

Talking Carp Magazine

ISSUE 13
March 2017



Inside this months magazine:

Scott "Geezer" Grant,
Gary "Milky" Lowe,
Rich Austin,
Robert Gibson,
Nathan "Snowy" Sharp,

Plus Catch Reports
and Much Much
More

And still FREE !!!!!

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Hello....

And welcome to another edition of Talking Carp.
Your favourite online carp magazine!!

Couple of points this month. Firstly, we would like to congratulate Terry Hearn on his capture of The Parrot at a net busting 63lb. Well done sir.... You never lose it!!

Secondly.... For those following the exploits of the Carp Society and the struggle of Sir Tim Paisley and his band of merry men, recently he announced that the Carp Society is back in the hands of those that care!! Read Tim's Facebook check out Carp Talk magazine. All will be revealed....

Rod licences are due!! Don't forget to get yours... online or via your general Post Office.

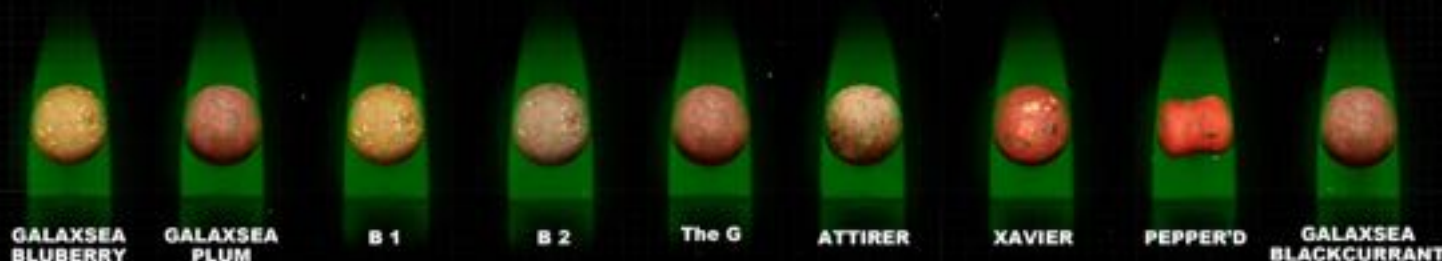
Spring is upon us, everything will be waking up from the winter slumber... so get out, take some pictures, catch some carp, and enjoy every day on Gods green earth.

Have fun people....

Brian.



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The Crackers of Cottington Lakes by Scott Geezer Grant



The Crackers of Cottington Lakes

After my blank session on my current syndicate water, I was invited to fish a very special day ticket water that holds some stunning fish. The invite was from good friends and England number 1 pairing Barry and Benn O'Connor. These are a formidable force on the carp match scene and to be honest even though they are great friends and lovely people it's still a bit daunting fishing with them. How they are not in the England team is beyond me, but these days it's not your catch rate they look at but if you liked, which to me is ridiculous. The good thing is they are so down to earth and they say it how it is, which a lot of people don't like, I am of the same calibre

that's probably why we get on so well. The session was planned for mid-September and I couldn't wait to get down there. Once the postcode was put in the sat nav it said 1hr 40 mins!!!! Jesus Christ I nearly fainted, I must admit driving miles to fish a lake just isn't fun especially sitting in bundles of traffic, getting stressed out!! ... but I had to bite my tongue on this one and go with the flow, I left home around 06:00 o'clock and arrived at around 07:50, it wasn't a bad drive but just bloody boring. I met the lads in the car park, then we went into the café and had a well deserved coffee, both me and Benn were super excited whilst Barry was more reserved, the banter started almost immediately with

Barry canning me one after the other.

We finished our coffee, grabbed our gate tokens and made drove down to the lake, I didn't have a clue what lake we would be fishing as there are some 7 lakes on the complex. Once parked up I asked Benn what lake we were fishing, he said with a big grin on his face "Pepper lake mate home of the crackers". As we made our way down to the lake for a walk round I also now had a big grin on face. The lake is in 2 parts, the old lake and the new lake which incidentally are joined into 1 lake, there were a few anglers on and all the swims in the old lake which is the shallower of the two were taken, so we were going to be fishing the deeper part which is the new lake.



As we were having a social we decided on swims 10 and 11, with Benn and the guvnor in 11, which is a big double swim and me in 10. (since I did this article the rules on Pepper have changed and you're now not allowed to double up in the swims). I wasted no time and began ferrying my gear from the car, it wasn't a million miles away which was a bonus, once the house was sorted it was time to concentrate on the rods, it's only a 2 rod allowance which

makes things easy. Rig-wise, I kept things nice and simple with a snowman fished KD style, I had an island in front of me with a marker on the left end and the other marker just to the right of the island. There is a map at the back of every swim which dictates the area you can fish, making it a lot easier as there really is no excuse casting into another swims water. I had a lead about and found a nice gully only 2 rod lengths out, this is where I placed my left-hand rod with a light scattering of 14mm nut job boilies,

a bait that hasn't let me down since I started using it. On the hair, I fished an 18mm bottom bait with the end trimmed off then placed a 16mm deep pink pop up again with the end trimmed off which sat nicely, when tested the bait sat critically which is how I like to fish this rig. As with every cast I like to dip my lead and hookbait, then place a PVA nugget on the hook which stops the hair from tangling, with a simple under-arm cast the first rod was out, I was finally fishing. I only threw about 20 boilies in and around the area, and added a couple of scoops of The Blitz keeping the baiting to a minimum, my right-hand rod was fished off the end of the island (right hand side) just over the gravel bar, again I used the same rig and bait, the weather was spot on

with a pressure reading of 1010 and heavy rain due from 12:00 o'clock. With the rods sorted, the kettle went on and it wasn't long before the rain set in and it was back to our bivvies, but not for long as Benn was into the first fish, which turned out to be a lovely double figured "Ghosty". The rain was still coming down and at 15:00 the left-hand rod was away, I quickly exited the bivvy and lifted the rod and was into a hard fighting fish. As it was my first Cottington fish, my heart was in my mouth the whole time, after about 5 minutes I finally slid the net under a lovely mirror. With the camera sorted and the O'Connors summoned, it was time to weigh her, Benn read out a weight of 30lb exactly!!... I was absolutely buzzing, my first

Cottington carp and it's a cracking 30lber. Benn done the honours with the camera, then the fish was treated and released back into her watery abode. I wasted no time at all in getting the rod rebaited and out to the same area, I was like a Cheshire cat grinning from ear to ear, what a trip this is turning out to be and I've still got 2 nights to go!

Later that afternoon Benn was in again, this time with a plump 20lb common. The wind was blowing from left to right, and the lads said if the wind changed from right to left (as per the weather man) then swim 9 will fish. I was happy where I was and to be honest I wasn't going to move, Benn said he was going to move the next morning into swim 9 if the weather man actually got it right!

Barry was still to get off the mark and I was sure with a man of his calibre it wouldn't be long. The owners had a walk round and it was nice to meet them both as Benn and Barry speak highly of them, so I know they are good people. The afternoon drew on and come the evening we had a lovely Chinese delivered and it was devoured in no time at all.

One of the bailiffs popped down to see how we was getting on a lovely fella named "Mango". He was pleased we had caught a couple and was sure there was more to come. He stayed for an hour or so, had a coffee or two then made his way back up to his house which is onsite, he said if we needed anything to give him a shout, which was nice of him. We retired to bed



around 23:00 as we were all knackered, it took me a while to get to sleep as I was still buzzing from my earlier fish, eventually I drifted off to sleep.

I was awoken at 06:00 with my receiver singing like a bird, this time it was the right-hand rod, I scrambled out the bivvy, eyes still a blur and lifted the rod with an angry carp attached. The fish put up a great fight taking me all over the swim and nearly wiping my left-hand rod out in the process. Eventually I slid the net under a



the Nut Job! I rang Benn and Barry and they helped me weigh and photograph

her, what a place this is and it's a day ticket water which is even better. With the fish treated and released it was time for some breakfast courtesy of the guvnor,

very angry common which when weighed went 20lb 4oz, another victim falling to

a couple of bacon and sausage sarnies went down a treat. The weather looked bang on for it the wind started to change blowing into swim 9 so Benn decided he was going to move into there, which to be honest I don't blame him he knows the water well and is confident the fish will be there. With the move complete he fished a couple of



areas he'd previously had fish from and later that afternoon, it was like the switch had been flicked. Barry "The Guvnor" was off the mark with a pristine



common of 22lb, Benn followed this up with a 20lb common and there was little old me in the middle waiting for my rods to go!! Later that evening around 18:00 my left-hand rod was away, the fish fought well and when she rolled on the surface Benn said "That's a good fish mate" to which my arse was then twitching like fook!!... Benn done the honours with the net and when I peered inside I couldn't believe what I had caught, she was a stunner. With the camera and scales

sorted she was lifted into the mat, I lifted her up while the lads read out the weight, 35lb shouted Benn... I was ecstatic!! The fish was an absolute cracker and was in mint condition, after all the blanks I have endured, this session makes it all worthwhile. That evening we had a lovely home cooked chicken carbonara made by my mrs, she is a great cook and I was certain the lads would like it, of



which they did, and poor old Benn had never even heard of it which had me and Barry in stitches. As we were sitting there letting our dinner go down Benn had a take, the fish fought hard as they all do and I slid the net under a lovely mirror weighing 23lb 8oz. The move was certainly paying off for him and he was sure sooner or later one of the big girls would make an appearance. That evening a few beers were sunk and a lot of laughs had it's so nice fishing in such great company and the banter never stopped. We all turned in quite late and we were all hoping we would get a visitor in the night.



Just like the previous morning my left-hand rod was away again at 06:00 o'clock after me battling to open my eyes and the fish doing basically what it liked I slid the net under a lovely mirror of 21lb 8oz. The guvnor was summoned as Benn's



well-deserved coffee before jumping on the throne, once Benn was in the land of the living we all started to slowly pack up, I had to be away by 12:00 o'clock as I had to be at



phone had died and a few snaps were taken, and she was treated and returned. I then had a

work at 15:00. With the gear packaged up and only the rods out hoping that another stunner would grace the bank it was finally time for me to reel them in and make the journey home. I said my goodbyes and thanked



both Barry and Benn not only for their hospitality but also for inviting me to fish with them. I must admit I never really knew a lot about Cottingham Lakes but boy there are some pearlers in every lake. The stock in Pepper Lake blew me away

with a 50lber, a few 40lbers and numerous 30lbers!! That's without the 20s and doubles. It really is a lovely place where you can fish very comfortably in the purpose made swims, there's an onsite café and tackle shop what more could you ask for.

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book yourself in or visit their website for more information at www.cottingtonlakes.co.uk you can also give them a call on 01304-380691

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"Geezer"



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**New beginnings
by
Robert Gibson**

New beginnings
Fields zip past like
sections of patchwork
quilt as I make my way
through France. I've
left everything behind,
the long hours of
laying under machines
on landfill sites and
wind farms in the U.K.
I'm making my first
move.

After months of
consideration I've
decided that I need
to escape what is
considered the norm
and do things my
way, not the way
we perceive things.
As I drive I'm deep
in thought and the
patchwork countryside
blends into my
subconscious. I know
I can do it and I'm
already preparing
myself. A few months
working to fund 8
months of unknown
European waters.
My vehicle of choice,
an old Citroen Relay
gained for a mere 100
pounds, motors it's
way painfully slowly

through France. Semi
kitted out as a camper,
it rattles and groans,
but I quite like it that
way. I've got my music
on and I feel nothing
but relief because for
the first time in years
I feel truly happy with
the choice I've made.

Although this is cut
short by a breakdown
somewhere near Dijon.
Eventually I'm rescued
by my step dad Stuart.

We make our way
back to the house,
nestled in a small
valley near Morzine, in
the French alps. Good
food, tea and cake,
just perfect. It's here I
really need to prepare.
All the gear that I have
is okay although not
the best and as I'm
pretty much planning
to live in solitude for
months I need some
reliable equipment. I
receive some brilliant
feedback from the
companies I email,
everyone seems
really interested in
what it is that I'm

doing which leads me
to where I am now.

The first few months
have flown by, setting
up social media and
gathering equipment
from sponsors and
my own back. So
here I am sitting on
the sofa by the fire
writing my first article
for you to hopefully
enjoy! How exciting! Of
course, there's some
pressure surrounding
the adventure. There
always is with fishing
because for some
unknown reason we,
as anglers, make it
increasingly difficult for
ourselves by needing
to catch fish and have
all the latest and
greatest. The truth is
you don't need to do
this. The realisation
came to me on a short
overnight session last
summer on my local
syndicate water.

The night sky lit up my
surroundings. I lay on
my bed chair staring at
the endless



number of sparks
igniting the sky, deep
in thought. I realised
that I wasn't thinking
of home pressure or
work, I was just in
that moment. What
would be would be and
I had absolutely no
control over what was
happening. It's all up to
nature! I was totally at
its mercy and I couldn't
have been happier. I
have 8 months of this
to go, can you see now
why I'm so excited!?
I suppose I'm very
lucky to not have
ties at home and to
have this opportunity,
I appreciate it's
not achievable for
everyone. So, I owe
it to all of you who

can't be out there
doing what I'm doing,
to do well and record
all of my efforts to
involve everyone in
my journey. I shall
endeavor to do my
best.

The waters I'm fishing
this year revolve
around two main
areas, the Alps being
the first and the river
lot being the second.
Some good friends of
mine have given me
some great areas and
advice and I'm sure
I've got the nouse to
find my way around
these venues. Huge
inland seas and miles
of rivers await me.
Slightly different to
the intimate syndicate

lakes of the east of
England I can assure
you. For such waters,
you really need
equipment you can
rely on, personally
I won't be using the
expensive gear as I
regard expensive rig
gear as being totally
unnecessary, instead
I'll be looking no
further than the guys
at Sharp Tackle. Now
obviously as one of
their field testers you
may think I'm slightly
bias but believe me
I'm not, there gear is
cheap to buy, there's
an extensive range to
choose from and I just
cannot get over the
quality of the products.
It's astonishing really.
They are always more
than ready to give
advice or help and I
am truly overjoyed to
be working alongside
the guys. I find myself
deep in planning,
sometimes laying wide
awake in bed until the
small hours reading
and researching,



hoping to find small snippets of information on certain areas and different approaches, my knowledge on these waters is currently nonexistent and it's going to be a lot of hard work learning about the forgotten waters. Climbing trees, watching and waiting. Engrossed in the moment that exists around me, the subtlest sound to the slightest movement. Watercraft is an art form. I think it makes the difference between an average angler and a good one! Too much time is spent setting

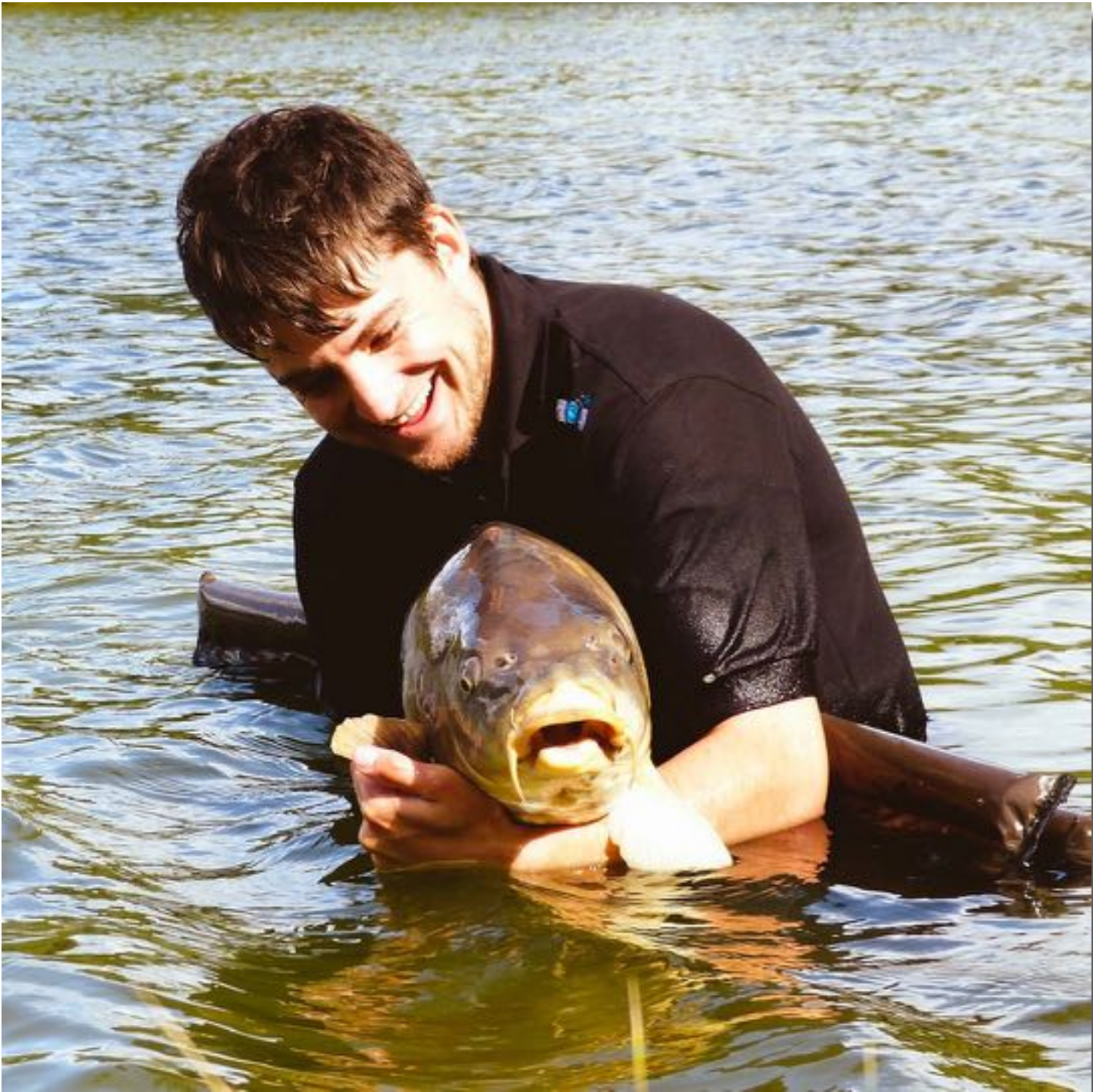
up in your chosen will not be targeting particular fish, I will be creating my own aims to achieve. I see my adventure not as a way to catch the biggest fish and have the best sponsors but more as a way to learn, nature has a way of teaching disregarded by



most, wind direction, weather change, moon phases. All things that constantly surround the angler, but regularly forgotten or ignored. I strive to learn from my surroundings in order to gain knowledge. And I hope that I may be able to take the slightest snippet of information and share it with the readers, hopefully to assist you in your fishing even. I urge you all to go out and enjoy what this world has to offer, enjoy the piece the tranquility, listen to nature, zone in on the sounds, the wind whispering through the

trees, the rain dropping on your shelter even the sound of a fish crashing. Trust me you'll hear and learn a lot more just by involving yourself in your surroundings!

My journey starts next



month, I hope you will take the time to follow me on my journey and experience as I do, the life of a travelling angler. Sounds good, doesn't it?

Until next time.

Tight lines

Robert Gibson

Theartofescape1

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In Search Of A P.B pt2

After the really good session I had last week, all I could do this week is hope that no one was going to be in the open water swim that I was going to be concentrating on as most people were still fishing the edges and well known spots, well during the week I sorted out all my tackle and then started to sort out the bait. I was going to take even more bait this time to see if I could get more bites and keep them interested in the spot so they keep on coming back there, Thursday came quite quick and I started to load the car with the mountains worth of bait and tackle, there was 15kg of active 8 20kg of response pellet and another 10 of particle and I was going to make sure that it all went in even if I put most of it in just before I went home.

Driving down the lane all I could think of is I hope my swim was free. I turned the corner into the car park and there was 2 cars there already' one of them was kens so I knew he would not be in my swim as he was concentrating on his own swim and a the other person was... yes you guessed it... he was in the swim I wanted so I would have to put plan b into action and fish the other swim that I could reach, the same open water area but first I would have to see and make sure that the other angler was not fishing into open water, so after a chat and a brew I knew that he was fishing the margins like most of the others did. Happy, I started to ferry my gear round to the other swim which took a few trips with the amount of bait and tackle I had.

I set everything up and then sat back and was in the middle of making a brew when ken turned up! well I had to make him one and we sat there chatting about things and what was going on at the lake when he said well how you going to get the bait out to your spot without the other bloke seeing where you're fishing? If he stays in his bivvy I'll be able to get a lot of bait out on the spot before he sees me , so I asked ken to go round there and have a brew while I put quite a few boat loads of bait out on the spot ,well the plan worked and I managed to get at least 15kg of pellet and particle about 5kg of active 8 out on the spot and cast 2 rigs out there before the other lad or anyone else seen what was going on.

In Search Of A P.B pt2
by
Gary Milky Lowe



10 mins later Ken came back round and I said all was well and he went to sort his rigs out for the evening, I sat there made myself another brew as I love my tea and watched the area I was fishing for any signs of fish, well it wasn't till around 9 in the evening till I saw my first signs of a carp near my area and it looked like a good one as well, it came out the water up to its wrists and went back down in the same ripples. That made the confidence go sky high more than what it normally is as I am always confident of a bite, well just as it was getting dark I could see flat spots above my spots it looks like the fish have found my bait mountain, as it got darker the fish became really active down my end of the lake jumping and rolling a lot. I went to sleep that night thinking to myself it's going to happen at some stage.

I woke up in the early hours for a leak and I heard a fish that seemed like it was really close so I thought I would stay up and have a brew and see if I could see where most of the fish were, I took my brew and sat on a bucket at the front of the swim and watched the water, one after another they were showing over my spot and as I watched the sun coming up over the trees on the far side. I started to get liners and I mean proper liners, the bobbins was hitting the rod and it was hard not to pick up the rod but I sat

on my hands, the liners started to become less frequent and the right hand rod burst into life. I was straight on it and the fish shot off down the lake to my left, now I knew I would have trouble trying to get it back in if the fish didn't come back to the right as there was a very big set of pads to my left, well has luck would have it the fish went right and was out the way of the pads. After what felt like ages I slipped the night under a very large scaly mirror. I looked in the net and I knew which one it was it was... A fish they called The Fully, it was a very heavily plated mirror. I made sure the fish was safe then went back to my bivvy to text Ken as I saw him up and about just before I got the take. just as I was going to text him he appeared at my door, he had seen me playing the fish he informed me that he had got a good common in the sack and asked what I had. I said the Fully, I had seen pics of Ken with this fish, really, he said that fish always comes from a swim they call the factory and has never been out of the open water swims, he picked the net up and said yep that is him, he looks big as well. We got everything ready and I was just about to lift her out when the other rod screamed of so Ken took over looking after the other carp while I tried to get this one in well after a short but spirited fight I netted a very long common that looked a good 20, so I made sure that the fish was secure. well we started where we left off and weighed the first fish and on the scales it went 34lb 6oz that will do me!! The biggest it had ever been and on the mat, you could see that he had been well on the bait as it was all over the mat...so a good few pics and I slipped her back to fight another day. Now it was time to sort out the common, and on the scales she went 27lb 4oz ,so it was 2 good fish on the first night and I still had two nights left



Well I would normally put the kettle on but I went round to Kens swim to do pictures of his fish, on the scales his one went 34lb 8oz so we had both had good fish on our first night. I made Ken put the kettle on and we sat there talking about stuff and putting the world to right and then I was off back to my swim, when I got back I decided to put some more bait out just to top up the swim ,after 4 boat loads of bait and I sat back tied 2 new rigs and then placed them back on the spots out in the lake.

I sat there most of the day watching the water and drinking tea, all day I had



not seen a fish up my end of the lake but had seen a few down Kens end so I thought he might have one during the night. I wasn't feeling that confident so as the evening drew in I made some dinner and sat back for the evening, well just on dusk I see the first one up my end of the lake but it was a good few hundred yards away but at least there is one up here. By the time I got in the sack I had only seen that one fish up this end so I went to bed thinking I would have a good night's sleep. How wrong was I?? Around one in morning I had a screaming take on the left hand rod. I was stumbling around for my glasses and then I was on the rod.... the fish was fighting hard and staying deep, this was not like the two I had last night it felt heavy and just stayed low in the water, after a good few minutes it was close to the net I turned on the head torch on and all I could see was a massive dark common! That's when I started to shake knowing that I was attached to a big common, and what seemed like ages it went over the draw cord

and she was mine. I secured the net and started jumping shouting yes!! Yes!! I had another look at the beast and I was thinking this is the biggest common I've caught it looked well over 40. I thought what do I do now. I thought I've got to go and get someone I started to run around to get Ken but I meet him half way as I had woken him up and he started to come round, well he said have you got the big girl? I said no its a bloody massive common. He followed me back to my swim and had a look in the net and he said yep your right mate that is big and it not the big common that I had had at 39! That's it!! I couldn't do nothing, Ken said come on let's weigh it now to see how big she is and well get some good photos, but first let's go and get Andy, another mate of mine that was fishing on the lake next door so we went and woke him up to tell him the news. He wanted to come round and see it, so we all went back to my swim and began to sort out the weigh gear I went to the edge to lift her out and she just looked massive once out the water. well Ken and Andy lifted her up on the scales and i watched the needle swing round to just over 40lb. I was over the moon with that, I secured the fish back in the water's edge and then got the rod back on the spot just in case another one wanted to feed, after that I sat back and put the kettle on and we sat there drinking tea and talking all things carp and before we knew it the sun was coming over the trees I waited about another 30 minutes and then started to get the camera gear ready. I found a nice clear spot to do the pictures, everyone came round to watch me lift my prize. Well, after all the pictures and the fish slipped back a few handshakes I was off back to my swim to sit there and think about what I had just caught ,well that day seemed to go really quick with loads of tea drunk and loads of visitors and it was soon getting dark and I was climbing into the sack for my last night and see what tonight brings ,



Well the last night seemed to go without a single bleep and I didn't even hear a fish jump, I still had a fair bit of bait left so before I went home I decided to let them have the lot hoping I could get back in one of the two swims next Thursday, and after a good few boat loads I was packing the gear down and loading it in the car ready to go, I had a brief chat with a few other lads that were in the car park and I said my good byes and I was off down the lane with a big grin on my face but again thinking about my next trip.

At home that night I started to get the stuff ready for the following trip next Wednesday as I had booked a day off work so I could do an extra night, well I tied up all new rigs and then it was the mammoth task of sorting the bait out. I had enough particle but not enough active 8 so Monday night was spent picking up that, once I had picked up the bait I took a trip down to the lake to have a look at round and see what was going on. When I got there, there was quite a few on.. more than at the weekends? The word must have got out that there was fish coming out ,as I walked round there was people in the two swims that I was concentrating on so a quick chat and a brew with them and I knew that they was not fishing on my spots as both were fishing in the edge and there were there till Wednesday morning so I hoped that no one would be fishing my spots. On my walk round the lake I took a look in the snags to the right of the swim I fished last week and there was a few of the A team including the big mirror that look massive looked a good upper 40, I sat in the snags for a good half hour till it drifted out and swam out into open water ,I knew that this big mirror was a bait fish every time it had been caught it was over quite a bit of bait ,but my problem was that this fish has always come out the edge but that could be because most people in the club fish the margins, so I thought I will stick to my plain and bait heavily out in the open water.



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Wednesday came round quickly and I was at the lake early morning just so I could pick which one of the two swim I wanted. On arrival one of the blokes in the main swim that I wanted was photographing a good common 34lb so I sat with him chatting and drinking tea till he decided to start to pack up so I waited till he had gone then started to set up my gear. The bivvy was up, rods set up then I sat down to chill as I was in no hurry I wanted to wait until the other bloke went till I put the amount of bait out that I wanted to. Around mid-day he was driving out the gate and the first bait boat worth of bait was on its way to the marker out in the lake. I decided to put 6 full loads out there to start, I had just finished the last boat load when Ken pulled up and said is that the first? No mate I've down six well you're going for it then? I am here for 4 nights ,we had a chat and then of he went to see if he could find some fish and have a go for them as he was only here till dark ,after Ken had left it was time to get the rods out at last there was only me and ken on at the moment so there was no worries about people seeing what I was doing and I knew Ken would not say anything, once the rods were out I could sit down and chill for a bit before people started to turn up. d chill for a bit before people started to turn up.

The first person turned up for the night at around 6 and it was my mate Andy, we had a chat about what I was doing and what fish I would like next, then off he went to the lake next door so it was still me and Ken on. Well as night drew in the fish started to show and they were down this end in numbers so for the last hour Ken moved in next door to me till he went home.

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We at there into darkness watching the display that they were putting on, Ken left about half ten and I sat back and watch the odd one show now and finally called it a night at midnight as I wanted to be up at first light to see what was happening. It only seemed like I had closed my eyes 5 minutes ago, when I was up playing a fish. After a spirited battle, I nettle a lovely mid double, and that was a good start to the session I replaced the rod and put the kettle on and sat back and thought to myself I wonder where the big mirror is right now? I had watched it in the week in the snags then swim out to open water so it might be out there now who knows? The alarm was set for first light so after about half an hour I was climbing back into my pit to get some sleep.

What happens next????

Find out in next months issue of Talking Carp!!!

Milky.



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Winter Nights by Rich Austin

Winter Nights

Well what can you say about this Winter, I'll tell ya what I think about it, I'd so far like to put this one rapidly behind me, it's been my most unproductive winter seasons for many years, I know that the winter months are notoriously a lot more challenging, a lot more thought is needed and more time is needed to locate your quarry etc but this winter has been very very strange indeed. I've not been able to get out as much as I normally do in the darker season, but I've still managed a few sessions and a lot more sessions than the BBQ weather anglers.

Most of my trips have been to Farlows Lake in Iver fishing both the lakes on the complex, out of the 5 trips there of 48hrs each, I have only managed 2 stockies of low teen size and losing what felt like a lump on my last visit

whilst fishing in a swim known as Ramp Bay it was dismal weather, cold, wet, icy and damn right gloomy to be honest but you can't catch from your armchair, right?.....

The weather this year throughout the country not just the Colne Valley has been very punishing with regards fishing and messing with the actual fish and their routines, we had a late start to the colder weather this year which allowed the weed to linger around a lot longer than usual, that alone threw the Carp off I'm sure holding up in those areas rather than making their way out to deeper water to find the thermal layers where they would be happy just milling around or finding a deep silt hole or gulley and bury themselves in it to produce their own body retaining heat. The couple of fish that I had were harboring lice and leeches so they were obviously either donked

on the nose with the bait enticing them to feed or just on a mooch and fancied an opportunist snack. I have persevered with the harder waters rather than going to the local runs water for a fix as I prefer to work hard for my rewards it means more to me be honest, anybody can go to a runs water and bang out a few fish but to me I find that a waste of quality bank time in hunting the fish that mean more to me in my hunt for that special winter Cypri. I get that guys/gals have sponsors or teams they are part of and have pressures of various levels for promoting those or even putting extra pressure on themselves thinking that they are in competition with a mate or rival bait companies etc its all a load of unnecessary stress making crap.

There's no need to put yourselves in that position,

yes I'm hard on myself when I blank but as long as I have not just sat on my arse on social media 24-7 and have rung the changes, changed baits, rigs set ups, areas, I cannot and will not blame myself, you cannot catch what is not in front of you, and you most definitely can't catch a fish that is in front of you but is not hungry, so stop the self-pressure that's the first thing, the second thing is if the team that you are part of is putting pressure on you then perhaps that is not the right team to be involved with. I am very lucky in that I am surrounded by good people, all knowledgeable anglers who all know how harsh this winter has been for us fishermen and those anglers all sympathies with each other, not slag each other off, I see too much of it on social media and more and more lately towards young children - old tackle, perhaps not

holding a fish correctly, perhaps not weighed the fish correctly and has over weighed it, but instead of offering advice or educating them they instead prefer to taunt and knock the angler and put them off ever asking questions. I am a fan of watching the weather leading up to my angling, I do incorporate it in to my session, I adapt my approach in the way that if it's been cold for a long time I DO NOT fill the lake in with bait, I will fish for a bite at a time, I will not thrash the water to bits with a spomb my approach is much more subtle, and the cold that we've been having of late has seen me use very little bait in

respects of whole boilies, I scale it down and prefer to use boilie crumb in 50 pence sized pva mesh or even smaller looking for that bitesize enticement for a wary carp. . Air pressure has of late been higher than I have witnessed for many many months going as high as 1040!!! that to me just says don't bother, but I unfortunately can only go when I can go and don't have the luxury of putting a session off for a couple of days then going, so you make the best of what you can and that is taking various tackle to entertain different set ups, pop ups, bottom baits, wafers





zig set ups it all comes with me. I will be totally honest I cannot wait for this winter to come to an end ha-ha. It's no secret I like my bankside photography, and whilst blanking the last few sessions I have been dabbling in some wintery pic taking, getting dark earlier in the evenings and having a fuller moon makes for some challenging scenes through the lens, and with so much time on my hands

I tried a few different settings with the camera which allowed me to get some great shots, sun and moon pics are great I love em, photography is definitely a part of my fishing, and an aspect that always needs improvement, chopping and changing with the settings allows for more scope to try something out of the norm and I'm very pleased with the moody pics taken this month. So, what's in store the next few weeks.....

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Well I have a couple of practice sessions over at Willow Park Fishery before my BCAC Qualifier at the end of March, my partner has been for a day session so far and the whole lake only produced 2 fish that day slowwwwww to say the least, they were showing in the usual spot but just weren't interested at all it was again cold and had the dial touching -1 the night before. I'm looking forward to

getting down there for my 48. I have also been lucky enough to have been invited to fish a lake that nobody has dangled in for years, I know the water contains a couple of 40's and a few 30's anything else is unknown I will let you know what happens there in next month's issue. Following the BCAC match with me partner Terry Clayton, I head off 2 weeks later to Farlows for the UK Carp Championships that qualifier is being fished this year early on Lake 2, so hopefully the fish have woken up from their winter slumbers and we qualify to the next round of both championships.

See you next time




Rich



TalkingCarp



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**It's That
Time of Year
by Paula
Marriott**

It's That Time of Year

Anglers all over the country are coming to terms with the loss of another few hours of their life that they have lost on the bank-side in the pursuit of the ever elusive and increasingly witty Cyprinus. You have planned your trip well in advance (or in my case usually just a few hours) and carefully executed that plan. You arrive at your chosen venue, walk the lake, sometimes even a few laps until you see a sign of a fish. If you're lucky that sign may be as obvious as a big old kipper 'boshing' out in front of you or the movement of a single reed that you manage to convince yourself wasn't the wind. Talking of wind, what direction and speed is it blowing? This

is another careful consideration! Life for me now has been a little complicated and I've not had much chance to really smash my Winter season. I've only fished a handful of times since September but I was free this weekend to sneak a day session and the conditions were forecast to be perfect. A slight rise in temperature and rain for a few days meant my dreams that week were mostly full of tactics and catching my first ever carp from my local Specimen lake. That coupled with the timely release of Masterclass 4 had me literally hopping with excitement and itching to get out. My local venue isn't exactly England's version of Gigantica but it's a place I do love. There are five small lakes aptly numbered 1-5 and I was going to

fish the Specimen lake, number three. It's a tricky little place, the fish are very wise and what I call 'moody'. There are a few twenties and maybe even thirties in there, no monsters, but they've always managed to elude me. I'm not a professional Angler and I still have so much to learn, but two years ago, I was making some catastrophic mistakes, I'm amazed I ever caught a thing, it must have been a pure fluke I can tell you. I was lucky to meet some extremely experienced people who gave me some great advice and my catch rate has improved ten-fold. Still not on lake three though! So, I got up at 6am, made my peanut butter sarnies, grabbed my maggots from the fridge (that I had snuck in late the night

before so my other half didn't see them), loaded the car and I was good to go. I arrived at the lake at first light and would you bloody believe it, there were four people bivvied up from the night before. Brilliant. To have any more than four anglers on this small lake would be like dangling your line in your granny's garden pond. We've all got that one friend who would though eh?

So, I decided to get set up on number two, it's a day-ticket lake with a good head of 7-20lbbers, so I was still hopeful for a little bend in my rod. I chose a favoured swim where I've had lots of luck before. You can walk

your rod around, drop your rig in right under an over-hanging tree and rhododendron and then walk back to your swim. I was confident of some interest. I set both traps and started playing with my tripod and camera. As a lone angler, I'm always trying to



perfect the art of the self-take photograph. I personally find it hard for two reasons, firstly camera phones aren't yet producing the quality of photo required for a magazine article and secondly my proper camera is pure garbage and I can't

afford a new one. An hour later, and twenty or so shots on the camera of me holding nothing behind my carp cradle, I heard that glorious sound. Than right-hand rod tucked under that rhodie was into a fish and as soon as I picked my rod up it felt good.

That good feeling didn't last long though because I hadn't tightened my clutch enough and that clever

little carp had snagged me up and set itself free to nip off to the carp pub so to speak. A little frustrated, I tightened up that clutch about as tight as your Nan and re-set my trap. Carp 1, Paula 0. I told myself, you can trick me once



was scattered with a few broken 16mm Ti boilies from SpecialT Baits that I had added a little of the matching glug to and dusted with Monster Particles The Krill stick mix. I had a 16mm The Code pop-up in white on my helicopter rig with a boom of about six inches. That's my six inches not yours lads! They were feeding today though, I had scooped two and I was feeling happy. The time came to stop for the day and packing up never seems too bad when you've not drawn a blank. Feeling content, the Sun went down and I was already thinking about my next trip out.



, but I won't let you trick me twice (in the words of Kelis). Another thirty minutes had passed by and I was hearing those bells again, this time I was right on-top of it. After a small fight, I managed to scoop it over the cord. Happy as Larry! Following best practice, I took my rubbish photo shots and got it back safely. As always, super keen to get straight back out to hopefully pinch another, I was back in position. Not much time had passed, and I was going again. They were 'feeding on my spot' this time

that was for sure! I had used that phrase 'feeding on my spot' in an interview that would be later aired on the actual television. I had said "The fish have been in front of me all weekend but I just haven't been able to get them to go down and feed on my spot". My friends had some fun with that. Today my chosen spot



Till next time...

Paula.



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*Living the Dream
by Keith Moors*



*Chapter Seven - Progress Over the
Years*

Chapter Seven - Progress Over the Years

As the years progressed so did our knowledge of the fish and their needs. Each year saw its own little nuances of learning so that we gradually went from thinking that we knew what we were doing to actually achieving another small step along the way. Our first year of 2002 was a step into the unknown with only the promises of big fish given to us by the previous owners. Obviously they were not carp anglers and “big” is very



much a relative word. Our “big” was thirties and forties whereas theirs was doubles and twenties.

By the end of 2002 we were just beginning to see upper twenties and a couple of thirties and we realised that the expected stock had simply been an “aid” to help them sell the property.

After the construction of the holding pools and the first drain down in the autumn of 2002 we were convinced that we had a target and had got everything sorted for the

following year.

2003 was to prove to be a challenge that no-one could have ever foreseen. The rain stopped in February and would not return until October.

The longest, hottest, driest summer on record was about to hit us. We already knew that the previous owners had lowered the water level for the benefit of their ducks by dropping the height of the spillway overflow. We had also rebuilt part of this and the level had risen by about ten inches but, had we known what kind of summer was in store for us the final spillway level would have been given much more importance.

Spring 2003 saw us add some very expensive big fish in order to provide the target fish for our customers and we also saw some really good increases in weight for some of the originals



We went through March with really high hopes of some massive carp during the summer and we even managed our first forties from some of the purchased fish. By April the fish had started spawning and they repeated this again in virtually every month of the early summer.

These massive spawning events had two distinct results. The first was that the big fish lost more weight than I could have ever imagined.

As an example, one of the forties, caught in early April was caught again in August at a bottom weight of 28.12 lb, a drop of over eleven pounds.

In hindsight it wasn't just the loss of spawn that had resulted in this huge loss. We learned that the French pisciculturist feed their fish very heavily on dry maize throughout the winter and this adds an enormous amount of bulk to their frame.

After being purchased and moved the carp then have the stress of the move, a new environment, different Ph levels and new food sources to get used to. Any one of these would have a detrimental effect on their metabolism but all of them together, plus spawning, has an unbelievably bad effect.

Despite all of our effort we ended the year with thirties as our best fish.



The second outcome of the multiple spawnings in 2003 was that we ended the year with thousands of baby carp.

It was immediately apparent that we didn't have anywhere near enough predators to control these small fish and we then learned that we would not be allowed to drain the lake again because of the authorities worries over the extremely low ground-water levels.

2004 saw some encouraging weight gains

and some of the bigger fish were looking in excellent condition. The main problem for the anglers was how to get through the myriads of rapidly growing small carp. The yearling carp were eating everything in sight and growing faster than I would have ever believed possible. If I could get the big fish to grow like them I would be made. Obviously we were aware of the impending problem and during the winter we purchase more catfish, pike and zander in an attempt to control some of the baby carp.



I am pleased to say that the big carp were present in sufficient number to prevent a complete disaster and several upper thirties were caught in the more traditional weather conditions. The one thing that did begin to dawn on us was that there seemed to be a “batch or shoal” of similar sized fish, which had been

the original small mirrors when we bought the property, which were showing signs of all growing well at the same speed. We suddenly seemed to have a considerable number of upper twenties and low thirties which were not from the batch of big fish which we had bought.

It was with a massive sigh of relief that I opened the sluice gate in late 2004, knowing that I could, once again, sort out my previous mistakes. This time we would get it right. We had learned our lessons about the need for predators and this time they would all be kept. The problem was that we did not find any of the pike or zander. Evidently the catfish have a preference for eating these over the taste of carp.



With the drain down complete we returned the carp, catfish, perch and rudd to the lake and made visit to a local lake which was also undergoing a vidange. We purchased some very nicely marked low twenty pound mirrors together with our one and only grass carp and a large bin full of big perch. Before the winter was over I was able to watch the

perch spawn so I was confident that our predator base would be self sustaining. The early season of 2005 saw a great improvement in the numbers and sizes of the carp being caught. We also saw some good sized catfish landed but I still wasn't sure that I had got it quite right.



Despite the better fish I still felt that there were too many doubles being caught plus, when the carp decided to spawn, the water was thrashed to a foam and the fishing, for that week became a complete waste of time. I knew that yet another drain down would be necessary but that wouldn't be possible until the autumn so I would need to use the summer months to work out our next plan of attack.

My original fishery management experience had been gained at Linear Fisheries in England where the weather was normally so unsettled that the effects of spawning was often not needed to be considered.

Here in France it is so settled that it lends itself perfectly to producing excellent conditions for virtually every egg to hatch. As an adult female carp can lay 200,000 eggs that's a lot of carp fry to deal with.

I decided to try to analyse exactly what the lake held so that I could calculate an accurate biomass figure. By using catch reports and photographs as well as reading as much as possible about dietary needs of carp I began to realise that our biomass was out of sync with the available natural food in the lake.

Obviously we needed to remove the small fish again in order to allow the big girls to grow on but I also decided to remove some of the double figure male commons also. The reason for this decision came about while watching the carp spawn. It became apparent that each female was being hounded by ten or a dozen much smaller, and often common, male carp. It was rare to see large males getting involved in the frenzy that ensued and I felt that I needed to find out why.

Telephone calls to Sparsholt College suggested that the male fish seem to get "lazier" as they get older so almost reach a sort of "can't be bothered" state of mind. Gradually as the summer continued I began to realise that we also had another problem to deal with. The rudd which we had put back into the lake had also spawned and we now had millions of small silver fry dimpling across the surface of the lake. These are also a cyprinid species so would also be competing with the carp for the same food items. Not only would these small fish be invading the anglers baited patches but they would also be providing the catfish with so much free food that they didn't need to eat or search for anything else.

This may also help to explain why less catfish were being caught. During November the sluice gate was again opened and this time we had a much more detailed plan for the fish. Obviously all of the big carp were kept as well as all of the predators. We removed literally tons of silver fish and then examined all of the carp under twenty pounds and removed the male commons.

We also removed some of the low twenty pound carp which didn't seem to have the growth potential that we wanted. All of these decisions were made on body shape as well as trying to compare fin and head sizes compared to body sizes.

I had noticed over the years that, once a carp gets older, it appears to have very large fins, almost as though they used to be in proportion to its body size but now it has "shrunk" and its fins are out of proportion. I also felt that fast growing young fish had small heads compared to the rest of their body. To me it was as though the skeleton was growing slower than the flesh. Anyway, rightly or wrongly, these were the criteria upon which our choices were made.



With the sorting completed the lake was left dry for four weeks and seemed devoid of life when the gate was again closed. We were confident that our biomass and stock levels were correct and our tally included forty seven carp over thirty pounds with ten of them at forty pound plus.



2006 opened, and indeed continued, with a bang. Carp which had been 39lb during the drain down were caught at 46lb and 47lb in May and June. With a late spawning some of this weight gain was obviously eggs but even so things were looking good. Every fish seemed to be up in weight by good margins and because of our reluctance to feed oily pellets their weight gains were more muscle than fat

and this was resulting in some incredibly fit and strong fish. For the first time we were seeing battles with carp taking over an hour and several “catfish”, when hooked, turned out to be thirty pound carp, when netted. The season saw one after another personal best being broken and we ended the season having recorded exactly 100 captures of forty pound plus carp. We relaxed in the “knowledge” that we had completely solved the previous problems and would not need to carry out another drain down. Unfortunately it is exactly when you feel that you are on top of a problem that it can bite you in the bum. We had overlooked one small item.....



2007 opened in a blaze of fantastic fishing. I forced myself to fish the opening week and, after all of the other anglers were settled I chose to fish in “snag bay” towards the end of the southern arm.

I started by baiting very heavily Saturday morning and then continued to top up the swim after every bit of action. The carp were obviously ready for a big feed and I ended with a catch of thirty carp including ten thirties and three forties. April and May continued to produce some incredible catches but these results gradually tailed off. As the summer drifted on we became aware that the lake was again holding a considerable number of small and totally unwanted fish.



I was always aware that the holding pools, which we had dug into the lake bed back in 2002, could be a hiding place for a small number of unwanted fish but I didn't feel that it was big enough to hold sufficient quantities of fish to become an instant problem. How wrong can you be?

By the end of the year we had only seen 74 forty pound carp landed so our total catch rate was down against the previous season. I had always known that it was likely that the lake would gradually get harder as the fish were caught more often but I didn't feel that this was the whole reason for the slow down.

The small fish were again getting to the baited patches quicker than the carp so there was only one solution. We decided that we would drain the lake again and this time we would empty the holding pools in order to examine exactly what they held. This year was also our fortieth wedding anniversary and we had promised to spend the weekend of 18th November in England with our eldest daughters. In order to accommodate this we would need to make detailed plans of how and when the various stages of the drain down would happen.

At the beginning of November we lowered the main body of the lake until the holding pools were “land locked.” At this point we closed the sluice gate in order to hold the main lake at that level. We then purchased a generator and two large pumps and these were installed in order to pump the water from the holding pools back into the lake. It actually took longer than I thought but eventually the bottom of the pools was revealed. Quite a lot of silt had accumulated since the pools were dug and the deeper spots were now soft but there in the watery silt lay at least two thousand small fish including the dreaded poisson chats. It seemed fair to assume that these numbers were fairly typical of what we had been leaving within the holding pools during each of the previous drain downs.



Basically each spring had seen a breeding population, numbered in thousands, of small fish ready to destroy our biomass calculations.

Once the pools were empty we cleaned the mud basins with chlorine and after leaving it to evaporate for a couple of days the pools were refilled. Even this was carried out by pumping the water from the lake through a fine mesh grill so that not even the smallest fish could get back into the pools. At this point we made our trip to England and as soon as we returned the gate was again opened to empty the main lake. I must admit that every day spent in England was also spent with one eye on the French weather forecast.

Luckily it didn't happen but any downpour could easily have refilled the lake and put us back to square one. Anyway, as the lake emptied, thousands of small fish were again revealed.

Unfortunately no-one wanted the small fish and we were forced to tip them on our field but we had to remove them for the benefit of the fishery. The total number of fish removed added up to 63 large dustbins full. We estimated that we were putting at least one thousand small fish in each bin so we took sixty thousand unwanted fish out of the lake. The change that this would make to the biomass would be incredible. If we assume that these fish weighed an average of two ounces each it equates to a reduction of 500 lb per acre on our biomass.

As we were trying to work to a total of 500 lb per acre it wasn't rocket science to see why our growth rates were stalling. The only unfortunate thing was that the fish would have to recover from the stress of the drain down before we saw the real benefits. After a month of extremely hard work the gate was shut and the lake began to refill. Our records indicated that the weights of most of the bigger fish were down but, now that we had seen the number of small fish which had been competing for the available food, it was not surprising.

However we did have one big surprise towards the end of the drain down when I slid my arms around yet another carp only to find that it was much bigger than expected at 46lb. Not only that but it wasn't a recognised fish. The real big plusses were that we were now holding twice as many forties and three times as many thirties as we had been at the end of 2005.

We also now had fifty large, adult catfish waiting to torture any fry that dared to emerge during the following spring.



The spring of 2008 was bizarre to say the least. The temperature shot up from freezing to red hot over the course of one weekend and the fish immediately spawned. I had never seen anything quite like it and it completely destroyed all of the accepted theories about the water temperature needing to be at a certain level for a certain number of days.

After the success of the opening week when many personal best's were broken, the following few weeks were poor. The weights of some of the known fish were good even after spawning but they hadn't had their normal pre-spawning binge so hadn't achieved their potential. However, as the year progressed the big fish seemed to gradually put on a small but regular amount of weight.



During the height of summer, I again tried the large beds of maize and the carp seemed to be recognising the sound of the spod. I could pick a spot amongst the weed and start spodding out a large bucketful of soaked maize and the fish would invariably appear and start head and shouldering a few yards behind the spot almost as if they were waiting for me to stop before moving down onto the bait.

It was this apparent love of maize on their part that made me carry out some investigations into its benefits as a food source. Until this point I had regarded it as unsuitable but my investigations suggested differently. It would appear that many French fish farmers use maize almost exclusively as a dry feed for their carp and they achieve some fantastic growth rates.

I also got similar feed back from a couple of helpful English lake owners who had also found it to be very beneficial. I decided then and there that I would be feeding soaked maize throughout the winter in an attempt to get the carp to maintain their condition during the cold weather so that they were fit and ready to make the most of the influx of spring food as soon as it arrived. The season produced some cracking fish and towards the autumn we began to see a few fish which were just suggesting that our hard work had not been wasted.

October was to see Robin Eden land an unrecognised common of 44lb 10oz. We searched through our photos and it didn't appear to be any of the commons which had made forty plus previously so seemed to have come through from an upper thirty of 2007.

It was truly a fantastic fish and I just hoped that it would be a sign of things to come. I was to be proved right later the same month when two fish were caught by a group of three lads. In October 2007 both fish had been caught during October 2008 by the same three lads.

One, "The Half Linear" had been 36lb 8oz in 2007 but now had risen to 43lb 2oz and looked superb.

The other "Chunky" had been 38lb 12oz in 2007 and was now 45lb 4oz. both of these fish had managed over six and a half pounds in twelve months. For the rest of the season I prayed for one of the known big girls, which had been forties at the drain down, to show up with similar weight gains but it wasn't to be so we closed the season with great expectation for 2009.

As a summary of our 2008 season we saw 269 carp of 36lb or bigger landed. Those captures were made up from at least 31 different carp of between 36lb and 40lb plus another 27 different forties. The simple maths of these figures suggests that we already have 58 different thirty six pound plus carp and could possibly see all of these as forties or fifties during 2009. My target when starting the fishery was to eventually have fifty forties and ten fifties and we are now within a couple of years of achieving this ... unless we have missed something else. Only time will tell.

I mentioned in an earlier chapter that Redmire had contained only carp and gudgeon during its period of dominance. I hadn't previously put any significance to the stock but a conversation with an angler who specialised in fishing for eels would make me ask even more questions.

He had originally asked if he could visit us to fish for eels but I had to explain that the lake didn't hold any but that it was a carp lake. He went on to explain in detail how he had spent some time fishing another lake in the area and had used gudgeon as his bait during his eel sessions.

He apparently had spent a weekend at this lake and had caught 15 carp on gudgeon as bait while the carp anglers had only caught a couple.

After he had left I began to put the pieces of the jigsaw together. Was there a correlation between the gudgeon and the growth rates of the carp and did this also extend to other fish fry?

It was obviously possible that the Redmire carp could have fed on the gudgeon as this would have provided a superb source of protein long before anglers' baits became developed and used in quantity.



If this was a common phenomenon then it would also explain why our carp were able to suddenly put on a "surge" of extra weight during the late summer and early autumn.

We didn't have the gudgeon but did have carp fry which would have reached "gudgeon" size at this time of the year.

Even more thoughts to take with us into 2009.





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The Reel Estate pt2
 by Nathan "Snowy" Sharp

The Reel Estate

pt2

After the success in part one with the absolutely stunning “long lin” I was obviously on cloud nine!

This success gave me some confidence in what I was doing but I knew one fish did not mean I had sussed the water. It was now about 3 weeks since & with not a lot else being caught from the lake in that time I knew it was vital to find the fish before I set up. Due to work I didn't arrive at the lake until 7pm and as it was a Friday there was a fair few anglers already on, I quickly noticed with disappointment that the few swims I really fancied were already taken. I'd seen a couple of shows and they all seemed to be held up in the middle deeper section of the lake, with the

advantage of a rare three-night session at my disposal I made the decision to setup as close as I could without encroaching and move in the morning when one of the swims became vacant.

By morning the angler in the swim that seemed to be showing the most activity had packed up and gone, considering my options and the fact I'd seen absolutely nothing in front of where I was, it was a no brainer, the gear was moved and spots were found. After moving it was evident most of the fish were now cruising around in the upper layers as it was already around 20°C. As there's a floater ban the best I could do was try and tease one into snatching at a zig bug, despite swapping colour

bugs, depths, moving around and sweating like a hog roast! I was unable to convince one into a photo shoot. It was now around 5pm, which meant I had to get the rods on the spot and over some grub i.e.) 4kg 15mm TG active, on the first rod I'd put a tg snowman hookbait and the second rod on the spot I'd rigged up with a 15mm Citruz pop-up, my third rod was set off the point of the island on a 3/4depth zig rig.

As night was setting in I was convinced there was fish on the spot as the oil slick that was appearing was bit of a giveaway. All my freebies had been



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covered in tg active soaked and hemp oil, this gives off such a slick when fish are on the munch I just knew either fish or a cheeky coot had disturbed my spot. I drifted off to sleep after a very nice and filling mixed kebab and bottle of cobra around 10pm. It only seemed like second when my middle rod on the snowman setup pulled to the top and started bucking away in the rest, it hadn't taken any line as I was fishing locked up due to the fallen branch

I was fishing off. After initially giving me a bit of a yank, I soon had the fish under control, leading her like a dog straight to the net. Upon peering into the net I could see she was a stunning little mirror of low doubles, after a quick pic she was slipped black and the rod

was re-wrapped and wacked to the spot at 23 wraps. The rest of the night passed without any action except for three bream and a pick up from the bird life.

Breakfast was demolished and spots were topped up, this is something I like to do, top up after the morning bite time and have a good walk around to look for any opportunities that might be there through the day. After walking and climbing (which with my figure isn't the

easiest thing to do!) It was apparent in my eyes the only chance was to hope one fancied a zig bug. The day was spent again adjusting zigs and flicking to the patrol routes the fish seemed to be using, but again my efforts were to no avail.

A similar routine, of baiting and whipping the rods onto the marks and we were set for another night. My rigs are never very complicated ones, every element of rig has its use, for my snowman rigs I had been playing with the now famous D-RIG, but with coated braid instead of fluorocarbon, my pop-up rig was the deadly multi-rig which had nailed me the 33lber last time out, both using size 4 Nash Fang X's, this may sound a big hook to some and it is, but the size of a 20lb carps

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mouth dwarfs this, I also like a big hook for its strength and once one goes in it very rarely pops out!

Just as night was setting in the slicks started to appear above the spots, my optimism grew, it was sit on my hands time, when.....

A great big white feathered thing that apparently are protected by our dear queen decided to fly through all three of my lines.....very annoyed would be about right! Words which cannot be printed and would turn these pages' blue were said so all I can say are the words; "That's ducking marvellous, you ducking white beep beep beep!?!@%#?!" were said!

This caused me a headache as I only had about 10minutes

of light remaining and had to get 2 rods tight on the spot, I wrapped them up as quick as you've seen any 20 stone man move and managed to get them both on the money first cast. I could now take a sip of a cold beer before tidying all the tackle that was now strewn across the swim. I'd just sat down taking a sip of beer, thinking to myself how bloody stressful the carping lark is when.... Beep Beep Beeeeep! The middle rod wanged to the top! As I picked up the rod I could see the fish was



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already on the surface thrashing itself towards the branches on the island, with everything locked up I carefully walked backwards hoping to drag this chunk away from danger. This is where you have to have the upmost trust in all your tackle as it really does take some hammer when doing this. After an almighty scrap I eventually got her into open water where I could start to ease off on her. After another 5 minutes of toing and froing I managed to bring her over the net cord, this is when I got

my first look at her and what a sight I was treated to. Over 20lb of the most amazing looking linear, a truly amazing looking carp bright deep colouration and lovely scale pattern, whilst holding her up for the pics I couldn't help but smile, to think 15minutes before the bite I had been cursing a swan for wiping the lines out! I had recast the rod and baited whilst the fish was in the net so once I'd returned that little fitty I could sit back and enjoy the evening whilst constantly looking at the picture of the linear. It was soon time for me to retire for the night so after a game or two of pool I was dreaming of all the fine things in life, when I was rudely awoken by two beeps on the same rod with the snowman rig on, after spinning my legs round off the bed I



realised how misty it was I could barely see the rods, this is when there was another few beeps and I could just see the bobbin wedged up against the alarm, panic set in and I grabbed the rod and walked back begging for whatever was holding its own, not to. In a similar way to the linear this fish didn't like the idea of taking a day trip away from its shaggy home but with plenty of persuasion she eventually started seeing things my way, with constant pressure I soon had her under the rod tip trying to bore down the margin shelf, this is where

things got very hairy. With a fallen branch in my right-hand margin the fish had somehow managed to get the line caught on the only branch that stuck towards me, I now had a decision to make either see if the fish would swim out or put the waders on and try and get above it, so I did the latter. As soon as I was above it the branch started flexing before...CRACK! The branch snapped and I was in contact with this yet unseen silt pig. With the battle now under my control she was soon in the net and again it was a stunning fish but

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one of the lakes really old commons, on the scales she went a 26lb 8oz and looked awesome in the morning mist, a fish that anyone would be happy with. My season was now starting to come together and I'd found a bait they were loving, I just had to find them each time, fingers crossed I can find some more find out in part 3,

Keep praying to them carp gods,

Snowy



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Hello. Hopefully everyone is well. I love this time of year, as the snowdrops and crocus start to bloom. Spring is on the horizon.

Let's kick off with a question from Mark Ashworth. Mark is a new comer to our sport and he is confused about lead set ups, and when and why you should use different lead arrangements. I am going to do this as a general guide for beginners.

Let's start with the most underused, in my opinion. This is the running lead set up. This can be fished over hard gravel and silty areas BUT shouldn't be fished near weed. This is because ideally this rig is most effective when using slack and semi slack line so the lead has free movement to increase bite indication. This rig set up is a fantastic option in the margins. You can also achieve this by using an inline lead, by removing the hard insert and having the line travelling through the centre of the lead. It is recommended to thread a soft rubber bead onto the main line to protect the knot of the swivel of the rig.

Ask The Experts with Paul "Hobbo" Hobbs



Next is inline leads. These are the most tangle free set up, suited for harder lake beds like clay or gravel. When fishing on a gravel bar you can fish with a flat pear. These are widely use fishing the solid bag method is conjunction with a short, soft braided hook link. This all fits snugly into a solid bag presentation in conjunction with a pop up on the rig inside the bag.



Next is a helicopter set up. These are generally fished over soft lake beds i.e. silt, debris and weed. This is where this set up is king over the rest of the lead set ups because the lead contacts the lake bed first. This allows the hook link to rise on the leader and then the rig is able to settle on top of the lake bed. Most people use this set up for chod fishing or with pop up rigs. It can also be used on distance fishing.



Last but not least, the most widely used is the lead clip set up. This can be used on gravel, hard bottom and in light silt, light weed and snaggy areas. This is the most versatile set up as the lead is discharged on the take or if the fish becomes snagged. If fishing on a harder lake beds a stiffer hook link is ideal. Hopefully you will find this general guide helpful when it comes to choosing a lead



arrangement to suit your angling.
Until next time keep the questions coming in.

Be lucky.

Paul

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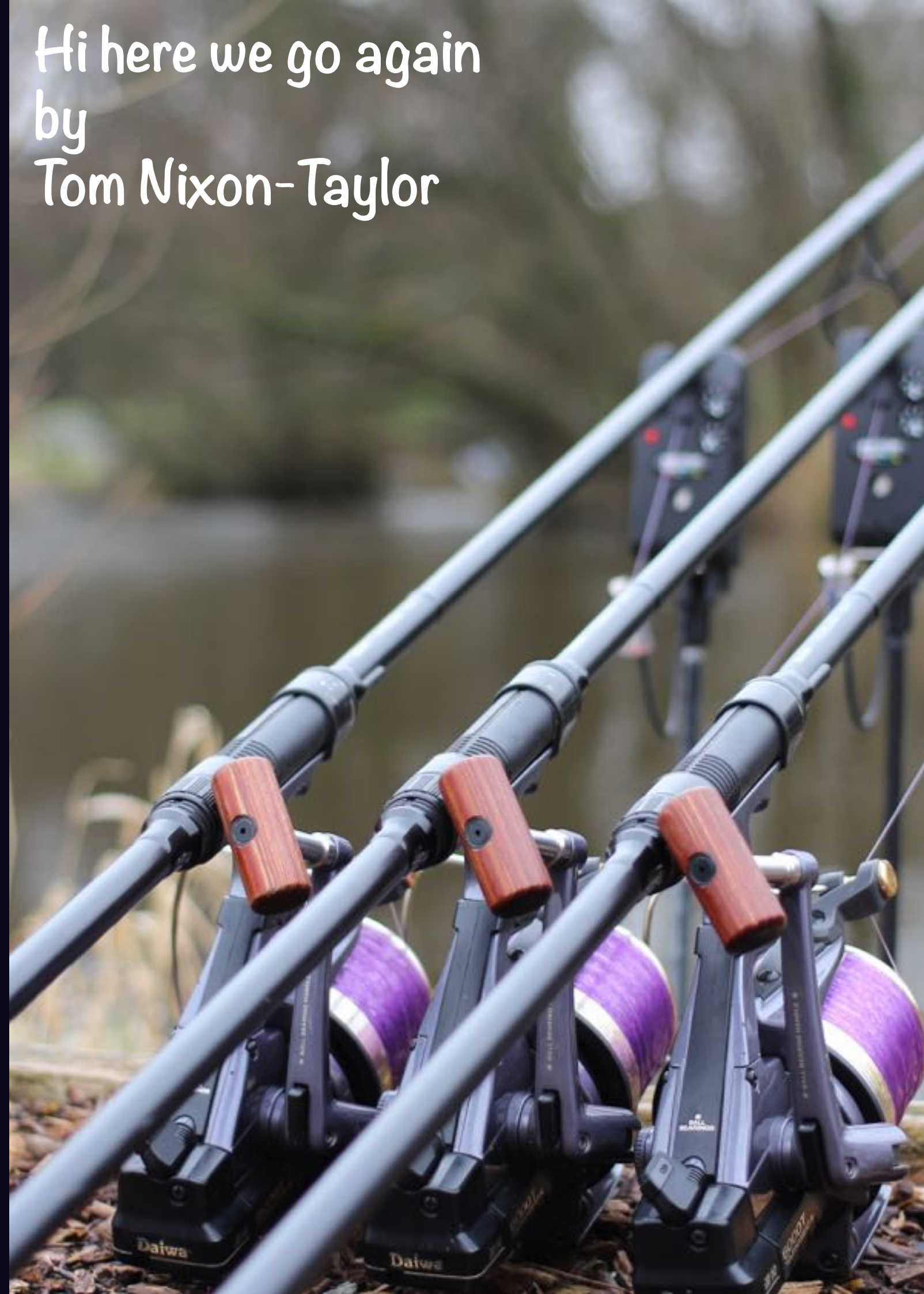
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Hi here we go again
by
Tom Nixon-Taylor



Hi here we go again

My name is Tom Nixon-Taylor and I am fifteen years old. Yes, it's true, I do seem to have OCD, i.e. Obsessive Carp Disorder, and this month my article is about something I could talk about for hours on Bait, Rigs and Presentation. I have gained my extensive knowledge from fellow anglers and from watching videos and reading magazines, to improve my own style and carping skills. I have tried and use all manner of different baits from boilies to maggots, from pellets to fake corn, and from mixers to hemp. The bait obviously depending on my prior experience on which ever lake I'm fishing at the time. However, in nearly all situations I prefer to use a bright hi-vis Pop-up, as I feel that this method gets me quicker bites.

This I think is because the Pop-up stands out a lot more compared to the standard freebies that are fed around the rig. Also, I have found that Pop-ups tend to sit on top of debris on the lake bed, whether that's blanket weed, dead leaves or twigs. In these situations, a bottom bait could be pulled into this debris, giving you poor rig presentation and making your bait hard for the fish to find. I always fish my Pop-ups critically balanced so they sink slowly, and this helps when a fish sucks at the bait. This helps the bait fly into the fish's mouth easily, getting amazing hook holds and therefore losing very

few fish. I have tried all manner of hook bait options, but I have found that small Pop-ups get me the most bites. I am at present experimenting making my own Pop-ups, trying all different mixes and flavours, and have found that yellow fruity hook baits work the best. For ninety percent of my Pop-up fishing I only use one rig, this is a low-sitting Pop-up rig. This incorporates a small hook bait, normally twelve millimeters, and a large size six long shank hook. The bait is attached to the hook, via a rig ring, which slides on the hook and is stopped from sliding off by a hook

hook bead. This hook bead is always opposite the point, which kicks the hook off at the best angle and helps it to flip and turn quickly in the fish's mouth. If I can, I always choose to fish clear spots, free of debris, because I feel your rig is presented better here and this rig is perfect for fishing on clear lake bottoms. As the popup is critically balanced against the hook and putty, the stiff coated braid helps to kick the rig away from the lead and it always lies straight. I use stiff coated braid to tie the rig this means that the rig can reset its self if the fish doesn't get hooked. I have been using this rig for about six months now and in that time, I have had thirty-five takes on it and I have landed thirty-one which is not a bad hook to land ratio. As this rig is simple and quick to tie I tie loads in advance ready to go in my rig-safe, so I don't

need to be wasting time tying them on the bank between casts. This helps me to get the rods back out quickly and to utilise all my time well, as most of my fishing is short day sessions or quick overnights. In my last article, I wrote about my very productive session at Cleveley Bridge Fisheries. All the fish then, totaling seventeen over a five-day December session were caught on the rig I have been talking about above. I revisited Cleveley Bridge Fisheries again on Sunday 19th February, on a chilly damp day. The owner, who is becoming more comfortable with my enthusiasm and style, kindly allowed me to cast from various pegs as the lake was being slowly vacated. The news from the weekend was that there had been very few fish out, possibly due to the weather and pressure conditions? Despite other

enthusiastic fishermen. I baited my rigs with twelve-millimeter pineapple Pop-ups, which from previous experience had seem to work well on here. I scattered a few of my home-made freebies over the top. All my rigs where placed as tight as possible to the far margin and overhanging trees. Over the short four-hour afternoon session, I managed to catch four carp! Out of the four my biggest fish out was sixteen pound eight-ounce Common carp, this being part of a double take, twenty minutes after my first cast in. I was keeping the Bailiff Tony busy once again. The second weighing in at thirteen pound four ounces, a Mirror Carp. The other two were much smaller Common carp which I didn't weigh but just put back with gratitude.



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Wyreside Lakes is a family run business, situated on over 120 acres of farmland at the foot of the Bowland Fells in Dolphinhall - Lancashire. On the estate there are 7 fishing lakes - with a superb stocking of carp, mixed coarse and lake. The Birkin family have continually used the same British stockists over the last 23yrs and the experienced to novice angler alike has an opportunity to catch a wide selection of beautiful two tone mirrors, immaculate scaly commons and the occasional leather carp.



The Lakes were created from former poor agricultural land after extraction of sand and gravel by Tarmac Road stone Ltd. The first fish were introduced in 1984 (Mirror carp weighing up to 1.5 lbs) and they have thrived in the lakes, growing and breeding in a spectacular manner. The lakes are stocked annually in October/November with 3-5lbs mirrors and commons – then they are grown throughout the different lakes until they reach maturity. However, this November we introduced 70 new mirrors and commons into S2 between 12lbs & 15lbs so we are hoping for great results



The 7 lakes consist of 3 day / night waters, Sunnyside 1, Sunnyside 2 and River lakes. These lakes have carp up to 33lbs with an overall average of around 19lbs – there are also mixed coarse prevalent in these waters. There are also two membership waters Wyre and Bantons which boast carp currently up to 39lbs however the largest recorded weight was the mighty Paw Print at 42lbs 10oz. Non-members can fish these waters but there are strict times and rules that apply. There is also a mixed coarse water Fox's lake – this is an excellent runs water that produces carp up to 18lbs, Roach to 3lbs, Bream up to 10lbs & Perch up to 8lbs.



The estate also boasts a 4 star Campsite as well as a recreational centre with bar, restaurant and function room. This year a large on site tackle shop was completed offering bait and terminal tackle. On site there is also a laundry room and a modern toilet & shower block. The Fisherman's Restaurant serves food and there is also a takeaway service with food delivered to your swim! The bar & function room is the perfect for match meets and presentations and an excellent location for any type of event from weddings to birthday celebrations. All throughout the year there are various events held each week, from Karaoke /discos to themed nights and live entertainment. The estate is open 7 days a week and is closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day annually. Restaurant / café opening times may vary.

Mark Wozencroft

Out And About with Wuzy...

After a few phone calls to check on current water conditions after the recent cold spell, and finding out that the lakes I wanted to fish were frozen I decided that a bit of angling on a local water was in order. Luckily, my part of the country had remained unseasonably mild and consequently the waters didn't



have 'a lid' on them .

Upon arrival there I had a really long hard look, but there was no real sign of any significant carp activity other than the odd single bubble plinking up to the surface from one particular area of the lake,

At this time of the year I like to fish with tight lines, keeping the lines up a little so I'm fishing for liners. I find that this will tell me if there are any carp in the area and whether I should be fishing at a shorter range?

The lake I was fishing has good winter form, but like any water can be tricky at times. The rigs I opted for the ever faithful "Ronnie" rig coupled with a size 2 Mugga, and used in conjunction with the new Stiff Ultra Skin hooklink in the 'go anywhere' silt colour.

Considering the cold conditions and the lack of activity I really didn't want to go piling in the bait, so fished Crafty Catcher 'King Prawn' washed out single pop up on each rig - and would play it by ear whether the fish wanted some bait. Sometimes even just a few is a few to many freebies so I prefer watch other anglers on the lake and basically use them as my guinea pigs. After all, if I notice a fish or two coming out over bait I can always trickle a little bit in and see how it goes!

During my stay there was nothing caught over bait, so I chose not to put in any myself. My tactic of fishing for liners worked, as I was getting the odd bleep and lift on all the rods regularly throughout the first day of fishing. Over the course of this time I slowly cast each of my rigs at a shorter distance till the liners stopped.

I now knew that I was in the hot zone and within a couple of hours I had my first take; which only confirmed my findings, It's all about being proactive rather than being lazy as I'm there to catch carp and not just camp it up!

Anyway, the session went really well from that point on and after pinning down the fish I proceeded to catch eight carp in total and lost two as well. They were nothing big, mainly doubles with a couple of twenties finding their way into the net, but at this time of the year I was really happy that my rigs, bait and tactics had worked so well.

It goes to show that a bit of careful observation and watercraft can catch you carp even in the direst of conditions and ultimately, I had an incredibly interesting and exciting winter trip!



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Ryan Butt

Triple Run!!

Low pressure, rain and warmer temps were in for a few days so I decided to pay a visit to a local 10acre water Lakeside view. Things had been tough over the last 2 weeks with nothing out but I was hoping it was about to end., I arrived at Lakeside view on Sunday morning and had a look around, it was flat to say the least but I knew over the next couple of days that the winds were changing to south westerly so I chose a swim that I could fish up to an island which was located in the middle of the lake. I baited up 3 spots of 100 yards with Monster ghost and Natures Bait Alpha. With the weather looking how it was I knew the fish would start to switch on so I fired 5 spombs on each spot hoping they would home in on some lovely freebees! The rods were set rigs tied using ESP Ghost 15lb on a D rig with Deception angling Dcrk size 6 Bait screws, Deception Anti tangle sleeves, Natures baits Berry bite wafter on a helicopter system with Korda Leadcore and Korda Heli-safe and lakebed lead 3.5 distance on the business end!! Things were very slow, water was flat with no indication on anything for the first 24 hours. I stuck to my guns and put out another 2 spombs on each spot and left it for the night. 8 am the sound of my left alarm ripped off... I hooked into my first fish, whilst playing it my second alarm ripped off double run I struck into it to make sure it was on and asked someone to step in... I went back to playing my fish which was putting up a good fight but 10 mins in it started to tire so It slipped into the net. I reached over and took over on the other rod and started to play the fish with this reasonably sluggish it eased its way into a second net by this time my right rod ripped off I pick up the rod and the third was on. I was feeling it in my arms at this stage but it didn't bother me I just wanted this triple run all banked. This was unbelievable I was shaking as it's not often you bank 3 carp at roughly the same time in winter conditions. There was my 3-carp landed... no time to mess about I put another 3 spombs out and the rods back on each spot. Things then slowed up the wind became flat and the rain eased off so I called it a day!



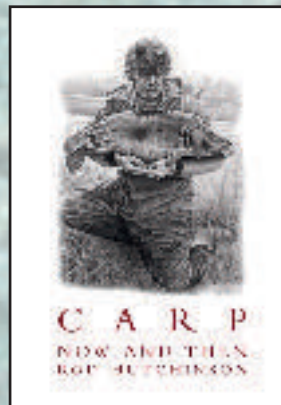
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Please send your articles and catch reports in by the **18th April** for the next issue to either :

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**The carp magazine for Carp anglers written by
YOU !!!!!**

“The Talking Carp Team”

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