



Issue 30
August 2018



Inside-

The Legend - Julian Cundiff
Scott 'Geezer' Grant
Mike 'SPUG' Redfern
Gary 'milky' Lowe,
Plus much much more !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

British Carp
Cups Ladies
Final



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Hello... And welcome.

First of all we are noticing a definite change in the world of angling right now, with the Netherlands implementing a total lead ban in fishing over the next few years and Holland following suit with a preliminary lead ban on larger size leads, how long will it be before the rest of the angling world follows suit. There's no denying that lead in itself is a toxin, a poison, and should therefore possibly not be as available as it is? And the dumping of leads into our lakes is currently common place on a lot of lakes "in the name of fish welfare"? Is it really fish welfare when we are dumping leads and plastics into their home domain at an alarming rate?

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A can of worms is about to be opened but as we are the keepers of our sport and it is up to us to safeguard the future of our sport, is it about time we removed the blinkers and looked at the bigger picture. Stop dumping leads because it's the fashionable thing to do, and take responsibility for our actions, before it's too late.

This months winner catch report winners... the Rod Hutchinson bait winner is **David Pritchard** and the Bell Ball Cutter winner is **Brian Payne**. Get in touch lads with your details for us to pass on. Well done.

Keep those catch reports coming in and if you wish to have your say, or feel you have an angling story to tell then please get in touch.

THE DOORS ARE OPEN FOR NEW WRITERS.... Everybody welcome and no experience necessary. We will help you every step of the way. Email us....

Until next month....

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Team Talking Carp

Inside This Month -

**This months cover shot - The one and only Keith Desmond
from honest carpy blogs**

ARTICLES - from page 6

Stepping into spring with the O'Connors - Scott Grant
To Sharpen Or Not To Sharpen by Julian Cundiff
Welsh Ladies Carp Team by Mark Galli
Return To The Syndicate by Gary Lowe
The Big Interview with Simon Pomeroy
British Carp Cups - Mick and Belinda Coxon
Carping Mad Chapter Three - Mike 'SPUG' Redfern
Carp chronicles - Brett McPhee
Carp 19 by Tony Lewis
In Search Of The Monster by Andrew Taylor
Chasing Tales - Corrie Booyson

FORCES SECTION from page 156

Forces Carp Classic comes to the UK - Tim Gray
Ex-Mil Carp Championships 2018 - Tim Gray

CATCH REPORTS - from page 172

White Springs Fishery, Brooms Cross Fishery, Alan
Beacher, Chris Kirk, Mark Wozencroft, Connor
Hatton

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**Lake
Christine**

**Stepping into Spring with the
O'Connors by Scott Geezer
Grant**

After a successful trip to my syndicate water it was back to work for a couple of weeks, then I had a couple of weeks booked off work which I was going to spend mostly fishing but with a couple of family days thrown in. Just days before I was meant to start my holiday I fell ill and when I mean ill I'm not talking about a sniffing cold (Man Flu) this was serious.

I never go sick from work so like a trooper I carried on going to work, big mistake I should have gone to the doctors but like all us men I was hoping come the next day I would feel better.

But low and behold I was getting worse by the day to the point I was rushed to hospital with a temperature of 104!!

The doctor diagnosed me with having bacterial tonsillitis

and believe me it was nasty. He prescribed me with penicillin and it was a 2 week course of tablets. I couldn't eat for a week and lost a stone in weight which wasn't such a bad thing. I was laid up for over a week and had to take my tablets every 6 hours so trying to have a good sleep was out of the question. I felt weak and lethargic and couldn't wait until I could get some goodness inside me without being in pain. I did have a few nights planned fishing over

at my syndicate water but that was out of the question. It was over a week later that I finally began to feel better and could eat, a few days later I was due to go to Cottington Lakes with the O'Connors fishing Lake Christine for 3 nights and yes I was well enough to go.

I arranged to meet Barry at the on-site shop early Thursday morning that way I would miss the traffic and we could go for a full English breakfast in the café.



I pulled into the entrance down to Cottington Lakes at around 07:00 o'clock Barry was standing outside with a cuppa along with Mango, the onsite bailiff.

As I got out my car the first thing they both said was "what is that big blister on your lip" trying not to laugh I said it was bacterial tonsillitis but not to worry as I'm over it now just waiting for the blisters to clear up and go.

Barry was a bit concerned but I soon put him straight and told him I was fine and getting back to my normal self.

We all jumped in Mangos van and went down the café for a much-needed full English which went down a treat. Once back at the complex Barry and I went for a walk around Lake Christine, there was meant to be four

anglers fishing but when we got there two of them had gone home. I spoke with one of the anglers asking how they were getting on and he said "only had two fish the lake is fishing crap" oh well never mind I'm here for 3 nights and really looking forward to it. Barry was going to fish swim 3 and 4, I was fishing 7 and 8 (both doubles) that left swims 5,6, 1 and 2 of which mango was going into 1 and when Ben arrives Friday morning he will go into swim 2.

Come 12:00 o'clock the anglers had left, and it was time to get my gear to the swim. As the lake has a two rod rule you need to pick your areas very carefully, now I have never fished this lake before but a good starting point for me was the bay to my right. I was watching





fish come in and out of it so I decided to put some crushed and whole boilies in front of the reeds and watch to see if the fish get on it. I baited another area just off the point of the island then went about setting the bivvy and getting everything sorted.

Rig wise I decided to fish a nutjob wafter on the Ronnie rig. The rigs come pre-assembled so all you have to do is tie on your hooklink material.

A couple of hours had passed, and I hadn't even cast a rod out, everything was ready to go but before the rods go out the baited areas needed to be checked.

I walked up to the reeds and peered over the fish were churning the bottom up tails in the air what a sight. I introduced some more bait then went around to Barry for a

coffee and natter.

As we sat there one of his rods was away I couldn't believe it nor could he but after a good fight I slid the net under a lovely plump common.

On the scales the fish went 34lb 8oz what a start this could really be a good session. I took some pukka shots for him then the fish was returned.

I was itching to get my rods out but not before Barry's other rod was away and what was attached on the end simply blew me away. The fish was immense and once in the net he recognised it as the biggest mirror in the lake, oh my god what is going on the fish pulled the needle round to a healthy 38lb 10oz and is a stunner!! As with the first fish I took some pics and what crackers they were, the fish was then treated and returned



Barry was grinning like a Cheshire Cat and why not he's a lovely bloke and a great angler and it was a pleasure to share the moment with him. We wasted no time and rang Ben to tell him the good news and the fact that he was at work LOL.

I then went back to my swim and got the rods ready to be dispatched. The right rod was loaded into the boat with crushed/whole 10mm nutjob boilies and a couple of scoops of HOB Chilli/maize hemp this stuff

is awesome and would add attraction to the dinner table.

The left-hand rod was boated with the same but dropped a couple of feet off the island in a slightly deeper gully. With the rods finally out, I sat chilling watching the water, darkness fell and the rods remained motionless. I got in the bag and drifted off to sleep

only to be woken at 03:38 by a couple of bleeps from the right-hand rod, I got straight out the bag and stood by the rod, the line was still in the clip and after 10 minutes of being eaten alive by the gnats I got back into the bag and went back to sleep. At 0630 the right-hand rod ignited which scared the shit out of me, I was straight on the rod and the fish fought hard and tried in vain to get round the back of the island, but I stood firm and played the fish into the waiting net. Phew what a relief it took me a few hours, but I was finally off the mark.



I lifted the net onto the mat and was met with a lovely mirror, the scales read 31lb 4oz what a start.

Barry done the photos and the rod was rebaited and put back against the reeds. Barry had another 3 fish through the night to mid 20 the man was on fire.

Three hours later the same rod was away again, the fish fought harder then the last one and seemed to take forever to give up, after a good 5 minutes I slid the net under a lovely plump common. It was another 30lber with a weight of 30lb 14oz I just couldn't



believe my luck. The bait is working as it does everywhere I take it I've got 100% confidence in this bait its simply awesome. Barry again took a few snaps then she was treated and returned. The rod was again boated out (stealth mode).

An hour later Barry chipped in with another 20lber and Mango managed his first fish

a lovely 17lb mirror, followed by a 22lb common. Ben arrived around midday and wasted no time in getting the rods out. It was only an hour or so later he was in with an 18lb common. This boy doesn't muck about just like his Dad. As the sun got hotter the fish could be seen on the surface and there was a lot of fish in front of Barry. I was watching fish cruise round the island



when all of a sudden, my right hand rod was away, it was an epic battle and I was relieved when I slid the net under a big common. Ben saw me playing the fish and wound in to come and assist.

Ben recognised the fish and said it was the biggest common in the lake, on the scales she pulled the needle round to 35lb 8oz, I was flying so happy. Ben took some cracking shots then she was returned.

I wasted no time and got the rod straight back out, later in the afternoon/early evening I served up a lovely red Thai curry my mrs had cooked, it went down a treat and she got the thumbs up

from all the lads, she is a great cook that's for sure.

Just as it got dark I had a lovely 17lb common followed an hour later by an 18lb common all falling to the right-hand rod. When I finally got in bed I was shattered, and it didn't take long for me to fall asleep.

Through the night I had another two commons both doubles then lost a good fish!!

I managed to get an hour's kip in amongst all the melee and was woken up with the receiver screeching its head off the culprit was a lovely plump 29lb





common, Ben again assisted with the photos and they were bang on thanks mate. No sooner had I put the rod back out and it was away again this time a lovely 17lb mirror was landed. It's now just manic the fish are on the bait big time loving the combo of the nutjob and chilli hemp/maize.

The fish were crapping

the bait out in the sling which is always a good sign.

Weather wise it wasn't going to be as hot and with rain forecast the fish should keep on feeding. Around midday I landed a very unusual koi which fought like a demon only a double but what a pretty fish. Late afternoon it was time to wind the rods in as

Mango was doing a BBQ for us all.

It was nice not having to listen for the alarms and I could just chill out with the lads.

Mango served up what was a magical plate of goodness with the highlight being a big juicy steak cooked perfectly. Ive had quite a few BBQs on the

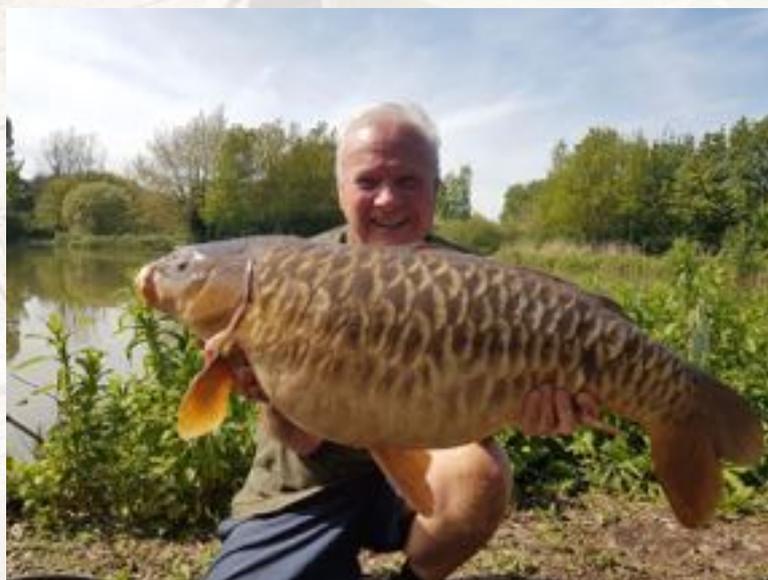
bank but none quite like that, the food was delicious. Just as we finished the rain started and boy did it come down, we all

retreated to the brolly Mango had set up but we still got wet in the process. When the rain eased off we all went back to our swims to get the rods out before dark.

The rods had only been out a little while and the right-hand rod was away resulting in a lovely old scaly mirror bang on 20lb, Ben shot round and took a few snaps then the rod went back out for the night.



I laid on my bed listening to the rain I must admit I do love the sound of the rain hitting the bivvy, but the only thing is it makes me go to sleep and with the darkness now upon us it wasn't long before I was away with the fairies.



I could only have been asleep for a couple of hours when the same rod was away again resulting in a small common.

I was debating whether to put the rod out again but knowing what fish are in here effort equals reward, so I got the rod straight back out.

Then it was back in the bag for a bit of kip, which didn't last very long as the same rod

was away again with another small common. As always, the rod went back out and it was back in the bag.

HOME TO
THE FINEST
PRESERVED PARTICLES



Just as the sun came up on the final morning the left-hand rod chipped in with a lovely dark scaly mirror of 20lb 4oz. My tally now stood at 14 fish landed with 1 lost not a bad average at all, my lead count however had taken a hammering 15 leads lost!!

Late morning and Ben was into a good fish, I wound the rods in and went round to assist. After an epic battle a lovely plump common lay in the net, she pulled the scales round to 35lb 14oz this place

is full of hidden gems. With the photos complete she was returned to fight another day. Ben was one happy chappy!!! Both Barry and Ben had racked up a few fish between them

and to be honest I lost count!! Barry, Ben and Mango were using A2 baits creamy toffee over HOB R9 and the Blitz respectively. The overall total of fish banked during the session was 47 carp to 38lb 10oz.

Cottington lakes is a lovely complex which consists of 7 lakes.

Lake Christine is around 3 acres with 2 islands average depth is 3ft and the stock is mind blowing, god knows how many 30lbbers are in there.



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“ TO SHARPEN OR NOT TO SHARPEN THAT IS THE QUESTION... BY JULIAN CUNDIFF

A personal history.....

There are not many black and white statements that I feel I can honestly make in carp fishing but I feel that declaring that a sharp hook really does matter is pretty safe even when it comes to trolls....In fact in all honesty I have never seen anyone state that a blunt hook is better (although I am still holding my breath on that....) , now that would be a brave statement !! Having been a keen and committed carp angler for over thirty years (I regard the 85/86 season as my start as this was when I concentrated purely and simply on carp) I have seen all sorts of fads and trends come and go but sharp hooks have become more and more important year in year out. When I first fished Tilery in 1987 it was clear to me that any old hook would not do due to weed and large carp at range so after some experimentation I settled on the good old Mustard 34021 carp hook as my weapon of choice. The size 6 was perfect till mid-summer but then with the weed really spiraling out of control I had to use the size 4 for strength. Considerably stronger but thicker in the wire even then it was obvious to me that the chisel points needed honing down to be of any use. Mustard also did a sharpening stone too so using a very rudimentary approach I managed to improve them and coupled with a larger lead the action continued. Not perfect by a long way but the seed was sown. Bigger sharper hooks and heavy leads catch more carp. Year in year out hooks got better and with the advent of chemically sharpened hooks the need to sharpen hooks soon became a thing of the past.

Well that's what I thought..... If you carp fished in the

nineties you probably remember that the smaller the hook the more bites you got? Not always but it was a tactic that we often tried and usually successfully. Well hindsight is always 20/20 and looking back I am sure it wasn't the size that mattered but the fact that smaller hook was sharper, hence more bites. Carp can see the bigger hooks I was told (and believed) so by dropping two hook sizes they would not see it and I'd catch more.....oh the naivety of it....Of course a smaller hook allowed the bait to behave more like a free offering but sharpness not size was the key..... As the noughties came to an end we should really thank Jason Hayward for raising the importance of hook sharpening to all and sundry and his features on it, and more importantly HOW to do it certainly triggered an



interest in stones, files, vices the lot. I watched him at a number of shows and boy oh boy could he sharpen them. I invested in a JAG kit and although I improved my hooks I could never put a point on them like he could.....Don't get me wrong they were better but

compared to Jason's versions I was not in the same ballpark. My hooks at the time were either Nash Fang X or Nash Fang Twisters in 5/6 which were sharp as they came and as I always only use a hook once I was happy with my results to be honest... In 2013 I received a lovely letter from Rig It Tackle based in the Manchester area asking if I'd be interested in some sharpened hooks from them? To be honest offers of freebies don't usually excite me, but owner Lisa was so excited about them that I felt unable to say no..... Within a week some Nash Fang X's and Fang Twister's in 5 arrived and even to a cynic like me they looked and felt a bit special. Without falling into "carpy" mode they were 'wicked' and certainly warranted a trip or two to test them out. First trip was to West woodside waters with Brian Skoyles on a guest trip and seven carp all fell to the sharpened Fang X's fished multi rig style.....Of course they were one bite only hooks (but I only use hooks once anyway) but (excuse the pun) I was hooked. From that day onwards if you discount carp caught on surface baits and zigs 80% or more of the carp I have caught have been on sharpened hooks....and that my friends is a lot of carp. You'd be forgiven for thinking that sharpening hooks was therefore a must but it's not that simple, not by a long way



So exclusively for **Talking Carp** here are the pro's and cons of sharpened hooks from my viewpoint.

Pro's

1. Anyone can have sharpened hooks. Ideally you sharpen your own using one of the commercially available kits that are available. To do it PROPERLY you need a vice, a coarse and fine file and most importantly an eye piece to check your work. Nash do the brilliant Pinpoint kit and JAG; Gardner and Fox do good ones too. There are lots of great videos on the technique so put 'hook sharpening' into your search engine and the Nash and JAG one's are absolutely spot on. Start with big hooks that you don't mind ruining (you will as you practice) and practice at home. Believe me it's not as easy as it looks and to start with you will probably be too 'soft' and end up polishing rather than sharpening them. You really do need to exert force but too much pressure and you will turn points and shorten points far too much. It takes practice and when you see what Jim Shelley and Adam Penning can do it's awe inspiring. Alternatively, you could be like me and just buy them sharpened by someone who really can do it properly. Mine are done by Rig It Tackle as I simply can't do them as good as they can. When I want to use a sharpened hook, I want one as good as it gets and theirs are hence that's who I use. Believe me if I could do them that good I would do my own. I can't therefore I ensure that I am fishing at maximum effectiveness by calling Rig It. My advice is to get a packet of sharpened hooks from them and if you can match them then that's fine but if

not.....well you know the answer to that !



2. You will get more bites on sharpened hooks. And when I say “ bites “ I mean when a carp samples the hookbait and pulls the hook in enough to give you a run.

3. It is an advantage over other anglers. In this day and age where good tackle, bait, waters and information are available to all unless you have more time than others it's hard to have an advantage over any clued-up carp angler. Despite me showing anglers how good they are I still hear trotted out “ they should be sharp enough as they come “, “ I'm not paying someone “, “ I can't do it properly “ etc.... At the right time it is as big an edge as anything I have seen for many years....

Con's....

1. Sharpening hooks is not as easy as it looks and most people (I include myself in that) cannot do it perfectly. Any sharpening helps providing you do not turn a point that is. If you want them done properly you need to pay additional money on top of what the hooks cost you.
2. Although I only use a hook once if you like to use a hook time and time again then forget it with a properly sharpened hook. The point will inevitably be finer / thinner and will be good for one fish only. And that fish might not be a carp.....
3. The sharpness can end up hooking far more nuisance fish than normal. If your water holds lots of smaller fish you will end up hooking roach, bream, tench and the like that inspect the hookbait. That can be frustrating, time consuming and expensive.
4. You can't fish any presentation on the deck unless it is very soft silt. If that hook point is over sand, clay, gravel, weed it is very likely to turn over before the carp takes it in. You can even turn a finely sharpened hook over by winding it in through weed.
5. Because you are pricking carp in the outer parts of the lips at times you will bump more carp off than normal. Of course these fish would never have been hooked on less sharp hooks (probably) but can you live with more lost fish than normal ?

6. If your carp have soft mouths you can end up with more hook pulls than normal.



So, there you go some pro's and con's and the decision will always rest with the individual angler, his pocket and the water he or she is fishing. That said unless you experiment on your water you will never know and that type of ignorance is plain daft in my opinion. I tend to always start with sharpened hooks providing I am using pop ups and the water justifies the expense. I am hardly going to use it on a prolific water like Drayton or Chestnut but if a take or

two a day is good a sharpened hook would be a good idea. I would constantly review my progress and if I felt I was bumping too many off I'd try out of the packet versus sharpened.... They can be an advantage, but they can also work against you. Remember whether you sharpen your hooks or use them out of the packet always check them with an eyeglass. Pricking your finger or dragging them across your nail (which can turn a fine point over) is not enough. Visually inspecting them is the only way. Good luck and as always feel free to contact me if you need any additional advice on the subject.

Jules



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*Raising the Profile of Female Carp
Anglers - By Mark Galli (Mark Carper)*



Back in May this year, I was invited to Drayton Reservoir, primarily to meet the England Ladies Carp Team, who were contesting the 'Clifford Cup' against the Welsh Ladies Carp Team but also to give me an insight in to the Match Fishing that these 'Ladies Teams' are involved in.

I am not a big fan of Carp Match Fishing, I don't really follow it, or at least I didn't, and I stick to my 'pleasure' fishing, well that's what I tell myself, and although I have been involved in some of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical (REME) Carp Team matches and know quite a few of the Military Team guys from the various Regiments, and have spent time with the Men's Team from both Scotland and Wales; it's not something I am

particularly enthusiastic about on a personal level, but it was a great opportunity to meet a couple of National Teams and get an insight to Ladies Carp Fishing for 'Talking Carp'.

Now, I had no real preconceived ideas as to what I would find when I got there, but, I did think it would be along the lines of a nice, relaxed 'Social' event, with a bit of fishing thrown in (did I really just admit that..?!!)...How wrong was I though..?

On arrival, the first thing that struck me, and no, it was not one of the Ladies, or though I am sure they would have if they had known my forethoughts, it was the sheer scale of the setups from both teams. The organisation and setups were top class

from both teams and the place was buzzing with activity...!

After a quick intro with Bev Clifford, I went off and introduced myself to Tania Williams, Miranda Brown and Jane Henthorn and had a brief chat with them about why I was there and about the Magazine. (Talking Carp will have articles from them in future issues)

I said a quick hello to some of the other Ladies from both Teams but to be fair they were all mega busy on the old 'Spod Rods', and I could not believe how hard they were all working, I felt exhausted just watching them...I arrived about thirty six hours in to the match and most of the Ladies had managed less than five hours sleep since they started....To say I was impressed with

what I saw, is an understatement..!!

If you think for one minute, the Ladies don't take their fishing or the competitions seriously or 'know their stuff', I would suggest you go and see them in action if you get the chance....seriously, these Ladies can fish...!!!

At this point, I also would like to say what a privilege it was to meet Mr. CARP Team England himself, Mr. Rob Hughes.... Massive thanks for the chat and what a

tremendous guy he is.

He works tirelessly for all things 'England and Carp' and is also a massive driving force behind Charities and Carp Angling, especially for Ex-Military personnel with Carp After Combat, which is linked with Care After Combat. Rob is the Patron of Carp After Combat and works alongside a host of others, including Jane Henthorn and Bev Clifford, Dave Coates, Andy Goodman and Bob Morris to name but a few and of course

Jim Davidson, who is the CEO of Care After Combat.

Rob also took me (briefly) through, the finer points of National Carp Team Management, International Rules and Match Tactics, and, he made me a coffee too...although we had to retreat to his shelter as we were getting sprayed with 'sloppy spod mix', as the Ladies teams were relentless in their desire to catch...!

I hope to meet up with Rob at some point in the near future for a full interview.

From that initial meeting, I contacted Sioned Weeks, who is the Welsh Ladies Team Captain and invited her to tell us about the Welsh Ladies Carp Team...this is what she had to say...



Welsh Ladies Carp Team – by Sioned Weeks (Welsh Ladies Team Captain)



Any mention of women who fish, and particularly women who fish for carp generally conjures up images of dainty little rods, fishing in prolific venues for small fish, or even sitting, patiently alongside their partners or husbands while they reel in the big fish! This is precisely the image that the Welsh Ladies Carp Team want to change.

So – how did it all begin and why on earth do women want to fish? The best person to ask was Rob Hughes, TV presenter, international competitor and double World Champion himself also Carp Team England Men's Team manager. He told me: *“The history behind the setting up of the lady's event started as Miranda Brown was helping out*

marshal at the British Carp Angling Championships. We bumped into each other at Barston in 2015 and she asked me why there wasn't a Ladies Team England. At that time there wasn't any female angling groups, so I suggested that she set one up and start getting people together and we could look into it. She organised a ladies only get together at Linch Hill and I said I would attend to say hello and also to televise it and give the group some support and publicity. We made a segment for Tight Lines for Sky Sports and it was brilliantly received”. From there, firm friendships were established, and a competitive element became evident among these ladies. Forming strong ties with the English Men's Carp Fishing Team, the lady's talents were soon noted, and seeing an opportunity, Rob soon offered to help Miranda to form a Ladies Team for England. Clearly, they now needed to someone to compete against. “We assisted Sam Roberts in her approach to the Welsh Federation for permission for a Welsh squad and the rest is history,”

Along with Sam, Kieran Harvey and John Cali of Cardiff Angling

Centre, they were tasked with the job of getting these Welsh ladies together and quickly established the depth of interest and talent among a handful of ladies, mainly in the South Wales area. I was personally approached by Kieran in early 2015 and was immediately captured by the prospect of improving my angling abilities by becoming part of a competitive team. By then, I

had been fishing for about 3 years, I was looking for a new way to test my angling ability, I was ready for a challenge, and this came in the form of The Welsh Ladies Carp Team and an invite from Rob Hughes and Miranda Brown to take part in the very first Anglo-Welsh Clifford Cup carp competition in April 2016 at Barston Lakes, near Birmingham. Samantha Roberts

was the Captain for that first match against England. The 48-hour competition in Barston was a huge learning curve for us – none of us had fished competitively before and despite an England win, we came away feeling very excited and far more confident as a team. During the following year, we practiced together as well as independently in



preparation for the return match, which would now be held on Welsh waters, White Springs Fishery in Pontarddulais near Llanelli. The yearlong development of the team and hitting it off as friends as well as team mates saw the return Anglo-Welsh Clifford Cup match in April 2017. Natalie Chapman, one of the team members in particular had and experience never to be forgotten, capturing 'Bruno' at

over 40lb in the very last few minutes of the competition – talk about pressure! With this last-minute capture, it tied Wales with England, and it then went on weight, fortunately for England, but sadly for Wales, England had caught more fish overall and they once again retained the Clifford Cup, but not before Wales had given them a proper run for their money this time.

Working hard behind

the scenes once again, Rob Hughes was establishing ties with European Lady Anglers, and the women's carp-fishing scene broke new ground as England, Wales and the Netherlands competed in the first all-female Tri-Nations event on the historical carp venue – Wraysbury. The 72-hour match took place under strict international rules, with four pairs of anglers representing each nation across four



sections. Points were awarded in each section and the team that finished with the lowest points were crowned the winner. Delighting everyone – Wales brought home the Gold medal, after a gruelling 72 hours. Natalie May the team captain for this match as Sam Roberts was away on maternity leave said ***“England were the favourites going into this match, with the Netherlands team strong on a venue like this as it suited their style. It was a tough event, but a huge boost and achievement for the Welsh Ladies Team we were now becoming a significant adversary to England”***.

Winning Gold was a proud moment for all involved, and finally we had benefited from all the hard work and improvements we had

made over the year to tactics and fishing practices. It was an outstanding victory – with Wales winning three sections out of four!

May 25th, 2018 saw the 3rd Anglo – Welsh Clifford Cup

competition against England in Drayton Reservoir, a well-known prolific lake in Northamptonshire, and this time I had been awarded the honour of Captaining the Team after unforeseen circumstances



Welsh Ladies Carp Team

prevented Nat May from competing. After England's defeat the previous year, the Welsh Team were under no illusions that this was going to be an easy match – England were out for retaliation for the previous year's Tri-Nations defeat. Another 48 hours of fishing under strict FIPSeD rules, saw the girls spodding constantly from 8 a.m. in the morning to 7p.m. at night. The lake fished hard, with the fish not behaving the way they normally do at Drayton, and with the spodding restrictions and floater fishing and floating bait total ban, meant that it was often a frustrating matter for the ladies as these were exactly the hours the lake switched on. Despite this, most of the captures came to both teams through the night, meaning very little sleep and

recovery time. This match was a debut match for two new members, namely Jackie Potts and Emma Dyer, paired together against two of England's more experienced team members Kellie Margerrison and Lyn Worster. First blood for this match came to Sam Roberts and myself, and we quickly gained a lead in our section. This early gain gave us the determination and will power driving

us forward and win our section. An overall Welsh defeat, but one section win was an acceptable outcome, however we needed to re-group for the upcoming Tri-Nations in less than a month. The Ladies ICFA European Tri-Nations International at Thorpe Lea June 21st – 24th 2018 dawned all too soon after the Anglo-Welsh Cup, but saw the return of Natalie May to the team, partnered with Amy Jenkins – an original



long-standing team member

The draw was done and as Wales - the defending champions were welcomed by England and the other challengers Holland and the 72-hour match was underway. Again, FIPSeD rule restrictions meant that spodding times were forbidden during the night, along with a complete floater fishing ban. In blistering heat, the girls battled over 3 days, again first fish of the match coming to

Sam and myself, however this did not set the tone for the rest of the match. Weedy water, and sweltering conditions meant that we had to try several methods before coming across one that worked. Finding clear spots through the weed was the first



priority, and England quickly found a method that worked, and were soon into one fish after another. After our lucky start in our section, things slowed down, but eventually we found a method – PVA bags over clear spots and spodding over the spots we were soon banking one fish after another, especially during the night. A close match in our section, once again pitted against Miranda Brown and Ellen Beedham, as we had been in the Drayton Anglo-Welsh competition, we were finally beaten by England, and



beaten by England, and Netherlands coming 3rd in our section. For other sections in this competition, things were a mixed bag, the other side of the lake was slow, and once again, hauling the fish through the thick weed was difficult, but one that Natalie May and Amy Jenkins mastered and went on to win their section. Final results were England won Gold, Wales Silver and Netherlands Bronze, with myself and Sam being awarded the

honour of having caught the biggest fish of the match, and a fantastic come back for our Natalie May with a section win. Yet another gruelling competition, 72 hours and sweltering heat, exhaustion was a constant adversary for all involved.

Looking forward to the future, 2019 will be a huge step forward for Women in Carp Fishing, adding to the excitement already growing among women in sport, and most specifically women in

male dominated sports. Rob Hughes made a big announcement in the recent Anglo-Welsh Clifford Cup competition at Drayton, he said: ***“There will be a full World Championships in 2019 hosted by France. All female events are currently ratified by ICFA the International Carp Fishing Association. I’m immensely proud and privileged to have been involved in this movement from the very beginning. As an international competitor and double World Champion myself, my efforts now lie in coaching and promoting our sport, especially participation and inclusivity. The growth, passion and also skill shown by all of the ladies is fantastic and I look forward to next year as yet more nations***



join the movement. The announcement has been made that next year will see the launch of the first Ladies World Championships Competition, to be held in France. “

There is potential for more countries to join Wales, England, Netherlands and France for the World Championships, with talks being held currently with Italy. FIPS will put out official invites to all of the 30 registered carp fishing nations to get their lady carp anglers together and pit their skills in this ground-breaking development. “It will be a small affair next year, probably 5-7 teams but within 2 years there will be a dozen or more nations competing for sure” said Rob. Going forward, things are extremely exciting, but we do

face challenges. In Wales, where carp fishing is relatively young in comparison to England and Europe, we have struggled to find women with a passion for carp fishing, especially given the fact that it is a huge commitment for all involved, including management and coaches. Not only is being part of the team a huge time commitment, most of the ladies have full time jobs or are mums with young children, it is also a massive financial commitment,

with no funding available to us at the moment. We do get some concessions from bait companies and Fox International who offer us discounts on their products, and we are forever grateful for this support. We would like to, however call on all female anglers in Wales who would be interested in joining us for trials, or just for an informal chat. Kieran Harvey, manager of Cardiff Angling Centre and Team Manager is always scouting for new talent and female



interest in the sport and would be happy to chat to anyone who feel they have got what it takes to be part of vibrant, exciting and most of all developing team of Welsh Lady Carp anglers. Kieran – the team mangers says **“The team has come on leaps and bounds since it’s early days. Having the opportunity to manage the girls and coming up against England for the Anglo- Wales Clifford Cup and the Netherlands in the Tri-Nations Internationals competition I knew we had to step up a gear and really get the ball rolling! Working in Cardiff Angling Centre gives me the opportunity to meet anglers and most specifically lady anglers which is where I started to scout for interest in the sport. It was**

a huge privilege and an exhilarating feeling to win Gold at the first Tri-Nations International last year at Wraysbury. Being the underdogs and walking away with a gold medal, I know my girls are capable of anything! We’re always looking for new faces to come along and join us in our quest to be the best we can, ladies of all abilities are welcome to join us and get involved! If this is you, get in touch! Find the Welsh Ladies Carp Team on Facebook

and Instagram, or even pop into Cardiff Angling Centre for a brew and a chat!”

Last year, myself and my husband purchased a lake in West Wales, and late last year stocked it with V.S. Fishery Carp and plans made to have a further stocking later on this year. With this development as well as a fishery for anglers, our proposal is to develop it as an academy for young anglers and for lady anglers with a passion for the sport, and to bring them on to be



safe, capable and competent anglers, with the ability to compete with anyone. It will be an opportunity for them to develop their skills and hone their angling abilities. Finally, I would just like to say that it is an exciting time for us ladies, and we continue to welcome the support we have had to date and any new support that is offered to us going forward. Please contact us via our Facebook and Instagram pages

#Welshladiescarpteam
Thank you for reading this article.
Signed Weeks (Team Captain)
Next Month, we will bring you a profile of each angler in the Welsh Ladies Carp Team, from a Mother of five, a Secondary School Maths Teacher, a Trainer for Lloyds Bank, a Rehabilitation Practitioner, a Customer Supervisor, a Nursery Practitioner and a Specialist Falls Physiotherapist and

they all have one major passion in common, they love to Carp Fish..!!
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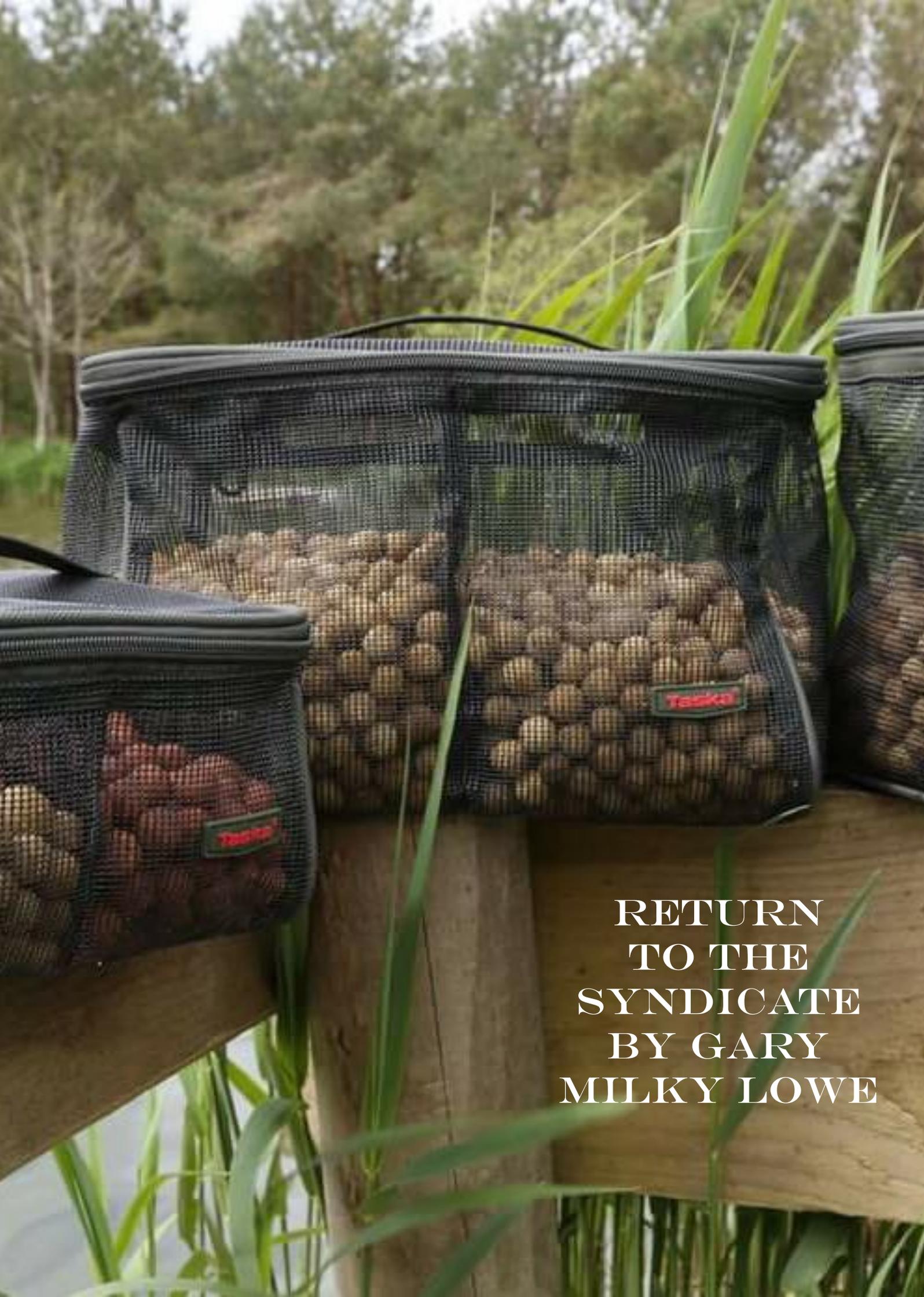


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RETURN
TO THE
SYNDICATE
BY GARY
MILKY LOWE

Well I was all geared up to do another session on the park lake as it was being so kind to me, all the bait was ready all new rigs tied for the lake. All I had to do the following morning was load the car. When I had a phone call saying that one of my syndicates was open, not my main one, but I was still happy that I could get away from the hustle and bustle of the park lake even though it had fished well and still was with fish coming out over 30 lb, but my heart is always going to be on my syndicates, well that phone call has thrown a spanner in the works... fishing on the syndicate is totally different to the park lake so all the bait went back in the freezer and a different mixture of bait was prepared ready for the morning. That evening I sat there

tying up different rigs as on the syndicate it was a different ball game when it comes to presentation the lake bottom is covered in silt, and I mean in some places it's up to 4ft deep, so I wanted to make sure that my rigs stayed on top and fishing all the time. I had used solid bags to good effect, so I was going to go in with that to start.

I was up nice and early for the long drive to the lake. I loaded the car and made a brew to take with me and I was off down the motorway. After what felt like eternity I finally drove down the dirt track that lead to the gate. Once I was at the gate my heart was racing in anticipation of how the session would go, as I opened the gate and drove down to the car park I could see no one was there which was a result. I am sure there will be a few tonight

after work ,so I locked the car and took for a walk round the lake, well the lake is just an open expanse of water with reeds all the way round the edge of the lake and big trees around the bank for cover so you can imagine that the fish do love to patrol the margins so as I was walking round looking in all the swims I also kept an eye out in the edge for fish. I climbed a few of the higher trees and could see that there was a good few fish in one corner of the lake which was at the far end of the lake. The lake isn't that big, only about 9 acres so it doesn't take too long to walk round. Well seeing them fish made my mind up I was going to start in that corner and if nothing happens or the fish do the off I'll have to move. The barrow was loaded with all the gear and off I went to

my swim, there was no rush as there was still no one around. Arriving at my swim which was named 'the ghost' which I wasn't to please about why the fish couldn't be some were else. I decided to set my gear up as far back from the edge of the swim as possible so if the fish did come right in close I wouldn't spook them of, once the house was up rods were all ready to go i sat back and made a brew and then I would decide where my baits were going to go as there is no features out in the lake... it's just flat with silt and the odd weed bed close in. All three rods were going on solid back and in the bags, I would have a mixture of small

dynamite pellets and a small white almond pop up then over the top of that I will be putting a spod mix which consists of corn, hemp and pigeon mix, that is just to keep them interested in the area. Tea had been drunk and it was now time to put the rods out, but I decided to take a climb up the tree to see if I could see where they were patrolling in the area.

Once I was up the tree and looking properly I could see that to my

right there was a small weed bed coming of the reeds for about 15 yards out and there were a few fish milling around that. Straight out at about 50 yards it looks like there was some fish feeding as the water was all colored and there was some fish swimming around the cloud so that was two rods sorted. The left had rod I was going to put down the left margin as there was an overhanging willow



about 20 yards down the bank. I took a mental note of where the fish were and climbed back down so I could put the rods out, the left hand rod went out ...spot on first cast just under the tip of the willow. The middle rod took two casts which meant tying on a new solid bag and the right hand rod again spot on tight up against the weed bank. I wasn't going to put any spod mix out just yet, I would do that later, for now I was just going to leave the bags on their own as I don't want to spook them off by smashing the water to a foam.

Well once everything was sorted I sat back down at the back of my swim tucked away in the trees and made myself some breakfast as I was starving. I put some mushrooms in the ridge monkey and them some bacon in the other ridgemonkey

and made myself a nice sandwich then washed it down with a nice hot brew all while watching the water. It must have been about 10 o'clock in the morning before I saw a fish crash out and it was nearly bang on my middle rod out where I had seen the cloudy area, so I was well happy that. I hadn't spooked them off with the two casts just as the ripples had stopped one of the members came walking through the trees into my swim, he was here for a couple of days so we had a quick chat and a cuppa tea and I told him what I had seen and he then took off to have a look round and find a swim. I settled down in the chair to watch the water, it looks like the other member had settled in a swim at the other end of the lake, he must have seen something down there

while I was watching the water. I decided to make up some fresh solid bags, but I was going to change the hookbait for tonight. I was going to take of the round 12mm round almond pop up and put on a 12mm barrel.

As the day drew on a few more people turned up so hopefully it might move the fish around more if there up the other end. I had only seen that one fish during the day crash out I was hoping that they were still in the area, so I decided to climb the trees behind me to have a look, well once I was up there the cloudy area from this morning had gone and the water was gin clear, so it looked like they had done the off from that area. Now I was thinking do I keep it there ready for the morning? I decided that I would stay with

that spot for the night. The left hand rod was going to stay in the same area as well but when I looked to the right I saw a few fish milling around and feeding on top of some low lying weed, no what do I do with the right hand rod... do I move it on to the weed or leave it just off it? The fish don't seem to be moving off the weed, but I know that the fish will be more comfortable away from the weed of a night, but I might take the chance and put one on the weed so at least if they move back on it in the morning I will have a bait there. I still have two other rods that will be ok for the night. I know that the willow tree does bites of a night and so does open water... so I was happy with them two for tonight, so I reeled in the rod that was near the weed bed, tied up a new bag and

cast it onto the low-lying weed were the fish were active during the day. I left the other two were they were as I was happy with the spots that they were on.

The sun was setting and I was sitting outside my shelter cooking tea when I had a couple of bleeps on the rod that was on the weed then a fish launched itself right out the water on my spot, now have I been done or had it just touched the line? I didn't want to risk it so I turned my tea off and redone the rod then sat back down to have my tea. I just hoped I hadn't spooked the fish off, well as it got dark I sat there watching the water with a cup of tea hoping to see some signs of fish but I didn't see or hear anything well into darkness, so I decided to get my head down as I wanted to be up at

the crack of dawn, but I hoped to be up before then. Let's just say I had a good night's sleep, not even a bleep, so I was awake just as it was getting light and was sitting on my chair with a nice steaming hot brew looking for signs. I see a few but it was on the other side of the lake near a few others and nothing near me so had I made a mess of things by staying here? I don't know... the fish were here yesterday so they might turn back up today. I'll give it till about 3, if they don't come back then I'll move before the overnight gang turn up later. I sat there for a few hours and I see nothing on my side but the sun had come over the trees now and was hitting my side of the lake so this should warm up the water over my spots and bring the carp with it.

After I had some brekkie I decided to climb the tree behind the swim to see if I could see any fish. Once I was up there I could see a group of about 10 fish all around the area of the rod that was cast on to the weed. I stayed up the tree for about an hour and I could see two fish that were happy to swim over or near my bait so all I needed was for one of them to drop down and I would be in. I climbed back down and sat there just watching the water and tying up a few new rigs. I redone the rod that was near the willow with a fresh rig but left the other two. I would do them later if I stayed here. I was glad I did when about an hour later the rod that was on top of the low-lying weed melted off. I dropped the cuppa I was drinking at the time and ran to the

rod... as I picked up the rod it tore off into the lake. I dropped the middle rod to get the line out of the way and tried to get some control of this powerhouse of a fish after a while I managed to get some line back on my reel from the fish but it started to kite towards the willow so I put some strain on it and turned it away from there but there was a lot of weed on my line now that it had picked up on the way in so I had to be careful. A few minutes later I had the fish in the margins and it was using the deep margins to full effect but after a few gulps of air she slipped in the net and she was mine. I was well chuffed as it was one of the scaly ones big scales down its side, I made sure the fish was safe in the net in the edge and got all my stuff ready for the photos, well on the scales she went

28lb 10oz a few photos and I slipped her back as it was getting really warm now.

I re done that rod with a new bag and cast it back on top of the weed ready for another if they were still there. After that fish I decided to stay put. I was going to try something different on the rod that was near the willow. I was going to put a Ronnie rig on with a yellow almond flavour pop up and bait it with mixed sizes of my almond flavoured boilie. The rig was cast close to the tree and I used the rings that it made to get the bait spot on then sat down to just chill out and hope that what I have done would get me another bite. One of the A team would be nice. That evening a few of the members walked round for a chat and to see what was happening as they were down the

I told them what I had seen and what the fish were doing, and they went off to look round. One of the lads that fishes here was coming down for the night and was going to bring a Chinese in so I didn't have to cook which was a result as I couldn't be bothered. After we had eaten our tea he decided to set up in the next swim which was about 200 yards down from me which I thought was ok as I needed a cameraman!! I did the same as the night before and got my head down early, so I was up first thing. I didn't get that good night's sleep like the night before because at about midnight the rod I had changed to a bottom bait tore off and I was soon on it. Now this fish was taking line like the other but straight down the margins. It was that dark that I couldn't see

where it was going, all I knew was that there was a big willow down there and I had cast close to it so it must be right under it so I thought I've got to stop this fish before it goes any further!! I clamped down on it and yes you guessed... it the bloody hook pulled. I was gutted. I reeled the rig back then changed the rig and cast it back out there with some bait round it and got back in my bag to sulk. I must have drifted off as when I opened my eyes again it was light and the sun was up! What was the time? It was eight o'clock... I had to be away from the lake for 10 so I made a slow pack down. All I had left was the rods,

which I would do last. I climbed the tree to see what was out there and I looked all over the swim and there was nothing to see. Yesterday were there was a big group of fish here! Oh well at least I had one. It could have been better but that's fishing. I climbed back down packed the rods away as there was nothing there and made my way home, but I couldn't wait to get back down so let's see what happens next time I get down.

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The Big Interview with Simon Pomeroy



When news broke recently of a radical move to eliminate the use of lead weights in the Netherlands it's a good bet that no one was cheering more loudly than Simon Pomeroy.

The former retailer, shery owner and now tackle manufacturer has been beating the drum for the replacement of lead in shing – often to deaf ears – for more than ten years.

Tackling him on the subject is like breaching a dam. All the passion, frustration and anger compounded by ten years of not being heard pour out as we

discuss an issue that continues to divide the sport and the trade. He

is scathing in his criticism of an industry he regards as irresponsible for largely failing to embrace the banning of a substance considered to be toxic to the environment and to humans.

“The industry, pretty much as a whole, has made no effort to reduce the use of lead and is unlikely to respond willingly to the Neth- erlands initiative,” he says. “It has actually lobbied to protect lead; lobbying supported by and paid for by the industry.

“The current situation is the result of negligence and lack of duty of care. It distresses me that the ill effects of lead are being ignored in the cause of pro t.

Pro t does not have to be an ugly word, but in this case it is.

“The only reason lead is used in shing weights is because it is cheaper and easier to use than other materials.

“We shouldn't even be asking questions about costs and change of practices given the much more crucial issues of health and the environment.

“Even the most naïve manufacturer should see the futility of the pro-lead argument. It is not a question of will there be change, but when will that change happen? Those who wait for legislation to force change will be perceived as not caring

and will be vilified.”

Pomeroy is particularly critical of the practice

“The general public must be horrified by what angling is doing. The perception is that fishing is poisoning water supplies.”

of leaving lead in the water through lead-eject systems, particularly in carp fishing. "This reckless method is actually promoted by some brand leaders," he says. "It started in the UK and has been copied in Europe. Films about how to use it have been popularised on the internet.

"These systems are designed so that lead can be ejected on every take. Many anglers have come to think this is the right thing to do and many tons of lead have been dropped into water systems across Europe. This is a real environmental issue but the industry does not seem to recognise this.

"I read one article where two anglers lost hundreds of 4.5 ounce leads in a 48-hour ses-

sion, all by design. "When this issue really blows up I can see the perpetrators being made to retrieve the lead that has been dumped. The cost of the clean-up will be massive. Ignorance will be no defence.

"The general public must be horrified by what the angling community is doing. The perception is that fishing is poisoning water supplies for families and children." It concerns Pomeroy that people will think his position on the issue stems from the fact that his company makes lead-free alternatives. But he is no Johnnie-come-lately to the debate.

He began marketing his Stonze range in 2007 because he couldn't believe the use of lead would prevail, and it was ten years ago that he appeared in the

very next issue of this magazine arguing the case for the use of non-toxic weights.

And by urging other manufacturers to go down the non-toxic route he is in effect inviting more competition.

He is aware that his outspoken views have made him a pariah among the keep-lead lobby, but stands by his principles.

"I genuinely fear for the impact this will have on the sport and the environment going forward. As an industry we should be very worried – but are we worried enough?"

He has not been encouraged by developments over the last decade, but sees promise in the recent Dutch initiative to reduce lead weights by 30% in the next three years.

It puts the matter more squarely in the public domain and provides additional traction. He also sees government involvement as critical. “The Dutch Ministry of Agriculture is behind the plan and has started something that the industry has absolutely no control over. The Dutch have clearly understood the depth of the problem. “There is a whole new dynamic to consider – people power. The industry’s historic control has been taken away and pressure for change is going to rise. “I also understand that in the UK a leading member of parliament is now aware of the issue and is bringing it to the attention of Environment Minister, Michael Gove. That could be a turning point. “Given that fishing’s governing bodies in this country are not responding sufficiently

to the facts, the sport is inviting a huge exposé in the popular national media condemning angling.

“I have personally spoken to the Environment Agency and the Angling Trust, but my views appear to have fallen on deaf ears, which is beyond me. Can they not see the obvious problem? Or is it just a case of profit coming first and environment a distant second?”

Pomeroy ‘would love’ to see EFTTA become the agent for change, but believes its call to action in 2015, which urged the industry to control and manage the reduction of lead, has been largely ignored and that the industry will continue to resist bans. However, he takes heart from the recent development in the Netherlands, believing

it will change the way the issue is viewed and lead to tougher rulings on lead elsewhere in Europe.

Denmark has already banned lead weights and he points to manufacturers across Europe that are already producing non-toxic alternatives. “Companies continuing to make lead are in denial. Non-toxic weights are out there. Manufacturing processes are out there. A change could be implemented quickly and smoothly if the industry worked together.”

“Most importantly, it will present the industry and the sport in a whole new light in the eyes of the world at large. The overall gain would be hugely significant. Surely that has to be good for the long-term future of this industry.”



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LEAD FREE LEADER & HOOKLINK MATERIALS

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LEAD FREE LEADER & HOOKLINK: COMING SOON!

Following a short delay on the initially expected release date, we're pleased to say the much anticipated RM-Tec Lead Free Leader and Hooklink materials will soon be available to purchase nationwide!!

Tested, tweaked and developed by Dave Levy, Jay Cater, Max Cottis and the RidgeMonkey Pro anglers, the Lead Free materials have already assisted in the capture of some of the world's largest carp and are sure to become a firm favourite in the tackle boxes of anglers throughout Europe and beyond.

EXPECTED AVAILABILITY

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LEAD FREE HOOKLINK

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ADVANCED BOILIE CRUSHER PARTICLE PLATE: COMING SOON!

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EXPECTED AVAILABILITY

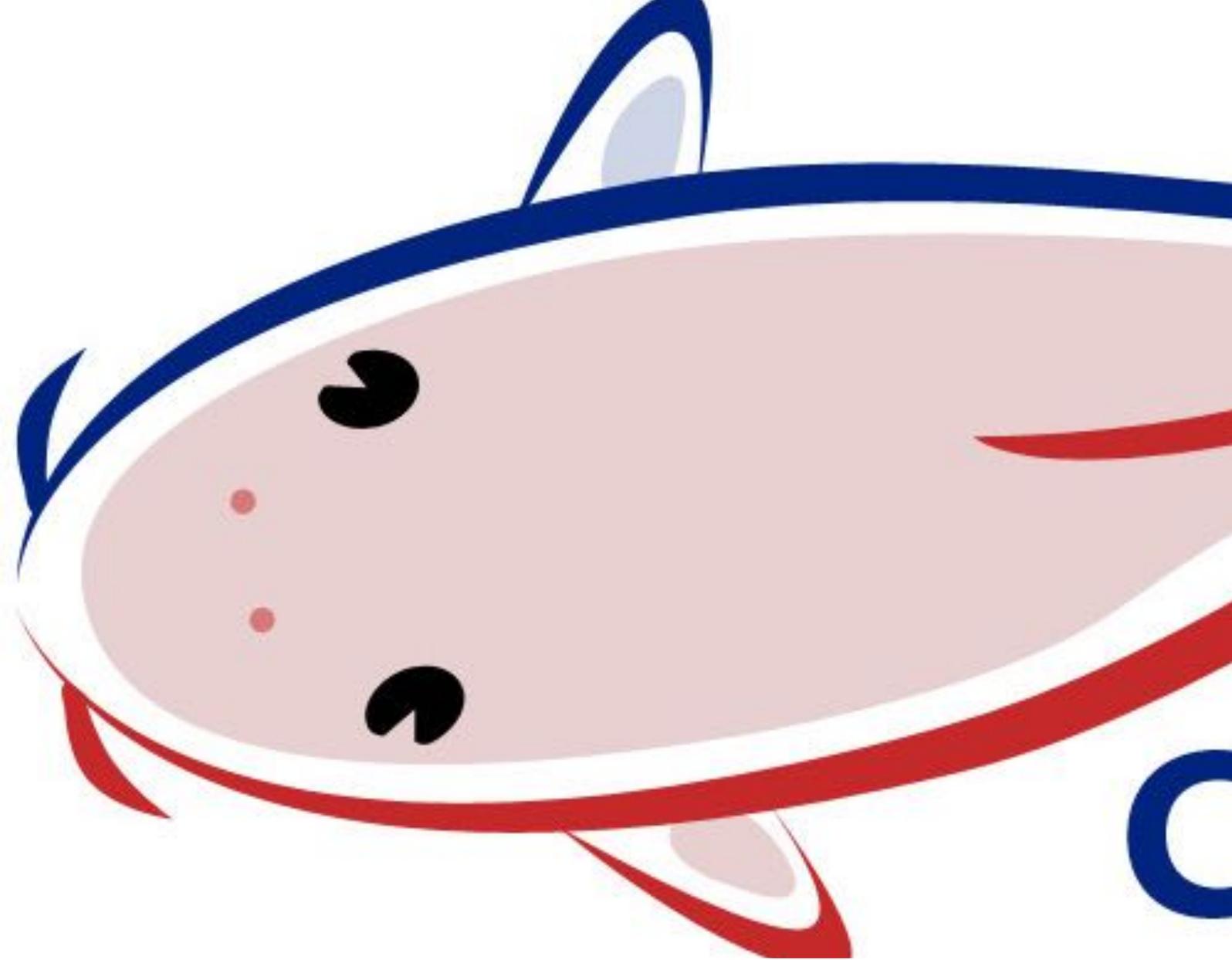
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LADIES BRITISH CARP CUP

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TalkingCarp.



BRITISH CARP CUPS



MIXED CARP CUP

Brought to you by **BCC**

TalkingCarp

I started marshalling for the British Carp Angling Championships around 2007 when Carp Team England Manager Rob Hughes was the owner.

I first met him whilst fishing the events with my angling partner. Rob eventually sold to Simon Bennie and I stayed on as a head marshal running both singles and pairs events.

I continued in that role until the end of 2013 when myself and my wife Belinda started British Carp Cups Ltd. We pride ourselves on forward thinking and started Ladies singles and pairs events along with the very popular Mixed Carp Cup, which is usually our end of year closer. This year all three of those events sold out and have competitors on waiting lists.

I have marshalled in Europe for the European Carp Angling Championships at Abbey Lakes and Ross Honey's Worlds Carp Classic at Madine. This year is the 20th Anniversary of the WCC which I will be fishing myself on the mighty Madine.

Myself and my wife are keen carp anglers but also enjoy fishing for other species as well.

Last year I was very proud to be asked to marshal the Home Nations between England, Scotland and Wales on Linear Fisheries and I must of done something right as I have been asked to continue into the future.

We have revamped our British Carp Cup with a new look final at Barston Lake in October.

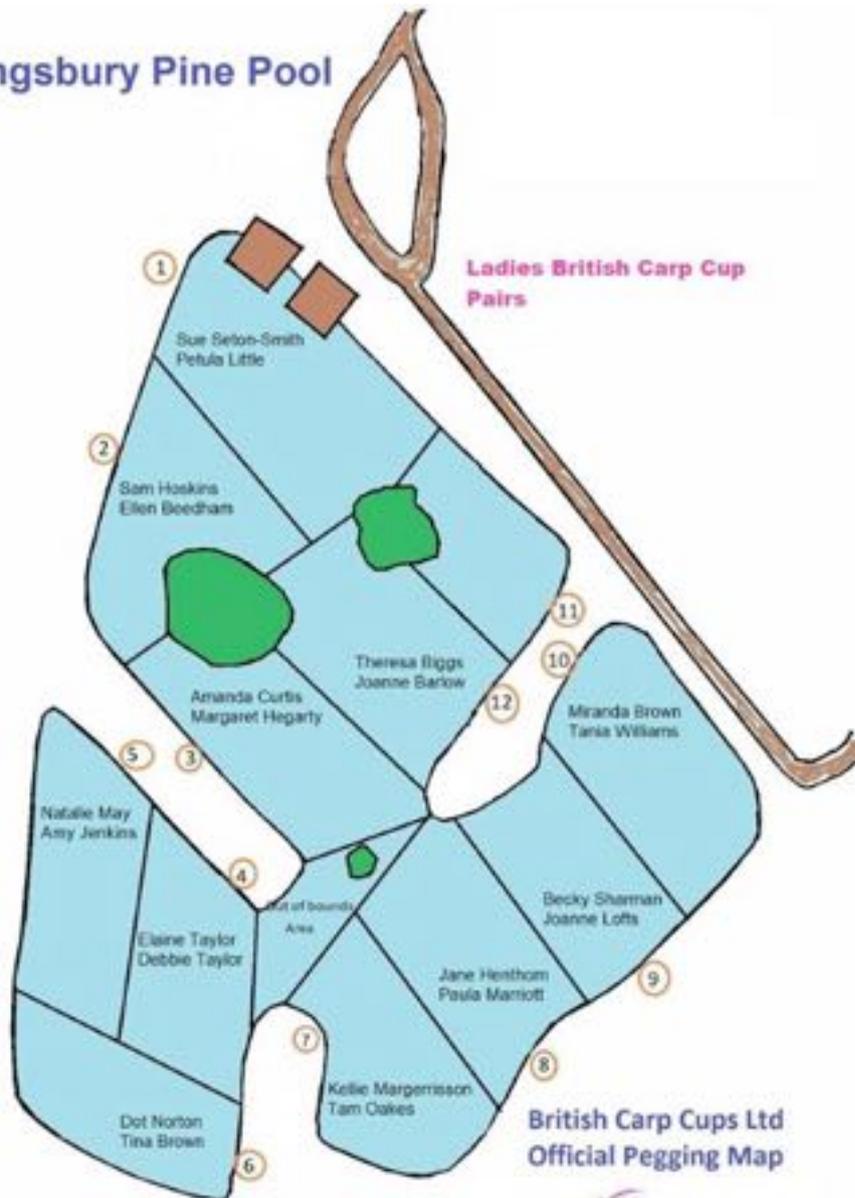
Anybody is welcome to enter our competitions, Check our website for more information and current availability. There are still places available on most of the qualifiers.

Mick Coxon British Carp Cups
www.britishcarpcups.co.uk



Ladies Final

Kingsbury Pine Pool



*Kingsbury Water
park, Pine Pool*

This year's event produced 31 fish for a total weight of 483lb 13oz, which equates to an average of over 15lb 8oz per fish. Nine out of the 11 pairs fishing registered fish. The largest fish of the match was a 27lb common caught by Theresa Biggs who went on to take the title with 5 fish for 80lb 6oz. Theresa was fishing on her own due to her partner, Joanne Barlow, coming down with an illness. She didn't even have a runner and worked the swim tirelessly throughout the weekend. She selected peg 12 after coming out 8th in the watercraft draw.

Runners up spot was taken by the 2017 champions Elaine and Debbie Taylor, who had 4 fish for 71lb 6oz. They cemented their place with a 15lb+



common with less than 2 hours of the match remaining.

3rd place went to Jane Henthorn and Paula Marriott with 5 fish for

69lb. Lots of girls were in contention during the course of the weekend and the podium places changed throughout the proceedings.



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

LADIES BRITISH CARP CUP **Ladies British Carp Cup** **Pairs**

Position	Competitors	Kingsbury Pine Pool	Peg No	Number of Fish	Total Weight
1	Theresa Biggs / (Joanne Bartow)		12	5	80lb 6oz
2	Elaine Taylor / Debbie Taylor		4	4	71lb 6oz
3	Jane Henthorn / Paula Marriott		8	5	69lb
4	Natalie May / Amy Jenkins		5	3	56lb 15oz
5	Miranda Brown / Tania Williams		10	4	51lb 2oz
6	Sue Seton-Smith / Petula Little		1	2	43lb 7oz
7	Dot Norton / Tina Brown		6	3	42lb 11oz
8	Kellie Margerrison / Tam Oakes		7	3	34lb 14oz
9	Sam Hoskins / Ellen Beedham		2	2	34lb
10					
11					
12					

British Carp Cups Ltd
www.britishcarpcups.co.uk

4th place was taken by Natalie May and Amy Jenkins who finished on 56lb 15oz and missed out due to the carpgirls late fish.

5th with 51lb 2oz

were Miranda Brown and Tania Williams. Following closely were a new pairing to the matches, Sue Seton-Smith and Petula Little, who had a nice 20lber each.

Next came Dot Norton and Tina Brown with Kellie Margerrison and Tam Oakes in 8th. Sam Hoskins and Ellen Beedham made up the last pair to register fish.



It was a very close affair and one fish landed by a host of anglers could have put a completely different slant on things. The hot weather carried on into Saturday but then started to change when a cooler front moved in bringing rain and gusty winds. Although this is

The British Carp Cups

on BT Sport 2 next

Monday.”

we needed it slowed the fishing down somewhat proving once again that although the hot dry weather was far from ideal, it was at least settled which is what the stunning Pine Pool residents seemed to prefer. On the whole it was a great event and I can't wait to watch it unfold when it airs







Keep watch for details of next years dates and venues, and remember to book early to secure your place in the number one carp competition.

Contact Mick or Belinda Coxon at
www.britishcarpcups.co.uk
for more informaion





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CARPING MAD!

Chapter 4



Mike 'SPUG' Redfern



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

~Snow & Curries~

A decidedly chilly 3.30am on the 11th of January found Hogg and me going through the tolls on the Dartford bridge, with Joy Division on full-blast as we sped towards Bromley to pick Tob up. We had been invited for a three-nighter down at Les and with nowhere really to fish and with Christmas well and truly out of the way, we couldn't wait. Tob had got a meal for three from the Indian all sorted. I had enough to feed the three of us with a massive chilli and Hogg had, as yet, sorted nothing out as his contribution to the meals for the forthcoming trip. He was cutting it fine that was for sure! Anyway, we picked Tob up, squeezed into the estate, found a 24-hour Tesco and we were on our way.

As we were going down the French auto-thingy, I questioned Tob as to what type of Indian meals he had got in. "Well three Madras, what did you expect?" came the reply.

"Oh nothing. That's perfect." I answered, knowing full well that Shandy pants Hogg would never eat one of them. He was, is, and always will be, a Silk Cut smoking, Masala eating ██████ that can only drink about four beers. This kept me entertained for the three or so hours the other side of the Channel as I kept ribbing Hogg about the fact that in all likelihood I would be heading for double portions on one night at least. He did fight his case and in the end told me to shut up. Tob just sat there laughing unfazed by it all, as we shared out our roll-ups, like men do.

We arrived around midday and I set up in the Christmas Tree swim. Hogg was to my left in Next to Coypu, both on the Old Lake and Tob went for the harder option of the bailiff swim on the Elf Lake 40 yards behind us. The fact that the bailiff swim on the Elf had a proper wooden hut, with a heater and double-glazing had nothing to do with it I'm sure. Like I said he's a real man! With the bivvies set up and a small remote control boat to put our hemp and maize out, it was just a case of getting them out for the night. We use the boat in winter for safety reasons as even with a lifejacket on, if anyone fell out of a boat it would be nasty to say the least. So not only does it save an hour's spodding, it also means there is some serious messing about to be done, which is of course how I



baited up, loudly singing various tunes from World War II films, if my memory serves me correctly.

We met in the lodge on dark and watched the telly. It was definitely going to be a cold night and after Hogg's pathetic contribution to the meals, we were soon legging it out of the lodge to land a mid-20 for him. At the end of the night and after copious amounts of laughter along with a few beers, two of us went back to our cold bivvies and one, well, let's not even go there. He reckoned he had to turn the heater down as he couldn't sleep. Grade 1 wind-up merchant! My middle rod went as slack as a spaniel's ear around 3am and although I managed to play it in the freezing cold for 10 minutes, wearing just my long johns, it decided to throw the hook just under the rod tip as I was trying to prise my frozen net off the floor. I literally dived back into the bag, cursing my bad luck.

We had a load of bacon on the go for breakfast the next morning, when Hogg had a run which ended up with a 26lb common in the bottom of his net. The second night was going to be the curry night and as I was still blanking I thought it probably best to turn my attentions to the meal, only of course to stop the wind-ups coming in my direction for my lack of prowess on the carp front! Most of the afternoon was spent winding Hogg up and by the time we were thinking about dinner two things had happened; one was that the snow had started to fall, and I mean it was falling as fast as I had ever seen it, and the other was that Hogg had announced that he was not at all a Shandy pants, and whatever I could eat, so could he, plus he wouldn't be far behind me on the John Smith's front either. I knew we were going to be in for a proper evening's entertainment and I was right.

Although he kept a straight face, I could see the sweat trickling down his forehead as he ate the curry and I kept nudging Tob, who was sitting there laughing as usual. It got to about 10pm and Hogg managed a personal best of five beers and one Madras and then claimed that he was tired and it was time for bed, so he put on his head torch and his all-in-one suit, and headed for his bivvy. As he opened the lodge door snow billowed in and he was seen carefully making his way back to his plot for the night.

Although we were rolling around with laughter, there was a small hint of concern as the situation was likened to Captain Scott's last journey and the fateful words of Captain Oates, "I'm going out, I may be some time." So ten minutes later I togged myself up and checked he was okay. He was tucked up nicely in his sleeping bag and snoring like a good'un. After Tob and I had stopped laughing and giggling like schoolkids, we too retired for the night and slept off the curry.





After 25 years of carp fishing.

The next morning my bivvy was as warm as toast, as it had turned into an igloo, but that wasn't really the result I was looking for. I wanted a carp and badly, as up until this point only Hogg had caught. One result I was looking for though, was noticed by Tob. "Hey Spug, Just look at Hogg's footprints in the snow as he made his way back last night." Now this was funny. I traced his footprints and he had swayed to the left and then to the right, back to the left then to the right, all the way back to his bivvy and then, right outside his door, was a massive pile of Madras sitting there glowing in the snow! God I laughed. I ran to my bivvy, grabbed the video camera and re-traced his steps on film, just for posterity of course. A fragile breakfast later and finally it was my turn to land one when, at 11.30, I managed a 26.8 common and then an hour later a 15lb mirror.

I didn't really get the significance of these snow photos until Tob asked if I minded if he put one rod in my swim because the Elf Lake obviously wasn't playing the game and he really wanted to get a snow photo, as after 25 years of carp fishing he didn't have one. It was then the penny dropped and I realised just what a snow picture means. Winters have changed a lot in recent years and snow had been rare at times to say the least. Of course it wasn't a problem and that had nothing to do with the fact that he was a co-owner. It did have everything to do

with the fact that he was, and still is, one of the nicest people I have ever met, who has never done anything except help and encourage me on my carp fishing path. He does of course wind me up too and he's the king at that.

Tob knew my swim was going to kick in. So much so that he suggested we build a snowman as that would make a great snow pic for him and 20 minutes later we'd built him one as he stood there grinning with his hands in his pockets, realising he had tricked us again! His hands weren't in his pockets for long as he was soon holding up a 24lb common, and the snow photo was his. Half an hour later he had another one, a low 20 common, and then he started winding me up about it being a match practise for the upcoming year's Gauntlet and how easy the Old Lake was and how his one rod was outfishing our six. I told him to shut up and carry on with the pest control (catching little ones) and then threw a snowball at his head! Fortunately, Hogg managed a bite just before dinner and landed a small common of around 15lb and it was a full set of white snaps for us.

The last evening saw me cook my chilli and for once I showed some restraint and only put a little chilli in, as I didn't want Hogg to be ill for the journey home. Before we set off I had a 39.8 mirror at early o'clock and it would have made a great snow shot, but the snow had gone as quickly as it had appeared. That trip was probably one of the most enjoyable I have ever had and we still all talk about it today. It had all the ingredients of a proper carp fishing outing; a few wind-ups, nothing nasty, a few beers, nothing silly, a few carp and some proper mates thrown in for good measure. Bang-on in my opinion, although in Hogg's opinion some of the curry ingredients could have been left out! We sped up the French auto thingy again, laughing and joking, all blissfully unaware that my whole life was about to be turned upside-down and plonked well and truly on its head.



A bite just before dinner.



39.8.

When I got home a flashing red light on the answering machine requested that I give Lockey a ring. It turned out that he had a couple of jobs going at Solar and asked if I was interested in making the move down to Kent. Now this would require some thought, so I phoned Andy who said, "Mike, you're young, you've got your whole life ahead of you, so follow your dreams. You don't want to spend your whole life working in an abattoir do you?" He was right of course, but here on one hand I had security, I had a good company pension, I also had a nice three-bed detached house which I could easily afford and a good management job with 11 years service under my belt. On the other hand, I was totally driven by all things carp and I was in a bit of a quandary. I rang Lockey. "What about about the fishing? Where will I be able to fish?"

"Don't worry about that, boy. We'll get you on Conningbrook. Oh, and there are loads more birds down here than in bloody Norfolk!" At this point I had

actually developed my own version of speed dating, which involved seeing a bird of a let's say more 'portly' than normal frame leaving the kebab house with extra chilli sauce all over her doner, then walking over and saying, "Hi! Fancy coming back to mine?" Sometimes it worked, sometimes it didn't. So bearing in my mind I could have a go at a mid-50 carp in the shape of Two Tone and I had probably had as many late night 'kebab meetings' as I was going to get in a small Norfolk town, it was a no-brainer.

I handed my notice in, sold most of my possessions, put the rest into my parent's loft, handed my house keys to a letting agency, even though I wasn't going to get enough money in to cover the mortgage, and I was heading for a small flat-share in Grove Park, South East London, obviously (cough) breaking a few hearts in the process. But hey, there's only one Spug after all!

On paper it wasn't the right thing to do of course, but I have never been one for taking the easy option. From now on my life was going to be carp, carp, carp, and I couldn't wait. The only slight downer about the whole thing was that I was going to have stop using my beloved Mainline bait, which we had used from day one. Don't get me wrong I knew Solar bait caught, but I had been treated really well by Big Steve and Angie and all the boys at Mainline, but how could I possibly continue to use it, bearing in mind that not only was I doing the bait write-ups, I was now working for another company. I did the honourable thing and sat down and wrote a letter, thanking Mainline from the bottom of my heart for everything they had done for me and explained my situation. Everything was fine and they wished me good luck, top people that they are.

I quickly found myself moving out of the flat as it was a nightmare. 'Don't drink in that pub cos it's dangerous and that one down the road is even worse. If you turn up in there you had better take a gun!' Now this was something I hadn't even thought about. Coming from Norfolk, we didn't have those city type problems so I was quickly into the Yellow ads and found a room to rent near Brands Hatch in a village called Vigo. The girl who was renting the room reckoned she was a model or something and showed me her portfolio as soon as I entered the house. I moved in a week later and proudly told them all at Solar of my good fortune!

~The Awesome Conningbrook~

Chris Logsdon from Mid-Kent Fisheries kindly offered me a Tier One ticket which meant I could fish all of his lakes, and the tales I had heard about Conningbrook and its inhabitants meant that other than the odd go down on Chilham, this was going to be my main water. Now the Brook was approximately 20 acres in size and had a fearsome reputation. In fact, it was often described as 'ultra difficult' as there were only around 25 fish in its weed-choked, deep water and those 25 or fish were extremely good at avoiding being caught at the best of times. I felt confident that I could deal with the weed, as it couldn't possibly be any worse than what we had to endure on Kingy the previous season. It was just going to have to be a case of sitting there and either boring them out, which wasn't really an option as I had a full-time job, or just learning a different approach which worked.



Friendly Common for Jacko.

The lake had some really good anglers fishing it. The likes of Laney, Jacko (Lee) and Mr F (Paul Forward) were having a go on there. It has to be said a couple of very accomplished carpers had tried and left with their tails well and truly between their legs, having blanked the previous year! I didn't let any of this put me off, though, and having been busy with moving and all that settling in, it wasn't until late April that I eventually found myself hammering down the M20 and heading for the Brook. Well that was the plan anyway, because I pulled off the motorway and headed for Canterbury as instructed, but I couldn't find the place! I ended up ringing the Tackle Box to get directions from Jacko, who had already landed the awesome Friendly Common at mid-30, a few weeks previously. Eventually, I was pushing my barrow through the grass and on to the lake. The wind was blowing gently toward a swim called The Bay and I fancied giving it a go, so I decided to have a look. There was someone in the swim to the right, called Joe's Point, and only about three other anglers on the lake, but something inside me said that maybe it wasn't the right thing to do to go into that swim. There were a lot of empty swims on the far side and not knowing what the other anglers would be like, especially after the previous year's hassles, I decided to play it safe and not get in anyone's face. So I happily trotted round the other side into a swim called The Lifebuoy. I hadn't even set my house up when there was an almighty crash about 50 yards out in front of me. Here we go! I quickly dispatched a fruity yellow pop-up and it landed peach, right on the money. As the lead struck the bottom with a resounding thump I knew that one rod was fishing. I had hardly tied on another pop-up, when the same thing happened again this time well to my right. Out she went, only to land in a weedbed as I felt no thump on the lead, so I reeled in a large ball of weed and repeated the process, this time managing to feel the lead down all the way to bottom. Rod number three was blasted straight out in front of me at about 100 yards and the reason for this was that homework had shown me that the biggun was often caught out in the middle and usually on a fruity boilie, hence my bait choice.

With all three rods sorted and a couple of hours till dark, I sat there on my bedchair with a bottle of Claret and just savoured the moment. Blimey, only five years into my carp fishing and here I was on the banks of the Brook with some of our most prized jewels swimming around in the lake and the cream of the cream trying to catch them. Andy's advice was right. 'Follow your dreams.' I was firmly in the middle of Utopia. It's almost impossible to put into words how I felt that night as I sipped my glass of wine. Of course I dreamed of catching Two Tone, who



An enormous carp.

wouldn't? But this wasn't about that old fish, this was just about sitting there and soaking it all in. All the scrapes and grief I had been through and I had put it all behind me. I had the chance to reinvent myself in Kent and here I was at this strange and mysterious place with all its secrets hidden between weedbeds or in deep water, and I can't describe just how it got me. It was like morphine being pumped into my arms and it seemed to take away the pain of previous battles and losses in my life. I know it sounds daft, but I really felt at peace for once and I didn't expect that to happen just then, at that particular moment. I guess it was just the Conningbrook spell.

Someone set up opposite me in the swim I had fancied at around 8pm, and not long after I was

getting into my bag and settling down for the night. I awoke around 6am the following morning and looked out across the lake. A small crowd had gathered around the swim opposite and I knew something had happened, so I made my way round to investigate and hopefully make some new friends in the process.

As I arrived in the swim an angler, whose name turned out to be Lee Watson, was lifting a sack out of the water which clearly contained an enormous carp. She was of course Two Tone and she looked absolutely stunning. A big, fat, brute of a fish, weighing in at 55.4. She also had a reputation for being almost as elusive as a certain Mr S Hussein would turn out to be a few years later, but she simply took your breath away. She had already shaken the record but that wasn't the attraction, far from it. She was the monster carp that I had dreamed about. The figment of my over-active imagination, there right in front of me, not four feet away. I could have touched her if I'd wanted, but I didn't. I mean I hadn't even



I looked her straight in the eye.

said my hellos yet. Instead, I looked her straight in the eye and said to myself, 'if I only ever catch one more carp in my life, I want it to be this one.' Quite a bold statement for someone who hadn't caught an English 30 yet, or indeed even had a line bite on the lake, but that was exactly how I felt. It was a mind-numbing view that was for sure. Maybe I felt that way because I hadn't seen a 50 in the flesh before, or maybe that imaginary morphine was still in my veins from the night before. Who knows? Or cares, for that matter.

With the photos done I shook Lee's hand and congratulated him. He returned the gesture by placing a Stella in mine. Oh mate do me a favour, it was only 7am. Oh well, when in Rome! The thing that struck home at that point was just how

friendly everyone was. They were all having a laugh and a joke with Lee and they all seemed genuinely pleased for him. It was definitely a breath of fresh air from previous antics I had witnessed, that was for sure. Proper anglers I guess; been there, seen it, bought the T-shirt type anglers. One of the previous captors of the big girl had even had a baseball cap with Two Tone's weight and 'county record' embroidered on it, much to everyone else's amusement. Can you imagine if I had '5 in 8 hours' on my hat the previous year? The whole experience was really quite humbling and I finished my beer and said my 'well dones' again and headed back to my swim. Lee said thanks and then mumbled something about the Long Common being the one he really wanted. I thought that was silly and then I thought that drinking Stella at seven in the morning was also silly, so I quietly renamed him 'Silly' and walked off chuckling to myself. Silly Lee Watson was far from it as it goes. He became the third British angler to get a 50 home and away with that capture.

The rest of the weekend passed without any signs of fish as did the next couple of weeks, and although I managed the odd overnighter as well, I wasn't any closer to catching one and in my heart of hearts I knew it. Although, and I'll be honest here, it was nice to be fishing a lake with Jacko, Mr F and co. on it. I had read about these guys and here I was watching them fall over drunk. It was great (especially Jacko, who had longer legs to control). The thing that blew me away, though, was that everybody just fished. There was no ego to any of them. It was like being back with Hogg except this lot would never forget a landing net!

I had made plenty of friends in Vigo, especially in the local pub, and one in particular helped me out when the 'model' decided to put her house up for sale and I was left in a bit of a quandary as to where to live. Andy Clements was also a carp fisherman and had recently just booted his girlfriend out of the house and said I could move in with him. Now that was just the ticket and it led to some sort of stability on the housing situation, which was nice as this was now my third address in four months!

~The Exiles 1999~

Jacko and the boys were off to fish The Exiles do at Shimano Hardwick on the second weekend in May. It was a charity fundraiser where well known anglers got together for a social and raised a bit of cash for a good cause. I'll admit I really wanted to go to meet some more of my angling heroes and of course, for the social! There was at the time nothing which amused me more than to fill Jacko full of red wine and watch his very own 'Ministry of Silly Walks'. It was true entertainment but I had a slight disadvantage and that was quite simply 'who is Spug? And why should he be there?' To that end Jacko suggested that I ring Nigel Cobham who was organising it and see if there were any spaces or if anyone had dropped out. Now I didn't know Nigel and I have to say I was pleasantly surprised when he said, "No problem, come down!" Cool, Party on! So with the old Nissan Sunny loaded with red wine and some fruity bait that I had come up with using Locky's ingredients, I headed off round the M25, looking forward to a bit of fun.

Obviously I got lost, but eventually I turned up late to find a host of well known anglers in the car park. There was Albert Romp and Bob Baker, Terry Hearn, Paul Forward, Tob, Jim Foster, Roger Smith, Kerry Barringer, the list went on. Wow! We'll have some of that. Most people knew me through working for Solar, so I didn't feel too out of place being there and I was pretty much welcomed by everyone, which I have to say was nice. All I had to do was not to let myself down too much and keep the chaos fairy at bay when the red wine flowed and everything would be fine.

The craic was, that there was actually a bit of competition in the shape of the 'Black Sheep Trophy' and whoever caught the biggest carp on the 24-hour session would win it. It was only a bit of fun and to be fair no one officially took it that seriously, but it was always going to be nice to win it, especially with the fine group of anglers who had made the effort to come.

Now I say that no one really took it that seriously, but a father and son duo did and what was to happen next did at the time raise a few eyebrows. There was supposed to be a draw for swims, but Albert being Albert, decided that he would go in the nearest swim to the car park to save carrying the gear round. Bob

followed suit, then Bernie Stamp and Tob (both from Les Quis). That was good enough for me, so I went on the end. Being next to Tob was always going to be fun and no doubt Jacko would appear later on anyway. At this point, the father and son duo got the arse, and in front of everyone, jumped in their motor and went home! It really did surprise a few people and I think with hindsight they would not have done it, but hey, we all make mistakes. It didn't bother anyone and we all just got set up.

It was pretty cold for May and overcast so I thought it best to go in lightly with the bait and I really didn't want to waste too much time baiting-up and all that rubbish. I mean, this was game on for a laugh along our bank and it was considerably more important for me to go off and chat to people, especially Albert, as I had just finished reading his book and thought it was fantastic. So around mid-afternoon we all congregated in Albert's swim for a cup of tea and a chat.

During this chat, someone who will remain nameless, asked everyone if they would like a fairy cake. "Cor, yes please," came my reply, as yet again I had come with plenty of liquids but not much food, just a tinned a curry I think. So, any free food was going to go down well and quickly! That was exactly how it went down too. It was just like chucking a small mackerel at a seal. Bang! Gone in one! I didn't have enough sense to realise that everybody else only had a nibble or at most, had only eaten half of their cakes. Mine was gone and Little Miss Chaos Fairy was well and truly sitting on my shoulder, waiting to pounce at any moment. I just hadn't seen her coming.

For the first 30 minutes I was fine, telling jokes that were about as politically correct as Boris Johnson talking about the fine people who live in Liverpool, then it happened. The blow from my shoulder was delivered and it hit me squarely between the eyes! My life force all of a sudden drained out of me. I knew I was in trouble and I just managed to crawl underneath Albert's broly and into his chair where, I sat paralysed for about an hour. I couldn't even make a roll-up. I was gone way, way up there. I dreamed of being a meteor, travelling at the speed of light, spinning in the darkness, out of control and orbiting the world. Now that may sound dramatic but it was the truth. If you have seen the bit on Young Guns where they drink the potion in order to find the way, then I was there.

I remember Simon Henton came to say hello and all I could do was dribble at him. I think he tried to strike up a conversation three times with me, but in the end he said he would come back later as by that point he had realised a lot

better what had gone on than I did. I think everyone else's laughter helped him realise my predicament. Eventually, my life force seemed to reappear and I managed to make a roll-up. As I was sitting there having a smoke, it was brought to my attention that it is wise to crack open a fairy cake and see how green it is inside. The more green it is, the further away you go when you eat it and it should only be eaten in small bits, now and again. Oh well I had made an impression on everyone, although it wasn't really the one I was hoping to make. All that remained was to trot back to my bivvy and eat that tinned curry, which now I wanted more than ever!

Now I think we all know what was in that cake and I am not trying to glamorise it in any way shape or form. I didn't know it was in there until I had eaten it! I rather bashfully turned up for the evening social around 7pm, armed with my cotes-des-fallover and happily joined in the proceedings and it was great. My afternoon's story only got recounted once. Roger decided to light a fire and kept saying how lovely it was and how we needed some more wood and off he went only to return five minutes later, with an armful of kindling. Through the evening the fire grew the and the red wine flowed. Jacko ended up playing guitar and managed to find his rubber legs again. I think he hides them around every lake he fishes. He puts them on late at night, wobbles back to his swim, then puts his proper ones back on in the morning!

While sitting around the fire, Conningbrook came up in conversation and obviously the quest for Two Tone was spoken about. It was really good for me, sitting there listening to the fire crackle and a whole heap of people that I had a great amount of respect for, talking about the lake I fished and that elusive great mirror. It's hard for me to get over just what that moment meant to me. I was addicted to carp fishing and I used to read all the mags, so to be there seeing it all unfold was just the [REDACTED] I guess I was a little 'star struck' even though I did the Spug's Sharper Carpers in Carp Talk and had by now done articles in Big Carp and Catchmore Carp, I still wasn't anywhere near the league of this lot and I think that even after my 'meteoric' rise in the afternoon, I managed to make some decent friends. It was indeed a special night in my carp fishing life.

There was one thing I forgot to mention, just one of the funniest things ever. During the discussions on how to catch Two Tone, someone, let's call him, 'Freelance' told everyone that he had worked out how to catch her. Well obviously we were all intrigued, especially me. As a newcomer, I needed all the help I could muster. Well, it was going to be quite easy, which was a result. All we



had to do was to get the perch feeding and Two Tone would surely follow. Ah right okay then! I'll remember that one and I'll buy myself some maggots and a spinner then!

With no one yet to bank a fish, it was bed time about midnight and off we went to our bivvies to sleep off the red wine.

The next morning the weather was about the same, overcast although a little warmer. Still no one had caught a thing and we were going to be off around midday so a fish was really needed, especially as Bob James (he of A Passion for Angling fame) was going to



I'd only gone and bloody won it!

present the Black Sheep Trophy to the winner. I was about to re-chuck my rods when I thought I saw a bit of a flat spot appear above my middle rod. Sod it, I'll leave them till we go, I decided. I wandered off to Tob's plot to see if I could get a cup of tea or something. Really that was a daft thing to expect, a cuppa from his swim, but I did manage to scrounge one off someone else close by. Just as I returned to Tob's swim we heard a Stevie Neville burst into life and it quickly became apparent that it was one of my rods. A good sprint later saw me lifting my middle rod into a powerful fish, which had, within seconds, come to an abrupt

halt in a weedbed. Oh [REDACTED] Now you put yourself in this position. On the end of your line is a surefire Black Sheep Trophy winner and most of the who's who in carp fishing are standing behind you offering advice from, 'pull it hard,' to put 'your rod back on the buzzers and let it swim out when it's ready.' What would you do? I so didn't want to lose it and stood there with a face covered with pure panic as I gently applied steady pressure. There was no way it was going to move, and by now my knees were knocking. The assembled crowd was starting to disperse, when all of a sudden Mr F turned up and said, "Spug, you're such a clown. All you've got to do is point your rod directly at the fish and then slowly and carefully tug at it to try and break the strands of weed. If that doesn't work you'll lose it anyway." So I decided to try that and by the second gentle tug of the rod the fish was out, swimming about with my hook in its mouth. Oh Mr F, you star!

The fish went in the net and was duly weighed at 22lbs. I'd only gone and bloody won it! No need for a fairy cake to hit the upper stratosphere now, I was way past that. I got a really good photo with Mr F, carp dog Jim (rest in peace little fella) Jacko, Terry Hearn and Tob, all in attendance. I was beaming from ear to ear for the obvious reason. I quickly slipped her back and an hour later I received my trophy from Nigel Cobham (turned out Bob James was as punctual on the Sunday as I was on the Saturday). For once, I kept my great big mouth firmly shut. With all the assembled people, I was as humble as I could have been, although inside I was about to explode with excitement. I returned trophy in hand to my bivvy and just sat there grinning. What a turn of events. To me, this was better than sex, which was quite a good thing as we didn't have a kebab shop in Vigo village.

Bob James came down a little later and sat on the grass outside my bivvy. We just sat there talking, and the Black Sheep Trophy was on the table next to his shoulder, God, I wish I had got a picture taken of that moment. It really was an unrepeatable one but as I am sure you know by now, I'll not be redesigning the space shuttle next week, now will I?

~Back To Kent~

Out of the blue, Hogg purchased a Mid-Kent ticket which allowed him to fish Chilham Mill. As we hadn't fished together for a while we arranged a long weekend fishing on the Mill and I was looking forward to catching up with him. We slipped into the Tesco at Ashford and bought the necessary bits and bobs we needed, then made our way up to Chilham. We managed to get set up next to each other and it wasn't long before we started catching. He landed his first Kent carp with a 21lb mirror and that evening I landed mine, a 10lb mirror. Over the next three nights I ended up doing all the cooking and seemed to be firmly rooted in my bivvy door, which I didn't really mind because it was no use leaving it to him, that was for sure.





A whole eight ounces bigger.

I was fishing up the side of the island, basically flicking a single hook bait to an overhanging tree, and the runs seemed to be coming on a pretty regular basis although the sizes of the fish were not above 17lb. Chris Logsdon came round to see how we were getting on and when I told him that I had landed nine fish and one of them was a 20, which I was delighted with because it was a whole eight ounces bigger than Hogg's weighing in at 21.8. Chris couldn't believe it. Normally, half of what you caught was over 20lb on there at the time, but I wasn't too concerned, at least I had caught a few Kent carp now.

The following Friday I was back on the Brook, set up in the Long Lawn. A chap fishing opposite on the island had seen the big mirror and the Long Common moving in and out of the bay to my left, his right, so I cast two fruity pop-ups into the bay and placed a tin of sweetcorn just off the reeds to my left and put just a couple of grains on the hair. I was fishing 'two and one' as they used to say on the Brook. What that meant was, two rods for the biggun and one rod for the Long Common, which regularly got caught in the edge on corn. Although I hadn't received even a bleep in seven nights, I still felt quite confident that I was approaching the lake in the correct way if I wanted to catch either of those fish.



Just another excuse.

Saturday afternoon came and the island became free, so I packed down and moved round the 100 or so yards to hopefully get into a better position for seeing the fish. After a trip to Tesco to get some bits, I cranked the Kelly Kettle up to bring me some luck and went about preparing a chicken stir-fry.

The night came and passed and Sunday morning saw me looking for any signs of fish. I didn't see a thing. It seemed that the fish were well and truly on the missing list. Jacko and Mr F were down on the Sunday night and we had arranged for me to cook them a chilli and consume some red wine. As we packed down and drove to our respective work places the next day, I think it's fair to say that we were feeling that red wine. Now this is a good point to mention that the likelihood of getting a bite on the Brook at night was next to nothing really, as the lake very rarely did night bites. In fact, it didn't do any for quite a long while. When you also consider the fact that you blanked on there for 99 percent of the time, you can understand why people were not worried about us having a 'drink up' down there. It was the European Cup final on the Wednesday night and myself and Lee decided to celebrate this occasion with a return to the Brook for an overnigher armed with plenty of red wine and my portable TV. It was quite funny looking at

it now, as neither of us gave a [REDACTED] about the football. It was indeed just another excuse to get to the lake and get our rubber legs on again.

Now, the thing that sticks in my mind from this trip was Lee's eating habits. If you have seen him, then you know he's not five stone wet through with a woolly jumper on, but boy can he eat. "Don't worry about food, Spug, just get the wine in," he told me. "I have got some buy one get one free vouchers for McDonalds. We'll grab something from the drive-in near Ashford." So after flying down the M20, we landed at the drive-in and I parked in the normal car park bit as Lee drove up to the window. He seemed to be there for ages and then I saw the girl walk away from the window and then the manager turn up and they were obviously having some discussion. It turned out that you could only use one voucher at a time and Lee had handed in three, asking for six Big Macs, no chips or Coca Cola. Not knowing what to do, the girl had called the manager over and he point-blank refused to honour more than one at a time, as was written in the small print on the bottom of the vouchers. Lee said, "What about if I used one voucher and then drove round and then used another?" the manager agreed that he could do that, so as I sat there wondering what was going on, I saw Lee collect a bag of take-outs then he drove round again, collected another, then he reversed back out of sight, only to reappear at the window and collect a third bag! At that point I had no idea what was going on, and I just sat there laughing my head off. It really looked like something out of *You've Been Framed*. Eventually Lee pulled alongside me and said, "Don't ask," and gave me a take-out bag bulging with burgers. We set off to the lake eating them on the way.

Now it only takes a quick glance at me to realise I am a greedy git, but three Big Macs? I had just about managed one and a half by the time we had pulled into the car park, and was amazed to find out that Lee had eaten all his and then he polished off the one I couldn't! Where he puts his food I will never know but he puts it somewhere all right.

I set up on Joe's and Lee set up to my left on the edge of the bay. We quickly got the rods out and set about consuming some red wine, of which Lee's contribution was one called Bad Tempered Cyril, which he used to buy from the Co-Op. In fact we all liked it that much that it went on to fuel most nights on the Brook for the next couple of years. We stumbled into our beds after watching the football and returned to work the following morning, again without a bleep for me. That made ten nights in and not even a line bite. I wasn't too concerned though, as I had been told that if you averaged one every 30 nights you were doing okay.



Hopefully, it was just a case of keeping going and your spirits up, which on the Brook was never a problem because by this point I had realised that just about the whole syndicate was a real bunch of characters and there was always something going on to help while away the hours.

A few more nights seemed to come and go, and before I could bat an eyelid it was the end of June, which saw a diversion in the shape of the British Carp Championships on Darenth Big Lake. In typical carp match style, me and my team partner Steve Cowell caught nothing, but Nick Helleur, who had now also joined us at Solar, had caught £1000 worth of carp whilst paired-up with Lockey, as that carp, at 37lb, turned out to be the biggest one landed in a match that year. Paired up next to us was Kev Knight and Rob Tough and we had a right laugh with those noisy [REDACTED]. With plenty of beer and [REDACTED] stories on the last night, it was actually quite an enjoyable event in my eyes.

The first weekend of July saw a return to the Brook and the Lifebuoy swim. It turned out that a carp hadn't actually been caught for about four weeks, the spawning had come and gone and the fish had gone on the missing list. The weed was well up by now and I decided to try something a little different. Nick had been

We celebrated in true Canningbrook style!



developing a groundbait called the 'bag mix' and I decided to try it, fished as the method, with a short hook link and flicked out straight into the weed. I cast that rod out about 40 yards and decided not to move it all weekend and to just catapult balls of groundbait at it, on a fairly regular basis. The other rods were fruity baits cast at anything that may have showed.

Sunday morning came and I felt knackered. The swans had been hitting my lines all night long and the weed had been moving on the breeze and also catching my lines and it seemed like I had spent the whole night trying to stop my buzzers from going off. I was just having a cup of tea when my buzzer went again. 'Oh do me a favour,' I thought. Then all of a sudden the middle rod hooped round, the line cracked out of the clip and I was away! I couldn't believe it! I was stuck in my Scooby Doo sleeping bag (for ages up to 16) which I had recently bought for a laugh at the Darenth match and normally I just slept underneath it, but the night before I had somehow managed to squeeze inside it all zipped up like a straitjacket. So here I was wriggling on the floor in a child's sleeping bag with a Conningbrook carp skipping off towards the other side, probably laughing to itself thinking 'what a [REDACTED]' After a few seconds I managed to escape and ran to grab my rod. Fortunately, the fish hadn't gone that far because of the weed so I applied steady pressure and it didn't take long before the fish was heading slowly back towards me. Ian Brown (or Brownny to his mates) had seen the whole escapade unfold and was slowly ambling round to lend some assistance. I had a right panic on, my legs were shaking and my heart was pounding so hard it nearly jumped out of my chest. This one mattered, I mean really mattered and I didn't want to lose it. It wasn't long before the fish was close, unlike Brownny, who was trying not to spill his tea on his way round and it didn't take long for me to be screaming for help as I had run straight past my net in order to grab my rod. With a mouthful of tea and a net in his hand, Brownny, turned into my saviour and netted a good size common at the first time of asking. I just stood there and screamed "GET IN THERE!" On my 14th night I had caught one and I was really made up about it. Bring on the dancing girls!

The fish was called the Little Friendly Common and at 28.8 it was a new English PB for me. Silly Lee was also on hand to help with the pictures and after a blur of about 10 minutes, we were all drinking tea on the damp grass. Brilliant! Later on that day Jacko turned up to fish his usual Sunday night and upon hearing that I had landed my first Brook carp, decided that we should celebrate in true Conningbrook style. With Student Grant, Roy, Brownny and 'any excuse'



The Little Friendly Common.

Jackson all around my broly, we certainly celebrated it in style. It was a real special moment for me. In fact, it was a moment that dreams are made of. Even Bruce the greedy dog, (half rottweiler, half labrador, full pig) turned up, but I know he wasn't congratulating me, he was looking for something to eat before he trotted back to Joe's where he lived.

We sat there until the sun went down, puffing on roll-ups and meeting up with Cyril again. In a bit of a state, I asked Lee where home really was and he looked at me and said, "Home is sitting here, on a Sunday night, on the best carp lake in the world and there's two carp out there, and those two carp matter so much."

I was beginning to understand just what it meant to be fishing there. It's a treasured memory of mine and was also a real lesson in the understanding of what true carp fishing is all about. It wasn't long after that we all crashed out and I ended up lying there underneath Scooby thinking what an honour that night had been.

~The Gauntlet Re-Match~

The much-awaited return of the Gauntlet Challenge saw us heading for Les on the next weekend and by now, the teams had gone up in numbers to six a side with the North now consisting of me, Hogg, Curly Hatchman, Big Steve, Danny Fish Magnet, and John Hannent. The Southern pansies were Lockey, Andy, Daygo, Tob, Essex Gary and Postman Pete. The fish didn't quite play the game as it was really hot and sticky with the pressure through the roof. Well, when I say 'didn't play the game' I mean by Les standards. I think we landed about 100 carp between everyone, with me landing three up to 33.8 and obviously having a lot of fun in the process. So in time honoured tradition and a saying that goes, 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going' obviously we failed miserably, and I



Having a lot of fun.



We failed miserably!

was soon on my knees handing the trophy over and grovelling out an apology for the three months of abuse that I had thrown their way in the build-up to the event. Although to be fair, this time it was closer and we only lost by 37 points. There were winners and losers, and T-shirts had been made this time and part of the punishment for losing would be to have to wear the losers T-shirt on the ferry on



Part of the punishment.

the way home. In true Norfolk style we stuck together on the ferry and it seemed to make the crossing a lot less embarrassing.

A week or so later it was business as usual on the Brook. The weed had come up fast by now. It was quite hard even getting your leads down unless you were throwing your baits into the deeper water and the fish had

gone on the missing list. Yet again I managed to get set up in the Lifebuoy swim, which made me feel reasonably confident as it was the scene of my previous success, and with three method balls flicked into the weed bed I felt that I had probably done as much as I could to provoke a bite. The fish obviously thought I hadn't and the rods remained silent for three nights. Monday morning saw me driving back towards Orpington, just wondering where the time had gone and that was one of the funny things about the Brook, it seemed to have its own time, completely different to the hours and minutes which we associate with time in the real world. I mean you could spend seven nights on there and it was like you had been there a day! Even though looking back on it, you hadn't done much except look for fish, drink wine and try to stop Bruce from raiding your food provisions. Odd to say the least!

I was quite keen to return, so as soon as work finished on the Friday at 4pm, I was heading straight back down the motorway to have another go at them. I was still buzzing about actually managing to land one and as I pulled in the car park I was pleased to see the same swim empty and happily wheeled my stuff round there again. Well it was exactly the same set of events as the previous weekend and by the time Sunday night came along, I had made the decision that I had made a bit of a mistake really, because it was no use trying to fish the same swim all the time. If I was going to catch these fish, I had to be like everyone else and be able to turn up and fish confidently anywhere. The other mistake I made was when I saw Student Grant come ambling round the corner with his barrow, and I suggested that he set up 30 yards just to the left of me, so we could have a social that night. There was plenty of room to flick his rods out to the left and I knew he had some red wine I could pilfer.

Well I got half of that right as he seemed incapable of casting to the left of the swim and blasted all three rods straight out into the lake, two of which were close to mine. Oh well, he was good company and I managed to raid his wine stocks, so as I hit the sleeping bag that night I had no regrets. Well that is until 5.30 the next morning when I thought I heard someone shouting my name. It was unclear though, so I rolled over and pulled Scooby over my head. "SPUG!" came the shout again. I thought I had better see what was going on. Yeah, you guessed it, there was Student, hanging onto a hooped-over rod, waist deep in the lake with a utter look of desperation on his face. "You jammy [REDACTED]!" was my-less-than flattering reply, to which he then returned a big smile. "Get back on the bank, I'm not wading in to land it," was my next statement, as I knew he had just run into the



The Friendly Mirror.

lake because he was excited, nothing more, or maybe just because he wanted to try his new waders out. Either way there was no logical reason for him being in the lake. But for all of us who know him, the three words, 'logic' and 'student Grant' were very rarely used in the same sentence and that was why we all loved him and his company. Back on terra firma he quickly had the fish under control and we netted it without too much hassle, and what a fish! It was the Friendly Mirror weighing in at 36lbs and she looked fantastic. In true Brook style, I shook his hand and congratulated him even though it was a bit of a poach. Still, it was my idea so I could hit his wine stocks and I guess that's what you get for trying to trick someone's wine out of them. Oh well, hopefully my time would come. Either way, I promised myself that the next time he was down, I would walk to his swim for a glass or two, rather than invite him into mine.

~Visiting Friends~

It seemed like I hadn't been home to Norfolk for ages, so I made the point of getting back home to see my family and more importantly, Andy, the following weekend. I could also have a night out with John H in Norwich. I popped to see Andy on the Saturday morning and was a little shocked to see that his health had really gone downhill. I knew that he was off work and was having difficulty getting about, my regular phone calls told me that, but in the time since I had been away it had gone from a left arm which didn't really work properly, to him being wheelchair bound, permanently off work, with motor neurone disease slowly eating away at his dignity. I was a little upset as I left him, but he said that he was lucky to still be around as he never should have survived what had happened in the first place. I guess I kind of agreed, but I just didn't understand. On his



Morning glory.

instructions I tore the [redacted] out of it in Norwich that night. I was joined by Nick and Danny Smith when I arrived at John's and we went to an all-night rave thingy and I threw a few shapes and wiggled my [redacted] around all night. It was great fun.

We finally got back to his around 6am with a couple of birds that Danny had pulled. John's old house just happened to back onto a river somewhere in Norfolk and he had been throwing bait in for weeks and catching the odd carp, so as soon as we arrived at his, out went the rods, on went the music and Danny tried to impress the couple of birds that were there. I decided a snooze was in order and crashed out on the couch, full of beer. Somehow I managed to impress and amuse everyone, as a part of my anatomy seemed to have a little more energy in it than the rest of me and stood proudly to attention in my pink and green shorts as I slept. I am sure I heard Nick say, "Oh bless him, he must be dreaming," and they all laughed. The next thing I knew, a rod had rattled off and they were shouting at me because it was my turn to hit the run. A real beauty of 21lb rolled in the net and that gave them something else to talk about rather than my morning glory. Oh well, they say there are certain beers which refresh the parts that others can't reach, don't they?

The next weekend I was heading for France again as a helper for Tob. We were quite looking forward to the trip as we had Essex Gary 'the fluffy dice king' on the coach, and an eclipse was due, so we got some silly glasses which we could use to look at it. Andy Little was due to turn up with Roy Humphries, to do a feature called 'Andy's angling adventures' for Anglers Mail, which he did, I think, on a weekly basis. Andy and Roy would turn up on the Wednesday and fish the Bay Lake, which was a recent addition to the complex. The complex was roaring and by the Sunday night I had caught three 30s and three 20s. Monday morning came along and things got really silly as I landed a further three 30s, including a really hard fighting common of 38.8, quickly followed by a 31 common. All of this, as well as trying to help cook the dinner. Tob being Tob managed to get by in my absences very well. After dinner that night and with all the plates washed and put away, we were sitting in the bailiff swim on the Elf messing about as usual, and we were a few fags and a reasonable amount of beer toward bedtime, when just on dusk my middle rod absolutely flew off. The L.E.D on my sounder nearly popped out as I dashed the 30 yards or so to the helper's swim on the Old Lake. As soon as I grabbed the rod it became clear that I was locked on, man versus beast, to an enormous catfish. "CAT ON!" I bellowed at the top of my voice.

"You sure?" said Tob.

"Mate, look at the rod, it's on full test curve!" I replied. He kind of nodded in agreement. The line was as tight as a bowstring and I made sure I only gave it some line when I absolutely had to. A small crowd had gathered behind me as the take had rung out across the lake and the thought of seeing a catfish was enough of an excuse for them to go to the lodge to collect some more cold stubbies. I was determined to land this cat, as I had only ever lost them in the past and with a small crowd behind me it seemed appropriate to play up a little as well. I was telling them all about its powerful surges and how I could feel it trying to dig itself into the soft lake bed. There were gasps, Oh yes there were. There was of course the odd call to 'shut-up and get on with it,' too. Imagine the surprise when a bloody great carp popped up and swam straight into the net! Tob was on the floor with laughter. He literally had tears rolling down his face. This wasn't the first time I had screamed, 'cat on,' and the last time it was a 22lb common, but this was my biggest blunder by a mile. Tob's infectious giggle had them all going in about three seconds flat and I duly weighed her at 44lbs on the nail.

The next day was a little more subdued with just a couple of 20s and then on the Wednesday, Andy and Roy turned up for their little bash, they hadn't been



38.8.



A bloody great big carp.

there a few hours when all of a sudden the real big ones started feeding and Tony had a 54lb mirror to my left, Andy had a 51lb mirror out of the Elf and then I landed my first 50 in the shape of a 52.4 mirror and I was punching the air for joy. Essex Gary was round as we did the photos and the banter was way out of control. I was getting attacked about the colour of my socks, my new trainers, my rods, in fact everything about me really. Tob made the situation worse of course and those two Southfolk gave it to me big-time – the [REDACTED] It did make good videoing though!

As I slipped her back I thought to myself, 'what a year this had been' and I was really grateful for all the wonderful things that had happened. But one thing was just starting to get to me a bit and that was the fact that I still hadn't caught an English 30. If you remember, I had said my lifetime ambition was 20 English



I thought to myself.

20s, and one 30 and a French 40lb plus mirror and common. Well, here I was, only one 20 and a 30 away, and yet I had a 50 and a string of 40s under my belt in France. I knew that for me, England is where it really counts, and that is by no means intended to belittle what I had caught or what anyone else has, or will catch. I just didn't want to end up being one of those anglers only associated with French captures. The problem is Les is so addictive and Hogg and myself had already made a pact that we would go there once a year forever! So I made the decision that I would do exactly that, just go there once a year not three times from then on.



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My first 50.

~Back On The Brook~

As I had caught a load of fish in France and thought that Lady Luck was smiling in my direction, the second we unloaded our gear off the coach at Orpington on the Saturday, I was heading straight back down the motorway towards the Brook. What a touch that would have been to have a caught a 50 home and away in the same week. I set up on Joe's Point and arranged a meeting with Cyril (who was right on time as usual) at 8pm. With the rods out and tiredness setting in, I settled down for the night. Back in the real world I awoke late the next morning with the sun well up, and Bruce well and truly into my foodbag! That bloody dog had done most of my carp rations and I only had a tin of out of date soup left, which had been rattling around in the bottom of my rucksack for months. I stared at him angrily but he just looked back without a care in the world, his only thoughts relating to who he could rob next, no doubt. Foodless and tired



He just looked back.

I made a retreat knowing that, really the whole thing had been a stupid idea. So back to normal and without a bleep I was heading back to Vigo for a return to work on the following morning.

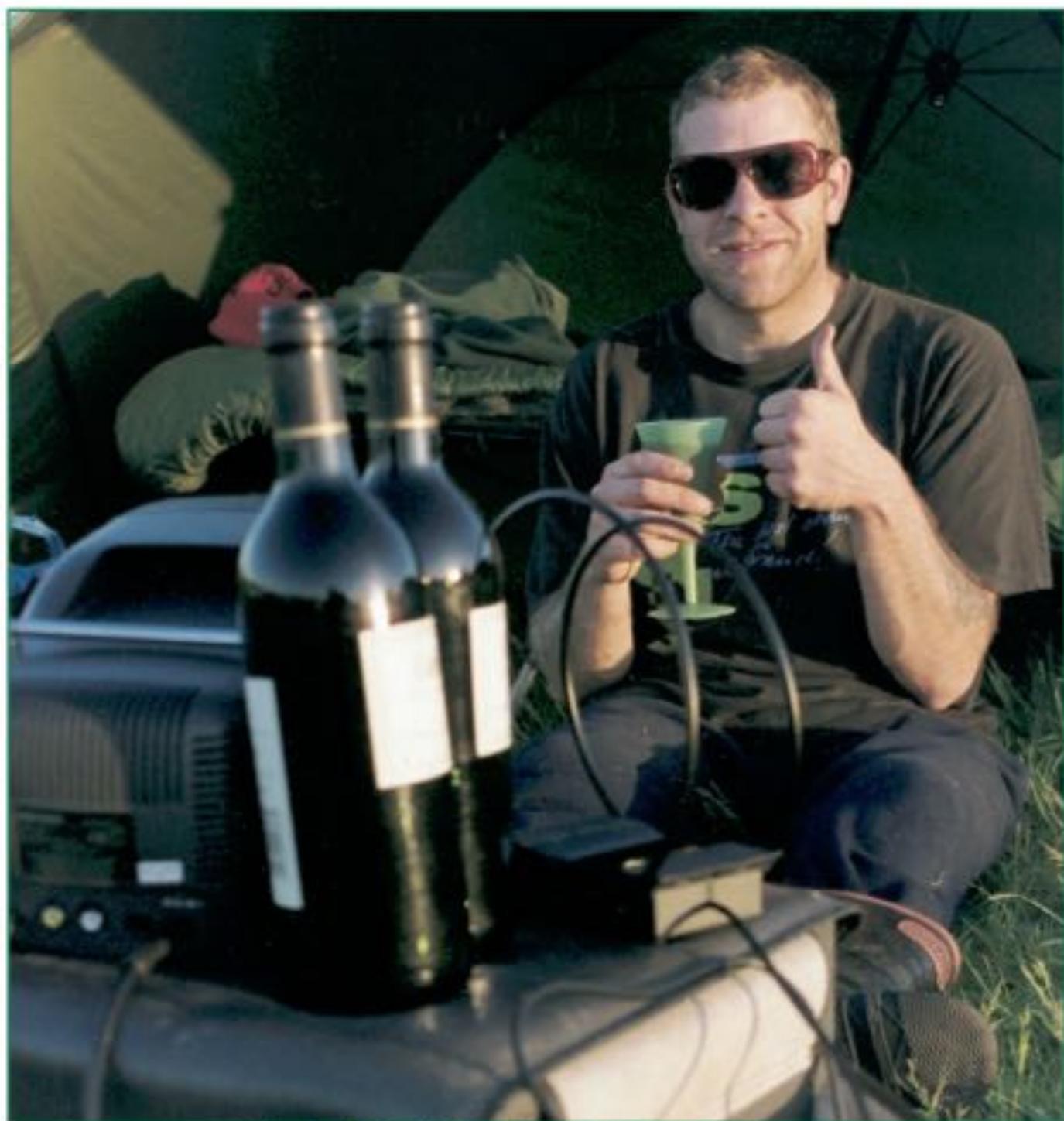
Recharged and up for it again, I returned the following weekend which was now the first weekend in September. The fish had been seen showing off Joe's Point during the week and I was quite pleased that the swim was empty on my arrival. I decided that I was going to start sticking some bait out in the middle of the lake, as not only were we now coming into prime time, but also in the knowledge that, come the end of October it would probably be over until the next spring. If I wanted to try and get something going, now was the time. With the broolly up and two rods launched into the middle, roughly in the area that the fish had been showing, I then started baiting-up and probably got a few kilos somewhere near the spots. Saturday morning came without any action and at about 11am I was just having a wander round the swim and poking my head over the reeds to look in the edge, when I stumbled across a big clear sandy patch right next to the reeds in the middle of all the marginal weed. You would never have seen it under normal circumstances as it was not at the front of the swim, it was just to the left of a small gap in the reeds. It just had to be a spot that the carp had cleared away. I dropped about 50 baits on it and went back to my broolly for a cup of carp tea and a roll-up.

I went back to check the spot a couple of hours later and to my surprise all of the bait had gone! Flipping heck! I went back and put some more bait on the spot and swore I would check it every 10 minutes or so, to find out who was responsible for eating my bait. It didn't take long, I think about half an hour. As I ducked down behind the reeds, with only just the top of my head peering over them, a big dark coloured mirror came out of the weed and up-ended itself right over the bait and started eating them right in front of my eyes! Somehow I managed to compose myself, quietly ducked down and made my way back to my broolly. The fish was huge. Surely it had to be Two Tone, it just had to be. The only problem was that I had never seen a big fish in the edge before, so it was difficult to gauge its size. Oh well if it wasn't the biggun, it had to be the Friendly Mirror, and either of them would do nicely. I was shaking with excitement.

Around 20 minutes later I very carefully peered over the reeds to find all the bait had gone again. A fish catching opportunity had raised its head and I wasn't going to miss it. I grabbed a rod and carefully placed it on banksticks in the gap in the reeds, I then dropped about 50 freebies onto the clear patch and



I had been well and truly done.



The British Red Wine Carp Appreciation Society.

lowered my hook bait onto the spot, carefully placing it so that my lead and rig tubing were right against the side of the weed. I then hid my main line in the weed and carefully placed the rod on the rests. It looked pretty spunky from where I was sitting under my broolly, and I felt mega-confident that it was going to go within minutes. It didn't of course. I mean this was the Brook after all. I had to sit and wait to see what unfolded and to keep an eye on the bait. Nothing happened and on dusk everything was still like I had so carefully placed it at midday. I decided to leave it in the hope that something would return, before I had to go back to work

on the Monday morning. It was a tinned curry for me and a bottle of red and it wasn't long before I was in big carp dreamland yet again.

I awoke the next morning just after dawn and I was going through the usual routine of coughing up tennis balls, drinking tea after tea and smoking roll-ups, until some semblance of a normal heartbeat returned, when all of a sudden I heard a single bleep from my margin rod. I turned round and the rod was bending violently to the left. ████████ HERE WE GO! Then, like someone sticking a pin into a balloon, it just went flat and ended up back where it had started. What the... What was I going to do now? I really didn't know what to do, but as my granddad used to say. 'If in doubt, do nowt'. He was from up north. So that's what I did. I sat on my hands, keeping quiet. My heart was racing and I was trying to hold myself together for about an hour, thinking the fish could return at any second. Sadly, nothing happened. Eventually I carefully popped my head over the reeds to see that all the bait had gone and my carefully hidden rig had been picked up and dropped the other side of the clear patch. I had been well and truly done! I must have done something wrong but I couldn't work out what. I knew a good angler would have had that fish, so it didn't do the old confidence a lot of good, that was for sure.

You get over things, though and as I knew Jacko and Brownie would be down for the Sunday night, I looked forward to seeing Cyril again. As we sat there that evening putting the world to rights and laughing about how quickly we could drink the first bottle of red, I told them the whole story about this clear spot I had found and what had happened. Brownie laughed. It only turned out that he had deposited a couple or three barrow loads of sand there himself, just to wind Matt Lawrence up! Who as it turned out had actually taken a small common off it. I was determined to keep the bait going in on the same spot out in the middle of the lake, off Joe's Point and during the week I returned and popped a couple of hundred baits out, hoping to get back into the swim on the Friday after work.

The plan worked a treat and the following weekend I was back on Joe's Point, carp glass in hand, just enjoying being there. The weather had now started to change and we were getting mist and damp grass on a regular basis during the evenings. Although my plan worked a treat, it obviously didn't impress the carp at all. The whole weekend I was there not one of them poked its head out or jumped. It was like they had all gone away on holiday. Sunday night came and it was the usual suspects that once again flew the flag for the British Red Wine Carp Appreciation Society. Lord Browny, Jacko and Cyril (the bad tempered one in case

you forgot) were all in attendance and with giggles of laughter and the world's problems all sorted out again, by the time drunk o'clock finally came, I made a retreat back to my broly a wiser man.

So far It had been one of best years of my life. I had been abroad quite a few times doing the trade shows. Which basically just turned out to be [redacted] ups with a lot of clubbing involved, although I must have looked out of place in my silver shiny shirt with my Iron Maiden tattoos showing. The fishing had gone really well and I had even managed to sneak a barmaid home when no one, except Andy Clements, was looking. He was too busy laughing, but I think I will leave that tale there because of libel. One more out of the Brook would just cap it off nicely.

Lockey was happy for me to take the following Friday off work because I needed to get back up to Norfolk in the coming weekends to sort out my house, which now had no tenants. So I knew the next session would probably be my last on there for the year.

When I arrived on Thursday there was only Kevin Cummings and Little John on the lake. Kevin had lost one and John had landed a 20lb plus common. Things looked good as the fish were back from holiday and having a feed. Happy days. With those two set up near the Lifebuoy swim and the rest of the lake empty, I felt really confident as I was again setting up on Joe's Point. Everything went out fine. The weed was falling back now and the spot out in the lake was easy to find. So with all the hard bits done it was just a case of sitting back and keeping an eye on the lake for any signs of showing fish.

Of course the red wine had to be opened and the food ordered, as by now we had an Indian's phone number, that would deliver to the lake. This was carp heaven. I think you had to order a minimum of £10 worth of tucker to get a delivery and with no Jacko around I had no one to clear my scraps up. I would just have to try and emulate that greedy pig's eating habits. I failed miserably and went to bed full of wine, with a half-eaten curry next to my broly and about three empty silver foil dishes in a brown paper bag at the end of my bedchair. Or that was how I left it. The morning after, I realised I had broken a basic Brook rule; never, ever, leave any food, food bag, bag of rubbish or anything that even sniffed of food out alongside your bivvy because that bloody dog Bruce would have it. Especially if you were set up on Joe's Point not 100 yards from where he lived! I mean I should have learned in the summer when he turned me over as I slept, so to leave that lot out was like putting a drug addict in a cocaine making factory and



I parted the weed.

saying to him, "Just look after that lot for me, I'm off for a couple of days and whatever you do don't touch anything." Silly! The mess was everywhere. All over the grass. Bruce had ripped the bloody lot up and shredded it. It must have taken me 20 minutes to sort the mess out, as he just sat looking at me, grinning from behind those bloody big greedy eyes! After that little diversion, I sat there looking at the lake, when around 11 I saw a small common jump out at 50 yards to the right of the baited area. I was due a re-chuck and was desperate to catch another, as it was now about 16 blank nights since the last one. I didn't really care about the size I just wanted a bite.

With a new boilie on the hair, I was just about to cast at the little common when a big flat spot appeared right over the bait. Change of plan. 'Don't cast at the little one, go for that one' I thought. So I dispatched the rig and it landed bang on the money, right in the middle of the baited area. I sat back, put the kettle on and rolled one up. I hadn't finished my tea when the rod ripped off. Here we go! I ran to the rod, picked up and leaned back into the fish. The rod kicked once and then just stopped, locked solid in a weedbed. The spot was 80 or so yards out and I knew that I couldn't really apply much pressure on it over that sort of distance,

so I did the Mr F trick and pointed the rod straight towards the weedbed and just started walking very slowly backwards toward where my broolly was, hoping to get the whole lot moving. This did the trick and I could feel a large weedbed slowly coming towards me. It took forever for this huge ball of weed to finally arrive in my swim and at no point during that time, did I feel a bump or anything to make me think there was a fish still on. There was a gap in the marginal weed and as the ball connected to the end of my line slowly drifted in, it completely filled it. I thought I had better check to see if there was anything attached as the ball of weed was that big, that it could have easily hidden most of the population of the lake.

I laid the rod down in the edge and started carefully pulling the weed away to see if I had got lucky. After a few good handfuls, the tail of a common suddenly appeared in the palm of my hand. It wasn't there for long though as the second it felt my touch, it was gone! It somehow managed to escape the weedbed and charged into the lake. Its only problem was that my hook was well and truly implanted in its mouth. My rod went flying into the weedbed and I just managed to grab it and hold on and I could see the fish twisting and turning violently on the end of the line, desperately trying to shed the hook. I wondered if I could just net it out into the lake. I probably could have done if I hadn't gone straight past the net in my excitement to the run in the first place. Oh [REDACTED] Now what was I going to do? The solution was to scream for help. "JOHN!" I shouted at the top of my voice, "HELP!" No response, so I shouted again, "JOHN!" Still no response. Sod it. I undid the bail arm on the reel, laid the rod down and ran and grabbed the net. I ran back to the swim and flicked the bail arm over again. Unbelievably, after a few turns of the reel I could see the common on the end of my line, still twisting and turning. "It's got to fall off, it's got to fall off" I kept saying to myself. I pulled the fish back near the weed and tried to net it. No chance. "JOHN!" I screamed again. Still no signs. Whatever was going to happen it was down to me and I had to do it fast.

Let's face it, you don't get enough bites on a place like the Brook to lose them, now do you? I heaved the fish back into the weedbed, bearing in mind that since all of this was going on my line hadn't been in direct contact with the fish as it was still going straight down and through the weedbed and then out of the other side! With the fish in the weedbed once more I threw the rod down and frantically started ripping away at the weed. After a couple of minutes, there was now a small ball of weed round the fish and it swam along with the weed back into the lake. I was now in direct contact with the ball of weed and pulled it back towards

the swim. This time I had waded into the lake and netted the whole bloody lot in one go and first time! I just stood there and screamed. "F [REDACTED] 'AVE THAT!" which was one of our sayings at Solar at the time. With the line cut and and the fish safely transported to the unhooking mat, I parted the weed to reveal my prize. It was the smallest known fish in the lake! I had deliberately not cast at the little common I saw jump and yet here on my mat was what we thought to be the smallest of them all. It was a 17lb common. In fact I recognised it as the fish in Terry Hearn's book that was his first Kent carp.



Fancy a smoke.

I was absolutely over the moon. At that point Little John came round the corner. "Did you call me? I thought I heard some shouting."

"I could have done with you 10 minutes ago," I said and he laughed. We did the pictures and I returned the fish. I recounted the whole story to him and he laughed again. "Fancy a smoke?" he said.

"Yeah, go on then," I replied. So we put the kettle on and normality resumed. That indeed turned out to be the last of the action and the next three nights flew by in a flash and that was it for the Brook.

It had been a great year with two fish banked in 30 nights, but that feeling of being unlucky on the sizes was niggling away at me again. I mean Jacko had landed two and they both weighed over 35lb, the Jammy sod! Perhaps it simply wasn't my time yet. Either that or maybe Cypry didn't think I deserved one yet.

That was pretty much the fishing for that Millennium. There was only a trip with Jim Foster to the Catch 22 Big Lake for an article on winter fishing that was planned. I looked forward to that weekend as I had also blagged us some backstage passes for a Thunder concert at The Forum in London. It was all planned for mid-December. After a weekend's messing about, we made our way up to the Big Lake at Catch and although severely hungover we managed to pull off a reasonable feature where I landed five fish in total, the biggest weighing 17lb. We were only two weeks away from a new Millennium and the Solar disco crew had big plans to see it in.

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Carp
Chronicles by
Brett McPhee

Wow what a summer we have already had, I have never experienced one like it people are saying it's just like 1976 but then I would have just been a scratch in my old man's pants!! With the heat being as strong as it has my fishing has been very limited indeed, I don't do heat very well anyway but couldn't think of anything worse than sweating my back out in the confines of a bivvy. With this said most of my sessions have been quick overnights with me arriving just before dark and getting off before 10am the next day.

In late June and with a new parcel of rig material and components from PB Products arriving I needed to get out and put them to use. I spent a few hours in the day tying up new

rigs and getting sorted ready for the evening session.

Arriving at my syndicate I was met with a water level that had dropped by around 4ft and there were parts of the lake bed now fully exposed, I set up on the point swim and stuck out a couple of my favourite multi rigs with small Fruit special pop ups from Covert baits, around these I placed about 50 freebies and set about getting the house and bed ready. Amazingly it didn't take long and

the shrill from a Delkim had me scrambling down to do battle with an angry carp, it's always good to get one early it kind of puts you at rest and I feel you can then enjoy the session a little bit more. It was a mid-double and a lovely one to scale pattern was amazing. I slipped it back after a quick photo and wanged the rod back out. Between 7pm and midnight I added a further 5 fish to the tally including a lovely double hook up, its madness when this



thinking it was going to be a busy night and was dumbfounded to wake at 5am with not so much as another bleep. As the sun was now in my face it meant an early start with temps almost at 21c by 6am!

As I was off all week from work later that day I was again prepping for another quick night over at the club water I have been doing a bit of time on. I again arrived about 7pm and found a few on but found fish down the carp park end so set up there making it very easy to get the rods out and house up. My first take came around 10pm and from then until around 3am I had Tench after Tench after Tench!!

It's becoming quite a theme recently and there is talk of a sister magazine called Talking Tench, if that comes off I will be top rod!

Anyway, again I was off by 10am and back home setting up for a 2-day assault on a club water sandpit that holds some real nice fish. I arrived at that venue early on the Wednesday morning with 48 hours ahead of me, a quick walk round revealed nothing with the only fish showing half way across the venue. I decided to set up in the steps back which offered me access to the middle where I had seen fish show, because of the nature of the bottom and the sheer scale

of some of the bars getting a rod out to where they had shown and getting a good line lay was near on impossible. It was a gruelling session with temps in my bivvy that day going over 40c and I was thankful to see then sun fade behind the trees and the cool night air creep over me. But alas no fish until at around 3am the rod burst into life and I was doing battle..... with a bloody Tench again!!

The plight of the Tench continued and by 7am



I had added a further 5 to my total, exhausted and not wanting another night like that I set off to find some carp, a mate had done the night in the car park swim and bagged 3 carp and the good news he was off to work shortly, so a race back gear packed and on my toes meant that by 9am I was a soaking mess and sat behind him waiting for him to go. He left, and I set up getting the rods on the bars he had suggested with a scattering of bait I sat back in the shade. The

sun must have not got the memo I sent about doing one as it swung round as the day went on eventually filling my bivvy with rays around 3pm and again I was in the sun trap, by 7pm I had had enough and gave up sitting in the bivvy instead using my car as a sun break and laying on the bed behind it. Again, the night air finally came but this time it was really muggy and the air was almost too thick to breathe!

Night became day and with it no fish for me,

with my 48 hours up, me a sweating mess stinking and tired I was actually happy to be packing up and heading off home, there would be no more 48-hour sessions for a while that was for sure.

I was back a day later at the sandpit with a quick overnight ahead and managed to find fish down the woods bank, the peg I chose was a real challenge in its self with you having to wade just past the lily's to get the rods out and they then had to stay on high bank sticks in the water. Never mind I thought effort = rewards and all that. It was warm enough to not bother with waders or anything like that and I was happy to be running in to a take in my shorts half an hour into the session, it felt strong not massive but definately a carp. It neared my after being



stuck in the lily's to my right and I could believe it when up popped the unmistakable flank of a green warrior Tench again!

I am going to be honest here it was by far the biggest I had ever had so I quickly weighed it at 8.12lb, now that's a Tench but again not what I was there for. The rest of that night went by as a blur of mosquito bites and rustling from rats and mice as the woods where alive at night. I was up early and off home the next morning. The rest of that week saw some

really high temps and I decided to not bother going out again.

A week or so later I spent an evening session on Meadowview with Ricky taking fish off the top, I have really concentrated on my surface fishing this year as I felt it was an aspect I needed to improve on and bagging 6 off the top in under an hour I think I might have it sorted.

The next night I decided to do some stalking on the view again, all real close in margin work. By this time I had been

taken on with Monster Particles team and had been sent a load of hemp and maples that where perfect for margin work. Walking round in the evening with a bucket and baiting some margins then going back having a brew in the office before actually putting out the rods was very refreshing as was the rain that finally came about an hour into me fishing, it poured down I had landed 3 fish from no more than 12" from the bank by this time and sat in the rain enjoying get wet.

My last session this month was a 48-hour session over at Baden hall on the middle pool, Scott had joined me for this one, we arrived about 11am after a full night shift for me I was knackered and with us setting up on the open bank to start sun in the face again I decided to



get my head down while Scott caught some off the top. When you wake with sun burning your face you know it was time to move, I walked to Scott who by this time looked like a lobster!

We reeled in and set off for a walk, we went down the other end of the pond and found black shapes everywhere just under the surface, and with the pegs all in the shade we were off on a move. Once set up in the new swim I had a walk down the margin to my right there was tails coming out of the water no more than a foot from the bank so I stuck out some hemp, maples, pellets and Mainline Baits Link bollies and went to get the rod sorted. Before casting I walked the margin again and found now about 3 or 4 tails on the spot so knew they were on the munch.

I wasn't wrong and no more than 10 minutes after casting over it was away, and I had a lovely little mirror in the bag, Scott had also managed to bag one and it meant that the fish were defo getting some food down them. The night came and went, and I had managed 6 by the morning, I reeled in placed some bait down the margin and went to see how Scott had got on. He had been busy bagging 9 fish during the night with one being a good one. I said I was sure today they were going to get on it and had decided to

go big. During the day up until about 3pm I steadily introduced bait via spod and baiting spoon meaning by the time the fish came at around 4pm I had gone through almost 11kg of bait!

That first fish was only the start of it and over the next 12 hours I managed to get 37 takes landing 32 of them!!!

This truly was mental fishing and being honest it's not normally my type of fishing you become very despondent and almost adopt a machine



mentality of playing, landing, unhooking and casting back out without really enjoying what you are catching but hey I shouldn't complain so others were not catching too much so I had obviously done something right. By the morning I had gone through 16kg of bait was totally ruined and was ready for home!

Until next time good luck and keep enjoying it

Brett

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The future of carp fishing in France has arrived and it is known as Carp19. After a brief, rewarding and very enjoyable few days at Carp19 I felt compelled to write a review about this venue as Nathan and Tammy have gone above and beyond what we have normally become accustomed to during our Carpy holidays.

We decided to fly to Carp19, something that I have never done before for a fishing trip. After a smooth flight to Limoges we were greeted at the airport by Nathan the owner to be transferred to our bankside retreat for a few days of relaxing and monster catching.

After a short pleasant drive through some breath-taking countryside we soon arrived at Carp19. The family home and anglers barn are the first buildings that you come across as you exit from your transportation, eagerly trying to catch your first glimpse of the lake. The anglers barn is an old traditional French farm building but it holds some contemporary facilities, the likes of which you would expect in a good hotel. The Barn plays host to a walk in wet room, modern toilet facilities plus kitchen and diner. It also has a bait room where the maize and particle are cooked, plus freezers for you to store boilies. Soon to be opening in the barn is to be a small tackle shop, supplying all the essentials that you might need or have forgotten to bring.

After a cold beer we boarded the all-terrain jeep to head down to the lake. You drive down a short track that looks over some amazing views of the surrounding countryside. At last, the lake. A five and a half acre, very mature but very pretty, tranquil lake holding some huge monsters that were waiting to make an appearance in our net.

As you stare in awe at this amazing place, huge carp are crashing all around. Can you imagine the temptation of immediately getting a rod out?

**CARP
19**



We now arrive at the Anglers Cabin, not just any old wooden cabin but a luxurious cabin, with its own kitchen and dining area. A cool place for anglers to take time out and chill if the need takes you. Ok so this is the meet and greet area, where Nathan explained the lake rules, gave details about the arrangements for breakfast and dinner. We were then taken on a tour of the lake and were given all the essential information needed about each swim to try and make our trip a successful and enjoyable as possible. As you walk around each swim you can see the time and effort that Nathan has taken to build a fabulous venue. The craftsmanship and build quality of every swim is quite amazing. Everything in each swim is exceptional from how well the swims are constructed to the all-weather Astro-Turf. No more muddy days on the bank. Why hasn't this been done before to these high standards. Now back to the cabin for the dreaded draw.



Upon arrival at my chosen peg for the next few nights a quick inspection of the equipment supplied as part of the Inclusive package, shows everything is as it should be. No expense has been spared here either, Greys Rods, Cygnet pod and weigh tripod, high quality full height bivvy and comfy bedchair. The bivvies are already erected on each swim, so it's just a quick set up of pod, bed chair etc before delving into your tackle box to set up and find your spots to capture some of these monster carp. I still can't get over that all the swims have been professionally fitted with Astro-Turf, meaning no more gravel or muddy swims. Something that I personally think is a must to help add a little luxury to your carping holiday.

The logo features the word "CARP" in a bold, white, distressed font with a black outline, positioned above the number "19" in a bright green, distressed font with a black outline. The background of the logo is white.

CARP
19



Each swim has an abundance of features to aim for. Whether it be margins, open water, islands or gullies and channels its certainly has the lot. Nathan pinpointed a few hot spots for me to bait up and cast my lines to, one in open water in a gully that spans across the lake from north to south. The second between the two islands and lastly



down the right-hand margin a patrol route from the shallower end to open water.

So, the bait went in, I used the Spicy Lake Specials and maize. I baited and waited, luckily enough not to long, a couple of hours at most. The left rod hand that was position in the open water gully tore off, the carp in search of its freedom. A short but fierce encounter saw me land my first pristine Mirror Carp. Large single scales flanked its two-tone body. A satisfying start to my Carp19 venture. With more to come. Fingers crossed.

As the jeep arrived we knew it must be 5 pm, dinner time. Rods in and a quick spin around the lake to pick up the other anglers then it was up to the Anglers Barn for some home cooked food. Tonights food was fantastic, so were all the other meals that we had during our stay. Breakfast was brought to our swims every morning, allowing us to keep the rods in during the crucial early morning bite time.

CARP 19



After dinner, feeling full we headed back to the lake to start the first evening at Carp19, talking of our personal best weights and what was needed to beat it. Exchanging banter as we made our way back to our swims.

The night ended well

for me adding a few additional stunners whilst my buddy, Luke opened his account with a chunky, football shaped mirror. But the giants still eluded us.





We awoke after a fairly uneventful night, to the sound of the jeep coming down the track and Nathan calling “breakfast, breakfast”. A full English delivered direct to your bivvy Sweet. The rods came in for a short while to catch up with Luke, who said he was going to move to the swim opposite me as he had seen and heard a lot of carp topping and crashing most of the evening into the early morning.

With the rigs cast out into the same spots as yesterday I sat back, sipped my cuppa and put my feet up and awaited for the alarms to sound.

Luke was still busy relocating to his new swim, as my middle rod beeped once, once again. Then nothing. As I turned back round to sit down again the middle alarm sounded continuously this



time and I knew I was into another carp. Another stunning mirror graced the net. With scales running the length of its back and small starbusts flanking its two toned body, another pretty carp.

That was number four, was number five to beat my pb?

Lukes move to the opposite swim paid off with three stunners, one being a new personal best for him. Another two mirrors plus the first common of the trip. Love the white belly mirror.



As the last day turned into the last night, we spoke over dinner of our joy of both catching well, considering it was only a short trip to France. Happy, if not a little frustrated that one of the Big Guns had not made an appearance for at least one of us. We made our way back to our swims to try and make the last night count. Rigs checked and checked again. Cast out onto the sweet spots, just praying for one of the chunks that we know is in there. Come on Big Dave, where are you?

Wow! Where had the time gone? Next thing I know, its 5 am and I get a call across the lake from Luke, "come quick, hurry up, I think I've got a forty" So I bring my rods in and run round to the other side of the lake to see what he has. Nathan is already there, claiming it's a lot bigger than a forty. Luke was saying he knew it was big as it didn't feel like all the others, it felt like he was dragging a bolder in. I peered in the sling, "you've done it mate, smashed it"



*52 lb 5 oz Mirror
New Lake Record
But theres Bigger*

So, imagine arriving at your venue, by a short plane journey, quick car journey, cold beer, chat with owner, no bivvy or other equipment to pitch up or pack away. And your relaxing in beautiful quiet surroundings with the rods out, waiting for Trigger or Big Dave to hit the back of your landing net.



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Stay tuned for next month's follow up, an interview with the owners about all aspects of owning a lake in France.



In search of the monster...

Part 2



by Andrew Taylor

I decided it was time to attempt to land the monster of the lake at Mineral Lakes in Bedworth.

If you missed part 1 of my article 'In search of the Monster' you can check it out in issue 26 of Talking Carp.

So, the daddy of the lake still hasn't been banked as far as I'm aware since it was last caught to my knowledge at the start of December last year! At that time, it weighed a whooping 96lb! It has also been nearly 15 months since I last landed the monster at a still incredible weight of 77lb 8oz. So hopefully this is going to be the time I land this amazing specimen of a White Sturgeon.

I've started writing this article today... which is Tuesday 19th June, I'm not going fishing until Friday 22nd June for a 24 hour session... and the reason for

this is I'd just like to share this search that has been going on for over 12 months for me, and my build up to hopefully what will be the end of an incredible, enjoyable and frustrating (at times) journey to land the monster of the lake!

So, to start the last time I landed the beast was the 15th March 2017 at a weight of 77lb 8oz... which I was ecstatic about... as firstly it was and currently is my personal best and it was just amazing to see a creature of that size, the fight was incredible... 40-minute fight in fact, it was awesome. After landed it back then I started hearing stories of it being caught again a few months later at 80lb! Then by September it was 85lb+ and then the 6th December I

heard it came out at an amazing 96lb!!! I couldn't believe the weight it had put on in such a short amount of time...

So, I decided I wanted to get back up there and see for myself, and attempt to catch it and see how big it really is now.

I chose to go the beginning of February for my first fishing session of the year and after setting up and casting my rods out the owner Bill came around to me and we were having a chat as we usually do.

After around 10 minutes my rod ripped off! I lifted into it and it immediately took off across the lake, taking around 40 yards of line very quickly... it then broke the surface near the corner of the island and Bill said, 'There he is, that's the daddy of

the lake!'

I got goose-bumps and my legs start trembling as I knew it was the big one...

After fighting it for around 20 minutes... my worst nightmare came true...

It jumped out towards the corner of the island and we literally saw it spin in the air and just spit the bait as if it was just holding it there teasing me...

I was absolutely heartbroken... Bill was gutted for me and for the fact he wanted to see it for himself as he'd never had a 100% accurate weight for such a long time... he'd

just heard the rumours of the weight ranging from 80lb to 90lb... up to 96lb...

Bill carried on around the lake after that...

I just sat there in disbelief... gutted... just knowing I had it on the end of my line... but it got away... I was totally gutted...

It wasn't all doom and gloom as this session ended with me landing a gorgeous Mirror Carp at 20lb 8oz and a Siberian Sturgeon at 50lb on the nose.

I then returned in hunt of the best on Friday 16th March for a 24-hour session during horrid weather

conditions. I survived blizzards of snow and up to 50mph winds... I know, I must be mad.. this session didn't produce any Sturgeon unfortunately, but I did manage three gorgeous looking mid double Carp.

First came a 16lb Mirror, which was quickly followed by a 13lb 5oz Mirror, and then a 15lb 6oz Common Carp... this was the first-time fishing here and me not banking a Sturgeon... where is the monster???



My next visit was Friday 20th April for another 24-hour session. This ended up be a session I'll never forget at Mineral Lakes but for different reasons. The weather was baking, it was so hot. After setting up I did manage to hit into a fish early on in the shape of a gorgeous little Mirror Carp at 11lb 6oz. After that the Carp just weren't interested in feeding at all, I put this down to how hot it was... literally at one point I had a pop up just under the surface and there was around nine or ten Carp just looking at my bait. That was until around 6pm... when I saw fish boshing the service towards the far corner of the island to my right. Thankfully nobody was fishing along the bank to my right, so I scattered a few boilies and put a rod on it... within a few minutes it ripped off...

and I missed it... damn! I put it straight back out and about ten minutes later my alarm started screaming again and this time I was into a absolute lump... after a cracking fight I ended up banking a new personal best for me in the shape of this beautiful 29lb 12oz Mirror Carp... what an absolute unit... if you haven't already, check out my article on this session in particular named 'How close can I come' in issue 27 of Talking Carp. Again, unfortunately I had no luck with

sturgeon in this session... but my new personal best made up for it... happy days!

So, then this brought me to my planned trip on Friday 22nd June... this was the session that I truly believed was going to be the one that caught me the monster... I prepared for it... I took unlimited bait, so I had no doubt of running out of something... it was baking hot again for this trip which wasn't a good sign as the Sturgeon don't feed as much when it's too hot,



after arriving I found out that not many sturgeon had been out lately due to the heat... But I'm not going to use any excuses or nothing and you know what... I'm just going to cut straight to the chase...

I hooked into a Sturgeon during the night... and while battling it... I reached for my headtorch and I believe the line went slack... and then it came off... as I shone my light on the surface of the water I saw a white tail of a Sturgeon flicker and swim away... was it the monster? I don't know... but one thing remains... I still haven't landed the monster of the lake... I was gutted... I was annoyed... I obviously wasn't as prepared as I presumed I was... I will leave it there... This session ended with me banking just two small carp to

12lb... I went all out the monster in this session... and it just never happened... I will continue to stay confident that my time will come again, and I will land the beast! I will keep going... and like I said... my time will come hopefully sooner rather than later... onwards and upwards...

I hope you enjoyed this read... please stay tuned for Part 3... which will hopefully be the final and closing part of my journey 'In

search of the monster'.

Thank you to Mainline Baits, Castaway PVA, RidgeMonkey and Intelligent Angling Solutions for supporting me on my fishing adventures.

Until next time... tight lines... stay safe and be on the bank!

Andrew Taylor





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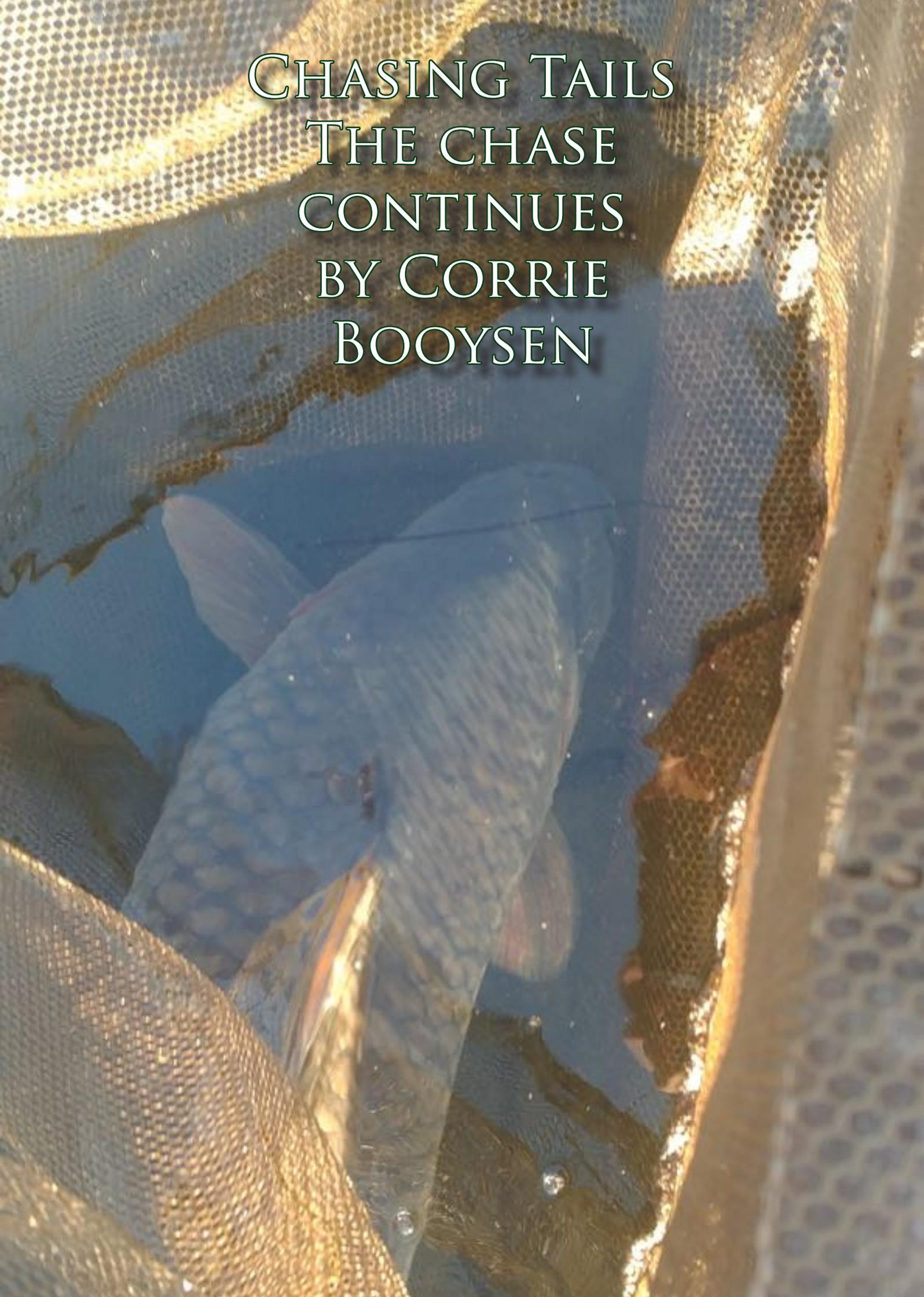
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CHASING TAILS
THE CHASE
CONTINUES
BY CORRIE
BOOYSEN



Chasing Tails

The chase continues...

Following our session at the African Gold Carp Syndicate the weekend of the 4th of May, which was the first session in my attempt to capture Floppy Tail, I returned home that Sunday with a lot to think about. My strategies did not quite work out the way I had hoped they would. There were lessons that had to be learned. I had three concerns of things I felt I could have done slightly different, and I believe these aspects could possibly have made a difference to the success I had over that weekend. Not that the weekend was an unsuccessful one - It was not a blank for me, and the highlight of our weekend was the two 40lb plus common carp my brother Wynand managed to capture.

Unfortunately, like most syndicate lakes in South-Africa, we have to book our sessions well in advance. Our syndicate lake only accepts telephonic bookings on the first day of each month, for fishing sessions the following month. This means that it does not operate on a 'first come first fish' basis, which often results in a disadvantage to some anglers as they are not able to locate, and fish towards where the carp may be showing on the day. Should the carp not be in your booked swim, your chances of landing a fish may be very slim. To try and avoid this from happening, we need to consider all the possible factors that may affect the carps location, prior

to booking any of the swims at our syndicate. The deciding factors for us are the time of year, how many other anglers may be fishing on the lake over that same period, and which swims they may have booked to fish from. The location and depth, also happened to be the first of the three aspects I felt I needed to change for me to have better success in our June session. In our previous session my brother was fishing the right and deeper end of our swim, whilst I had the much shallower end. The facts that he had success in the deeper ends, and that the temperatures would be much lower in June, were the two factors that made me feel confident in my choice of having

booked the deepest swim on the lake. The swim also happened to be the most recent swim Floppy Tail was captured from. Some anglers believe that carp are territorial creatures, and if their beliefs are true than my chances of capturing Floppy had been improved with this booking. I believe that carp are more prone to seek out the depths of the lake during the colder winter season, once the water temperatures have dropped. I hoped that the swim I booked would prove to be a good choice on the day. We expected our June session to be our coldest one so far for this year, and we were to be proven correct on the day our session commenced. We know that even colder sessions await us in July and August, as these are the two coldest months of the

year in South-Africa, with August being the windiest.

The second of the three aspects



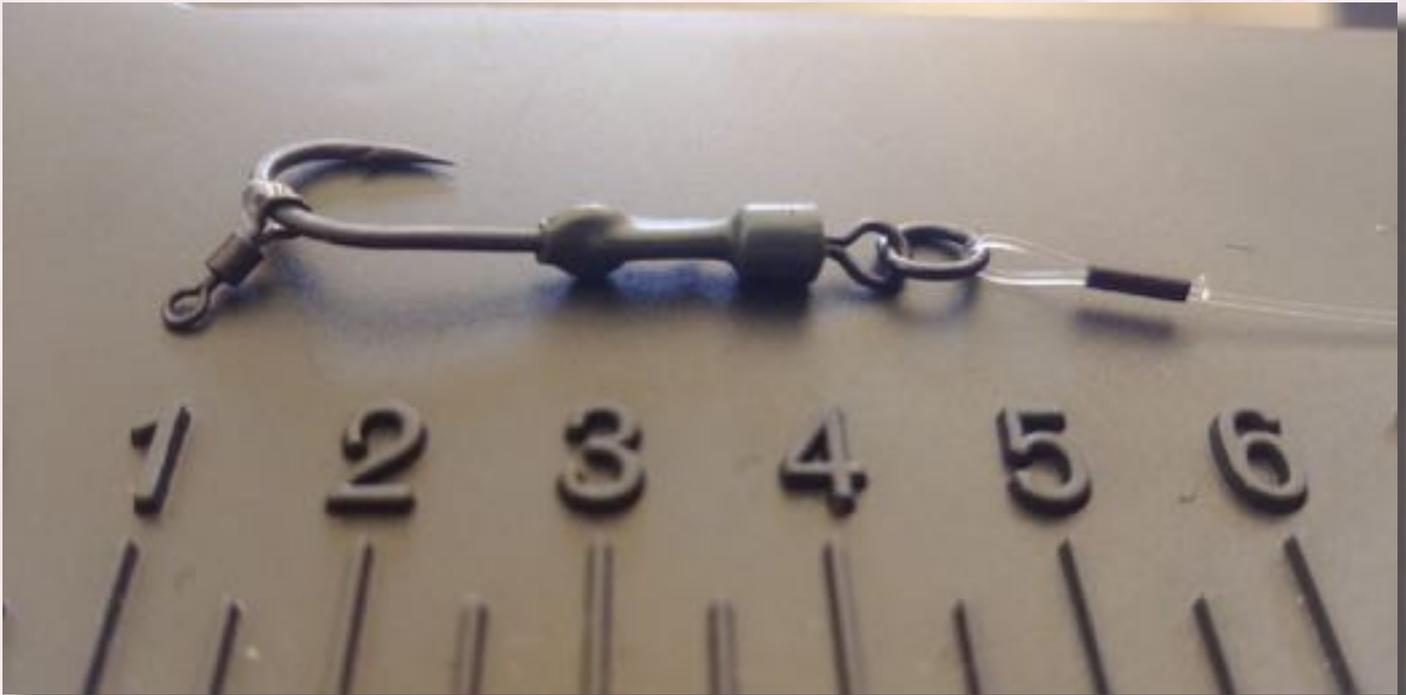
I needed to do differently, was the actual baiting up of my rigs. In our previous session, the larger fresh water crabs made a nuisance of themselves by chopping away at our hook baits and rigs. This resulted in us not having any hook baits in the water over a period of time, which means a potential opportunity for us to land a carp may have gone to waste. The crabs also forced me to move away from my natural approach, especially since the snails I baited up with may have been extra attractive to them.

Unfortunately, natural baits happen to be one of the key strategies in my quest to capture 'Floppy'. In our May session, I initially set my traps out

with black snails, and Karper Ltd fishy flavoured popups, which I fished over a bed of American maggots mixed with crushed Karper Ltd RS freezer boilies. I still feel this is a necessary approach I would need to follow if I were to stand any chance of capturing my target fish, and the only way for me to maintain this natural approach would be to make my rigs and hook baits stronger, and more resilient. As part of my preparation leading up to our session, I played around with a few ideas and finally decided that for our

June session I was to going to bait up my rigs using metal maggot clips. These maggot clips should prove to be too hard for the crabs to chop off, and it would enable me to fish maggots or even chopped up snails, on top of a pop up boilie or a whole snail. Baiting up like this would also aid to the natural approach I am aiming for. In addition to this method, I would make sure that my chosen pop ups are also more resilient to the claws of these crabs by making use of bait protective sleeves. Should I choose to fish a single pop up boilie





I would use the bait protective sleeves but instead of using the maggot clips, I would make use of floss caps in an attempt to strengthen my rigs. The last of the three aspects I felt I needed to do differently was the type of maggots I used. When I placed the maggots order for our previous session, my supplier did not have stock of my preferred European Bluebottle maggots, which are more commonly known as 'gozzers'. He supplied

me with the American maggots instead. I believe the American maggots are not quite as effective when it comes to carp angling as 'gozzers', due to their lack of malodour. I decided to give the maggot farmer a three week notice of my requirements, ensuring that he would have sufficient time to prepare my order, and have it packed out on time. I finished work at 2pm on the Friday, and collected the maggots

from my supplier on my way to the lake. Once again I joined my brother at the lake shortly after 5pm for our session, a session I felt much better prepared for than our previous one. It was a very cold afternoon, and I expected the weekends fishing to be really tough. I decided to prepare a stick mix consisting of some crushed Karper Ltd RS freezer boilies, carp pellets, blood meal, a small amount of krill meal, cold pressed hemp oil, bloodworm

extract and maggots. My plan was to fish this stick mix in a PVA bag or PVA mesh, in addition to the free offerings I had put out. I was hoping it would improve my chances of luring Floppy Tail to my baited area, especially since we had anticipated it to be a much colder weekend with fewer bites. Temperatures during the early hours of recent mornings were already getting as low as -6 °C. After doing our lines, and making a warm brew, we could finally sit back confidently and wait for a tug. I had armed my traps with Karper Ltd.'s Maggotz, and the new Sweetcornz pop ups from the Dispersion range – www.karper.co.uk. I tipped the Maggotz Dispersion pop up with live maggots on a maggot clip, which I fished on the old faithful Spinner rig. For my final trap, I

used a live snail and a Karper Ltd RS Wafter, which I fished on a Slip D rig. By the time we went to bed we had not had any runs.

We were woken up at 01H00 AM by a screaming take. It was dark and very cold.

The lake still had quite a lot of watergrass about 10 inches below its surface. Under normal circumstances it would have been very difficult to land a fish in these conditions, but fortunately the lead dropped, and the carp drifted towards an area of the lake where there was no watergrass. I felt her shake her head, and tug at the line while I

was playing her, and after a short battle eventually managed to land a 22lb mirror carp on the Spinner rig I had armed with a Karper Ltd Maggotz Dispersion pop up and maggots. Not the biggest of captures, but a very welcomed



one as it meant I would not go home without a result. During the course of the early morning hours we had another run, but it was a non-weighing carp. We got up early in the morning hoping to see some carp boshing in our swim, but admittedly it came as no surprise when we could not see any. The cold weather makes carp more lethargic as a result of the low oxygen levels in the water, and less likely to show themselves, let alone break the

surface. We reeled our lines in at 14H00 PM, and were pleasantly surprised to see that there was no sign that crabs had chopped away at any of our hook baits. Clearly the cold weather had affected them too. This meant that I could move away from the bait protective sleeves, but more importantly, we could fish more confidently knowing that our traps would not be disturbed or destroyed. We re-baited and did our lines again at 16H45

PM. The only thing I changed was using a Karper Ltd Shrimp & Garlic Dispersion pop up, instead of a Sweetcornz pop up.

I was hoping the fishy flavoured hook bait would be more effective in these colder winter conditions. It proved to be a good choice as our next run came at 01:20 AM on the Karper Ltd Shrimp & Garlic Dispersion pop up, but unfortunately this was once again a very small carp.



Our final run came shortly after 04H00 AM on the Sunday morning we were going to pack up. Wynand managed to land which was quite an interesting character, a common carp weighing 29lb 12oz, and which looked like a survivor of an otter attack. He decided to name her 'The Stumpy Common' due to the fact that she

only had half a paddler. A true warrior indeed! She had fallen victim to one of Karper Ltd.'s Coconut Dispersion pop ups fished on a Spinner rig. Our June session had come to an end. I felt that I did not have to adapt to, or change anything for our next session, which would be on the 29th of July. I believe I just need to remain patient,

stubborn in my quest, and in my approach to capture Floppy Tail. #ChasingTails

Until the next issue... Tight lines, bent rods, and wet nets!

Corrie Booysen

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Forces Section

dedicated to the brave men and
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*Featuring -
Tim Gray*

A photograph of a man from behind, wearing a white t-shirt. The t-shirt has the text 'FORCES CARP CLASSIC' printed in large, bold, black letters. Below this, in smaller, lowercase letters, it says 'the only classic'. The man has short, light-colored hair. The background is dark and out of focus.

**FORCES CARP
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**Forces Carp Classic
Comes to the UK**

The inaugural Forces Carp Classic – UK event took part a couple of weeks ago and brought together some 25 x pairs to Horseshoe Lake, the famous Carp Society water near Lechlade.

The event has been brought about due to the demand for places at its bigger brother event the 'Forces Carp Classic' which happens in France each October and brings together 100 anglers (50 x pairs) from all three Armed Services but also the entire Emergency Services can enter.

Talking Carp – Mark decided to pop over and visit the organisers both Ex- Army men themselves Tim Gray & Russ Marsh.

Hi there Russ & Tim and thanks for taking the time out to talk to us, I expect everything

is really busy? We get a quick nod from both of them and then Russ begins "Yes it's been very busy since the start and we're really happy currently"

TC - So Russ when did it all begin?

"Well initially the event came about because we were over subscribed for our bigger event in October, and we decided to run a smaller event here in the UK, hoping of course that anglers would want to fish it"

TC - "Having already spoken to a few anglers they all seem really pleased with it, many telling us they plan to fish it next year? Assuming there's going to be a next year, Tim?"

"Yep we'll be here again don't you worry, in fact we've already

had a chat with the Carp Society and planned dates for the next three years, so the FCC – UK is here to stay, that's for sure" "That's great news guys and we hope for your sake it grows and makes plenty of waves".

TC - So Russ tells us more, what's been happening? Russ begins

"the event started on Wednesday afternoon with the guys booking in and walking the lake, followed in the evening by a Hog Roast, which was superb and then we moved into the building for an evening of chat with Ian Russell and Ian Chillcott"

TC - Now you had two big stars supporting your event, what did they do?

"Both are huge supporters of the

Armed Forces and when we asked them, they were only too willing to help out. With both wanting to give a general talk about all things 'carpy' and answer questions. It was a great evening and after an hour Ian Russell left to allow Chilly to talk through his last 18 months"

TC - I bet that was interesting? Tim jumped in

"Yes it was I've known Chilly for a long time now and he's always been very supportive of Army Carp Fishing but initially I didn't want to ask him because I knew it was hard work for him, but he jumped at the chance once he knew lots of Army guys would be there. I think he knows that they understand him, he speaks our language and we speak his!.

TC – I hear where

you're coming from there, I've been around the Military only recently and you guys all speak a different talk to each other. That's was really great though that Chilly could relax with you guys.

"Yes it was, Tim continues I think he really really enjoyed himself. In fact I know he did because he's asked if he can bring a team along next year and FISH the event"

TC – Wow that's a big testament to you guys, well done.

So Russ tell us about

the event and how its run? Russ begins "the event started Thursday morning with a Group picture, followed by a briefing, covering Admin, Competition and the Rules, its then on to the draw" "it's then off to the swims and set up time with the rods in at 1200hrs. Then it's down to the anglers to give us a shout over the Radio when they catch a fish, we pop round, we normally have a quad bike in France but have had to use pedal bikes at this event, bloody hard work" Russ says laughing out loud.



TC – So they call you over the radio when they have a fish?

Tim says “Yes indeed they do, every fish is weighed by Russ or myself on my scales, that way no one can call anyone out for exaggerating a fish weight. This event is very different to our France one as we are trying out a different scoring system”

TC – Please explain?

Russ jumps in “We decided this year to try the ‘three biggest fish rule’, this means Mark that although one pair might catch 15 or 20 fish ONLY their three biggest fish count towards their pairs total. It means that right up until the end of the event, it is still anyone’s to win or at least it stays very close till the end of the event.”

TC – Wow that’s something different but keeps things very close doesn’t it? Haven’t I heard of this before on another event?

Tim says “Yes it does Mark and that’s so much better for the anglers and the event, keeps it all as we say ‘squeaky bum time’ right up until the very end. And yes you have possibly seen it before as both the World Carp Classic & World Carp Masters use the same system but if memory serves correctly they use the top 5 fish.”

TC – Yes I thought I’d seen it somewhere before, it’s a great system and I’m sure it’ll keep every angler on their seat till the end.

Talking of the WCC, didn’t they just have their UK qualifier on here? Russ pipes up “Yes they did, sadly it didn’t fish very well for them with only 11 fish coming out to 4 x pairs that caught. They also didn’t quite fill the venue with only 15 pairs taking on the challenge. Thankfully we have beaten their totals already with 8 pairs catching from



25 x pairs fishing the event, plus we've caught 22 x fish. So overall both Tim & myself are extremely happy"

TC – Well I should think so, it's a great event and everyone we've spoken to said it was just brilliant from the fantastic hog on Wednesday to the goody bags & Polo Shirts you give out. It certainly seems like you both leave no stone unturned when it comes to events like

this. Well done guys!

"Thanks Mark that means a lot to both Russ & myself as we do work very hard to ensure the anglers fishing our events, have nothing to think about other than their own fishing, WE take care of everything else for them. Both the amount of anglers returning each year to our bigger event I think we achieve that, now we plan for the exact same policy for this smaller UK event. It's

still a lot of work even though it's just 25 x pairs."

Mark – Guys I think you under sell yourselves, 25 x pairs is still 50 anglers, with all of the Admin that goes with it, the event, getting 'stars' here and getting the venue, it's a massive thing. Maybe we at Talking Carp should sort something out and just maybe we can get a pair on the event?

Tim pipes in "that's



always possible Mark, we did try this year as you were going to sponsor the Team Trophy at our event but it sort of slipped the net.! Maybe we can sort for next year?"

TC – I'm sorry for that Tim but we'll try this year for next, promise.

So lads the only thing left to do is give us all the stats, so over to you Russ? Russ is laughing loud at this, "nope Mark, Tim deals

with all the stats stuff, and that's his baby" laugh out loud...!!! Ok Tim over to you then?

"Yes Mark we didn't tell you did we, I do the stats, Russ hands out the trophies lol... Well here goes:

The guys caught the following, out of 25 x pairs, 8 x pairs caught a total of 22 fish for a total weight of 403lbs 02ozs. Those 22 fish where broken down into 21 Mirrors, 1 x

Common of which we had 17 x 'others', 4 x 20lbs, 1 x 30lb (a new UK PB).

First Fish Peg 5 – Ian Reevely with a Mirror @ 16.12

Biggest Common Peg 2 – Lee Berry @ 33.10

Biggest Mirror Peg 2 – Sam Walters @ 28.09

Team Winners – A2 Baits - Tony Collins & Jamie Taylor / Chris Wake & James Deeney



3rd Peg 22 Paul Kemp & Ben Bentley 2 x fish for 28.04

2nd Peg 21 Tony Collins & Jamie Taylor 2 x fish for 30.02

FCC – UK Pairs Champions 2018 – Peg 2 Lee Berry & Sam Walters 3 x fish for 83.09

(they actually caught 13 x fish in total for 247lbs 10ozs)

Wow guys that's an impressive amount of fish in these hard conditions, so well done to the anglers and extremely well done to Team Champions – A2 Baits and of course to Pairs Champions – Sam & Lee. Hopefully they'll be back next year to defend their title? Tim jumps in "They were the first pair

to get there name down for next year

lol. So it'll be great to see them again and let's hope that this extremely hot weather is not here again for next year's event, as it made it really hard work for the guys."

Russ jumps in here "just before we say goodbye can I say a massive set of thanks to Ian Russell & Ian Chillcott for coming down, the Carp Society for loaning Horseshoe to us and Wass Tackle in Colchester for the winners tokens, Just Stitched Up for the Polos, AHG Group for the trophies and last but not least our Admin Team – Dad (Tim's Dad) Jon Lloyd and

Roger our Chef, thanks guys without you it wouldn't happen."

Mark – So that's it for now, I'm signing off from a fantastic event, and if you want more details check out their website at www.fcc-uk.com or email Tim at tjgray1968@hotmail.co.uk / Russ at forcescarpclassic@hotmail.co.uk

Cheers guys from all of us at Talking Carp well done and see you again soon.

Russ & Tim "Thank you Mark and your welcome anytime".



ExMil Carp Championships 2018



The second ever Ex-Military Carp Championships took place last weekend at Maxey Lake near Market Deeping. The event brought together pairs from all three services Army, Navy & RAF in a friendly but competitive format covering a 48hr period. Sadly not all of the 13 x Pairs made it too the event with 2 x pairs dropping out at the very last minute, but that still left 11 x Pairs to fight it out at Maxey.

With the weather glorious and not looking like changing all the anglers meeting up on the Thursday evening where talking zigs, zigs and more zigs! There was a faint chance on Saturday of some rain but even the weather man put that at 5%, so sun cream, sun tans and lots of water were the name of the day.

About 16 of the 22 meet up that night for the normal BBQ and a few welcome drinks, with lots of stories and merriment being had by all those who had turned up. Some of the anglers hadn't seen each other for years and it was a great occasion to 'shoot the shit' as we in the Military call it. The party rumbled on into the late hours with lots of sarcasm and witty jokes between the services. Well it would've if there were any pairs from the Royal Navy attending! Sadly they weren't so the Army and RAF continued without the senior service, oh and what fun we had.

Looking around in the morning, there were a few sore heads but still they dragged themselves out of bed to walk the lake before the draw. With one or two pairs just arriving

at first light, some of these had just finished work (night shift till 4am) and then driven to Maxey.

The photo, brief and draw all took place without a hitch and the anglers started to move towards there swims, leaving Peg 8 in the corner free. The other 11 swims where well spread out around Maxey and although most could get there car behind there swims, it still took a while to get the kit sorted and ready for the 12 o'clock start.

Despite the massive current bun in the sky, which shone very bright and true, it did also show a few fish moving around. The conversation about zigs was certainly looking like a good bet but only time would tell.

The defending Champions from 2017 where Mark Jarvis & Carl Hoyle – RAF and they were looking like they really wanted to keep hold of the title of Champions. It seemed like Carl did even more than Jarvy as he'd forgotten the trophy! Ah well best win it again then eh? They didn't do too bad on the draw coming out 5 out of the 11 pairs and still having their top choice of swim available,

which they quickly took, Peg 3 right next door to their winning peg off last year peg 4.... Don't they say "it's written in the stars" or something like that.

Barely had the hooter gone at 12 for the start of the match, then Peg 1 – Terry McCann & martin Whitefoot were off with their first fish and first of the event. About 7 minutes I think Martin said in the end, they certainly seemed

like the fish where all stacked up at that end of the lake, that's for sure.

How wrong could we be?? Fish seemed to be moving all over the lake and getting caught as well. By the time the first 24 hours were completed, 7 x pairs had caught, ranging from single fish at 9.11 for Peg 9, to 26 fish for 260lb all from Peg 3 – Jarvy & Carl. The only other pair making



a massive move and having fish in front of them, which they'd capitalised on and now had over the 100+ mark where Peg 1 – Terry & Martin who had also caught from the off but just not as regularly as Peg 1. In fact when Martin came for a walk around he said “you want to see those to fish, they're like machines. If it's not perfectly on the spot, it's back in again and recast, whilst the other sticks out more boilies. Excellent team effort guys”

Would you Adam and Eve it??? The weather man actually got something right for once, and after weeks of really dry weather but only giving us a 5% chance of rain, it lashed it down for a solid 6 hours! Let's hope that pushes the fish down in the water and turns it on for the rest of us.

As the horn was sounded for the end of this gruelling 48hr marathon in the heat it was clear we only had one winner but what had they achieved? The overall stats were as follows:

- * All 11 x pairs caught
- * Total number of fish caught – 146
- * Total weight caught – 1,649.11

It was great to think that everyone at least caught something from their Peg and that the venue had

once again produced the goods, but this year far more than last year. Many thanks to the members of the private Syndicate at Maxey Lake and their owner for allowing us to use the venue again. But also to Korda Developments who provided the prizes for the winners to take home.

So who where they and how did they do

First Fish Peg 1 Terry McCann (Army)



Biggest Common Peg
2 Carl Hindson (Army)

Biggest Mirror Peg 6
Bob Hughes (Army)

Runners Up Peg 1 –
Terry McCann & Martin
Whitefoot (Army) with
25 x fish for 292.14

Champions Peg 3 –
Mark Jarvis & Carl
Hoyle (RAF) with 59 x
fish for 699.06

Some great angling
by everyone in
some extremely
trying conditions but
especially to Mark
& Carl who worked

their socks off and
took home the trophy
again (well they would
off if they'd brought it
in the first place lol).
But that's two years
on the trot that the
RAF have showed the
way, the Army have
tried hard both years
but sadly maybe the
Senior Service (a
few members would
be nice first) need to
provide a pair to take
them on??? Offers on
a postcard please?

If you are interested in
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– Tim Gray at
tjgray1968@hotmail.
co.uk. We have some
200 members currently
but it'd be great to get
even more, so come on
what's stopping you?
The club is only open
to Ex – serving from
any service, please
do not apply if you are
still currently serving.
If you are still serving
all three Services have
their own Carp groups
up and running, if you
need details of those
then get in touch.



We spoke to Tim at the end of the event and he said “the event has yet again been great, a chilled weekend with a comp thrown in for good measure, just how we like it here. But if you are Ex-Navy or RAF then please let’s hear from you as the Group is Tri-Service but we are currently top heavy with Army anglers and I’d love to get a few more RAF & Navy involved. Please just drop me an email?”

Well that’s it for now the EMCG move on to

the Army Carp Festival where they have two teams entering the Army’s week of angling, before they move over to France for the Forces Carp Classic. If you’re interested then just

give Tim an email.

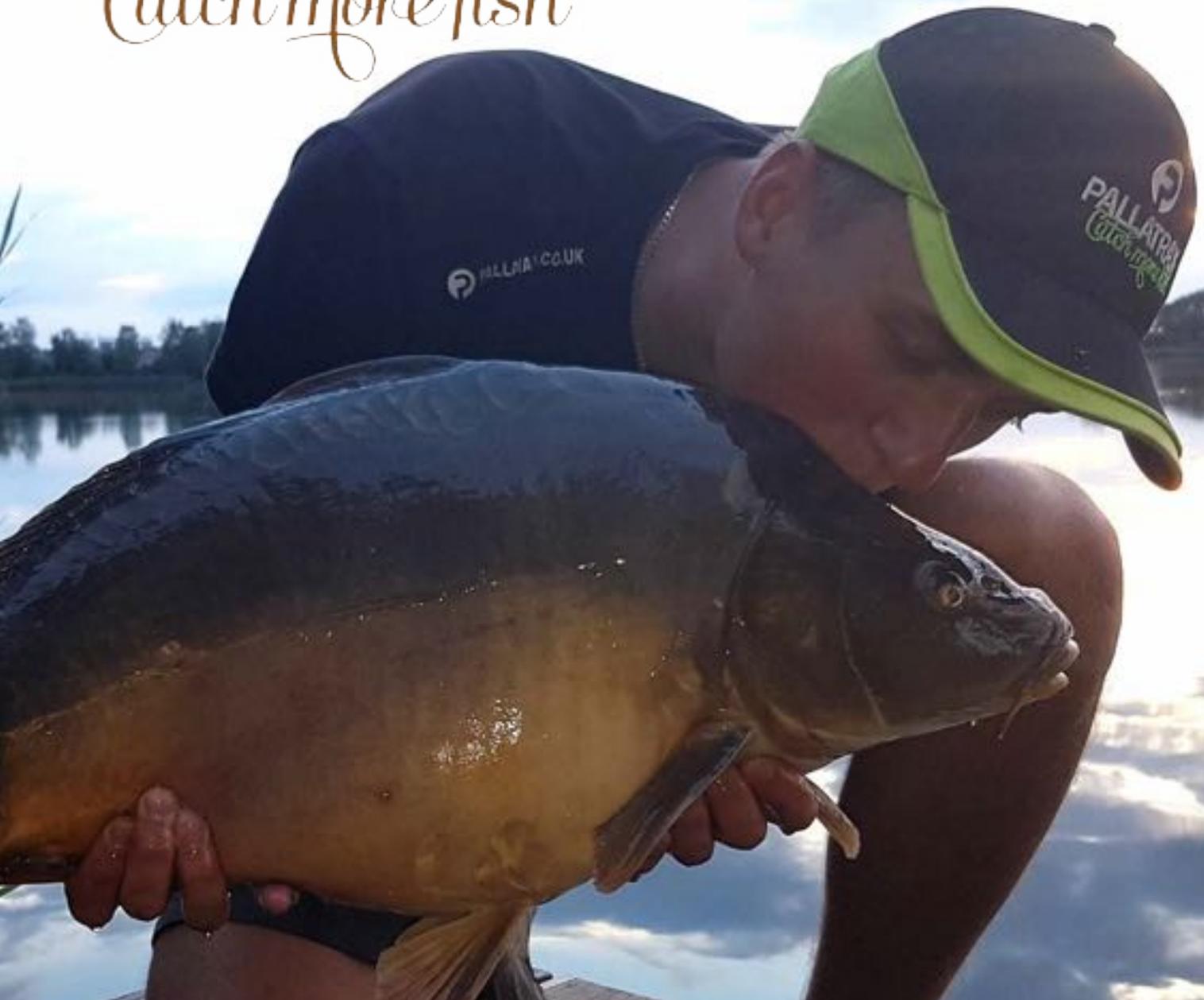
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Talking Carp.





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Catch Reports

Featuring -

Brooms Cross Fishery, White Springs
Fishery, Alan Beacher, Chris Kirk, Mark
Wozencroft, Connor Hatton.



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"CATCH REPORT" FOR A

CHANCE TO
WIN GREAT
PRIZES



BELL BALL CUTTER

Alan Beacher has been back out again to his new lucky spot... and only gone and done it again. Here's Alan...

“A quick over nighter on the canal and I've only gone and done it again! Another pb, this warrior 24 lbs 11 oz. I did not expect it to be so soon after my last one in June. The reliable multi rig tied with skin line strip shield, a size 6 hook with a krill berry pop up and a scattering of Captivator Tandoori Salmon bottom baits doing the business”.





Two crackers for Chris Kirk on a recent trip to Eric's Willows lake. Retro baits working for Chris everywhere he goes these days as he continues his amazing run of form.



A close-up photograph of a textured metal surface, possibly a tool or part of a machine, with a brass-colored pen resting on it. The metal has a pattern of raised, rounded rectangular shapes. The pen is positioned diagonally across the frame, with its tip pointing towards the bottom right. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic sheen and the texture of the surface.

It's time

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to get Serious!!.....



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fade into it!!



Mark Wozencroft with an absolutely stunning 37lb 6oz Horton Church Pool original. This fish is a rare visitor to the bank and definitely one that Wuzy can cross off his “most wanted” list. Well done Mark



Connor Hatton has been out and about lately, and the young rod is still having some success!! The big common known as Elsa has not been out in nearly 2 years, all fish from the mere and the park caught on pukka squirrel baits sweet candy hi vis pop up on German rigs made from riverside angling terminal. Lots of pre baiting and hard work on both lakes.



White Springs

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Ashley Davies
25lb 6oz

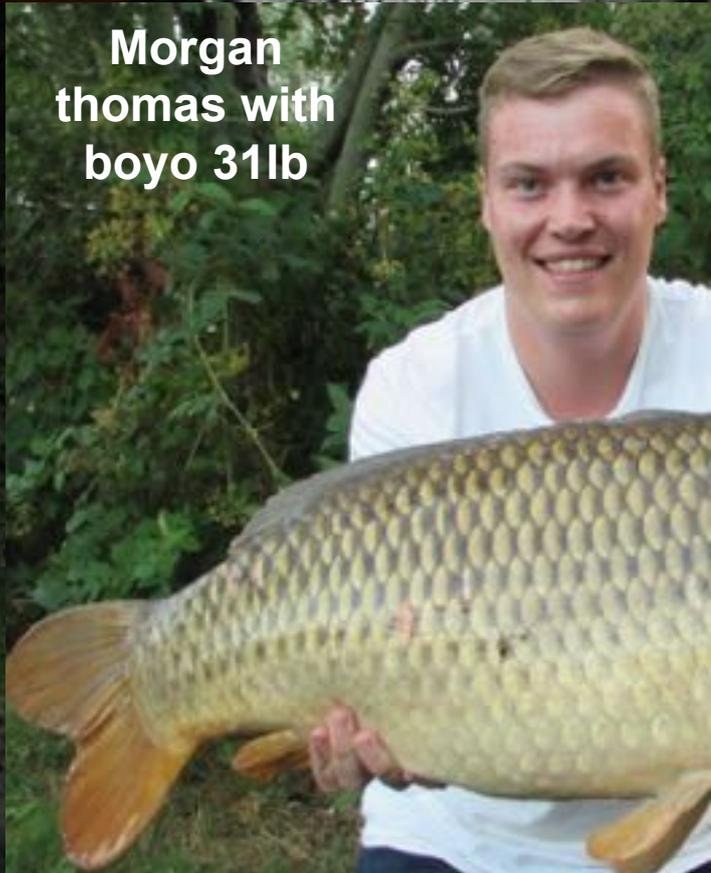


David Pritchard
with boyo 32lb

Catch Report
WINNER !!!



Morgan
thomas with
boyo 31lb





Darren Stern
35lb 1oz



Brian Payne
with Cheryl at
35lb 1oz

Catch Report
WINNER !!!



Ewan Cessford 22lb
7oz

Phat Fish





Brooms Cross Fishery

Specimen carp and coarse



Louis Lyon
with a personal
best shaker...
Starburst at 28lb
6oz from Upper
Alt lake, and
again on his own
bait. well done
Lou.



Mike Roberts
was recently
rewarded new
personal best
from Upper Alt
lake when he
landed Jimmy at
27lb. Well done
mate!!

Brooms Cross Fishery

Specimen carp and coarse

Mike Williams with
"The Maggot" at
28lb 14oz. The
first time this fish
has been out since
June 2017!



Paul Stanger with
"Sue" at 33lb 1oz
from Upper Alt lake.
This is her best
summer weight yet,
good angling Paul
well done mate..





mike mcMahon

I was at home looking at the rain hammering down thinking do I or don't I go, but I only get one night a week and you won't catch them at home! With that thought the car was duly loaded and I set off full of anticipation. I made some calls on the drive down to the bailiffs to try and get a mental picture of what was happening and where the carp may be lurking so I could hatch a plan if I didn't see anything to change my mind once I walked the lake.

I arrived in the carpark around 20:45 and loaded the trusty barrow in double quick time and was soon heading off to complete a lap of the lake. I was soon greeted by a carp popping his head out in a bay that I had baited heavily earlier in the season (I even managed to winkle a few out) After I had completed a lap of the lake with no further sightings I had to make a decision. Having seen the carp earlier and my initial calls to the bailiffs who told me they had seen some carp in front of a swim to the left of where I had spotted the one earlier I decided to setup in between, it

was off the back of the North Easterly and gave me some more options whilst I knew I was close to some fish. I positioned all my rods in areas that I had fish from before and lightly scattered 40 or so baits over each spot that had been heavily plugged in Steamies Nut Oil for extra attraction.

My alarm went off at 05:00 and I was up cup of coffee in hand watching for signs. Around 6am my left hand rod rattled off, I picked up the rod it bent double and about 50 yards of line melted off the spool – I was in no doubt whatsoever I was into a chunk and my legs turned to jelly. After an epic 20 minute battle I was guiding my prize over the drawstring Get in!! 45lb 2 of lovely chestnut scaly perfection was my reward.

I started packing down my kit (slowly) around 07:00 whilst having a chat to Cheddar, who said you still have time for more. Well about ten minutes later my delkim was sounding its battle cry I was attached to another angry carp, this one decided to go through my other lines so it was a game of Knit one Purl one (thanks Cheddar and Dan who were on hand) I was soon having a picture taken with a nice common of 27lb 8.

What a morning a 45 and a 27, I left the lake and drove to work grinning from ear to ear.

All carp were caught using Steamies TNT by Individual baits and using Rig Marole Freefall clips, Freefall braided tubing and CamH20.

Tight lines

Mike



Steve Gilbey

Just returned from Holm Fen from a 48-hr session fishing for Team Hutchinson Banked two the biggest of 29lb and 23lb from Poachers Pool. Taken on Rod Hutchinson Ballistic B bait the first fish the leather was caught on a 12-inch Korda Camo Multi rig with size 6 Krank choddy and a 15mn Ballistic b pop up. The second a 29lb Mirror was undone by a 9-inch Avid coated braid tied German rig style to a size 6 Mystic carp hook with a chopped down 15mm boilie.





Barrington's lake France

Week 15 saw Mike and Dan in swim 3 who caught 13 carp to 37lb4oz which was a new personal best for Dan. Both of them had a grass carp - 25lb and 24lb8oz. They had brought a trophy with them for the one who caught the most weight of fish during the week but decided that they would call it a draw.

Our friends, Daz and Julie, visited with a grocery delivery for us and fished swim 5. Daz landed a catfish and 4 carp to 35lb4oz.

On Tuesday, Anoop, Erwin, Samantha and Alyssa joined us from The Netherlands and rented the Chalet. Anoop and Samantha fished swim 7 and landed a 17lb catfish and a 20lb common. Erwin fished swim 1 and had a 23lb mirror carp.

There were 22 fish caught during the week including 2 catfish and 2 grass carp.

One evening we had a late dinner and watched the World Cup match between England and Croatia on the temporary TV in the dining room. Our Dutch anglers told us that they had learnt some new English words lol!

The weather was very hot again and apart from 1 fish caught Wednesday afternoon when it was overcast, all of the fish came between 8pm and 10am.

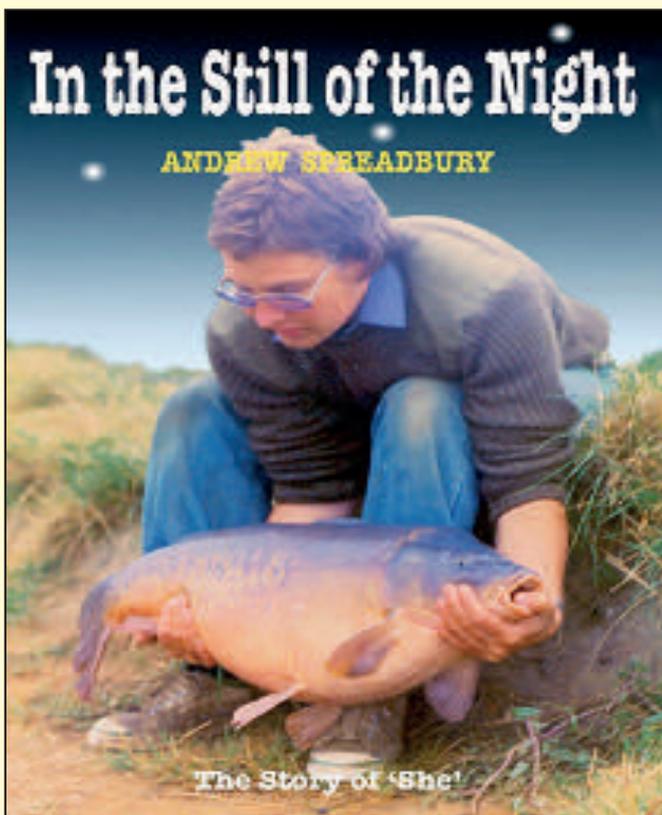




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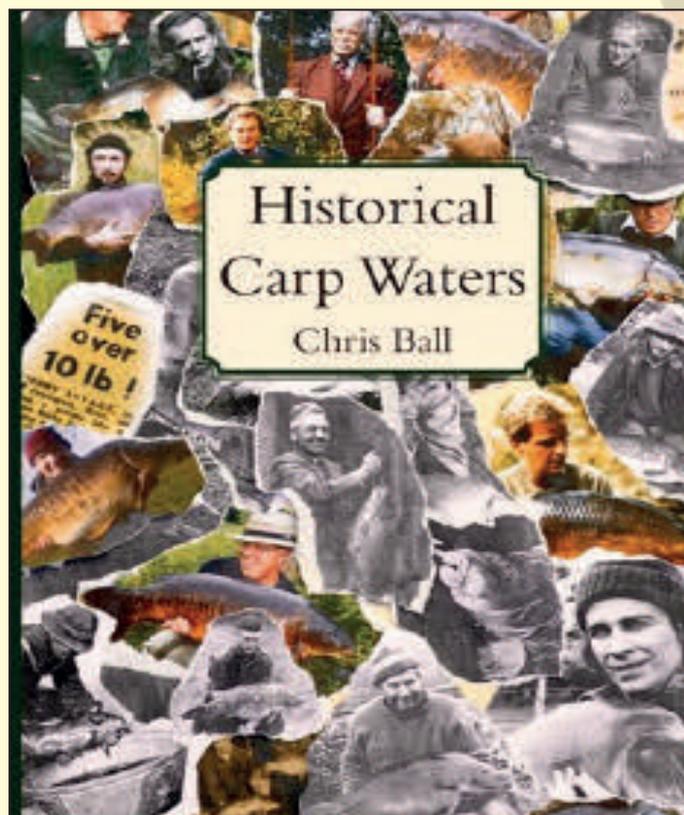
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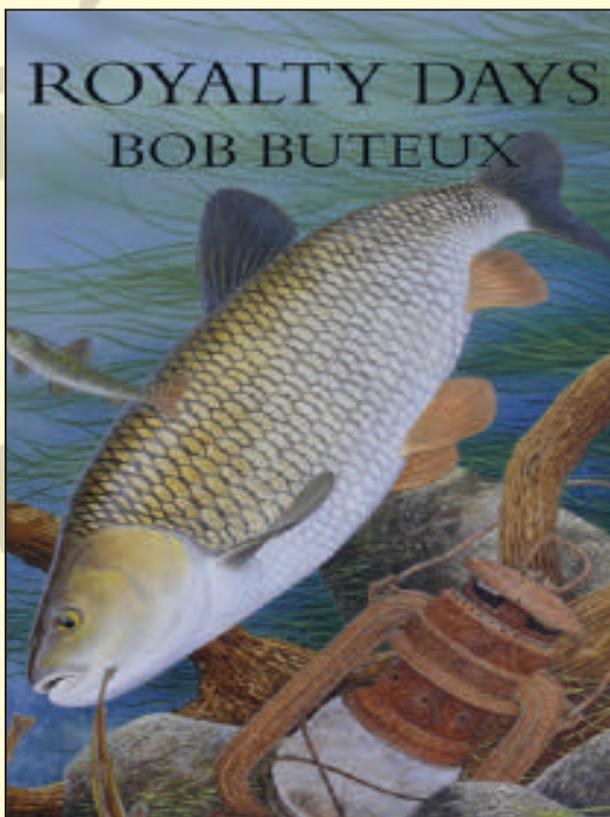
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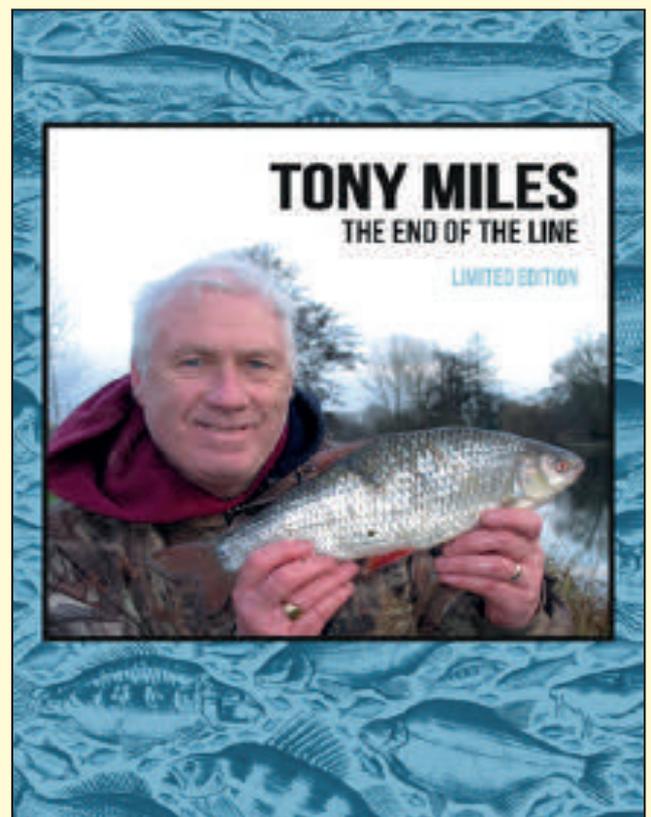
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