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3	SANDHURST
4	FARLOWS LAKE
5	COKING FARM
6	NORTON DISNEY
7	OAK LAKES FISHERY
8	BERNERS HALL
9	CEFN MABLY
10	CROMWELL

TOP 10 CARP FISHING BRANDS	
1	DAIWA
2	SHIMANO
3	REUBEN HEATON
4	SOLAR
5	JAG
6	FREESPIRIT
7	FOX
8	TRAKKER
9	CHILTERN RODS
10	KUDOS

TOP 10 FRENCH HOLIDAY VENUES	
1	IKTUS
2	ABBEY LAKES
3	CRETE LAKES
4	BRITTANY FOREST
5	GIGANTICA
6	RAINBOW
7	THE AQURIUM
8	DREAM LAKES
9	FISHABIL
10	RIBIERE

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

TOP 10 BAIT COMPANIES	
1	MAINLINE BAITS
2	STICKY BAITS
3	DYNAMITE BAITS
4	CC MOORE
5	TARGET BAITS
6	NUTRABAITS
7	DNA BAITS
8	URBAN BAITS
9	DAVE MALLIN BAITS
10	GOODZ CARP BAITS



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

BC

BIG CARP: 361 AUGUST 2026

THERE SHE IS



OLD HOGG HIGGS FERRIS

FULL OF UK STORIES, TIPS AND CATCH REPORTS

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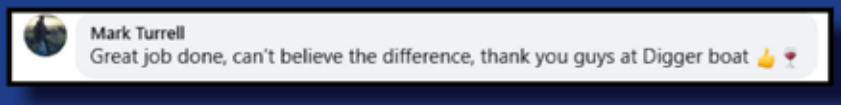
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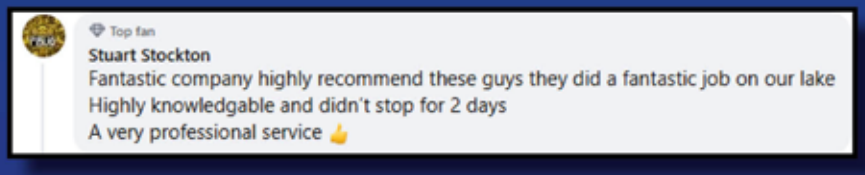
CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Big shoutout to the lads at Digger Boats Ltd
I've been living onsite at Carthagena Fisheries for 23 years now, and we've had plenty of work done over the years... but this one tops the lot!
We've been fighting a losing battle with reeds taking over the entrance to one of our bays for a few years now. Even tried getting in ourselves with dry suits and pulling them out by hand absolutely brutal work and getting nowhere fast... was starting to think we'd lose the bay completely.
On top of that, the carp were loving it — hiding in the reeds and becoming a nightmare to catch
We'd had other companies in before with weed boats, but if I'm honest, the results just weren't great.
Got James from Digger Boats in, he came down, had a proper look and got stuck in... and what a job they've done!
3 days later and the place has been completely transformed it's something I've wanted sorted for years and it's finally done.
Already this spring we've had over 22 fish out — including a few we haven't seen in years! Normally we'd only see a handful by now. Can't recommend them enough — top lads, proper job done
Thanks again boys — Jerry Hammond









The company can carry out any aquatic projects on Rivers, Canals, Lakes, Ponds and Marinas. Weed removal, dredging, water deepening, reed and rush removal, aquatic tree works and much more.

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

07768 731425
info@bigcarpmagazine.
co.uk

Design & Production
James Harrison

Advertising Sales
Bountyhunter
Publications
mobile 07768 731425

BIG CARP 361:
AUGUST 2026
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Front Cover:
Stuart Higgs with a missing list mirror.



The missing list carp - almost every lake has got one if not more. What causes these carp to avoid capture for season after season? Obviously they could have been hooked but unknowingly lost in that time .

The syndicate that I'm on had around 30 original carp in it. We'd seen them the first season of having the lake at spawning time. In 5 years only 2 small commons have graced the bank? As the lake had been unfished (officially anyway) do those carp just turn on to a fully natural diet and rarely, if ever, pick up bait? Big commons in particular are known to be very predatory, so why would a fry feeding carp pick up a boilie? This is certainly one carping conundrum that hasn't been fully cracked yet.

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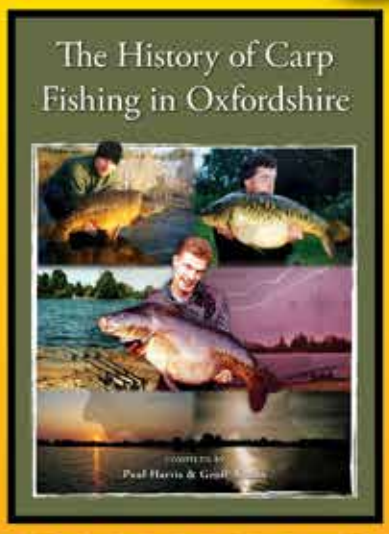




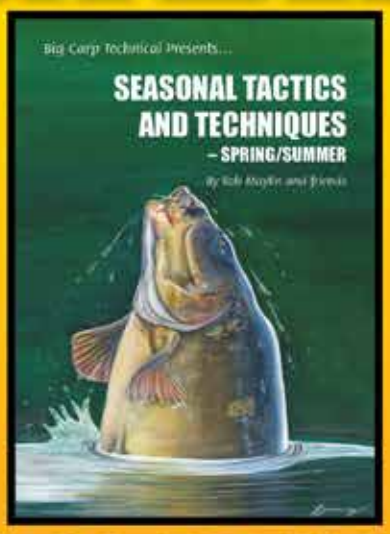
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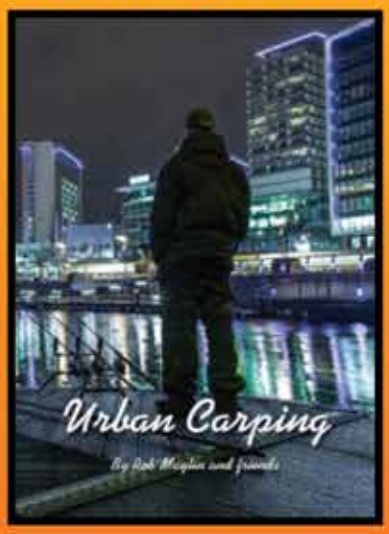






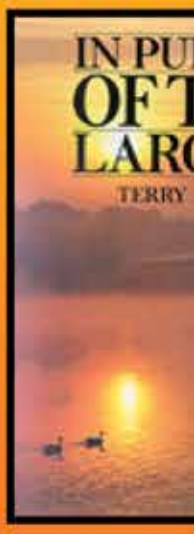


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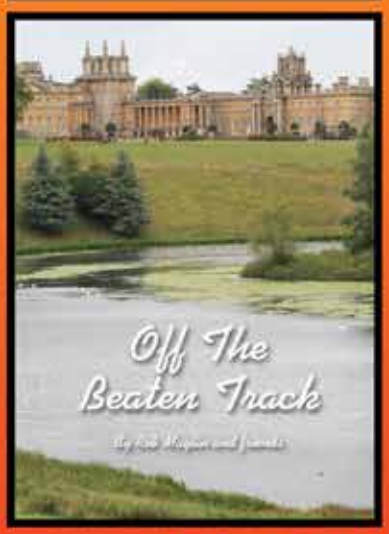














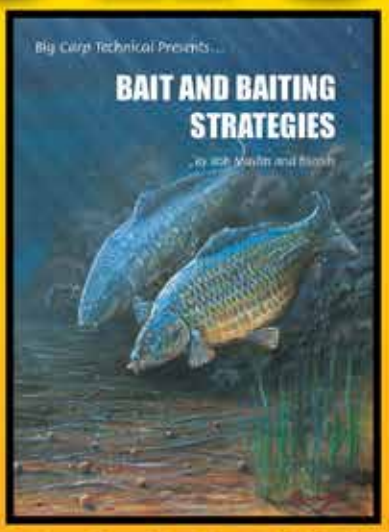


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NEW AND OLD BOOKS: WWW.EBAY.C

CORCHERS



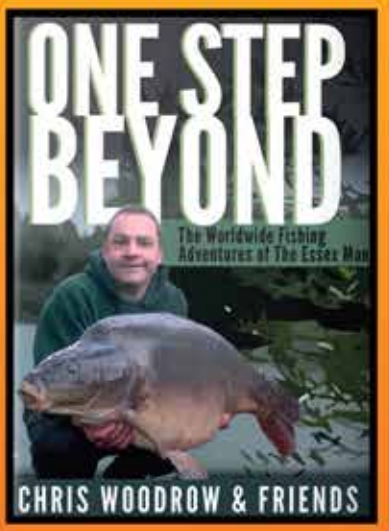


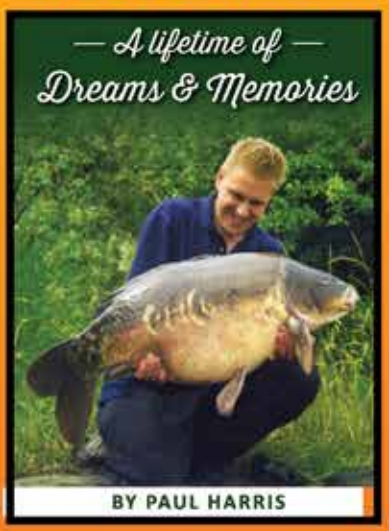


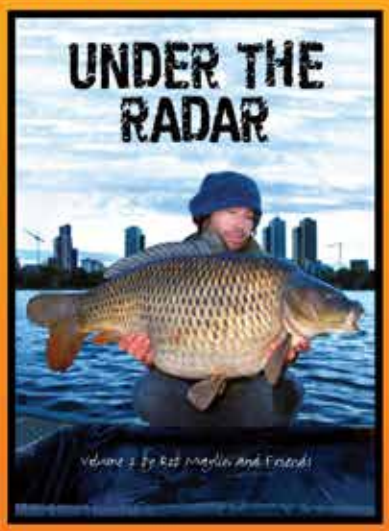


ND GET READY FOR SUMMER ACTION

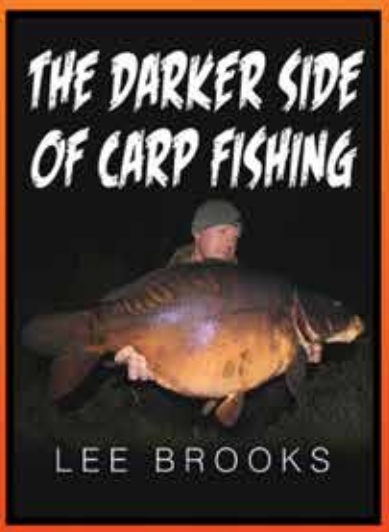












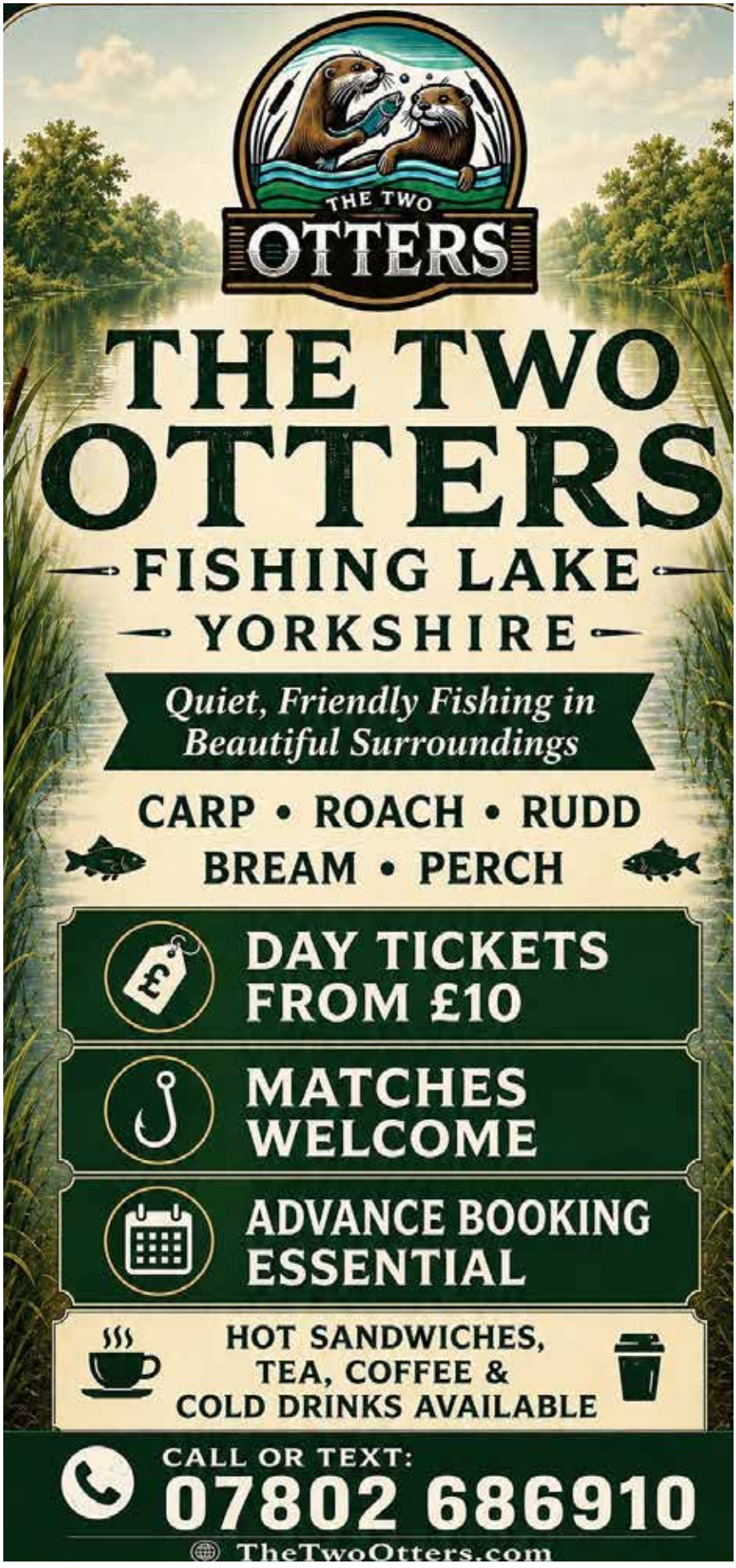




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SHOCKLEADER



LANE CHATENDEN RIP



It is with great sadness that the Tubemonkeys Team shares the heartbreaking news of the passing of one of the greatest gentlemen we have ever had the privilege to know,
Mr Lane Chittenden.
We have lost a dear friend, a valued member of our team, and someone who will be deeply missed by everyone who knew him. Our thoughts and heartfelt condolences are with Lane's wife, Tina, and all of his family during this incredibly difficult time. Please bear with us over the next few days as we come to terms with this devastating loss. Thank you for your understanding.
"Rest easy, Lane. You'll always be part of the Tubemonkeys family

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Our Get Fishing sessions are designed for children who are new to angling or want to build confidence and learn the basics in a fun, safe, and supportive environment.

From setting up a rod and tying knots to safely handling fish, casting, and water safety, our qualified coaches guide every young angler step by step. Along the way, they can work towards their Get Fishing Awards, celebrating their progress and achievements.

It's about so much more than catching fish—it's about building confidence, making new friends, spending time outdoors, and creating memories that last a lifetime. All equipment is provided, so there's no need to own any fishing gear—just come along and give it a try!

If you'd like your child to get involved, send us a message to find out more about our upcoming Get Fishing sessions. We'd love to welcome you to the bank!

Parks Angling Club

Priory & Shoebury

3RD ANNUAL JUNIOR EVENT

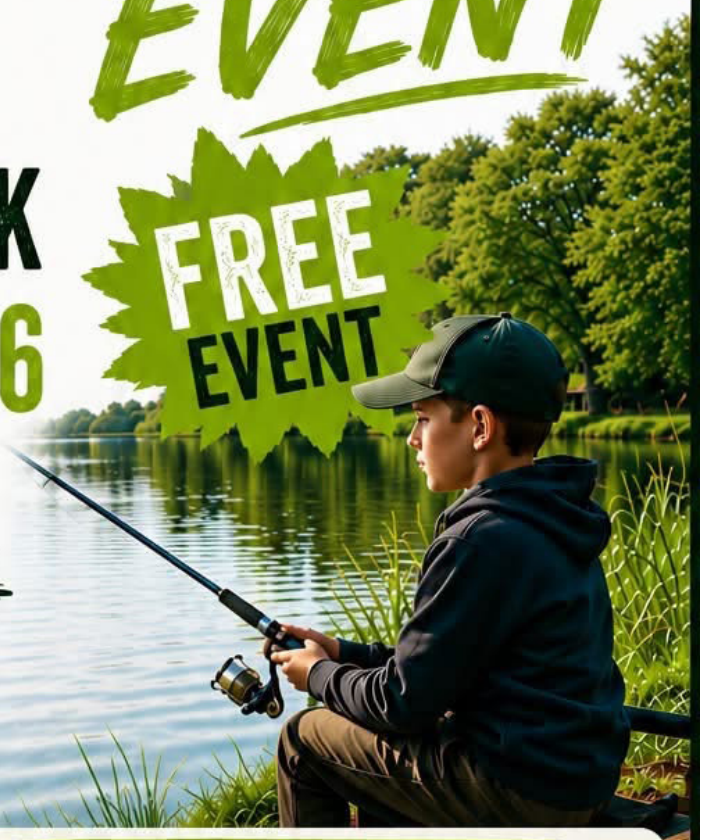
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EDDIE LUCIA RIP BY MATHEW HART



A total of 20 students from the College's Level 3 Land & Wildlife and Agriculture Diploma courses took part in a day of practical learning at the College's impressive onsite fish farm and lakes.

A further eight students attended a follow-up visit to Embryo's Baston fishery near Peterborough. The project offered students a rare opportunity to work directly within a professional fishery environment and gain real insight into the industry.

This fantastic learning event was captured in a new film that brings the students work in fisheries management and conservation to life. Produced for the Embryo YouTube channel, the film follows the full journey of fish from rearing through to stocking, highlighting the strong

connection between Embryo and Shuttleworth College.

The film begins at the College's fish farm, where students took part in netting ponds and learning the foundations of fish husbandry, before progressing to real-world experiences at Embryo's Baston site.

Neil Sampson, Land and Wildlife Technician at Shuttleworth College, said:

"It's real industry experience. They're out there getting wet, getting cold and fully involved in the work. The students absolutely love it and don't stop talking about the experience for weeks afterwards."

"Without partners like Embryo, they simply wouldn't get these opportunities as regularly. It's been fantastic to see the partnership grow over the past five years, and long may it continue."

The partnership forms part of Shuttleworth College's ongoing work with Embryo Angling, part of the wider Korda Group, which includes providing a growing-on facility for fish supplied to the Shuttleworth Fish Farm and giving students direct access to industry expertise.

Matt Pettitt, Director of Embryo Angling Habitats, said:

"This project is something we are very proud of, creating meaningful real-world opportunities for education and engagement. Working with Shuttleworth College is a great example of how we can support both the environment and future careers within the industry."

The film concludes by showcasing the finished fishery and what it offers to visiting anglers, demonstrating the full journey from fish rearing through to stocking and sustainable fishery management.

The film is now available to watch on the Embryo YouTube channel



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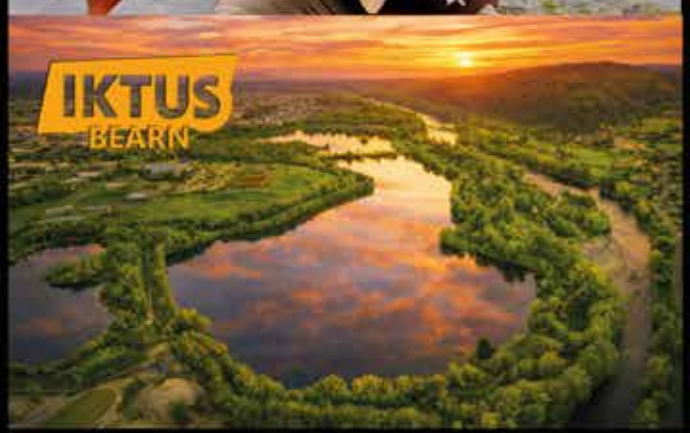













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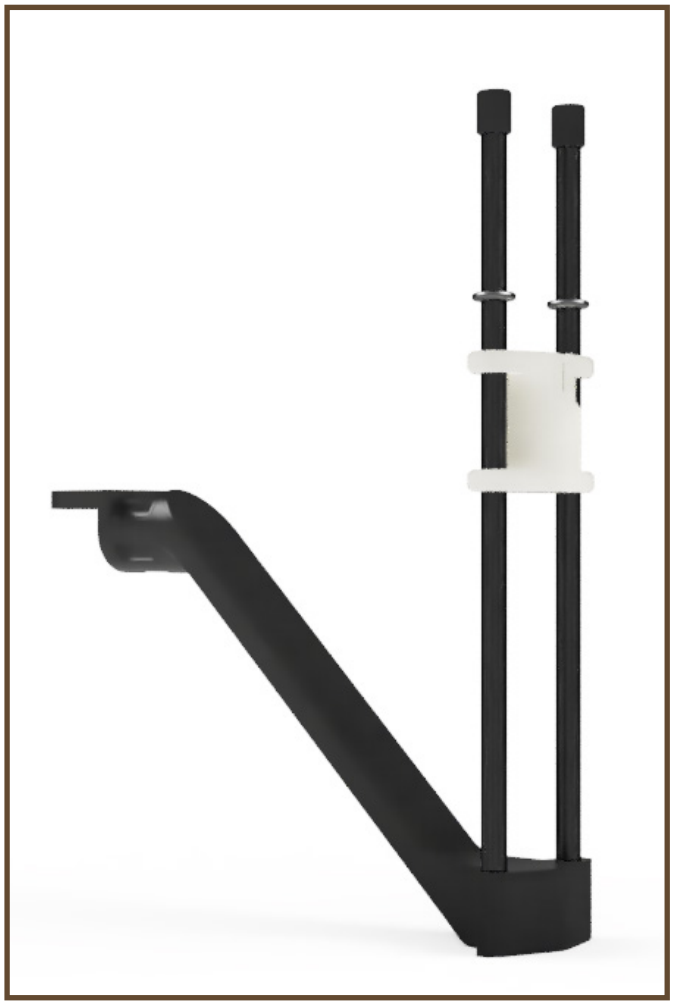
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Big Carp Promotions

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Oak Lakes Fisheries

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



30 lb 4 oz long common



18 lb 10 oz



28 lbs



15 lbs



15 lbs



19.5 lbs



Delboy 27.14



Nice start to the day 7.45 rod ripped off and this was the reward

Big Carp Promotions

OAK LAKES FISHERIES SOUTHMINSTER

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



A cracker for Gary



24 lb ghosty carp day ticket lake



15 lb 8 oz swim 11



14 lb



Another nice fish



Good to see young lads enjoying their fishing



Lovely catch



Proper soaking

Big Carp Promotions

OAK LAKES FISHERIES SOUTHMINSTER

Oak Lakes Fisheries

www.oaklakesfisheries.co.uk

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



In his own words Oak Lakes bailiff Gary said "the lady of the lake"



Cracking catch, cracking background



19lb 4oz his PB



26lb common



Jack had this cracker on the Reel Impact Angling Programme



19LB on the nose



Buddha said "old crusty one" - cracking carp 22 lb 8 oz



19 lb 4 oz absolutely lovely looking carp

Big Carp Promotions

OAK LAKES FISHERIES SOUTHMINSTER

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





12 lb 3 oz swim 6/7



Cracking mirror on the last bit of dusk



Poor fish being handled by Gary with his shirt off



20 lbs



25 lb



21 lb 4 oz
a cracking looking common



A hot night catch for the consistent Gary

DISNEY DONKEY



Darrell Peck with a stunning 48lb 12oz mirror

RECORD ROCKED



Mike Nixon with the Waterside common at 68lb 8oz

ANCHORS AWAY



Blaise Price with Anchor at 47lb.

FINN PERFECT



Dave Finn with the Box Mirror at 52.12

LINEAR FIFTY



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WASING WHACKER



Jon Williams with one of the lakes big mirror of 42lb

GO HIGGO



Ian Higginson with the Hardwick Mirror at 48lb 1oz!!

STILL GOT IT



Terry Hearn with a 50lb plus common from a Surrey Pit.

CATCH REPORTS

ATOMIC BOMBER



Callum Lower and his new PB. A UK 50!!!

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COCK ON



Paul Alcock with a new PB Old Rubber Lips at 51.10

TOP MARKS



Mark Willcocks with a common going 58.12.

DAN THE MAN



Dan Hallett with Drop Scale, weighing in at at 49.12

AWESOME ADAM



Adam Francis has continued his year in fine form.



FIGHTING FIT

Cliff Fiske with a 41.8 Mirror



BIRTHDAY BRUTE

Karl White had quite the present for his 40th



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The ultimate in rod security. The rod is securely held in place under lock and key. The side bar locks at the 9 o'clock position and is released when you press it down to the 6 o'clock position. Simple - easy - reliable. Individual inserts from 12mm - 25mm perfectly match your rod. There's no compromise here. A must for fishing locked up, snag fishing or when fishing your rods out in the lake. Your rod has never been this secure. Manufactured from almost indestructable nylon using the very latest lazer technology right here in the UK.

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SPRING PICK



Adam Francis' pick of the bunch.

KICKING OFF



James Hutton's year kicked off in true style.

IT'S NO JOKE

A lovely summertime capture for the Jesterman



LIN TOPS IT OFF



Matt Berale with Anderson's Lin

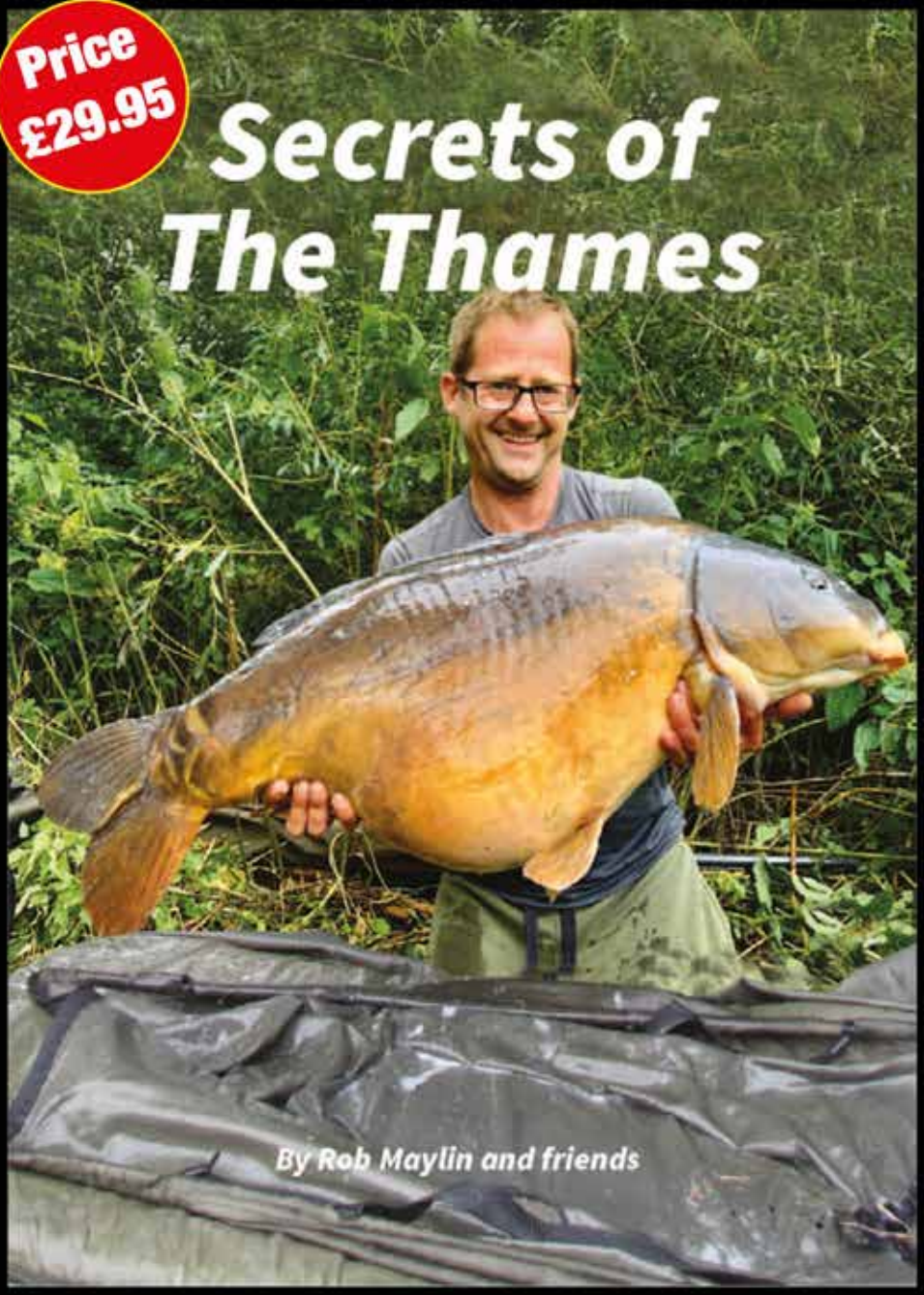
BRIDGER'S BRACE





Jerry Bridger who banked these two stunners weighing 40lb and 36lb 6oz

SECRETS OF THE THAMES











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).

By far and away the largest carp water in UK. Now sit back and enjoy just a few of its many secrets.

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AMELIA ROSE

AN UNFORGETABLE WEEKEND

When my dad handed me an envelope on Christmas Day, I had no idea what was inside. As I opened it, I couldn't believe what I was reading. I'd been given a ticket to attend The Fish N Show 2026 at Linear Fisheries.The best part was that it was announced by Scott Lloyd himself on his Fisherman's News YouTube channel. Watching the video and hearing my name called out was such an amazing feeling. I was absolutely made up and from that moment I started counting down the days.This wasn't my first visit to Linear. Earlier in the year we'd fished B1, but unfortunately the carp





had started spawning so we never really got the chance to fish it properly. Ever since then I'd wanted to go back and have another go.Little did I know that I'd end up on exactly the same peg again.

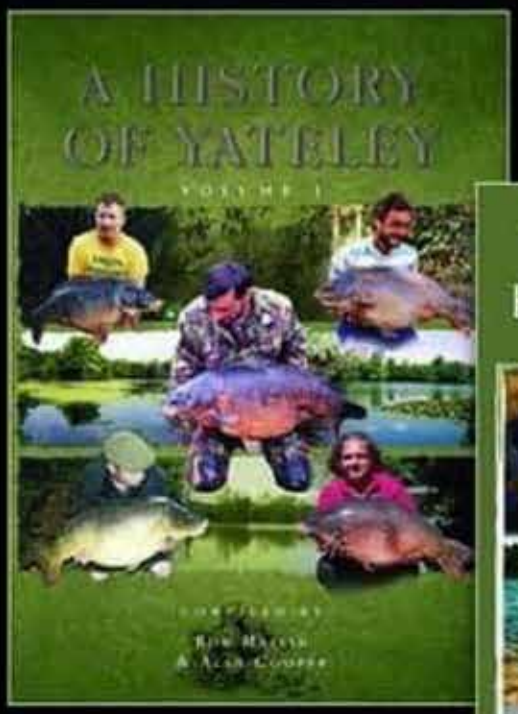
Arriving at Linear: We arrived early on Friday morning and the atmosphere was incredible. Everywhere you looked there were anglers and some famous faces from the carp fishing world and loads of people chatting about fishing. It already felt special before a rod had even been cast.Before the peg draw we all headed off on the watercraft walk. Even though it was close to 40°C, I loved every minute of it. I took my time watching the water, looking for signs of fish and trying to work out

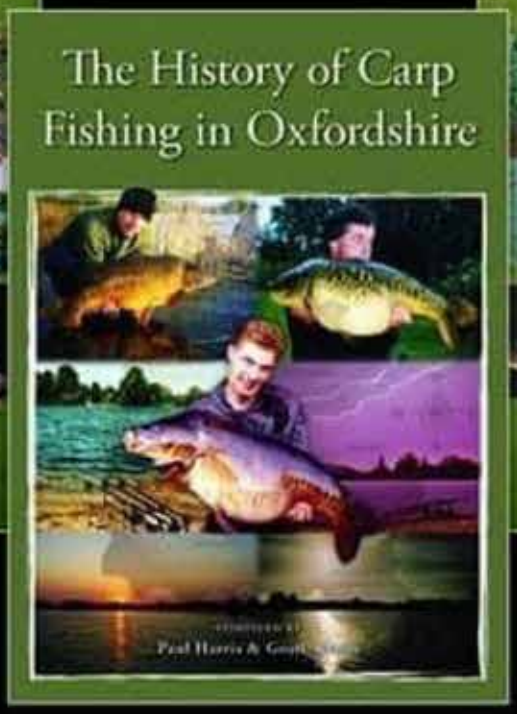


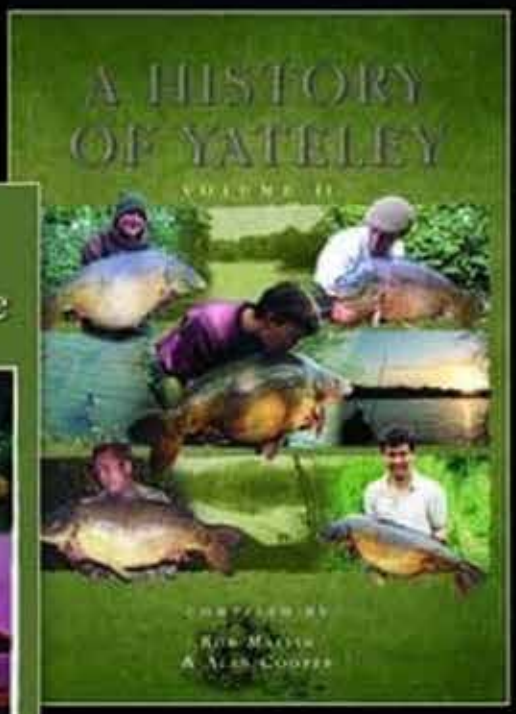


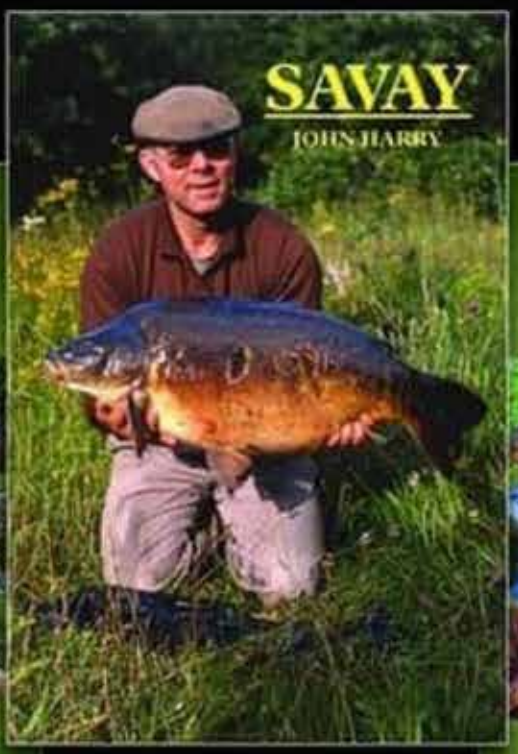
where I'd want to fish if I had the chance.As we reached Peg 1, I noticed carp moving through the shallow water. They looked really comfortable there and kept drifting in and out of the area. Around 60 yards out I also spotted a gravel bar that looked perfect. It was comfortably within my casting range, meaning I could fish accurately without trying to overcast.Straight away I hoped I'd draw that peg.Lucky Number One. Back at the marquee everyone gathered for the draw. When my peg number was called I couldn't stop smiling...Peg 1!.I honestly couldn't believe my luck. The peg I'd wanted all morning was mine.We quickly got everything set up and before long I had three solid bags tied and ready to go. Using everything I'd learned from watching YouTube videos and practising at home, I cast

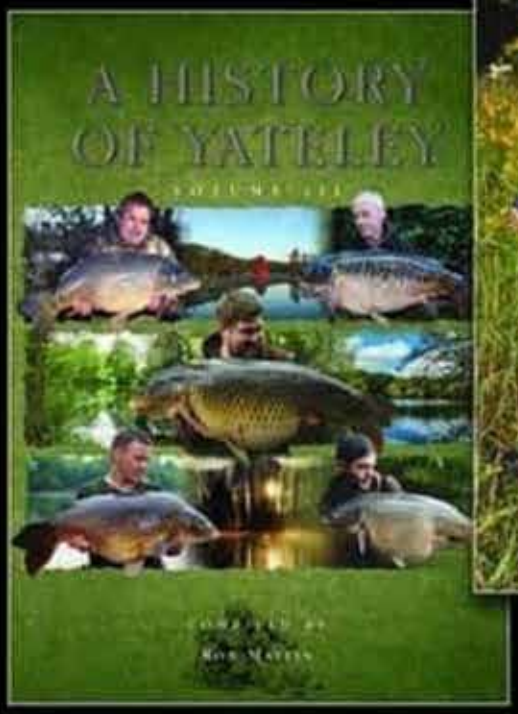
THE HISTORY SERIES

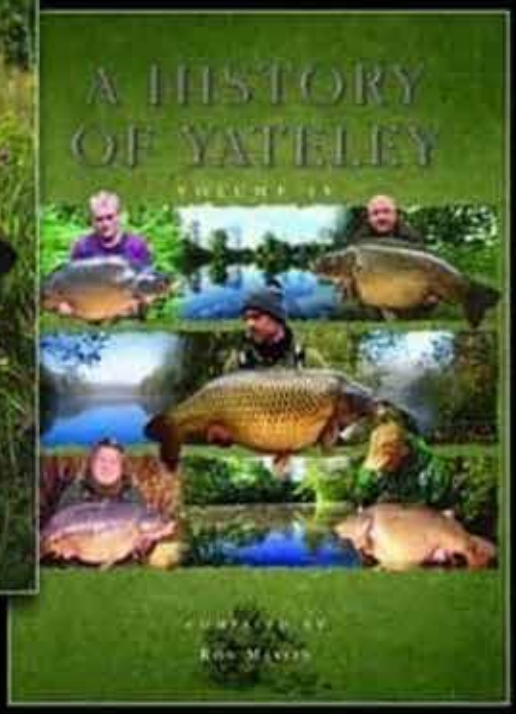












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THE
FISH
SHOV

all three rods onto the spots I'd found.Now all I could do was wait.

Meeting One of My Heroes: Not long after getting settled, someone walked over who I'd been really hoping to meet, Rob Burgess. I've watched loads of Rob's YouTube videos over the years and learned so manybtips from him about solid bag fishing. To actually have him standing in my swim was unbelievable.He spent around half an hour chatting to me, asking about my fishing and showing me exactly how he ties his own solid bags. He never rushed me and answered every question I asked. It meant so much that someone with so much experience would take the time to help a young angler.Then, right in the middle of our conversation... One of my rods absolutely melted off. The fight felt like it lasted forever, but eventually





a huge mirror carp rolled over the net cord.When we lifted it onto the scales, it went 30.8lb. A new personal best. My first ever carp from Linear. Rob stayed to help, took the photographs and celebrated the capture with us. Then, in true Fish N Show fashion, everyone grabbed a bucket of water and tipped it straight over me! Considering how hot it was, I wasn't complaining one bit.

Even Bigger: After carefully returning the fish, I recast all three rods straight back onto the same spots. It wasn't long before another familiar face walked into my swim.

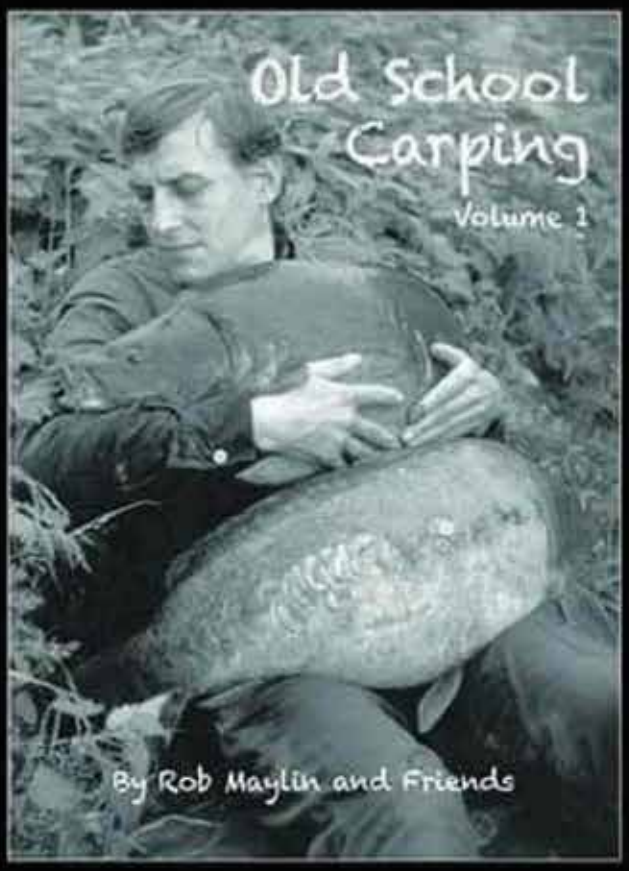


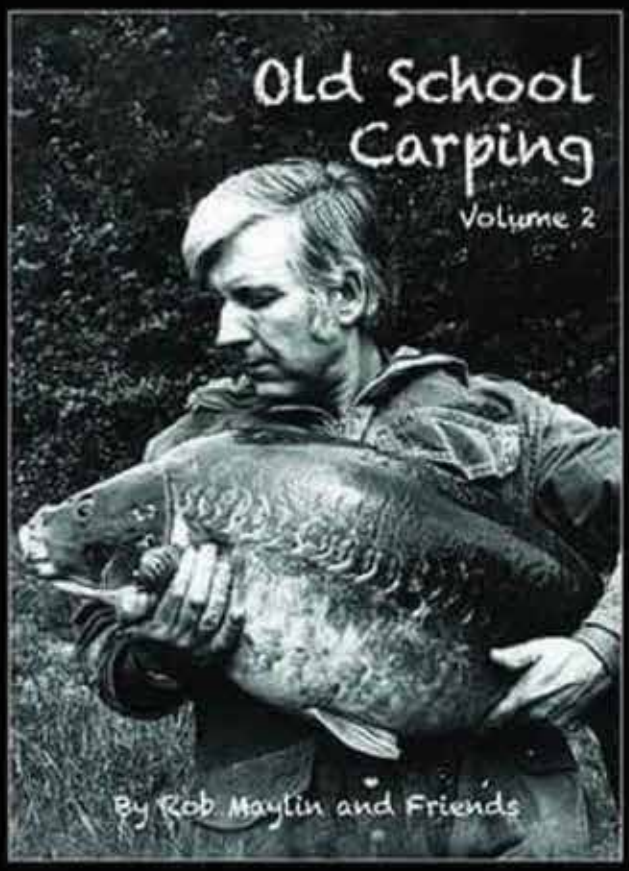
Scott Lloyd had come over to congratulate me on my new PB. We were chatting about the capture when suddenly... The rod screamed off again.I honestly couldn't believe it.nAfter another brilliant fight, an even bigger mirror slid over the waiting net.This one pulled the scales around to an incredible 34.7lb. Another personal best. Two PBs within just a couple of hours.I was completely speechless. The celebrations started all over again, with another bucket of water over my head and everyone laughing. They were moments I'll never forget.

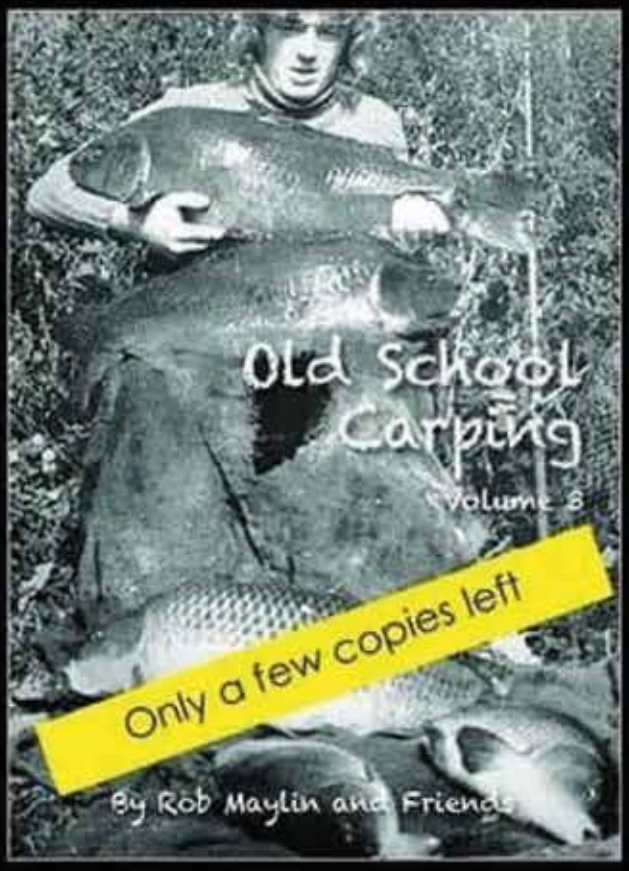
The Heat Didn't Stop the Fishing: As the afternoon turned into evening, everyone gathered for the BBQ before sitting down to watch Tom Stokes' brilliant talk. Afterwards we all settled in to watch the England football match before heading back to

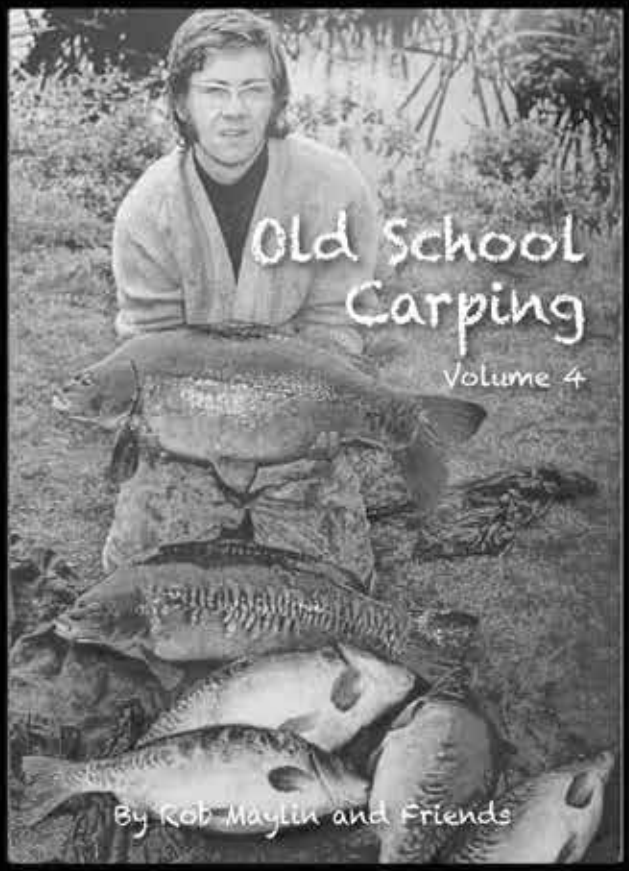


OLD SCHOOL CARPING SERIES









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our swims for the night. Even after midnight the temperature was still incredibly warm. At around 1:30am, one of my alarms burst into life. I jumped out of bed and was straight into another powerful fish.

I was absolutely exhausted by this point and even started feeling sick and throwing up while playing it. My dad thought it was hilarious and couldn't stop laughing, but there was no way I was giving up. I'd waited too long for this weekend to lose a fish. Eventually another beautiful 26lb mirror found its way into the net.

Learning From The Best: The next morning we wound the rods in so we could enjoy everything the show had to offer. One of my favourite parts was watching Tom Maker, who demonstrated his spinner rig and showed everyone how he fishes it with worms on top. It was fascinating watching someone with so much experience explain every little detail, and I can't wait to try it myself. Later we headed over to Scott Lloyd's surface fishing demonstration.Scott was helping all the youngsters catch carp from the surface. The fish were a little further out than I could comfortably cast, so he kindly cast the rod for me before firing out a few handfuls of floaters. Within minutes I was hooked into another fish. My first ever surface-caught carp from Linear. A lovely 16lb linear. I couldn't stop smiling. I'd now caught fish from both B1 and B2!

A Weekend Beyond My Dreams: The fish just kept coming over the rest of the weekend.By the time the event finished I'd landed an incredible nine carp for a total weight of 229.2lb.

To finish the weekend with 229.2lb and be crowned the Fish N Show 2026 Champion was something I never imagined would happen.



But if I'm honest, the trophy wasn't the best part.The best part was meeting anglers I'd looked up to, learning from some of the very best in carp fishing, making new friends and creating memories that I'll remember forever. A huge thank you to Scott Lloyd, Tom Maker, Tom Stokes, Rob Burgess and everyone who took the time to chat with me, encourage me and make me feel welcome. Finally, thank you to my mum and dad for taking me everywhere, supporting me every step of the way and helping me follow my dreams. I'll never forget my Fish N Show weekend... and hopefully it's the first of many.


CHARLIE FERRIS

HUNTING DEPTH

'Monitoring the weather, I saw an opportunity to take a few days annual leave to capitalise on the conditions which coincided with the full moon. Even though temperatures were set to plumet below zero, I knew an area they'd likely be held in and felt there would be a chance if I could get the depths write on the zigs.

The lake hadn't done a bite in six weeks, but this didn't dishearten me. As far as I was concerned, they were all due and past winters have shown how effective zigs can be.

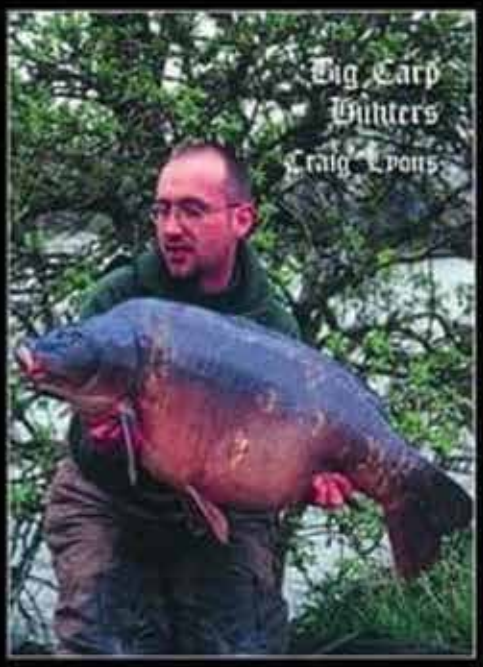
I managed to get into the zone I wanted, fanning 3 zigs in the area, spending the first 24 hours adjusting the depths until I got it right. After the first bite, all three rods were then fished at this depth and I knew it was game on. Over the next 36 hours, I managed 5 fish to 35lb – A perfect way to start the year'.





THE BIG CARP HUNTER SERIES

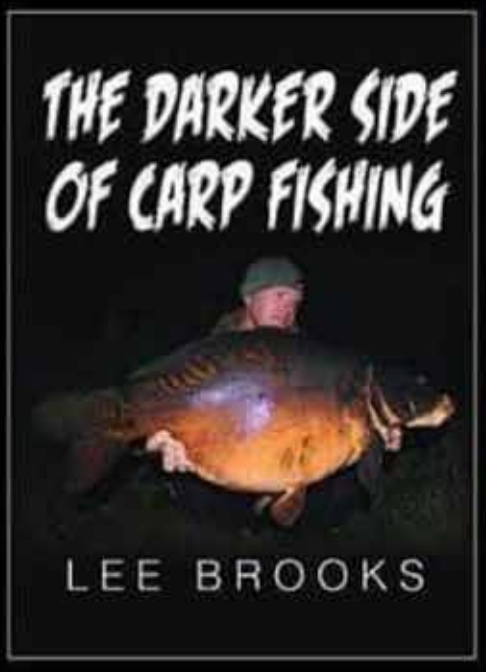
The Unsung hero's prolific catches with a unique tale to tell

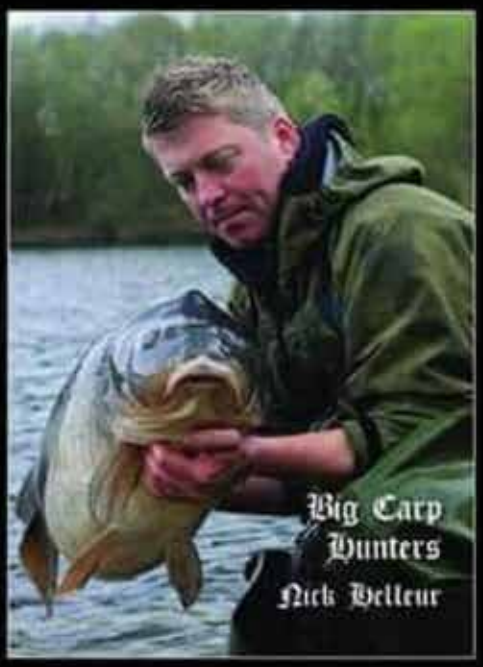


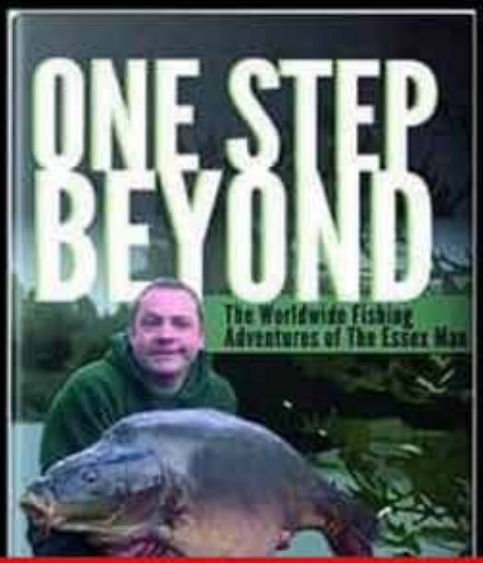












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JONNY OLD

SPRING RESULT

Jonny Old has had an incredible spring fishing a large, tricky 65-acre pit catching some amazing carp. he told us: “I started by baiting a spot at range in a quiet swim, just trying to get something going as my time is very limited. I decided to only fish one swim this spring as chasing carp around on a busy big pit with little time never seems to work for me. I never expected what was to follow. It would have been a proper result to nick just a handful of fish across the whole season.

But things have gone far better than expected, and I've been lucky enough to land 37 carp so far with these being the best. A few of these have been originals, over 43 years old, which makes it even more special. A handful of the bigger ones being low 30s. There has been a couple of trips which normally just consisted of a night and a mornings fishing where I have had 10 bites.

Consistently baiting the area a couple of times a week with 18mm Cell boilies has definitely been key to the success. I've also been soaking the boilies overnight in Cell Smart Liquid to let them absorb and swell slightly, this has helped avoid the large numbers of tench in the lake.

Over the top, I've been fishing super-buoyant Cell

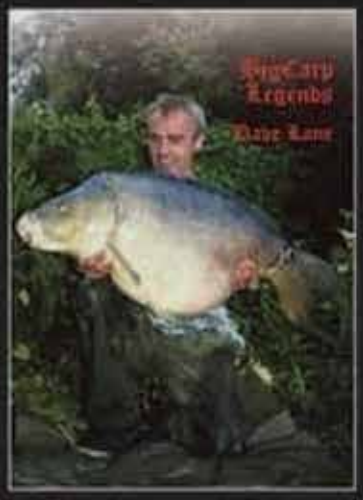


BIG CARP LEGENDS SERIES

The anglers that shaped todays carp scene



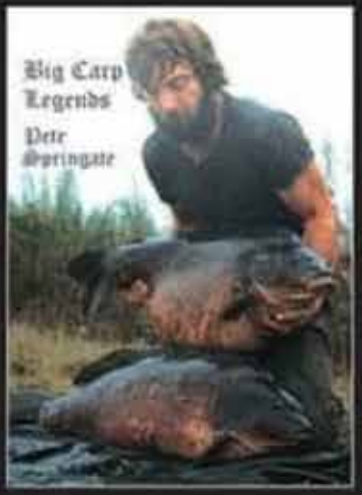


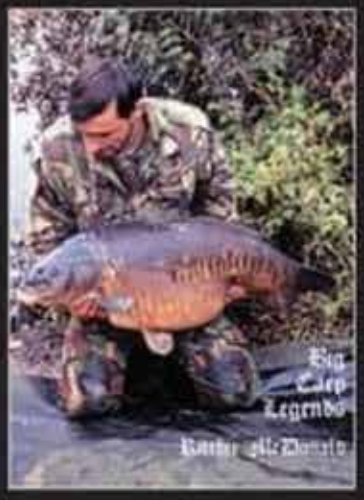




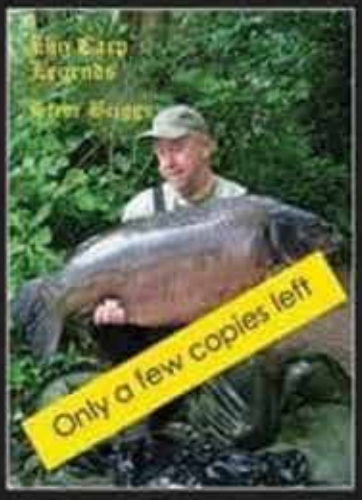












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pop-ups on spinner rigs, which has really done the trick. I'm hoping to keep things going and hopefully the action continues throughout the spring fingers crossed". Jonny Old has had an incredible spring fishing a large, tricky 65-acre pit catching some amazing carp. he told us: "I started by baiting a spot at range in a quiet swim, just trying to get something going as my time is very limited. I decided to only fish one swim this spring as chasing carp around on a busy big pit with little time never seems to work for me. I never expected what was to follow. It would have been a proper result to nick just a handful of fish across the whole season.

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Over the top, I've been fishing super-buoyant Cell pop-ups on spinner rigs, which has really done the trick. I'm hoping to keep things going and hopefully the action continues throughout the spring fingers crossed".









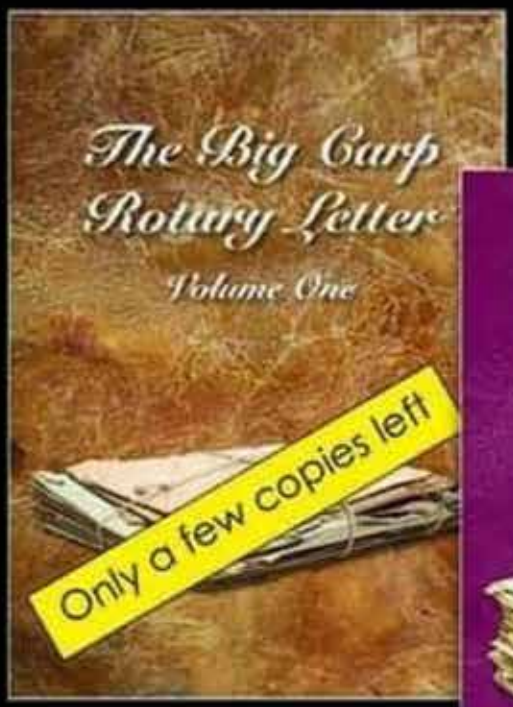


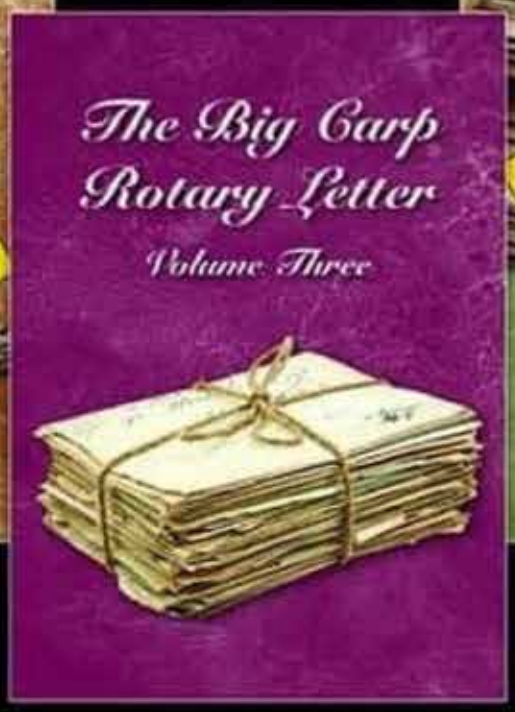




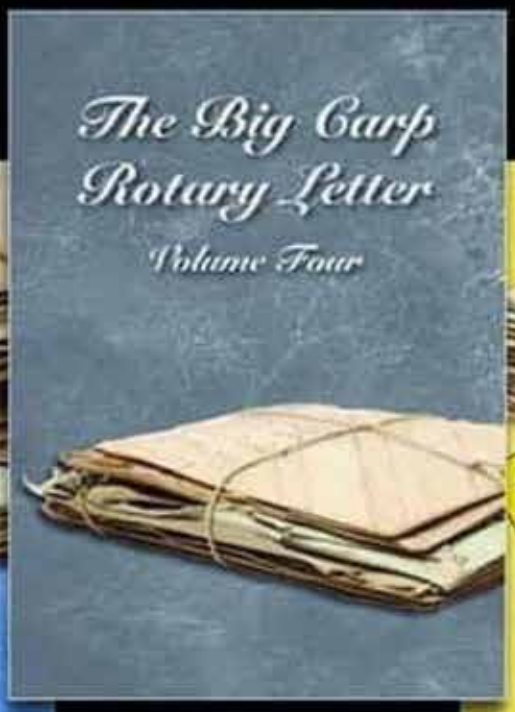
THE BIG CARP ROTARY LETTER SERIES

The greatest collection of thinking anglers ever amassed

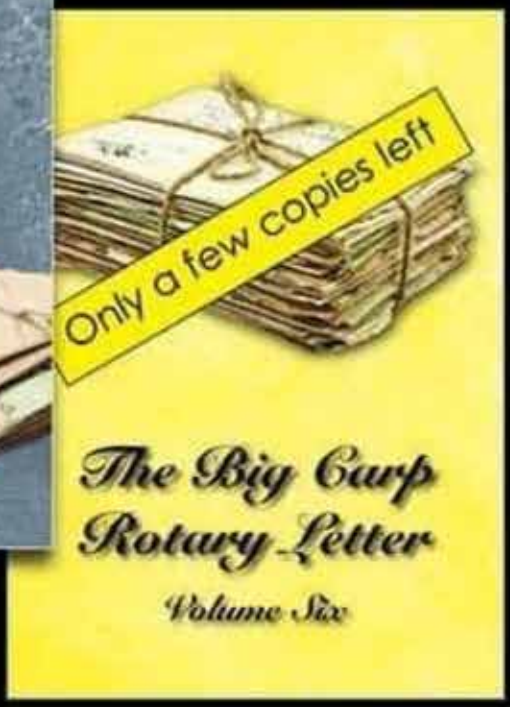












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MARC CAV

SPRING ACTION

My plan for this spring was simple, mirroring last year's approach, I planned to make the effort of arriving in the dark in the hope of hearing fish show or seeing them in the half-light, then hoping for a good draw to set up on them.

The previous two springs started late, horrific easterly winds that seemed to last an eternity making bites so hard to come by. It was late last spring that I decided to focus entirely on fishing Solidz - Small bags fished as singles. With bites so

hard to come by, I felt that baiting was slowing down responses and only the birds were benefiting from spods that were being deployed around me.

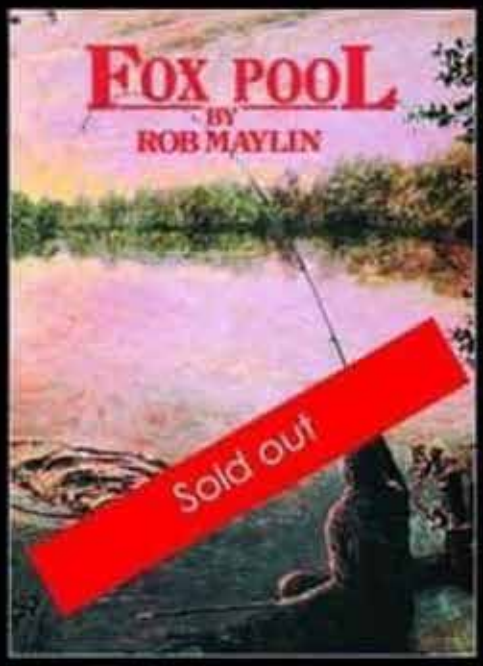
To me, spring fishing has always been about being mobile, reactive, having a trusted rig and lead arrangement capable of presenting on different lake beds for when casting to shows, bright hookbaits to capitalise on their poor senses.

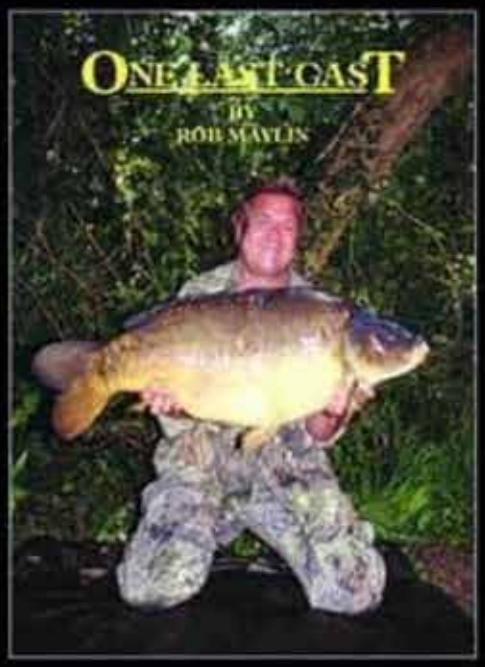
Single solids allow me to react to shows quickly, with the right drop they're always presenting – When fishing at close range, I opt for Kontour fluro mainline, but when

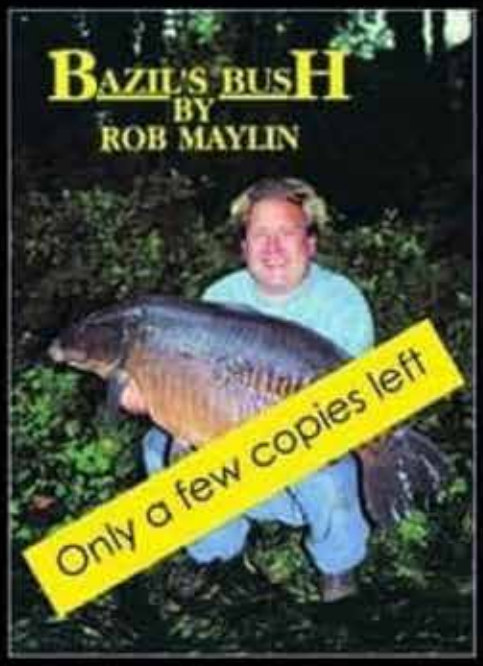


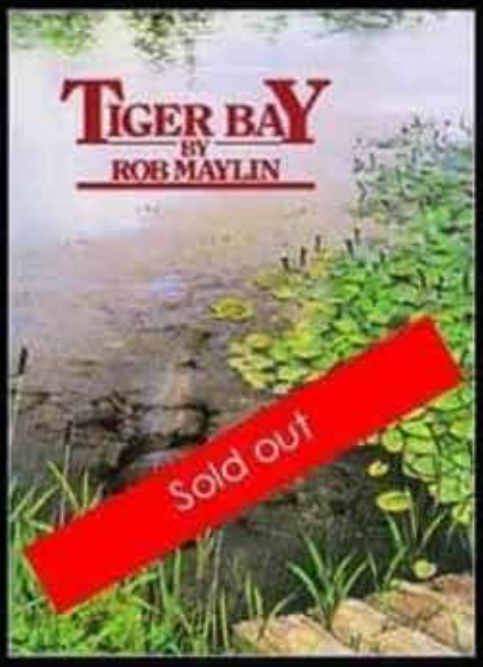
THE ROB MAYLIN SERIES

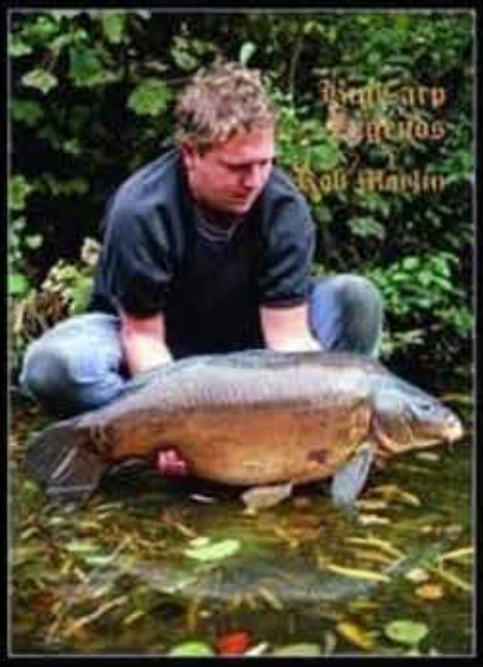
50 years on the bank with Rob and Friends











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needing to chuck further into the pond, a quick change of spool to Tapered Long Chuck lets me hit ranges of 120 yards out to the middle of the lake when needed. Fishing this way means minimal kit, so I can have a few bags pre-tied, fish off the barrow when needed and quickly and effectively get fishing. This has accounted for one of my best springs angling, with fish to upper 40 over the last month'.

Rig wise, Cav sets his small Solidz up with 6-inch sections of Tight Weave leadcore, drop off inline leads with 4-inches of 18lb Supernatural hooklinks to size 8 Krank X's, with small sections of silicone closing the gape of the hook even further.








MINDSET








STUART HIGGS

THE LEGEND LIVES ON

There are some carp that become more than just fish. They turn into legends, spoken about in hushed tones around bivvies, their names carrying weight long before they ever touch the net again.

At Dinton White Swan, one such fish is Darren's Linear. For nearly four years, it had anished. No captures, no verified sightings, just the odd fleeting and unconfirmed glimpse of a shadow, here or there, but mainly just speculation.

Had it died? Had it been hooked and lost, or had it simply outwitted every angler who'd tried?

Nobody knew for sure, but the longer it went uncaught, the more likely it was that it had moved n, or so some thought... One bite can certainly change everything!


White Swan Lake
Corner
d Hide

Last season was my first year on Dinton, so I was very much 'learning the ropes' as it were,especially as I only managed to get 16 nights under my belt. I was still lucky enough to catch a few from White Swan, but nothing bigger than 30lb, and the few forays across to Black Swan, the larger of the two waters, were ultimately fruitless.I'm under no illusion that the time I get to fish these days already puts me at a disadvantage from the off, and seeing as there are a lot of good anglers on these waters, that have a lot more time and energy than I, working smarter, not harder, was definitely going to be the key to any success.

Early this spring I decided to target Black Swan. The stock in there is phenomenal, up there with the very best in the country, but after a few sessions I once again came away empty-handed - on such a big water there's a lot to learn! Based on last season's findings, water clarity can be an issue at most times of the year, so learning spots early, for when the algae starts to bloom and the weed growth begins is key. I have learned not to become despondent, and just view any blank session as a part of the learning curve, and instead focus on sussing out each swim as best I can, in itself a frustrating act, as you can never do too much in the way of poking about, searching, and feature finding, when you're fixating on keeping disturbance to a minimum in an effort to snare your first fish! It will happen for me on there, I'm sure of it, it's just a matter of when...

Earlier in the year, I had booked some time off work, to coincide with the first Bank Holiday weekend of the month, and decided to head back to White Swan.A Lake That Doesn't Give Up Its Jewels Easily:

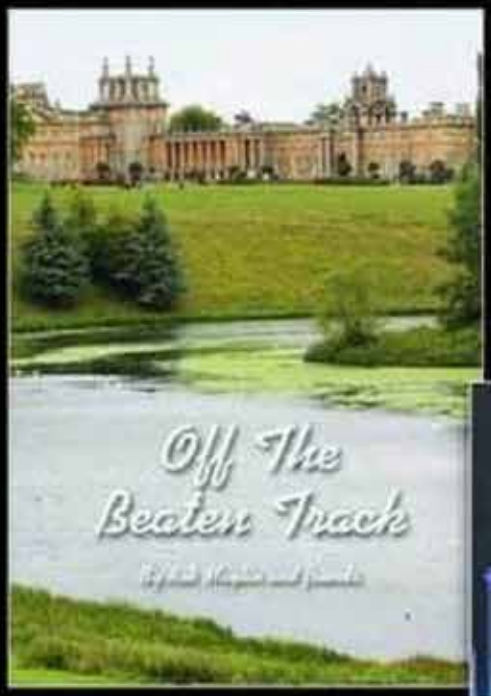


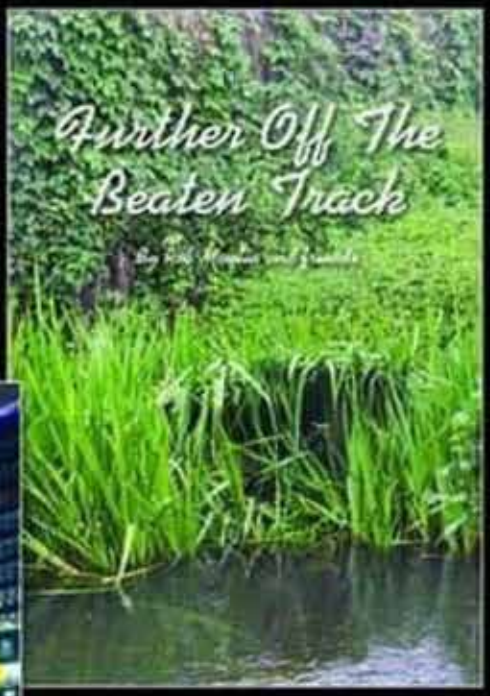
White Swan, another part of the Dinton Pastures complex has never been a runs water. It's very much a thinking angler's venue, with not a huge stock, but not a low stock either. The fish are immense, again, it holds some of the best in the country, with big rewards to be had, but also, with potentially long blanks in between! Even experienced anglers can go weeks or months without a take and some fish rarely get caught, or can go uncaught for incredibly long periods of time. Every bite is hard-earned and every capture savoured!

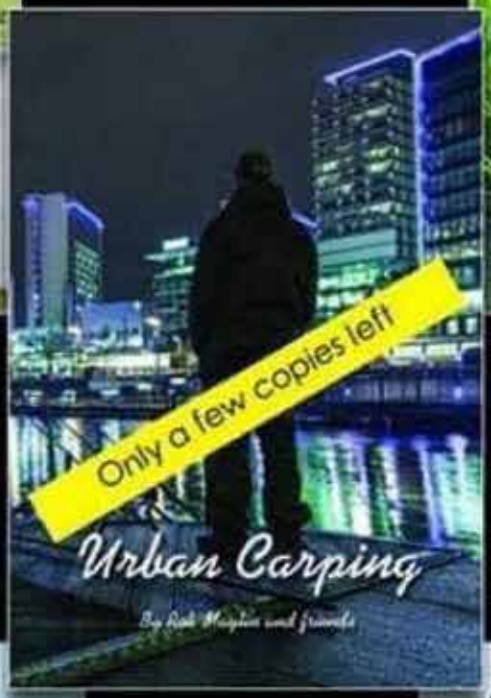
The Build-Up:I knew on the journey down that just by it being May Bank Holiday weekend, the lake was always going to be busy. The full moon was due on the Saturday night, and a good number of the A-Team still hadn't been out despite a fairly mild

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

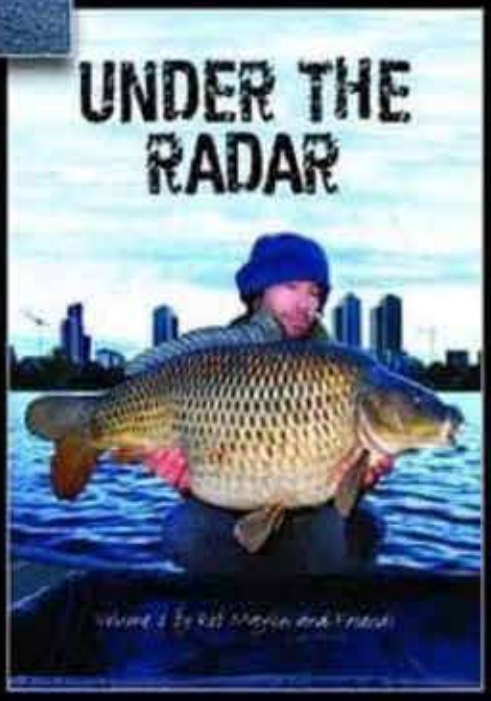
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springtime. Notwithstanding the potential dread, I had already witnessed, the season before, how White Swan can strangely fish better when the lake is at its busiest, so when I arrived to a very packed car park, I wasn't going to let it put me off. Speaking to one of the lads on my walk round, I quickly learned that a lot of fish had been holding up in the middle section of the venue, a fact supported by the number of anglers congregating in this area.

There was no way I was going to fish in this zone, I'm not averse to the social aspect of carp angling, but I'm also not as keen to rub shoulders with other people whilst we're all targeting the same section of water, and so after a brief barrow-push, and spending two hours casting a lead about in a few likely areas further down the lake, I decided to set up in a swim where I had iscovered two clear, but, ultimately small spots, in one of the weediest areas of the lake.One rod was put on a short spot almost directly in front of the swim, with half a kilo of boilies catapulted in a loose spread around the area. The other was put a few rod lengths further out, and to the left of the swim, with just two-handfuls of bait over the top.

The first night and day passed without a bleep. A couple of fish had been out in the middle section, and someone had now dropped in opposite me. I wasn't going to move as I was happy ith my spots, but I had only seen a couple of fish in the area, so the thought did cross my mind.

The second night then passed, and once again the lack of fish activity in the area did beg the question of whether I was wasting my time in the area? The angler opposite was obviously having

similar thoughts, and before long I watched as he started to break camp. Around the lake, a fair few others were up and about, too, on the search for different swims and angles of attack.The fish were clearly holding up in the central part of the lake, that much was abundantly clear, but with a lot of angling pressure from both sides, they clearly weren't letting their respective guards down, and having watched the human traffic gather pace, I was now increasingly confident that at some point the fish might move to a quieter area!

That evening a friend and I were discussing a few of the different fish in the lake, and Darren's was (as ever) the main topic. Being a very elusive fish, talk always hinged on similar threads; was it still in there? Had it been seen? If it had, who knew? Were some of the more seasoned heads keeping it quiet in an attempt to complete a set or a personal quest?

To be honest, I'm sure a few of the swims were privy to similar lines of enquiry, as it had got to the point, and I'm sure the other anglers would agree, whether it was your target or not, where everyone just wanted to know, for sure, whether it was still in there - and I don't think they'd care

who the captor maybe... Charlie, who had been on the lake for a number of years now, and knew the area of the lake I was fishing, suggested that if the fish were in the area, then you would normally expect to start seeing some shows around eleven o'clock of an evening. Watching patiently for any signs of activity that night, it can't have been much more than fifteen minutes past the alleged witching hour, when a small fish showed right over the top of my right-hand rod. There were another two shows in



quick succession thereafter. Charlie was right. A few had turned up and now I was on edge wondering whether the take would come?

I couldn't sleep and by five in the morning, with no takes materialising and fish beginning to show few swims further down to my left, I had the hump! It felt like I had missed my opportunity once again, so I started to pack down, planning on moving onto the showing fish for a few hours before I was off...

The Take:It came without warning. As the last bit of luggage was loaded on the barrow and with just the rods left to bring in, the right hand rod on the shorter spot of the two, went into meltdown! I mmediately grabbed the rod and as I lifted into the fish and simultaneously tightened the drag, it flat-rodded me! There was no way I was going to stop it, so eased the clutch off a couple of clicks and just let it run. Fortunately, it ran straight, there was a boil about ten yards off the far B ank, and I started the pump to get some line back. At this point, I knew if the fish decided to ite left or right, I was in big trouble due to the marginal snags down both sides, so attempted to retrieve as much line back on to the spool as quickly as humanly possible.It came in relatively easily after that first surge, heading back towards me on a straight line, and soon enough it was plodding around, only a couple of rod lengths out in front of me. After a few minutes of some short, yet powerful lunges in either direction, it decided to head off on another longer run. As per the initial take, it ran straight for the far bank, and once again, there was nothing I could do but let it go. This time it ground to a halt a short way from the opposite bank, stuck fast in some of Dinton's perennial weed, but

with a little pressure I was able to get everything moving once more.Slowly, everything started to head back toward me, but this time without any movement, I cursed as I thought I had lost it. As the ball of weed drew closer, I could see there were actually two vast clumps, one had clearly caught around the leader knot, and the other, still some way off, was swaying gently around, above what could be the fish. I steered the whole thing as close as possible, before propping my rod up and reaching out to clear the offending weed from the leader knot, as I did so, somehow the furthest clump simply fell away, too, and a very large linear was now floating on its side in the snag to my left! Without hesitation I dropped the rod in the water, grabbed the net and hand-lined the fish into it. She was mine! My first thought, immediately, was that it looked huge, and I knew at that point there were probably only two fish it could possibly be, either John's Linear, or the even more

elusive, Darren's...

The Weigh-In:

The fish was not happy about being in the net, so I quickly grabbed the weigh sling and

transferred it across. This was one angry fish however, and even in the sling it appeared agitated

and continued to tear up the swim.

I wanted to keep it captive for the least amount of time possible and with Charlie just a few swims

down, I set off in search of some help. On arriving at his swim, it was apparent he had clearly

already been in a battle himself, which in this case, he had unfortunately lost - so my proceeding to explain how I had one of the big linear mirrors in the net, probably wasn't going to make him eel much

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The Legendary Big Carp Series



Burghfield Common

The sixth in our series of Legendary Carp paintings is none other than that awesome creature, the Burghfield Common.

Only discovered in recent years, Nigel Sharp rocked the carp angling world when he finally landed the beast after a five-year campaign, during which time he had only seen this leviathan on a handful of occasions.

Regarded by many as the original myth, there was much speculation about its existence at all, until it was finally landed at an incredible weight of 50lbs.

Quite how it had evaded capture for so many years is still a mystery, but due to the vast size of this huge gravel pit, it simply became the needle in the haystack.

Once its existence was verified by that first capture, an army of the country's top carp anglers have invaded Burghfield's banks and some feared its mystery would be lost forever.

But no, this incredible beast has still proven to be virtually uncatchable with only a very few captures in the past half a dozen years.

Undeniably a legend, this beautiful animal well and truly deserves its place in the Big Carp Hall Of Fame. Coming soon – the Royal Forty…

Strictly Limited to only 100 signed and numbered by the artist.

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

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better (sorry, mate). However, in his time of despair, he was still more than happy to come down, lend a hand and witness the reveal.

With my adrenaline starting to subside and having a few moments to gather my thoughts, I took a closer look at the fish in the sling. It was clear to me that this fish was definitely somewhere round the 50lb mark, so I took mental note of a couple of the distinctive scales and then started a quick Google search for pics of the two big lins. It was quite obvious that the shape of the fish wasn't consistent with John's, it was simply too long, so after picking out the two small cuts in the tail and a small cluster of scales on it's flank above the main line of scales, I knew immediately what I had. It was indeed Darren's, she was alive! After almost four years without capture, it was very much alive and well, and a few anglers made their way to the swim to both help out and also, I suspect, just get a good look at her.

On the scales, the needle settled at 56lb 8oz, a weight that few had probably suspected, but in its absence, the fish hadn't just survived, it had thrived, and was in immaculate condition, with no other signs of any previous hook-holds or such, other than mine. Surprisingly, after she had been so aggressive in the net and sling, once on the bank she was ctually very well-behaved. We took a few lovely shots on the bank, before returning her to the water for a few more. It wasn't until I placed her back in the water for the release that she finally started to tense and bristle again, a sign she was ready and kicked off back into her watery home, to hopefully make another angler very happy in the hopefully near future.



The fish represents a new Personal Best for me, something that I thought wouldn't be possible on White Swan, and far more likely next door on Black, so to have it now standing as a new lake record for the lake is an incredible feeling.It was a great day for me, and even better day for White Swan and the current members as a whole, to be honest. The legend lives on again, and in the days after, it has been nice that quite a few anglers who have previously fished at, or do still currently fish Dinton, have sent me messages of congratulations - some of whom I have never even met before, which shows

what a lovely syndicate set-up they have...Interestingly, in the interim, stories did start to come out that anglers had indeed seen the fish, but opted to keep things quiet, with one angler actually seeing Darren's the previous afternoon near his own spot.

I'd love to write that my hard work and graft over many years on the venue resulted in such a capture and I appreciate that a lot of anglers have put a lot of time and effort in, but for me, it was still a combination of my hard work and dedication over 30 years of carp angling that got me to this point. I've caught lots of special fish over the years, but this is truly the tip of iceberg!

I waited my turn for the best part of twenty years to fish at Dinton, and this was undoubtedly a case of being in the perfect place, at the perfect time, combined with the perfect set-up. Sometimes, your name is just on them!









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1 Start by draining off the excess water from a tin of Sweetcorn.



2. You will need a dry powder like this Stick & Bag Mix next. Sprinkle some mix over the corn to absorb some moisture.



05 Mix through to help dry the corn and repeat where necessary.



06 Sweetcorn Smart Liquid is perfect to liquid to enhance the mix.Smart Liquid will also provide further PVA friendly qualities.



09 Okay, the mix is now PVA friendly and should look like this.



10 Scoop some mix up into a PVA mesh system like this next.



11. Compress the mix and feed out to form a tight PVA mesh bag. Tie two over-hand-knots next and cut between the two knots. The result should be Sweetcorn PVA mesh bag like this one.



14 A Sweetcorn Clone Wafter is the perfect hookbait for the PVA bag of sweetcorn.



15 Carefully hook on the mesh bag without hooking any corn.




RICH HOGG

CANAL SESSIONS PART 6

7th September 2017

Absolutely made up with this dark leathery old thing from this morning.

The biggest of 2 fish taken off the top within minutes of each other on a super quick 20-min walk before work.

3rd time lucky with this one as I struck the free-lined bread out its mouth twice!

Best way to start the day.

8th September 2017

And this is the other reason I was made up with yesterday's little flick about before work.

A beautiful little koi and if there was ever a reason why size doesn't matter on the canal, well this is it.





24th September 2017

Its been a tough week or so on a hard canal, battling through the bream and heavy boat traffic for no real result.

Every time the alarm sounded it could have been something special but hey that's all part of carping on canals.

I did manage a quick staffs worcs sesh earlier in the week though where there was just enough time to trip up this angry 2 tone before work.

9th October 2017

Made up with this one! Conditions were bang on last night so with that in mind I set my alarm that little bit earlier and made more of an effort than I have done of late and I'm glad I did!

The rods were out by half 3am and after a quiet





few hours the left hand rod rattled off attached to this mint little staff's worcs stunner!

They don't come much better looking than this so a nice little way to end a rubbish few weeks! :-)

10th October 2017

It's the 'being there' and 'doing it' that makes it what it is!

Putting up with the blanks, eventually those gems will reveal themselves.

11th October 2017

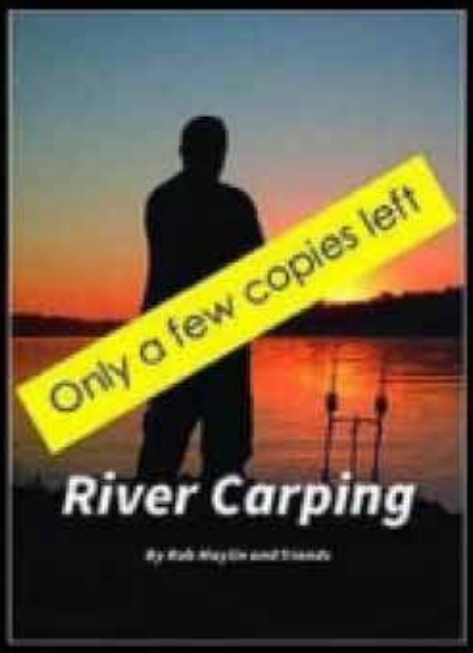
A propa angry common from this morning!

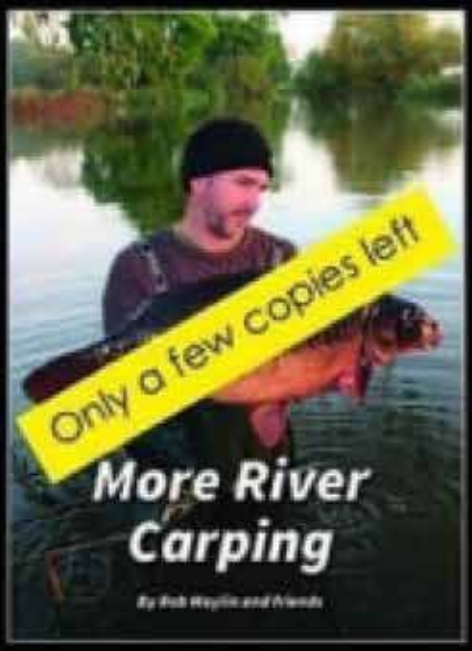
The temperature was well up last night and the wind was strong pushing into a little bay so I flicked the rigs into where I thought the fish might be.

It looked like a blank was on the cards but right on packing up time, the right hand Rod absolutely flew off with this

THE RIVER CARPING SERIES

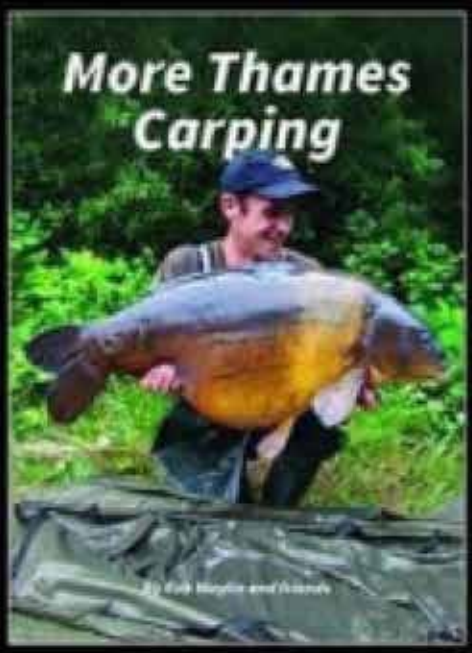
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little steam train that put up a right old scrap!

18th October 2017

Well, I'm absolutely buzzing with this one from this morning.

After 3 years of fishing this particular stretch of canal and after countless commons I've finally got myself my first mirror, and it's not a bad one either!

Also, I'm more than happy to say that it's my 1st fish as part of the Xcel baits team!

A handful of VNF boilies crumbed up and cupped out inches from a moored-up boat proved a bit too much for this leathery old thing. Another couple of hours on the path paying off before shooting off to work

22nd October 2017

One quick little morning sesh this weekend and one perfect little mirror to show for it.





Nothing more than a single beep and a little back drop on the left-hand rod, coming right at the end of the session.

What a little stunner

26th October 2017

A pristine canal common from this morning!

Has to be up there as one of the most perfect commons I've caught.

Rigs were placed on the spots using the baiting pole for maximum accuracy against the boats, cupped out with a small amount of VNF boilies crumbed and halved, over the top of a matching pop up for a quick



result before shooting off to work,

happy days!

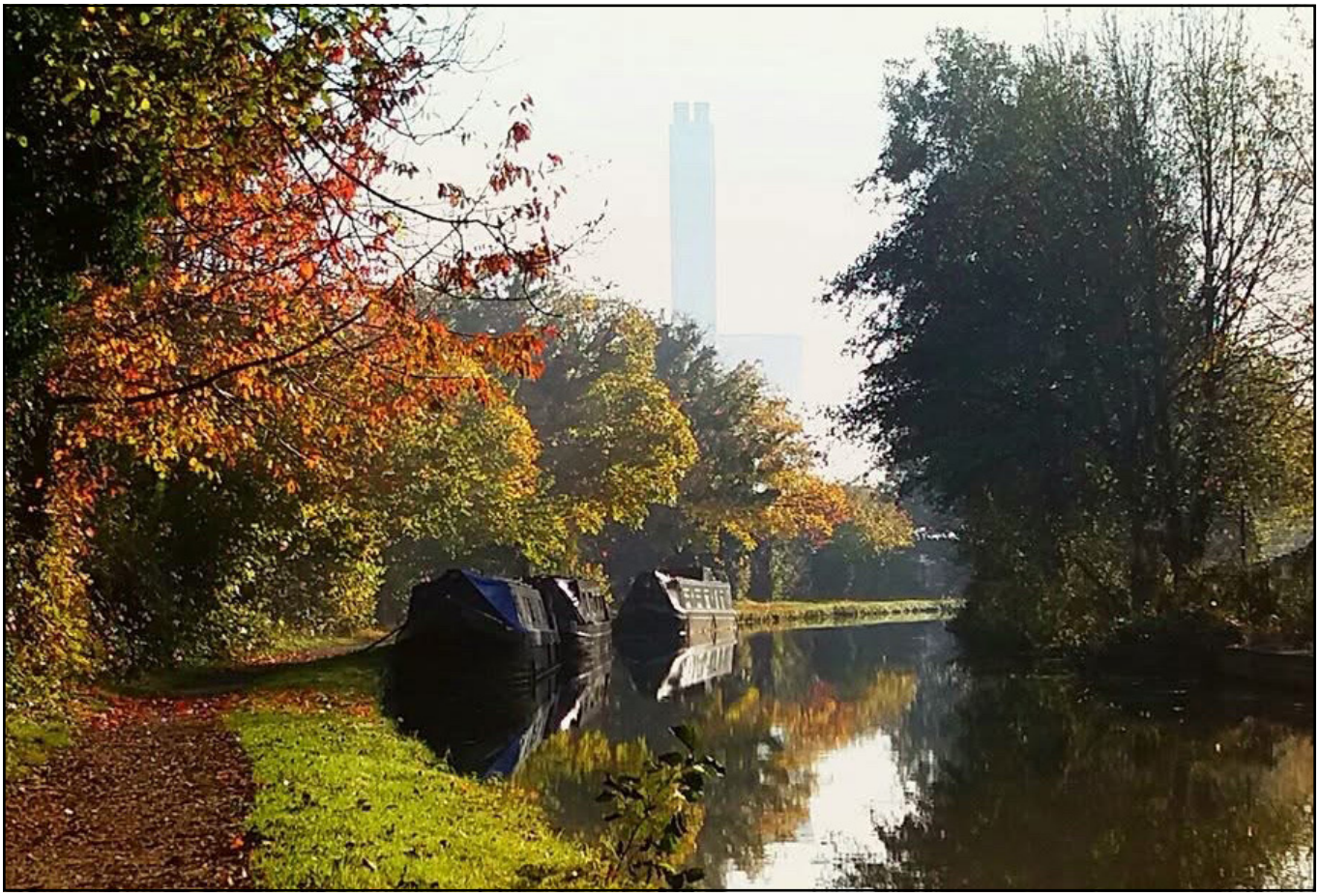
7th November 2017

First one of November.It's that time of year when the carp angling gets tougher and the predator angling grabs some of my attention, and I've really enjoyed slinging a bit of rubber around targeting perch the last week or two.

Last night though, with perfect conditions and temperature up a good 10deg on the previous night, it felt right to do a few hours this morning behind the rods which paid off with this freezing cold mirror!

A trimmed down VNF pop up over a few matching half baits doing the damage, all cupped out onto the right spots.

Always love hearing the alarms go this time of year no matter how big they are.





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

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

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12th November 2017

It doesn't matter whether I'm sat back waiting for a big old scaly character or covering ground targeting stripies, I just love being somewhere along the tow path in search of hidden gems!

3rd December 2017

It was nice being back out behind the rods this morning after having a few weeks targeting perch (which hasn't been especially rewarding). I jumped onto a stretch that has been hard going in the past and proved so again today.

I spent the morning on single VNF pop ups whilst watching the water for signs of fish to drop onto, but unfortunately after a few hours it became clear there were no fish in the area to go at so... bacon sandwich time it was!

Hopefully temperatures will stay up a bit now and give me chance to nab a December canal carp.

21st December 2017

I'm itching to get on the bank in the coming days as i haven't been out in weeks.

But as the year comes to an end, I always like to have a look back at the easier times and make plans for the months ahead.

It's not been a bad year for me really, with each session being nothing more than a handful of hours at a time, but I've managed to put a few stunners on the bank and for the first time in a good few years, nicked a few off the top aswell! The rods have nearly been torn off the alarms on some violent takes and I've found myself waste deep more than once in an effort to slip the net under the ones that tried every trick in the book to get away! I'm happy to have upped my mirror carp pb and my tench pb (I won't talk about bream though) ;-) but I think 1 of my



favourites and certainly most memorable from this year has to be this old fully scaled character below, which was the 1st fish from a new spot for me and one of the ones I had to jump in for.

As the shortest day of the year is now behind us and the days slowly become longer, I'm starting to looking forward to what 2018 has got in store, hopefully more smash n grab surface sessions but certainly a lot more behind the alarms too and all with #XcelBaits. Finally, a big thanks to all for continuing to like my page, have a merry Christmas, a happy New year, stay safe and il see you on the bank!

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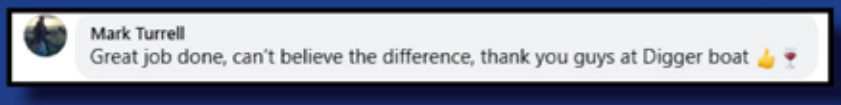
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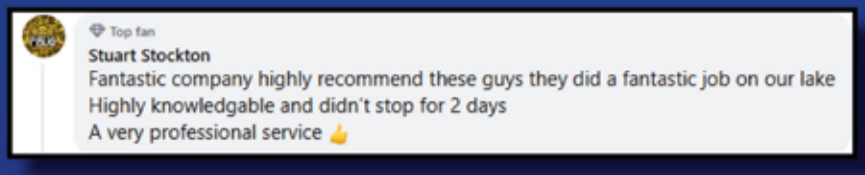
CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Big shoutout to the lads at Digger Boats Ltd
I've been living onsite at Carthagena Fisheries for 23 years now, and we've had plenty of work done over the years... but this one tops the lot!
We've been fighting a losing battle with reeds taking over the entrance to one of our bays for a few years now. Even tried getting in ourselves with dry suits and pulling them out by hand absolutely brutal work and getting nowhere fast... was starting to think we'd lose the bay completely.
On top of that, the carp were loving it — hiding in the reeds and becoming a nightmare to catch
We'd had other companies in before with weed boats, but if I'm honest, the results just weren't great.
Got James from Digger Boats in, he came down, had a proper look and got stuck in... and what a job they've done!
3 days later and the place has been completely transformed it's something I've wanted sorted for years and it's finally done.
Already this spring we've had over 22 fish out — including a few we haven't seen in years! Normally we'd only see a handful by now. Can't recommend them enough — top lads, proper job done
Thanks again boys — Jerry Hammond









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

07768 731425
bigcarpstudio@hotmail.co.uk

Design & Production
James Harrison

Also available this month Big Carp issue 361





Front Cover:
Adam Kitchen witha fine morning common



At the Carp4Kids Academy, we are dedicated to nurturing the next generation of anglers by providing expert tutorials designed to teach children the art of fishing. Our mission is to introduce young people to the joys of fishing in a safe, supportive, and educational environment. We believe in building both skill and confidence, ensuring that children not only learn the fundamentals of the sport but also develop a deep respect for nature and the environment. Through engaging lessons, hands-on activities, and a focus on safety, our academy aims to inspire a lifelong passion for fishing while encouraging good sportsmanship and responsibility.

Please see our website and Facebook page for more details

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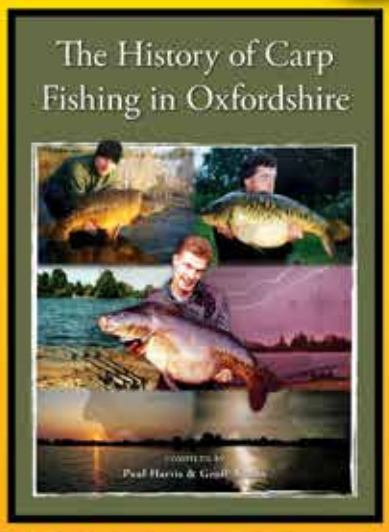
84. DEAN MCLOED



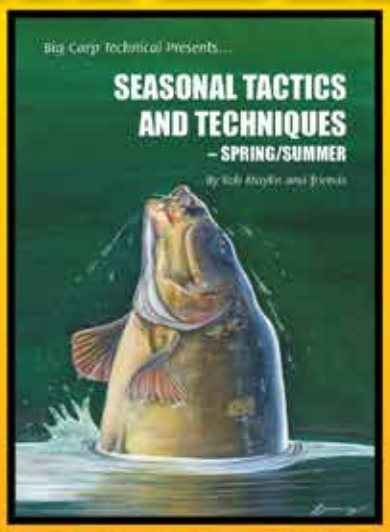




SUMMER S









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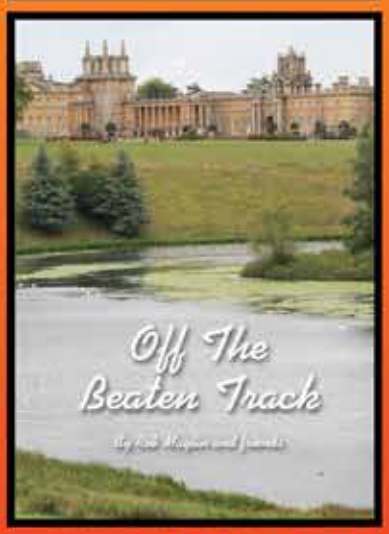














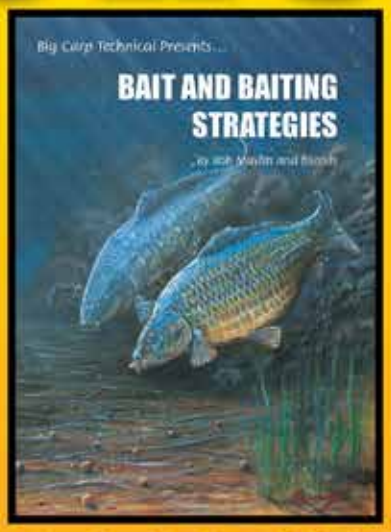


NEW BOOKS: WWW.C

NEW AND OLD BOOKS: WWW.EBAY.C

CORCHERS



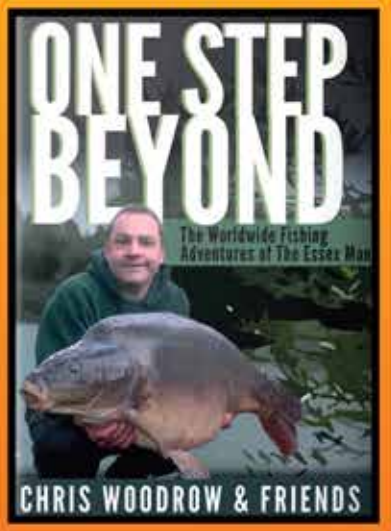


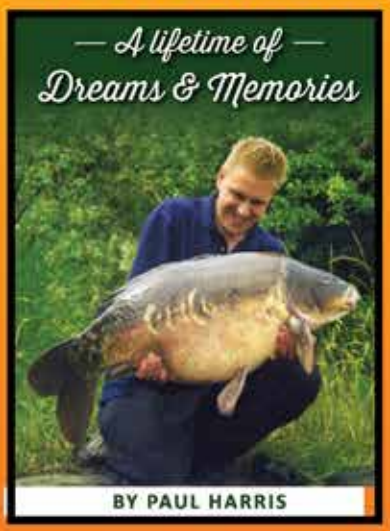


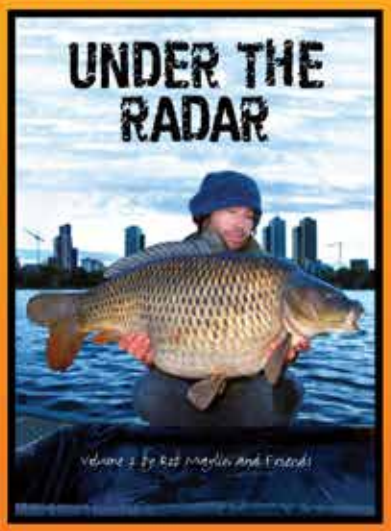


ND GET READY FOR SUMMER ACTION

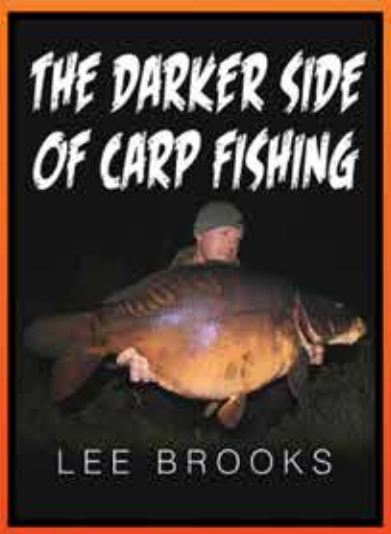
















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NEW UK RECORD CARP CONFIRMED



What an absolute masterpiece from Mike Nixon, who landed this incredible looking common carp weighing 68lb 8oz on 1st May at Waterside Fishery. The record has now been officially confirmed by the Angling Trust. https://anglingtrust.net/2026/06/11/british-carp-record/ Mike caught this magnificent fish using the Harrison Acurix 2.75lb, a rod he has trusted ever since its release many years ago Everyone at Harrison Rods is immensely proud of this achievement , well done !!!

TOP 10 2026-27

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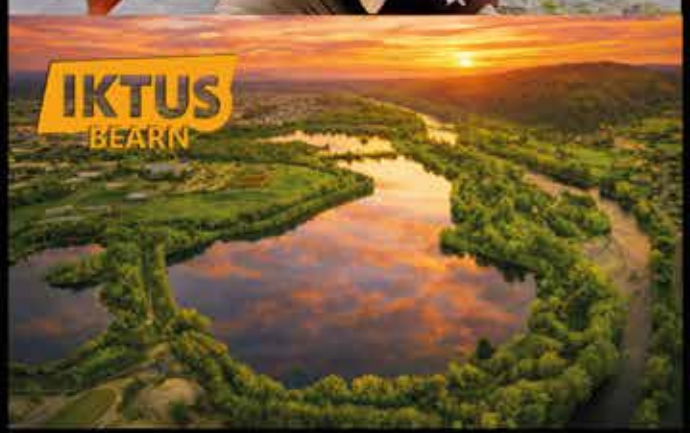












TOM MAKER JOINS TEAM DAIWA



We're delighted to welcome Tom Maker Carp Angler to the Daiwa Team.

A highly respected angler with an incredible track record on some of the country's most challenging venues, Tom will be fishing exclusively with Daiwa reels for all of his carp angling moving forward.

Tom said "Joining the Daiwa brand is a huge honour for me and I am very excited to be on board using their reels exclusively.

Over my years angling I have been fortunate enough to use some of Daiwas big pit reels from the more budget friendly ones right up to the flagship Basias, all of which have been absolutely faultless and a joy to use.

I don't think anyone can dispute that Daiwa reels are some of the finest carp fishing reels available on the market and having recently been invited up to HQ and being given the opportunity to see what's in the pipeline the future is very exciting indeed!

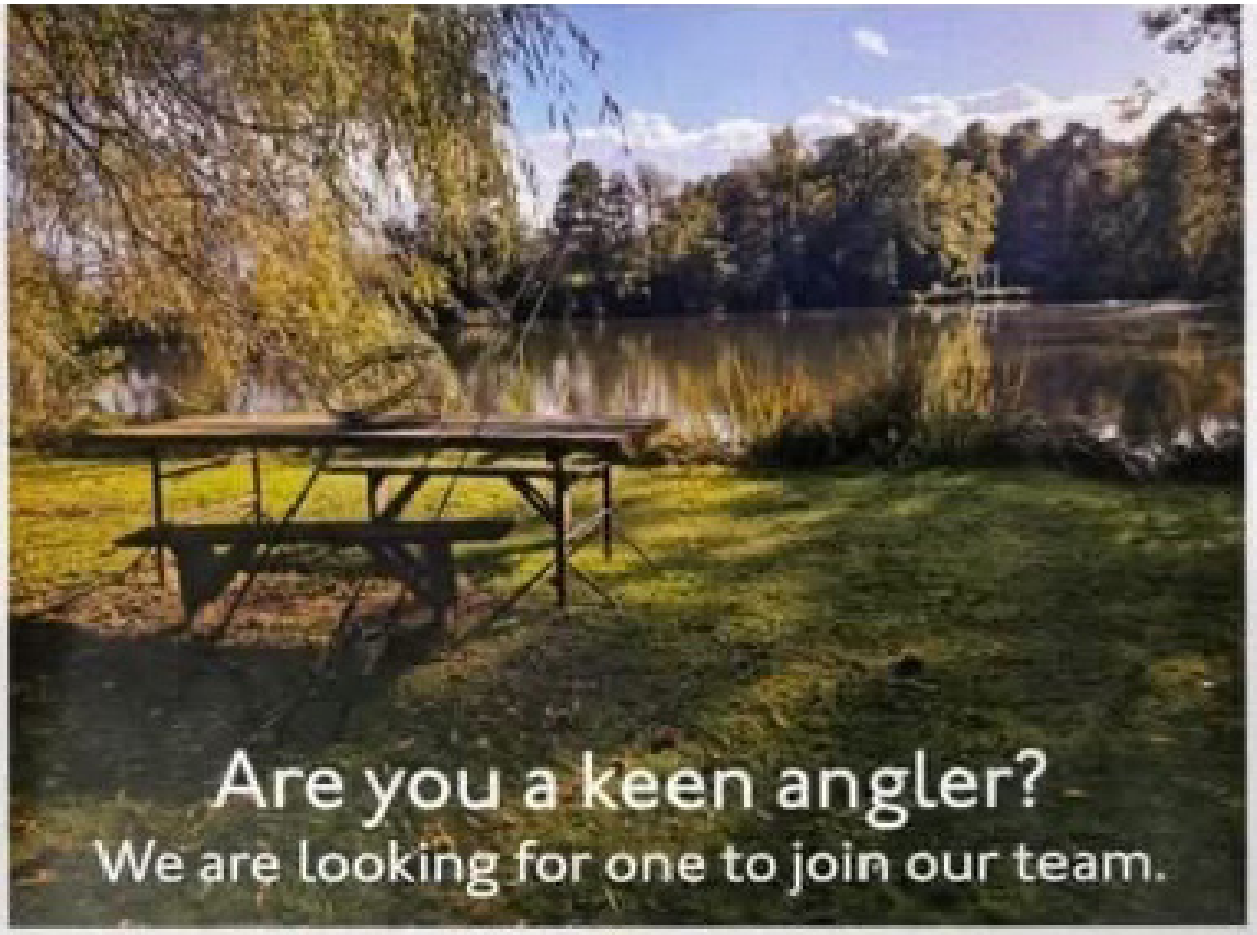
I would like to take this opportunity to thank Daiwa for the support and I'm am super excited to be working closely and forming a long lasting relationship with one of the best reel manufacturers in the world of angling."

£10M E.A. INVESTMENT FROM ANGLERS LICENCES



We're celebrating £10 million of investment from fishing licence income! Since 2015, the Fisheries Improvement Programme has helped deliver thousands of improvements that benefit anglers and the communities around them. From stabilising eroding riverbanks and restoring overgrown ponds to installing accessible fishing platforms and planting thousands of trees.





We are looking for an experienced and personable angler to take guests fishing on our lake. This is a hands-on role suited to someone with a strong knowledge of fishing techniques.

You will lead guests of varying experience levels, provide instruction on tackle setup, casting, baiting, and fish handling and ensure our guests enjoy a safe, professional, and memorable experience.

You must have proven angling experience with strong practical knowledge and be friendly and confident dealing with guests and groups.

An Angling coaching qualification is preferable.

A flexible approach to working is required (may involve weekends).

If you are interested or would like to know more, please email hr@heckfieldestates.com.

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11th - 13th September 2026





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Limited Tickets at £100 each

BBQ included on Saturday (£10 for non-anglers)

Bivvy City including BBQ £20 per person whether you stay 1,2 or 3 nights from the Thursday.

Anglers to raise a minimum of £150 sponsorship, to be collected by the day of the Event. A full support pack will be sent once ticket purchased.

CHILDREN WITH CANCER UK

LINEAR FISHERIES

Tickets available on our web site Sunday 1st March 2026 at 10am

The AAC Mega Raffle will be drawn on Sunday 13th September after the event has finished.
Tickets on sale on our Anglers Against Cancer Auction Site.

For more information visit: www.anglersagainstcancer.co.uk


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18TH - 20TH SEPTEMBER
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ULTIMATE CARP SOCIAL 2026 TICKET DRAW OPEN



Tickets for this year's prize draw are now on sale. 4 lucky winners will join Terry Hearn, Oz Holness, Tom Stokes Angler and Nick Helleur for a weekend session at Reading & District Angling Association - RDAA 's spectacular Junction 12 venue. Tickets are still just £2 - find out more and get yours at https://anglingtrust.net/ultimate-carp-social-2026/ Korda Developments Sticky Baits Thinking Anglers ESP Carpgear


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FARNHAM MEMBERSHIP NOT BEING CAPPED

Farnham AS Membership Despite some rumours apparently circulating about Farnham AS having put in place a membership cap, we can confirm that is not the case. We can also confirm that despite some peoples misguided previous claims that our membership exceeds 4,500, 5,000 and even 7,000 this season ! , our membership remains open and is below 3,500 at present. Indeed, it will most likely be below 3,700 at the end of the season, which is where it has remained for the last 3-seasons. Indeed, our membership has only exceeded 4,000 members on 3 occasions, for the 2013/14 season after we had just purchased our Yateley East & South Complexes (which have been invested in heavily over the last 14 years), and in both 2020/21 & 2021/21 due to the pandemic. If you wish to become a member and enjoy the fishing and facilities we offer our members, which many believe is unbeatable value and which includes some superb and varied fisheries, please just use the link below. https://farnhamanglingsociety.clubmate.co.uk/register Just follow the simple instructions and provide a digital 'passport style' photograph. Payment is accepted from all major Credit & Debit Cards, Direct Debit, Apple Pay and Google Pay. Last season's members who have not yet renewed and intend to do so should act before 1st June 2026 to avoid having to pay the Joining Fee again, as your membership will be deemed to have lapsed as of 31st May 2026. Enjoy your fishing, whether it be with Farnham AS or elsewhere. Ian Gray, Honorary Secretary

PEGSLAM: SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF CARP ANGLERS

In a sport where opportunity can often depend on who you know, where you fish, or whether the right doors ever open, PegSlam is doing something different. It is creating those opportunities from the ground up.

Built around junior competition, development and visibility, PegSlam has quickly established itself as one of the most exciting grassroots concepts in UK carp fishing. What started as an idea to give young anglers a fair chance to experience proper specimen-style competition has evolved into something much bigger: a platform designed to inspire, support and develop the next generation of carp anglers. At a time when the future of the sport depends on bringing younger people through, PegSlam is proving that junior carp fishing can be competitive, inclusive, modern and full of potential.





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Another new product that has crept into the range of late is the updated Tungsten Rig Tubing. 3 brand new colours matched to our Lead Clip systems covering you for all bases.

The new Gravel Brown Tungsten Rig Tubing replaces the original Silt Brown. Made lighter, more gravel like and more in sync with out 3 way colour fade through our Lead Clip systems.

The new Weed Green has also had a facelift making it a deeper more darker green along with the new Silt Grey again being made a deeper darker grey.

The same formula has been used meaning its still an absolute dream to thread time and time again and the usual #AtomicTackle 70/30 Tungsten mix means its super heavy but remains supple.

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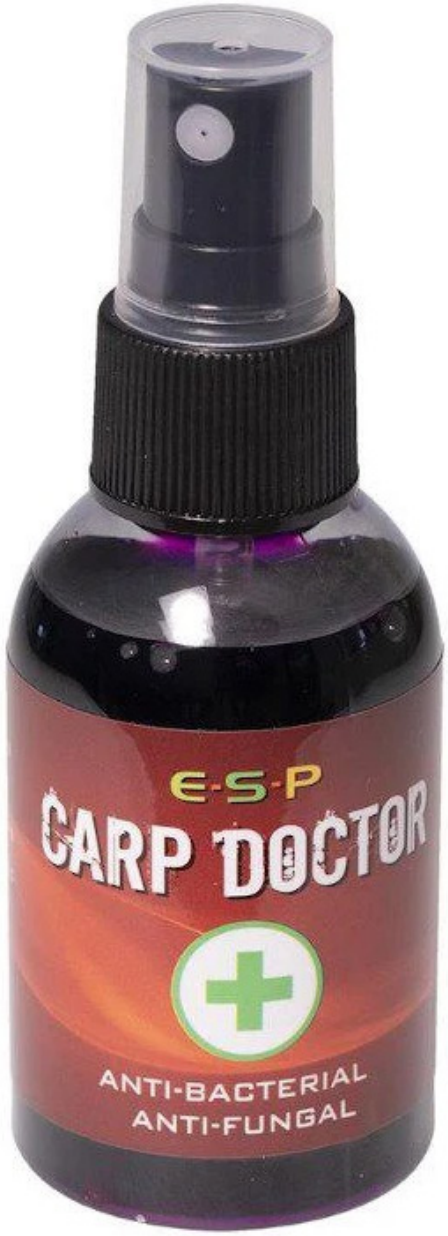


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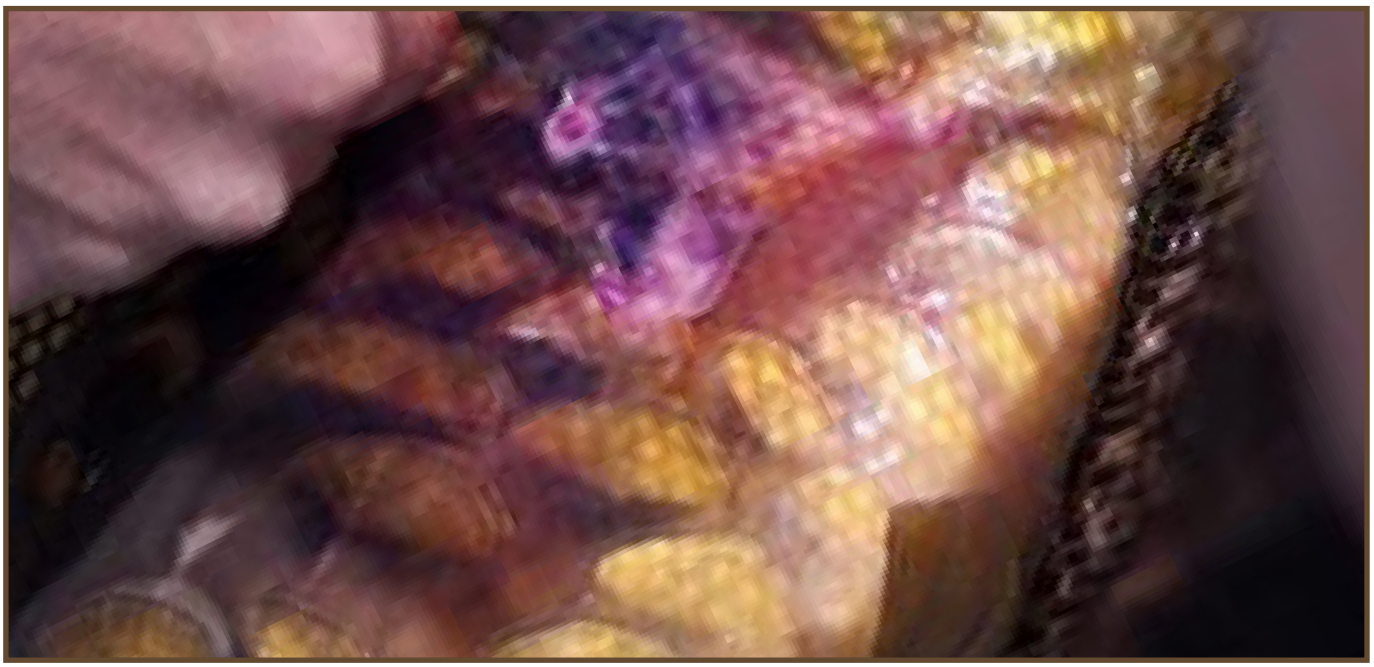
ESP CARP DOCTOR TREATMENT ANTISEPTIC



With carp spawning everywhere over the last month, and the inevitable post-spawn feed up to follow, it's highly likely that some fish you might catch will show signs of damage from their annual ritual.

Spawning often takes place in snags, reeds, weedbeds, shallow gravel areas etc so lifted scales, cuts, grazes etc. are commonplace.





ESP Carp Doctor is an effective, easy to use antiseptic spray for carp and other freshwater fish. For treatment of spawning damage, plus bacterial infections such as fin rot, ulcers and hook marks.

Easy to apply using the atomizer spray, Carp Doctor works on contact. Supplied in a handy, easy to store 50ml bottle.

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SCOTT CLARK

FRYERNING FISHERY

After working away for a couple of weeks and not being able to get fishing for a few weeks due to being busy with work, I decided to do a quick overnight session on Tuesday the 6th of November. I turned up at my syndicate, Fryerning's Fishery, at around 3pm and noticed there were a few anglers on. After a quick look to see what pegs were available, I noticed a peg called the Double Dam was free. This is a peg that does tend to hold the carp through the colder months due to being one of the deepest parts of the lake, and it commands a lot of water. I knew a few spots that produced big fish at this time of year.

I wasted no time in finding my spots and marking them up. I fished my left rod at 80 yards on a hard clay spot, my middle rod at 60 yards to soft clay/silt and my right rod at 40 yards, as I know they get in close on a southeasterly wind. My left rod was fished with a blowback rig on Korda N-Trap soft with Korda Kamakura size 4 barbless hook on a single Mainline Link



bottom bait. It was the same setup for my middle rod, topped with a 10mm Mainline pop up as a snowman, and my right rod was fished with just a bottom bait, all on 18mm Mainline link. As I was just doing a quick night, I decided to fish with six-boilie stringers on all three rods. I was fishing for a bite, and with it being colder weather, I thought this would be best on a short session.

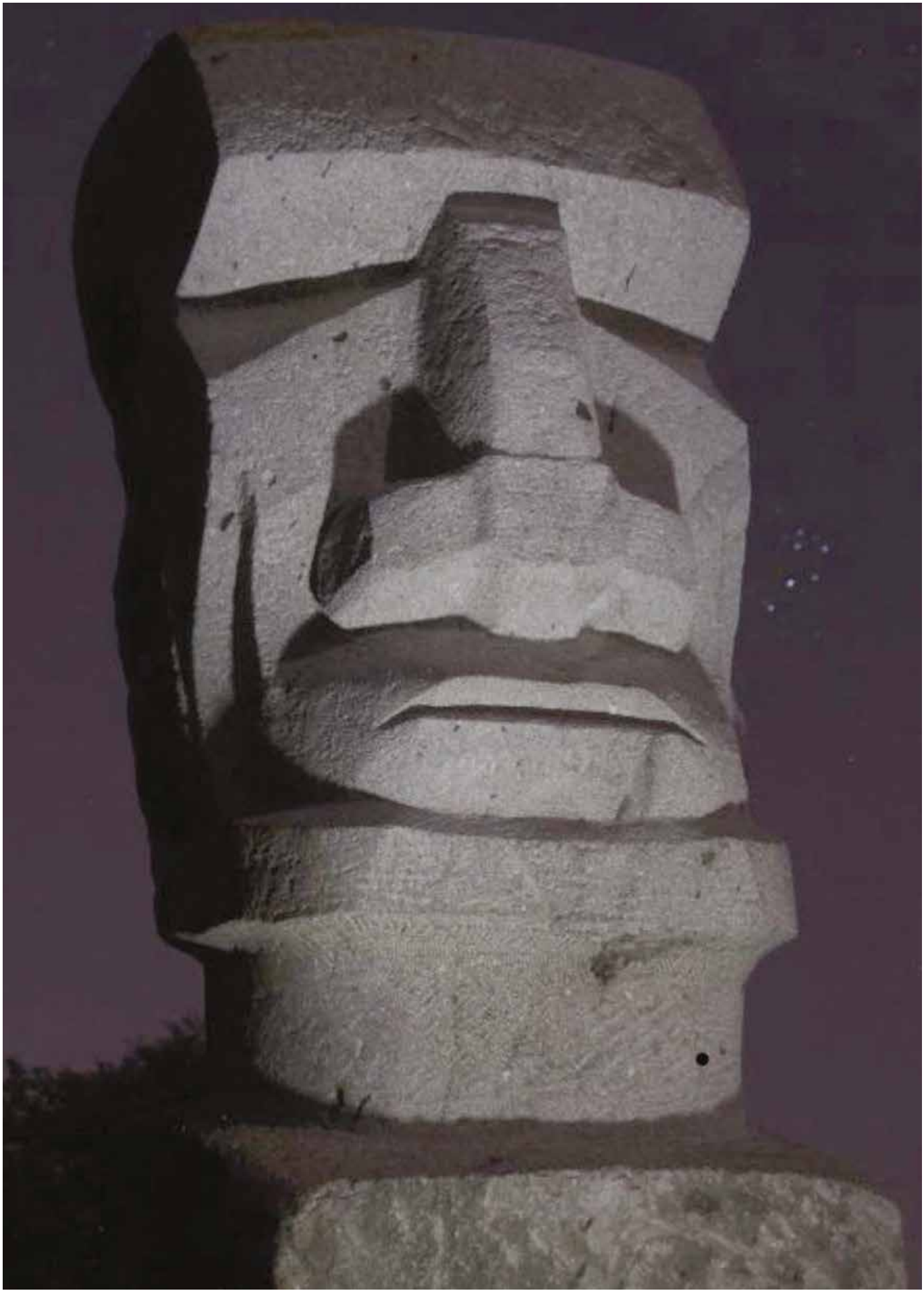
The weather conditions were perfect – windy and blowing a southeasterly, cutting across my peg to the island. After watching for any signs of fish in the peg, the light started to fade very quickly, and by 6pm, I started getting a few liners and considered bringing a rod in closer. I decided against this, as I didn't want to push any carp in my area away. I went to sleep around 9:30pm and was woken up by a few bleeps on my middle rod fished as a snowman rig. I went out to investigate, and I saw I'd had a drop back. I tightened my line back up, and

the hanger kept dropping, so I picked my rod up and slowly reeled in. Within ten seconds, I felt a tug and knew I had a carp! This then turned in to a 40-minute battle with one hell of a fishy!

I knew it was a big fish when I finally managed to get her in my net. I put my head torch on and saw a big fish known as the Emperor. I know this fish does mid 40, so I was absolutely buzzing. This was a fish I'd seen in pictures, and I thought I'd love to catch her. After doing a few pictures, we put her on the scales and were blown away! She went 45lb 10oz! I couldn't believe my luck on a quick overnighter! A massive thanks goes to Charlie and Chris who own Fryerning's for doing such an amazing job and giving people like me the opportunity to catch such stunning carp, and Mainline for bringing out such good bait.



SCOTT CLARK



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TONY GASKIN

CLOUD NINE

I decided to go down to Oldmill Lakes and do 24-hour session on Birch Lake. After a chat with the owner, I went walking around the lake to see I could see any sign of fish showing. After about half hour of walking around the lake, I noticed some fizzing in a swim called Doubles. I walked back to the car to get my gear and set up in there. I put three rods out with a handful of offerings over each rod. The day passed without any action, so I decided to move one of my rods to an island to my right just before it got dark and baited with about a kilo of 12mm boilies.

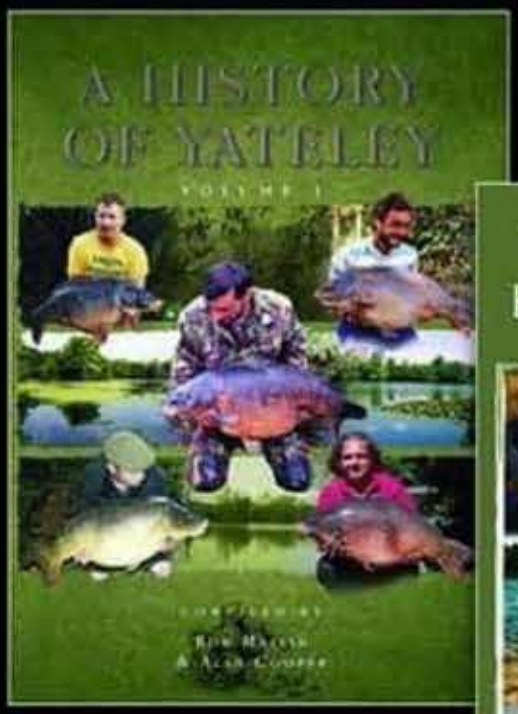
The night passed with just the odd liner, and then around 7am, the rod I put out just before dark signaled a couple of bleeps. The bobbin pulled up tight, so I struck into it. I thought it was a stockie at first because it didn't put up much of a fight. Then it got to the margin and rolled, which was when I knew it was a good fish. It then went on a good run, charging around the swim before finally, probably 20 minutes later, it gave up and rolled over the net cord. I knew it had to be a new personal best! I got one of the lads to come help me with the weighing and photos and was absolutely buzzing when the scales went round to 46lb 3oz. I'm on cloud nine!

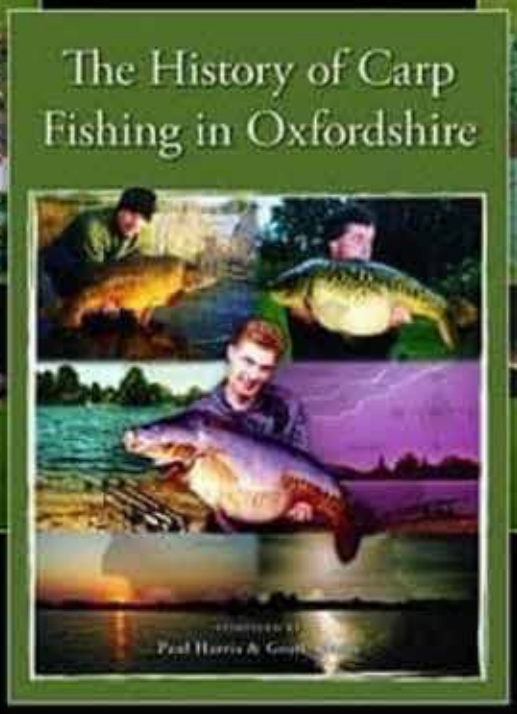
TONY GASKIN

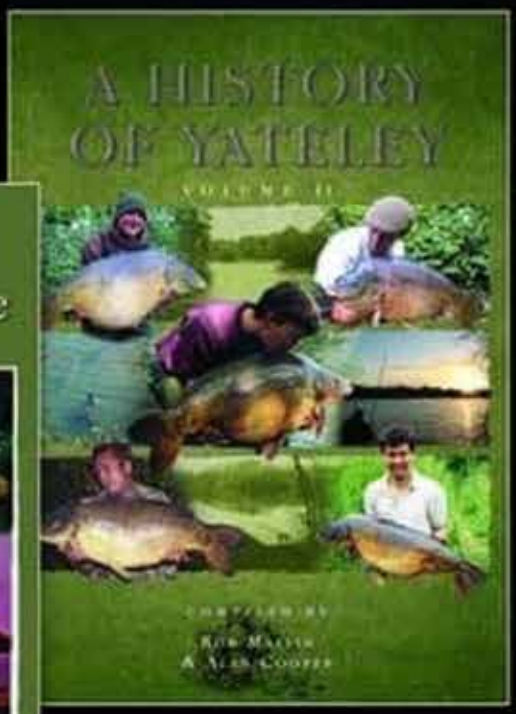


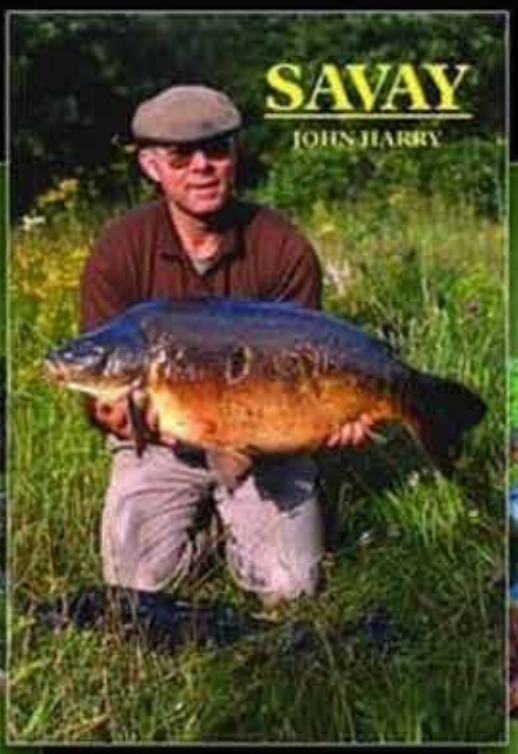


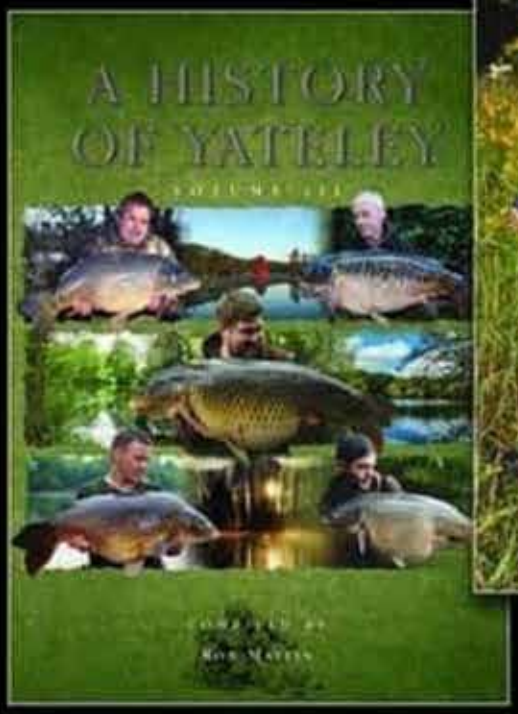
THE HISTORY SERIES

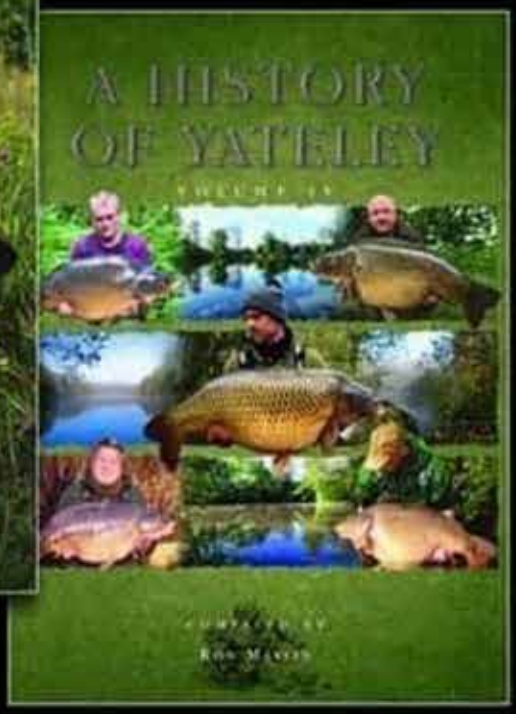












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ADAM HONEYSETT

MANOR MAGIC

After starting my own business, it's been hard to find time for fishing, only having done a single night since mid-November, so I couldn't wait to get back out. So after finishing work on Friday 21st December, my thoughts were on getting back to Manor the following day. I arrived for first light and after a good walk for a few hours, I decided on dropping in a swim down the deeper end of the lake after seeing nothing to go on, but after doing 24 hours in there, I decided another walk was needed to try and find some fish. After a walk down the other end of the lake, sitting down and watching for around half an hour, it became clear there were fish present with several patches of bubbles starting to come up. I swiftly got back packed up and moved, checking where the fizzing was before I cast so I didn't spook any fish present in the area. I just cast one rod out for the first hour whilst I set the bivvy up etc, rechecking there were fish

still in the area before I got the other two rods out, and sure enough there was still some fizzing going on close to where I had put the first rod out. I positioned the other two rods away from this area and flicked a few baits around each.

At around 2:30, about two hours after moving, I had four bleeps on my right hand rod. Glancing down the bank, I noticed the bobbin was pulled up very tight. I shot down the bank, picked the rod up and bent into the fish. It plodded around for about ten minutes before it popped up in the margin. That was when I could see the mass of it with its head and shoulders coming up out of the water. Luckily it went in the net first time. I peered in to the net and recognised it instantly from photos I have seen – another one that is often talked about but not often caught. I was surprisingly quite calm, even though I had a new PB in the net and possibly my first UK 50. I left her to rest up in the net for a few minutes whilst I got a couple of the guys to come and help. A couple of mates came round, and I went down into the water, rolled the net up and placed her into the weigh sling so two of us could carry her up the bank to the unhooking mat. After zeroing the scales to the weigh sling, I hoisted her up whilst Jake and Mark read the scales. It was my new personal best and my first UK 50 was confirmed – the Peach at 51lb 12oz.

After an hour or so of taking it all in, I got the rod back in position, almost certain that the fish had vacated the area, as I hadn't seen any signs since all the commotion. The next 12 hours passed by with no signs of carp until around 4am when I had a line bite on my left hand rod. I sat up, made a cup of tea, and around about 4.45, a fish rolled out in front, so I was sure they were back. The morning almost came and went, but at 10.45, I heard a splash whilst I was packing up. As I turned around, I





could see how close it was to me, so without a second thought, I shot down the bank, reeled my middle rod in and repositioned it very close to where the fish rolled.

It was now Christmas Eve, and I had to be on the move by midday to get home to my family, so the minutes were ticking by. I was just putting the last of my gear on the barrow before I got the rods in when the middle rod signalled a very jittery bite. I picked the rod up, bent into the fish, and after a short but hard battle I could see I had netted another lump. Christmas had well and truly come early! My mate Mark came round to help, as we were the only ones left both packed up ready to go. When I lifted this one out the water, I knew it was a mid-forty, and up on the scales, it was confirmed at 44lb 14oz, a fish known as the Pound Coin. I made a very quick exit after the photos to get home to spend Christmas with my family.

ADAM HONEYSETT



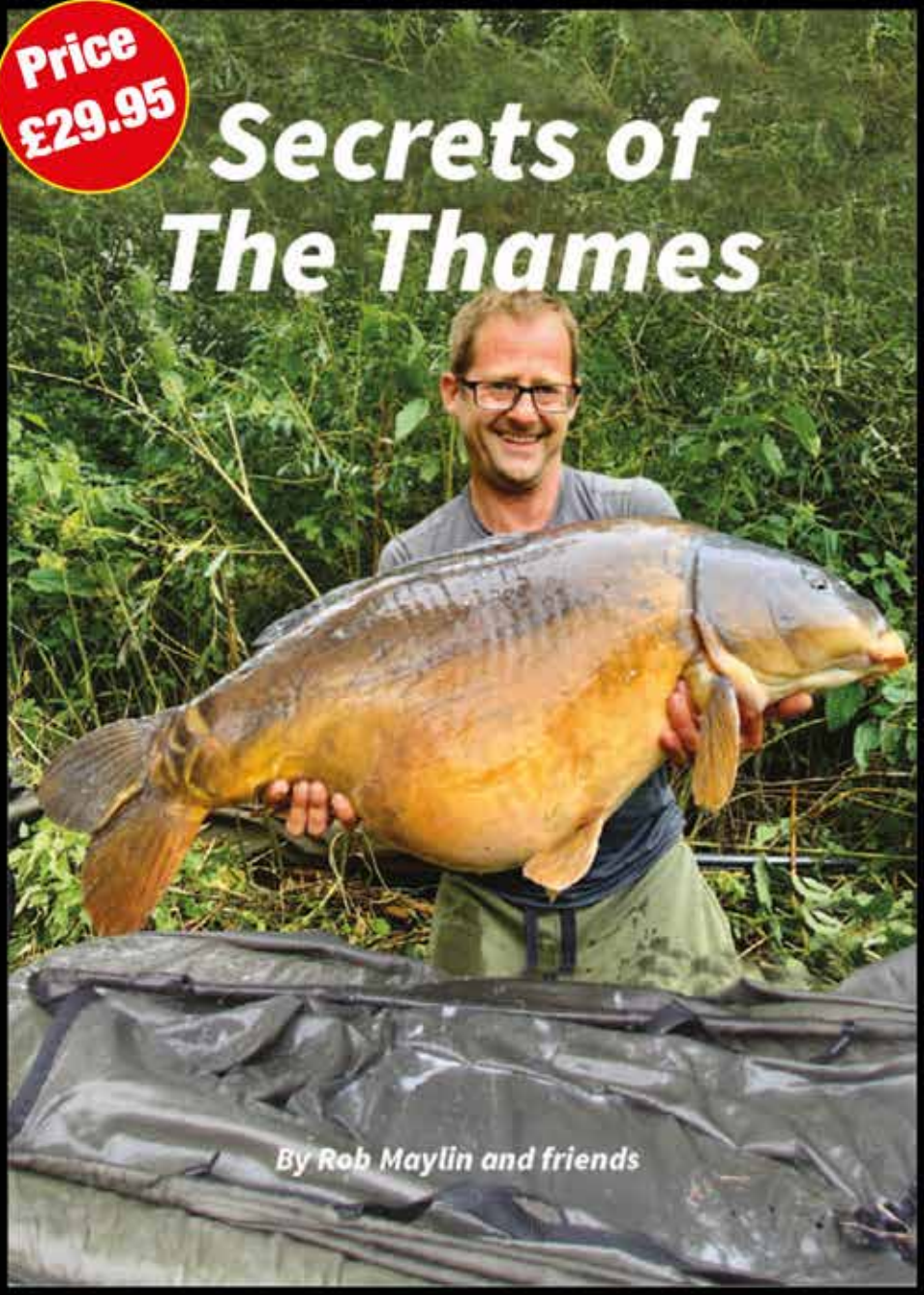


ADAM HONEYSETT



After my result leading up to Christmas, I was dying to get back on the bank, so on Boxing Day I made my way back down to the lake for another three nights. After having a good walk around, I decided to go in the swim I'd had my previous success in. After 24 hours, however, I was convinced the fish were not in the area, and a brief walk down the bank confirmed it. I moved quickly, but over the next 24-30 hours, it just didn't feel right with high pressure and flat calm conditions. I woke up on my final morning to what felt like a different world; a slight breeze had picked up, and one of the lads stopped for a chat on his walk around. I had just said to him that it felt good for a bite this morning when the bobbin on my right hand rod pulled up tight, and I had a cracking scaly 33lb 8oz mirror. What a nice way to end the year with my first UK 50, but to have a 30, 40 and 50 over the festive break was mindblowing.

SECRETS OF THE THAMES











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).

By far and away the largest carp water in UK. Now sit back and enjoy just a few of its many secrets.

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ADAM KITCHEN

THE MORNING GLORY

So after having six months off fishing due to my dad being ill and having another son, I just didn't have any time free to get the rods out, but a trip with the boys was due, and I was buzzing. After an early morning trip to the lake, I was knackered, but the lake looked great. We did the swim draw, and I came out first, so I decided to fish a swim that gets ignored, but it just looked good. Even though I didn't see one fish on the walk round, this swim just looked right. It has a bit of open water to the left island in the middle and a big channel to the right. After getting the rods out, I just wanted sleep.

ADAM KITCHEN











On the next morning, my pal in the next swim had a lovely 40, and we both said that it was going to be a good week, but then the weather changed. It got cold with a northerly wind, and the lake just shut up shop. I kept the Mainline baits going in, but each night I was getting done by the crays. I got a couple of beeps, and I was in on the Monday with a little 25, so the pressure was off. Then the next morning I had another take, and this one felt a lot better. After a good battle, I landed a lovely 42, which was a PB common, and then that evening, I had another take, which was another cracking common at 47lb 5oz, another PB for me. I was made up already, and it was only Tuesday.

The next morning, I had another 25 to back up, and then at about 6pm, I had a one-toner. My alarm was melting off, and after a mega battle and being snagged up, I had this fat beast of







ROBERT LITTLE

NEW PB CHUNK

Hi, my name is Robert, and I've recently got back from a 48-hour session on Cromwell Lakes in Newark. This was my fourth visit to the lake; the first three times, I blanked, but that didn't stop me from going and keeping on trying for my first fish from this venue. I was in peg 11 and started of on pop-ups on Ronnie rigs with Urban Baits Nutcracker pop-ups on, but nothing happened for the first 24 hours. Then I noticed they were on the surface in numbers, so I set up a floater rod. I fired out a few catapults of Sticky Baits Krill floaters and kept feeding every five or ten minutes to get them feeding.

After an hour or so, a few lumps started getting confident, so I cast over the fish and reeled in slowly over the freebies of floaters. About 30 minutes later, the controller float went under and I was into a fish. It went straight for the trees, so I

ROBERT LITTLE

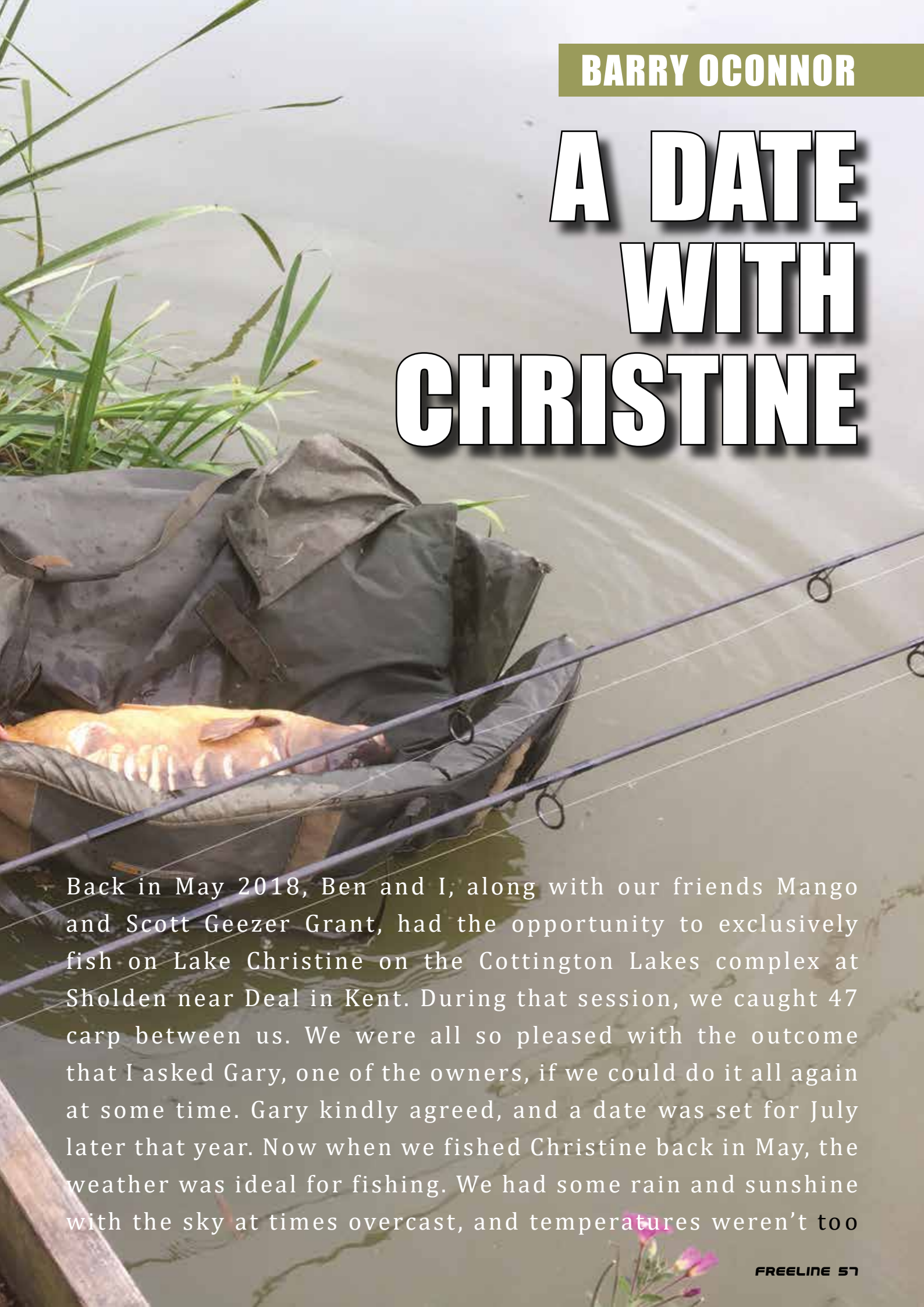


applied pressure, and about five minutes later, the fish was on the surface. As I saw the fish, I started shaking, as I knew this was a PB. After 15 minutes the fish was over the net, and I could not believe my eyes. I didn't just catch a fish after three blank sessions; I caught my first ever 30 and smashed my PB! I was over the moon, and my emotions were running wild. I could not stop smiling! The fish went 32lb 4oz.

As this was my first time ever catching a fish of this size, I was more bothered about the fish care and safety of the fish, so I didn't want to hold it up too much. I just rested it on my belly for extra protection for the fish, so I'm sorry if the pics aren't the best, but you can see the joy in my face!







BARRY OCONNOR

A DATE WITH CHRISTINE

Back in May 2018, Ben and I, along with our friends Mango and Scott Geezer Grant, had the opportunity to exclusively fish on Lake Christine on the Cottington Lakes complex at Sholden near Deal in Kent. During that session, we caught 47 carp between us. We were all so pleased with the outcome that I asked Gary, one of the owners, if we could do it all again at some time. Gary kindly agreed, and a date was set for July later that year. Now when we fished Christine back in May, the weather was ideal for fishing. We had some rain and sunshine with the sky at times overcast, and temperatures weren't too

high. In contrast, the July visit coincided with very high temperatures and bright sunshine that had been with us for weeks – not the sort of weather you want for carp fishing. The water level was slightly down, but because of the dyke system that surrounds the lakes at Cottington, the water level can be controlled. Anyway, even if we didn't catch anything, we'd all end up with a nice tan.

Both Ben and I went back in to the same swims we were in during the May session, whereas Mango and Scott changed their choice of swims. Mango went to the left of me and fished into a corner and to an island. Scott went to the right of Ben and also fished into a corner and to an island. As always, Ben and I used the ever-reliable and very sharp Deception size 6 D-X Curved hooks. The hooks were matched with a three-ounce lead, a five-inch Tranzlusion Fluoro hooklink and Deception Safety Clips on our setups. Because we'd had so many carp on our last visit, none of us could see any reason to change what we did… that was until we could see a few carp cruising around on the surface while we were setting up. Would zigs work? Well, I was certainly going to try them on one of my rods. I'm sure the others might have had the same thought. The water depth in front of me was around four feet, so I set the zig at three feet. A tiny piece of black foam the size of a pea was used as the hook bait. This was dunked in A2 Tutti Frutti glug before casting. The setup Ben and I use allows for the lead to come off very easily when the carp takes the bait. It's almost instantly dropped. The biggest problem with playing a carp on a zig is the lead weight. If

BARRY OCONNOR





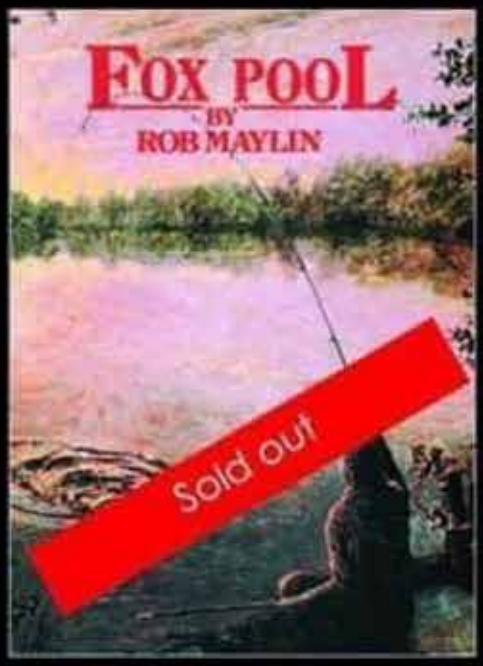


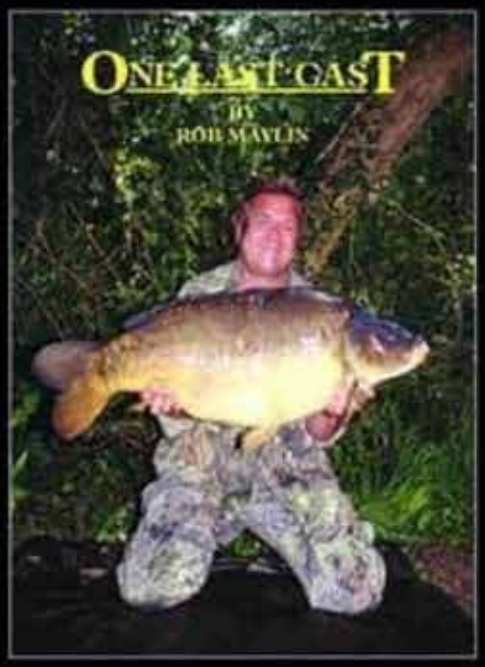
it doesn't come off then you'll be playing the lead rather than the carp. The lead will be bouncing all over the place and quite possibly loosen the hook hold. That's why so many carp are lost when zig fishing. Lose the lead, not the fish.

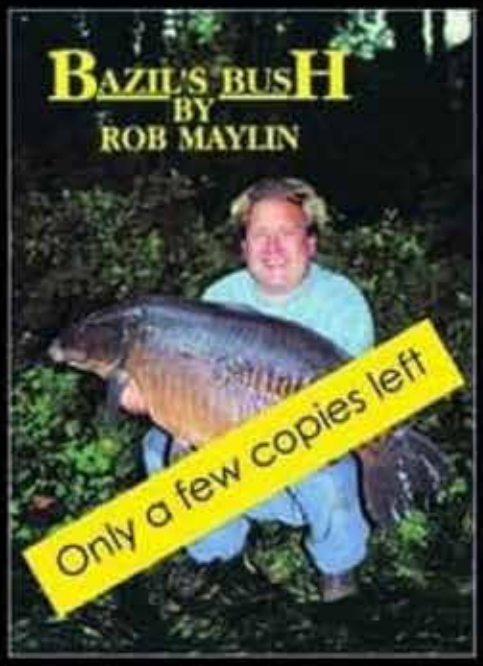
I put the zig out and left it on my bite alarm while I set up the rest of my kit. The others were all going about the business of getting their own rods out. Ben knew exactly where he was going to put his hook baits, having caught from these spots on the previous visit. Mango and Scott had ideas about their own swims. Anyway, I was setting up my camp and had completely forgotten about the zig. That was until my alarm reminded me with an audible sound. I must admit it startled me a bit, but then I realised what

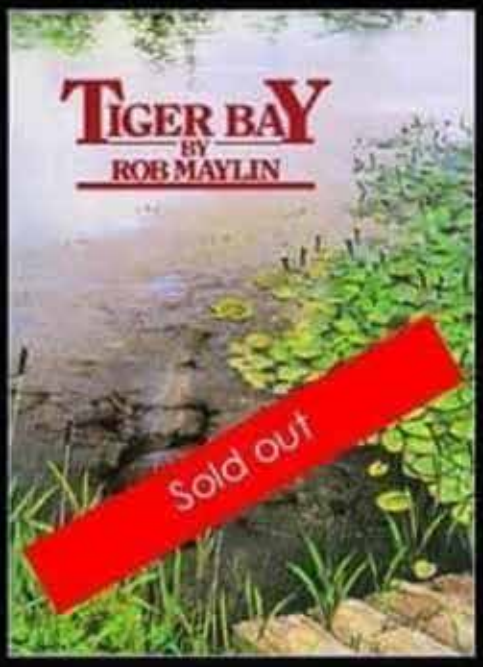
THE ROB MAYLIN SERIES

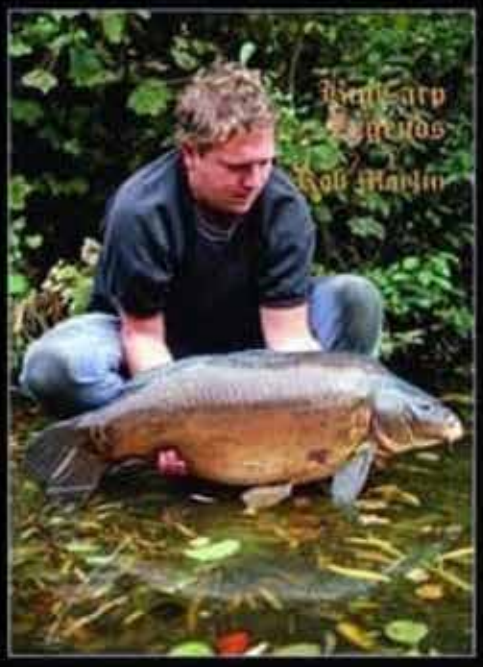
50 years on the bank with Rob and Friends











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was happening, and I was soon playing my first carp of the session. It came to the net with no dramas and was a nice common of about fourteen pounds. Ben in the meantime was priming some spots in his swim. The likely spots were baited with 12mm A2 Creamy Toffee boilies and Hooked On Baits R9 particles using a catapult. Not too much was put out. About fifty boilies and a few pouches of particle went on to his chosen spots. This included putting some bait around the peripheral areas of the spots to create a sort of trail leading to the hook bait area. This can sometimes work very well on small lakes or in areas where there are snags or reeds. It's a tactic that has caught several carp for Ben and me whether in carp matches or pleasure fishing. A 12mm Creamy Toffee boilie was also used as a hook bait.

A few hours into the session, and Ben's tactic paid dividends. His rod cast close to an island tight up against a small bush was away. The fish made several attempts to free itself of the hook, none more so than going underneath a bramble bush on the island. Ben dipped his rod tip under the water and held fast in an attempt to prize the carp away from the bramble bush. By dipping the rod under the water, Ben was now pulling the carp at the same level the carp was at, as opposed to pulling upwards, which is what most anglers do. Playing the carp with the rod tip underwater seems to fool the carp, and you have more control over it. They also come in a bit easier. Keeping the rod tip underwater also keeps the line out of the way of overhanging branches etc – in this case, the overhanging

BARRY OCONNOR







bramble bush. If you pull the rod up, it will definitely snag the line on the bush or branches. It's no good using this tactic if you are fishing at distance, but it will help when you get the fish close in and near the net. The tactic worked, and the carp came slowly away from danger. Although Ben had got it away from the bramble bush, the carp was not by any means ready to come in. It was giving a good account of itself. The first glimpse we got of it was when it rolled. It was something special! We both looked at each other in amazement but never said a word. It kissed the spreader block on the net, and it was captured. It definitely was a good fish. We both did our usual guessing of the weight,

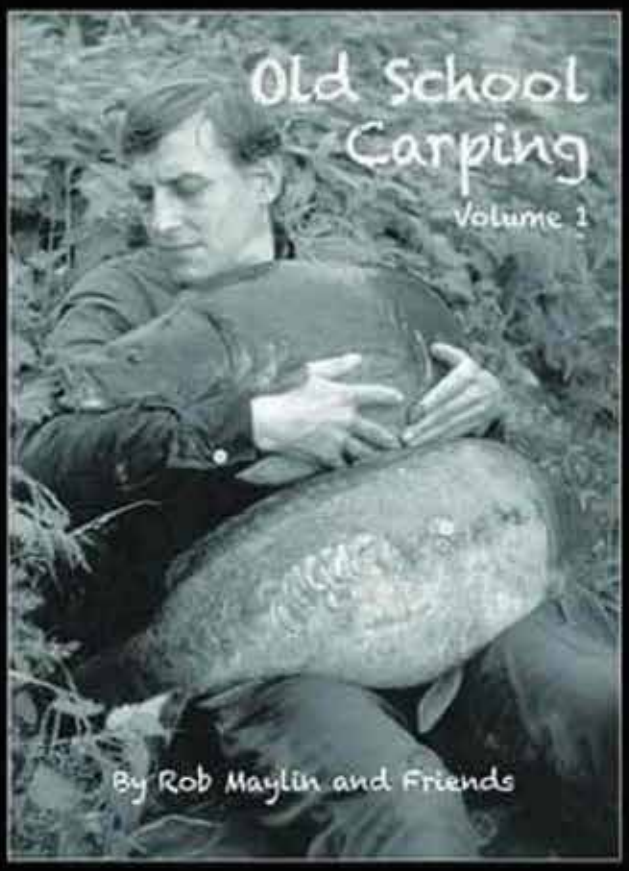
BARRY OCONNOR

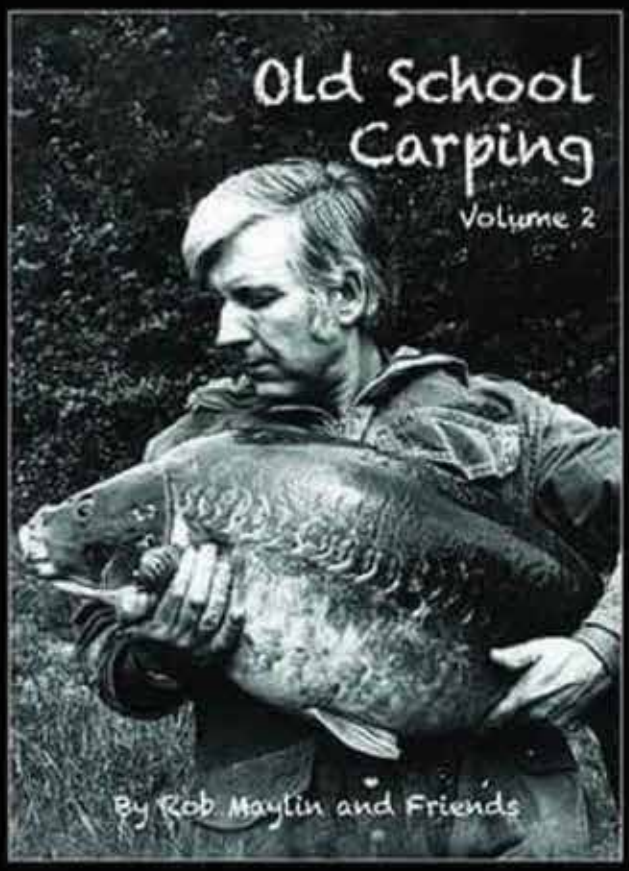


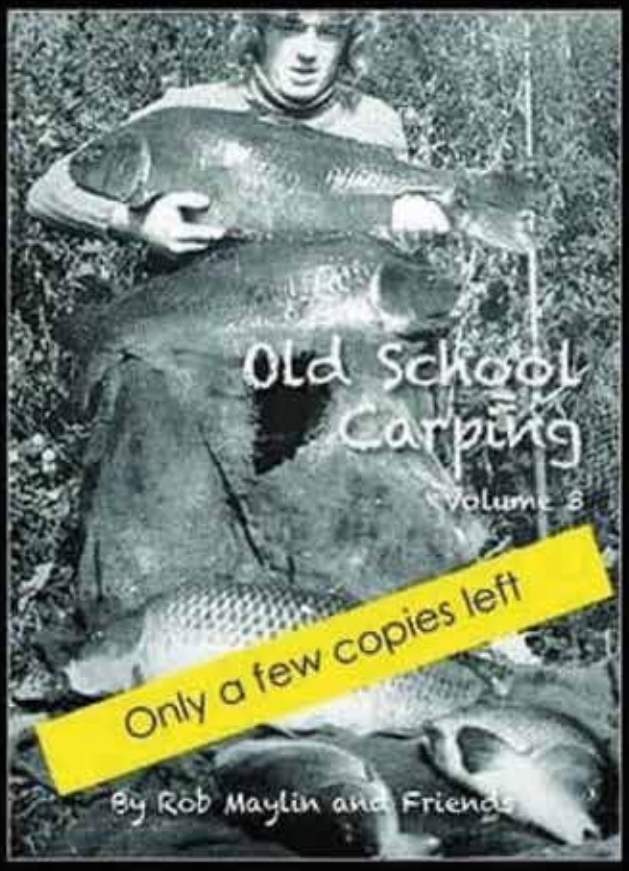


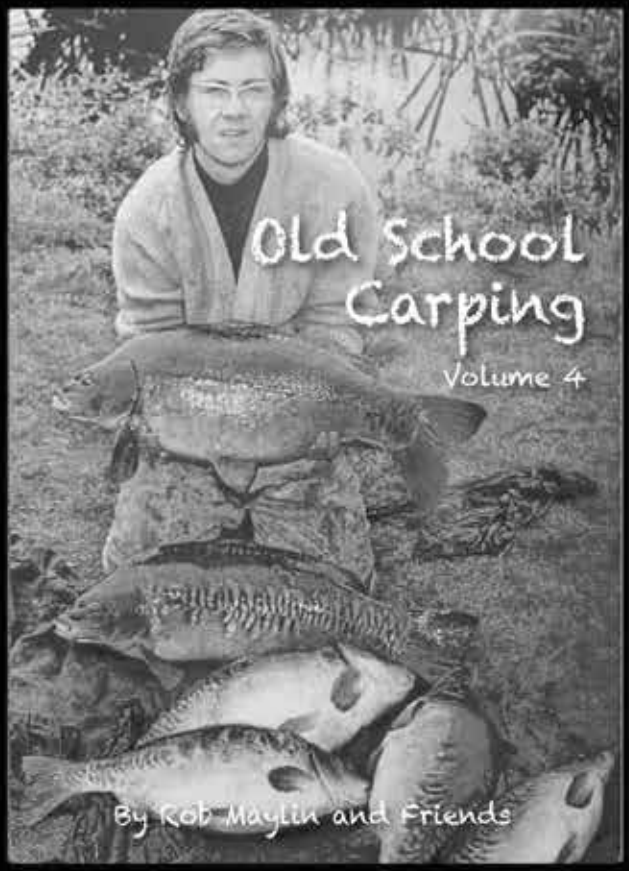
and we were close to the actual weight of 34lb 12oz. Photos done and carp returned, we proceeded with renewed enthusiasm. It's great when you catch early on in a session; it gives you so much confidence for the rest of the session. Not long after Ben's capture, one of Mango's rods was away. He was on it in a flash. Being nearest to him, I went to net it for him. The carp put up a good fight, twisting and turning, but it eventually went into the net. It was instantly recognisable; it was the Fully Scaled Mirror. I'd had this fish on our previous visit to Christine. It weighed in at 29lb 14oz, which was a few ounces down from the previous capture back in May when it was 30lb 2oz. Nevertheless, Mango was well pleased with the capture of the Fully Scaled Mirror. Scott in the meantime had caught a couple of carp, both mirrors, 28lbs and 31lbs. Placing a hookbait very close to the island foliage had been the downfall for these carp. The islands and the margins are very productive on Christine and should not be neglected. More carp get caught in these areas than anywhere else. Accurate casting to the islands is a must, although bait boats are allowed on Christine. Most of the margins can be reached by just walking along them and dropping a hookbait in the side and walking the rod back to the swim. It's worth mentioning here that although Ben and I used the same tactics as before on this session, we did want to try solid PVA bags. A lot of anglers won't use them because they think they are fiddly to make up. That isn't the case. Bags are a means of getting the hookbait and freebies tight to weed beds and at distance without having to put

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Pack of 25

anymore bait around it. Once the hookbait and freebies are placed in the bag, liquids such as oils or PVA friendly flavours can be added. These soak into the freebies, giving them added attraction and more pulling power. We use Castaway solid PVA bags, as they seem stronger than most, and we have a lot of confidence in them. Once the bag is made up, most anglers then tie them off with PVA tape or string, which is fine, but those boys at Castaway PVA have come up with PVA cable type ties – ingenious! It makes the tying of the bags much easier with no messing about tying knots – just one pull and the bag is sealed. The ties, being PVA, dissolve like any other PVA. Solid PVA bags figure highly in our armoury of fishing.

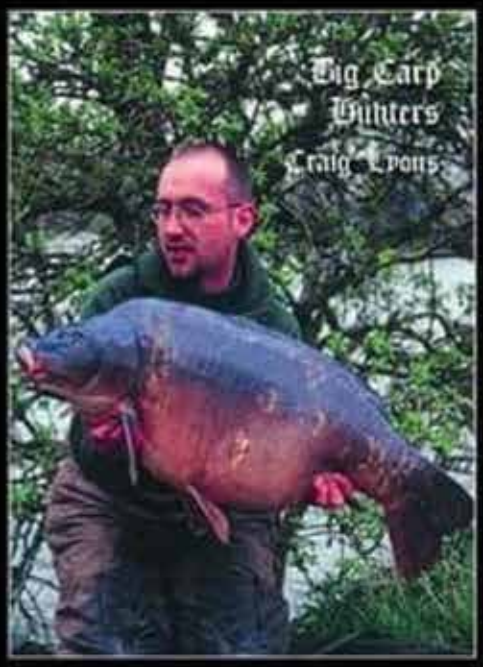
Meanwhile, back on the fishing front, I had a belting run, which saw me connect to something that was making bow waves on the surface. After a hardy scrap, the carp surrendered to the net. We could see it was a nice mirror and might reach thirty on the scales. This it did, just, at 30lb 6oz. By the way, this was caught on a solid bag setup. By the end of the session, we had accounted for twenty-eight carp between us – not bad when you think the weather wasn't really that great for carp fishing. A good time was had by all on our second date with Christine.

We are going back to have a third session on Christine in November, so I'll let you know how we got on.

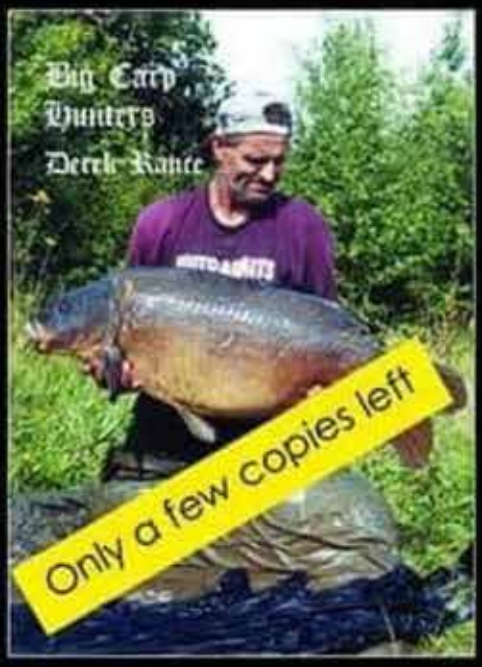
Christine is a day ticket water and can be booked through the booking system on Cottington Lakes' website at www.cottingtonlakes.co.uk. With plenty of big carp to fish for on Christine, you won't be disappointed. Give it a go.These PVA cable ties used with solid bags are magic.

THE BIG CARP HUNTER SERIES

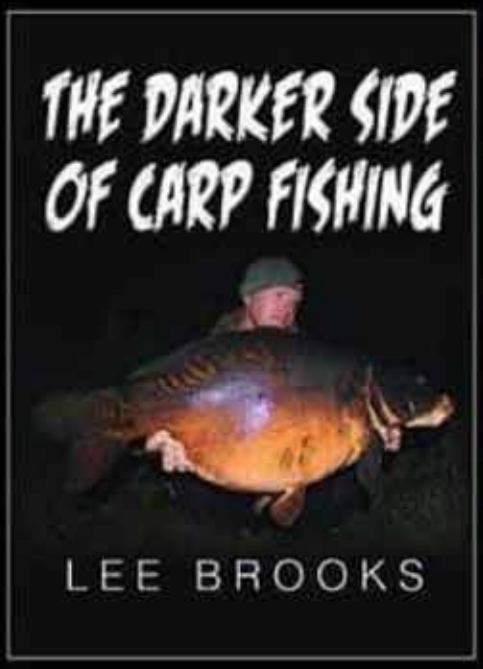
The Unsung hero's prolific catches with a unique tale to tell

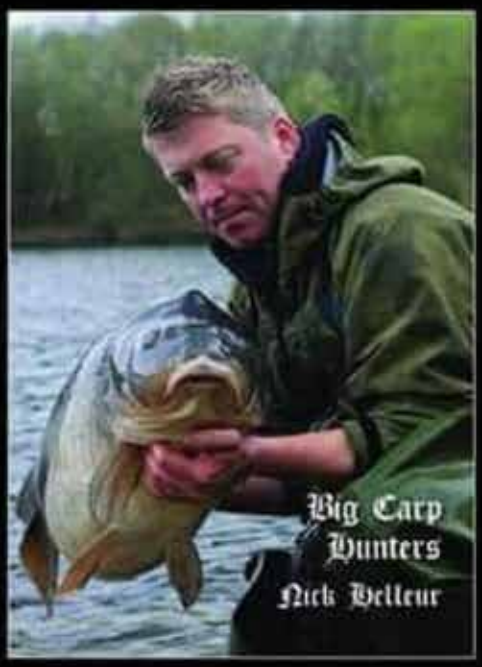


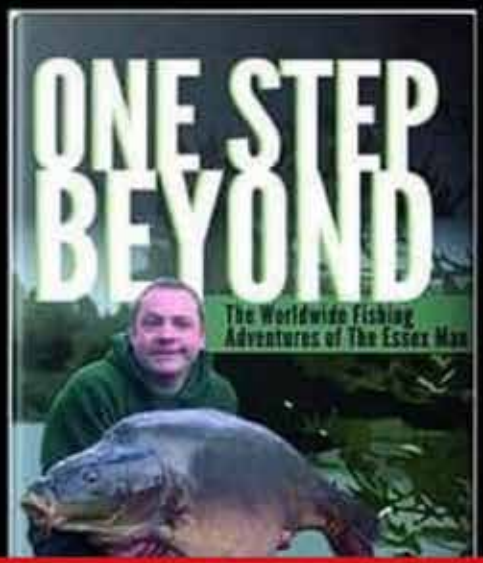








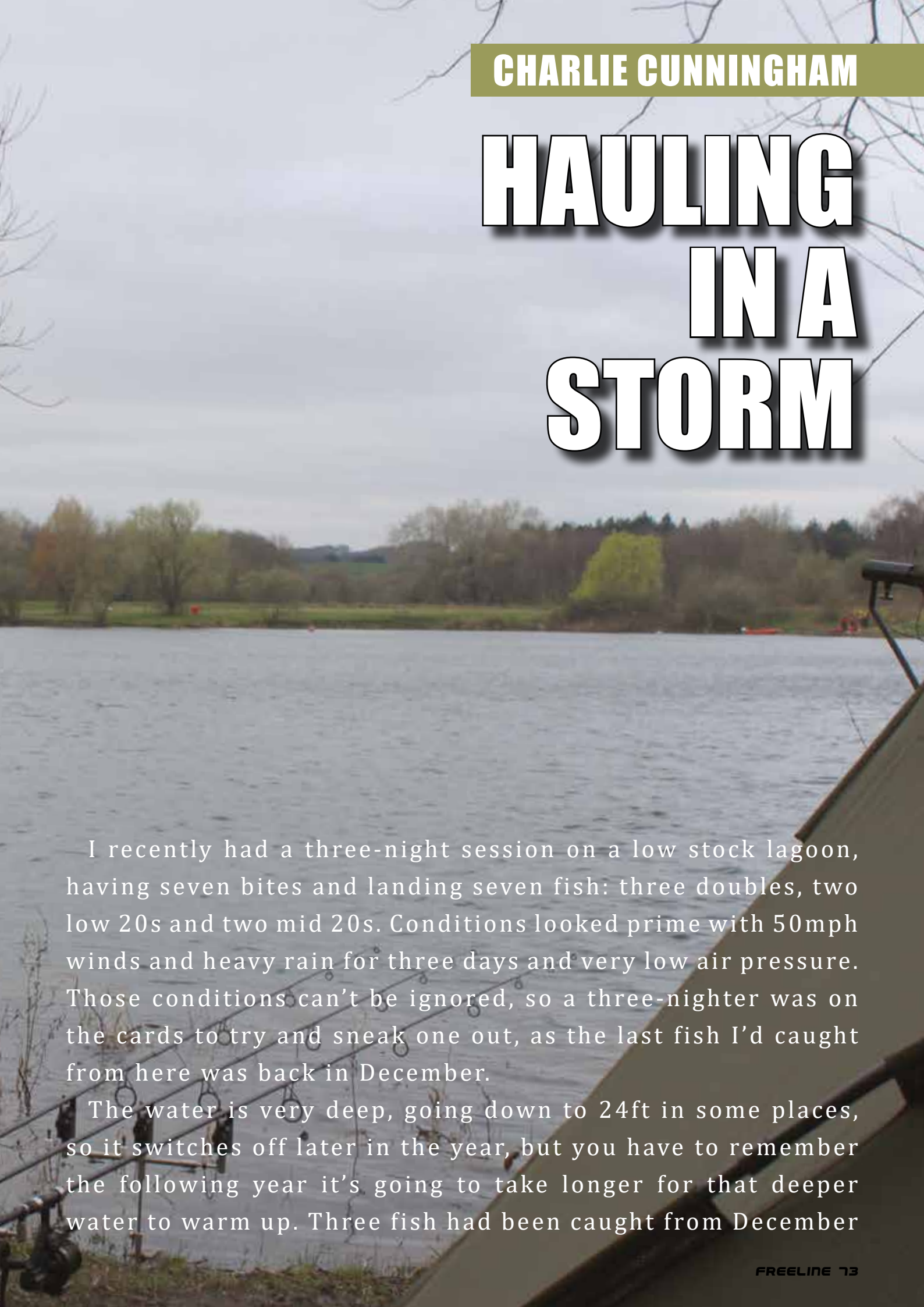




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CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM

HAULING IN A STORM

I recently had a three-night session on a low stock lagoon, having seven bites and landing seven fish: three doubles, two low 20s and two mid 20s. Conditions looked prime with 50mph winds and heavy rain for three days and very low air pressure. Those conditions can't be ignored, so a three-nighter was on the cards to try and sneak one out, as the last fish I'd caught from here was back in December.

The water is very deep, going down to 24ft in some places, so it switches off later in the year, but you have to remember the following year it's going to take longer for that deeper water to warm up. Three fish had been caught from December

up until the start of March, so I thought it was going to be tough, especially after cutting through my hand to the bone with a hatchet only two weeks before. A friend and I got set up on the main point of the lake, fishing some of the main areas that have done me well over time, fishing with my trusty home cooked particles and the ever faithful Dynamite Complex-T range. All we could do was wait…

The first morning came, and at half past five, I struck… It was all very sudden, but I found myself in battle with the first lagoon fish of the year, screaming my mate's name at the top of my voice to wake him up and let him know the situation. I couldn't play and land fish, as I had stitches in my left hand. It was all so sudden, but in she went, just shy of 21lb – fantastic! Back to bed I went, and two hours later, I found myself playing another fish – the rain was horrendous! I actually played the fish in the bivvy until it got closer in, but that plan didn't go well. I knew it was a decent fish as soon as it started stripping line off the reel, taking me round into the Back Bay. I was hoping and praying it stayed on, and after a long fight, into the net she went. We looked at each other… hmm… that's a bit bigger! It was a lovely dark mirror weighing 24lb 8oz – fantastic! In the sling she went and it was back to bed for me…

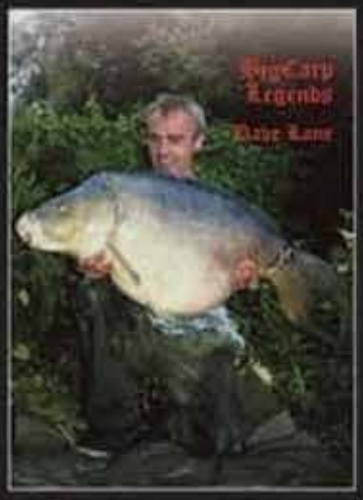
This time only an hour later, I found myself playing another fish! After a short battle, into the net it went a small 13lb common, probably a fish that escaped in the floods from the pond over the other side of the track. There were a few of them in there… Fast forward to the next night, and I was awoken in the early hours, and again had two bites during the night – a long, lean 22lb common and the most beautiful mirror of 18lb 8oz with so many shades of colour on him. Ideally I wanted to

BIG CARP LEGENDS SERIES

The anglers that shaped todays carp scene

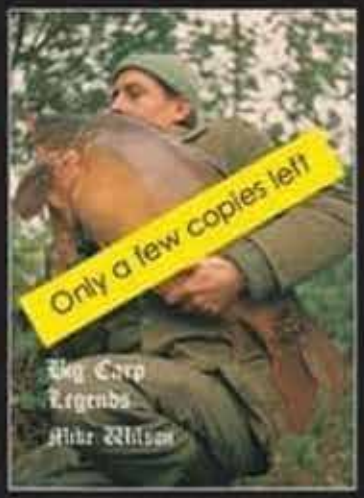




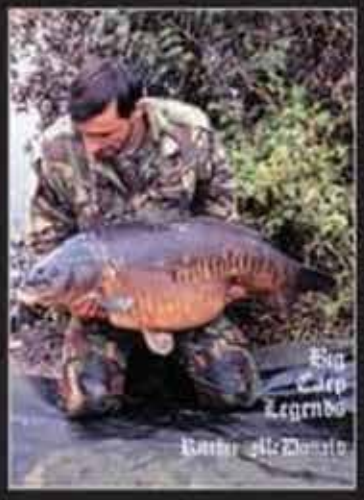




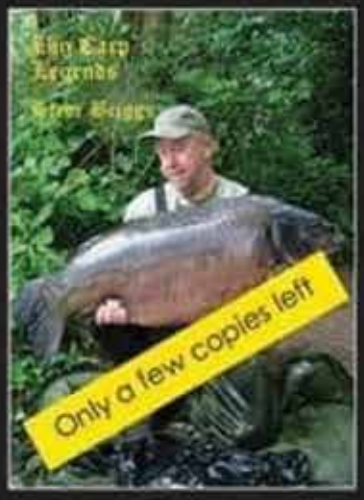












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name that one Pinky or Pink Bits. I was amazed – up until now five fish with a stitched up hand, and they all beat me up on the mat!

We went into our last night on the lagoon. At this point I couldn't have asked for more, but the best was yet to come! At 2am, I struck, and this was a really savage take. As soon as I struck into the fish, I knew it was a better one, and after a 150-yard battle through weed beds and horrible windy rainy conditions, into the net she went. My friend and I looked at each other with excitement – yep, that's one of the better commons in here! It turned out the fish in question was called Smudge and weighed 25lb 8oz – that will do me! I didn't sleep for four hours after that, brimming with excitement. Not only that, but the wind and the rain were so savage, it was near on impossible!

We woke up the next morning and photographed the lovely

CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM





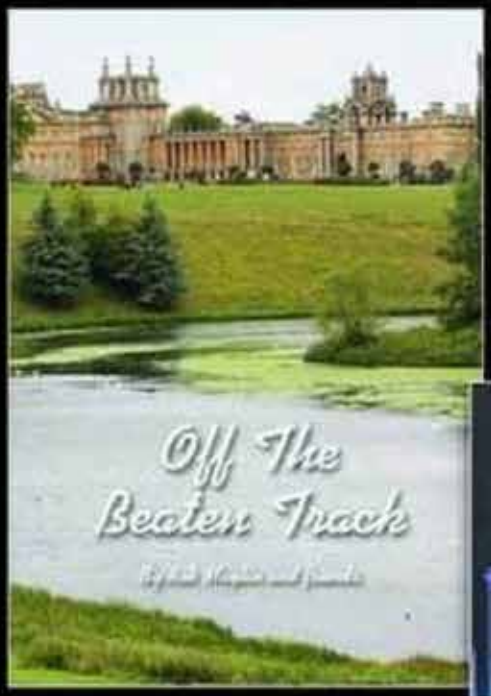
CHARLIE CUNNINGHAM

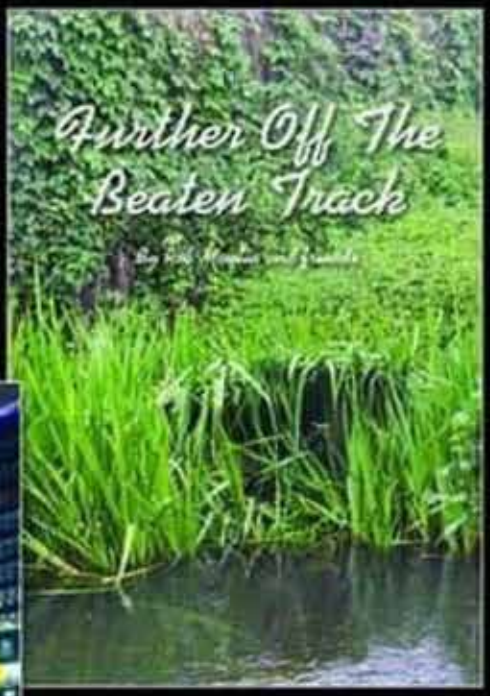


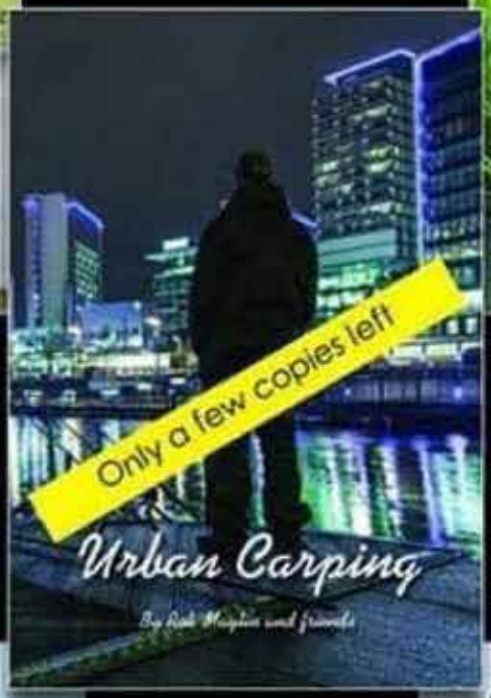
Smudge Common – what a joy! After that it was the depressing pack-up. No one likes it, but it has to be done. Midway through packing up, I had a screaming run on the right hand rod. I struck into it, and it was stripping line of the reel from the off at 150 yards. We thought this ain't no small fry... The fish was pulling to the right of the lake really hard, and after 15 minutes or so, it was getting a lot closer. It actually wiped two of my friend's rods out – he didn't mind, honest... Into the net it went, giving me the biggest battle out of the lot. It turned out it was only 18lb but with a huge rudder and fins to boot – crazy! I said to my mate that if I'd lost it, I would have sworn it was one of the A-team! All the fish were caught using simple but effective bottom bait rigs and Dynamite Complex-T boilies, pellets and my special homemade particles.

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK SERIES

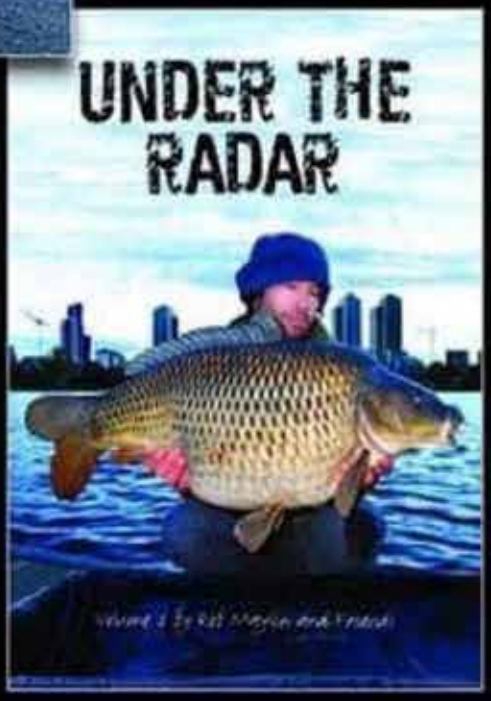
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DEAN MCLOED

RETURN TO MONKS PIT

Having fished Monks Pit in Cambridge for a few years, it was with regret that I had to pull off last year due to work commitments. This season, I am back on the lake and am already in shock at one of the big girls that I was fortunate to have caught during the recent storm Hannah.

Finishing my night shift at 05.30, it was a smooth one-hour drive for the 70 miles to Cambridge. Pulling into the car park, I was met by Darren, one of the bailiffs on the lake, who informed me on his way out that one of the chaps was into a fish as he was leaving. I quickly got round to Underpass where I met Rich Barns, a good friend that I met through fishing

Monks, and he was just sorting the camera settings out to take some photos of a lovely fish by the name of Henry.

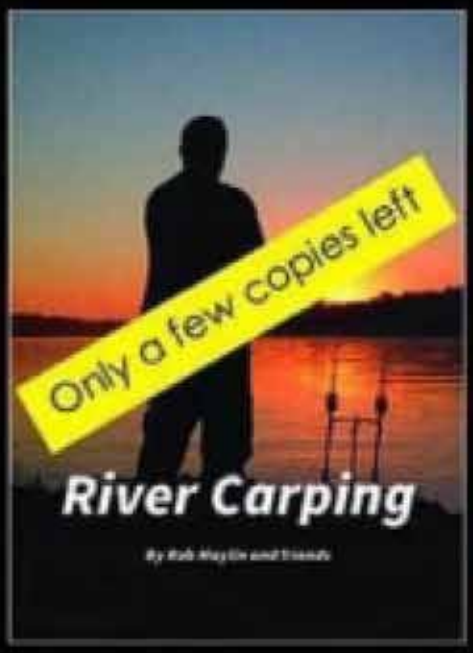
I offered to do the pics for him and snapped away at the awesome fish he had just landed. What a sight to turn up to – 42lb 12oz – one of the A-team, one that is on everyone's tick list. He informed me that previously that session, he had caught the Patch Common, one I've already had the pleasure of catching but at a low weight of 27lb, but a couple of years ago, Rich had had it at a great weight of 38lb. After the snaps were done, fish returned and some banter about bait boats, it was time to get the gear round to the Wobbly Boards, a very good swim, but for some reason in the past I'd never done a night in there. Looking at the coming weather, I knew it would be on the back of the wind and out of harm's way, as Hannah was coming and high winds expected. I didn't want to cast a lead around in case it disturbed Rich's swim, especially at a good time in the morning to have one, so I put two zigs out and went about setting up base camp.

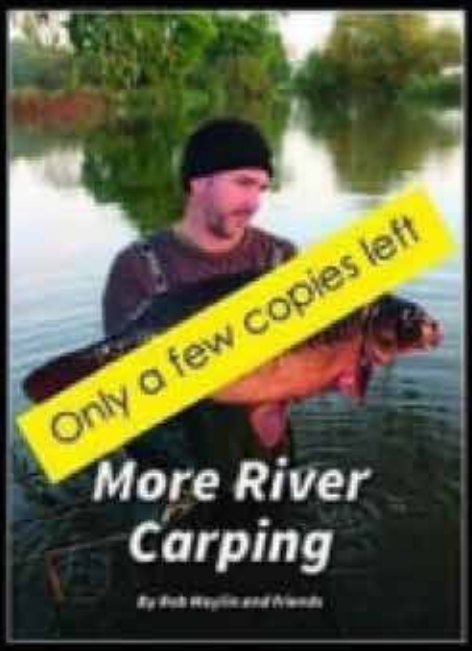
idday came, and Rich in Underpass was getting ready to leave. Two fish under his belt may not be a brilliant session for Monks, but a 38 and a 42 would be most welcome in anyone's book. It was time to get the spots sorted and get some bait out. Finding a firm patch in the silt, I settled for 23 wraps, probably an average area for the swim chosen and close to where I had seen a fish show. I put two rods tight on that spot and one in the margin on the bottom of the shelf, and then it was time to get a few hours' sleep, as by then I'd been up for 24 hours.

I woke to a few beeps on the margin rod and sat there watching the rod tip, but nothing came of it. The rest of the day came

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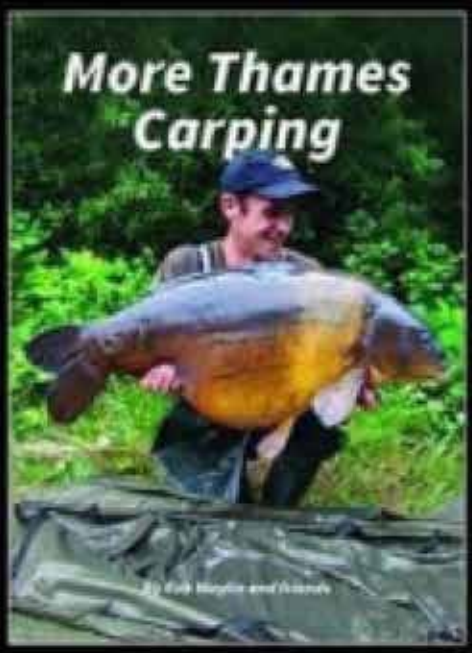
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and went, and it was soon night. The wind picked up, and the branches were swaying in the wind. The other side of the lake was nearly full of anglers, but not one bivvy could be seen. Everyone had set up behind the trees to try to keep out of the wind that was getting stronger.

1am and a savage liner had me up and out of the sleeping bag like a shot. I hit nothing – maybe a trailing line. That rod was fishing a snowman on a blowback rig, and the tubing was still in place, so I knew I hadn't been done. That rod was left in for the night, and I went back to my bag, the alarm set for 5am.

I was up at 4.50, watching the water for signs. The rod I had reeled in was changed to a zig, 11ft in about 15ft of water on a black bug-like creature soaked in the Shimano Isolate lM94.



Breakfast done and watching the water, it was later that day at about 11.30 that I saw a good fish show just past the baited spot. I thought, anytime now and the rod left out there would be off. Then one showed to my right in short. I wound the zig rod in and put it out roughly where the fish bobbed up and got ready for the footie, West Ham v Spurs. It was a good first half, and at half time, as I waited for the second half, I watched as the swifts fly around taking a hatch from the surface, closer and closer my area of water.

Then I saw it... a good fish head and shoulder, again in line with the baited spot and where the swifts dove for hatch. The zig rod went straight back out long, just right of the baited area. I could listen to the footie and watch as it all unfolded right in front of me. The swifts flew round and a few seagulls

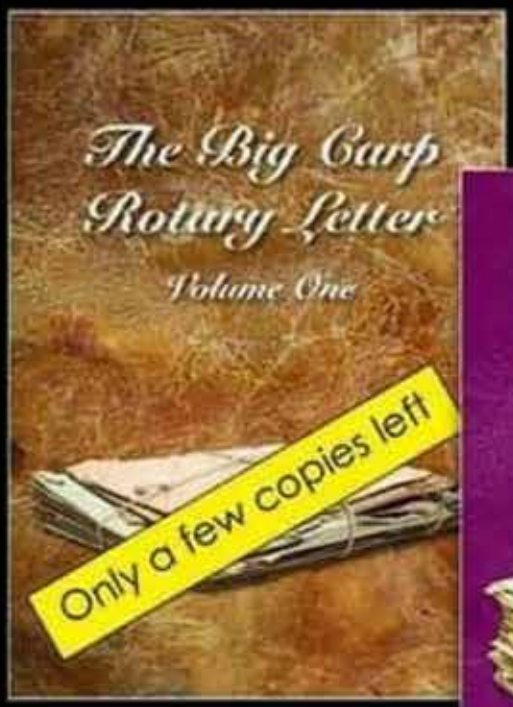


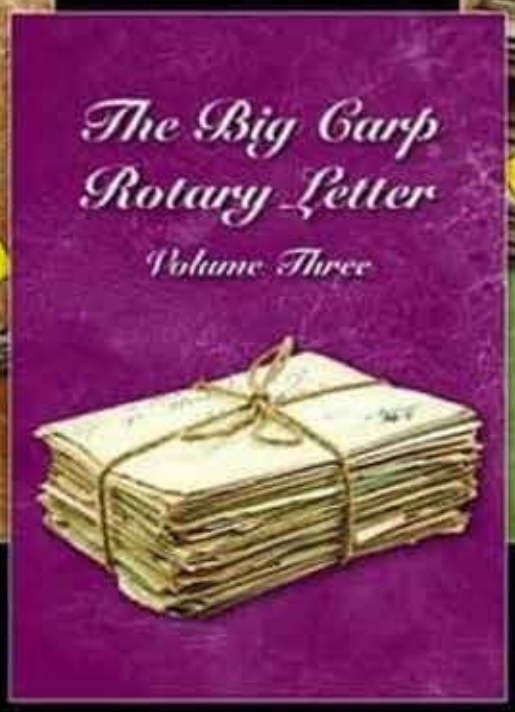
had joined in on the action, and then it happened... I had turned my alarms down and my receiver was on quiet, and it lit up once. I looked to see which rod it was, and the bobbin dropped and then slammed up to the rod and started churning line off the spool.

As I picked the rod up and lent into the fish, I felt it kick, and from that moment, it felt heavy, just typical of a big fish plodding around letting you know it's still on by a few nods. Probably ten minutes into the fight and it was close. The other rods were back-leaded, so the line was out of the way, and I let it plod around till it got under the rod tip. Then the fish made a huge surge back to open water, but I managed to turn it and

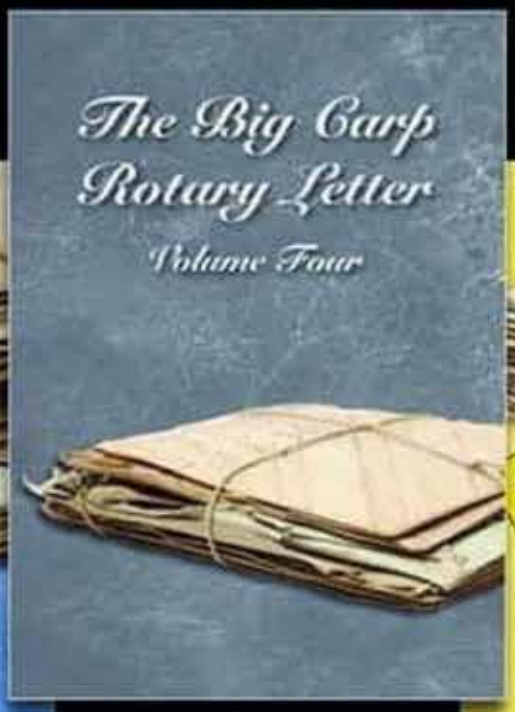
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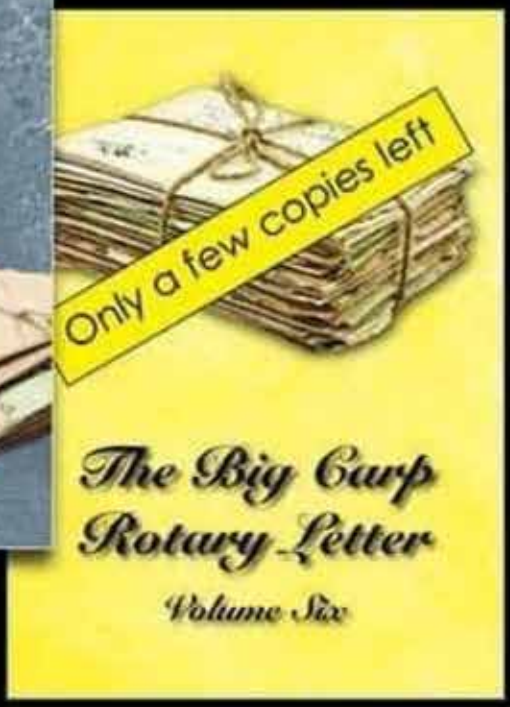












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guide it back in. It took only one go netting her, and Jason from over the lake came along and we had a proper look into the net. “Definitely 40lbs,” I said. Jason said it was a bit more than that, and as we lifted it out in the retainer, we both knew it was probably close to the magical 50lbs.

Scales zeroed and tripod sorted, we lifted her on – 43lbs! “Oh no, it ain’t,” Jason said. “It’s still touching the mat!” we adjusted the tripod, weighed her again, and the needle settled on an amazing 47lb 8oz. My UK PB was broken, not by a lot, but a couple of pounds. Wow! What an amazing fish! We identified her as the Peach, a fish that doesn’t see the bank a lot, and she was in perfect condition. Jason photoed her for me, and we rested her up before returning her to her home.

I wound in the rods and went to the shops to buy a few beers to celebrate catching her. She was another one of Monks Pit’s beauties ticked off the list. I sat there while my phone went crazy with texts and calls from angling friends and family, and then I walked the lake and chatted with the members. Nothing else happened for me for the remainder of the session, and it was time to go home.

The stock in Monks is unbelievable, as are the fish weight gains the past year, averaging 7lbs since Mick the owner introduced the dye and his baiting campaign. It’s certainly done the lake some good; I believe the past year it has produced a further 12 new 40lb fish and a new 50 in the shape of Black Spot, a fish I wouldn’t mind a repeat capture of, since I had it at 44lb 12oz. It’s put on an amazing 10lb now, standing at 54lb 14oz. My next session is a month away, and I’m already planning and tying rigs.

Until the next time, happy hauling!


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