



Talking Carp *Magazine* 'Spug' Edition

Issue 41
July 2019



Inside ...

The final chapters of Spug Redferns
sold out book Carping Mad !!

Exclusive Q&A with spug!!!!

Scott Grant, Tam Oakes, Gary Lowe & more



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Hello... and welcome.

Here we are, issue 41. Rolling through the summer months, and we are seeing some great fish being caught so keep those catch reports coming in!

*There are plenty of upcoming carp fishing events and days out, but one that should be visited is the Carp Society Horseshoe lake open weekend at Horseshoe lake, Lechlade, Gloucester..... And this year it is dedicated to the late Rod Hutchinson. There will be stars galore to talk to, bouncy castle for the kiddies, stalls, casting lessons, auctions, talks and so much more. It's a great weekend and its **FREE** so no excuses.... See you there August 3rd and 4th.*

Wyreside fisheries are also holding a junior carp camp on July 29th to 31st for the young ones to learn and hone their carp catching skills for 48 hours tuition with some local experts. Bait and food are provided and also there is a goodie bag for each junior. Ring the fishery on 01524 792093 or email the team at wyresidelakes@btconnect.com for further information. Again, see you there... as we will be in attendance!

As our catch reports section seems to be growing massively, and we welcome fisheries from around the country to jump onboard and supply monthly catch reports and highlight their venue.

If you are a fishery owner or know any fishery owners who would be interested then simply drop us an email anytime.

That's it for now... may you have tight lines and wobbly bobbins.

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Team Talking Carp

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*A Chat With
Mr 'Spug' Redfern*



A Chat With....

Mike 'Spug' Redfern

Following on from our “no holds barred” chats with Dave Levy and Julian Cundiff, this month we thought who better than one of carp anglings biggest characters.... Spug!!

Welcome to issue 41 Mike, and thanks for the chance to actually have a chat with you.

Q1) So, now you are back in the UK after your time in Thailand, and back on the angling scene as it were, how are you finding things?

Since I came back from Thailand I haven't carp fished anywhere near as much as I wanted. But that's life for you, the first couple of years that I came back I was delivering kitchens for B+Q and I can honestly say, I hated every minute of it! I was so knackered at the end of the week, I wouldn't go unless I could get a couple of nights in. I caught a few out of my syndicate, Monks pit in Cambs, but none of the bigger ones. I have now got a job which is 4 days on and 4 days off, so finally I can have a go at them properly. Having said that, I've realised I'm a bit rusty! 2 years in Thailand and 2 years hardly going to the lake, has left me making the odd mistake, just silly things.

Q2) The UK carp scene seems to be changing rapidly and changing almost weekly, what are your views on the modern-day scene?

Now there's a question! Times change, people and things evolve. Me personally, I think that the advent of the internet has ruined many things in life, and carp fishing in general has lost a lot of its romance and pureness because of it. I used to love rushing down the shops to buy all the mags, going to carp shows to buy the latest books and to meet my carp fishing heroes in the flesh. Sitting down the pond with your pals, trying to make the latest rigs, it was all part of it.

Now I see loads of bitching and arguing, slagging off and all the rest of it, the internet has given everyone a voice, which in some ways is good, but not when it's used for bitching. A cheeky wind up, yeah, all good, but I don't like the nasty stuff. It's only fishing and it's supposed to be fun. I do my utmost to stay away from it, because it takes away from my happiness of this glorious past time.

Also, times have changed so much from the 90's. In those days, you got noticed for your angling ability and sponsored anglers were pretty much all very good anglers, who had at some point had a result or two in their time. These days if you're good on the Keyboard (or pretty in some cases) then you are of as much use, to many companies, as someone who is good at watercraft and actually catching fish. I always have a little chuckle to myself, when someone catches a few doubles and maybe a 20 and the next thing you know, they have a clothing deal and bait sponsorship from "unheard of baits.com", just because they're good on a keyboard.

We had iconic fish and anglers back then, Mary, Bazil, Arthur, Chop Dorsal, Two Tone, Heather etc, and you basically had carp anglings finest, chasing them, people who became "house hold names" (well in carp fishing households anyway) but these fish have nearly all gone and lads like Terry Hearn, Dave Lane, Martin Locke, Nigel Sharp and Lee Jackson, will be the last of the truly great names in our sport and in

particular Terry, who is probably going to be the last true "icon", i.e. Walker/Hutchinson/ Maddocks/Yates

It's also really "clicky" now and I have to chuckle when I see people from tackle or bait companies that will only "like" posts from people also associated with those companies-sad or what? I am very lucky to be with Mainline baits who (bar the three years I worked at Solar) I have been with since 1994, damn, that's 22 years of using their baits! So, I will always share their stuff of course. Other than that, I have no desire to be a consultant for anyone, for the reasons already stated, quite simply there is hardly any real Kudos to a lot of it these days. I'm lucky to have the odd "trade deal" or shop that discounts stuff, that's more than enough for me. I've always been a bit of a loose canon, and probably too politically incorrect for today's world, like me old mate Dean Macey says, "yeah, but that's why we love you Spug!" I have learnt to keep myself to myself and just surround myself with people who just love fishing, we have a lot of fun and banter and just fish for ourselves.

Q3) Talking of Thailand... how did that come about? How did you end up working at the world famous Gillhams resort? You managed to get your own rods out now and again and had your fair share of monster fish, didn't you?

Current British record weighs in at 56 lb 8 oz

BY STEVE BRIDG

COVENTRY (BBC) - A monster breeding two of the monster fish species has been caught, just two months after the last one was caught.

Mike Spug, 40, of Coventry, said the fish was caught on the night of the 22nd.

At 56 lb 8 oz, the fish is the third largest ever caught in the world and is the first to be caught in the UK since 1985.

The fish was caught by two anglers, Mike Spug and his son, who were fishing in a pond in the garden of a house in Coventry.

The fish was caught on a night when the temperature was 17°C, 27°F and the wind was light and fresh.

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MIKE 'Spug' Freshum with Two-Tons.

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Basically, I went over there on Holiday as a customer and they offered me a job. A lot of the job offer was based on the success of my first book, Stuart said he loved it and he wanted someone like me around the lake, doing the social media stuff and chatting to the anglers around the lake, cheering those up that weren't catching! A couple of year after the offer, the planets aligned for me, as I knew Iron Maiden were about to release a new album, which would lead to a world tour. This was my time to take the job offer, as I really wanted to see them play in Tokyo, Japan, somewhere I had wanted to visit for 20 odd years. I didn't actually fish the main lake that much, in fact at one point I had a whole year when I didn't fish it. Some people might find that odd, but at the end of a week on there, I just wanted to get away from it. having said that I caught the 3 fish I really wanted, a 100lb Siamese carp, I had 2, the biggest 120lb, a big arapaima at 350lb and a big Mekong catfish at 170lb. To anyone who knew me, it was no great surprise I handed my notice in a couple of months after seeing Maiden playing. The two years in Asia were absolutely crazy and something I will talk about forever!





Q4) It is fair to say, you are not only known for your carp catching ability, but also a master stroke puller!! And your list of victims must read like a who's who of angling!! Tell us one of your favourite pranks....

I have got a mate called Adam Thacker. Now, he calls himself “nut nut” because he has to take medication, to calm himself down a bit. Don't get me wrong he's not a dumb dumb, by any stretch of the imagination. But he's not a full ticket. Anyway, he had a lucky duck (stuffed toy thing), that was his lucky mascot when he went fishing. To cut a long story short, I got someone to kidnap the duck, without him knowing as he was packing up one day. I wasn't on the lake at the time, so it couldn't come back on me. Anyway, I set up a Facebook profile for it and sent him a friend request from “Kidnapped duck”, he ran to the garage to try and find his beloved duck, only to find out it was missing. He flipped right out! There was pics of the duck being chewed by a dog, on the grill, in a bin and even a video of it being sh@**!d from behind, god it was funny, he phoned me, raging, saying it had something to do with me. I denied it of course, he shouted at me, “when I find out who it is, I'M GONNA

KILL THEM! I'M SPITTING FEATHERS!" I replied, "yeah, not duck ones though" I think his eyes popped out at that point. Anyway, I finally confessed to having the duck, but told him if he wanted it back, he would have to dress up as a clown and sing Karma Chameleon, video it and post it on Facebook, he did and it was hilarious.



Q5) Early in your "carp angling career" you hit many a milestone and fished some iconic waters. In June 2001 you landed England's biggest carp with Two Tone at 56lb 8oz, which was the second biggest capture of a carp ever in England, (Two Tone had broken the record a few months before at 59.07) this capture also made you only the 4th UK angler to catch a carp over 50lb In England and France. you have since famously landed a total of 79 different UK 30lb'ers, Including 4 forties and that 50. Is there one memory that really stands out for you. An achievement that cannot be replicated

(Editors note: Since writing this Spug has landed his 80th 30lb+ fish with a stunning 41lb 4oz Layfields lake mirror! Congratulations Spug)

If I'm honest just to still love fishing as much as I did when I started fishing as a kid is THE ongoing achievement!

Fishing has cost me dearly at times, especially when I was younger, my drive, ambition and passion for it, definitely cost me a wife, a home of my own, 2 company pensions and string of other bad decisions! In some ways, on one hand it cost me pretty much everything I had, but on the other it has given me everything I ever wanted, because of that first book, my whole life changed, for the better. The opportunities that it has led too are just so far reaching and there are just so many I could mention, but to name a few, working in Thailand, which then led to my greatest adventure outside of fishing, which was to see Iron Maiden play in Tokyo, Beijing, London and New York on the Book of Souls tour, my new job, becoming friends with Adrian Smith from my favourite band Iron Maiden, which led to a slight change in direction as I realised there is so much fun to be had, chasing other species of fish too. That and many other great things came directly because of that book. So, without doubt Carping Mad! Was THE Achievement, it changed my life, (not financially, I'll always be skint!)

Every now and again, I receive a message from someone who has read one of my books, saying things like, "oh mate, loved your book, laughed my arse off or best book I've ever read" and I am truly humbled by it, and of course it makes every bad decision, (or loss along the way) worth it, 100%

Q6) Your first book, Carping Mad, was a huge success, it's a must have for many people... so much so, it is completely SOLD OUT, never to be reprinted, and now selling for silly money on eBay. Your follow up Carping Mad 3 is also heading that way too... what do you think made them so very popular? They're certainly like no other carp book out there are they?

I think they reason that they were so well received is that they had integrity, honestly and more importantly humour. Who else would actually own up to "following through" in Tesco, after a farting competition going down the M20, or indeed own up to being offered a B.J from a tranny in a New York nightclub? And of course, I accidentally set fire to Chillham mill, I mean 6 foot flames on a lake, in the pitch black dark, now that's special! And that's what made them different, everything seems to happen to me, I can't even drop my mates daughter off at her boyfriends, without choking on a sweet, losing control of my car and then ending up getting cut out of it by the fire brigade and whizzed off to A+E (story in carping mad3) Books don't seem to sell as well as they did years ago, and although Carping mad3 is selling reasonably well, there's still plenty left for now.

Q7) Even though you seem to be a constant joker on the bank, surely there must be things that you come across that really wind you up? What are you seeing these days that really gets your goat?

These ridiculous pics where people are holding their fish out at arms lengths and making 20's look like 50's and 60's look like 100's, ridiculous! Now don't get me wrong we often get one that goes a little that way when self-taking, but the way some of these pics are taken, is sad and pathetic. Having spent 4 years of my life doing "Spug's sharper carpers" the Solar bait write up, 8 years doing What's Occurring, the Mainline write up, I was also the one who created the official Mainline Facebook page too and was admin for years. Finally, I spent 2 years doing Gillhams fishing

resorts social media, that's a total of 14 years doing catch reports for 3 of the biggest names out there, without a complaint from anyone. So, I would say that leaves me qualified to comment, Sort it out you melts!

Q8) You cut your carp angling teeth fishing alongside some big names at the time. Who would you say really influenced your angling?

Terry O'Brien or TOB as he is known, from Les Quis, he really put me on the path, very good angler, genuine person. All the boys down Conningbrook, but particularly, Lee Jackson and Ian Brown, very technically gifted anglers and nice people too!

And finally, Martin Locke, or "Lockey" from my days working for him at Solar Tackle, he knew how to trick a carp!

I'll tell you a tale.....Nick Helleur (who was also at Solar at the time) was playing about designing "the bag mix". Me and Lockey went with a "supercharged" version of it, down to a lake in Godalming, Surrey. We asked around who had caught what, there had been the odd one out here, odd one out there, maybe a couple here and a couple there, you get what I am saying, right? Anyway, Lockey said, "just watch this, we're gonna whack this place, put the mix into PVA bags and just flick them out with a boilie on the hair. Re-cast them



every 10 mins, you see what happens”. Two hours later we left, Locky had landed 15 and I had landed 12! You could actually see the fish flashing along the top, eating the freeze dried shrimp and plankton from the mix, then diving down to the hookbait. As we walked off a bloke said to Locky, “I think I have just been dealt a lesson in carp fishing”, he had big time. Locky was definitely a “trickster” and could wrangle a carp out of anywhere.

Q9) What does the future hold for Spug? What goals and targets do you still have?

The first goal is to maintain my desire to keep going, as I’ve got older I have found that my drive has waned a bit, I still love fishing, but I don’t want it to dominate my life as much in the future as it did in the past, I guess it’s time to grow up a bit and even try to keep the same address for more than 12 months!

Having said that, my life hasn’t been solely about fishing, there’s been times when we partied hard and as we all know I love going to gigs, and to be fair I have spent a lot of my time split between doing what I love. If I had just fished, who knows where I would be now? My quest for 100 thirties currently stands on 93 as we speak. That doesn’t mean I think I’m a superstar angler... far from it. I was just in the right place, at the right time. I put in the legwork, and I put in the hours, and right now, I have managed to regain some focus, some clarity in my life and the



pursuit to hit the 100 is driving me forward to complete this quest.

Q10) Where can Mike be found these days? Big waters with low stock or smaller waters with more stock and more runs?

At the moment I am fishing Monks pit in Cambs, an incredible water with a really good head of big fish and if I pull my finger out and try a little harder, I may start actually getting amongst a few of the bigger ones and hopefully get to that 100 UK 30's target, in the next few years.

Q11) We know you've dabbled in the world of tuitions before, is this something you would consider doing again?

No. Although all the people who came were really great people, and I enjoyed their company, it's not a bit of me. I don't want to earn a living out of fishing, I want to use my spare time to do my fishing and I don't want to be the person that shows people how to tie a hook on! My only real contribution, (bar the odd bit of charity stuff) to carp fishing, is hopefully making people laugh through my books, that's it, end of. I'm no Dave Lane or Terry Hearn by any stretch of the imagination, but then they're no Spug either. Which is probably something they are both very pleased about!

Finally, before I go, if I do complete the triple century challenge, then carping mad5! May well come along, if it's does, it starts in Thailand and there's some really funny stuff happened out there I can tell you!

That pretty much wraps up the chat with Spug for now, we thank you for your time and we look forward to following you in your future adventures!

We would like to thank you for allowing us to serialise the Carping Mad book within our pages and allowing our readers access to it for free....

Talking Carp.

Note: Carping Mad 3 can be purchased for just £24.95 at

www.mikespugredfern.com/carping-mad-books



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**Bayeswater... Where
dreams are made and
hearts are broken
(Part 2)
by Scott Geezer Grant**



Two weeks later and with a couple of days off work I was up early doors loading the car, there was only one place I was going and that was Bayeswater. I kept in contact with a couple of the regulars and the odd fish was coming out, most of them stockies with the only A Team member the Hawaiian Honey making an appearance. I got to the lake in record time!! And there was a couple of anglers on. Swims 1 and 8 were taken and as I stood at the gate a fish crashed out in front of swim 4.

Well that's a great starting point, Chris had packed up who was in 4 and said the fish had been crashing out in-front of him since first light. I went for a walk round and didn't see another fish. So, going on what I saw I decided to go into 4. Porky was in swim 1 and was there for the week, I just hope he's timed it right as a week on the bank in the right conditions can catch you enough fish for a season on this place.

Once back at the car I made the arduous task of getting all the gear to the swim, as I stood there looking out I was wondering if I should of gone into 9 as the fish do get in there in early spring usually when its warmer and as the fish hadn't got in there in numbers I was convinced they would still be spread out around the open water. Sam who was in 8 had started to move down into 9, so maybe I had missed the boat!!

Staying positive is what you need to do when your fishing a place like Bayeswater as it can really test the best of anglers. The fish are special and when you do catch one all the hard work and effort is rewarded.



With the house up and everything sorted I got the rods sorted, I decided to fish 3 rods on the bottom and 1 rod on a zig, that way I had all angles covered. With the rods out it was time to sit back and relax. Nick popped over as he can't seem to stay away from the place and while we stood there talking, he got a call on his work phone and had to leave to attend a job on the other side of London!! I didn't envy him one bit. As the day wore on more anglers turned up and by 19:00 there was only 1 swim free.

Its mental as the majority of the anglers only fish overnights so one minute the lake is packed and come 0700 o'clock in the morning, you're the only one left. Its great if you're doing a session as you can move if you want to but trust me that's the only chance you do get to move. As the night started to draw in, I had a lovely dinner then laid on the bed chair watching the water.

I must admit from what I had been told the fish had showed in front of 4 for a couple of days, but that night I only saw 1 fish. Had I made the right choice to go into 4? Well only time will tell, it only takes one bite and that one bite can be a fish of a lifetime. Positivity is the key well at least that's what I was telling myself. It got to just after 23:00 so I made the obligatory call to the other half before getting my head down.

Come 05:30 the alarm was going off so it was up, kettle on relive the bladder then get back in the bag whilst looking at the lake drinking a



coffee. Again, the fish were not active at all, the water temperature was still very cold for this time of year so maybe it will start fishing later who knows, one thing is for sure the fish are playing hard to get.

With one more night I was hoping a fish would come out even if it was to someone else, I didn't care. Well as always, a few anglers went off to work and later that afternoon a few anglers turned up to fish. Sam who was in 9 had gone home and Jim was in there like a rabbit, he loves that swim and has done very well from there so fair play to him. Porky was firmly planted in 1 and there was no way he was moving. With new anglers on they went about their business setting up and getting comfortable. The weather was still cold with a biting east/north easterly wind which wasn't doing any of us any favours. Later in the afternoon I went for a walk round the lake and sat with Jim for a while chatting, he was fishing the snags a place the fish love and when the weather is at its finest it's their haven.

On the way back to my swim I stopped off at Porky's for a while, to see how he was bearing up. This place can really get to you and the only way to cope with it is to stay positive. He was due a fish and I was hoping and praying he would bag one. That night the fish remained dormant and the

following morning as I was sitting on my bed looking out, I could see Jim out in the boat!!



He was out in the boat for like 10 minutes then once he was back on the bank, he texts me with a simple word "Buggies"!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



I couldn't get dressed quick enough, I literally ran around to the other side of the lake, stopping briefly at Porky while he wound a couple of rods in, he had off the snags and we both went around to Jim. When we arrived, there were a few others already there and Jim was beside himself. I jumped on him and congratulated him big time. This for me is what fishing is all about a group of men all here for the same thing and being as happy for each other when they catch. The atmosphere was electric and when Jim pulled the huge beast from the water and laid her on the mat, we were all speechless!!

As Jim unfolded the net you could see the girth, and she looked big, it's hard to put it into words, but if you're a carp angler you would understand. Jim lifted her and I removed the net, the scales were zeroed and witnessed then she was hoisted up and a weight of 48lb 12oz was recorded, absolutely magical!!





bucket of water treatment which is duly took in his stride. He then held her to gain her strength and off she waddled a sight I will never forget, and one day hopefully it will be me on the other side of the camera. Jim's swim was like a bomb had gone off, and he was like super chilled, so we all left him to it to take in the moment and enjoy it.





It wasn't long before he reeled all his rods in and was off to get everyone breakfast what a top man. His phone then went into melt down as I sent him in the region of 40 plus photos, plus all the other photos people were bombarding him with it was great.

That was the highlight of the trip, and later that day I was packing up heading home with my tail between my legs yet again.

Porky had done a week without a fish and he was also disheartened, but like a trooper vowed to be back the following week for another crack at this magical place where Dreams are made, and Hearts are broken.

The following week saw the Macster bank the Equals Linear at 39lb 10oz, "Snub Nosed Lin" 34lb and a 26lb stockie, and my hero the Porkster managed a stockie, which done his confidence the world of good. People have this fallacy that its clubbing season in April/May at Bayeswater but let me tell you every fish caught is reward for all the effort the lads put in, and every capture is well deserved. Jimbo carried on his good run with "Gracie" at 37lb 12oz and "Sparkles" at 34lb 12oz. I am sure there were a couple more captures but for the life of me I can't remember what they





were, getting old is no joke, plus some anglers were keeping it quiet which you can't blame them for doing.

I would like to thank the following companies for their products of which I use in my fishing.

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www.hookedonbaits.co.uk

If you're out on the bank stay safe and remember its only fishing.

All the best

Geezer



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Learning Along The Way by Joe Turnbull



Well the last few months have been pretty hectic for me what with work and that which is always good (man I wish that lottery win would come in) but I guess it is what it is and we soldier on.

I often ask myself, what I'd do without it. Carry on with golf? (I used to play quite a bit), Na, Persue my singing career? Well I'd love to and kind of am to a degree but that takes more time than fishing and I can see that dream slowly dwindling away but who knows. Maybe Simon Cowell will spot me or I'll get through to the voice final and win that, whos knows. What I do know is that fishing is so available. The thrill of the chase, the feeding, watching for signs of bubbles, rolling, showing, the adrenaline. Ah, thats what its all about, the

adrenaline and it's that which keeps us going.

When that alarm goes or the float sinks out of sight or the tip pulls round or your bobbin hits the rod blank quicker than the alarm can sound, thats what we go for. All those quick sudden movements is a cheap thrill and one that we yearn for more and more or at least I do. It's almost like a drug where I have to get my fix at some point in the week, even if I only go for an evening or a morning but it's all about that one bite. How many times have you got to the bank, puts the rods out, had a fish in pretty quick succesion and then felt that comfort blanket feeling? That's because you're adrealine rush has been fulfilled and we the sit and wait for the next rush! Great isn't it?

Sitting next to motionless rods often bores the hell out of me and looking for signs can be really tiresome work. Although I'm used to all of that and still enjoy it to some degree I find it very difficult to concnetrate as really, deep down, I'm an active minded person. I can't think of anything worse than a holiday sat in the sun on a beach! I'd last a few hours then have to go for a swim or better still buy a a rod and and GO FISHING!

More often than not my angling is very nomadic and I guess many day ticket venues are eventually customised that way anyway with the ever increasing presuure of anglers making the carp move about. It's one of the reasons why, when I take guys on tuitions that I move about a lot and I try to



teach guys to move also. If the mountain won't move to mohammed and all that then you have to move to it. In fact it's quite funny because many guys that I take are really taken aback by it at first when I ask them to leave everything on their barrows except for their rods and alarms. However, its great when you receive messages some time after from them thanking you for giving them a new way of angling.

So many guys become lazy or should I say

converted because 90% of other anglers around them will set up in a swim and stay there for as long as it takes for them to catch a carp. In all fairness anyone with enough time on their hands can do that but when you haven't got much time like the majority of us these days then you need to get off your fat arses and go and find them. Look, I understand the other side of it and for those of you that go for a day off, to get away from the Mrs, the mother in law or even the kids then thats fine also but

please don't go home and say nope, didn't catch anything 'again' because you sat in one swim. It's harsh but I'm also a realist and the bottom line is, if your're a true angler you go to catch fish and will try your best to do so. It's a bit like fairweather anglers (and there seems to be more and more of them), carp do feed in the winter. In fact there are more venues than ever to catch a winter carp and there are more clothing companies than you can wave a throwing stick at that offer warm comfortable clothing. Am I having a rant?, nope I'm being real and 100% me and writing this to fire you up. It's not meant to offend as there is no place for that in such an amazing, fun, glorious, beautiful and often idyllic pastime. We are very lucky to have what we have as anglers and I'd never

discourage anyone in anyway but it's all about learning along the way and very often pushing yourself in order to catch.

I've been fishing now for somewhere around 30 odd years and in that time I have met some great friends who all share the exact same passion that I do and I sincerely hope you all experience the same in the many

of your future years fishing. Hopefully this little piece has fired a few of you up and if you need to ask me any questions relating to bait, tactics or even tuition for that matter then get in touch via Facebook or Instagram @Joe_turnbull69.

I'll leave you with a couple of fish I caught recently that I moved onto once I sat in a swim for all

of 2 hours before my inquisitiveness got the better of me. You know, Curiosity has it's own reason for existing.

Tight lines

JT





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*Being Confident
by
Tam Oakes*



I believe being confident has increased my catch rate over the last year. Since I have been applying my new method of thinking to my style of fishing, I have managed to beat my PB twice. I have also increased the number of fish I have managed to get on the bank. This article is not designed to sell any tackle or bait, but hopefully it will help with your own thought processes and enable you to gain more confidence with your own fishing.

With the vast amount of information available to carp anglers these days from magazines and online sources, it is hard for people to decide what to use. I can remember when I first started fishing, I would have so many different rigs and hook baits with me on a session I would never

really give anything a chance to work. I always had doubt in my mind and never felt confident in my presentation, often changing rigs and bait every cast. I would also look around me and see other people catching and try and copy their methods which also made me second guess myself.

My catch rates were not the best, so I decided it was time for me to look at tactics as well as my bait and rigs. I needed to identify what I wanted from each aspect,

and the best way to improve them. I wanted to be able to go to any venue and have confidence that if I felt a good drop, my rig would be presented correctly. After watching how many times a fish could pick your rig up without being hooked and the movement that can happen whilst fish were feeding, I needed a rig that could reset itself and be fishing correctly every time.

I now fish helicopter style for both of my pop up and bottom bait rigs, changing between





between leadcore, fused leaders or naked depending on the venue I go and the lake rules. With the amount of movement between the two beads of a helicopter setup, I believe my rigs will lay flat 95% of the time. I also believe that losing the lead is also important when you are fishing for that special fish. You want confidence that the lead will come off every time it is required to do so, and you can be in full contact with the fish. This can be the difference between

landing or losing a fish of your dreams.

My rigs I now use have very similar properties. When using pop ups I have chosen the Ronnie/spinner rig, made up from a size

4 curve shank hook with a micro bait swivel and a bait stop opposite the barb, fished with either a stiff or semi stiff boom section approximately 6 inches long. For my bottom/wafer baits I use a German or D rig, using the same size 4 curve shank hook and bait swivel, but I will change between a stiff fluorocarbon or semi stiff coated braid depending on the bottom. Both of these rigs will reset themselves if picked up or moved by a feeding carp and I have confidence I am fishing



at all times when my rods are in the water.

Bait is another area that can be confusing in so many different ways. I truly believe that the way bait is marketed these days it's designed more to catch the angler rather than the fish. I have used the same bait for over 2 years now, and it has worked on all the venues I have visited in the UK and France. A good quality bait will give you a good result. Colour, shape, and size is the only variable I use. Either matching the feed bait or contrasting with a bright hook bait to draw the fish to it.

I also try to be different when fishing busy waters, so many anglers these days try and aim for the middle of the lake or to a distant island and forget what is right in front of them.

When everyone else is spombing to the middle of the lake I opt for a margin approach, setting my bivvy as far back as possible and making as little noise as I can not to disturb the fish. I have seen this method work on so many occasions where the fish push out to a quiet corner or into the margins where no one is fishing for them. Having the increased confidence now with my rigs and bait I have also found myself casting to showing fish with one of my rods, this has been a deadly tactic which I never would have done previously. A top tip from myself is not to be disheartened by not catching if you are

fishing hard venues, during the year I will plan my trips to switch between venues. There is nothing wrong with going to an easier lake to get your confidence back up before you go back to the harder water. Even professional anglers don't catch fish every time they go.

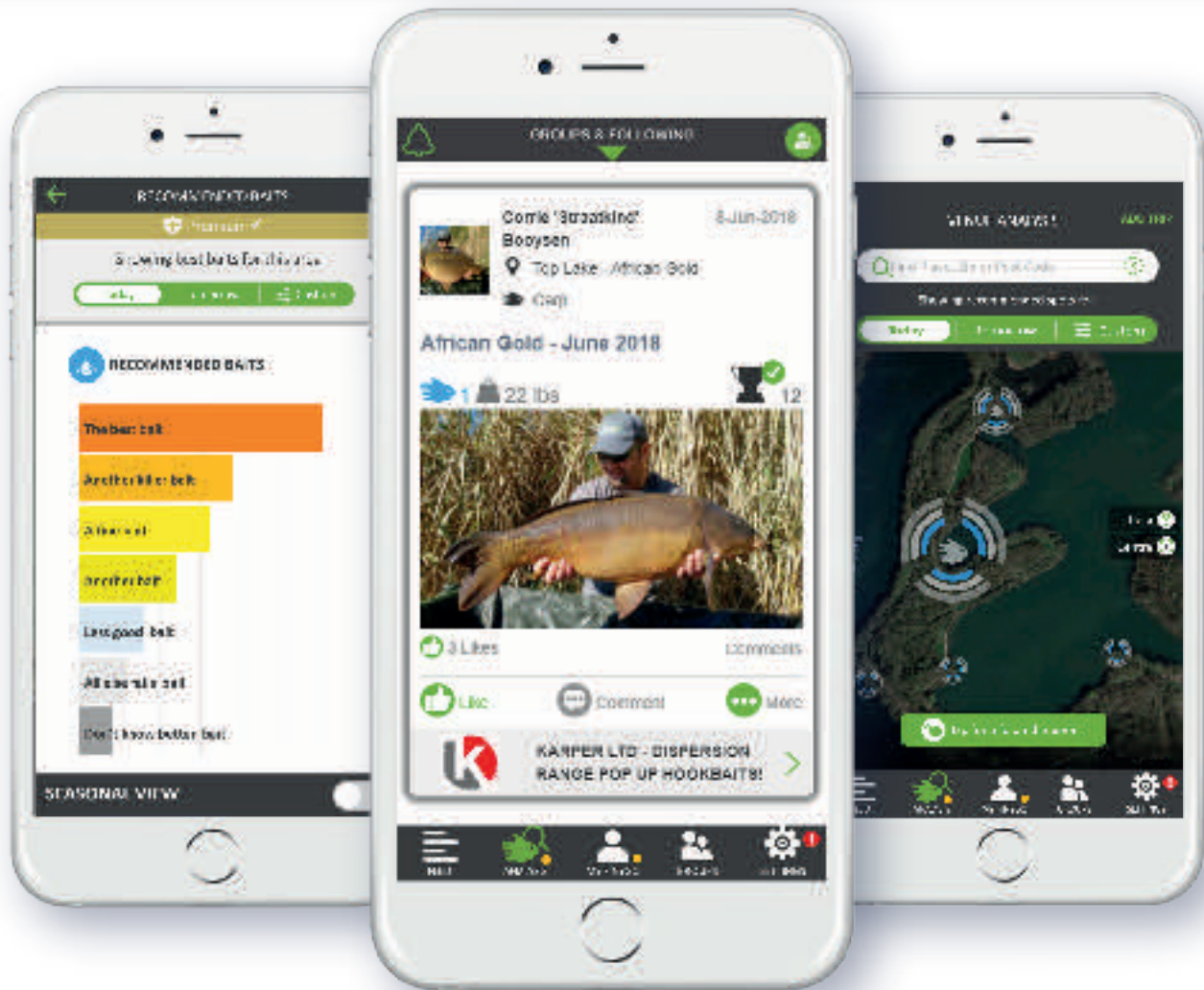
Until next time....

Be confident, catch well.

Tam.



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Get On The Munch by Gary Milky Lowe



Early April I had a long chat with Nathan of Munch Baits, he wanted to do a video on a lake local to him called Berners hall that is owned by total tackle. During the chat he told me what he had in mind, about what he wanted to do on the video, and I would be fishing against someone. He said one would use boilie and the other would use particle. The lad who would be joining me is Callum, a local lad, plus he works for Total Tackle, so looks like I had my work cut out against him. We had planned the filming for early May which was perfect as it shouldn't be too hot. I was due to leave for Berners Hall on the Monday so the weekend before I started to get all my bait and tackle ready. As I was the one using boilies on this trip, I was going to use my old favourite combo and that is the Cream Seed, Bio Marine and the Sweet Stim mixed and chopped up so it gives them something to think about when there feeding. I made sure that everything was packed and ready downstairs in the hall on the Sunday night ready for an early start Monday morning.

I was awake before the alarm went off as I was really excited so as soon as the alarm went off, I was up

and downstairs with the kettle on. While this was on, I loaded the car ready, tea made I was on the road for the long journey down to Essex. If the traffic was good, I should be there for 8 ish, nice and early. Well all the best plans never work out and the 5-hour journey turned out to be 7 hours, the traffic was a bloody nightmare on the motorways, but I got there in the end safe so all was good. I drove down the dirt track towards the lake, there was a few cars already there, so I pulled up in the car park and went for a walk. The guys had kept us 4 swims, the Island bank, as Nathan and Jack were coming down as well to film it. I walked up onto the res and walked along the bank to the first angler that was fishing. I had a chat with him and found out he had caught all his fish during the day, nothing at night which was good I thought as we wanted to catch on film.

The four swims that were kept for us were next to him, one was his side of the island and the other three are the other side of the island. I chose the swim the other side of the island, so I walked back and loaded the barrow and then walked it all the way back to my swim. I set up my house first and got everything sorted in there then

started on the rods, new rigs etc. I was going to use my go to rigs and that was a helicopter rig with a Ronnie, it always works for me when I am not really sure on where I am fishing. A few casts with the marker rod and I found a nice area straight out at 17 wraps in amongst the weed. The bottom wasn't hard it was nice and soft which I was looking for. Everyone normally looks for the hard gravel, but I like the soft silty areas. Two rods were going to go on that area, and I found an area near the island that looked like it would do a bite. Well on them two spots I baited heavily with my bait combination with the Spider Spod, then I sorted the two rods that were going on one spot straight out. There was a church in the distance, one rod one side and the other would go the other side. My hook baits were going to be nice and bright. I do well this time of year with white pop ups, so I was going to use the sweet stim 14mm pop ups as hook baits. These two rods went out first time spot on, the third rod took a couple of casts, but I got there in the end then it was time for a quick brew before the others turned up.

I sat there with a nice hot brew and watched the water. After about an hour of watching and seeing no signs of fish I decided to prep some bait ready for later. I had a bag of each the bio marine and cream seed and the sweet stim boilies, I don't just put these out whole, I chop them up with a boilie chopper just to mix it up then I cover them in Munch Bait liquid hemp and leave it to stand so it soaks into the bait. I had just finished doing the baits and one of the bailiffs came walking along and we were chatting about the lake when he asked had I seen anything, and as he said that I had 3 bleeps on the middle rod then it burst into life. Now I had to be





careful as this was a res and you are bivvied up on the top and there is quite a few steps to get down to your rod, but I made it without breaking a leg! I picked up the rod and I could feel the line grating through the thick weed that is about but I started to gain line then it all went solid so I walked back up to the top of the bank to get a different angle to the fish, I think it would help as I was high above the water and I should be able to keep a tight line on the fish and it should come out the weed. After a few minutes it started to move and just as it did Jack came walking down the path. He was here to film us and fish, but he would be fishing the nights, so after a spirited fight in and out of the weed Jack netted the fish. We looked in the net and it looked a mid-double mirror.

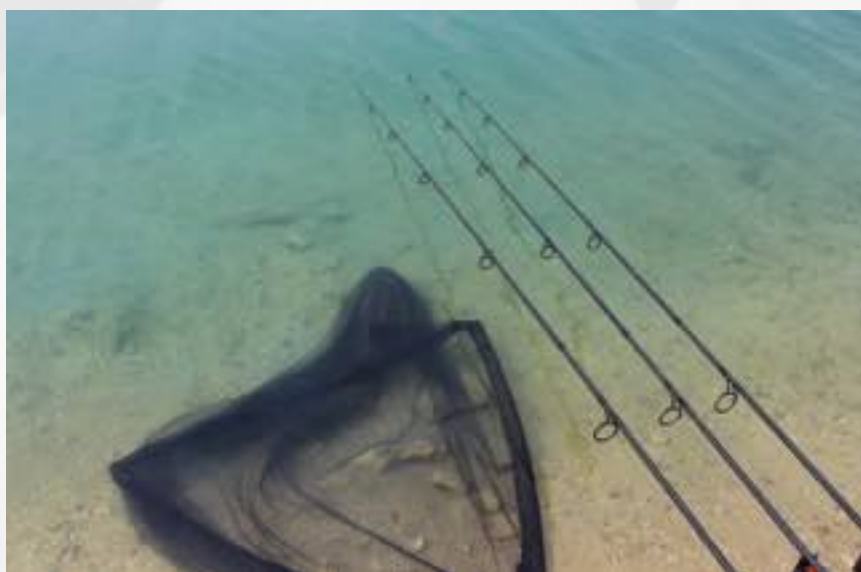
Well that was a great start to the video, I unhooked the fish in the net and left Jack to keep an eye on it while I put a new rig and bait on, then I done the 17 wraps around the new Taska Range sticks and cast it back on the spot. There is normally more fish out there feeding so it's good to get the rod

back out there quickly, once I had done that it freed up Jack to get the equipment ready to do some shots and a bit of video work. Once it was all set up I sorted out the fish, up on the scales it went 18lb and the fish was stunning, a few minutes later all was done and I returned the fish to its watery home and watched it swim off in the gin clear water. I put the kettle on to make us a brew and have a chat about what was going to be done on the video and who was doing what. Callum was going to be down after he finishes work at Total Tackle and Nathan would be down shortly. Jack went and got all his gear and set up in the next swim to me which left the swim the other side of the island for Callum which is another good swim and commands a lot of water. It wasn't long before Callum and his

girlfriend Lauren came walking down the bank with their gear. He stopped in the swim and started to set up, we left them to it and get all the rods out on their spots. Nathan had turned up by then and was going in the swim the other side of Jack in the open water. Once everyone was sorted and their rods were out it was late afternoon and we all gathered in my swim as it was central for everyone. A Chinese was ordered and eaten in the swim that night and we all chatted about fishing and life in general, and before we knew it, it was 10.30 and everyone drifted back off to their swims and we were hoping that something would happen during the night, so that we could film something at first light.

Well the night past and nothing happened, as I woke up just as it was getting light and I looked out and was greeted by fog. I couldn't see anything. I looked at the rods and they was still the same so I thought I would just turn over and have another 10 min. I didn't drift off, just laid there.... Jack walked along and said "is your rod supposed to be like

that?" When I looked the rod had moved forward and the bobbin was jammed in the buzzer.... no, it's not!! I jumped up and walked down the steps to the rod and leant into it, well it was solid, stuck fast so I walked back up to the top of the bank and kept a tight line to it, and gradually it started to move so I kept pumping and it was coming towards me slowly. After about 5 minutes the fish was close in, but I still couldn't see it in the gin clear water as there was weed all round where the fish was, then all of a sudden it kicked itself free and off she powered. I caught a glimpse of it before it disappeared into the depths and it was a nice golden common. I made my way back down the steps, all the time this was going on Jack was filming and getting some good shots of me playing the fish. Eventually I netted





the common, also with a bit of weed, I made sure the fish was safe in the edge, then I got everything ready to weigh and film the fish. On the scales the common went 22lb and a bit of filming and a few shots she was returned to her watery home to make someone else happy.

I retreated to the bivvy and tied a new rig and screwed a new Sweet Stim pop up on and cast it back out into the rough area where I've been thinking I was, I couldn't be certain that it was on the spot as it was foggy and I couldn't see that far out or the church that I was aiming at in the day light, but I did the best I could in the situation, then as soon as I can see the church I will redo the rod. By now all the lads were up and it looked like mine was the

only bite. After brekkie the sun started to come up and burn off the fog, so it was time to redo the rod and get it on the right spot, as yesterday I had a day bite on the spot, so I needed it back there. While I was doing my rod Callum was up

in his swim prepping it, there was loads of fish showing in his swim so he was spodding out a sloppy spod mix with a mixture of Munch Baits particle mixed in so all the bits fall through the water column, and he put out three zigs coated in Tri Sweet liquid. I walked down there once I had finished my rods and I could see loads of fish topping over his bait. He pulled in one rod and made it deeper and cast it back out then spodded over the top. We were watching the fish roll all over his swim, when the rod he just cast out bleeped a few times and roared off and Callum was on it in a shot. He was playing it in and out of the weed, Jack was filming him from a drone so you could see the fish out in the clear water, and it looked like



a big common. After a while it rolled not far out and that confirmed it was a massive common. Lauren was on the net and she done a good job at it and it went in first time. It looked a good high 30, well this is definitely going to be a new pb for Callum!

With everyone about we soon had things ready we lifted the fish up and on the scales, she settled at 39lb 8oz! A new personal best. Callum was over the moon. A good few shots and a lot of filming done, then we then watched her swim off in the gin clear water. Congratulations were in order firstly, then I walked back to my swim to try and get

something going. I only had a few hours left before I made the long journey home, so I tied up a zig rig. It would just be under the surface and cast it out in the area that a few fish were seen cruising up and down. I didn't spod out as I had only brought boilies with me. I have had good

results on just a single zig out there, so I was feeling confident. I left the other two rods on the bottom in case they did come over my baited area. I sat there watching the water, it had gone flat calm and the sun was beaming down on the lake and



the sweat was running down my face, up the bank Callum was filming how he goes about fishing with a zig. The time soon went, and it was time to pack up and make my long journey home. I said my goodbyes and loaded the car and set off down the track and on to the motorway. After four and a half hours I pulled up outside my house, I unloaded the gear and it was time for a nice brew and relax and think about how good the session went. Well the following morning Callum had caught another, this time a small scaly mirror so well done to him, that is a good way to end the session.

Until next month good luck and tight lines.

The video is online and can be viewed here....

<https://youtu.be/J9vq6k3xkdQ?t=3>

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*Home, Abroad and
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It's been a while since I have written due to various things going on in my personal life with my father Ill, and the passing of my mother which has had a serious effect on myself and my family so I had to take a hiatus for a while to gather myself and my thoughts, I even contemplated packing the whole angling thing up but I know my Mum and Dad would have gone spare and literally kicked my butt - I guess it was just the whole emotional rollercoaster. My Mum loved fishing and keeping fish, always having ponds and keeping lovely Carp. I have so many lovely memories of taking my Mum fishing to various lakes, and she was pretty damn good at it often showing us lads how it's done, and I will forever look back on those special moments with great fondness. **So, this article is dedicated to my Mum 'Jacqui'.....**

HOME

Every Year myself and some very close friends have a one day get together at a public water in Sussex a one day mini competition, the heaviest fish of the day takes the prizes and the loser with the smallest fish has to wear a fancy dress outfit back through the public

car park from around the lake, it's a fantastic day and takes away all our troubles and worries albeit for a day but being with special people does help there is no doubt about that. Luckily thus far I have never been fortunate enough to lose and wear the fancy dress, something I expect never to have to do haha. As usual it was a great day, great weather and lots of fish, one of those fish that graced the bank was a little unusual in its markings and thus making it very recognisable to any future captor, I spoke with the lads and good friend Terry who caught the 25lb brute of a Mirror and we have named the fish 'JAC' in honour of my Mum so I can't wait to get back there and try to catch her.

IN-BETWEEN

It's no secret I am a great fan of surface fishing for carp. I find it one of if not the most exciting way of catching a fish, it doesn't matter about the size it can be a 5lb or a 30lb fish, watching the line ping up from the water and the water erupt is second to none. There is a local water to me that doesn't allow surface fishing due to the amount of wildlife residing and frequenting the



a gorgeous Common in this session and also a fish I've been wanting to catch for a long time one of the lakes Fully Scaled Mirrors, which took my bait and a huge battle ensued, I was very excited when it crossed the Sonik spreader block. The fish was a very healthy high 20 and made my day, I shall return in the school holidays with my 7 year old daughter Scarlett who is a great little fisher 'lady' and she will be armed with her new Sonik Xtractor Rod and Vader 6000 Reel.

ABROAD

lake which I understand, so to combat this and giving away my tactic for this water I fish a zig of sorts just 1 foot beneath the surface, whether I am using an imitation bait, a pop up or a floating pellet, I am constantly changing and adapting the rig to try to entice a bite, one of my recent tactics was to fish the PB Products Clear Skater Zig Line with a Fluro Mainline pop up with a few maggots on and it was the winning tactic for the session, I managed to land 5 fish from 7 takes in between the school run so from 9:30am till 2pm not bad I'm sure you'll agree. I had

Every Year myself and some close friends venture across the channel or to be precise under it - as we take the train through the channel tunnel. I personally love the ferry as I like to relax, have a wander round the duty free and have a lovely big hearty breakfast before the 3.5hr drive down to the Lakes in France, but there is no denying the train is super fast and hassle free. Most of the Lakes that we fish are around the same sort of distance from Calais, 3-3.5hrs drive. There are so many waters within that distance we haven't felt

the need to venture further afield yet, but we have discussed it on a few occasions and a little adventure may be in the pipeline at some stage.

The last few years we have been very fortunate to have fished some mega lakes holding some amazing fish, Lesmonts, Du Bois, Deux Pierres and now Pascales Lake on the Goncourt complex of which I think there are 9 waters and Pascales Lake is notoriously regarded as the most challenging and difficult to fish due to its intense weed and stock numbers. Most of the lakes in France have a waiting list but the likes of Pascales now has a 3-year waiting list to fish. For the last couple of years I've been

watching the internet for all and anything Pascales related trying to build up a picture and knowledge I have also been speaking regularly with good friends Iain Macmillan and Ian Russell who frequent the legendary water and they have offered various advice BUT as much as it all comes in handy if the lake is not wanting to play then all the advice in the world can't help you, and you have to dig deep, look outside the box and try something completely different. The trip couldn't come round quick enough for me I was itching to get there, I was more intent on following recent catch reports, and the couple of months leading up to our trip there were very different reports along the way, one week would be a great

week, and the next, 1 or 2 fish, and there were 3 weeks that were so contrasting it threw me abit and got me thinking a lot, and although its healthy to get your brain ticking you have to keep it all in context because the main thing is IT'S NOT MY WEEK it could all be so different. On Pascales Lake it is generally regarded as a





tough water, but the rewards are there if everything falls in to place - if you have 6 fish for the week on Pascales you have had a great week, 6 fish for the whole lake that is not per person! A few weeks before our trip the lads had a great week landing 9 fish, then 4 fish, then 12, then 9 so it was up and down, now you never can tell if it's because of the weather, angler pressure, angler error or at this time of year spawning. It did show there were fish on the feed so confidence was good going in to the last week before the trip then..... the hot weather appeared, Pascales Lake is the deepest on the complex and thus usually the last to spawn, this year was no different, the fish had not yet spawned before our trip and now the heat was at a constant 23/24/25+ uh oh anytime now we

all thought, couple that with the weed coming up faster than Lewis Hamilton it was looking very challenging indeed. The weed in a lot of places was now touching the surface at 11 - 12 feet. It had got to the last couple of days before our trip and still no spawning we really thought the worst was going to happen and we all

started to get our heads round that they would probably spawn on our week, only one good thing about that is that not all the fish spawn at the same time.

The time had arrived for our long awaited trip that was over 2 years in the making, once we had the van loaded we set off for the channel tunnel where Terry and I would meet up with the other two guys on the trip Tony and Dave, Tony had been on trips with us before but it was Dave's first time with us, I hope he was ready for the banter as anybody who knows us knows we are off the chart and I will profusely apologise for this now NOT ha-ha without the laughter and the banter it makes for a boring week and it didn't disappoint. Terry and I are no

stranger to tough waters and we have both caught some very big fish, Terry has had carp to over 80lb so he is no slouch either, Tony and Dave are both very good anglers and have many types of waters and scenarios under their belt so we have a strong set of anglers to tackle this week. Working as a team on this water is important as its all boat work not just the safety aspect either, and I don't mean bait boats, I mean rowing boats, due to the amount of weed 99% of all the angling is done by boat, out in the boat looking for spots with your sonar and aquascope is a must you will be very very lucky if you cast a lead and feel anything decent. When we arrived, we did the obligatory walk around and first impressions were just how beautiful it was, how well kept it was and how bloody weedy it was! Although I was expecting weed, I wasn't quite ready for the amount that greeted us, so a serious game head came straight on. You could see the weed touching the surface pretty much

all round the lake, and so much drifting with the wind as well it was going to be a challenge there was no denying that at all. Once we had walked around and got back to the immaculate lodge that is there for the anglers' comfort, including electricity, fridges, freezers, cooking facilities and showers we did a draw for pegs. Discs numbered 1-4 were in the bag you pick out number 1 you have first choice etc, so we all picked a disc and I came 3rd. Terry Came first and chose a swim called 60's right around the other side and you have to barrow your gear haha. Dave chose 1 Down quite close to the Lodge but it commanded a good sized piece of water, I chose The Gate swim right round the other side arghhhhhhhh and Tony



took the Middles, all of us were very happy with our choices we all had lots of water although Tony took a leaf out of Terrys usual book and tried to cut us all off, the banter was already flowing. The idea of our swim choices were because of the amount of boat work, we can work together in two teams, all go out on the lake on the first day 1 boat per person look for our spots and drop the H Blocks which were 100% needed to retain your hard found spots, with us all on the lake together it would disturb the lake but also keeping it to the minimum at the same time you don't want to get your rods out and then someone goes out in the boat disturbing your water again so we worked well on our spots and eventually helped to get each others rods out a great sense of accomplishment and satisfaction as well as great team bonding.

We were all confident although a little daunted by the amount of weed, some had their rods low in the water and some had them high going across the lake it didn't really make much difference as we all got



weeded eventually. The weather was so very hot and hit a scorching 32 degrees on one day I could hardly breathe I hate the heat and more to the point so do the fish. Astonishingly and to all our surprise Tony nailed a fantastic fish on the second morning a 61lb bang on Mirror wow we were all so pleased for him as it was also a new PB. Was this the state of things to come a 61 on the second day!!! Unfortunately not it was a hard few days, Terry landed a stunning Common of 17lb and lost 2 more for the week, Tony had another Mirror of 51lb 6oz - two fantastic fish for the week, Dave had a 36lb Mirror, and myself on the Thursday had



had Landed 5 Fish and Lost 3 and with 6 Fish being a great week we weren't too upset as we had all caught fish and a new PB was broken. We always have a trophy for the biggest fish of the week and I have won it for the last 3 years with

what I had come for, before I left I made it well known that my goal for the week was a Pascales 50 I was to be rewarded with a stunning Mirror that sent the scales round to 55lb 2oz I also went on to lose another fish on the Saturday morning before pack up. I fished Sonik Dominator X Rods, with Mainline Link Boilies and Pellets, Pascales Maize and Hemp and PB Products end tackle all working together to help get me what I came for.

For the week on Pascales lake we

a 69lb, 62lb and a 61lb but this year my reign had been broken and I handed the Trophy to a well-deserved Tony who on a very tough week with a few obstacles in our way managed a 60 and a 50 from Pascales which is something to be proud of well done buddy. The fish still didn't spawn on our week, although by the end of the week temperatures came down a little again and they are due to rise once more the following week so as of the 10th June they still hadn't spawned.....



Thank you to Terry, Tony and Dave for a fantastic week, and thank you to Pascale for a truly beautiful experience.

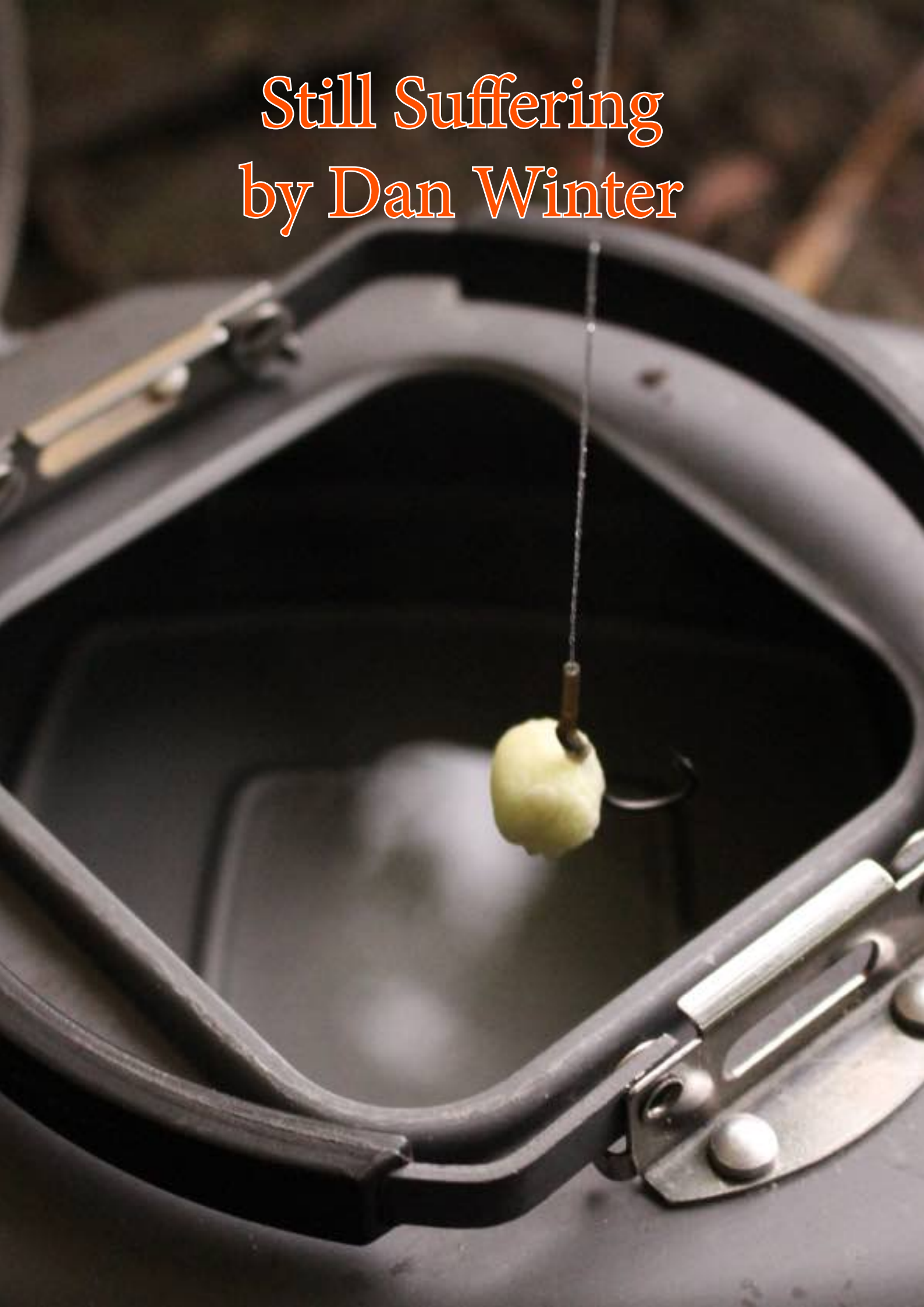
Til next time

Rich

We all had an amazing week, in an amazing environment it was a pleasure and a delight to be able to fish Pascales Lake and if you want a challenge, with some truly amazing fish then get yourself booked on you won't be disappointed that is for sure. It's not just about the fishing for me, the wildlife is also something I enjoy, I also love my photography and Pascales Lake afforded me to enjoy these things, whether it was the highly loud and annoying mating frogs at night, the Coypu, Snakes, Terrapins, amazing variety of birds or the hatching Green Darners and Dragonflies there is something for everybody.



Still Suffering by Dan Winter



Well here we are again and true to my word, I would walk you through the ups and downs of my campaign. If you remember last month's article, I highlighted that many anglers believe that if you're in the industry, you almost certainly have an advantage over other anglers because you have more time. Although I think most in the industry would tell you otherwise, so I wanted to prove that effort is far more important than time.

However, I'm not entirely doing a good job at proving that....

So far, I'm still yet to have a fish and left scratching my head as to how I'm going to start getting my rod

bent into the stock there.

But first, let's recap a little...

Currently most of my time is taken up with work and family life, like most anglers. I find myself limited to a single overnights lasting barely 12 hours as I pack up around 4:30-5am, which leaves me without some of the best times to be on the bank, especially the morning period.

It's never easy trying to write when you almost have nothing to show for your efforts, especially in a series of articles like this whereby I'm hoping to prove that effort equals rewards, and so far all my efforts have left me with nothing. But I will do my best to give

you an insight into the life of a campaign angler.

Just after I last wrote, I was back down with renewed confidence and a new game plan. I had been contemplating on why it was such a struggle to find bites at night. I had tried a variety of baits, I followed where the fish have been and got ahead of them and fished for where they go to. Even after fishing baited areas, I still struggled to entice that all important first bite. In fact, it's safe to say this is my toughest and hardest start to a season I've had in a long long time.

So, my plan? Zigs! These fish were going somewhere at night and no doubt they feed even if only for short

periods in the night time. So, if they aren't feeding on the bottom, naturally they must be up in the water. With zigs tied, my marker rod ready for a scout on depths, I left the bait at home in a bid to force myself to fish these as effectively as possible. This turned out to be my biggest mistake so far this season.

I think it's important to stick to what you know in times when you're struggling for bites, and what I did was try something I haven't had much success in doing without taking anything else into consideration. I turned up on an extremely wet and warm afternoon to find an angler who I had met previously, in the only

swim I wanted to fish that night. But that's fishing sometimes, and I hadn't put any bait out so, it wasn't too much trouble. I pitched up on the same spit with him and fish different bodies of the water in front. What happened after really left me with egg on my face, as we had a conversation about how hard the fishing was in the night time. You can probably guess what happened, he caught, not just one, but three!

Now to be fair he had pre baited with a lot of bait and I think that did work in his favour massively, but the conditions that night were perfect. It was criminal even being on zigs. Warm, the pressure was around 1006,

heavy rain bringing tonnes of dissolved oxygen to really give the fish a kick of energy. Honestly, I can say I was laying in my Hutchy sleep system (try one! so comfy) and I was so prepared to pack up and go home after my new found friend had caught. Which annoyed me really because I'm not the type to be jealous, and I was more than happy to get up and help him with weighing and photos etc. But there was this burning sensation inside of me as I knew the fish were hard on the bottom, absolutely bang on the feed, jumping left right and centre, and I was sat there behind 3 zigs and no bait.

The level of disappointment I

had in myself for getting so preoccupied on what I believed fish were doing, I had stopped fishing in the way I know the best and paying attention to the circumstances of the session. I was trying too hard! I had even gone as far as wedging a piece of cork into an enterprise baits glow in the dark floater bait. Which isn't buoyant once under the water by the way. Although I have to say it did look quite good, and for a 2ft zig sitting over dark black silt, I really thought it would stand out enough to nick a bite. Maybe in the future I think that could be something worth looking back into.

But I digress, I feel I'm starting to ramble now. I have so much

going on in my mind when I think about how my seasons going that I try and spit it all out in one go. This has become a slight obsession of late, I'm even sitting with a bucket of tigers soaking as we speak. Of course, being used to within what the rules state I can use them in, naturally. But at the moment I cannot wait to get back down. The lake and the challenge has absolutely hooked me. I'm more determined than ever to figure out how to turn this into a success. I do feel like pre-baiting is the way forward. I have done it, but I don't think I've done it enough or in the kilos needed.

The one difference I am changing to is the tigers. This is for

2 reasons. Reason 1 is that crayfish hate tigers, they still try and eat them, but they are frustrating to crayfish as they are too awkward and hard for them. This means any tigers I introduce to my pre-bait will likely only be eaten by the carp, rather than by the crayfish.

Reason 2 is something that's a bit of a myth, but I've seen it work many times and personally I believe it. Commons love tigers and if you fish tigers you will catch more commons. The lake record is a common so I'm hoping that will work in my favour. For those that don't believe in this myth, I'll tell you exactly why I believe it.

A few years ago



fishing the Abbey lakes complex in France, me and my business partner Christian Cox were getting into filming and trying a few things. The Fox lake was a venue

Chris favoured for the stunning mirrors it's famous for. There are a few commons in there but only a handful. On the last night we were discussing the stock in there and he really wanted one since he'd only had mirrors. He then told me about this supposed trick to select commons

by using tigers. So, I challenged him on it and to be fair, he had a pot of soaked tigers in his bag and was prepared to put one on.

That night he landed a 50lb common on the tiger nut! And to add to it, he wasn't fishing tigers in his loose feed, so it was quite literally the only tiger in the pond, and one of the handful of commons managed to home in on it. Now it's down to you whether or not you believe it, but I

was certainly sold after that.

The next night I managed was another wet one. This time I was planning on using physical effort in a bid to be on top of where I had seen them regularly. The furthest or one of the furthest swims is at the base of a slope along a high bank, with a gruelling walk with weeds and nettles to shoulder height lining the path. The path, once the undergrowth gets up, becomes narrower than the average barrow, so you have to push your way through the greenery to walk along that bank. Made ever more difficult on this occasion as the heavy rain had made the nettles lean into the path. This felt like the first of many issues

I had on that night as the path quickly became muddy, and I found it difficult to get space wide enough for my distance sticks.

I got into the swim with just enough time to throw my bivvy up and get everything under it before the next downpour set in.

As I sat watching the surface of the water, rain doing its best to camouflage any signs of carp in the area. I did catch a glimpse of a rolling carp out in the open water. That was a massive boost of confidence. At last I had got around to the area I had seen fish on my previous nights, but had been shy to attempt fishing because of the hard and long walk I would have early in the

morning.

The rain settled and left me with beautifully still water in front of me, a few fish still high up in the water subtly giving themselves away. This felt like the night it was going to happen as I eagerly baited up and proceeded to touch up my rigs with a file.

This time I had battled the long walk through rain and forcing my way through a towering jungle, got

caked in mud and faced the treacherous slip and slide that the steep bank down to the swim had become. All made more difficult knowing that by morning I would have to battle it all again at an ungodly hour. But as we established from beginning, it was a difficult pack up, and with a heavy heart I carried my gear back up the slope, slipping at nearly every step. Maybe it's just me, but when I'm not catching, I really feel it.



I don't just do it to get away from the Mrs, or to simply be at the lake and relaxing on my bed chair. For me this is a challenge, it's a passion, it's the chase. I pride myself in recent years for being one step ahead, having a plan and getting it to work. But before I had time, and now with time being my limiting factor, I'm struggling to find a way to do the things I want to do.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not going to blame time, I am 100% responsible for not catching and I genuinely believe that. Each and every angler out there should be questioning themselves before the conditions or the fish. It's up to us to find the key to what it is that makes those fish feed,

to be in front of them when they are, and I am failing miserably.

I am currently boiling my tigers now in preparation for some pre baiting tomorrow. I know your probably thinking that earlier in this article I was talking about them soaking, but of course no parent can ever finish anything in one go! So, it's the evening after I started writing this, another day of work completed and another yoghurt covered top. I'm back behind the laptop and with tigers quietly boiling behind me. In the words of a certain Mark Pitchers, that's carpy. All I need now is a long beard and a fishing dog to fulfil my true carpy potential. Although I've got enough on my plate,

I think I'll stick to the 'preparing bait while the Mrs is out' level of carpiness.

Now my beautifully smelling tigers are nearing the end of their cook, I'll take this opportunity to wrap things up so I can get them in a bucket and back on the van before my partner comes home from work and shoots me.

I will be back on the bank in a couple days' time with hopefully some good news to tell you all about. With any luck the fish won't be spawning as locally to me, and maybe where you are as well, it seems like every time the sun comes out the fish are trying to spawn. In what has been the longest spawning period

I've ever seen? 3 times they've spawned already, and I believe there may have been a 4th last week after I was there but I haven't got that confirmed.

So, I hope your enjoying my suffering and you're doing a

lot better than me. Or perhaps you're in the same boat as me and my little article is helping you through the tough times!

Good luck

Daniel
Winter



A Look Inside Lucy's Bowl by Gary Bayes

Lucy's Bowl For Guide dogs is now a registered charity founded by Keith Sykes, set up in memory of Lucy, the Labrador Retriever Keith adopted when she was 14 months old.

When Lucy passed, Keith and some of his and Lucy's fishing friends decided to have a memorial fishing get together in memory of Lucy. The general idea was just to have a social, with a barbecue and a few beers, someone suggested a raffle, Keith's local tackle shop, D&J Sports donated a crystal bowl, which Keith's friend Roley beautifully engraved by hand and it turned into a light-hearted memorial fishing match. The local legend known as Pete The Painter won that first year and the raffle raised £1,200 which was donated to the local Guide Dogs For The Blind Association. Why this charity? Linda Bonner, a puppy walker for the association found Lucy for Keith so it was fate, to repay the joy Lucy had given Keith and his friends.

The next year Keith and his friends decided to try to raise enough to buy



and name a puppy to go into training as a Guide Dog, which they did, the puppy was a she and was aptly named Lucy. Each puppy costs around £5,000 to start them on the journey to become a guide dog, the next year Lucy's Bowl raised enough to buy 2 pups, Lucy 2 and 3, the truly wonderful legacy lives on.

Now Lucy's Bowl is a yearly event, raising more and more every year and has grown into a full on event now held at RK Leisure's iconic Wraysbury Complex. Lucy was a proper carp dog and Wraysbury just feels right for such an event.

As big a complex as Wraysbury is the main event is a sell out, so it was decided to have a big "thankyou" event, inviting as many as possible of the supporters of Lucy's Bowl. There was the usual barbecue, a few beers and a light-hearted match, yeah right! everyone wants to win, it's in our nature.

Truth is though all the people involved in Lucy's Bowl are winners, Keith Sykes and the early trustees have created something very special, a large



proportion of the carp fishing trade supports us with raffle prizes, the attending anglers sell lots of raffle tickets and the people buying the raffle tickets do so more to support the charity than to win the prizes. It's quite amazing when you think about it what just one lovely fishing companion has made happen. Lucy is champion!

If you want to help support Lucy's Bowl visit www.facebook.com/lucysbowl, keep an eye on our social media for the chance to bid to fish with some carp angling stars and if you know someone who's involved buy some raffle tickets please. If you're in the trade we're always looking for raffle prizes.

It always touches my soul how kind anglers are to good causes, often giving more than they can afford, so here's a big thank you to everyone who supports Lucy's Bowl and to all that read this from me, Gary Bayes.

LUCY'S BOWL for Guide Dogs

Helping raise funds for Guide Dogs

Keith & Linda Sykes

M: 07895061947

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Trustees of Lucy's Bowl -

Andrew Taylor, Ben Sykes, David Sykes, Dean Hingley, Dean Lloyd,
Gary Bayes, Kevin Nash, Jim Roberts Les Bowers & Tom Colloff

Guide Dog Association Contact - Bob Bonnar

www.facebook.com/lucysbowl

IN SUPPORT OF





**A “Vantastic” Journey
(part 3)
by Alex Sheldon**

As we are into June now, I'm sure that many of you will be back out Angling and potentially reading this from the bank side, hopefully with wet nets and cradles. Thanks to any of you that read parts one and two of this series and for those of you who didn't, here's a quick recap. You join me and Gary amid a 10-night UK day ticket mega session, with fish already banked from "Linear Fisheries" and "Yateley Sandhurst Lake" to 28lbs. It's been a mixed trip with fish spawning wherever we go and our borrowed van showing signs of fatigue. We have caught some awesome fish when things have gone to plan but this next leg of the trip was to push us both to our limits.

As we left Yateley and headed towards

Egham Surrey, we both didn't know what to expect from our next venue "Thorpe Lea Fishery." An unfortunate series of events has led us to this unplanned venue, with the fish spawning at Thorney Weir and seemingly everywhere else we wanted to fish. We were really short of options so took a stab in the dark after finding Thorpe Lea Fishery on google. So as a result, we headed to the venue blind with no prior info or research to aid us. Regardless of all the above, the Van was once again loaded to the helm and Gary in excellent singing voice, we put all 15 horses under the bonnet to work and set about our next venture. My girlfriend Ashleigh was back to gymnastics coaching that evening, so we dropped her off at the station en route before arriving at Thorpe Lea

shortly afterwards. I should say at this point the weather was the hottest it had been all year; it was a bank holiday weekend and every man and his dog wanted to be out fishing. As we drove under the height barriers and into the fishery, the car park was fuller than a centipede's sock drawer. So much so that we had nowhere to park and had to ditch the van right near the entrance. I had googled Thorpe Lea on the way down and had discovered the following:

Its recognised as a "prolific/runs" water, it's stuffed full of Drayton Reservoir munter fish, it is a magnet for the learner or less advanced angler and there's far too many swims on the venue per acre. I had also read somewhere that they had suffered a huge fish kill previously

and as a result the fishery had benefited from some new stock. The general feeling was that these new fish were very nice looking and from a good source, so all was not lost.

I have had a fair bit of experience in the past fishing these types of places and was really looking forward to the change of pace and challenges that come with it. It was all a new experience to Gary though who has rarely fished an “easy” water in his life. Before carp angling, I used to fish competitively on the match angling scene and as you know it’s a completely different mindset. More than anything I was looking forward to seeing Gary’s reaction to such a place and I could tell that part of him was quite excited to see what this bagging up game is all about.

Weary and tired we went through the saga of unloading the van once more and headed to the fishery office to purchase a 48hr ticket. The staff were very friendly and explained that although the lake was full, they were happy to open two closed swims right in the back corner of the fishery behind the island. I asked why they were closed and was informed that they had been clearing weed from that area of the lake that had got out of control and they closed the swims for fish welfare purposes. Credit to the staff for

accommodating us and opening the swims, they even offered to drive our gear around to the pegs on a golf cart for the fee of £2 each. With 6 nights angling already behind us we both were more than happy to agree to the fee and leave the barrows in the van on this occasion.

I’m not entirely sure but I would put Thorpe Lea at 12-15 acres in size and with 60 odd swims



it really was going to be interesting. Of course, we were the longest walk from the car park so as we were chauffeured to our swims, we got our first look at the water. I'm trying to think of something positive to say about our first glance but as the photographs I've included will illustrate, it looked more like a camp site than a fishing lake. Wall to wall bivvies, often two to a swim and most were fishing with three rods each making the lakebed look like a spider's web made of mono. The lake itself was very mature, tree lined and well-kept banks with decent sized swims for bivvy use and a barrage of fish lunking out all over the place every 30 seconds. We arrived at our swims and looked onto the water not entirely sure where we were permitted to

fish because we were completely surrounded by other anglers!! Gary won the toss and went for the swim with the island in front of him and I was to his right, all of 10 metres away in the swim next door with open water in front of me. My first cast with a bare lead was an underarm flick about 30 yards straight in front of me before another angler shouted over that I cast over him. Whilst Gary's first cast with a bare lead towards the margin of the island 25 yards away resulted in him pulling for a break due to the density of the weed. One of the staff came past in the golf buggy so we quickly stopped him and asked where each peg should be fishing to. I was informed that my peg had a limit of 5

wraps yes 5! While the adjacent bank to my right had no limit and could cast 100 yards if they wanted, which would put them against the island in front of Gary! Absolutely mind boggling why they didn't just let every peg have 60 yards each and share the open water, but rules are rules and we had to follow the guidelines of the staff. It was probably almost as ridiculous as the



ruling on the fishery shower facilities! If you are fishing less than 72 hours you aren't allowed to get a shower! Gary's second cast with a bare lead to a different area of the swim also saw him walking backwards and having to pull for yet another break in the weed! We were both starting to feel really despondent already, with me fishing 3 rods at 5 wraps no more than a millipedes leg apart and Gary unable to even cast out into his swim, we had our work cut out.!

Time for the big guns. Gary broke out his 50 lbs braid and a cast-able weed rake he had made online and started trying to clear an area in his swim big enough to fish on. I set about exploring the bottom in my ridiculous 5 wraps zone and found nothing except that horrible candy

floss type weed that covered anything I threw out within seconds. I got the phone out and looked on YouTube for Thorpe Lea and instantly found an issue of underwater answers with the brilliant Rob Hughes. It was a zig edition and was actually filmed close to our swims. The weed was actually more like an algae, really thin sticky stuff that rolls around the bottom and moves about the lake all the time. He actually referred to it as "un-fishable" as you can cast any rig out with get a decent drop, only for the moving weed to drift over your line and completely bury your rig 5 minutes later. The only option was zigs as stated in the video but there was a board up in the carpark stating zigs were banned. Time was getting on now and I had a choice to make. I decided to

fill it in with bait and let the fish feed for a couple of hours to hopefully clear the rolling weed from the area before casting in. Meanwhile to my left, Gary had spent the last two hours busier than a one-armed brick layer in Baghdad with his weed rake and had a pile next to his swim the size of a 3-piece suite. The poor bloke had barely scratched the surface as evening drew in, so halfheartedly chucked out three chods with the top bead shoved miles up the mainline and hoped for the best. I already had a couple of "chuck it and check it" type casts and everyone was landing clean and coming in with the candy floss all up the line and hook. I ended up going down to a 1/2oz tiny lead on a helicopter set up hoping that there would be more chance of it sitting higher in the

algae. I put it on all three rods, again with the top bead a country mile up the mainline and continued to draw fish in with the intermittent spodding and recasting regularly.

The spod had an instant effect as the middle rod burst into song during the spodding process. I would do 5 spods and regularly reel in clear the floss and recast and noticed the area had been getting clearer because the drop was getting firmer. I had actually seen fish coming to the spod so knew a bite wasn't far away. The fish took lots of line on the bite as I launched the spod rod on the ground and shouted Gary to reel it in for me. The fish put up a very good account of itself darting left and right and trying to cut me off down the margin. Gary slid the net under the fish, and

I readied the cradle to take a look at my first prize from Thorpe Lea. A horrible, ulcer covered, ugly, Drayton pig munter with a face only a mother could love. With warts on one size and a mouth that resembled an empty headlock. Not exactly what we dreamt of when planning this trip, but I tell you what. That minging little Quasimodo fish had really cheered me and Gary up and we both decided we had to photograph it for memory's sake. It wasn't worthy of the Ruebens as it was a low to mid double at best and we snapped it on the iPhone instead of the "best" camera. Needless to say, the commotion of hooking that fish had now thrown the candy floss all over the dance floor again and the spot was back to square one. The left and right rods were

brought in absolutely caked in the stuff and with the light about to go, I accepted defeat and just chucked them back out and got ready for some shut eye. This trip was really starting to take its toll on the two of us and we were absolutely exhausted on our 7th night. We sat with a beer under the 'rave' style flashing lights of 2000 head torches surrounding the lake and bitched and moaned like a couple of schoolgirls about our mistakes. "We brought far too much gear, we're fishing too many venues, we only had 5 hours sleep" blah blah. What we needed was a good nights kip and unsurprisingly Thorpe Lea and it's weed problem was set to provide just that with no action forthcoming.

We arose the following morning after a "lie in"

at around 8:00am and it was time to make a change. Do we walk around the fishery and look to split up for the last night, potentially getting a change of swim to somewhere more fishable? That's if any of the other 60 anglers had left. Or do we just lose the cash and leave? The situation we were faced with from a fishing point of view was absolute garbage and both of us felt slightly shortchanged being given swims that were clearly roped off for a reason. I'm sorry to say it but they knew the weed wasn't clear enough to fish that's why the swims were closed, and I doubt that my swim gets used at all when somebody is adjacent because that enforces the "5 wrap" rule. I couldn't help but laugh to be honest it was one of those moments where I looked around the lake

wondering "how did we seriously end up here?" How do the fish even survive with that amount of pressure? Just shows you how hardy a carp really can be. We had totaled up that there was close to 180 lines in the water which is absolute madness. The biggest joke, however, was that the fishery staff and friends had taken up a huge portion of the open water close to the fishery lodge whilst other anglers were stuck in unfishable swims with three rods within spitting distance from the bank. "F**K it, let's just leave" I said to Gary and he was in agreement and already thinking the same before I suggested it. Gary also thought it was worth talking to the fishery manager and explaining our situation. Thankfully the fishery manager was very understanding and

reasonable and refunded us for the second night without any problems or debate. The biggest shock of all however, was Gary's wonderful diplomacy on visiting the lodge! Even I felt sorry for him and his downtrodden delivery, with his sweat ridden brow and rosy red cheeks after an early pack up and huge walk to the car park. Whether it's random knowledge of a species of tree or the breeding habits of a particular type of bird life, he certainly is always full of surprises.

Our stubbornness combined with both being men of principle meant that we foolishly didn't want to fork out another £2 each into the money-making factory that is Thorpe Lea and instead decided to barrow our gear back the 7 acres ish trek back to the



van. The hellishly long walk resulted in two trips! With the hot morning sun beating down on us we were both sweating like rabbits at a greyhound meeting by the time we got finished. After the usual van loading jigsaw puzzle, once inside we were downing water and belly laughing at each other as we gave individual reviews on our experience at Thorpe Lea. I realised something very important while doing so though and that is. Without places like Thorpe Lea the number of newcomers to carp fishing would be drastically

decreased. The venue isn't designed for experienced carpers looking for solace and searching for a target fish or a particular stunning strain. It's designed to give any Tom, Dick or Harry access to decent sized carp and many of them. It's for beginners to learn their craft and cut their teeth tying rigs and reading the water, let's face it you learn nowhere near as quick when your blanking all the time. It doesn't matter how many pegs they have or how close together they are because it's for the guy with 3 sons, it's for the people who just want to catch fish and get out there, it's for the groups of blokes that work hard all year round to bivvy up in a big line and have a social and chance of a bite each on their well-deserved holiday. For that we should be grateful

to this type of venue because otherwise our sport would die a quick death, especially when you consider how sneaky and closed shop most of the syndicates are these days. How would anybody ever get involved? It's hard enough to get a member of a water to disclose its location to you or give you the details of how to get on the waiting list. Even when the said members are so called friends! Places like Linear and Sandhurst are too difficult for newbies looking to pop their cherry so massive thumbs up to Thorpe Lea and every credit to you for providing that service. I also know for a fact that if we had dropped on one of the decent open water swims with the shallow bars or larger clean gravel areas in front of us, we would have absolutely emptied

the place as it's clear to see it's stuffed with carp.

I can't believe I'm saying this, but I would actually like to return at some point and perhaps do a midweek session when it's not as busy and I actually have a choice of swim. It would be nice to end my memories there on a good note.

So, we were now two man in a van with no plan! We had 24 hours to kill and we needed to find somewhere to fish on a bank holiday weekend, a very tall order. We had already promised to take my girlfriend Ashleigh fishing for catfish the day after when she travelled back up from Brighton. Ever the romantic myself, I was more than happy to oblige her in sharing abit of "pussy" action and wasn't prepared to break my promise.

Even Gary was coming along to assist where needed which again proves how much of a stand-up bloke he is. To our astonishment we made a call to Orchid Lake and they informed us that they had space and we would “definitely” get on! We couldn’t believe it. Why didn’t we think of Orchid in the first place? Even Gary was excited as he demonstrated by going over the speed limit by a 3 or 4mph in the van. This fresh bit of excitement was just what we needed to inject some life back into our campaign. It’s amazing how you can go from being absolutely knackered to running about like two kids with bucket in hand as we pulled into the Orchid car park. The bailiff told us to have a walk round and see what swims we fancied before returning for the rest

of our tackle and to purchase a ticket. Wow what a difference from Thorpe Lea! Orchid was stunning with spacious swims and plenty of water for every angler we even spotted a couple of groups of fish as we walked around with some lumps in amongst. I fancied almost every vacant swim I came across as we made our way around the carpy oasis of snaggy bays and lily beds. We both wanted swims in different areas as is usually the case so Gary opted for the swim “All Alone” and I settled for “The In-Between” and a plan was formed.

A couple of hours later and the rods were being dispatched into Orchid and I was already sad that I had less than 20 hours on the water. I honestly could have stayed there all week it was

so quiet and peaceful and also boasts a good stock of 30lbs fish.

Additionally, it wasn’t short of some entertainment either as I became acquainted with a gentleman known as “Mad Pete.” Pete lives on Orchid in the peg next to the Inbetween in what can only be described as an adapted garden shed with a felt roof and a plastic door. He gave me and Gary a tour of his man cave and proceeded to demonstrate every single mod con he had at his disposal including:

A full run through of his tv and showing us that every channel in the guide worked, his different lights including what batteries they take and how to switch them on and off, fully functional plastic door with locking capabilities along with his cooking

setup and how he has the gas rigged up. We spent an hour or so chatting with Pete who told us how he used to run a brothel in Camden Town and how he has no desire to go home despite having caught almost all of Orchids stock during his years living there. Then there was the graffiti artist work decorating the fishery cabin on the "Alamo" peg. An adapted version of the Orchid slogan "Home of the 30s" from a disgruntled angler was Gary's personal favourite. "Orchid Lake, Home of the Upper Double" with an accompanying list of his captures during his week stay there made for comical reading.

Before I knew it, I was settling in to watch the sunset in the "in-between" with a belly full of chicken fajitas and the ever faithful

can of cider in hand. Shorts and T shirt was all that was required on a glorious night daarrn saaarrrrfff and the fish seemed to be in the area too. I had one rod positioned close to the island, one in the channel and one close into the enormous Lilly beds to my right. I almost jumped out of my skin a couple of times as some of Orchids big girls boshed out in style no more than a couple of rod lengths from the bank. It certainly got the heart rate going watching numerous fish launch themselves out in a mad 30mins spell over all three of my rods and left no doubt in my mind that Orchid was a lot more than just a home of the mid double.

I awoke the following morning without a single bleep in the night and immediately mr negative that I am, I

started blaming myself as I knew I had been on fish. Everything seemed right all rigs came in perfectly and weren't held up in any weed or poorly presented. What did I do wrong? I'm asking myself. Should I have fished back lead with a tight line? Perhaps fluoro mainline fishing slack? The fact of the matter is more than likely it boils down to sometimes the fish just are busy with something else and don't want to feed. The bailiff informed me that he had lost a fish in the hours of darkness and other than that there had been nothing to report which made me feel abit better. But that part of me that always strives for perfection still echoes in the back of my mind and lets me know that I should have caught a fish that night. Gary had nothing to report

either with the large numbers of fish in his swim exactly where they were the moment we arrived. Tight under the branches and in the thick weed with their backs out of the water enjoying the sunshine. It was with a very heavy heart that I had to pack up and leave Orchid that day and I know Gary is also itching to go back

for another crack at it. Maybe for a couple of nights next time. Perhaps that's a piece for the magazine next season if we ever do make it back. Until then I wish you all "Wet Nets and Screaming Reels."

Thanks for reading

Alex Sheldon

If you have enjoyed reading this piece and are using social media, please check out my page and follow my adventures on Instagram

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For the Love of Carp...
by Chris Sampson

When we think of carp fishing, we tend to think of the prime location, but what is the prime location? Is it a pond, a lake whether it be large or small, or is it a river? For me, it is a local river just a short distance from my house. The St. Joseph River located in Indiana, USA. Don't get me wrong, I do occasionally fish in Lake Michigan.

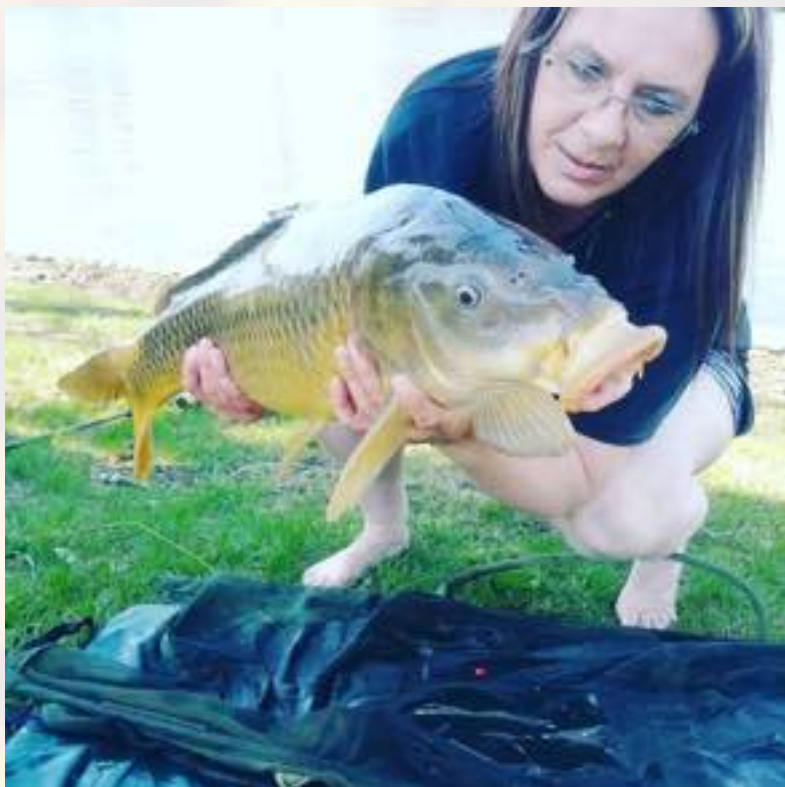
The St. Joseph River is a 206 mile long tributary of Lake Michigan flowing generally westerly through southern Michigan and northern Indiana. It is one of the few rivers that can flow in both directions at the same time here in the states. There are many species of freshwater fish that inhabit the river.

I choose to target the river carp for the challenge it has to offer. They are very smart, very strong, and very tricky to hook and land. I love the rush it gives me. When comparing the carp between the river and the lake, there is a slight difference in the body their structure.

The carp in the lake are more rounded and plumper, when the carp in the river are long and slender, but yet like bulky torpedoes. The fight they give differ as well, the lake carp fight but not that of the river carp. The river carp are angry, aggressive and use the current to their advantage.

When I get to the banks of the river, I study the water, sometimes for hours before I even set up. I look at the margins, the clarity of the water, the flow of the current. I look at the weed beds, the lily pads, and where the ducks are hanging out. The ducks,





geese and swans can give me a clear indication on where the carp may be feeding.

Most people here just use a regular hook, worms or sweet corn. They have never seen a sling, unhooking mat or a proper landing net. I have seen many carp get injured or even allowed to die from being allowed to flop on the concrete or rocks. Myself I fish strictly Euro style. I take pride in my gear, the way I handle and care for carp.

When it comes to bait, I make all of my own, I prefer to use maize that I carefully process myself. The flavour of maize I use mainly is either almond raspberry tinted hot pink, or almond tangerine tinted bright orange. I usually add one tiger nut that I have soaked in saltwater until fully plump.

When making my own pva mix, stick mix or panko, I use only the best ingredients that will not harm the carp's digestive system. My mixes may contain oats, crushed hemp seed, chickpeas, maize, calf milk replacer, and a few other secret ingredients I like to add for an extra attraction. I have spent the last 5-6 years perfecting what works for me. Occasionally I will make up some boilies, but I have found that they do not work as



well here for me.

When I first started fishing for carp, I would order my hair rigs, but I have found that tying my own rigs is more rewarding. When tying my rigs, I use 50 lb braid, with a #4 carp hook. I keep my hook link short at around 4 inches. Each one has a hook aligner and anti-tangle sleeve.

When I finally get set up, I always cast in the same spot as I have found what I like to call the honey hole. One rod to the right on the edge of the lily pads, the second rod goes straight out about 100 yards on the gravel bed, the third rod to the left on the weed bed.

Hearing the scream of the alarm, the release of the drag, my adrenaline gets pumping. As I pick up the rod, the sensitivity tells me what I am in for. I am not on the banks for the numbers or the size, I am strictly here the pleasure of meeting such a beautiful specimen. Each carp that I land is carefully and quickly weighed, measured, and kept in the water as much as possible.

I provide the proper care and the utmost respect to them in which they deserve. When I release them back to where they came from, I allow time for them to recover before I let them swim gracefully away. They all get a kiss on top of the head before they leave my hands. Nothing can give me a better feeling then when I'm in the water holding a beautiful majestic creature as it slowly swims away.

Fishing is my passion,
passion is my fishing...
Tight Lines to you all.

Chris.



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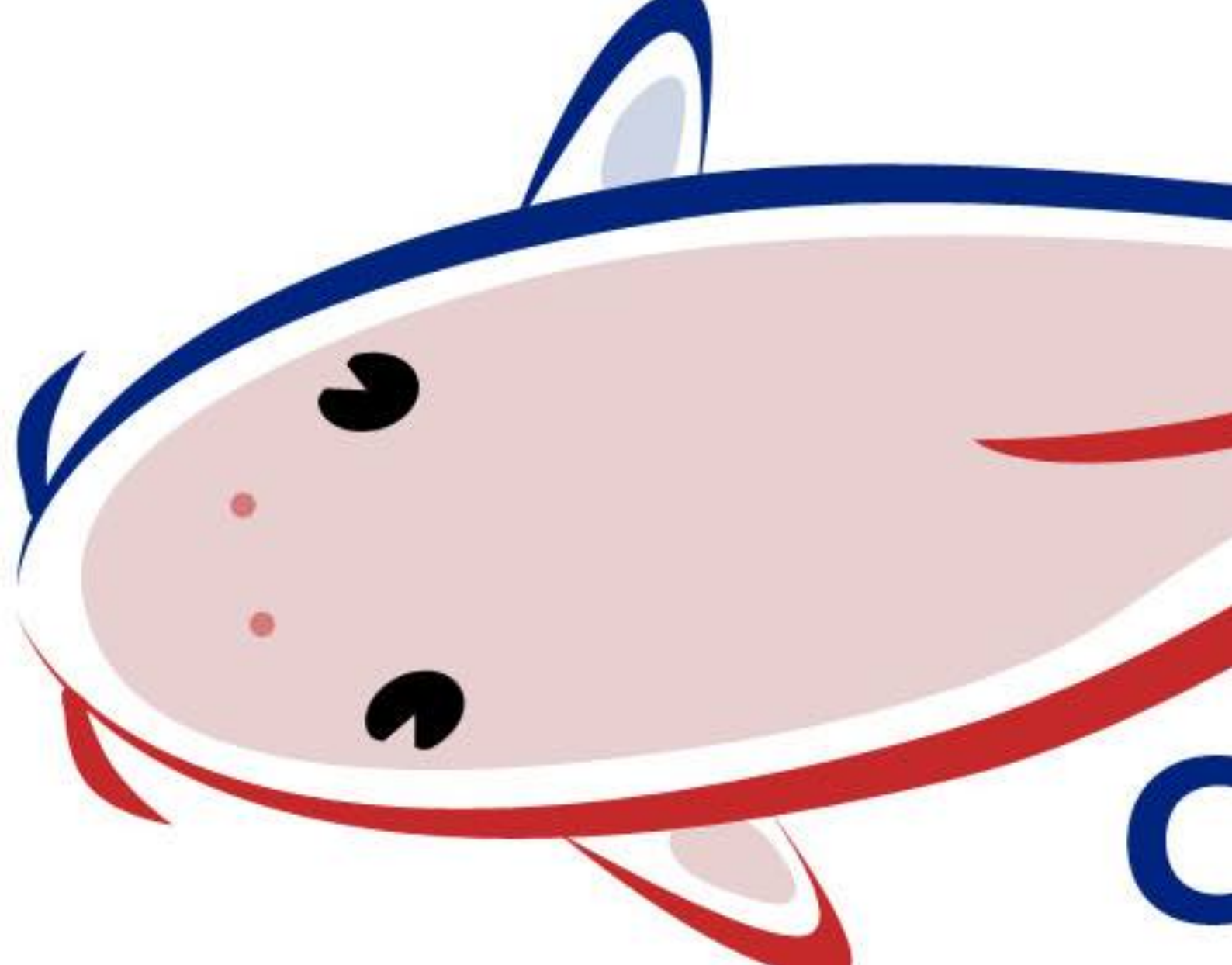


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Pairs Qualifier 8



Old Mill, Oak Lake

This lake just like the rest of the complex continues to go from strength to strength. It is a great water to hold competitions on as it's as fair as possible and can be won from anywhere. Only three out of the 12 competing pairs didn't register fish in this one.

As usual it was a fairly tight affair with anglers catching from all over the lake. On the last morning it was a case of any three pairs from seven that could of qualified, that's how close a contest it was.

In the end Jason Adams and Luke Church had two fish in the last few hours to cement their victory. They were made to work very hard catching a smaller stamp of fish netting eleven for a total weight of 90lb 5oz. Scott Head and Jerome Brown came next with only four fish for 75lb 14oz, only a fish behind our winners. Third was taken by Terry Overend and Kevin Greenwood, who had 6 fish but ended about 3lb behind second place. Fourth was Mike White and Kel Bowers with five fish for 66lb 14oz. Fifth place was Lee Bateman and Rob Lawton who also broke the 60lb barrier and only missed out on a podium spot by one fish. Following them were another two pegs with weights of 40lb+.

What were the chances of the exact same three pairs who qualified here last year did it again this year? That's how it ended up, last years's winners Terry and Kevin finished in third this time. This year's winners Jason and Luke have gone one place better as have second placed Scott and Jerome who all make it to Barston for the August bank holiday final.

This lake has a great winter pedigree and there are not that many places for a bend in the rod at that time of the year in Lincolnshire. It has been throwing up 30lb+ fish as well which is special considering how new the lake actually is. All this is a credit

to owner Chris Marler and his quality fish management skills. I can't wait to see what happens next year.

REUBEN HEATON					Total weighing solutions
British Carp Cup Pairs					Q8
Position	Competitors	Old Mill - Oak Lake	Peg No	Number of Fish	Total Weight
1	Jason Adams / Luke Church		1	11	90lb 5oz
2	Scott Head / Jerome Brown		10	4	75lb 14oz
3	Terry Overend / Kevin Greenwood		14	6	72lb 3oz
4	Mike White / Kel Bowers		3	5	66lb 14oz
5	Lee Bateman / Rob Lawton		12	4	61lb 5oz
6	Adri Barker / Rob Julian		5	4	43lb 13oz
7	Luke Terry / Alan Hunter		6	2	41lb 11oz
8	Chris White / Tom Isen		8	2	34lb 14oz
9	Rafal Wojewoda / Giovanni Celmer		7	3	24lb 6oz
10					
11					
12					





Singles Qualifier

5



Wetlands Carp Fishery

We used this lake for our first two televised ladies singles events in 2015 and 2016, but unfortunately as the ladies carp scene expanded we outgrew the venue. The launch of this years singles event gave us our first chance to return. Following the noon start on Friday it was seven hours before the first fish graced the bank, it was an 18lb 13oz mirror caught by Shane Fletcher from peg 2. Tony Reynolds in peg 10 joined him on the scoreboard by catching an 18lb+ mirror himself. That proved to be the last of the action on Friday.

Around 2am Saturday peg 3's Mark Sawyer was awoken by all three of his alarms sounding at the same time. When he looked out, he wondered if he was dreaming as he saw what he described to me as a marsupial sat by his rods looking back at him. As he came out it hopped up the bank towards Jamie Londors in the next peg. He got the same treatment from the escapee as his rods also got disturbed. When Mark shone his head torch on the creature it hopped off into the darkness and wasn't seen again until it was recaptured later in the day and return to it's enclosure. Kang roo believe it!!! Says Mark Sawyer of the Angling Times. Strange things happen on the bank.

The rest of Saturday proved even more eventful as we had 23 fish grace the weigh sling and activate the Reuben Heaton Sports scales. By the end of the day we had 9 out of the ten competitors on the scoreboard and a real tussle developing for the top three podium places.

Sunday morning saw four fish out to three anglers, Jamie Londors had a 20lb 13oz mirror, which was his biggest fish and gave him victory. Tony Reynolds had a brace weighing 17lb 10oz and 23lb 3oz and put him in runners up spot. Finally Simon Wheeler had the biggest fish of the weekend, a 25lb 1oz mirror which was enough for him to take third with less than 5lb separating him and Tony. Although Jamie and Tony came out second and third in the draw and chose their pegs Simon came out last and had to fish what was left.

The top three anglers had over 300lb between them. The following pack were not far behind on Saturday night but the Sunday morning flurry was enough to decide the result.

Score Board Supplied by **REUBEN HEATON** Total weighing solutions Est 1857

BRITISH CARP CUPS British Carp Cup Singles **Q5**

Position	Competitors	Wetlands	Peg No	Number of Fish	Total Weight
1	Jamie Londors		3	8	122lb 5oz
2	Tony Reynolds		10	5	98lb 3oz
3	Simon Wheeler		5	5	91lb 10oz
4	Jack Johnson		6	3	51lb
5	Shane Fletcher		2	3	46lb 13oz
6	Mark Sawyer		4	2	37lb 4oz
7	Mick Day		8	1	24lb 14oz
8	Ben Taylor		1	1	20lb 2oz
9	Ben Timson		9	1	18lb 14oz
10					
11					
12					

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Singles Qualifier 6



Newbridge Lakes

This turned out to be an extremely slow weekend on this popular picturesque northern tree lined venue, complete with Lilly pads and a lovely house, owned by Lance and Michelle Bramley, overlooking the lake.

With the very hot, bright day time temperatures and high pressure it was never going to be easy. Only four out of the nine competitors registered carp on the score board. In the end it was Dan Robson in peg 7 who took the honours. Considering he only came seventh out in the draw, he got a peg he had previously done well in. He banked five fish for 74lb+ including a couple of twenties, one of which was the biggest of the weekend. Ironically it was the first fish of the contest which was caught less than an hour in on Friday. It was a cracking common of 25lb 7oz.

In runners up spot was Paul Monkman who came out fourth in the draw and opted for the favoured peg 1 which surprising enough had not already been taken. Paul landed four fish for just over 49lb. Next was Lee Fletcher who came third out of the draw bag and picked peg 8 which he had previously qualified from. Lee had 3 fish for 44lb+. The only other competitor to get on the scoreboard was Darren Queen with a 14lb common early on the Saturday morning.

The top three qualify for the new singles final at Albans Lakes in October where they will fight it out for the top prize of £5,000 and the title of 2019 British Singles Champion.

		REUBEN HEATON		Total weighing solutions Est. 1957	
		British Carp Cup Singles		Q6	
Position	Competitors	Newbridge	Peg No	Number of Fish	Total Weight
1	Dan Robson		7	5	74lb 7oz
2	Paul Monkman		1	4	49lb 10oz
3	Lee Fletcher		8	3	44lb 12oz
4	Darren Queen		2	1	14lb 6oz
5					
6					
7					
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9					
10					
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12					

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*******URGENT*********Q8 PAIRS Kingsbury Water Park Fishery Pine Pool**

Early this morning we were advised by the Kingsbury Park Rangers that the water levels had risen so high and fast overnight that this weekends match has been cancelled. We have an new date and this qualifier will now become Q9 and fished from the 12th to the 14th July.

Sorry about the late notice but we cannot control the British weather.

Bookings now open for this years events !!!!

competitors and then 9am Friday 19th to everyone else.

Cost of entry £440.

contact@britishcarpcups.co.uk

Belinda 09791 285864 Office 01159 812791

The final at Barston will commence with a sit down meal in the restaurant followed by the 10pm draw live on stage.

- Q1 Branston Water Park 1st to 3rd March - Complete
- Q2 Orchard, Lake 7. March 15th to 17th - Complete
- Q3 Todber Manor, Big Hayes. March 22nd to 24th - Complete
- Q4 Albans Farm Lake. April 12th to 14th - Complete
- Q5 Berners Hall. April 26th to 28th - Complete
- Q6 Willow Park. May 17th to 19th - Complete
- Q7 Poolbridge Q Lake. May 31, 1st & 2nd June - Complete
- Q8 Kingsbury Pine Pool. June 14th to 16th
- Q9 Old Mill Oak Lake. July 5th to 7th - Complete
- Q10 Thorney Weir. July 26th to 28th

Final Barston. August 23rd to 25th

Hurry !!! Book now as places are filling fast



Here it is folks. The one you have all been asking about. It's the British Carp Cup singles.

- Q1 Todber Manor, Little Hayes 8th to 10th March - Complete
- Q2 Branston Water Park 29th to 31st March - Complete
- Q3 Willow Park 26th to 28th April - Complete
- Q4 Kingsbury Pine Pool 31st May to 2nd June - Complete
- Q5 Wetlands 21st to 23rd June - Complete
- Q6 Newbridge Lakes 28th to 30th June - Complete
- Q7 Poolbridge Q Lake 28th to 30th June - Complete
- Q8 DDAP's Brooklands 26th to 28th July

Final Albans Willows Lake 4th to 6th October

Brooklands will be 16 places and max of 11 at Wetlands
All the rest have 12 and the top 3 qualify. Top 4 at Brooklands.
The final will be an out of the bag draw and it will be decided on
a 3 best fish basis. The entry fee is £250.

Prize money

1st £5000

Runners up £2000

3rd £1000

4th £750

Booking now open

contact@britishcarpcups.co.uk 01159 812 791





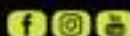


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- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ■ BROWN 0.35MM 12LB/5.4KG 1200M | ■ CLEAR 0.35MM 12LB/5.4KG 1200M | ■ GREEN 0.35MM 12LB/5.4KG 1200M |
| ■ BROWN 0.38MM 15LB/6.8KG 1200M | ■ CLEAR 0.38MM 15LB/6.8KG 1200M | ■ GREEN 0.38MM 15LB/6.8KG 1200M |
| ■ BROWN 0.42MM 18LB/8.2KG 1200M | ■ CLEAR 0.42MM 18LB/8.2KG 1200M | ■ GREEN 0.42MM 18LB/8.2KG 1200M |



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- Protected registered design



CARPING MAD!

Chapter
12
pt 2



Mike 'SPUG' Redfern



"Open a bottle or two, and smell the grapes"

~Run To The Hills~

(Well Surrey Actually)

When I got home, the cheque had finally arrived so I went straight down the bank and cashed it in. It took five long working days for it to clear and in that time, I had agreed a figure in order to pay my mum and dad seven months rent up front, and copped a small discount on the way, which was nice. I fired a cheque off to CEMEX Angling for my Gold Card, bought an iPod, the biggest one they did, and finally, I ordered a load of stuff from the fan club including a limited edition leather tour jacket, and the cheque hadn't even cleared! Good solid angling. I phoned Cliff at Mpress and told him I was on a mission. It was going to happen. From now on it was operation book!

Now Gary and Steve in Surrey had always said that if I was down that way, to drop in for a cuppa and I had already sounded them out about this CEMEX Gold Card quest and they were well into it.

"So where you going to fish then, Spug?" Gary asked.

"Frimley Pit 3. It's a no-brainer!" I replied.

"What not the Car Park at Yateley?" he replied.

"No. I want to try and catch the odd 30 and if I am really lucky one of the big 40lb commons in Frimley."

"How many of them are there?"

"Don't know, four I think, biggest one's Charlie's mate at 44lb!" came my reply.

"What, four 40lb commons in the same lake?" he quizzed back.

"Yeah, and a good load of 30s!" I continued.

"Blimey mate, see what you are on about!" Gary replied. "Let me tell you, Spug. Anything, and I mean anything, you need to help you with all this, let me know."

"Well, I was thinking of moving in!" I replied, liberty taking and stroke-pulling to the max. He laughed.

"Whatever you want, Spoogles. Me and my family are behind you all the way

on this one and let me tell you I am in on this journey too. I can't wait!"

Blimey, talk about stepping up to the mark! I was totally blown away by this.

"To tell you the truth, Gary, I just need somewhere to store my gear for a few months and somewhere to go if I feel like I'm going to burn out.

I intend to go back every fortnight and work on the lorries anyway, just to keep my funds up."

"Whatever you want, Spug. We'll make it happen."

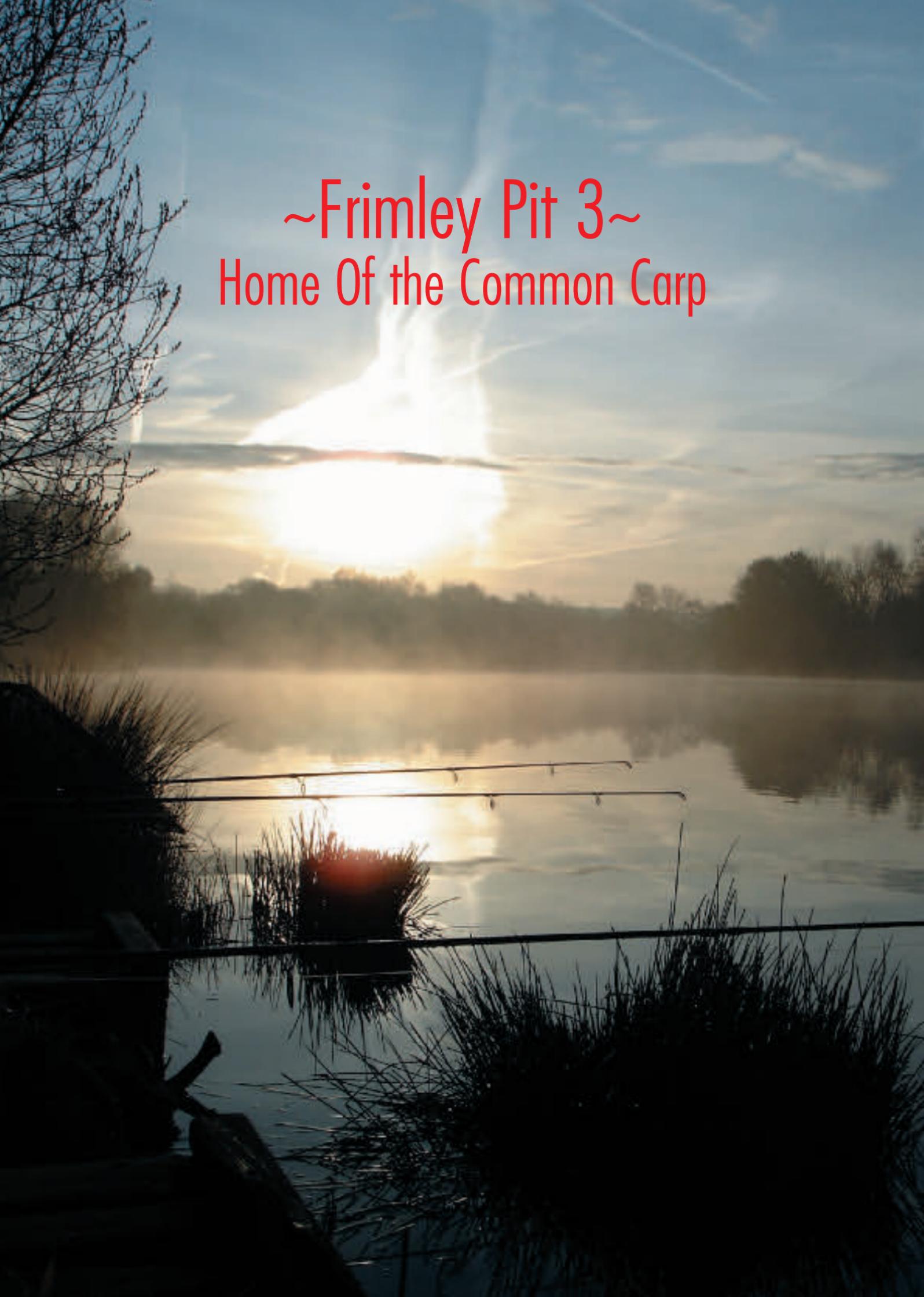
The cheque cleared a very long week later. I had been booked for a fortnight by a company, so still had to work another week. I had been on the phone to Ting Tong about Frimley. He had been caning the place and caught loads of fish and a good amount of 30s. I could not get down to Surrey fast enough. I swung into Gary's drive and unloaded my gear, including the Burco boiler and spare tackle, into his garage. It wasn't long after that Steve, Gary's best mate, came round the corner and we headed down to the pub for a slap-up steak dinner. Good start!

By the time we'd finished, Surrey knew I had arrived. I had ended up naked in Steve's Jacuzzi, even though there is a naked ban, right up, with a bottle of champagne in one hand and a roll-up in the other singing 'Who wants to be a millionaire? I do!' at full blast. It wasn't a pretty sight I can assure you! Gary and Steve thought it was great though.

Of course, it didn't end there because when I get drunk and let myself down, I always do it in style. Gary and me wobbled back to his house and apparently, he pointed me in the direction of his daughter Kayleigh's room for the night. Kayleigh had enough sense to go round her friends for the night. I can't remember, anyway. When Anita, Gary's missus, went to the toilet during the night, she looked across to the open door and there I was, butt naked, spread-eagled on my back, snoring away, with my fruit and two veg hanging in full view! Oh well, I had arrived.



It's a no brainer.

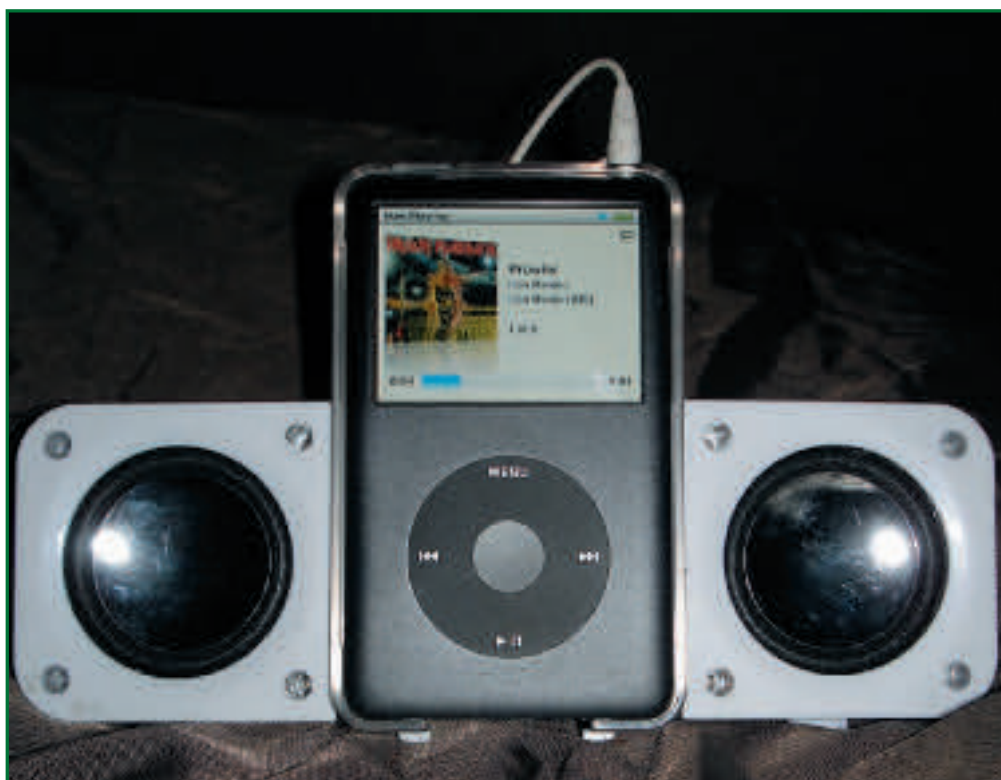
A serene sunset scene over a body of water. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright, hazy glow that reflects on the water's surface. In the foreground, two fishing rods are silhouetted against the water, extending from the left side. The sky is a mix of blue and orange, with wispy clouds. The water is calm, mirroring the sky and the sun. The overall mood is peaceful and quiet.

~Frimley Pit 3~
Home Of the Common Carp

I woke up the next day with the most enormous hangover you can ever imagine. My head felt like a freshly popped grape in someone's fingers. To make things better I had the Fox Carp Experience to attend in Horseshoe. I drove slowly down drinking latte after latte, the whole way. I turned up feeling like I jumped in a bivvy and went straight to sleep. The next day was the show and I was bright-eyed and bushy tailed again and ready to go with my new game, 'play your carp right'. It went down really well and the show was a success.

Back down the motorway on the Sunday and I loaded up and went down to Frimley for the first time. I unloaded the van and pushed my gear to the lake. This was all new to me. You have to park in a housing estate, walk past a row of houses and then get over a railway line, before you are anywhere near the lake!

I managed to get to the lake without any drama and I pushed my barrow round to a swim called Deep Point. What a beautiful lake it is. I had only quickly popped down before to see Ting Tong and I hadn't really taken it all in. The other great thing was that there was nobody else there. Now this was a surprise. I knew it was only the Gold Carders and the bailiffs who could night fish there, I'd found that out prior to arriving, and it was half the reason that I chose Frimley in the first place. I had spoken to Chilly, and Stevie Mogford about the place, and it certainly was different to normal lakes. The other half was of course its beautiful fully-scaled and enormous common carp! I think it was the fact I had grown up with old-school anglers and that meant commons were always held in high esteem in my eyes. We always spoke about commons rather than mirrors, and I guess that was because years ago they were a lot less common! It was pretty much the school of thought



It was time to rock!

that a 40lb common in England would equal a 50lb mirror and that would do me if I managed to fluke one of the big puppies!

The swim was quite weedy and I knew I had to have a rig that dropped the lead, so it was a nice simple leadcore rig with a safety clip, slackened off slightly and the same old mono hooklink, with an Arma Point, SSC, size 8 attached. I cast the marker out and tried to find a clear spot. This turned out to be a fruitless task as it just jammed up in the weed straight away. 'Not to worry,' I thought to myself. 'I'll just go back to the old Brook days, place a nugget of dissolving foam on and try and feel the lead down.' It worked. I got the three rods out, sprayed five kilos of Pulse boilies around two of the rods, and fished a single on the other. Back in brolly it was time to rock! My newly acquired iPod was blaring away and I opened a bottle of red wine. Good angling! As I sat there wondering how I would get on, it suddenly dawned on me that if I caught one in the night then there was nobody around who could take some pictures.

Now I always carry a tripod in case I need to do a self-take because I hate sacking fish, but having said that, I had never had to do it. The fact that the fishery rules also ban sacks meant only one thing; it was time to learn the art of self-take photography. I mean, how hard could it be? I fumbled around with my camera, and it was then I found out that after pushing the self-timer button, I had just seven seconds to run to the unhooking mat and carefully pick up the fish, ready



My first CEMEX carp.

for a picture to be taken. It was at that point I wished I had a remote control attachment on my camera. I thought I had better try a practice run, so with everything set up and ready to go, I pushed the button and scurried back to my unhooking mat, pretended to

move the retaining flap out of the way and pick up the 'fish' for a photo. It all went well. 'Piece of Bring on the carp!' I thought.

My first self-take and my first CEMEX Angling carp came along at 3am the next morning. It was a 20lb common and everything had worked a treat. The lead had fallen off, I had the carp safely in the viewfinder well in time, and I had a pic of it, nice one! I did of course cut the top of my head off, but I knew I could improve on my first attempt.

The other thing I had decided to do was recast at night. Now that may sound daft, but I had never really re-chucked them at night, even if they had gone off, as it was just too much effort and grief, coupled with the fact that normally I was just so happy to catch just one that I didn't want to cast it out again anyway. On the rare occasions that I did recast, it usually ended in a tree or someone else's swim. Anyway, all that was behind me now, I was going to fish properly like proper anglers do. I had placed some marker on the line and had picked a tree on the horizon. Out went the rig, a nice little 'donk' as the lead landed. 'Yeah, check me



What disaster!



25lb.

out!' I thought as I got back into the sleeping bag.

My new-found skill was rewarded the next morning when the recast rod ripped off and I landed a large ball of weed with a 26lb common in it. 'Superb. What a start!' I thought. I went through my little plan on the self-take and released the fish very quickly. It had all worked a treat. I was really proud of myself, until I looked at the photo. Not only was I pulling a stupid face as I tried to

concentrate on the timer, but my hair looked like The Doc from Back To The Future, with bloody grey all over the place as well, Rubbish! What a disaster!

I had forgotten all about the fact that I was trying to grow my hair long; just to wind my old man up. As I was living in his house, under his rules, this meant untidy was out the window. It wasn't just my fault; it was also my brother's wife, Linz, as she had encouraged me to do it! I phoned Gary and told him about my bad hair day. He laughed and said, "Don't worry I know a hairdresser, we'll get it cut for you, sometime." Problem over.

After a cup of tea I re-chucked the rods and sat there smiling away. 'Two 20s on your first day. Wow, that'll do!' Well, at 11.30am it was three, when my middle rod ripped off. This time I had a little more drama as the fish got well weeded-up, but after a bit of gentle persuasion I managed to get her moving again and eventually a large ball of weed was stuck in the edge in front of me. I



Toni landed a 27lb mirror.

couldn't get it in the net so I placed the net beside the weed ball ripped some away and lifted the whole lot into the net, when it would fit. Among the weed was a 25lb common. I was over the moon. Half an hour later, my right rod went and I landed a 17.8 common. Now that would do for my first 24 hours.

The rods remained quiet and when I awoke on the second morning, there was a lad fishing next to me in Daisy Bay. He turned out to be one of Moggy's mates, a chap called Toni Pittas, who was one of the old Yateley head-bangers from years ago and had landed some nice ones in his time. We sat there yakking away and I was telling him about my self-takes. He was laughing and said that he had seen me running about the day before, as he had been set up in The Noddy opposite. I explained that I had to pull off as my 48 hours were up and that I planned to go to Sandhurst for the next 48 hours.

"Tell you what mate," he said. "I'll have some of that. Can I tag along?"

"Of course you can," I replied, thinking he was a nice bloke and that I could do with a photographer! (cough).

We went down and got a load of barbecue stuff in, and after picking up our permits from Yateley Angling, we headed to Sandhurst. I think Toni found the whole thing quite amusing really. There were T-light candles everywhere, a



The Noddy.

gaslight roaring away and of course the iPod was on; not quite how they used to fish I was told. Still, we had a giggle and got on great. The next day it was me taking the photos as Toni landed a 27lb mirror and I had a couple of small doubles. Sandhurst was only ever going to be a diversion and it was the opposite of Frimley, as nearly all the swims were full. However, there is a good head of 30s in there and I hoped to get one another time. We packed down the following day and I returned to Pit 3, after going to Fleet Services for a shower, and Toni went home.

On my return, I set up in The Noddy. Tong had just been in there and caught God knows how many fish, and it seemed a good place to start, especially as we were on the same bait. I was sitting there minding my own business when all of a sudden, I heard the gate go behind me, then I heard someone say, "Buster, you
You Sit! Buster! Sit!" It was a confusing moment until Danny Savage walked round the corner with his little mate and fishing buddy in the shape of a scruffy terrier called Buster. They came and said hello. It turned out that Danny was one of the bailiffs and had just about caught every fish in the lake, as had the other lads who bailiffed down there. It also turned out that although Buster loved his dad, he paid little or no attention to what he said. What an amusing pair these

two were. Anyway, we had a beer and they skipped off, with Danny giving commands and Buster ignoring them.

I sat there on the phone to Monki (Nigel Hodgson). Monki had done really well on Pit 3 and I was talking to him about a possible plan of action. I knew I wouldn't be here forever as this little bubble I was in would burst within six or seven months, depending on finances. Monki said that he had caught most of his fish from a swim called The Secret, which is to the left of the Noddy.

I got off my newly cultivated fat and went and had a look. I was told that the big fish seemed to hang out regularly around the bar, which starts slightly to the right of The Secret and ends opposite The Gravelly, 200 yards or so down. Monki said that if you looked at the tree line there was a set of 'inverted boobs' (which I hasten to add I saw straight away) where if you cast your marker and had a feel around, there was an area of silt and gravel. This was where he had done well from. However, four rod lengths away, he fished just a PVA bag or stringer and picked up most of his better fish on that one, away from the baited area.

"Another thing I will tell you is, these carp love a boilie. Don't be afraid to give them some bait. If you can get them going in there, you'll have them. Don't worry about particle. Just give them boiled food, but you have to get them going."

To be fair I knew they loved a boilie and I knew there had been some big hits out of the swim, but only when people had primed it. It was food for thought, though, and I put his advice into a small area of my memory labelled 'one to try shortly'.

I had two nights in front of me and then it would be home time, as for some stupid reason I had told work I was available the following week. This was a bit daft really as I had loads of funds for once. I think it was a case of keeping them topped up and also I didn't want to full-time it, even though I could for a short period if I wanted to. As I was sitting there talking on my phone I saw a load of bubbles rise to the surface, just to the right of a set of pads.

"Gotta go," I said and reeled in my middle rod and flicked it out, right on the money. That rod went at 3am the following morning and I landed a 22lb common after a short scrap. To be honest, I hate night bites and especially at three in the morning, because I am even more dozy than I am during the day. That's not amusing for me and nor do I rate it as a quality either. It's more of an illness in my eyes. Speaking of my eyes, I tend to wear glasses these days, as your eyes get bad as your hair goes grey, or so it seems. If I catch a fish I take them off for the pics, but I wish I had left them on with this common because after I had self-taken, I



I had dropped a

quickly checked the photo. Other than the fact I had forgotten to take the headtorch off, it looked fine. Well, that is until I checked it with my glasses on. It appeared that I had dropped a , so to speak. Oh well, we have all got them. I would like to point out to any single girls reading this, that mine are quite big and could do with a rub!

It had been a great start and I had been really impressed with everything about Frimley and CEMEX Angling. Everyone I had

met seemed sound, and I had even had to bring a rig in for a bailiff to check. This, after the Kingy experience, was actually quite refreshing. I got back to Gary's and we had a chat about how to approach things when I returned a fortnight later. We needed some time together fishing; if nothing else to get him some me time, as the demands of his business usually meant he didn't even have the time to fart. We also put some funds together and ordered a bait boat. We said we would name it, Jenny, after Forest Gump's boats; quite appropriate really.

The week's trial had gone well and I was soon home preparing for a week away trucking for Greene King, through the agency of course. I could have done without that week really, because the day I got back I was straight off again, but not to Surrey. Instead, it was back to France for a trip with Dave Wilby and a couple of mates from Norfolk on a drive and survive holiday to a lake called Etang 5, which was home to an 80lb mirror. That would do! However, it just all fell wrong, because I was itching to go back to Frimley. I had been bitten and not for the last time either, but now I had a plan. Oh, I love a plan!

~Etang 5~



I had always said there was no need to fish anywhere other than Les in France with one exception, and that's Cassein, because of its history not the 20-hour drive to get there, strangely enough. Although, if ever anything else came up within three hours of the ferry and it had a monster in it, then I would be silly not to consider it. That statement does not belittle other lakes, commercial or otherwise, as there are loads of other good lakes in France, it's just that we fell into the whole Les thing and never really felt the need to get out, and I don't think we ever will. Oh, we have had all the crap like: overstocked stock pond, not the same as a Cassein fish. We knew that. That's why we went there! To us, the whole of France is an overstocked stock pond. Some lakes are just easier than others.

Now, Etang 5 is two and a half hours in, has a great big mirror which can hit 80lb and I think about six different fish over 60lb. It sounded good and I looked forward to seeing the other side of the coin on the old drive and survive trip. The fact it was the laid-back squad consisting of Dave Wilby, his mate Barry and Little Dave just made it better. I got to Little Dave's around 9 o'clock on the Friday night and we squeezed my gear into his van and headed off to the ferry. We followed Mr Wilby and co down the French motorway, until we landed in a lay-by next to the lake.



We squeezed my gear into his van.

The chap in charge of the venue is called Jean Claude. He runs a chip van next to the lake and sells tickets from there. A bottle of beer and some chips later we drove onto the lake. It was approx 100 acres in size and it was quite a weedy lake. There weren't many people fishing it. I think there were two sets of English lads and a bloke from a country none of us knew, as none of us understood his accent. It could have been Essex, but more of that later.

There was a nice wind blowing across the lake and the far side was empty, so we could all plot-up next to each other and fish into the wind. It was a good enough starting point. We knew the lake wasn't going to be easy, as I had done quite a bit of research. One of Rod Simpson's crowd had recently done a three-week blank on there, so we didn't know what to expect. The thought of a whopper was enough, though, and me and Little Dave quickly had bivvies set up and were tying on rigs, as we were keen to get on with it. 'Quickly' wasn't quite the word you could use to describe the other two, though. The laid-back brothers, Dave and Barry, just set up their bivvies and said they would wait until the next day to cast out, happy just to be there. Honestly!

By the time me and Little Dave were sorted, it was getting on a bit. I said that although he had a boat, I wouldn't use it to start with as time was running out. So I tied on three PVA bags and cast them out into the weed, all within 40 yards of the bank. This turned out to be a good move as the next morning my right-hand rod ripped off and I landed a 31lb mirror Superb!

Jean Claude came round to see how the lake was fishing and I found him quite amusing. I think he found me quite amusing too, but I don't know. One thing I did know was that he liked the look of my Team Mainline Fox T-shirt and in his broken French and my broken English (yes I did get that the right!) he made it perfectly clear that he wanted one, especially as it would go well with a Fox hat that he had robbed off someone else. Christ! It was as bad as fishing with king robber, Uni Dave, again! Me being me, I didn't (and still don't) know whether I would return and suggested he had my shirt instead. Now this thin Frenchman is half my size but it didn't stop him throwing it on. I laughed my socks off when it was on as he was a medium and I am XXL. Yeah I know, I know. Anyway, the shirt almost went down to his knees and he looked at me and just stuck his thumb in the air. I thought it was hilarious. Top robbing!

It seemed that most people fished the lake in the same way. They all had conduit markers out at about 100 metres, went out in a boat, dumped a load of bait over the side, including a hookbait, then they rowed back to the shore again



This turned out to be a good move.

and just sat there waiting for a bite. It wasn't exactly rocket science fishing. Dave and Barry got their rods out on the Sunday and we all relaxed in the sun. Little Dave lost one, but he seemed to be having fun just going round in circles in the boat.



Top robbing.

There were some fish that kept showing to my right and I will be honest, I don't even know if they were carp, as the shows seemed quite strange. Whatever they were, I kept throwing my PVA bags at them and my rods kept going. The next morning I landed a 27.8lb mirror and the morning after that a 22lb mirror.

Wednesday morning came along and myself and Little Dave decided to go shopping, as we had now drunk all the beer. It was my

birthday on the Friday, so that was an excuse to get some red wine in. We drove around looking for a barbecue and failed miserably. We ended up in a big French supermarket thing, with me looking down some really fit-looking bird's blouse at a perfectly formed set of melons. It was great! Vive la France, I think you'd say. Now if I thought that was eye candy then when I walked past the meat counter, all my dreams had come true. They sold the biggest steaks you have ever seen. I love a steak, in fact we used to have competitions to see who could eat the biggest one, and I won just about every time. This steak deli was just too much to resist. I ordered the biggest one they had and it cost 11 Euro-thingys. That was fine by me.



11 euro for the steak and 1.75 for the wine.

Little Dave was laughing as we stocked up on beer and wine, which was a tickle as the wine cost only 1.75 Euro-thingys.

We were soon on our way back to the lake, where Mr Wilby was somewhat bemused by the size of my steak.

"What did that lot cost you?" he asked.

"11 euro for the steak and 1.75 for the wine," I replied as I cut it in half, and I have to say that half filled my frying pan up! It was time for a feast. The next

morning while I had a big gut still full of carcass and a head full of red wine, my right-hand rod was away again and I landed a 23lb mirror. I was really pleased. The only other fish out was a sturgeon, which got caught twice at 44lb and one of the English lads had caught a 30lb mirror.

We had a couple of days to go so I decided to go out in the boat and try to learn something about this style of fishing. I went round in circles for ages but I couldn't really get the hang of it, as the weed kept setting the radar thing off on the back of the boat. In fact, according to what I could see, there were fish everywhere, all over the place, huge shoals of them. I told Little Dave but he said



When I grow up a little.

those shoals I had seen on my radar were probably weedbeds or something. So I totally ignored what the screen told me, went out with a bucket of bait and a baited rig and poured the whole lot over the side. Just as I got to the point when Little Dave disappeared from view, it took me about 20 minutes to get back as I was going all over the place, round in circles, off in the wrong direction and anywhere but where I should be.

I will learn how to do this properly one day, perhaps when I grow up a little. It's a different style of fishing, that's for sure, and one I would like to learn, especially if I ever end up at Cassein. When I go back to it, though, I want a boat with a big gun on the end, so I can shoot things too! How much fun would that be? I could pretend to be in the Navy (or in particular the S.B.S) and tell loads of stories like Uncle Albert! Great!

My Royal Navy rod didn't go, not that I was really bothered as my PVA rod went again the next morning. This time it was a 19.8lb mirror and it signalled the last fish caught that week. So I caught my birthday fish, which was nice and we hoped that big old monster would still come and say hello. He didn't, of course, but there was definitely a buzz about that place. It was almost a French version of the Brook, sitting there on a weedy lake hoping for a real monster mirror. I hadn't felt like that in years and it was great.

The week ended as it had started really, me and Little Dave fished through until our departure time of 9 o'clock on the Saturday morning, while the laid-back brothers packed down on the Friday, not wanting to have to rush themselves on the Saturday. Let me tell you this; those two couldn't rush to do anything, but they are brilliant company and we all headed home on time the next day, having really enjoyed ourselves.

~Ringing The Dinner Bell~

I got back home around 5pm and had a chilli with the seniors. Then I downloaded God knows how many e-mails and went to sleep knackered. I got up early the next morning and headed back to Surrey, armed with my bait freezer and a load of bait. It was time to put my plan into action and let those Frimley carp have some food! I arrived at Gary's, unloaded the bait, had a cup of tea and a chin wag, gave him a kiss, shook Anita's hand and then chugged back down the M3, looking forward to a two-week session and hopefully some fish.

When I arrived at Pit 3, I headed straight for The Secret swim. Further investigations had shown that most people, especially the day lads, left the swim alone and it also turned out that the lads who fished the nights would invariably leave a swim alone if someone was having a go in there. This was a bonus. It had turned out that certain people were concentrating in certain swims, so armed with as much knowledge as I could and bearing in mind that no one was really fishing it, it just had to be the one for me to choose. Ting Tong was having a go at The Noddy, which is next door, and that meant I could impress him with some serious air guitaring.

By the time I got all the way to The Secret I was knackered. There was an extra 20 kilos on my barrow and there was no way I would be pushing it all the way back to the van 48 hours later, that was for sure. I found the spot with the marker rod and gently pulled it back until I reached the gravel. Right, here goes! Two catapults, 15 kilos of boilies, one extremely sore set of knuckles and an hour later, I sat down and cracked open a beer and had a roll-up. Dan and Buster turned up and we sat there talking at first about the swim. Dan knew all about it and I told him my plan.

"Oh mate, that's the way in here. Give it 'em. They love a boilie, especially that Pulse," he said. "You'll have them mate, one of them big common carp. You'll have one I promise you."

It gave me a little confidence. Now, when Dan and Buster are around there is usually something to laugh about. Whether that's Dan calling Buster all the names under the sun because he won't do as he's told, or if Buster is sitting there

with the hump because it's raining, there is always something that brings a smile to your face. We were talking about the birds and the bees and I was explaining how I just couldn't be with the opposite sex for a while, and how my copy of Voluptuous was keeping my pipes clear, so to speak, when Dan wanted to know a little more about my paper wife. I passed him the mag and it's fair to say that he was enthusiastic about the girls featured in there.

"Oh mate, I am this big old bird at the moment and it's great! When I go round there, she ties me up to the bed, covers me in strawberry yoghurt - it has to be strawberry as she doesn't like anything else - then she licks and sucks it off, jumps on top of me, my off, unties me and then goes to the kitchen and cooks me egg and chips. It's always egg and chips! It's brilliant! Fed and within 20 minutes!"

I spat my beer out laughing. The way he recounted the story was just hilarious.

"Can I have her number, too" I almost pleaded.

"No! You can't," he said. "Come on, Buster, you We're off!" and with that they were gone and I sat there laughing while looking out at the lake.



Egg and chips.



Jenny.

I had one rod on the gravel and one in the silt, both on the baited area. Then following Monki's advice I put a PVA bag about four rod lengths away. Everything was in place. It was just a case of whether the fish would turn up. The night passed without any action. I wasn't too concerned and I went back to my motor and grabbed another 10 kilos of boilies. When I got back to the swim I went through the whole process of baiting-up again, so that was 25 kilos in the first 48 hours! I hadn't had even a beep, but I had made the move now, it was just a case of getting on with it.

I had to pack down and meet Gary at Yateley Angling, and then we were off to Sandhurst for a couple of nights. I had just got everything on the barrow when the heavens opened and I got soaked through to the skin. Now that's just rubbish when that happens! We arrived at Sandhurst armed with Jenny and we ended up right on the end of a new wind, armed with loads of bait. Having the boat was great. It was a toy to us and it meant that we could just stick loads of bait in it and drive it around with its lights flashing, whilst generally having fun.

We found some spots with the marker and then boated the baits out; we had them in silt and gravel as we started our campaign proper. The first night passed and Gary couldn't stay for the second night as something had occurred at work.

Just as he was packing down, his silt rod tore off but the fish got away. Gary went home and I stayed on for another night as I could not get back to Frimley yet. My rods remained silent and 24 hours later, I was packed down and pushing my barrow back up the path to The Secret, yet again soaked through, as the heavens had opened up.

I threw the brolly up and sat there a little bit glum-faced and cold. When the rain stopped, I was back baiting up again and I put 5 kilos of boilies back on the spot. Gary phoned that night.

"How you getting on?" he asked.

"Oh mate, I am wet through again and biteless. I could do with a fish right now," I winged back.

"Why don't you have the weekend off and come round ours. Then you can get back to it on Sunday," came his reply.

"Do you know what? I think that's a bloody good idea! I'll cook dinner on Saturday night as a thank you to Anita!" I happily answered. "It's a date. See you tomorrow!"

"Nice one. Don't forget we have you down for a hair appointment as well," he replied.

I had forgotten. Now, this was a plan we had put together to dye my hair and hide the grey bits. I wasn't 100% sure if it was a good one, but after some of my recent pics I knew it needed sorting so when I packed down and went to Gary's on the Friday, I had my hair done and I looked like a right straight away! Gary was laughing, but I wasn't. God it hurts when they pull your hair through that swim cap thing! I told him I was a proper southerner now, but he said I wasn't, as I needed to wear some Burberry shorts. What that was all about I'll never know, but I wore them anyway.

The weekend passed all too quickly and Sunday morning saw me loading the



A proper southerner now.

van up in the rain again, ready for a return to the lake. I had loaded the van up and had just managed to keep dry. I hadn't noticed before but southerners have strange designs on their garages doors - We don't do that in Norfolk, we just have doors. I learned at that very second about door designs because as I pulled the door down, I got absolutely covered in rainwater as it all landed on my head and legs.

I screamed out loud.

Anita's head popped out of the house door.

"Oh Neet, I am so sorry, I didn't mean to say that word in front of you," I apologised and rightly so.



I needed some luck...

"You okay?" she asked.

"Yeah, I'm just wet again," I replied standing there looking like a used unhooking mat. Without further mishap, I chugged off down the motorway and returned to The Secret swim.

Now after the crappy week before I decided to pull out the big guns so I came armed with the old Kelly Kettle and went through my silly little process of making a sacrifice to Cypry, as I felt that I needed some luck. After I had drunk my cuppa and got my plot sorted out, I went through the whole baiting-up process again. I

put in five kilos of boilies and this time I also had a 10 kilo bucket of hemp and I put half of that in, along with half a bottle of hempseed oil, half a bottle of Active-8 Particle Syrup and added a couple of tins of sweetcorn for good measure. Now that should feed them!

Gary rang. "How's it looking, mate?"

"Not bad," I replied.

"Well don't forget, if you get a biggie, doesn't matter what the time is, ring me and we'll get some decent pics." He had seen some of the self-takes-obviously.

It took me about an hour and a half to bait up and by the time I had finished I had bust the line clip on my reel and my baited area must have been massive; the spod was flying about all over the place. The sun was out and I had the lake pretty much to myself once more. I put two rods on the baited area, the right-hand rod went on the gravel and my middle rod went 10 feet behind that into the silt, both rods were fished with dumbbells topped off with plastic corn. My left-hand rod, fished four rod lengths away, was two 10mm boilies, fished with a four-bait stringer. I slackened off my lines and hoped some liners would develop to tell me



Shoulders at 38lb.

that the fish had turned up. They did. At around 10 o'clock I received a couple of good liners and dozed off hoping one would go.

At midnight, my middle rod screamed off and I was into a very powerful fish. It was charging from left-to-right, right-to-left, up and down, in fact all over the place. The rig had dropped the lead, so the fish was high in the water. As it charged around it picked up quite a large ball of weed so when I eventually netted it, my net was full of weed and a large common carp and it looked a proper one as well. Happy days! It weighed 38lbs on the nail and I was to find out later that it was a fish known as Shoulders and definitely one of the A Team.



Made of steel.

What a result! A PB common. Everything had gone according to plan, even my self-take photo, as I only just cut the top of my head off, and I got it done in one go! I recast the rod and sat there grinning away. I nodded off to sleep about 1am. I was up again at 3am, however, as my left-hand rod was now ripping off.

here we go!" I said as I hit the rod. What a beserker this one was! It made a complete of me the whole time it played me. By the time I bundled it into the net, it had taken my other two rods out, nearly made me fall in and then when I went to unhook it, it flipped its tail and smacked me in the face,

just for a laugh I think. I have never been so beaten up by a fish. I lifted it up for a quick pic and it felt as if it was made of steel. It was just pure muscle. It weighed 30.12 and I was bouncing for joy after I had put it back. With everything all tangled up and in a mess and two 30s to the good, I decided not to sort it all out and just jumped in my bag to get some kip.

I was speaking to Moggy the next day and I told him about the incredible power of the fish. He was laughing.

"There's a few in there that fight like that!" he told me. God I hoped not! The



Business as usual.

next day, I baited up again exactly as I had the first day and afterwards I untangled my rods and hoped for some more action. It didn't come and the following morning it was pack down and head to Sandhurst for 48 hours, for a trip with Gary. This time my old beer-robbing mate, Uni, was coming down as he too had 48 hours to kill. He was now starting to chase a lifelong dream in the shape of Heather from the Car Park Lake. We met up at Yateley Angling and got our tickets for the lake. Somehow, we all ended up next to each other, so it was game-on for a social. It wasn't long before it was business as usual, though, as

Gary's phone never stopped ringing from the blokes at work and Uni soon had one of my beers in his hand. I had to take a picture because it just summed the two of them up in one go!

I felt sorry for Gary I really did, he just can't get five minutes peace and his hopes of a 48-hour session with us were out of the window before we had even eaten our tea that night, as something else had happened and he would have to deal with it. It's a southern thing I'm sure. Uni actually repaid his beer later that night, but that was after trying to skank my water off me. I gave him a He just ignored me.



It can't be that easy surely!

It was business as usual on Sandhurst also, and we didn't get a bite for the first 24 hours, even though there is a really good head of fish in there. They just weren't playing the game. We sat there thinking what we could do to get a bite. Just as Gary was about to go home, we came up with the idea that doing something different may be the way forward. It seemed most people had been dumping loads of bait out in the boats all year long and when me and Toni had

gone we caught our fish on single hookbaits or method balls, so I suggested that maybe a single 10mm boilie, a handful of hemp and 10 freebies may be a good idea. I put that little lot in Jenny and off she sailed to about 40 yards out and I dropped my little load there. We packed her up as Gary was going to take her home and 30 minutes after dropping my hookbait the rod roared off and I was in.

"Blimey! It can't be that easy, surely!" I said as I held on to a fish kiting to the right. We got the fish in and it weighed 34.8lbs. I really thought that I had sussed it out having spent a quite a few nights down there blanking. I hadn't of course, as that was that, and the day after I packed down and was soon trudging back across the railway line to Frimley. I could not get down there quickly enough.

I won't bore you with the details, but I went through the whole baiting-up thing on each night and although I got some liners I didn't receive any action at all. Tong was in the Noddy though, so that created some entertainment and so did Danny and Buster. As usual, Buster paid about as much attention to Dan's commands, as I do letters from the bank.

"Sit! Sit! Buster, sit! Buster sit! Buster, you sit! Sit! Oh just do a cartwheel. Buster!" Tong and I looked at each other and just fell on the floor laughing.

"What chance have you got of getting that dog to do a cartwheel?" I asked, laughing away.

"None," came Dan's reply and off they went again to set up for the night.

Oh, I was loving Frimley! Everything was perfect. The other lads were the best; the fish were the the lake is beautiful, the bailiffs were nice when they did their jobs and a giggle when they fished, no stupid rules and I had a new PB. God, I was pleased I had bought a Gold Card!

I wasn't so pleased that I'd put myself down to work the following week though, especially when I got all the way home and there wasn't any work. The credit crunch was now taking hold, hauliers were going bankrupt, and the



24lb.



The bed and breakfast man.

agency had a load of extra employees, some with kids and mortgages, all looking for work. A wasted week later, I was heading back down the motorway early on the Sunday morning dreaming of big fish. It was now the third week in October and time was flying by, I had planned to work the whole of December, so I was really on a mission now!

Back in The Secret and the only one on the lake. Great! I got everything sorted out and started to bait up. Everything was the same, although I had now dropped down

to 10mm and 14mm boilies and baited with them, instead of 18s and 14s. All three rods were cast in the same spots and an hour or so later, I sat back and hoped they would return. A 24lb common signalled an early bite at 9pm and the liners had started. 'Bring it on,' I thought.

A closer inspection of my photo reminded me that I should really remember to put my hat on. If my newly dyed barnet wasn't bad enough, I realised I was starting to pull funny faces as I concentrated on the timer and I wasn't smiling nicely on the photos. In fact, I looked like a right 'Never mind, next time I will get it right,' I thought to myself. I really thought the swim was going to kick-in but it didn't, even though I was receiving liners the whole time, I must have had my chocolate hooks on I reckon.

The next day came and I repeated the whole baiting up process, don't get me wrong I am not whingeing, but my finger was starting to be quite sore from the braided spod rod! I was definitely giving them some grub. I received some liners and again, the rods were quiet.

Tuesday morning came along and it was back to Sandhurst and although we blanked again, me and Gary had a really nice time and ended up having a whole heap of fun on the iPod. By the end of the night we had both learned how to moonwalk and we had played Madness all night long too. I renamed Gary 'the bed and breakfast man' as he liked that track and that was just about all the time

he got to fish, a quick overnighter, followed by a quick carp omelette and he was gone!

We were finding Sandhurst quite frustrating. We should have been

getting bites as there are plenty of carp in there, but still no one else was getting them either so our failure wasn't the end of the world. Thursday came and it was time to pack it all down again and return to Frimley.

I turned up and Tong was in a swim called Double Boards so I quickly popped round to say hello. As we were talking, his rod went off and he then lost one. He had left the Noddy because Joe was on his way down from Carp TV and they were going to do some filming. Back in The Secret, I went through the whole process again and flicked my rods out for the night. The liners started again around 7pm. It was just mad really. If the fish turned up, then the liners would start and you would sit there thinking it would go at any moment, crazy stuff. I had never fished like that before. It was exciting and it made you feel you were doing something right. At 9pm my middle rod was away and a real bruiser of a common eventually came in weighing 28.8lbs. We were back in business. One silly face later and the rod was back out on the money.

Although the liners continued the bites didn't and the rest of the night



A real bruiser.



26lb.

was quiet. Tong was being a film star and telling the whole world about his fascination with cleaning things and I baited up again. The fish returned right on cue at 8pm as the liners started once more. At midnight I was dealing with another 28lb common off the rod in the silt and an hour after that, it was away again with my first mirror out of there weighing 16.8lb. Now this was getting ridiculous!

I didn't take a picture of the mirror, I just put it back. I immediately regretted that, as I know the lads would have been interested in seeing the fish. I then popped the rod back out into the silt and sat back and put the kettle on. After a cuppa it was time to sleep. I didn't get too much of that as the right-hand rod burst into life for the first time and I landed my third common over 25lb in a few short hours. This one weighed 26lb and it looked brand new. With the rod back into position, I retreated to the sleeping bag knackered and smelling of fish, just like my old kebab house days then!

This was more like it and I hoped it would continue. The old plan was starting to come together, now that was a first. It turned out to be a good night for British carp fishing as Tong had landed one of the biggies. It was Black Eye at 42.4. He had permission to put it in the sack and when we spoke at around 6am, he was in a dilemma as the film crew had gone and he wondered how he could get it on video. This was now not a problem as I had a video in my bag and I said I'd be round at 8am when the sun came out and I would video it for him. At 7.30 I was



Black Eye at 42.4.

lying there having a cup of tea and a roll-up thinking what a good night it had been, when my right-hand rod burst into life again and after a slow and heavy fight I netted a big old mirror covered with a good splattering of scales. It was another one of the A Team! 'When your luck's in!' I thought to myself.

I had heard the gate go so I carefully secured the fish still in the net and went

and found the angler, who then came along and took some pics for me. The fish was called the Heavily Plated and weighed 36lbs. It ended a fantastic night's fishing and I then walked round to see Tong.

"You had a busy night, didn't yah?" he asked

"Certainly did," I happily replied. "Come on then, let's have a look at this big common."

We did the photos and filmed the beast. It looked magnificent in the early morning sun and I think it fair to say that our little cleaning lady was over the moon, as he had achieved a big personal goal with this one.

After the photos, I went back to my swim and re-baited. That afternoon I got on the bedchair and tried to catch up on some sleep, just in case the same thing happened on the second night. It didn't. I got one bite and it was a small common weighing 18lbs; it came nice and early at around 10pm. Saturday was a pack down and then a drive all the way home to Norfolk so that I could do a week's work. That work got cancelled so I wasted another week and the funds were getting bashed. With two possible weeks of work cancelled, I was quite a bit of money down from where I had planned to be.



36lbs.

~Arachnophobia~



Now before I start this next little tale, I had better explain that someone else is a big part of this story. That someone else is the lovable Ruth Lockwood from Yateley Angling Centre. It's only fair that she can have her say in what's about to happen, you'll know why at the end! Here goes.

Gary had been doing a sterling job in the background, and every week he was helping me big-time by receiving deliveries of boilies, boiling hemp up and anything else he could do to help. What a top man! He told me to get on with the fishing and that he would worry about the rest. It was making all the difference, as I was quite a long way from home. However, being as busy as he is, and following Chelsea like he does, sooner or later something had to go wrong and as he was on his way up to watch the football this particular Saturday afternoon, his wife Anita was in charge of my Burco in the garage! Bless her.

Now I will totally admit that if I can pull a stroke to go fishing, I will. If I can get a bit of extra bait from Kev, I will. If it means I don't have a flash car, only a crappy van to go fishing in, then so be it, but knowing your mate's wife is cooking your hemp when he's at the football and you're sitting drinking a glass of red wine in Norfolk is a step too far, even for me!

I arrived on the Sunday morning, collected my tackle and thanked her for her efforts. So back down the motorway, an hour and a half's spodding and baiting up, then it was time for a brew. I had a couple of liners so it didn't

really surprise me that at 1 o'clock the following morning I landed a 27lb common. Time for a quick pic. Hat the wrong way round and another silly face caused by trying to smile and count the self-timer down at the same time, then the fish was quickly returned. No problems there.

However, I did have a problem with my left hand. It was really quite sore and it had swollen up. I wondered what might have caused this. At first, I thought it might have been the constant spodding I was doing. I mean, I was giving them the bait big time so it could be a strain injury or something.

When I woke up the next morning my hand was worse. It was starting to concern me a little, and then I noticed quite a grizzly-looking spider on the underside of my brolly. I had never seen one like it before. Now birds would scream and run a mile, but I didn't. I just wondered what type of spider it was and I wondered if it could hurt me. I certainly hadn't seen one like it up in Norfolk, so with a swollen hand I thought I had better text someone and ask them about it. 'I know, I'll text Ruth from Yateley Angling. She'll know,' I thought, so I tapped out a text. 'Hello. It's Spug. Just a quickie. Are there any spiders round here I should

know about? I think I have been bitten.' and I pressed send.

Over to Ruth then:

'Having spent nearly 20 years in the tackle trade, I am fully aware there is much more enjoyment to carp fishing than just catching, and banter among the angling community is at times, legendary. I have learned slowly to adapt to a man's world and enter into this world of banter from time to time. I've played a number of practical jokes on key figures over the years (for a great one on Chilly, see www.stoneyandfriends.co.uk). Every now and then, practical jokes unintentionally turn into nightmares and the story I am about to relate should serve as a lesson to each and every one of you that likes a wind-up. For who could have imagined that an insect bite could lead to my engagement and the hassle it would cause me!

Late Autumn 2008, while fishing at Frimley, Mike 'Spug' Redfern sent me a concerned text describing a 'bite' from a spider that was making his hand swell up quite dramatically. Well I just couldn't resist the opportunity for a wind-up, and knowing Spug was generally up for the craic, I concocted an elaborate tale of flesh-eating spiders living in the adjacent River Blackwater, and backed it up with Deadly Blackwater Spider images of mass destruction.'



I landed a 27lb common.

Back to me now.

I put the kettle on and had a brew. After that, it was a tin of Full Monty covered in pepper. A good start to the day, I thought, then I washed up and got my plot sorted out. On went the kettle and my phone rang. It was Ruth.

"Did you receive my picture message?"

"Nope. I only bring an old phone fishing. Why?" I replied

"I am not messing you about, Spug. You could well be in bother! There have been some documented spider bites in and around the River Blackwater." This was 150 yards away from me. Ruth went on.

"We have even had some customers who have been bitten. Two went into shock and one nearly lost his leg when the bite went septic!"

"I take it you are winding me up here?" I quizzed back.

"No I'm not! You'll know if you are in trouble in the next 48 hours. If you start to feel sick, reel in and get down Frimley Park Hospital straight away!" came her reply.

Bloody marvellous! Now I have known Ruth on and off for years. She used to ring up and place the orders for her shop when I worked at Solar, but I didn't know her well enough to tell if she was winding me up and it caused me a little concern. I mean who would possibly leave someone sitting there by themselves, a long way from home,



It was really quiet sore.



I wondered if it could hurt me.

thinking they might go into shock because of a spider bite, if it wasn't true?

Back to Ruth.

'To be honest, I never thought for one minute that Spug would fall for it, but to my amazement he sounded truly worried. Despite my surprise and being in fits of laughter immediately after the call, my conscience got the better of me when I got home that evening, and thinking Spug would be sitting up all night worried about slipping into a coma, I was about to call him to rectify the situation, when a text arrived. It was cheeky old Spug, suggesting that he was lying naked on his bedchair, doing all he could to encourage the said spider to bite his manhood as the swelling might come in useful! So I rested a little easier with the knowledge that he realised I had been joking.'

I put it to the back of my mind for a bit, went through the now painful process of baiting-up, and repositioned my rods for the night. I made a slight change this time though as I moved the right-hand rod six feet further back, off the gravel and into the silt, as most of my bites were coming to the silt rod. The evening came along and so did a couple of phone calls, Gary first.

"Hello mate, how you doing? Hey, you haven't heard anything about these spiders in and around the river Blackwater have you? Apparently they have been on the local news and everything. I am a little worried, Ruth has told me that I might go into shock and that I could become quite ill"

"No mate I haven't heard anything about that," he said. "Is she winding you up?"

"Gary I really don't know. I'll ask Moggy," so I rang Steve up and described the spider to him and told him the tale.

"Yeah, I know the spider you mean. I had one in my bivvy over on Pit 4 the other week, but it didn't bite me. I haven't heard anything else," he replied.



Ruth has told me I might go into shock.

Hmm, I was still unsure. Anyway, I was talking to Knighty at around 7.30pm when my middle rod burst into life and I was connected to another hard-fighting common, which went into the net at 32.10. That made my hand feel a whole lot better! More success with the self-takes, as the first pic was a stunner! I thought I had better do it again and the second attempt was slightly better, although I still looked like I was being fingered by a man with rather large hands. Oh well, at least I was catching them and that was all that mattered. This was my fifth 30 in less than a month. Happy Frimley days! Out went the rod and I phoned Knighty back.



The first pic was a stunner.

After all the excitement of the day, at 9pm it was time to get into bed. The nights had started to turn cold, as we were now in the first week of November. At 1 o'clock in the morning, I was back out on the rods again. The middle rod was in meltdown and I was hanging on the end as best I could. This fish took me all over the swim and eventually it got stuck in the overhanging trees just to my right. I could see it on the surface, a big golden common and it looked like a 30, too. I just could not get it out of the trees. There was no point trying to pull its head off, this would just take a little time and a bit of thought. I grabbed the net and made my way along the trees to my right, I



I still looked like I was being fingered.



It looked like a thirty too.

just managed to get the net under the fish, although I got a wet foot in the process. With the fish safely in the net, I cut the line and everything came out without any hassle. I weighed the fish at 30.8 and I punched the air for joy. A quick pic and the fish was safely returned. I put the kettle on and sat there looking at my pics on the camera. 'Oh well.'

Now one thing I am a little about is my hooks being sharp. I usually change them after every fish, but I was so happy to have caught two 30s that I didn't bother to change my rig, I just flicked it back out on the spot. Before I had got back to sleep I regretted this as the same rod went again at 2am and a powerful fish charged off at a very high rate of knots. 'It can't be another 30,' I thought to myself as I tried to slow it down, 'it just can't be.' The fish gave a good performance and the whole time I was worrying about the hook and whether or not it would stay in.

The fish came in close and I saw it flash in the head torch. 'Blimey! It is,' I thought again. After a few minutes under the rod tip I netted another 30-plus common, and as I lifted the net, it felt like a high 30, too. 'What a night,' I thought as I carefully took the hook out. Up on the scales the needle swung round past the 30 pound mark and settled on 12lb. What? 42lb! No way! I lowered the fish and raised the scales once more. 'Oh my god!' I thought. It does weigh 42lb! I've caught a 40lb common. Yes! Get in there!' Now I had a dilemma. Did I want to screw these photos up like I had the others? What do you think? No way!

I placed the fish back into the net, secured it in the edge, and rang for help, Moggy first.

"Ra ra ra ra STELLA!" came his reply.

'I'll try, Gary,' I thought. I rang his mobile. No answer. I tried again. No

answer, 'I'll have to do this myself,' I thought. My phone rang. It was Gary.

"Are you alright?" he asked. "Spug, are you okay?"

"Okay?" I shouted back, jumping up and down with delight. "Okay? 42lb of common carp, what the hell do you think?"

"Oh mate, oh mate, nice one. I am on the way!" The phone went down. I paced up and down in that swim shaking with excitement, smoking roll-up after roll-up, while checking the fish and drinking tea. After what seemed like an age (actually it was 20 minutes), I saw a head torch coming down the path and I went to the gate to let him in. It was so funny; we just cuddled each other like a married couple and jumped up and down still embracing each other screaming, "YES! YES! YES!" After we had finished that, Gary was off doing a moonwalk and I laughed again.

"Shall we get the pics done?" he said.

"Yeah why not, eh?" I replied. We did the pictures and at one point Gary said, "Take that silly hat off! Let's have one with the old hoody up!"

"Oh, okay," I replied.

With the fish safely returned we sat there like excited school kids, drinking tea and recounting the whole story. Definitely a team effort that one, especially bearing in mind Anita had boiled the hemp up for me!

"Do you know what?" Gary said. "When the phone rang we thought you had gone into shock and needed rescuing or something. You have to remember last time we spoke it was about your spider bite!" (which had since disappeared)

"Bloody hell, mate. I forgot all about that," I said laughing. "Bloody Ruth! Right I'll get my own back on her." We hatched a plan.

God I was buzzing. It was a really special moment for me and Gary. He, along with his wonderful family, had helped me so much and this fish was the highlight of everything we had worked for.

"I'll put it on the cover of the book, Gaz" I said. He just grinned and said, "I'd better go. It's now 3.30 and I have to start work at 6am."

He left and I just lay on my bedchair. I couldn't sleep, numbed by what had just happened. When 6am finally came I started to text my news to everyone. I texted Tong 'I liked your 42, so much, I went and caught one myself!' He rang laughing like he does, "Well done, Spugster!" Moggy then rang and made his apologies for not being able to do the pics, "Oh mate, don't worry it's all cool." We were trying to work out which fish it was when the right-hand rod pulled tight and the clutch started to spin, "Oh mate, I'm in again! I gotta go!"





"The Big Fully Scaled" . 37.10





I dropped the phone and ran to my rod. The fish was a lot easier to control than the three previous ones had been, so I thought it was a little one. How wrong I was! A bloody great big fully-scaled rolled in the net and it looked enormous, 'Jesus!' I stared down at it. It was simply mind-blowing. In fact, I would go so far as to say, it looked staggeringly beautiful, easily the most magnificent fish I have ever seen. I weighed her at 37.10 and it was a fish known as The Big Fully. What a result! There would be no self-takes with this puppy that was for sure. This was a fish of a lifetime!

I secured the net and ran to the gate hoping someone would come by to take a pic. Literally two minutes later, a chap came past all suited on a posh pushbike. I jumped up and down waving my arms at him and screaming for assistance. He stopped and I apologised for the fact that I looked a complete in all my camo gear, but I really needed a picture.

"Okay," he kindly replied and he followed me into the swim.

I chucked the camera at him and said, "Just get my head in and all of the fish, that'll do." He took a few pics and said he had to go for a meeting.

With the fish returned I just sank back on my bedchair, totally blown away. Three 30s and a 40 in 12 hours. 'It doesn't get much better than that,' I thought as I carried on texting my news. I got one back from Ruth 'Well done, Spiderman!'

I had to pack down and leave for Sandhurst that morning, so I was heading for Yateley Angling anyway; this was good as I could get on with my plan to avenge Ruth's wind-up. The plan was to get some photos of her with some sort of plastic spider, so we could have a laugh in these pages. She duly obliged and said laughing,

"I'll do anything to get in a book," somewhat tongue in cheek I think really. What she didn't plan on though was that I would carry out my threat to send our 'friends again' shot into Carpworld and announce our 'engagement' to all and sundry. I explained that she had now entered a game of 'Spugmanji' and just like the film Jumanji, and when you roll the dice you have to play the game, right to the end. A quick phone call to Gaz Hood at Carpworld and the rest, as they say, is history!

For the first time ever, I will let someone else have the final say on something! Thanks Ruth, it was a good giggle after all. Over to you then!

'The next time I saw Spug was a few days later, just after his monumental catch from Frimley. By the look on his face, initially I thought I was going to get a real mouthful! He stuck his hand out to shake mine and announced, 'Fair play

mate, you really got me going for a minute there.’ He then relayed the full events of the ‘night of the spider,’ the initial worry of the bite, made much worse by my contribution of course, and went on to relive the capture of his 40lb carp with typical Spug-like enthusiasm.

With similar enthusiasm, he began to rattle off an idea for a book of funny, fishing related tales he was working on. Spug clearly wanted to include the ‘spider’ episode and asked for a few photos to accompany the story and to call it quits, so to speak. The local newsagent kindly provided us with a comedy Halloween spider and before I knew it, we were larking around like Morecambe and Wise in front of the camera and a declaration of ‘Spugmanji.’



Friends again.

And so to my engagement. Spiderman’s revenge, aka Spugmanji, became a reality only a few weeks later, when flicking through my advertisers’ copy of Carpworld, I spotted that ridiculous picture of the two of us in front of YAC accompanied with news of our impending marriage. While I immediately saw the funny side, others in my life wouldn’t necessarily share my view in the days that followed. Can you imagine your parents’ reaction? An angry father convinced you have lost your mind and a distraught mother, wondering why she is always the last to know what happens in her daughter's life.

If that wasn't bad enough, I received nearly 100 text messages and endless pages of emails of best wishes and congratulations. I even had to endure a very public presentation of a bottle of Champus and the biggest bunch of flowers I have ever seen, and I clearly remember wishing the floor would swallow me up as I sheepishly enlightened 30-plus applauding work colleagues that my engagement was actually fictitious!

Eventually the ‘spinster of the parish weds Spiderman’ backlash subsided and life returned to normal. Spug and I did end up making a faithful commitment to each other soon after, a truce on Spugmanji ‘til death us do part!’

~And They Just Kept Coming~

I returned to Sandhurst and the blanking continued. It didn't matter, though, as I was still in a daze from the previous 48 hours. I returned to Frimley and blanked for a further two days. Gaz Fareham was down so I could impress him with some air guitaring. Iain Stevens came down with an amazing pile of photos, which just about covered all the fish in the lake, from about 20lbs upwards, so we set about working out which fish I had landed at 42.4.

"Charlie," he said straight away. "Look at its mouth, it's a dead giveaway."

Nice one. And apparently it was one of the more elusive ones. 'Lucky me,' I thought. 'That'll do!'

Work had picked up a little now, so I was back up the motorway on the Saturday, and the following week was spent putting some beer tokens in the bank. After the week's work I was heading back down to Surrey again and was back in the garage, having a cuppa with Gary.

"Oh mate, things are going well now aren't they?" he said.

"Yeah," I replied. "I still can't believe that last one. I've got to tell you though, it's the first time I have not felt like 'one fish willy' ever, mate."

"Really? Why?" he answered.

"I dunno," I came back with. "I just felt like that."

"Er, okay." He looked at me in a bit of a strange way. "Your hemp's over there."

"Cheers mate," I replied. "Love you."

"Yeah, love you too," he said and I was back heading for Pit 3.

What I actually meant by that, was that for the first time ever I felt like I was getting somewhere. Now that may sound a bit daft, I don't know, I think it's just that a 40lb common is a pretty special fish, like Two Tone I guess, and someone's old words of, 'one big special fish, an angler does not make,' had always rattled round in my empty head and now I had two and it felt nice. Not that I would confess to being an angler, but it's nice to think you might be, from time to time!

Back on the lake I went through exactly the same ritual and sat back having a beer with Surfing Paul, who had come down for a quick overnighter in the



I was holding up another 30.

Noddy. We sat there with Bob Marley on, as I couldn't get him into a bit of headbanging. The next morning came and he was off. It was starting to get cold now and the frosts were beginning to hit. The rods were quiet and I was wondering if my time had been and gone, but I wasn't worried as the lake had been more than kind to me anyway.

I re-baited and hoped they would return again. At 11 that night they did and the kindness and the silly faces continued as I was holding up another 30, this time weighing 31lb. Blimey! Five over 30lb on the bounce! This was so alien to me. I sat there shaking my head in disbelief. 'It can't continue. It just can't,' I thought to myself, but it did just three hours later, as my middle rod was away again and after a slow fight an enormous common rolled into the net! I know it sounds silly, but I was just numb. I couldn't believe what was happening to me. Don't forget that I



I didn't even make it to the fish.

was the bloke that couldn't catch a 30, and had only ever caught 10 prior to the Gold Card escapade and yet here I was with six on the bounce. I couldn't take it all in. I was blown away by my luck. Whatever I had done, it worked. Maybe it was the dumbbells? Maybe it was all the bait? God knows! It was business as usual when I took the pic and I didn't even make it to the fish before the camera went off! My second attempt went fine though. I was quite surprised that the fish 'only' weighed 36.10, as it looked every ounce a 40-pounder! The next morning I was talking to my mate, 'nice bacon, Matt Damon' or more commonly known as Matt, about it all, and trying to work out why it had gone the way it had.

"Tell you what, mate," he said. "Maybe it's just the fact that you've just put yourself out and earned them. Effort equals reward, chap!"

"Oh mate, God knows, but I am buzzing!" I replied.

It was pack down the next morning and I went to Kingsmead 1 as by now, we had fallen out of love with Sandhurst. I was supposed to stay down there for a few nights and Gary was going to come and join me on the Saturday for a well earned three-night session.

"Oh mate, you ain't going to like this. It's rammed out," I explained to him.



It looked every ounce a 40-pounder!

"You're joking," he replied.

We cancelled our trip and I went home early. We were gutted, as this just about signalled the end of my time in Surrey for a few months and the time had gone so quickly that we had only managed four nights fishing together, and that was not what we'd hoped for. I managed to dive down for a couple of nights just before the Sandown show but I blanked.

The year had turned out to be the best in my whole life, for all of the reasons you have just read about. Frimley was just amazing. I had another 'family' in Surrey. I'd had a 58lb common in France, Maiden had conquered the world and I hadn't been dumped for once. Great!

Reality was restored and I drove a lorry for the next five weeks on a night shift, trunking beer to Nottingham and back every night. It couldn't have been further away from where I had been for the previous three months, but I didn't care, I was still pinching myself.

CARPING MAD!

Chapter 12.5



Mike 'SPUG' Redfern



"Open a bottle or two, and smell the grapes"



~Insomnia~

Christmas yielded its usual array of presents for a mature adult like myself; that'll be a pair of Homer Simpson slippers and a Detector then. I had one week's trucking to go and then it was planned for three solid months sitting here, typing this up. Time to get on with it.

I managed the odd trip out to the Catch syndicate, in the vain hope of the big common or leather, but I only managed to blank. It was only a diversion at best, but it got me out of the house so it served its purpose nicely, because I hate being cooped up in four walls.

Early March is the usual Carpin' On show, at Five Lakes and we had a trade show to attend. Shaun Mcwinkle had stupidly said I could share a room with him and that meant I could snore all night and keep him awake, which I did. None of my show clothing fitted because no one had realised quite how well my plan to eat the olds out of house and home had gone. Other than that, the show went really well.



The show went really well.

As I was halfway down to Surrey, I thought it would be a good idea to have a week off and return to Frimley. I went back to Gary's after the show, managed to rob some wine off him, and then returned to the lake on the Monday morning. The winter had been awful. Nearly everywhere had been frozen up and I think I am right in saying that in the three months since I had been away, there had been very little out, maybe only one 30. I didn't head for The Secret swim because I didn't see the point. What had happened in there was something that had been cultivated by heavy baiting, so I headed for a swim called The Double Boards, as it was empty. The Double Boards is a good swim and usually it's taken, but there were only two other people on the lake and they were fishing elsewhere. I think the chap opposite had caught a couple of fish, maybe even both were 30s I am not sure, so with a couple of bites being had on the lake there could be a chance, although I wasn't that hopeful.

I got into the swim around 9am and I felt pretty knackered. I had a quick feel about with the marker and it seemed like there was a gravel bar at about 35 yards, with silt behind it. There was also the bar to chuck at in front of me, with an island sitting on top of it and the odd spot here and there which felt nice. Still, I had plenty of time so I chucked out a zig on the right-hand rod, a PVA bag on the left and then stuck a dumbbell on the middle rod and fired it at the back of the island on top of the bar. It landed soft, so I chucked it again, it landed soft once more. A third chuck and a two-second drop later I felt it land on something hard. 'That'll do me,' I thought. With the rod in position, I quickly threw up my brolly and then laid on my bedchair in need of some beauty sleep. Around 30 minutes later I had a slow take on the zig and I ran out and reeled in a pop-up. 'Yep. Certainly got the hang of that one then,' I thought as I re-chucked the rod. Back on the bedchair and back to sleep.

Two hours later at 2.30 in the afternoon, my middle rod dropped back, so I got up and struck it. Fish on! The fish kited slowly to the right and it felt like a good'un. 'It can't be another 30 surely!' I thought to myself. There was a chap walking round with his dog and he came to lend a hand.

"Do you want me to net it for you?" he asked.

"Why not, aye," I replied. Someone to net the fish and take a photo if we got it in and in the daylight. I was liking this swim! We did net the fish and it looked a possible 30 as it was quite long. It wasn't until I lifted it out though that I realised that it was well over 30. In fact, it weighed 36.6! What a jammy git! Now this was a lucky fish in my eyes, as I didn't really know the swim at all. I hadn't put any bait



This was a lucky fish.

out or really done anything to earn it, just a two-second drop with a donk on the lead. 'Oh well, that's seven on the bounce,' I thought. 'It's time for a cuppa. When your lucks in, it's in!'

The other tickle about this fish was that it was my 20th English 30 and that was a little personal goal for me. After we had taken some pics, I sorted my rods out properly. I left the zig and the island rod but on the left-hand rod, I spoddied out five kilos of hemp and a pound of 10mm baits just into the silt behind the

gravel bar. The evening came and I sat there watching the sun go down. God, I was pleased to be back!

The lake was quiet and I received no more action, so it was back over to Sandhurst after having a cup of tea with my 'fiancée' Ruth, at Yateley.

I arrived at Sandy and Chemo was set up in The Pipes.

"Jump in here, Spug. I've had a couple out. Aim at that tree over there at about 80 yards, put on either maggots or plastic corn, and you'll have 'em!" he said, without charging. A free tuition, just what the doctor ordered, especially bearing in mind how useless I was on there!

As Ian left he said, "Give us a bell if you get one." So, I sorted my gear out and flicked a dumbbell straight out where he had told me to cast, thinking that I had a rig that couldn't fail. Well it did (obviously). I was speaking to Tong just as I was packing down two days later, and he told me that he had been talking to Chemo, and that Chemo was surprised that I hadn't heeded his advice and then blanked. Apparently, Tong's reply was, "Well, that's Spug for you," and they both laughed. Oh well, I could go back to Frimley and hoped to get in the Double Boards again as I had left all that particle in there the other day.

When I returned there was a nice fella called Lawrence in the swim. He was from Sparsholt College and was just doing the day. I asked him if he minded me setting up behind him as I wanted to have a go on my baited area and he said he didn't. We sat there drinking tea and chatting all day, until it was time for him to leave. As he left just on dark, I flicked the rods out. I had put the marker on my line and was happy that my left-hand rod had hit the baited area. The other two just landed where they landed and I thought, 'that will do me for tonight. I'll sort them out properly in the morning.' It wasn't long after that I jumped into the sleeping bag and dozed off, or at least I tried to. I was being hit by swans that kept tapping my lines. Every time I looked out I heard a beep. I was being hassled by two swans. Great!

I got another couple of beeps around 2am and when I looked out there were no swans, so I got up and walked over to the rods. I saw the indicator rise slightly on the left-hand rod, so I picked it up and struck. There was a fish on! 'That'll do,' I thought as I played the fish in. It didn't fight that hard and I soon had it in the net. As I lifted it out, I knew it was another good one. Up on the scales she weighed 31lb. A big, golden, round common, what a fish! I was delighted to say the least.

There was a chap set up round the corner from me in Daisy Bay, so I thought



I would pop round to see if he was awake and could do a picture for me. He was.

"Blimey mate! How come you are awake at this time in the morning, are you an insomniac or what?" I asked, all full of myself,

"No mate, not all. I have been sitting here listening to your rod going for ages," he replied.

"Yeah, bloody swans, eh! They've been crazing me all night!" I answered.

"No mate, I'm not talking about that. Didn't you hear everyone shouting at you? Your rod ripped off for ages!" he said.

"You winding me up?" I asked back.

He wasn't. Apparently I had slept through the take, what a noddy! I can't tell you why as it doesn't normally happen to me. It could have been the swans, who knows? I mean, all the fishing in The Secret had proved that I didn't sleep through runs, but I bloody well had this time, How embarrassing! It took the hundreds and thousands off my trifle I can tell you. We did the photos and I reeled all my rods in, feeling unhappy about what had happened. Fortunately, it all happened in open water, but that wasn't the point. I didn't sleep too much after that, but early the next morning, I put on my remotes and made my apologies to anyone who had witnessed my 'dead sleeping'. The following day I was of course the butt of the jokes, but to be fair I deserved that.

Surfing Paul returned from some faraway country, Danny and Buster were about, Tony the head bailiff made an appearance and then Iain Stevens popped down to say hello. Yeah, it was good to be back at Frimley! Gary came over for a brew and Moggy called me Golden Now that cheered me up again. You know something has gone well if someone like Moggy calls you Golden that's for sure!

This was the last week of that season and things were due to change as a syndicate was about to start on the 1st of April. There was no way I could expect to get in a swim and fill it full of bait to try to emulate what I had before. Frimley had been so kind to me. All the lads were the best of the best and I have never known anything like it. I sat there and we talked about whether or not I would come back for the last couple of months of my Gold Card. Maybe for a 'goodbye Spug' barbecue on Pit 4, but I pretty much decided that would be that, as my memories would always be treasured and what a way to end my time on there. I fished 29 nights in total, I caught 23 fish including Ten 30s and a 40, how lucky was that?

~The Essex Boys~

"Spug, you imbemong. Are you up for a weekend on a southern stillwater with Damo?" asked Knighty.

"Yes mate. I would love to!" I replied, although I was a little unsure of just what an imbemong was.

"Right then you inbred, next Saturday. I will give you all the details later. Gotta go. I have to take another call." Typical long chat with Kev, then!

It had been 10 years since we had fished together and that was at Darenth in a carp match. He had been next door, with Rob Tough so I had an idea what was coming.

Now we are always going on about the north/south divide. I think they are all a bunch of hairdressers and Kev just thinks I'm sheep and farmyard animals. Good job he hasn't seen the human ones then! Anyway, it was going to be something new and no doubt a lesson in life, so I looked forward to a re-education at least.

It was intended for a meet at 3pm on the Friday, but I had a voluptuous date planned in a Little Chef on the outskirts of Norwich at 11am, so I had to be on the ball with my timings for once. Friday morning at 9am the phone rings.

"I think it's off. Something has happened with Damo (Edna Everidge), I'll let you know!" says Knighty as he puts the phone down. Now what? Should I load my motor or shouldn't I? Typical Essex girls; couldn't organise a cup up in a brewery! It was nothing new. It's a southern thing. They are all the same south of Ipswich, too busy brushing their hair and talking about fuel-injected cars, whatever they are. In Norfolk we like to plan things a little better, (although some of us are always late). So did I have to load the van or not? I had a date after all! I had had my year off from the opposite sex and wasn't against the idea of a woman at all, especially as I was now three weeks away from moving out again and my copy of Voluptuous was starting to look a little worse for wear. I was pacing up and down wondering what to do when eventually he phoned back.

"Ha ha, you inbred! See you at three it was all a wind-up!"



I replied, now on the edge of being late for my Little Chef interview. I threw everything in the van and got there five minutes late, which is actually very good for me. An hour or so later I was heading down sarf (or south to you and me). We met in a boozier (there's a surprise) and the first thing I noticed were the ballet shoes he had on.

"What is going on there?" I asked.

"Lacoste, mate," came the reply.

Now what is that all about? If that wasn't bad enough, his

The neatest fishing tackle you have ever seen. partner in crime turns up looking like Al Capone! Wearing dark clothes and wearing sunglasses that had a name written on them, I think it said Rayburn. Now where I come from, that is a top of the range cooker that you chuck wood into; strange boys. Of course, it couldn't be one pint, either; it had to be a few.

We arrived at the lake and then out came a funny hat and the neatest fishing tackle you have ever seen. I went to my swim and left them to it. I had been told to find some gravel and have a feel about with the lead. I did eventually find some, so sent the Jenny out to deliver some bait, I hadn't even got that one out, when our ballet dancer was away and into one.

"Come and have a look at this, you imbecile!" Kev said.

He was hanging on to one which was pulling hard to his right. In typical Essex style and with a few choice words, the fish had no chance of evading capture and was soon in the net. It was mid-20.



Look at that.

"There you go you, inbred! Look at that!"

As much as it pains me to admit, that was a bloody quick bite and I was then duly reminded how much I liked sheep! Oh well, back to the swim.

I flicked my left rod up the margin and hunted for some more gravel. I couldn't find any so I thought maybe a different approach may be in order. The silt was quite thick so I put on a long hooklink with a snowman rig that barely sunk. Out came Jenny again and I loaded her right up with pellet and some boilies. I sent her out, right above the thickest silt and dropped my load. With the rods sorted out it was time for tea. This of course had to be a 'taake aht ruby', which to the rest of the world means, take out Indian. It would have to include king prawn butterflies and king prawn vindaloo. I agreed. There were a couple of beers but I was quite surprised that more didn't go down. I guess they were used to cocktails with umbrellas in.

I grabbed my old paraffin light and lit it. It's fair to say they were impressed and made such remarks as, "Blimey! I haven't seen one of them for years!" which I guess is a compliment. The night turned cold and I mean really cold. Freezing fog surrounded us and there was soon a set of ballet shoes underneath a bedchair,

while Pink Floyd played on my iPod and someone got into the sleeping bag. It didn't take me long to follow suit as I was freezing and I think by 9pm we had all crashed out, which was good for them because, unlike me, they needed their beauty sleep.

I was away with the Essex fairies when all of a sudden my middle rod, on the deep silt, burst into life. A fish charged off in the other direction and I stood there shaking in the freezing fog. After a while, the fish came closer, but as soon as I put



A long and heavy mirror carp.

the head torch on, all I could see was a white blur of fog. I turned the head torch off and used the light of the moon to land the fish. I looked down at the unhooking mat and there lay a long and heavy mirror carp. It looked like another 30! I was shaking my head in disbelief. The fish weighed 33.10, so I scuttled off to wake one of our southerners up. Now if I thought I was dozy on my last fish at Frimley, then Kev was simply dead! I carefully pushed and prodded him, then shook him. It was hopeless. No doubt dreaming of imbemongs, or more likely pretending, as he didn't want to get out in the cold. Damo did though and we eventually got a picture done, on about the fourth attempt, as the flash kept

picking up the fog. It turned out that Damo had caught a couple of mid-20s and Kev had landed another and lost one too. Bloody hell, six bites as quickly as that, in about minus six!

When we all got up the next day, everything bar the lake was frozen solid. Washing the vindaloo off Kev's plate had meant that all of his cutlery was iced solid on it.



Iced solid.

It didn't take long before we were back in the sleeping bags and waiting for the sun to reappear, which it did. As the sun started to melt the fog and the ice, we got our rods back out again as no one had bothered to re-chuck them in the night



We got our rods back out again.

because it had been so cold. Me, I was sitting in there in a bit of a daze. That was now nine on the bounce and I just prayed that I could catch one more and make it 10. Now that would be really special. Still with five out so quickly, more would surely follow.

Having being so royally looked after the night before, it was now my turn to contribute to the scran (that's food to you and me). I had come armed with bread, bacon and eggs, which didn't seem fair considering the Ruby, but that was what I had been told to contribute, so I thought I would make a McSpug.

Now a McSpug is basically a bacon sandwich with an egg thrown on top of it and another bit of bread thrown on top of that, all covered in sauce and I thought it would impress them. What an epic it turned out to be. Have you ever cooked bacon for an Essex boy? Let me tell you it's easier to get a degree in astro-physics. My sunny side up and perfectly cooked crispy bacon sandwich with none of that rind on it was delivered about an hour later, presented perfectly and to order, although it has to be said that one was not so fussy as the other.

The afternoon came and so did their mate

he seemed like

quite a nice chap to me. Now I don't always understand their language and the things they say, but I did understand something was going on in the

background, as Kev and the Licker (wonderful names in Essex) passed a small black plastic bag around behind Damo's back. I wondered if it was something exciting like perhaps a load of knocked-off gear, but I was somewhat confused to find out that it was a bag of rubber ducks! 'Strange,' I thought. Perhaps it was a new carp toy or something.

The next hurdle we had to overcome was ordering tea. I mean, how hard could that be when it was fish and chips?

"I'll have an 'addock and a wally.



A new carp toy or something.



Do they have no shame

What about you?" one said.

"Cod and a wally for me," the other replied.

"What's a wally?" I asked.

"It's a gherkin," came the answer.

"Why?" I asked.

"It just is."

"Oh all right then."

Anyway, when Damo went to collect the scrán, Kev and his mate put these rubber ducks everywhere; in Damo's sleeping bag, rucksack, on his leadcore, in his tackle box. I was confused. It had something to do with a rubber duck race on a river years before and Damo had thrown a paddy about them filling his swim up or something. I didn't ask for any further information. Licker went and we ate our tea. Kev lost one on dusk right at the same time he had received his first bite the night before. I really thought we were going to clump them. We didn't. That was the last bite. I think the cold snap had finished it off. It wasn't quite so cold on the second night, but we had run out of time. All that remained was another McSpug and then we were off back home.

I had enjoyed myself and learned a lot about a far away culture and dress code. As we stopped and said our farewells, I looked down at their silly shoes. Do they have no shame?

~Children Of The Banned~

Well that's it, thank God! I am sure you are now as bored of reading this as I am of typing it! It's taken me just about three months solid and I need to get out of the house, as I am going stir-crazy. The sun is starting to shine and I have a few beer tokens left, so I am going angling until they run out. What's going to happen after that? Who knows! The only thing I know is that I am on the move again now this is done. My parents are punching the air for joy! Their larder is empty and my belly is full so it's time to lose weight and maybe find a wife.

I hope you have enjoyed the book. Some bits I have, and some bits I haven't but that has been the nature of my life, so it's a fair representation really. I could have swerved certain issues, but having spoken to my nearest and

dearest, they all agreed it would be better to tell the whole story, warts and all (rightly or wrongly) because that was the nature of the beast, so to speak. I realise I have made some mistakes along the way. If there is any regret, then maybe it is the fact that I overreacted with people and let them get to me at certain times, especially in the early days. I have written this book as I felt at the time everything took place, which is why certain things were mentioned.

Working in the angling trade has taught me that you have to be thick skinned and it doesn't matter what you say, do or catch, someone will have a go and these days it just makes me laugh. If you look at the forums, it's usually the same people all the time, and usually they make three or four posts a day! What's that all about? Perhaps if they spent more time fishing rather than on the net, then they may be able to up their PBs to a hefty 24lbs! (That should get 'em going!)

Anyway, I am currently on a 12-month ban for cracking a joke about certain people with a certain lack of brainpower so I won't see all the crap anyway. Crack on you nerds! Sorry if there's a comma or a full stop in the wrong place, (NOT!) and does it really matter anyway?

Someone said to me recently, "Cor, you're lucky doing all the fishing you are

these days", and in some ways I have to agree but the only reason I can do a bit, is because I have made the choice to live in digs and work 70 hours a week when work calls. I then live on tinned food and try my hardest to catch them. Like I said during the book, I am not a gifted angler at all, but I do try my hardest, so if I want to catch them I have to put myself out and go without. It was only really 2005 and 2008 where I spent any serious time angling, the rest was, as you read, while trying to balance work, mortgages and girlfriends.

To me, 'lucky' would be some sort of stability and of course to get my stuff out of storage! Don't get me wrong, I have always made the best of things and even now, when in reality I have a lot of things to sort, I am just happy doing my thing. I was chatting to my mate Goochy the other day, and he asked me what makes a good angler?

"That's easy," I replied. "A good angler is someone who always enjoys their fishing."

"Do you know what?" he replied. "You're right," and that sums it up all nicely, I think.

In my opinion we don't laugh enough and it's hardly surprising when you look at how the world is changing. It's all gone mad, we have children knifing children to death, our armed forces (who we should be proud of) are told not to wear their uniform out in public in case they get abused. Feral teenagers are running riot and this political correctness thing has gone way beyond sensible. We need a Minister for Common Sense and I may well write Gordon Brown a letter telling him that I am the man for the job. Let's hope he doesn't read this though!

So what of the future? Well, who knows? My brother's little boy, Thomas, has picked up a rod and started to learn how to catch fish on their Sunday morning outings. Maybe in the future we'll be sharing a beer around a barbecue, with the rods out. I hope so.

The big common and the leather still elude me from the Catch syndicate and maybe The General is in there; it wouldn't surprise me at all. I have also joined Monks pit in Cambridgeshire. Monks has really blown me away, even though I have only just started on there. It's absolutely full of big carp with about eleven 40s and more than 120 over 30! Add to that a few sensible and fair rules, a syndicate of nice lads and fish that normally only come out during the day and you'll know why I think I have found heaven! And hopefully a few years worth of good fishing.

So was it all worth it? That's the real question. I don't know, is the answer!

Things have started well on Monk's, Gilcluster at 38.



When I look back at my life, sometimes I think it was. It has certainly been entertaining to say the least, but then I see my friends, managing to keep the same address for more than 12 months and having fun with their children and often wish I had chosen the family route in life. Therein lies the problem; you are what you are, and you can fight it if you want, or you can just accept it and go with the flow. I love my fishing and it will be a big part of my life for as long as it needs to be, unless of course, a nymphomaniac, multi- millionairess, with great big boobies comes along and then and only then, will I give it up for a week or two!

Finally, will there be a Carping Mad 2? I hope not! I really need to get my together and buy a car with doors that lock, which I can park outside my castle, where I live in the land of make believe. I did think of maybe doing a 'how to do it' book, but it's all been done before hasn't it? Perhaps a carp fisherman's Kama Sutra would be good. We could call it 'Carpa Sutra' and have pictures of birds dressed up in camo, in strange and alluring positions, while holding things. I can feel myself going off on a tangent again.

Oh well, maybe it should be a 'how to do it' book after all. It shouldn't take too long, as I don't confess to know a whole lot really! Tell you what, as a first, I'll give you two books for the price of one! Yeah sod it! We'll stick another book on the back of this one, for free!

Enjoy yourselves and please remember it's only fishing, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with having a laugh!

Oh, and by the way, remember Shiny Toys' retriever, mentioned in Fordy's chapter? It was a male dog! Eeeuw!

Spug

(Now author, although I prefer the term 'Dreamweaver')

August 15th 2009



Nothing wrong with having a laugh.

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Anglers National Line
Recycling Scheme
Press Release

NIFCA (Northumberland Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authority) are delighted to be supporting the Anglers National Line Recycling Scheme (ANLRS) in Northumberland. The scheme was launched in Sussex in 2016, then rolled out nationally in 2018 and aims to provide a route to recycle angling line including braided fishing lines, monofilament and fly lines. The aim is to establish an easy way to discard and recycle these lines to prevent them from ending up in the marine environment or landfill. We routinely see angling lines washed up or discarded on beaches throughout the district, often tangled into balls with other debris. The line is extremely strong, does not breakdown easily, and is a threat to marine wildlife.

ANLRS hope to promote and spread the word about this work but need support from other organisations. NIFCA have donated £500 to the scheme and have purchased bins to be set up in tackle shops and other convenient locations along the coast. There are 263 tackle shops and over 70 freshwater fisheries currently signed up to the scheme around the country, so hopefully we can help bring it to the North East. Anglers, or people who have collected discarded line, can deposit it into the bins. The locations of the bins can be found through the ANLRS website www.anglers-nlrs.co.uk/recycling-locations.

NIFCA have also teamed up with Coast Care, a fantastic volunteer led organisation who conduct beach cleans in the Northumberland AONB. They regularly collect large quantities discarded line from Northumberland beaches. All litter collected is recorded, so far this year over 750 bundles of angling line have been picked up. The Coast Care team are delighted to be part of the process to recycle this waste and keep it out of the marine environment.

All line will be collected and sent to be recycled. Various products have already been manufactured in the UK from the recycled line, line spools and single use plastics including bins and benches.

This is a brilliant initiative and NIFCA wish it continued success and support in the future.

Angler's National Line Recycling Scheme (ANLRS) Contact Details

Viv Shears

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NIFCA

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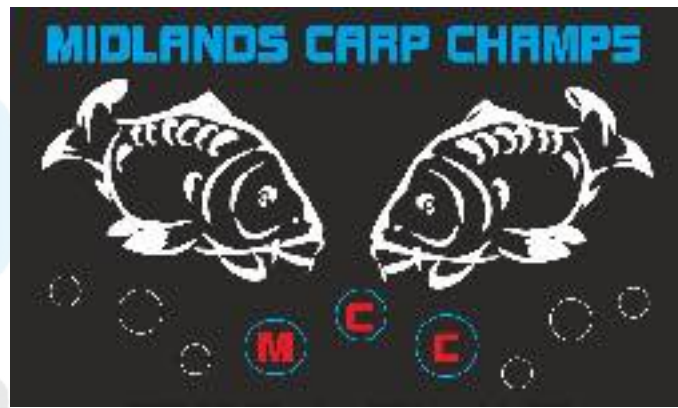
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Event Overview:

We enter our 4th year at the Midlands Carp Champs 2019, year on year the event has grown but we have decided again to keep the format of the events this year the same as previous with 2 x 10 Peg qualification rounds where the top 5 pegs - decided by overall weight of carp caught in 48 hours will then go in to a 10 Peg Final, the events can be fished as a pair or single you simply purchase a ticket and the option is yours.

Throughout 2019 we have decided that we would give what we can back to the sport so we are supporting Rob Hughes and Carp Team England with this each ticket sold has a £5 admin fee attached and these fees will be given directly to Carp Team England – Rob has informed us that these funds will go towards supporting the England Ladies Team in the forthcoming World Cup in France. We believe this is a fantastic direction the sport and the team are taking and we wish them the very best of luck in their efforts.

We are delighted and honoured to have been given access through the night to this magical day only water and we thank the Ranger team for allowing us to host both qualifying rounds and the Final of the 2019 Midlands Carp Champs back at what we believe is the best carp day ticket lake in the Midlands – Kingsbury Water Parks - Pine Pool.

The 2019 event we have again tried to keep the cost of entry to a minimum whilst still being able to offer competitive prize money, vouchers, trophies and complimentary leads that are provided by our fantastic sponsors – this year we thank and welcome on board JMC Tackle who have provided vouchers for the winning pair and Chameleon Leads (Alan Scholes) who has continued to support the events in the past couple of years.

Venue Overview:

- Size of Lake 7.52 Acres
- Type of Lake - Day Ticket – No Open Access Night Fishing
- Ticket Cost £5 per day (2 Rods, 2 x day tickets required for 3 rod use)
- Fish Stock Good stock of doubles and 20s
- Biggest Fish 30lb+
- Features: Islands, gravel spots, bays, weed, reeds, shallow area

The water parks extensive fishery management plan over the past 2 years has seen the stock grow impressively and they have added a number of home grown carp into the water in 2018 that have settled in well and have made great additions to an already impressive stock of carp.

You can find us on Facebook “Midlands Carp Champs” Follow us for all the latest news, updates and live footage from the 2019 events.



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Your Name: Alan Beacher

type of fish and weight Mirror carp

Location of catch Ladywood lakes

Info about the catch

Had my first 24 hour session at Ladywood which is a day ticket water known for its big fish. It's a very pressurised water which is not the easiest of waters to fish.

It lived up to my expectations as I put the effort in and I was rewarded with this stunning 22lb mirror carp later on in the day, caught on my version of the multi-rig using Rod Hutchinson fluoro squid & octopus popup.

A great report from Alex Miljus and Matthew (Harry) Cudworth. It was one of those trip that was almost written before we even set off. The moon cycle was ideal, Harry had a big score to settle with the lake (he'd lost 4 fish a month before due to rubbish hooks), he's been desperate to bag a UK 30 for 25 years (his PB being 29lb 14oz!!), and it was my 1st year of carp fishing anniversary.

We were on Hunts Corner, he arrived first around 4pm and met Ian the bailiff who immediately asked why he'd chosen his particular peg because he'd left the better one for me "Alex really wants this peg, I can't take it" he replied. Ian explained the swim around the corner was also better than the one Harry had chosen "Yeah, but it's a social too, no I'm happy with this one."

I arrived a little while later and Harry was pretty much setup. I was grateful I'd setup my rods before I arrived because Harry was into his first carp by 7:18pm 10 minutes after he put his rods in and having played it for at least 10 minutes before I heard him shouting. It was a lovely chunk but only 22lb, still a very fast start on Krill boilie over hemp and corn. He put the rod back out and landed another one or two through the night, and then another 3 the next morning. At 10:15am Friday 6th July, I videoed Harry weighing his latest catch, not the best looking fish, but a unit. The look in his face, I'll never forget it...but we'd had several come close I didn't want to jump the gun "What is it?" I asked, "It's 32" replied Harry, frankly far more demurely than I was at that moment.

Ever since I got my UK30 in February, when I still can't believe how gracious Harry was given how hungry he was to get his, I've been bringing a bottle of champagne on our trips to celebrate him landing his 30. We finally opened it that night, to celebrate two 30s, the second he landed in the heat of the day just before 3pm.





I lost track how many more he caught from there. I never got a chance to get my swim going, not least because I had a major rig failure on the first night on all 3 rods, my bait getting eaten by crays, but mostly because I spent so much time with Harry either helping him or taking pictures of his catches.

I managed to get one on Saturday morning, off the spot Ian had tipped me off about. A lovely Mirror at 22lb (catch report submitted online). But Harry kept catching. Just after midnight I opened my eyes to see him standing over me, "Alex, it's huge can you come over?" Groggily (we'd had a bottle of bubbles to celebrate my first year carp fishing) I videoed as we weighed it, 39lb. His third UK30!

I woke Sunday morning at 6:30 worrying I'd been cray'd (I had, even the fake corn was gone), so I quickly reset the rods and spombed out a decent



amount of bait, in a tight area over two rods. I then started to pack up. Harry and I were having breakfast and watching the swans eating my bait when the alarm went off, we both watched for a few seconds thinking it was the swan, but as I saw the line zzzzzip off I knew it wasn't. I leapt up and grabbed the rod to land a very angry 25lb mirror which kicked off my 2nd year of carping beautifully

Well by the end of our session on Sunday morning Harry had landed not just a three UK30s out of a total of 16 fish landed and the heaviest at 39lb. He even got a new PB Tench at 8lb.

Thankfully he didn't take my swim, as I'm not sure it would have happened the way it did. I was frustrated at times that I wasn't catching, but it was definitely Harry's trip. I was there to support him for once, and frankly I'd have been just as happy being his gillie and photographer and not fishing, because I got to witness a dear friend beat his PB three times in 48 hours.

Alex and Harry





Name

Alex Miljus

Type of fish

Mirror Carp

location of catch

Hunts Corner,
Linear

Info about catch

Two lovely mid 20s caught on Krill boilie over hemp and corn. I would have caught more but I spent more time as gillie and photographer for my fishing bud's 16 catches than fishing myself





Andrew Taylor

Quality 24 hours at Weston Lawns Fisheries, landing 5 carp to 15lb 6oz, it wasn't bad going as only 6 fish came out during that 24 hours between 12 anglers all fishing 3 rods, so I was well chuffed to have 5 of them.

All carp where caught on a single glugged Mainline Cell boilie, this was presented over a Castaway PVA stick of crushed Cell boilies and a 3 Cell boilie stringer.

The rig I used was just a standard blow back rig using RM-Tec Soft Coated Camo Hooklink from RidgeMonkey along with RidgeMonkey end tackle consisting of a size 6 RM-Tec Straight Point Hook, a QC Hooklink Clip and a Organic Brown Anti Tangle Sleeve.

This was also the first time out using Bio-Weights from Harrings' Bio-Weights and they was awesome, they cast great and literally camouflage to suit the lake bed!

Happy Days... Roll on the end of the month when I return to Weston Lawns Fishery for 72 hours.





Name
Dave Booth

Type of fish
Common carp

location of catch
North Shropshire mere

Info about catch

Been fishing my local mere for 2 years and struggling. I decided to go for a short day session and spotted fish fizzing... after watching them I decided on a peg, by this time it was 1.30pm. By 7pm I had 4 common carp to 33lb 4oz, which is now my p.b... what an amazing session 21 years carp angling and probably the best half days fishing ever.



Name
Carl Relph

Type of fish
Carp

location of catch
Emperor lakes syndicate lakes

Info about catch

I set off on my 360 mile journey to my syndicate lake in Devon. I left at four in the morning got there around half nine, having a good walk around the lake I managed to spot a few carp located in the corner of the lake and at least 4 of the big big girls in there so I decided to set up in one of two swims that could intercept them on leaving the area. Using Monster Baits plum ice and monster ice I proceeded to bait about 3 kilo of bait on three hard spots I found with a Deeper Pro Plus. Using Hybrid Tackles Dispersion hooklink, Purefilth putty and the Armohawk curv style hook in a D rig coupled with a plum ice wafter dipped in the glug and put my rigs on the spots. Unfortunately, the first night passed and nothing happened and when I looked in the corner the bigger fish had seemed to slip out without being tripped up. The following morning at around ten in the morning my right hand rod ripped off to be greeted by a 17lb 3oz common carp which on my syndicate was a result to





catch as it's a hard lake. Rods back on the spot at 16:00 and the same rod ripped off again and I knew this fish was bigger as she was hugging the bottom and using her weight and 25 mins later, I slipped the net under a 46lb 6oz mirror know as Moth, the oldest fish in the lake. Once captured and treated with Propolis on a scale that was damaged and a few squirts of Steri 7 on the hook hold she was sent back to the depths rods back on the spot same rigs and bait and I had a peaceful night absolutely over the moon with what I had caught two fish in a session unreal but unknown what was about to happen on the 3rd day at 11 in the morning just as I was thinking about pulling my rod in to go shower and clean up etc my riddle rod tore off and the area it was there was a massive commotion on the spot as everything seemed to jump to get out the way, she ran straight for the weeds and got in there but with light constant pressure and feeling every weed on her way out she was coming free when unbelievable my right hand rod tore off. I knew the original run was the bigger fish, so I gave my mate a shout and he come round and took the 2nd rod off me and landed a perfect fully scaled 20lb 1oz carp, absolutely stunning too. I was still fighting the big girl, she once again stayed deep and as soon as she got anywhere near the bank, she took off again! 30 mins later she flanked in front of me and I was like "wow that is a big fish!" 5 minutes later my mate managed to slip the net under a 52lb 12 oz mirror carp known as Mr T!! Absolutely unreal! 4 fish in a session where you are lucky to get one bite in 5 days. My first UK 50lb carp and a new personal best to boot. Without doubt the session of a lifetime.

Carl.



Wyreside



ATTENTION ALL

This week the weather has been all over the place. The day tickets lakes are still on form. The complete landed with S2 leading the way again with 28 fish each.

First up this week is S2. The fish have been very much to the other on a regular basis with fish being caught has graced the bank to the rod of Alan Rigby at an 16lb common. Regular Dave Goldspink drop into p 30lb common also getting amongst the action was

Now to S1 Callum Boyle started things of this week hours from peg 3 the biggest one tipping the scales with match white pop ups over the top fished on a and Shaun who fished in pegs 10 and 11 this week fish the biggest tipping the scales to 19lb to Mats r

Foxes is definitely starting to pick up. This week where they swapped their dead bait for Boilies for way all the lads managed to get a bite or two with the Patterson and a stunning 20lb common for Joe Tom he slipped his net under two lovely 20lbbers a comm

Bantons and Wyre have been tough this week, with the weed however our very own Phil managed to bag a 22lb scaley one from swan bay and Sir Lanky Pant on Wyre and has already bagged himself two stunn

Thanks to all the anglers for sending in their reports
Wyreside Lakes
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Fisheries

ANGLERS *****

again with wind, rain and a smidge of sunshine. x has produced and impressive 74 fish being being landed and S1 and Foxes producing 20 fish

mobile this weekend get from one end of the lake ht from all four corners and the middle. 'CALLUM' impressive weight of 30lb 4oz he also bagged a eg 11 for a night and bagged himself a stunning Grant with a stunning IG stocky.

k in style when he bagged himself 5 fish in 24 s to 21lb all fish came to a bed of hot shrimp boilies Ronnie ring to the far bank. Next up is Matthew kend and manged to tempt 4 bites resulting in 3 od!

e had the pike anglers alliance from Scotland the first time with John Neafcy showing them the e best fish going 25lb/12oz to rod of Malcolm ner. Also getting amongst it was Alex Glover when non and a mirror what a lovely brace.

h the fish just spending most of the time chilling in g himself his first ever Wyre fish in the shape of a ts Aka Mat Ingham has just started a 3 day session ners in the shape of a 22lb and a lovely 25 lber.

s, tight lines for now and stay carpy ;)



01524 792093



Wyreside

Wyreside Lake

The weather has defiantly improved this week with degrees, with over 60 fish being landed over the p being landed.

So first this week is sunny side one and to start this did 24 hours in pegs 8 and 9. Callum had 4 up to h came to a lightly baited area with pop ups over the who had a brilliant weekend bagging himself 4 stur came from the tree line in peg 7 over a bed of part

Next up is Sunnyside 2 which has produced 26 fish getting caught from all four corners and the middle a stunning 15lber caught on a 6ft zig from peg 5. P one weighed in at 15lb caught on a DNA Wafer ov caught off the top.

BANTONS has kicked off starting things off is Pavc the first one a stunning 28 lber the second is 'Sam' came to around 6KG of mixed sized life system bo a chod rig over the top. Next up Callum who mana beds of particle. Antony fished 15.5 wraps to a wee queen' at 30lb caught over a bed of maize and her good few days In Mug Fish where he landed 4 fish ups over a large bed of Cell boilies. NEWS FLASH from peg 17. Also, Paul Johnson had a lovely 27lb up.

Tight Lines.
Stay Carpy.

www.wyresidelakes.co.uk



Fisheries

s report week 2

lovely sunny days with temperatures reaching 25
property with sunny one being the best with 28 fish

ings off on there is Callum Maines and John who
high teens and John had 2 mid doubles, all fish
top fished on a Ronnie rig. Next up is Ste Taylor
nners the best tipping the scales to 22lb all fish
icles with a Cell boilie as a hook bait.

n this week yet again the fish being very mobile
, getting amongst the action is David Evans with
Paul Wright bagged himself two beauties the first
er a large bed of corn and the other a mid-double

ol who did 24 hours in Luna and bagged 2 chunks
's fish' pulling the needle round to 33lb both fish
ilies soaked in amino blend 365 with a pop up on
ged to bag a 24lb & 28lb on pop ups over large
ed bed from Rowlands and managed to trip up 'Mc
np with an IB pop up over the top. Ben Webb had a
up to 24lbs all caught on Dynamite Hit 'n' Run pop
BLANK A LOT TROY – catches a lovely 18lber
from fence fishing at 19 wraps on a Manilla pop



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Brad McInerney with his second big carp from his Upper Alt session... Pacman at 27lb



Callum



Louis Lyo first saw this fish 4 years ago and put her on his most wanted list. Finally he's had her on his mat. The Scaley One a



Louis Lyon with another carp from his Upper Alt, this time



Robb



Deebo at 34lb 14 oz for Jake Sanderson on Upper Alt lake



other new p.b. from
a stunning 29lber



More from Lower Alt as Dennis Preston ups
his personal best with Measles at a fine
27lb



Cody Robinson

Type of fish
Mirror Carp

location of catch
Ormsgill Reservoir

Info about catch

Caught on Nash Citruz pop ups on a multi rig with a PVA bag full of Citruz pellets and my own Citruz spod mix. This fish came in the 2nd afternoon of my 72hrs session weighing in at 20lbs 10oz also coming in to be my first 20 and a new PB

Daniel Carter

Type of fish
Mirror

location of catch
Horton complex to leisure

Info about catch

A fish called DC at 39lb 12oz out of Horton complex Kingsmead 1. Caught out of a swim called no carp bay at 12 wraps on a DNA slk pop up



**Name**

Gedd Cannon

Type of fish

Mirror

location of catch

Brightlingsea syndicate

Info about catch

Been fishing this water for around 5mths and for around 5mths and

catching all low 20's then I catch this lovely looking 25lb 8oz golden mirror, my biggest from here so far, was caught using Vipertackle and a nut based bollie on a combi rig.

I also caught 22lb 4oz golden common which is rare for this lake as there is only a few in there.



The slight change in weather conditions was all **John Lawrence** needed to inspire him to get the rods out for an overnight session. The Orchid lake bailiff dropped into an empty peg and was awoken early next

morning when the mirror carp known as Roly tore off with his Mainline pop up, fished over a scattering of Cell boilies. The 30lb 0oz Roly is a very rare visitor to the banks making this capture all that bit sweeter.

Name
Joseph Lee

Type of fish
Carp

location of catch
required
Park lake

Info about catch
Great catch yet again,
an old park lake warrior
over bed particle and
chopped boilies.





Name

Paul Gill

Type of fish

Zip linear

location of catch

Yeadon tarn

Info about catch

First night on a new water at Yeadon tarn . After struggling with the crays to bag this little beauty I was over the moon, stunner at 18lb 4oz .

Name

Phil Lloyd

Type of fish

Mirror

location of catch

Local canal

Info about catch

15lb carp caught on chod rig with a pink krill pop up.





Name
Lee Whiteley

Type of fish
Mirror Carp

location of catch required
Westmoor farm

Info about catch
4 days on the specimen lake.
Left it till the very last night to
land these 2. 30.11 and a big
scaled 27.10 caught on J H
baits klf freezer bait.



Name
Mark Russell

Type of fish
Common carp

location of catch
Le Grand Pierre, France

Info about catch
During a tough weeks fishing dye to the
spawning I managed 3 commons of 34lb
44lb 10oz (pictured) and a 38lb 8oz all caught
on carptackleonline.com Scorpion hooks
Mainline Essential Cell pop ups over a light
scattering of mainline boilies.



Name Mark Russell

location of catch - Bluebells Sandmartin lake

Info about catch - During a carptackleonline.com social I managed to catch this cracking mirror on my range of Zig products including the size 8 Scorpion Zig hooks! To say my heart was in my mouth as it took a 40yard run as soon as it realised it was hooked.



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ught
and
ght



Robert Fay

River Thames Oxfordshire

New pb absolutely buzzing

After getting to the river at about 7pm and seeing my first choice swim taken, I opted for somewhere I knew had potential, with no pre bait gone in I decided to give it a good bit of bait before the season started. I put roughly 2kilo of dna slk 15mm and 10 groundbait balls consisting of hemp and crushed pellet and let the swim rest till the hand struck midnight. My Rods were all prepared ready so It was just a matter of putting them on the spot and waiting, it didn't take long as the rod shot into action and I was rewarded with this old 33lb 10oz river Thames warrior



Shan Smith reports in with this beauty! We travelled down to the Bluebell complex. We went on Mallard Lake. I got this lovely 40lb common!! It was caught on a 18mm plum white pop up. On a size 4 Ronnie Rig over a bed of 18mm nut bottom baits. Second common weighing 17lb 3oz and the mirror weighed 16lb 8oz. All the fish

were caught on Five Star baits. It was a trip of a lifetime, I wasn't expecting that to happen!! Happy days.





Name

Sarah Scotson

Type of fish

Mirror carp

location of catch

Permit water

Info about catch

my first fish of the season 18lb 5oz caught on Rod Hutchinson Fluoro Squid and Octopus pop up over the moon with this stunning fish.



Simon Jones

31lb caught on a Rod Hutchinson Ballistic B pop up

Name

Terry Millward

location of catch

**Mousehole fishery,
Paddock Wood Kent**

Info about catch

**Best from an 8 fish haul.
All fell to RG pastel pink
wafters. Own tied multi
rigs. Twenty freebies
around each cast. 28.8
and a 17.4.**



Name

Steve Parish

location of catch

**Local Midlands
Syndicate**

Info about catch

**Blowback rig, DNA 18mm
-10 pop up snowman.
Fished just off an island.
Fish is an A team lake
fish that hasn't been
caught for over 12
months.**

**22lb bar of gold with
superb markings**





Steve Cartwright

Steve had a great session catching 8 Carp in a 48hr session, 6 carp going 20lb + to 25lb 13oz and 2 x 19lbbers, all taken using Carp Online terminal tackle and Key Bait solutions ASM boilies.

He then followed this up with a nice 27lb 10oz Common, caught on a zig using the Carp Tackle Online Zig Kit at Sandmartin Lake - Bluebell Lakes Complex





Team Taska



Matt Eade lands 3 different 30s in one session!

Team Taska man Matt Eade is a man on fire right now... And what a day as backups.

Here's Matt's report: -

"Today couldn't have gone any better (unless I landed the one I lost). I

2 x Stockies 34lb Ghostie 30lb 12oz Common 30lb 8oz Common

All were caught utilising the Baseline Products to keep my rigs and line

Well done Matt!

#teamtaska #taskacarp

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Team Taska



...y he had!! In one session Matt had 3 different 30s and a few stockies

...had 6 bites in the end and landed 5, this consisted of;

...e pinned down."

Team Taska



How's this for a perfect Father's Day? Team Taska men Dan Winfield and son Harrison did an overnight session on his local syndicate and saw in the opening day of a brand new season together... carp of 30lb and 23lb for Dan and H weighed in with his own 21lb common! Great teamwork guys.. Taska Baseline products giving perfect presentation every time! #teamtaska #taskacarp www.taskacarp.com

Team Taska

**Early morning
mega session
report!!**

**Team Taska man
in Belgium Ken
Veerle Roeland had
a fantastic early
morning session
before heading off
to work.**

**Take a look at these
beauties!**

**Taska Deceptive
fluorocarbon
mainline and
Baseline products
giving perfect
presentation every
time.**

#teamtaska

#taskacarp

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Team Taska



Team Taska reports are rolling in fast this week as Matt Hennessey also got bankside and had himself a hat-trick of cracking northern carp up to 28lb.

Taska Baseline products giving perfect presentation every time.

#teamtaska

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Team Taska



Taska consultant Mike Jones checks in with this stunning dark scaley mirror, Mike definitely can't put a foot wrong at the moment, this mirror follows on from the big common he banked last time out, as usual Taska Baseline products kept everything pinned down out the way.

Taska consultant Mike Jones is definitely on fire, here he is with the second fish of his session, and what a common it is, with the help of Taska Baseline products which kept everything pinned down, and Mainline baits... what fish could resist that combination?



munch baits

Bio Marine Pop-Ups

Incorporating the same essential ingredients, additives and our exclusive aquatic stimulant used within the range, these ultra-buoyant Pop-Ups are needle friendly and will remain buoyant indefinitely. Giving you the confidence fishing for long sessions.

**Available in 200ml tubs – 14mm/18mm
RRP £5.99**



Bio Marine Wafers

These wafers provide a perfect solution for critically balancing your rig. They have been carefully produced to remove the weight of the hook, thus simplifying the way to make a balanced presentation. These include the same essential ingredients that make the Bio Marine range so effective.

**Available in 200ml tubs – 14mm/18mm
RRP £5.99**

Bio Marine Washed Out Pop-Ups

These subtle coloured pop ups provide a multitude of hookbait options. Needle friendly and Ultra Buoyant they will remain popped up indefinitely. Packed full of marine proteins, liquid additives and our proven aquatic stimulant.

**Available in 200ml tubs – 14mm/18mm
RRP £5.99**



munch baits



Bio Marine Boosted Hookbaits

These highly concentrated hookbaits are smothered in an enhanced formula to create a powerful, instant attract hookbait option. The ultra tough skin provides a barrier against nuisance species yet still remains soluble.

**Available in 200ml tubs – 14mm/18mm
RRP £5.99**

Bio Marine Dumbell Hookbaits

These dumbell shaped hookbaits are infused to the core with the functional ingredients and additives used within the range, ensuring they will provoke an instant response. Having a tough outer skin, they will withstand the attention from nuisance species.

**Available in 200ml tubs – 14mm/18mm
RRP £5.99**



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Bio Marine truly is a bait that can be compared to no other. Every single ingredient working on a different level to provoke feeding responses in any condition. With incredible rich nutritional values, due to the main mass of ingredients being varied marine based derivatives, it provides a complete food source all year round. A cultivated Algae, a single cell yeast and a proven aquatic stimulant is also added in optimum levels, to form an ultimate attractor package. Deliberately formulated to naturally overpower any other bait before it, with no expense spared in development.

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continued support**

**Please send your articles and catch reports
by the 28th July 2019 for next months
magazine**

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