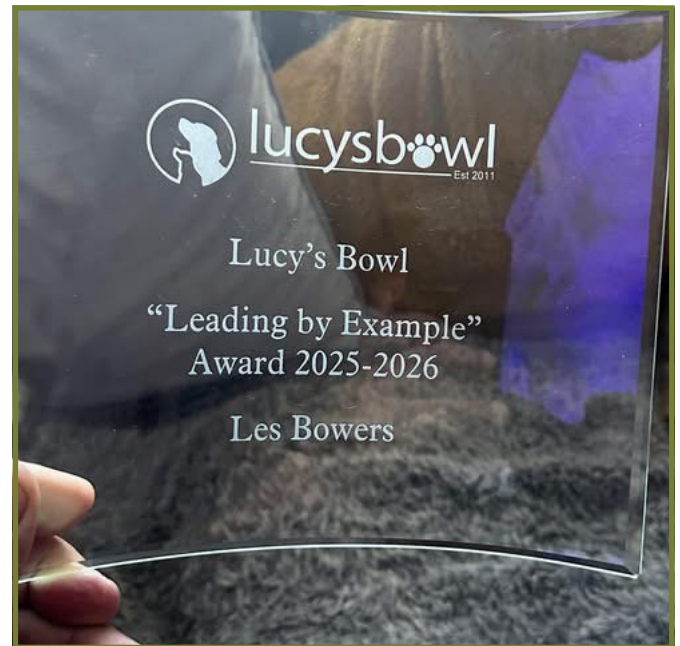
Lucy's Bowl 2025 comes to an end. I still have a few auctions to go through.

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.

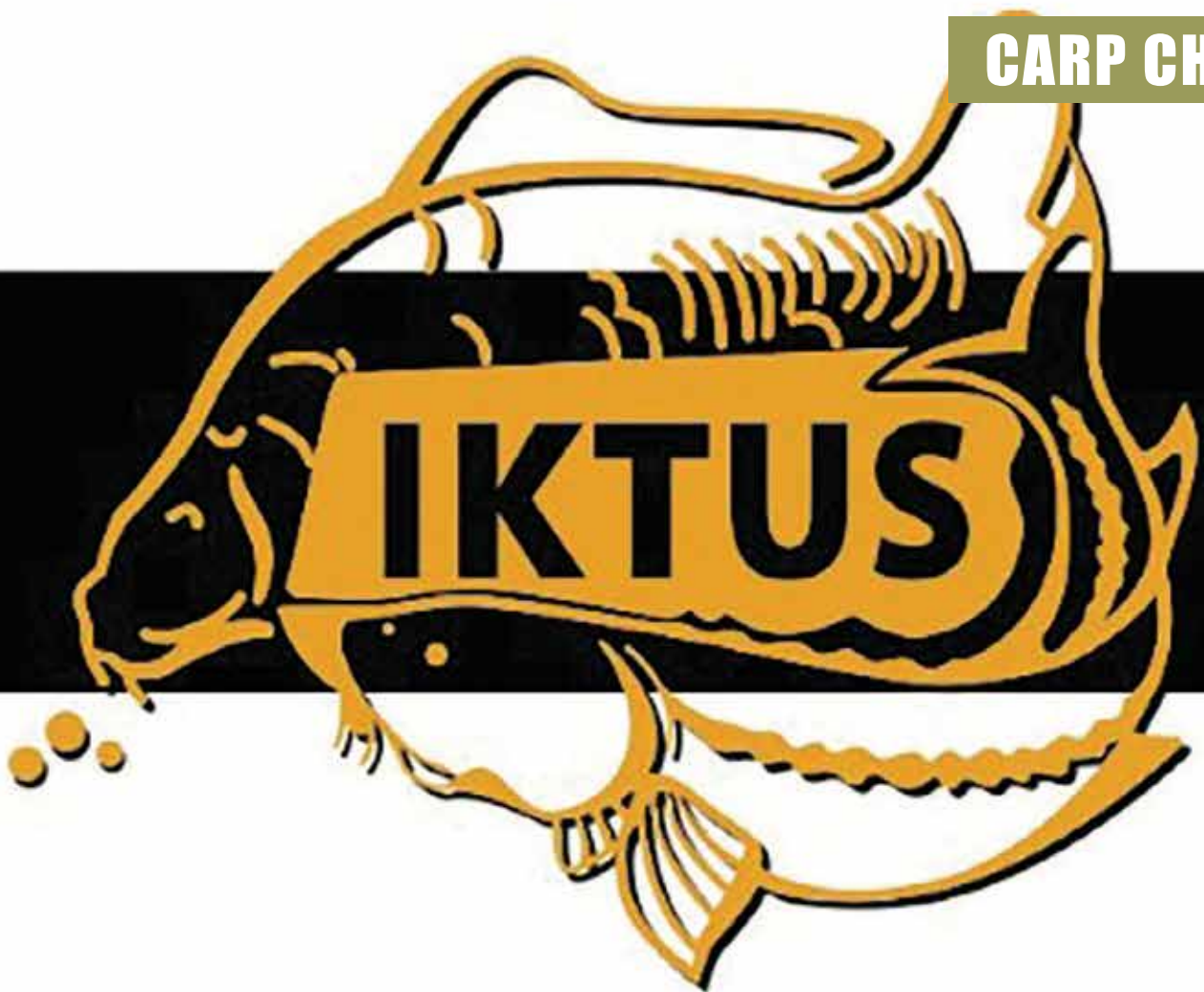
I'm shattered at the moment but I will be going through my raffle winners and contacting them. If you don't receive a message then sadly you haven't won this time around but we thank you for your on-going support that allows us to buy and train the guide dogs. You make a huge difference to someone's life !

Les Bowers x



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

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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, whose talks are a must-see for anyone passionate about angling.



Tickets are officially on sale starting July 26th—with two incredible VIP bundles available at reduced early bird rates until August 26th. Whether you're chasing your next PB or simply love the angling lifestyle, this is the show you don't want to miss.

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).
- Behave professionally both on social media and bankside.

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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



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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 & Whitehouse: Gone Fishing is set to return for its eighth series, which is especially wonderful given Bob Mortimer's recent health issues. The beloved show will revisit the riverbanks that shaped the formative years of Paul Whitehouse and Bob Mortimer.

Filming will begin later this year for six new episodes, taking the pair to Whitehouse's birthplace of Wales and revisiting Mortimer's early years in the north-west of England, along with their trusty dog, Ted.

Bob Mortimer shared his excitement: "I'm looking forward to visiting old haunts from my younger years as Paul and I travel back in time for this series, fishing in places that shaped our lives." Fans can also look forward to the seventh series airing later this year, featuring episodes filmed in Bedfordshire, North Norfolk, and Northern Ireland.

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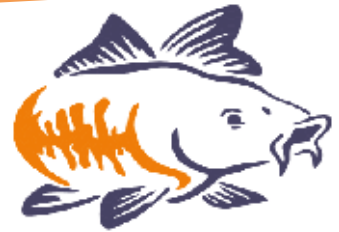
BIG NEWS FOR ALL CARP ANGLERS!

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This show is an experience you won't want to miss, so spread the word, tell your fishing buddies, and let's make The Winter Carp Show 2025 an unforgettable angling adventure!

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

TNT

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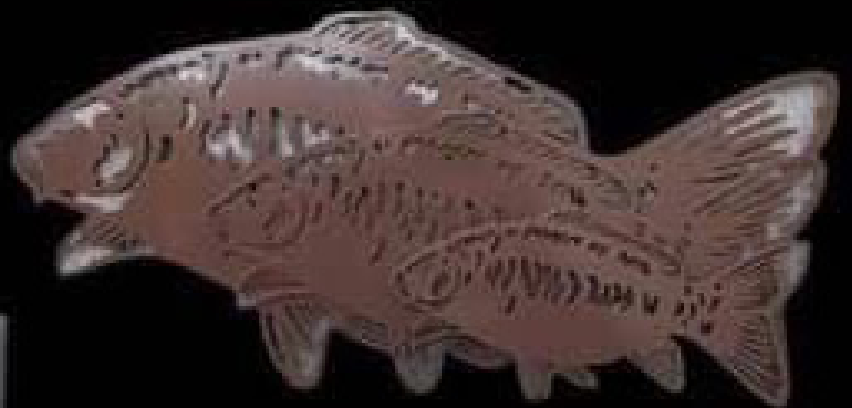
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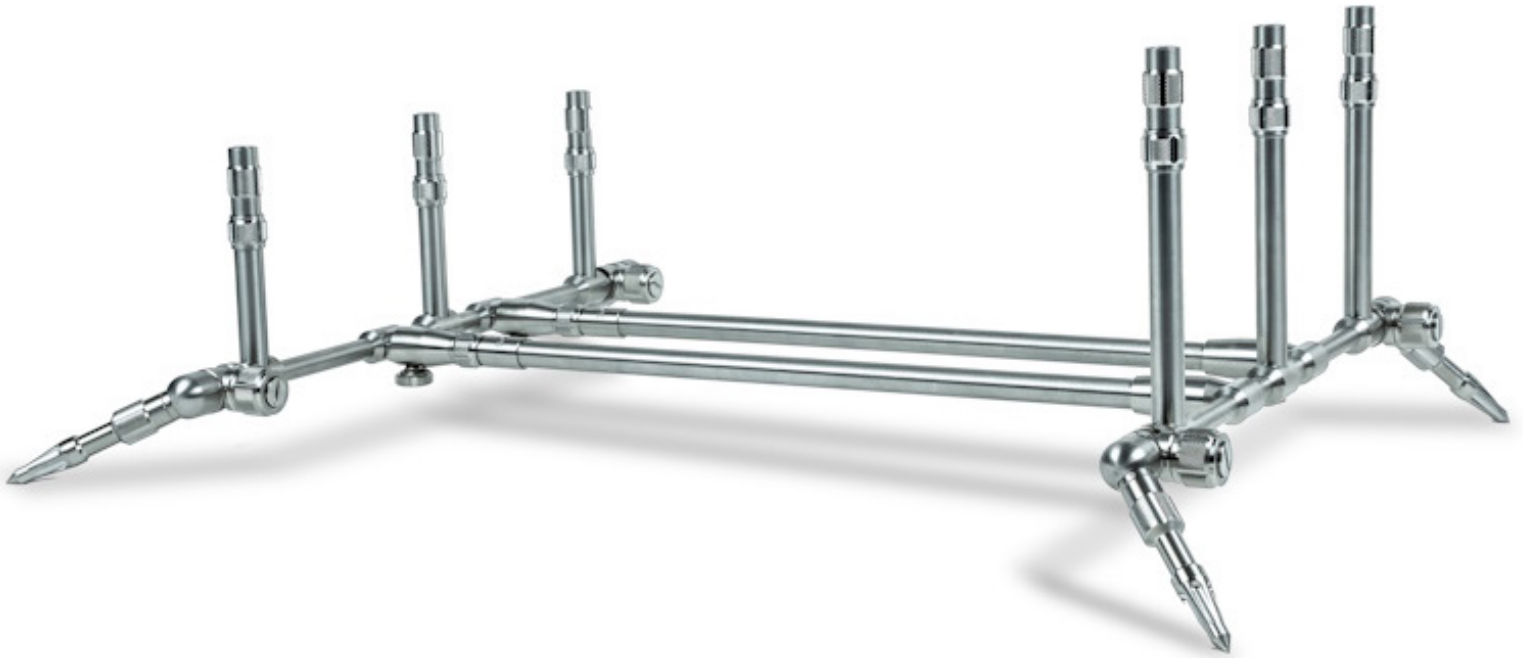
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IT'S BACK!! The much sought after and revered CROC Pod is back. As usual, you can tell it's 'Solar' hardware from 10 feet away. With the advanced machining capabilities and with the precision of CAD's 3D technology, it has allowed us to completely 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 the need to cover all angling situations. The P1 CROC's are fitted with the new semi quick release 3/8 BSF thread fittings on the newly styled Stubby legs (supplied), which are fitted to the outside ends



of the bridge bars, enabling quick and easy attachment of those , or your chosen longer legs/bank sticks required in any given terrain , further increasing the adaptable capabilities of the set up. The cosmetic design of the fixtures and fittings are immediately noticeable, not only do they look futuristic, the 'Super Grip' fittings serve the purpose of easier adjusting and locking of everything in position, even in the coldest and wettest of conditions. The CROC is a peak performance thoroughbred, a precision-made piece of kit, designed and made entirely in the UK to the highest standards that anglers come to expect from Solar Tackle hardware.

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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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Having the right kit to do the job when it comes to baiting up is the key! As it will make lighter work of the job at hand and not all of our Spod / Marker braids lines are designed for the same jobs — here's a quick breakdown of three options designed for different spod and marker situations:



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The ultimate all-rounder for spodding and feature finding.

- 30lb breaking strain means no shockleader is required.
- Buoyant + zero stretch – feel every bump on the

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- Perfect for those who want simplicity, performance, and value
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- 20lb breaking strain – requires a 30lb Arma-Kord shockleader
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- 300m spools
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At its core, The N.M.E is a pure tigernut-based bait, crafted to be highly digestible and nutritionally complete, providing carp with everything they need to thrive. What sets this bait apart is its ability to mimic a real tigernut once it hits the water—ejecting an unrivalled stream of premium tigernut extract, paired with a rich, naturally sweet maple profile that stimulates intense feeding responses from even the wariest fish.

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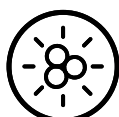


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SON OF TRIPLE ROW

Dinton Pastures is a lake full of obsessions; carefully selected strains have ensured a long legacy of big, black, scaly carp, which have lured anglers to its banks since the 1980s, here is a recent capture of one such obsession, Son of Triple Row, caught by Darren Blunt.

“In 2013, I joined Dinton White Swan. I always usually set myself a target fish or two. Top of my list was Bernie’s Linear and The Twin. With an amazing stock, they all would be welcomed in my net, and I couldn’t wait to wet a line there. I fished there catching a few, but as I had unfinished business at another lake, I couldn’t give Dinton my full attention.

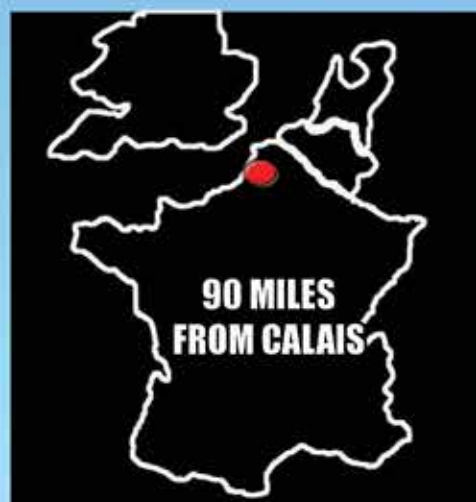
Skipping forward a few years to September 2018, and after two weeks away from Dinton, I was itching to get back. After a good walk around and seeing nothing to grab my attention, I

DARREN BLUNT



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was soon plotted up in Jay's Boards. This swim had been kind to me, having captured The Hamster at 40lb from there the previous year. I was up early and scanning the water, but all was quiet. As the day went by, my attention was drawn to an area between Spotters and The Woods, and they were there. My gear packed and I was on the move. I knew a few hard spots out in the lake from the previous year and was hoping the weed wouldn't mess up my plans. Rods out in two casts... mega drops... oh, happy days. Once again the night passed with no signs they were still in and around the area. Unexpectedly the left-hand rod was away twenty minutes later, and a stockie was soon netted and returned with no fuss.

That evening a little social was had in Micky Gray's swim, and watered and fed, I was itching to get back to the swim. Two casts later and a good helping of Trent Baits Fresh Shrimp, and it was watch and wait time. Up early again the next morning, and it was a repeat of the night before... all quiet on Dinton. The bobbin on the left-hand rod then slowly climbed, and I was once again connected to a carp, but this felt completely different, heavy and with a purpose. This fish fought hard for fifteen minutes... Three attempts to net the fish had the voice in my head saying, "Please stay on!" After gaining full control, I managed to guide the fish into my net... relief and elation.

A quick look into the net and my eyes were met with the most perfect looking carp. I'd caught Son of Triple Row. A few texts to my good friend Ben, and he arrived in my swim. At a weight of 46lb 4oz, the fish looked amazing – black shoulders, brown belly and golden scales – the fish was perfection. Photos were taken, and Son of Triple Row was soon released back in the depths of Dinton “





A MONTH TO REMEMBER

This season, I was lucky enough to get a ticket on the well-known Swan Valley in Yateley. Spring got off to a good start with an upper 30lb mirror falling to a zig and a couple of others to 30lb on the bottom. I felt I was lucky to have had what I did, as the fish seemed to be either sat in the snags due to the lack of weed present or just sunning themselves out in the middle of the pond. They certainly weren't on the feed much. To add to this, the weather was very warm, and I felt they were grouping up ready for spawning. With this in mind, I decided to pull off for a month.



Fast forward a month, and I found myself thinking about Swan again. Keeping an eye on their Facebook page and keeping in touch with a few mates on there, it was clear I hadn't missed much. The lake didn't fish well, and to add to that, it was closed for two weeks for spawning. With two weeks booked off work coming up I had two 48-hour trips at my disposal either side of a week's holiday with the missus for our first wedding anniversary.

Feeling rather out of touch with the place, I decided a day's floater fishing would give me the chance to have a good look about as well as giving me the chance of a fish or two off the top. The weather was roasting and good for a floater. Only an hour in and I was lucky enough to have a nice low 20lb common off the top from the back bay. With all this abnormally hot weather, in the places the weed had shot up to the surface. Come midday, the weekend anglers had left, leaving the lake empty. I decided to make the most of this opportunity to mark up a few spots in a few different swims around the lake. After plenty of marking about, I had found a few likely looking spots that screamed out for a big hit of bait.

I felt the carp would be up for a big munch-up after the slow spring and the heavy spawning, and my knowledge, there weren't many anglers putting much bait in. I really felt they needed turning on, and a big hit of bait at the right time can do this. I felt the middle of the pond in the main lake would be the perfect area, as big numbers of fish love feeding out there and always pass that area. Not only this, but I prefer fishing the middle of any lake; it just seems to be a safe zone for the carp, even on smaller lakes.

Wanting to hatch a plan for my 48-hour trip, I decided to

JAKE LUND

Spomb out a big hit of bait onto a firm silty area from the Oaks swim. The Oaks gave me access to the middle of the pond with a much better line lay than other swims offered. That afternoon, I Spombed out 8kg of Dynamite Baits Marine Halibut Pellet in 8mm as well as 8kg of 15mm Complex-T boilies. I really did feel that a big hit of bait would get them going. I arrived only a day later, and to my amazement, there were fish already fizzing over the bait!! Leaving them to it for the afternoon, I got the rods in position later that evening once the fish had moved off. The night was quiet without so much as a liner. It wasn't until about 7am when a couple of patches of fizz started to show out in the middle of the pond. The fizzing moved closer and closer towards my bait, and before long, the carp were fizzing over my baited spot, and they really started



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ripping the bottom up.

Around 20 minutes later, my right hand rod signalled an erratic bite, and bending into a heavy plodding weight, I was buzzing. Not only was I into a fish, but this meant the heavy baiting had worked. Catching this early on in the session for me really meant there was a good chance of a few more. The dogged fight was soon over, and I netted a big bundle of weed with a decent common buried inside – result! It was then that I realised I had made a schoolboy error and left my scales at home, therefore I couldn't weigh the fish. I'd guess she was an upper 30, but I'll let you decide.

The fizzing died off, and a second bite didn't look likely until around 10am when it clouded over and the started fizzing again. 20 minutes passed, and the right hand rod was away again with a smaller fish this time in the shape of a crusty old



mirror around 20lb. The rest of the day was quiet. The buzz was real, and waiting for the following morning was slow going. I got my head down early, even though I couldn't sleep due to the excitement. It was 3:30am, and my alarm soon woke me. With the kettle on and the sun slowly rising, the pond came alive. Carp fed heavily in numbers in the middle zone between other swims water, the safe zone as such. I watched them for four hours out there; it really felt like the morning was going to pass without a bite.

My mate Tom popped down around 8am and jokingly said, "Right, I'm here now, and I want to see three carp this morning please!" A tall order, and I would have loved to think it could happen but highly doubted it. The sun got up, and to my amazement the fish didn't stop feeding in the middle of the pond; they just moved over my baited spot. Tom looked at



me as if to say, “Here we go... fish number one!” No sooner had we thought that than my rod was away! This fish really gave me the runaround, taking me from weed bed to weed bed. Thankfully she was soon beaten, and to my surprise it was another big’un! Still with no scales, I couldn’t weigh the beast, a proper brute of a mirror, again an upper 30!

I thought that would be it for the morning, but only ten minutes after getting the rod back out, they started fizzing again. The bait had definitely turned them on! Watching one patch of fizz only a couple feet to the left of my right hand rod, it wasn’t long before it was right over my rig, and with that... beeeeeep... and I was in again! Another dogged fight commenced, and the fish found sanctuary in a big weed bed. After a while of no movement, the whole weedbed broke free

and came to the surface. I pumped the large mass of weed in slowly, bundling the whole lot in the net. I frantically ripped the weed apart, hoping to find a carp buried inside. Thankfully, with a sigh of relief, I saw a common sulking in the bottom of my net. Crazy, it was another decent sized fish around mid-30 – this really wasn't the session to leave my scales at home! I had to pack up and head home, as my wife and I had a week's holiday booked in Menorca. A lovely week was had, but I'm not going to lie – Swan wasn't far from my mind!

A week had passed, and I was back down to Swan for another 48-hour session before returning to work. Luckily, I managed to get straight back into the Oaks swim. Since my week away on holiday, I think the Oaks was fished quite a lot by various anglers and with this in mind I didn't pile in loads of bait. I only put out 3 kilos of Dynamite Baits Marine Halibut Pellets and CompleX-T boilies. I also positioned my rods slightly differently, as on my previous session, I noticed they loved feeding on the back of the spot more so than anywhere else. They were constantly fizzing there and only fizzed on and off on the closest edge of the bait. With this in mind, I put my left hand rod to the back of the left hand side of the spot.

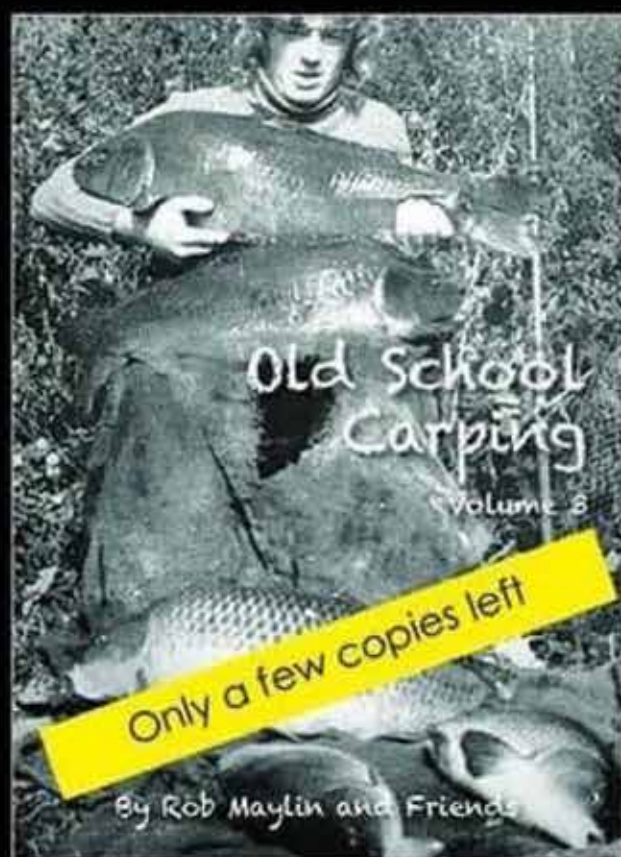
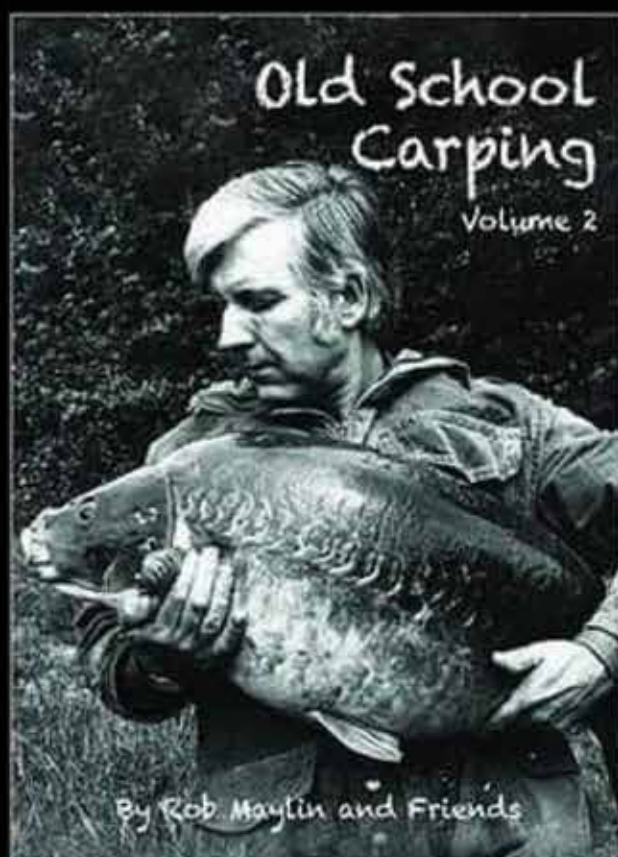
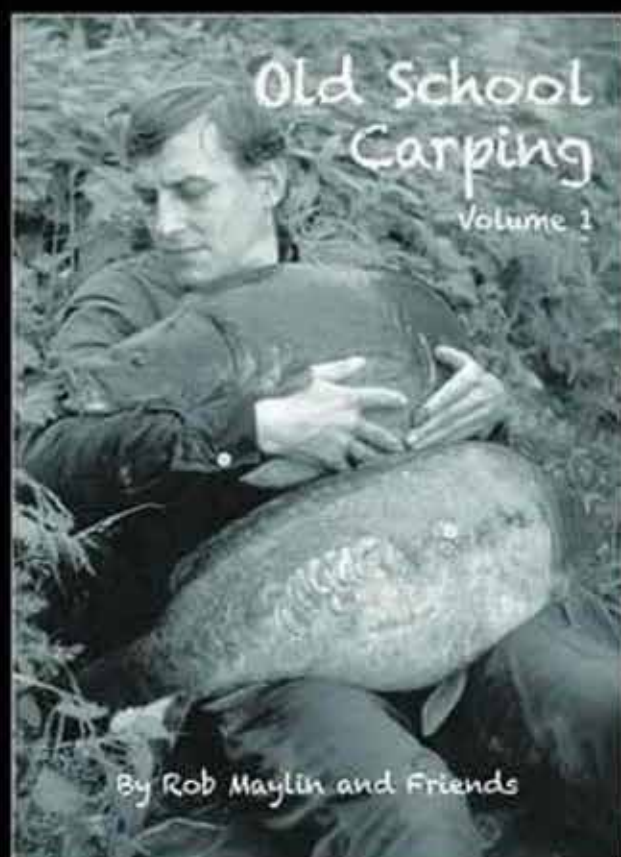
Again, the night was quiet. The carp started feeding out in the pond just on first light, and within an hour they were over my spot and really fizzing over my left hand rod. I thought my left hand rod had to go, but again it was the right hand rod! This fish had a different idea and just ripped line from my clutch as if its life depended on it! I suspected that a long, lean hard-fighting mid-20 was the culprit. Well I was wrong; it was another good -ized fish, which turned out to be a rare visitor to the bank. Having scales this time around, we weighed



her at 39lb, and I was buzzing! I admire big, dark, old looking mirrors, and she was just that! The action didn't stop there, and before I had chance to get the rod back out, my left hand rod from the back of the spot was away. Sadly, I suffered a hook pull after being weeded up for a while, but I wasn't too disappointed, as I really couldn't complain with what I'd had earlier that day. The following morning, there wasn't much fizzing going on; in fact most of the main lake looked dead. I think I was lucky to get one more small common around mid double.

A long week later, I found myself back at Swan after what felt like a year at work. The Oaks sadly wasn't free, but I wasn't too bothered, as they didn't seem to be in the main lake in numbers. There seemed to be more in the Back Bay and Match Lake. I wadded out and set a couple of margin traps in the

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back bay, as I didn't want to lead about looking for clear areas out in the pond spooking fish in the process. At around 1am, I was looking over the pond when the water over my margin rod erupted! A moment later, my rod went into meltdown. I'd not had a take like it in a long time! I was worried about landing the fish, as the weed in the Back Bay is mega and had caused a few anglers problems landing fish. Thankfully she was soon in the net without too much bother.

Now I don't know what I'd trod in lately, but it was another chunk going 39lb, another nice old mirror. I really couldn't believe my luck of late, as there are a lot of smaller fish in Swan that could have easily picked up my hookbaits over the last couple of weeks.

Back to work, and I was already desperate to get back to the lake. After my success, I just felt I needed to make hay whilst the sun shined. Being self-employed, I can work what hours I like, and I had five days' work booked in for the Monday to Friday and planned to work silly hours each day to get finished earlier in the week. Finishing work midday Thursday, I was straight down to the pond, and I took the wife along with me. Squeezing two bedchairs in my one-man bivvy was fun! I felt a blank was on the cards just because of the amount of success I'd had lately. Not only this but I'd treated myself to a few new bits, including a new net and camera, and I imagined it would take a while to christen a new camera! There were a good number of fish in the main lake again, so I set about setting up in the Oaks again. The swim hadn't been fished all week, so I put a good helping of bait out there again – 4kg of pellet and 4kg of boilie. As I'd put so much bait out, I felt a bite would be slow the following morning, so I put both rods to the back of the spot, as this is

where the carp seemed to start feeding first.

My mate Jon Blackman was due down the following day and messaged me that evening asking how the pond was looking. The conversation turned to my thought of a blank happening and Jon said, “No, you won’t blank; you’ll have the Penny Common, as she’s due out.” Well, would you Adam and Eve it? That following morning I had the PENNY COMMON! Talk about being talked on the bank! She went 42lb 4oz and looked mint! I was totally blown away, and it was lovely to have the missus there to share the moment and take a few pics for me! Catching the Penny Common was the icing on the cake. The last couple of months have probably been the most epic months’ fishing I have endured in a long time.





SATURDAYS ONLY

I'll start out with a little bit about my angling, which is limited to Saturdays only due to family and work. When you only have limited time, which for me is usually two 12-hour trips and two 24-hour sessions a month, in my eyes you have to hone your approach to whatever the type of water you're fishing, and for me that's staying mobile, fishing off the barrow, making that you can work every one percent in your favour! Make sure you use a setup so you're presented all the time; don't be lazy – go and make your own chances instead of sitting it out, and that really is the way I've always angled.

So this is why I choose to fish Walthamstow reservoirs with it having seven different waters for carp fishing with varying

levels of difficulty on site, and the fishing, being days only, gives every angler a level playing field. But on the first and third Saturdays of each month, you can fish a night, and to be honest, this usually tricks a few of the bigger fish into coming out, as seemed the case on my last trip.

I will usually wet a line in a few of the waters in one day, racking up a good few miles. Because most of the reservoirs are big silt bowls, the fish are usually on the move, as there aren't many features to hold them, so walking about baiting and keeping a firm eye on the spots and making sure I'm getting on fish is what my aim is. But this trip was a bit different, as they stayed in the same area of my first swim for my whole trip, so I gave them a good helping of Sticky's Krill and Manilla boilies in mixed sizes over the top of the three bright pop-ups I had out. These were fished at long range into shallow water and deep silt where I'd seen them sheeting up an absolutely Jacuzzi like patch of fizz with the odd gill cleaning roll on the surface every now and again, exciting me even more, knowing there were bites to be had.

I do know the area well, and by the amount of times I've wound in from there with bloodworm impaled on the hook... well it doesn't take a rocket scientist to know why they're staying put! I had to use a big enough lead to reach the spots, but I also know how soft the bottom is, so I had to move my safety bead right up on my leadcore leader, coupled with my own original pop-up rig, which is most well known these days outside Walthamstow as the Ronnie or spinner. I fished this slow sinking on a helicopter style with helisafes and 4oz leads.

My first two bites were small commons, not the biggest fish, but one was short and chunky, and the other was a long cricket

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By Rob Maylin and friends



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

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

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

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

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

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

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JOHN BARNES



bat shape. These were soon followed by an ancient little low-20 mirror. I'd kept the bait going in little and often all day to counteract the millions of roach the res holds, topping up with a bit more after each bite too. As the evening drew in, the fish were still fizzing at range, but I decided to take a rod off the area, opting for my deeper margin spot that I'd been keeping line free but also baiting little and often throughout the day. I actually call it my honey hole... and it proved me right. After getting the drop I needed to feel, I put a couple more handfuls of just 12mm baits over the rig and settled back for the night, but to my surprise it only took a few minutes for the alarm to give a couple of bleeps and then my Stow bobbin to just rise enough and hold up near my rod, and I was on it straight away!

I lifted into the bite, and then the fish bolted off the spot, but after a short fight, it was sitting in the folds of my net. As I peered over the mesh, I thought, mmm... that'll do... thinking it looked a good fish. Then my eye was drawn to a small patch it had on its back, and I realised the biggest common on the complex was sitting there, a pale yellow Signature hanging off my size 6 Kaptor Curve bang centre of its bottom lip – happy days! I got the rod back out with a few more handfuls, and then I called a mate who came and did a few shots for me. That was it for a few hours, but I stayed awake watching.

Just before dawn, the bobbin lifted a little to catch my attention, then went into meltdown! This fish was going mad, trying to make it up a culvert pipe to my left! Steering it clear into open water, I could relax and enjoy a great fight. Once netted, I realised I had got a fish called the Zip (for obvious reasons) sitting in the net, one of the prettiest fish in the 2 and 3 res. I then gave my pal a shout for a few shots and told

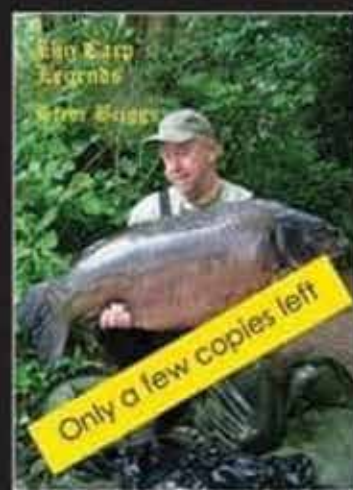
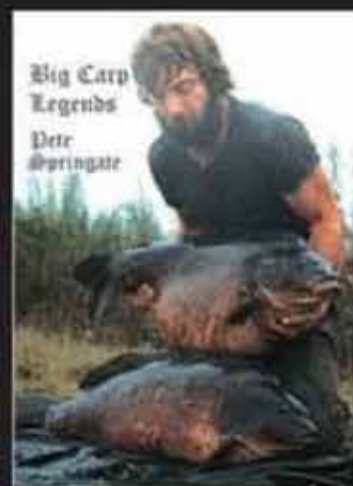
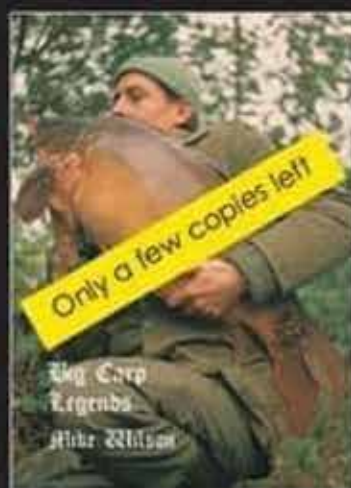
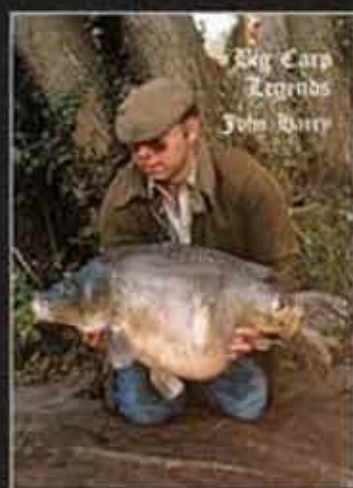
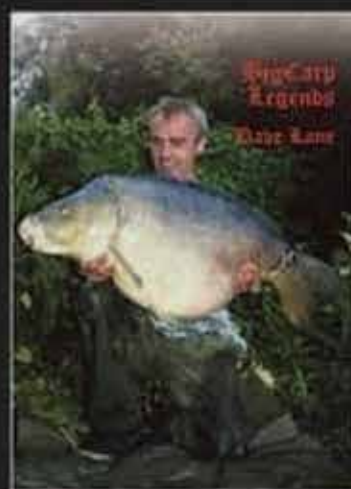
him to bring a rod this time, as they were sheeting up again on the open water spots! When he arrived, we both cast a rod to the area, put a few baits out with the stick, and I was away again within a few minutes with another smaller common.

We did the pics and had a coffee and a few laughs as we both watched the activities in front of us, both willing my pal Matt's rod to go for all his efforts. We're both family men and only had an hour before we had to go. Then as we watched the spots, there was an eruption in the shallow water followed by a bow wave and a big patch of fizz, and then Matt's clutch started clicking as it lay on the floor besides us – brilliant! It gave a great scrap before I netted a little breeze-block common for him, which actually made my morning! We packed up with fish still there in the swim, but we'll save them for another day.



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BUNDY'S OVERNIGHTERS

As the working week rolled by, it was soon back to Saturday morning. The wife goes to work, and I get to look after our beautiful 18-month-old daughter Phoebe for the day. Since the birth of our daughter, my fishing time has been limited to just being able to do overnights and the odd evening session (not that I'm moaning) instead of the usual 24 to 36-hour sessions, but this has made me spend my time on the bank more wisely, making sure I give myself the best possible chance of nicking a bite or two. Since I have been luckily enough to have a Bundy's ticket for the past two and a half years, I have had the pleasure of catching quite a few of its gems and my main target, called Petals, all 41lb 8oz of her in my first full season. She's a rare visitor to the bank and even more special being a mirror from the pit of commons. Since then I have turned my attention to

trying to snare one of the 40-plus commons that live there, catching plenty of my fair share of 30-pluses until now but never managing to get a 40. That all changed at 11:30pm on August 4th.

I was supposed to be attending a BBQ at one of the wife's friends', but I was itching to get down the deep pit after a couple of weeks away, as something just felt right, a feeling we carp anglers get from time to time like we may miss a chance even though the conditions weren't great with it being baking hot. Thankfully the wife gave me the go-ahead, and with that I dropped off our little girl with her at her friends at 5pm and then made my way to the lake. I arrived at around 5.30 and found that no other anglers were on! Perfect! I had no reason to rush, and grabbing a bucket, I set out for a slow walk round to try and find some carp. The algae was still bad, making spotting them swimming about more or less impossible unless they are right on top. I couldn't even see if they were held up in the snags.

With a lap of the lake complete and no carp seen boshing or cruising about, I was puzzled as to their whereabouts. I was expecting to at least find some on top with the weather being hot, but these deep pit carp don't play by the rules sometimes. The wind was slowly trickling into one of the shallower areas... well, shallow for this lake is 15ft with the average being 30-plus all the way down to 61ft. As I stood there for 10-15 minutes, eventually I saw what I wanted – a good group of carp swam no more than a couple of rod lengths out. As I watched, I saw a few more, and some looked to be the big girls, so I dropped my bucket into the swim and headed back to grab the gear. Once back in the swim, I watched for another couple of minutes just in case they were

just drifting through, but the same group was still about, so I was confident they wouldn't go too far for the night ahead.

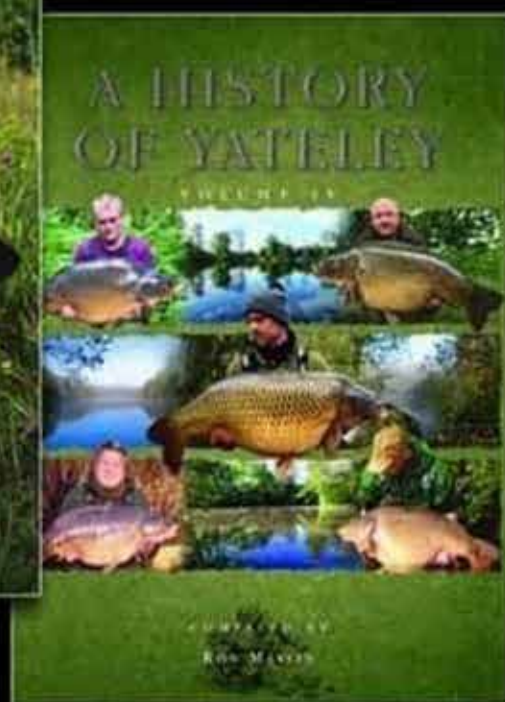
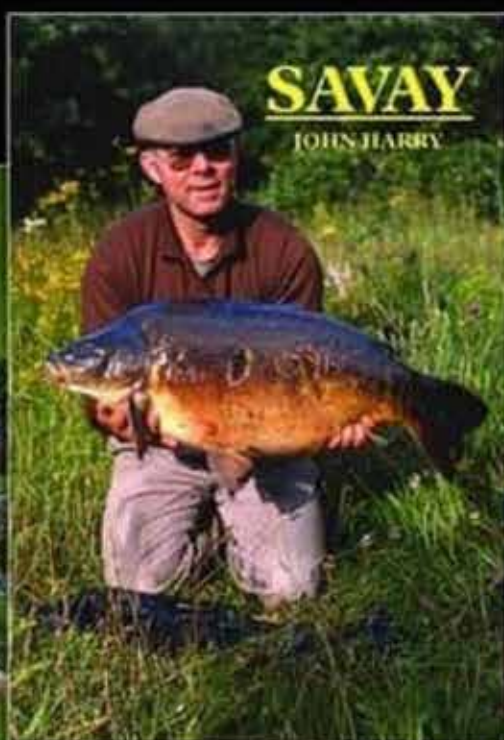
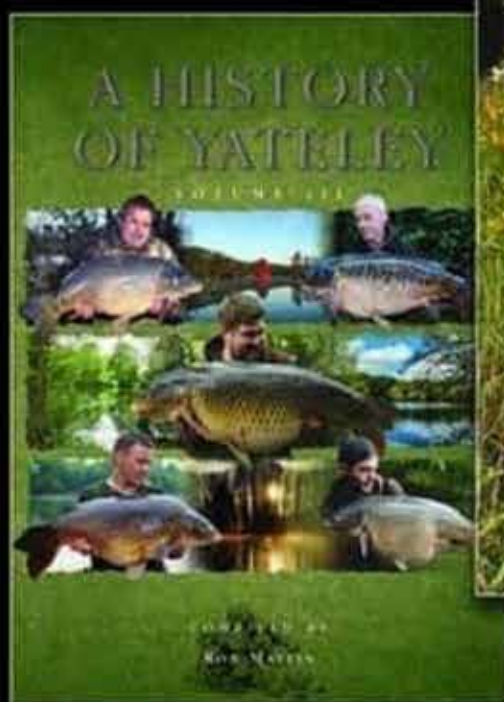
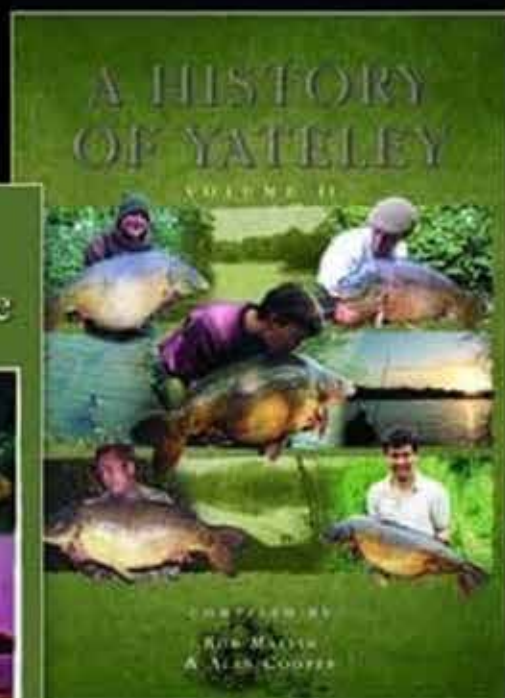
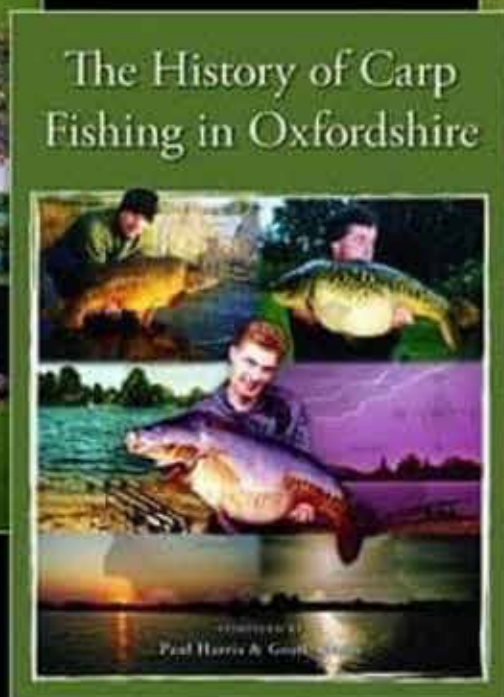
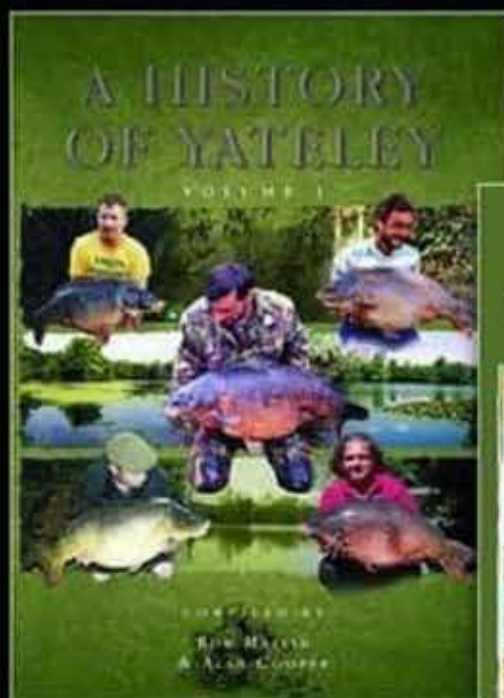
The swim I chose is one I'm fairly familiar with, so disturbance should be minimal, and a flick out with a bare lead went down with a mighty crack onto gravel. A few casts either side indicated that it was surrounded by thick/sticky blanket weed, but the spot was big enough for two rods. I opted to fish with a simple bottom bait rig. This was made up from Fox Edges components with 7ins of Fox 25lb Camotex soft dark camo with the coating stripped back to half an inch from the eye of the hook, a piece of Trans Khaki hook silicon to trap the hair and a size 5 Fox Medium Curv hook – simple but effective. The hook bait was one of my CC Moore 15mm Live System hard hookers that I have been glugging in the new Northern Special liquid for a month now, topped with a piece of plastic yellow corn.



With both rods into position, I introduced around 4kg of 10 and 15mm Live System that I had glugged with the Northern liquid and also a kilo or so of mixed particles. I was finally all set up at around 8pm, so I had some food and chilled for the rest of the evening. I was woken at around 11pm when I started to get some savage liners, and then I heard one crash not too far from the spot, so I was feeling that a bite could come very soon. The only problem with this spot is that more often than not, you get plagued with tench so I was praying not to get picked up by one. Then at 11:30pm, my right hand rod let out a few beeps and started to slowly tick off, but as I was making my way over, it dropped back then tightened and then repeated that pattern. As I was slipping the waders on, I was almost certain it was one of the red-eyed buggers as the



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bobbin was bouncing up and down. As I lifted the rod, the tip was tapping away, and still I thought it was a tench, but there was a bit of weight to it, and then this massive common just rolled in front of me. My knees went, and in a blink of an eye she was in my net! I was speechless as I looked down into the net... All along, I'd played this big common like it was a tench, and oh, how I was so thankful it wasn't.

As I lifted her out of the water and onto the waiting mat, it was obvious this was one of the A-team. I peeled away the mesh and looked in awe, finding my size 5 hook had absolutely nailed her in the bottom lip. After a quick look at her dorsal, it was clear it was one called "the Hole in the Dorsal", one I dearly wanted in my album. With the sling ready and scales zeroed, I hoisted her up, and the needle swung past 40 and settled at 46lb 8oz – target well and truly complete – and with her back on the mat, a few fist pumps followed. With her resting in the sling in the deep margin for a few minutes, I set up my camera equipment and the spotlight to do some self-takes. Normally doing self-takes isn't a problem, but I've never had to do them with a PB before, so I got her out, lifted her up, and thankfully got the best pictures I could manage. It was time for her to go back home, and after a few snaps in the sling and a kiss on the head, she powered away back to the deep. Wow, what a moment – one I'll never forget – and with no further action, I packed away and was on the way home at 9:30 one very happy carp angler.

It just goes to show that even with limited time, you can achieve your targets. My Bundy's adventure will continue, as there are at least three bigger commons hiding in the depths of this special lake.





THE BIG SUTTON

You often hear within this wonderful sport that a certain capture should never have happened due to the said angler being faced with an issue that under normal circumstances would have meant they should “never have been there in the first place”. Well, this is exactly what happened to me... However, with a little bit of luck and a huge amount of determination, I made memories, and I’m able to share my tale.

I arrived on Saturday morning amid the start of a huge weather system change. Driving to the lake, my truck was registering

986mb of air pressure, the first time it had been under 1020 in months. Upon arrival, the white foam flying and the sight of big waves that a windsurfer would be proud of had me thinking that there was a massive window of opportunity staring me in the face. The lake had been fishing very slowly indeed, like most places since I'd obtained my ticket. Five nights in, I had never felt close to catching one, with only tench to my name, but I used the time wisely in regards to reconnaissance by fishing different areas of the lake in order to locate likely areas.

My confidence was further boosted when it became apparent a couple had been caught from different areas of the lake and that they had been very active in the night, which was no surprise, as this weather was a different beast altogether. I dropped into a swim I'd never fished before in order to get right on the end of the ever increasing SW wind, but I set about fishing it completely differently upon locating a deep silt depression at what is close range for that particular swim.

Three multi rigs were fanned out over the zone, followed by a few hours of baiting up with a throwing stick, found me content and at peace that from an angling perspective I could do no more. A few hours passed, and the wind and rain became relentless and savage, so much in fact that my brolly was smashed to pieces, literally being held up by its pegging and connected storm poles. In the evening for a brief time the wind seemed to subside, so I decided to recast with fresh hookbaits and obtain a better line lay. The night proved to be a very long one, as I basically had to sit perched on my bedchair holding on to my brolly or it would have been blown away and out of the water park. My friend Reg had caught one

in the early hours, and I'd listened to them boshing out not too far away from my area, which was basically giving me the confidence to carry on with this endurance test... I was soaked and exhausted, having not slept.

Once it got light, I had no choice but to move, as it was impossible, and I required shelter a windbreak. With some help from Reg next door, the decision was made to try and move my brolly between us both. If it collapsed, I'd simply pack up and head home, but if we were successful then I'd stick it out given the weather conditions. As luck would have it, we were able to move my brolly next to some trees, which acted as an effective windbreak. How it didn't collapse I will never know, but it certainly would have been an impossible task on my own.

I decided to leave the rigs in place, as they were in and amongst a lot of bait, and I was more than happy to keep any more disturbance to a minimum. That evening I had the privilege of witnessing my target fish and doing the pictures. There had been more fish out too, and I just kept my fingers crossed it would be my turn, albeit only six nights into my campaign. Before getting in my sleeping back, I popped next door to see Reg. I thanked him again but clearly stated I felt something big was going to happen. The atmosphere was electric, and the brightness of the moon was incredible. If Carlsberg did "big fish weather", this was it.

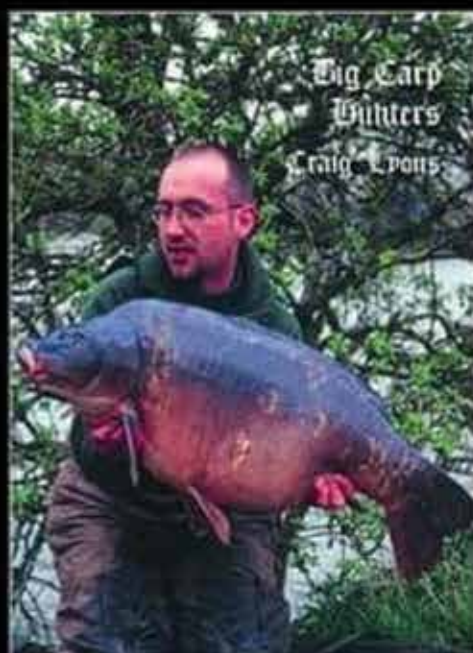
At 3am, I was awoken by my right hand rod absolutely melting off. Upon picking it up, I immediately knew I was attached to something special that certainly didn't want to make my acquaintance; it was like latching onto an express train. After a hard 30-minute battle, Reg from next door finally scooped

the net under my prize and stated, "That's massive, mate!" After a check on the scales, the needle settled on 48lb 8oz and a new UK personal best for me. Further to this, it was identified as the king of the pond and one of the lakes most sought after jewels, the Big Sutton. The rest of the morning was one of euphoria as my phone went into meltdown with friends wanting to congratulate me.

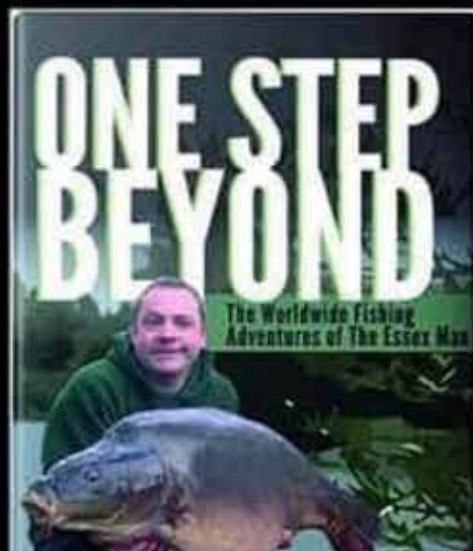
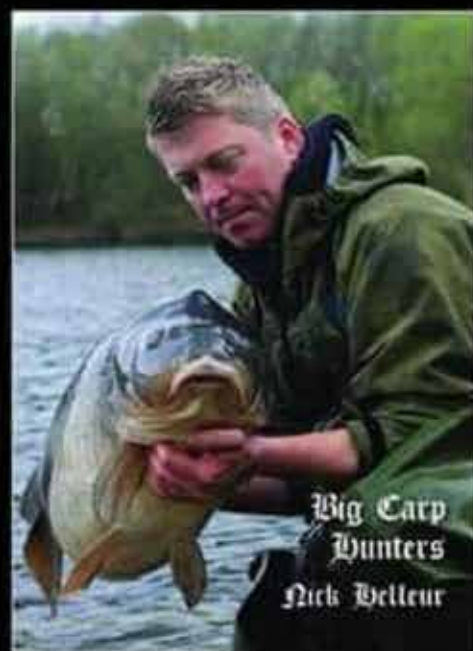
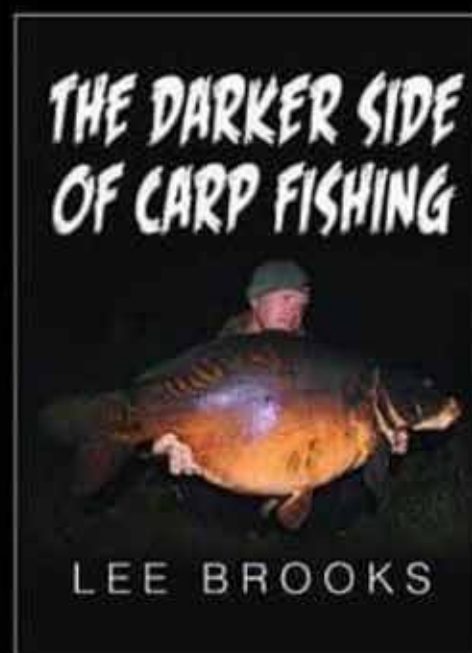
Life will always throw obstacles at you, but it's how to choose to deal with them. I choose to never give up and look forward to what the rest of my campaign may throw my way. Tactics used were a multi rig constructed with a size 4 Chod Hook and 35lb Stiff Coated Hooklink. Attached to this was a Butyric-C pop-up fished over a heavily baited area of profiled Red Amo boilies.



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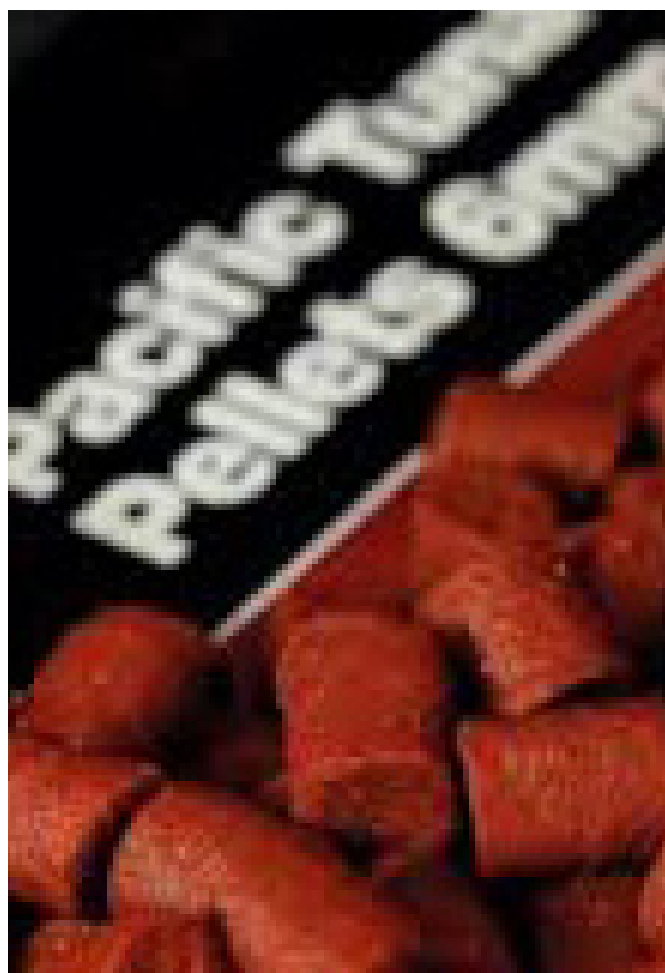
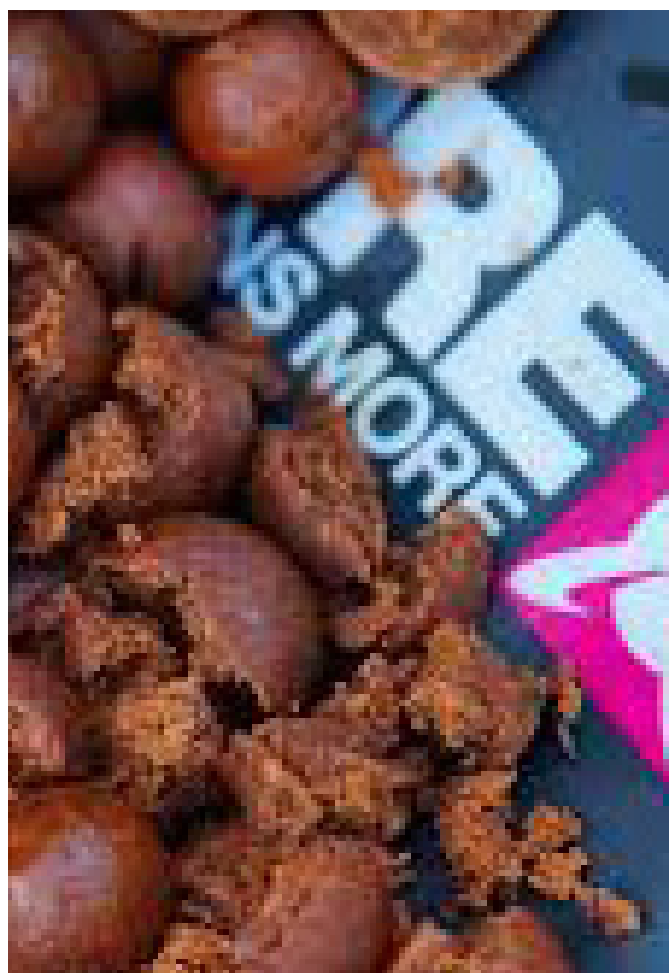
CAMBRIDGE CRACKER

I arrived at my syndicate in Cambridgeshire late Thursday night due to work commitments, but after a quick walk around, it was obvious that the carp were all down one end of the lake in the weed and kelp. With most of the swims taken, I set up in a swim known as the Car Park. I had a lead about, and it was clear that the silkweed was growing in abundance and the kelp was high and thick. Eventually I managed to find two hard spots – one was approximately 50 yards out to the right hand side of the swim up against the weed and kelp and a margin spot tight to the reed bed.

I decided I would start with four small Spombs of CC Moore Pacific Tuna boilies and pellet over the spot out into the lake and fish two rods on it. On the margin spot, I opted for a Pacific Tuna stick mix and a spread of boilies leading up to the spot.

Throughout the night, the fish were crashing amongst the

kelp and weed further out, but due to the kelp, I could not get a line near them. The next day, I reeled in about 12pm and decided to rest the swim for a few hours, as there was a bit of pressure this end of the lake, and I felt that this may draw them out of the weed and kelp. After reeling in, I put another two Spombs of boilies and pellets out. Just as I decided to put the rods back out, the pressure dropped from 30-degree heat, and it suddenly changed to strong southwesterly winds and a heavy downpour. With the rods all back out, I felt optimistic. The conditions looked perfect, but I was unsure how the sudden drop in pressure and conditions would affect it. Darkness came and with that the rain and wind started to subside, and half an hour later, the spot up to the weed and kelp ripped into life. With the lead dropping instantly, I could see it screaming



across the surface. I managed to get it away from the kelp, but the reeds were the next place of call, and within ten minutes, the fish had darted into them, and the hooked pulled.

The rest of the night was uneventful, but I could still hear them crashing further out to my left. I was aware that the bloke to my left, in the swim known as the Point, was leaving early that morning, and at first light, I was round there with my bucket reserving the swim.

I was on the move and by 12pm, I was set up in the point. It felt different, with more water to work with, and with the conditions completely different from the past few weeks, I felt very hopeful. After a quick lead about, I found three spots all hard up to the kelp and weed all spread across the swim and at different ranges, with the furthest being 100 yards and the shortest at 65. Before putting the rods out, I again started with four small Spombs of the Pacific Tuna boilies and pellets on two spots and scattered 1kg of boilies on the other. I decided to rest the swim, as I was aware that there had been someone in the swim all week.

I put the rods back out about 3pm, and by 9pm, I was starting to wonder what was going on. The conditions seemed perfect – overcast, 10mph southwesterlies and pressure around 1003/1005.

I was fishing 14mm Northern Special in yellow and white and decided I would drop down to 12mm, which was placed on my trusty and most reliable pop-up rig – the 360. For this rig I use the Fox Camotex soft 25lb light camo braid down to a Fox size 11 flexi ring swivel attached to a Fox size 4 Curve Medium. I find that out of all the hooks I have used, the Fox Curve Medium seems to sit just perfect and at the right angle



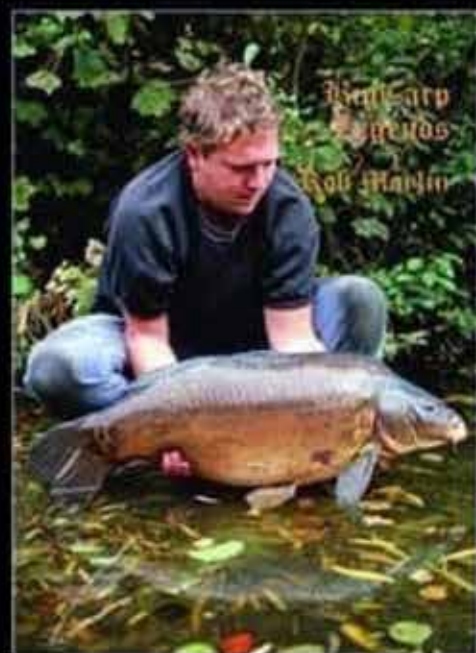
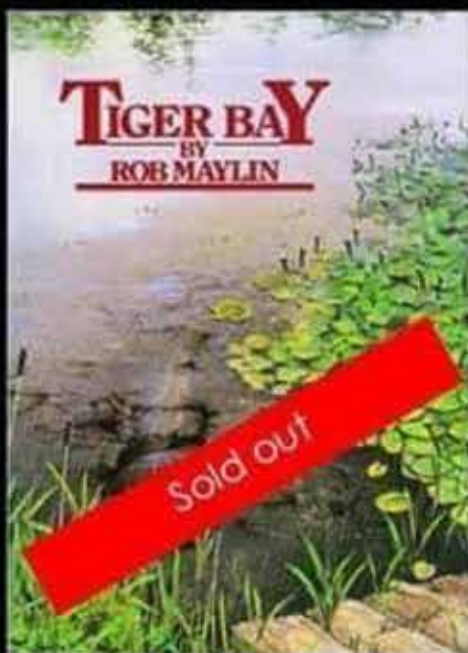
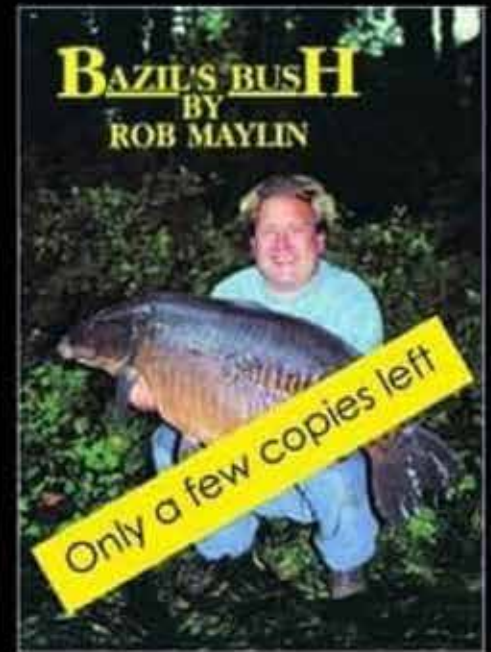
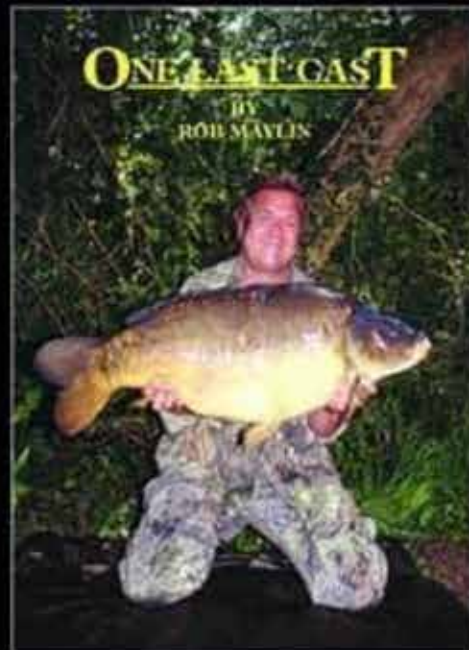
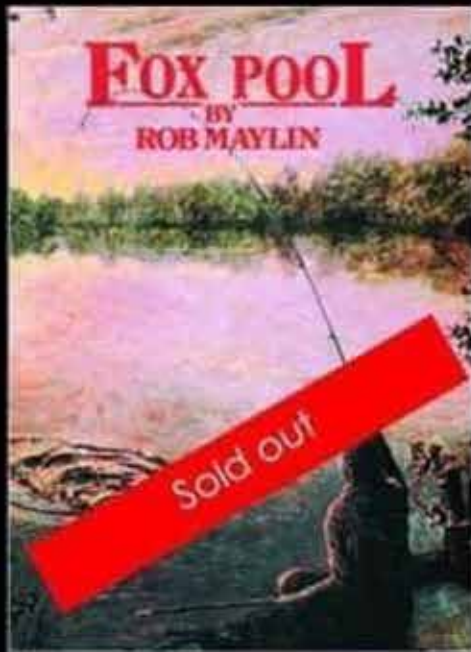
for the 360 without the need to include kickers etc.

As darkness fell and the wind starting to die off, the left hand rod screamed off, and after an eventful fight, which ended up wiping my other two rods out, the fish was safely in the net. Not the biggest in the lake, but a welcome confidence boost going into the morning. The scales went round to 18lb – not the biggest, but very welcome. With all my rods wiped out, I decided to change them all over to the 12mm white Northern Special. With all three rods back out and another two Spombs of bait over the spots, the traps were set, and first light seemed promising for another bite.

Just as I started to go back to sleep, the right hand rod screamed off, but this time it had headed straight for the kelp, and within a matter of minutes, the hook had pulled. Whilst it was frustrating, it was pleasing to see the change to the white pop-up seemed to have worked. With the rod back on

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its spot and the sun just starting to rise, the left hand rod was back in action, and after a good fight in and out of the weed, I was glad to see the fish roll over the cord.

With it clear that the fish were starting to feed hard, I put the fish straight into the retainer and the rod back on its spot along with two Spombs of Pacific Tuna boilies and matching pellets. This fish felt bigger, and the scales went (to my surprise) 29lb 6oz. The common was nice and still had some marks from spawning.

I was setting the camera up, and just as I knelt down ready to pick it up and take some shots, I heard the bobbin smash into the rod, and then the alarm was screaming as the left hand rod was away again. Instantly, it felt a decent sized fish.

Thankfully, my friend Ashley was on hand to put the 29 back in the retainer while I was battling with the fish in the kelp. After many hard and deep lunges and some heart-in-mouth moments when the braid flicked off the dorsal fin, I was glad to see it come steadily into the net. With a quick look in the net, to my amazement it was clear which fish it was – Black Spot.

The adrenaline was pumping; it was straight on the scales, which went into unfamiliar territory and stopped at a massive 46lb 10oz and a new PB. This ended up being the last fish landed that session with another fish also lost to ever-thankful kelp. I would just like to extend my thanks to my good friend Ashley Shuckford for his help and advice and of course his brilliant photographic skills.





THE BURGHFIELD COMMON

In July 2018, Tom Stokes caught the ultimate obsession in carp fishing – the Burghfield common, and here is what he had to say after catching it...

“To be honest, I am still at a loss for words. I really don’t think anything I could say will ever truly do justice to quite what this capture means to me. As a young lad from the Midlands, this fish was once nothing more than the impossible dream – the most incredible carp, living in the most challenging of environments some 120 miles from home... A long and determined journey followed, bringing blood, sweat and tears along with it.

All those thousands of miles driven, the hundreds of nights fished, the tons of bait, the hours of walking, climbing, cycling and baiting, not just on this lake, but on those I fished before it. Years’ worth of effort just for the chance to revel in that one moment of ultimate glory, which in reality may never come! But, as many of you now know, at 5.45am on Friday the 6th

TOM STOKES



FREELINE 90

July, just a few days after my 29th birthday, thankfully, that moment did come, and my 116th Burghfield carp turned out to be the one which I so desperately desired – THE BURGHFIELD COMMON!!

Thank you to everyone who took the time to message or call with their congratulations; the response has been well and truly overwhelming. I have tried to get back to everyone, but to anyone I may have missed, I do apologise... and to all those who I have met or who have helped along the way, you know who you are, and thank you also, you're all legends!!

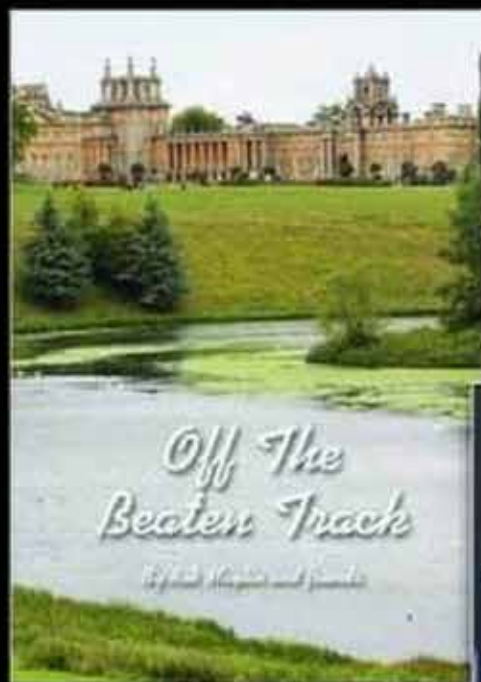
I've had the most amazing four and a bit years' angling on that lake. The likes of which I'm sure I'll never match, and in that time I have made some great friends, many of whom I am sure will stay friends for life. I'm not going to lie; I will miss that place!





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THE DESIREABLE DUO

A couple years back, I included a short story in an article in Big Carp magazine about the capture of a fish known as the Warrior in a Cambs gravel pit that I had set out to catch and “fluked” her on my first night. Well, she has a mate too, aptly named Warrior’s Mate, with equally striking looks of linear scales and a mature depth of colour that takes decades to create. Since the capture of the Warrior, I have only done



a handful of overnights on the pit despite it being a lovely lake, a slice of paradise really compared to the other, bigger and savage pit on the same ticket that had me locked within its unforgiving jaws for the past four years, keeping me from straying anywhere for long.

That other pit had felt very cruel for too long towards the end of this spring. I had endured a catalogue of harsh luck incidents, a ridiculous run of events that seemed to be holding me from success despite me putting in more effort and energy into my angling than I ever have and baiting up hard that should have created multiple chances. I just could never seem to get on the spots when fish were there, or the times that I did, some

freak of bad luck would always seem to happen to mess the chance up. I was incredibly frustrated, as I knew carp were demolishing my prebait. I had witnessed them doing so from up trees and in the margin, but only when I was on my way out the gate or the nearest swim was randomly taken usually minutes before I arrived or was moving over, and every time I did get on the active spot, the weather always seemed to abruptly turn for the worse bang on the same time, and the fish would vanish again. It felt like a curse, and it was starting to drive me mad.

When you find yourself laughing back at the pit with bloodshot eyes and a grin that resembles Jack Nickolson in *The Shining*, and, through gritted teeth, telling the solitary magpie that has been following you around to go f*** himself, you know it's time for a holiday! So, one day in late May, I arrived for a session, having done a work night that week only to be soul destroyed by losing my first bite that spring. I was met again with the familiar sight of the weather being bang-on for a prebaited spot, but the nearest swims had randomly also at the same time become the most popular and were taken. I just kept on driving down the track, and soon found myself gazing over the idyllic home of the Warrior's Mate.

The lake has a low stock of mirrors, only around a dozen or so I have been told, mixed in with a larger head of pristine commons, so to pick out one particular mirror was not a realistic goal for a man of humble expertise such as me, but did I dare dream? Of course I did. I already had a stroke of fortune arriving at the pit, as the swim I had in mind as my starting point was free, despite being a popular one, and I found out afterwards that I had passed and waved to the angler

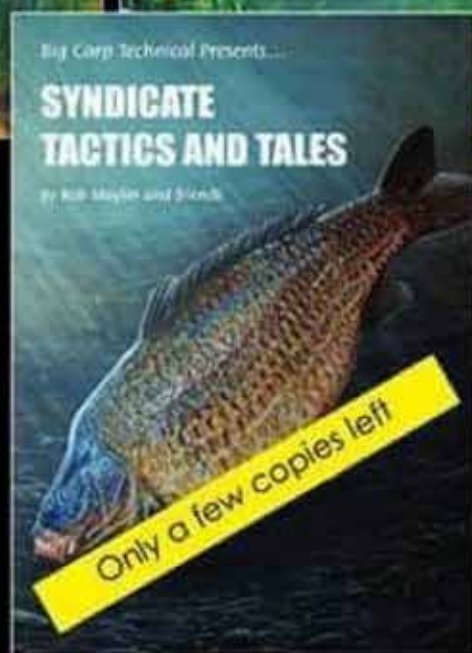
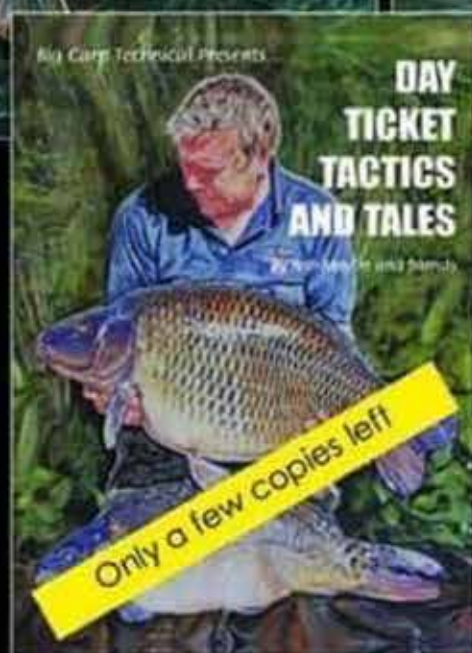
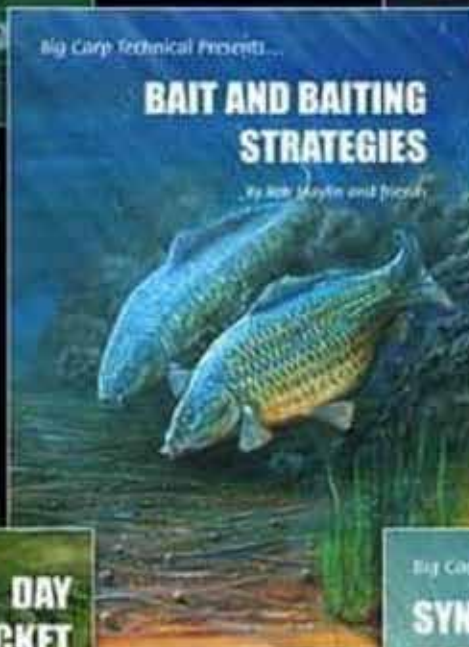
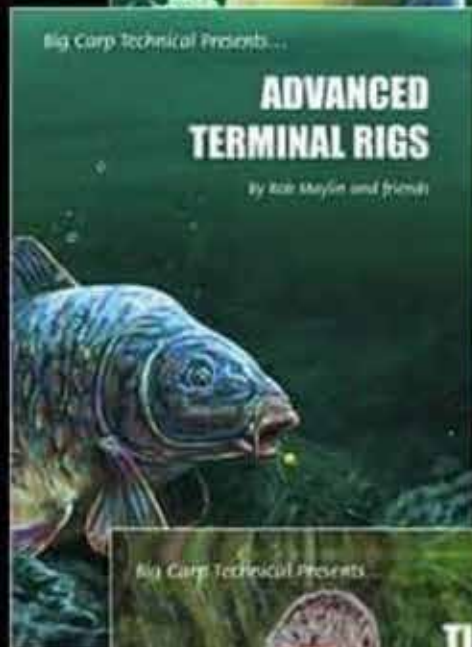
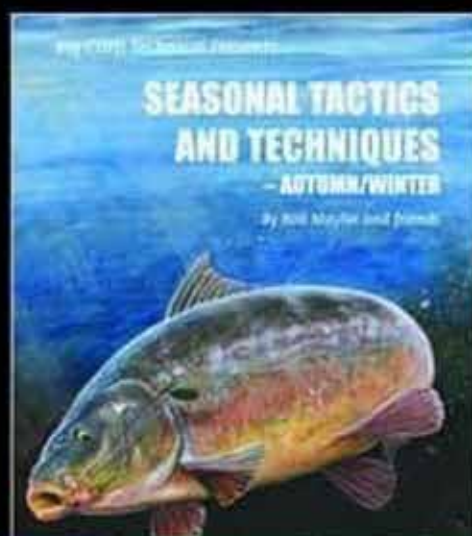
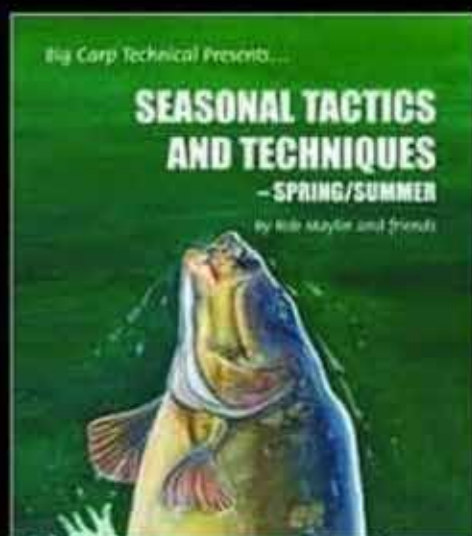
that had just vacated on my way through the gate, which was in complete contrast to the luck I had been experiencing. The swim had a large island feature at 50 yards' range and a small section of open water, but it was the calm eddy of water on the back of the island created by the wind funneling down the sides that screamed out to me.

Upon leading around, the deck felt clean out there except for eel grass tight to the island, which I suspect had not seen a great deal of bait or it wouldn't exist. So that was attractive for me. We all like to get a hard, clean drop when looking for spots, but how many times have those spots been fished to become that hard? That is the question I always ask myself. And if the spot has done a few fish, it is likely the carp may avoid it like the plague, especially on pressured waters such as this one? So I decided it was worth the gamble of risky presentation in the eel grass weed rather than fishing the hard drops. Although I usually prefer a bottom bait where I can get away with it, I felt a pop-up was essential for fishing over the eel grass to hopefully ensure the hook would settle proud and upright and not be fouled up on the stems of the weed.

Regarding the baiting approach, I decided a small item bait mix was the best choice, so it would hopefully settle gently and visibly over the grass to draw the fish down to feed. The mix was made up of hemp, corn, 4mm pellet, groundbait and crumbed and chopped Complex-T boilie, with a whittled-down matching pop-up to resemble a chop as the hookbait. I was not intent on "filling it in", as there were a few anglers on the pit with a lot of bait going out, too much for the stock really in my opinion, so I was fishing for one bite at a time, with half a dozen small Spombs over each spot being plenty. The bait

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application and the rods all went out as perfectly as I could have hoped for, and it felt really nice to be carp fishing again as opposed to what felt like a battle against a curse on the other pit. The afternoon turned into evening, and the sunset was enjoyed with a thick cut of steak and washed down with the complimentary bottle of Hobgoblin Gold or two of course... everything felt really nice!

The silence of the spring night was occasionally shattered by the sound of a carp crashing on the surface. They seemed to be all over the pit, and the excitement grew as I anticipated the morning bite time. 5am arrived, and I struck up the stove for its usual marathon runs of coffee on tap for the next two hours and sat myself up to watch my piece of water. Carp began rolling just around 15 yards past my spot that was tight to the end of the island. Do I recast on them and risk spooking them and move off the bait or do I sit tight? I pondered, but decided keeping my hands off my rods was the best idea. I had my daughter's new Jack Russell puppy named Peabody with me, and she was more than enough to keep my hands busy as she tried every trick in the book to slip out of my sight and commit a bloody murder upon one of the baby goslings that kept waddling past the back of my bivvy. As the morning rolled on by, the shows stopped, and I was beginning to think I had made the wrong decision by not casting a little further to the rolls. Then, around 11am, I started getting very subtle liners on the banker rod closest to the shows, the type of liners that suggested tails just picking up the leader as they fed on the spot, or so I hoped.

I pulled off another foot of line from my tight clutch to bow the line down a little more, as I didn't want a tight line spooking



them, but I had to be a bit careful... I couldn't slacken off too much, as I needed a tight clutch set due to the hazards of fishing so close to a snaggy island. Midday was about upon me, and I thought my chance had gone when out of the blue that rod erratically burst into life like it was attached to a bolting wild horse ridden by the Devil himself! I can remember just one frame in my memory as I launched myself forward towards the hooped-over and rattling rod, and the next frame I was hanging on as the culprit flat-rodded me on the tight clutch and battle commenced.

Her first trick was to head towards the snaggy island, so I had no choice but to stay virtually locked up and pray. The little bit of stretch in the mono cushioned her head knocking

and body twisting attempts at shedding the hook. I managed to turn her, and she began to kite on a tight line all the way into my margin to my right, which was littered with overhanging branches and roots – she was no fool. I had no choice but to hop into the lake up to my chest to get the best angle I could as I stretched every tendon in my body to extend the tip as far out as possible and keep the pressure on. I felt the dreaded grating of line against the snaggy branches as she tried to smash me off in there, and was muttering to myself, “No, no, no...” over and over like a broken record as fear of a loss began to wash over me.

But this is where my end gear of 3ft of fluorocarbon leader and ten yards of 30lbs braided shock leader came into play, and slowly and agonisingly I managed to maneuver the fish back through the overhanging branches and eventually persuaded her into open water without disaster. Here she powered past me at about 20 yards’ range, and through my Polaroid glasses, I caught a glimpse of an orange-toned flank with a distinct colour difference each side of the lateral line, and I thought to myself, “Mirror!” I can tell you, I went very easy on her from then on now that she was out of the worst danger zones, as she plodded from left to right in front of me for several minutes, all the time twisting around. Yard-by-yard, I persuaded her closer as she tired, with my heart in my mouth, then inch-by-inch as she finally took a gulp of air, and over the cord she went.

I looked down and was blown away at a large and prehistoric looking plated back, and in the water, I tilted her on her side in the net to make sure it wasn’t a recapture of the Warrior, and it wasn’t. I couldn’t believe my luck and stood there holding

the net just laughing my head off to myself for a minute or so before composing myself and securing her properly. On the mat she looked awesome with those pastel tones that only come with age, and big linear scales, the type of carp I dreamt of catching as a young angler in the 90s. After I did the self-takes, I checked a photo of a past capture, and it was confirmed that it was indeed the very sought after and elusive Warrior's Mate, and as quick as that, my quest was over on the first morning. How luck can change! It was just what I needed after a gruelling spring, and I had fallen back in love with carp angling again – a day to remember, for sure.



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