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ISSUE 2 - FEB 2016

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Greetings One and All.

Let me start by giving out a massive thank you... a thank you to each and every one of you who contributed, read, played competitions with, added on Facebook, advertised in and generally got involved with issue 1 when we launched last month.

The response has been overwhelming and Team Talking Carp thank each and every one of you. It was a hell of a launch, and the response has been fantastic.... Good times!!

First point of business... massive congratulations to angler Dean Fletcher on landing The Parrot at a new record weight of 68lb and 1oz. I'm sure all the weights and measures criteria will be fulfilled and check out and we will have a new British record carp!!

Well done Dean.



This month we have plenty for you again. We have Martin Clarke giving us part 2 of "A Chat With..." and this month he talks bait and rigs.

Scott "Geezer" Grant introduces us to "The Pretty One" and you will see exactly how this carp got her name!

There's no stopping Lee England as he continues catching carp after carp.

Ross Hunter shows how he rings the changes to turn a blank into a successful trip to France in December.

Teekay continues to share to lifetime of angling tales with us.

And more.

We announce the winner of the Ridge Monkey toaster and RigTag camo toaster sleeve inside!

A brand new competition to win the A.C.A carbon throwing stick in this issue... and what a piece of kit this is!!

We hope you enjoy this month, and please don't hesitate to get in touch either via our Facebook page or email directly

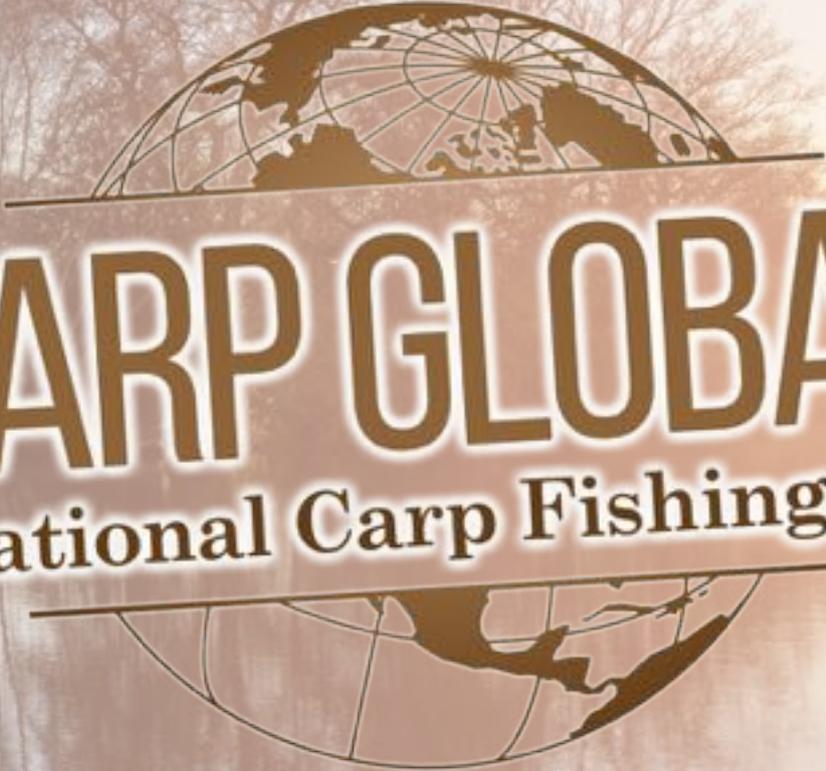
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Until next time,

Be lucky and stay safe.

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A Chat With - Mr. Martin Clarke

Pt 2...

We welcome Martin back for some more chat, and with us getting another look into a very experienced mind such as his... we can't help but seek out some answers as this time we talk bait and rigs...

Q1) Over the years we have seen the bait for carp change dramatically from maggots, meat and potatoes all those years ago, through to the explosion of the boiled paste baits... the boilies... and just lately it seems more and more anglers are switching back to naturals with sweet corn, maggots, hemp seed and nuts proving to be very much in vogue at the moment and landing some huge carp on the smallest of baits.

Do you think the day of the boilie for carp may be numbered as more and more anglers look for alternative baits?

A1) In short, no I don't believe the boilie days may be numbered. Yes, there may be a lot of anglers using alternative baits, but then that's always been the case from my personal perspec-

tive. Not that there's anything wrong with boilies or particles, the main thing is the carp we are fishing for have got to eat the bait if we're going to get our chance of catching them whilst fishing over bait.

I think the reason perhaps why we are seeing more anglers using alternative baits is the type of venues being fished, prepared particles supplied in jars or buckets and the development of spods and spombs. I could also add the fact that many anglers are getting to grips with measuring lines and clipping up, therefore fishing more accurately.

As anglers we all seem to want the same thing, which is convenient bait that gets results and doesn't break the bank account. £20 for a sack of Hemp, £35 for a sack of fishmeal pellets and another £20 on tins of Sweet-corn, or £75 for 10kg of boilies. Obviously it can all depend on where we are fishing, the numbers of fish, and then determining

what gets the desired results in the times at our disposal.

I like to cover both options when fishing in the UK for carp, so I will take boilies and particles whenever I foresee fishing on the bottom. If in doubt then I'll have a different bait, or bait presentation, on each rod and let time and results determine future decisions.

One thing I have learnt over the years is that there can be a fine line between catching occasionally to catching consistently, and it's not just a case of firing out boilies or spodding out a bucket of particles every single time we go fishing. Sometimes fishing single hookbaits can be very effective.

Q2) As you walk onto a new water for the first time... how would you start your personal baiting plan? How do you decide which boilie or bait to use? What little clues do you look for?

A2) I wouldn't say I have any baiting plan when I walk onto a new venue. Prior to any first visit with fishing in mind I will usually have a walk around a few times just to familiarise myself with the venue, it's swims, and hopefully spot a carp or two. Time of year, on those first few visits, will determine what I do, also taking into account of other anglers if there's many fishing.

I also think as anglers our first year on a venue is more of a learning year, unless of course you're a full time angler then your expected to come up trumps more often than not regardless.

Which baits or boilies I use on a new venue will be based on a few things. For one, being a

sponsored angler, I will use what I have faith in and/or use the bait I have been asked to use, so in effect I have a restricted armoury of baits at my disposal.

Put another way, anglers that aren't sponsored in any way can use absolutely anything and everything, do their own thing or simply jump on what's doing the runs so to speak. I have in the past teamed up with a few friends and all used the same boilies, which has helped as it can speed up establishing that bait, but it's not always necessary and I'm just as happy to use something perhaps the carp in that venue have yet to encounter.

As an example, a few years ago Richworth asked me to try out a new boilie called XLR-8. Previous to this I was using a boilie called Ultraplex, and catching carp, so I decided to fish both baits side by side, so to speak, swapping rods and baits. On the very first session I caught

on both baits, so decided to go in next time with just XLR-8, like I say there's only one way to find out sometimes. As luck would have it XLR-8 turned out to be very effective, and funnily enough within a short period of time a few other anglers also got onto it and we all had many memorable moments including the biggest carp in the pond on consecutive days.

One strange thing was how certain carp almost became addicted to them, with me catching another specific 40lb plus carp three times in three months going from 40.02lb up to 43lb as it gained weight during the autumn.

I'd never caught this carp before, and even though we can never say which carp we lose now and again, it obviously liked that boilie a lot because if it didn't then it wouldn't have graced my net three times and avoided everyone else's.



Q3) How does your baiting plan change through the year, if at all?

A3) Well I wouldn't say my baiting plan changes that much throughout the seasons.

As regards quantity then I probably use more in the summer months, but not a lot more than say during December. January and February can be funny

months and it's usually localized spots, which produce the takes, or other methods such as zigging or floater fishing.

Wherever we fish I think it comes down to our own thoughts on baiting strategies for each venue based on weather conditions and hopefully carp activity in your chosen swim.

Like a lot of things with carp fishing, bait-

ing up at the right time is better than baiting up at the wrong time, so you have to accept that if you stick to one specific time to bait up throughout the entire year you will make mistakes. Sometimes it's best to bait your swim at first light, sometimes middle of the day, and sometimes at dusk, the answers can only be found out by fishing and observation.

Q4) Would you care to share any sneaky little hints and tips with our readers that you may have been keeping under your hat to get the best out of any bait?

A4) To get the best out of any bait it's best used in the right places at the right time. So as with anything related to actually fishing for carp it does help if you/me are on/at the right end of the pond, lol.

Location of the carp will put us in good stead, after that then the more intense we can make them feed the better. With this in mind I started blitzing boilies in a food blender years ago, and on the bank with a hand grinder since Korda

came out with their Krusha, and introducing this to my spots either included in my spod mix or via funnel web PVA stick mixes has improved results.

This increase in attraction is simply because the ingredients and additives within the boilie are not locked inside by the skin of the boilie, it's almost like an explosion of additives, which again can be enhanced with some liquid stimulus such as liquid fish protein if casting out small stick mixes.

In effect with blitzed boilies we're creating a carpet feed, sending out all the signals of FOOD, and if they like what they can smell

you can almost guarantee your hookbait will get sampled.

I've got an ice-cream tub with a 50/50 mix of 2.3mm Fishmeal pellets and blitzed boilies specifically for fishing at medium range and introducing to marginal spots.

I did something similar many moons ago with blitzed Tiger nuts which proved worth doing, and I've mates who've done similar with Brazil nuts so I'm sure the introduction of the nut particles and juices generates an almost instant response. Might have to give this another go this coming summer.



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Q5) Let's say that you've been given one shot at a water with a real prize specimen in, and you're allowed 3 baits to take with you... tell us what you're taking!

A5) Blimey Brian, you're not giving me easy to answer questions, lol. Well if it was somewhere in England and I could fish for 3 days I'd take Hemp, pellets and boilies,

but as I never go anywhere without some floaters in my van I'd have to ditch the pellets.

If it was just for a day session, then Hemp, Sweetcorn and boilies. Can I get away with different size boilies and/or fake hookbaits, lol. No, oh well 14mm's, and just hope I haven't got to cast out far.

Of course with no knowledge or little knowledge of the venue in question I can only hope I've made the right choice, in reality we have some idea of the size and stock of the venue and what others have used to good effect, which can help dictate a lot of things as far as bait goes, not just quantity but all the other alternatives out there.

**“I’m no expert on the Chod,
and I suppose you could say
it’s just a variation of some
80’s helicopter rig...”**





Q6) It's all about presentation...

And as good as your bait may be.... if it isn't correctly presented it can be rejected without even a hint of bite...

Have you ever seen your own rigs rejected in such a manner that you've had to go away and completely re-think your strategy?

A6) Good question. Yes, presentation is important, and by saying rejected without a hint of a bite what you really mean is if and when the hookbait entered the mouth the bait was either blown out by the carp or it simply fell out as the carp moved away with its mouth open, and the hook simply failed to enter the mouth properly or fell out and failed to prick any/ or enough tissue for the hook to penetrate enough to give us some form of indication to pick the rod up.

Yes, I've seen this happen. I've also witnessed carp trying to rid themselves of rigs, which have pricked flesh with the carp

hardly moving from the spot, no doubt sucking and blowing to eject the rig.

Going back a few years, I can re-call fishing a marginal spot on one particular venue and I had carp feeding for a few hours and didn't even get a sniff of a bite. I could sense I was, or had, been done, or more to the point the rigs just weren't working. So after spooking the carp off the spot by throwing a handful of hemp on top of them,

I reeled in both rods and both rigs just looked a tangled mess. Thinking I got to get my rigs back on the spot before the moment disappeared I simply pulled of the pop-ups, stuck a fresh pop-up back on one rig and a normal 14mm boilie on the other, and then swung the rigs back onto the feeding spot, after having to semi-spook them off again. Another hour of feeding, and still no bites, until eventually they drifted off one by one until the moment had completely gone. When I reeled in again both

rigs were tangled. I was using a supple braid hooklink at the time, and I'm fairly certain my rigs had at some stage been ejected, possibly more than once.

A very educational blank session in my book. There were no coated braided hooklinks available at that time, so next time I fished the exact same spot I used hooklinks that I'd super glued straight.

I also ditched the simple knotless knot rig for something else and didn't use as much Hemp, and simply chucked in an extra handful of 14mm boilies.

Didn't get done a second time, or third or fourth time, lol. most instant response. Might have to give this another go this coming summer.

Q7) It's not hard to notice that there's isn't really anything new in the carp rig department, just some tweaking and minor changes to alter the mechanics slightly of most rigs, for example it's been said that today's chod rig is just a variation of an 80s helicopter rig, what's your thoughts on this?

A7) I'm no expert on the Chod, and I suppose you could say it's just a variation of some 80's helicopter rig but simply saying 'just a variation' could be applied to many things and to me

The Chod rigs we see today are different simply because it's a very short mono hooklink, usually connected to a ring swivel with a small

D section and rig ring used to attach a pop-up.

The helicopter rigs being used in the 80's, that I saw in use, were more typical six to ten inches of either braid or mono hooklinks and normally fished with bottom baits.

Thankfully most aspects regarding carp fishing has improved over the years, and almost every year new products enter the frame, which in turn then gets subjected to use by those trying to improve their results. I've no doubt some of us could drag out thirty-year-old tackle and go out and catch something, but sooner or later market forces come into play and improvements take place.

I know it's getting off the subject of Chods, but just think back to the early 80's and most swivels available were bright or shiny, some even chrome plated. And hooks weren't much better. Now in 2016 most rig items are black or coloured, usually with a dull finish.

The Chod hooks we see today, with short shank and out-turned eyes, weren't around in the 80's, and the stiff mono hooklink materials we see today, which can be curved make it all work so well.

In reality The Chod rig, as we know it today, is just the end section of a stiff hinge rig, for arguments sake more refined than what you saw in the 80's Brian.



Q8) And just to follow on nicely from that, I have noticed that you are a huge fan of the “slip D rig” right now and rightly so from the reports I’m hearing... would you mind showing us how to tie it, and explain the strengths and advantages of this rig over other similar type rigs?

A8) I could do a step-by-step guide on how to tie up a Slip-D rig, but it would need a few pages so perhaps another time for Talking Carp readers.

I have written about it in the past in other publications, and go through the mechanics of the rig in great detail within my new book ‘Heads Down Tails Up’, and to be honest perhaps a few decent images will reveal how it’s tied and why it works so well everywhere it gets used.

The strengths and advantages of the Slip-D are in the D section, which should be supple, i.e. un-coated braid. The D section of a Slip-D is not fixed, as is/was with the original D rig, which in turn allows the hookbait and hook to act more independently once inside

the mouth of any fish.

If I was to compare it to let’s say using a ring on the shank of a hook, then this rig will get more bites simply because it is more effective and less easy for the carp to deal with than a ring on the shank type rig.

On some fisheries it was twice as effective, trust me. You’ve only got to hold a Slip-D rig in your hand with a bait, or multiple baits, tied to the rig ring to realise the difference to that with a ring on the shank rig as the hookbait has a limited amount of travel, unlike the Slip-D which allows far more hook and hookbait separation.

It was designed for with fishing bottom baits, or multiple bottom baits, with the added bonus the same rig could/can be used for fishing pop-ups, wafers, particles, bits of meat or anything else you think a carp will sample.

At first I didn’t realise how good it was, as I got side tracked with other rigs, but when I started using it again with different hooks and hooklink materials it always seemed to work. As far as fishing baits on the bottom go the Slip-D has outscored everything else I’ve tried, used and tested. Having also used the same rigs with pop-ups many times

I have a lot of faith using it with any bait presentation. I get a fair amount of feedback via Facebook, and from friends fishing lakes I’m familiar with, from Slip-D fans and all seem to be having some good sessions. Based on my personal experiences I will never use a rig ring on the shank of a hook ever again, but that’s not to say they don’t work, it’s just that my time is valuable and Slip-D’s are more effective.



Q9) Would you consider yourself more of a “baited area, sit and wait” kind of angler, or are you just as happy to catapult dog biscuits out for an hour with the hope of snatching one off the top or even fish zig rigs at various depths to catch those cruising carp subsurface?

A9) There have been times when I’ve adopted the ‘Bait, sit and wait’ approach, but one thing I’m not is a sit and wait type of angler if/when fishing somewhere with some freedom to move about.

I like to think of myself as an old dog with many tricks up my sleeve, knowing from experience that there is a time and place for all different methods to catch those carp we all desire.

Yes, there will be times I could be fairly static, but there will probably be more times in which I’d be extremely mobile, stalking with minimal tackle or floater fishing with one rod. One thing I am good at is surface fishing, and

normally when I get the mixers out it’s not for an hour trying to snatch a carp off the surface. If they’re on the top all day, or most of it, then I’m happy to fish into dark fishing on the surface.

Looking back through my records then 2009 was one of my better years when it came down to fishing on the surface.

I never fished a single night before August, just fished with one rod April, May, June and July, before I started doing any 48hr or 72hr session.

Excuse me if I don’t count those under 30lb, but I had 31 carp over 30lb, and 18 of those were caught fishing with just one rod. 13 off the top, and 5 stalked fishing on the bottom.

I think my shortest session was less than an hour, just enough time for a couple of casts before connecting with an upper thirty.

Fishing one particular method or style can at times be time wasted and mental feel like your flogging a dead horse, and if carp are cruising around in the upper layers refusing to go down to the bottom then it’s down to each an everyone of us to make tactical decisions, or not.

I’ve had more than thirty 30’s on my homemade cork cubes off the top, but I also use them for zig fishing which again is probably an under-rated method in the eyes of some but clearly effective on some lakes in the right place and time.

Next year we’ll be talking about anchored floater fishing, and to some this will be new; perhaps if we think of a catchy carp name it’ll be the next new thing Brian, lol.

Q10) As with all dedicated and enthusiastic anglers, given the chance you will go to great lengths to make sure your bait is presented correctly and in the exact area ... and if I'm not mistaken, I have heard stories of you using lengths of plastic guttering to your advantage? Tell us the story behind that one!!!

A10) The pipe trick, as I like to call it, is an extremely effective way of fishing the far margin of a bay without breaking any rules, such as being off your rods, unattended so to speak. Yes, we could all cast 65 yards, no problem, but it can be hard to judge exactly where your rigs are landing without someone on the far bank telling you exactly, so is there an easier more accurate way to do it on your own? In my opinion it's just as easy using 'The pipe trick', and virtually ensures the rig lands on the same spot tangle free with far less disturbance the area of water you want to fish.

I usually use 2 rods, so have two 3-metre sections of 75mm rain-water downpipe, which have had the last 1 me-

tre cut so it looks more like guttering. These pipes are then placed, and left in situ for the session, exactly where I want them on the far bank.

Next step cast two old leads onto far bank usually with old marker floats attached, and then position the rods with the tips high with some slip on the reel clutches, so there's two tight lines going across the water. Then walk round, armed with bait, rigs, scissors and spare leads, and one rod at a time cut off the float and tie on your rig and replace old lead with a good one and then place the rig and lead onto the gutter section of the pipe.

Once there's two rigs in place at the ready, bait up spots and walk back round to your swim with your rods in. Then one rod at the time, tighten up slowly until you pull your rig off the pipe letting your rig drop down to the bottom on a tight line.

Using this method allows us to use things we'd struggle to cast to the spot, such as using 5 or 6 ounce leads with three-inch-long funnel web stick mixes attached. The pipes

are set at a slight upward angle so the rigs don't fall out with wind pressure on your line whilst you're walking back to your rods.

All it takes is some prep and planning before you see the benefits. I pulled my pipes out of a skip so they cost me nothing, but having used this method on numerous occasions successfully I'd be happy to pay out to replace them.

Incidentally using lead weights over 4 ounces isn't detrimental in any way, perhaps we'll touch on this and other topics next time Brian. Time for a brew!

Martin, thank you for your time and for sharing your insights, experience and knowledge with us. It's been our pleasure!!

That concludes our chat with Martin for now, and we hope you found it as enjoyable and interesting as we did actually doing it. We hope to have Martin back with us again very soon for more questions and answers from a man with a life time of carp angling under his belt. □

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Looking back - Lee Upstone

Well it's the start of a new year! But looking back at 2015 what a great year it was for me again banking some awesome uk fish.

Whilst I am sat here writing this the weather outside is unbelievable for the time of year.

November and December can

really be quite cold and my syndicate and nearly always shuts up shop in winter till at least early March.

But same again, all depends on the weather.

A little insight into where I've been spending my time most of this season is a gravel pit called White-

house fisheries on the borders of Lincolnshire and Peterborough area approximately about 8 acres in size with about 80 carp in, but some really big lumps at the right time of year can produce 3 x 50+ carp and backed up by a fair few other big fish.



Believe it or not, it's not an easy place to get to grips with for some.

Due to the high volume of silkweed and other weed everywhere on the bottom making presenting hook baits sometimes a nightmare.

It also seems to be a four swim kind of venue due to a bar running across the middle and two islands it's seems to be proven over the years that these swims are definitely more productive than others and the lake doesn't seem to like the pressure at weekends.

Week days are certainly the best to fish but counts me out straight away due to working Monday to Friday so basically I'm a weekend warrior!

My fishing really started about mid-March, still quite cold and wet, but the members were starting to turn up all eager just like myself,

I knew I had to get to grips with it quite quickly to bag some of the bigger ones as they really, like many lakes, only come out every so often so had to be on top of my game.

I was 100% confident with the bait from Nutrabaits which was the big fish mix and the particle side of things was buckets of hemp and mixed hemp from hull particles, and all the end tackle and line was Ashima, and have never let me down over the years. To be honest why keep swapping and changing if it catches fish it catches fish...

Simple! Time and time again I hear people say I'm gunna try this, I'm gunna try that, but why? When they were catching before sometimes you just got to hang in there.



“To be honest at times it can be quite stressful, but that’s life for a sponsored angler but wouldn’t have it any other way”

I had sorted all my holidays so I was getting every Friday off till June just for the chance of a good swim. It didn’t work all the time, but still was happy with the swims I ended up in.

I started to catch from the off, really working the swims hard and fishing to the best of my ability knowing if I didn’t then the other members would get the advantage on this lake. I can certainly say we have some above average anglers and professional anglers at this venue.

The fish were definitely on the bait so I kept piling it in when I was there and baiting up the spots when I left. I wanted it to be long term food source for them.

As the season progressed I managed to bank 3 x 40+ and various 30+ carp fish

by closing day June and not a single bit of tackle or hook had let me down. I must say I have got to praise ASHIMA for their top notch tackle.

Rigs consisted of size 4 Goliaths, small Ashima line aligners, Groundhog hooklink and Ashima putty to turn the hook straight away, also using the drop off lead clip system with a foot or so of Ashima dark green tubing for a simple but effective set up. The lake closed for a month for spawning so I had a good rest with the family, but eager to get back and carry on where I left off.

It soon reopened and I was back into the fishing, not catching all the time, but near enough consistent managing to bank another 2 x40+ fish putting me up to 5 UK 40s!! Hats off to the lake owner Phil Greg,

who definitely knows how to run a lake.

I was really pleased how everything went and totalling 23 carp from the syndicate which is really well above average. One thing I must stress is that you have got to keep at it.

Things like being up at dawn, watching the water for fish, finding spots etc. To be honest at times it can be quite stressful, but that’s life for a sponsored angler but wouldn’t have it any other way... don’t forget effort equals reward!!

It does help when fellow fisherman are friendly and approachable and would like to thank those lads... you know who you are.

Tight lines

Lee Upstone ☐



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**First of the year -
Neal Willetts**

So the trip was planned a week or so in advance for 2 nights on a day ticket water and hopefully the first carp of the year.

We arrived at the lake in question, Trinity waters, nr Bridgewater in Somerset (well worth a visit!) at around 10.30am knowing which pegs we wanted as we previously came to the water to do some homework but as with any day ticket water, you can't guarantee the peg, and we arrived to find someone else fishing where we had planned to.

So off to look round the lake to see what was what, we decided on a couple of pegs a bit further down in the corner, which is a basin and can cover a lot of water.

With that sorted we set up base camp and most importantly we got the kettle on.





My order of boilies and pellets arrived in time, Rolled by the Weights and Baits company to my own mix of colour, size and flavour

after I had talks with Carl the owner. I decided on the mix that I have dubbed the LL1 after my daughters Lexie and Lacey.

Carl kindly added a tub of matching pop ups in for me with the same flavour and a mix of colours.

So with that I began to bait up, going for the pva bag approach with a mix of pellets onto a simple hair rig, with a small amount of heat shrink tubing added to help the hook turn and take hold.

Armed one of the LL1 18mm boilies and a piece of fake pop up corn I cast to open water at around 60 yards out.

Once the bait was out and the rods were fishing I made up what I call pva parcels, basically a small pva bag filled with pellets and goo tied tight into a golf ball size which can then be fed in as needed with a catapult.

The trick is to make the bags tight and then pop a couple of holes in them, that way they sink down instead of floating on the surface.

With the rods out it was time to try out this Ridge Monkey toaster I have been hearing so much about.

Everything I heard was right and I soon cooked up chicken and chips no problem. Now with my belly full I sat back watching the water for signs of life, but they were playing it close to their chest and not wanting to give anything away.

As it started to get dark with no action for me or Lee my fishing buddy, I put out some more free offerings in the shape of boilies whole and halved, and 5 more pva parcels of pellet over each rod.

Finally, happy with everything, we put the kettle on and had a chat about all things fish, but as it was getting colder we decided it was bed time with that we retired to our bivvies.





I had just bought a new sleeping bag so was keen to get settled and try it out. Once settled I found I was wide awake again.

These winter nights are long!! So the only thing to do is to get the tablet out and put a film on.

Halfway through the film and the right hand rod starts to beep.

It was a slow take to start with as I jumped up and out the bivvy, not even putting my boots on, I grabbed the rod and was in.

Fish on!! This was what I had been waiting for! The bait I thought up, on the rigs that I have tied, now with a fish on.

Lee too had heard my alarms and was there to offer a helping hand with landing the fish. As it slid over the net

bang there it was, first blood, off the mark in my 2016 campaign.

I set about unhooking the chunky little mirror, which I must say was in stunning condition, as Lee got ready with the camera.

Not a giant by any means but a very welcome 11lb 8oz on a dark winters night. A couple of photos and she was safely back in the water to fight another day.

I rebaited and got the rod back out, got the kettle on and the normal banter between mates resumed before heading back to bed.

The rest of the night passed quietly, well, on the fish side of things it did. Mother Nature on the other hand had other ideas and at 2:00 ish it started to rain, and my god did it rain! That set the picture for the rest of the day... really wet and windy.

A small window in the weather gave me time to rebait and recast the rods.

By now another mate had popped down to fish the day, and as it was also breakfast time, our orders for each morning was a bacon sausage and egg baguette was delivered to our peg by the owners, a lovely touch.

As the day passed the rain got worse, it was nonstop now, and to the point where it was deafening in the bivvy.

I was cooking my dinner and the right hand screamed off.

What a run! I dived out, grabbed the rod only to feel no resistance? Following the line, I saw it was my mate Tony who had somehow managed to cross my line. After

the tangle was sorted in the rain, a rebait and get it back out there.

The rain showed no sign of letting up as Lee shouts "I'm in!" so round I go to his peg where I land a pretty little common around the 6lb mark.

The fish was quickly returned and I went to get changed as I was soaked through.

A few hours passed, and yes it was still raining, and the wind had got up as well now, another shout off Lee and he was in again.

By now it was dark so off I went to land the fish, another common, and this one was weighed and tipped the scales at 10lb on the nose.

With that I went back to the bivvy decided to get my head down again as the wind and rain showed no sign in letting up. Around 4am I was woken up to a screaming run. I quickly got my boots on and hit in to it, and this felt good one with no intent on stopping anytime soon!

The fish stayed deep, just plodding around as it got closer, and I was struggling to see where as my head torch had packed up, so I was

waiting for Lee to come to the rescue with some light as the fish finally broke the surface under the rod tip.

I moved the net into position, as I did the fish made a lunge to the left which took my other rod off the pod and tangled. During this the fish got enough slack line to drop the hook, and as this fishery has a barbless only rule so the hook will come out with ease, it did! Not too happy with the loss but it's one of them things, you just can't win them all.

A quick cuppa and I sorted the rods out and got them back onto their spots then back to bed. I woke up to no wind and rain, that's a nice change I thought, so we sat and chatted whilst waiting for the breakfast rolls to arrive.

The rods were all quiet so we started to pack things down. Nothing worse than packing down a wet bivvy is there, but needs must, and as normal the rods, net and cradle are left until last.

With everything packed down and the car loaded just a quick look back round the pegs making sure all the rubbish was picked up and we hadn't missed anything, and that just about sums up my first trip of the year.

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RAPID RESPONSE





Bad Session - Part 2
Ethan Carper

After 20 minutes sitting behind my rods and watching the water, I was just about to walk over to see if my Dad had finally got a rod in the water, I was stopped in my tracks by a couple of bleeps from my left hand rod. As I turned around the indicator was right up at the rod. I walk over and picked up the rod and made contact with the fish. Game on...!!

I got an instant feeling that I had hit into a decent double, then the instant thought that

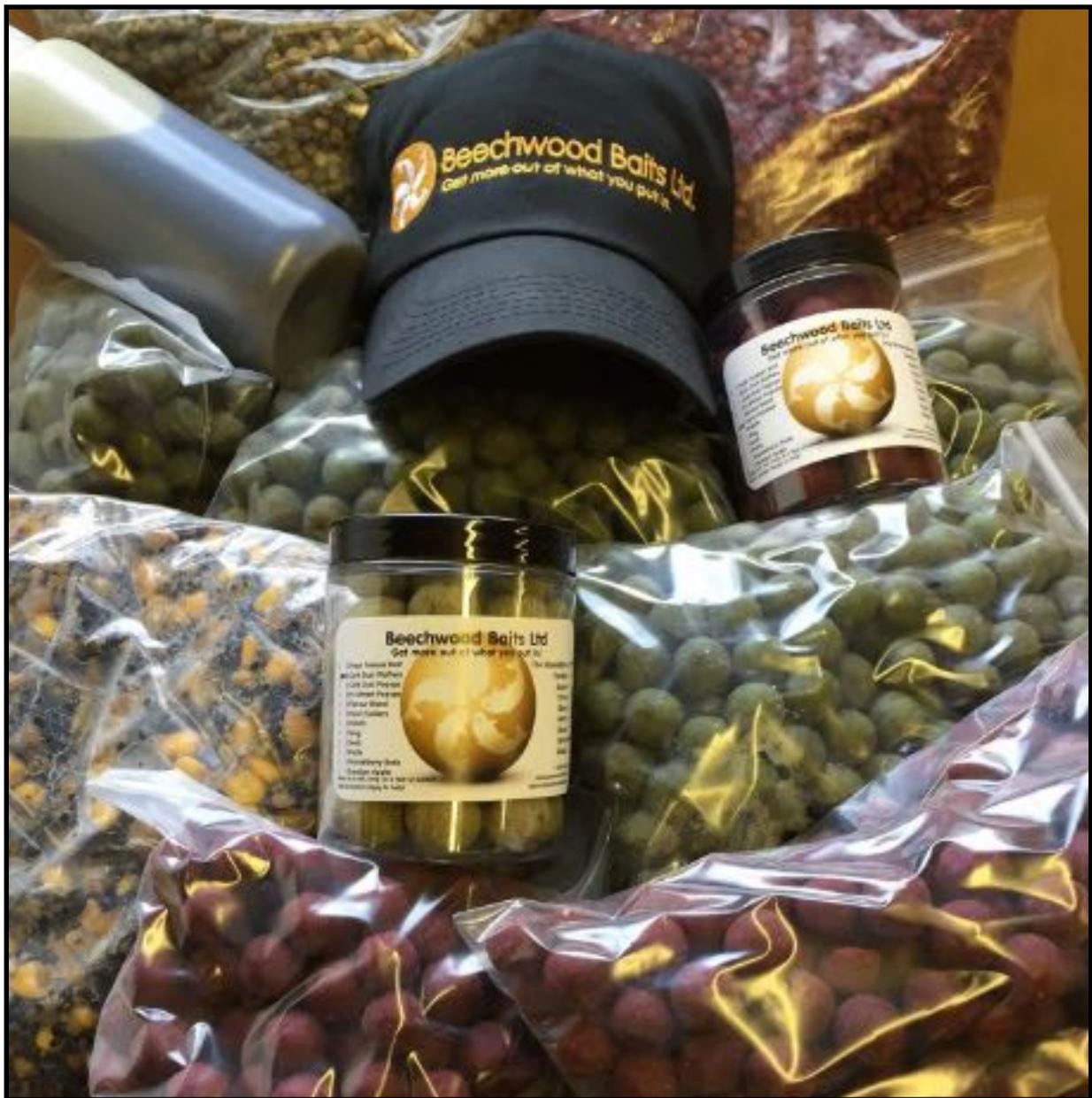
always goes through your mind when you know it's a good fish 'I hope this doesn't come off', every scrape on the line felt like it was about to come off. With those thoughts racing through my head, I went into auto-mode...!!

With the margins on this pool being so deep (6-7ft) at half a rod length out, I had to make sure I kept the rod tip high to ensure there was as much line as possible between the tip of the rod and

the fish. The challenge was now to get its head up and get it a 'gob full' of air. Finally, its head came up but it was having none of it and with the flick of its tale it was back down again.

After another couple of minutes, the fight was up and I was the winner as I slipped the net underneath it. No matter what size the fish that feeling of relief you get when the fish is safely in the net, is great.





It looked a decent fish, so I couldn't resist weighing it and the scales went 14.8lb.... a nice mid double Mirror on the bank within the first 20 minutes. The day looked promising...!

As the fish was being slipped back, the only rod my dad had in the water screamed off and after a short battle he banked a scraper of

a double, a nice Common of about 11lb. The day was looking better and better.

After going through the same process of baiting up, I got my rod back out on the spot as before.

The rig I was using was Fluorocarbon Hooklink of about 8 inches long to a size 8 wide gape. The hair length was

matched to an 18mm Beechwood Baits Musselberry 'Hard Hooker' Boilie and a small clear 'dumbbell' type boilie stop.

The hair length I tend to use sits the boilie just under the curve of the hook. I'm not really sure why I prefer this but it works well for me and gives me confidence in my set up.

After another cup of tea, my dad was finally fishing with two rods... and the kettle was on yet again...!!

We quickly set up the video cameras in readiness for another take, as I like to do a bit of videoing for my YouTube channel Ethan Carper257 and sat back to watch the water.

After 30 minutes and not having any bleeps from the alarms, I decided to feed a little

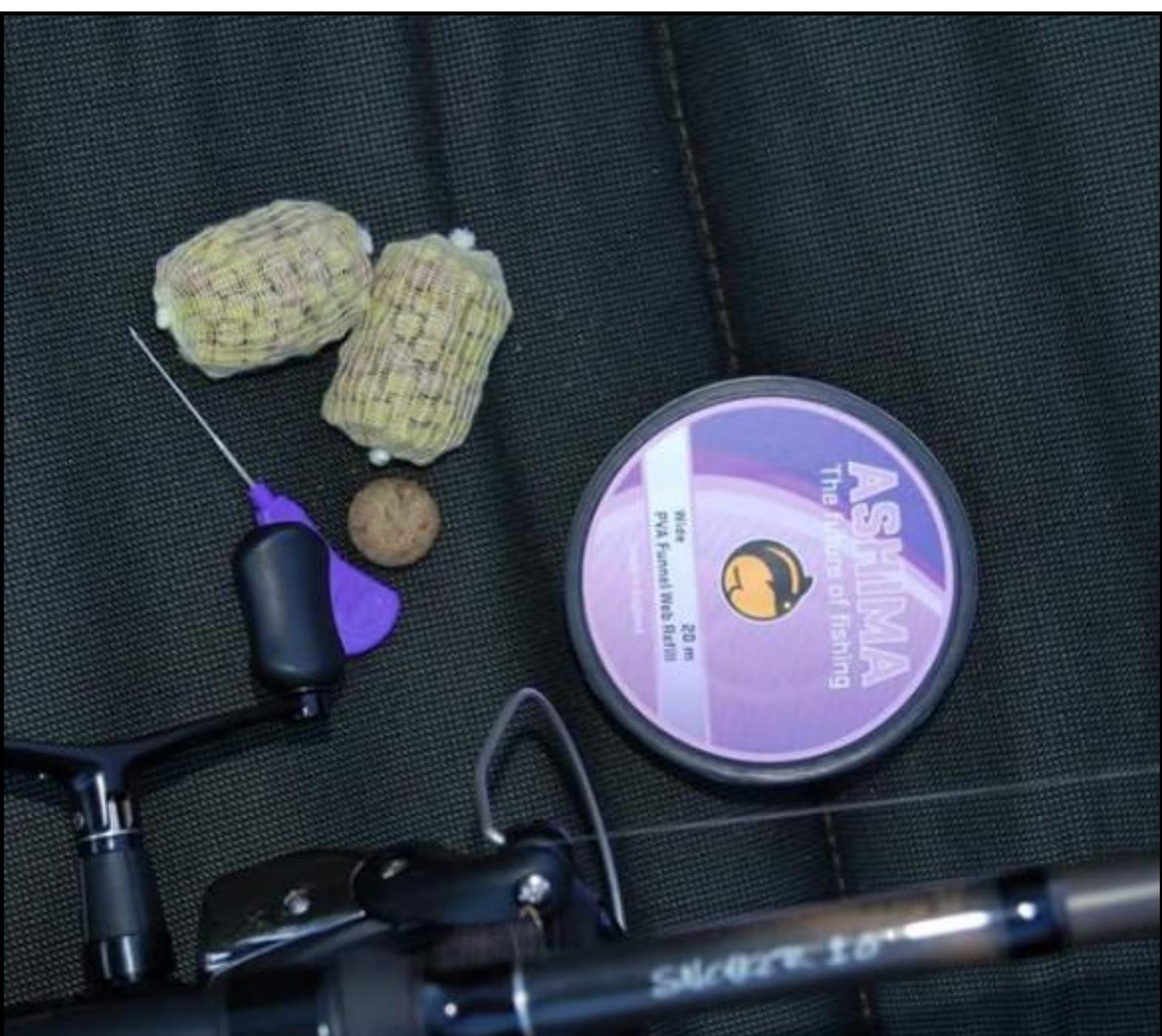
more bait onto the spots. I got my small pouch catapult which can hold 3-4 16mm boilies and with a gentle flick, put the bait on the spots.

I use a small catapult as I am not fishing at range and want to be accurate with where I am putting my bait. I also like to feed a slightly smaller boilie than the one on the hair. It is something I have always done and again, I feel confident with that approach.

It was now 11am and I had been fishing for about three and half hours. The fish movement that was in front of me appeared to have stopped,

I had been scanning the water looking for signs of any movement in any other areas but had not seen anything. This is fairly normal for this water so I was not concerned and after the great start, I was sure the next take would be soon...!





My dad's swim had gone exactly the same and he had not had another fish since that initial take.

I put another hand full of boilies on each rod in the hope of stirring the fish into action.

After watching the water for another hour or so, I spotted that there was a bit of movement about 3 feet off the

island which was approximately 60 yards straight out in front of me. I left it for a bit and kept an eye on that spot and there were still fish moving out there on the top and also moving the reeds that were just in front of the island. I got a couple of handfuls of boilies and scattered them around the area but I didn't put a hook bait onto it straight away as I wanted the

fish to gain confidence in feeding in that area, if that's what they were doing.

This is a tactic I sometimes do and have had good success with. I left the spot for about forty-five minutes before putting a hook bait onto it along with a PVA mesh bag of 6mm pellet and another dozen 16mm 'freebies'.

I cast my right hand rod to the new spot.

The reason for moving the right hand rod was that I had not had a single bleep from it since putting it in the water, so it seemed the logical choice.

After allowing the line to sink, I set the indicator a little 'slack' and turned on the alarm. My hopes were high and I was wishing for a 'screamer'...!

My dad had made yet another brew and brought one over to me too along with a sausage sandwich. We sat together for a while and had chat about possibly switching to a 'Zig Rig' as he had also seen fish in the upper water.

He had flicked out a few surface baits, the good old reliable 'Chum Mixers' but the Carp just moved past and completely ignored them but a Zig with a few slow sinking pellets over the top might just get a bite.

I find that when the fishing is slow, I work harder as I am constantly up and down from my chair to observe the water, my brain goes in to overdrive thinking about

what I can do to get a take. When the fish are feeding, I am able to relax a little more and just concentrate on feeding the swim...it was looking like it was not going to be a day to relax.

Confidence is a big thing for me and I am confident in what I do. If I cast and 'it doesn't feel right' I will re-chuck but when I am happy with the cast, I tend to leave it in the water and not keep winding in and re-casting, I just feed small amounts of freebies on a regular basis.

This approach has worked many times in the past. Sometimes, I have had a rod out for 6 hours or more and then had a take. It is this part that some people find 'boring' as they like to cast and try different spots but for me, that approach does not give me confidence and I stick to what has worked in the past.

I know for Junior Anglers, the waiting with nothing happening can make them lose interest and that is why, when I started to Carp Fish, I used to use one Carp Rod setup and my other rod would be a Float Rod or Pellet

Waggler. This allowed me to be active but also got me into the 'proper' Carp fishing approach.

Eventually, I was happy to sit behind two alarms. I find the 'take' is the most exciting rush from all the types of fishing I have done.

The peace and quiet being interrupted by the sound of a screaming take and hitting into a Carp in what seems like milliseconds is fantastic and once you have experienced it, you just want to do it more and more...

Unfortunately, today was one of the slow days. The lad that was fishing round the corner from me, with his dad, had walked past a few times during the morning and said that they had not caught anything, so at least it was not just me.

There was still time and if nothing else, at least I had my 'Backside, Bankside'..... ☐

Ethan Carper



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The Pretty One- Scott “Geezer” Grant





“Nightfall came and was chilly to say the least. With the rods motionless morning was met with the birds cheeping and the coots making a right racket...”

With winter coming to an end, it was a very cold start to spring.

I decided to fish a session up at my syndicate water. The lake is around 12 acres but tends to flood a couple of times a year.

This does affect the fishing after the floods and getting around the lake can be very tricky. I had a good idea where the fish would be from previous seasons and decided that was the area I was going to target.

I arrived at the lake just before sun rise, there was only 1 car in the car park which is always a good sign. I grabbed a bucket from the car and made my way up to the area I fancied and I had a good previous track record from.

Just as I was getting to the area another member was packing up. He was fishing two swims back from the swim I fancied.

As every angler asks "had anything"? to which he replied "no mate but there were a couple that boshed last night down to my right".

Well that put the cat amongst the pigeons!!! After a lap of the lake I decided to fish the opposite end to where I fancied. I only saw 1 fish but that was enough.

I wasted no time at all and got my gear from the car and made my way to the swim.

The bank was quite muddy and getting the gear round to the swim was a mission, but I managed it in the end. The swim fished well last spring so I was hoping I've timed it just right.

With light rain forecast

I decided to have a quick flick about with the marker then set the house up. The wind was pushing in from my right and the pressure was 1010.

With the house up and gear sorted I turned my attention to the rods. I found a lovely hard area for the right hand rod at about 70 yards, the middle rod was fished straight out at the bottom of a bar at 60 yards and the left hand rod was fished up against the snags.

Rig wise was very simple on both the right and middle I opted for a critically balanced presentation and my left rod the ever faithful 360!

With the rods out it was time to take in my surroundings and chill!!!



Nightfall came and was chilly to say the least. With the rods motionless morning was met with the birds cheeping and the coots making a right racket.

As I sat there watching the water for any signs of life the left hand rod was away.

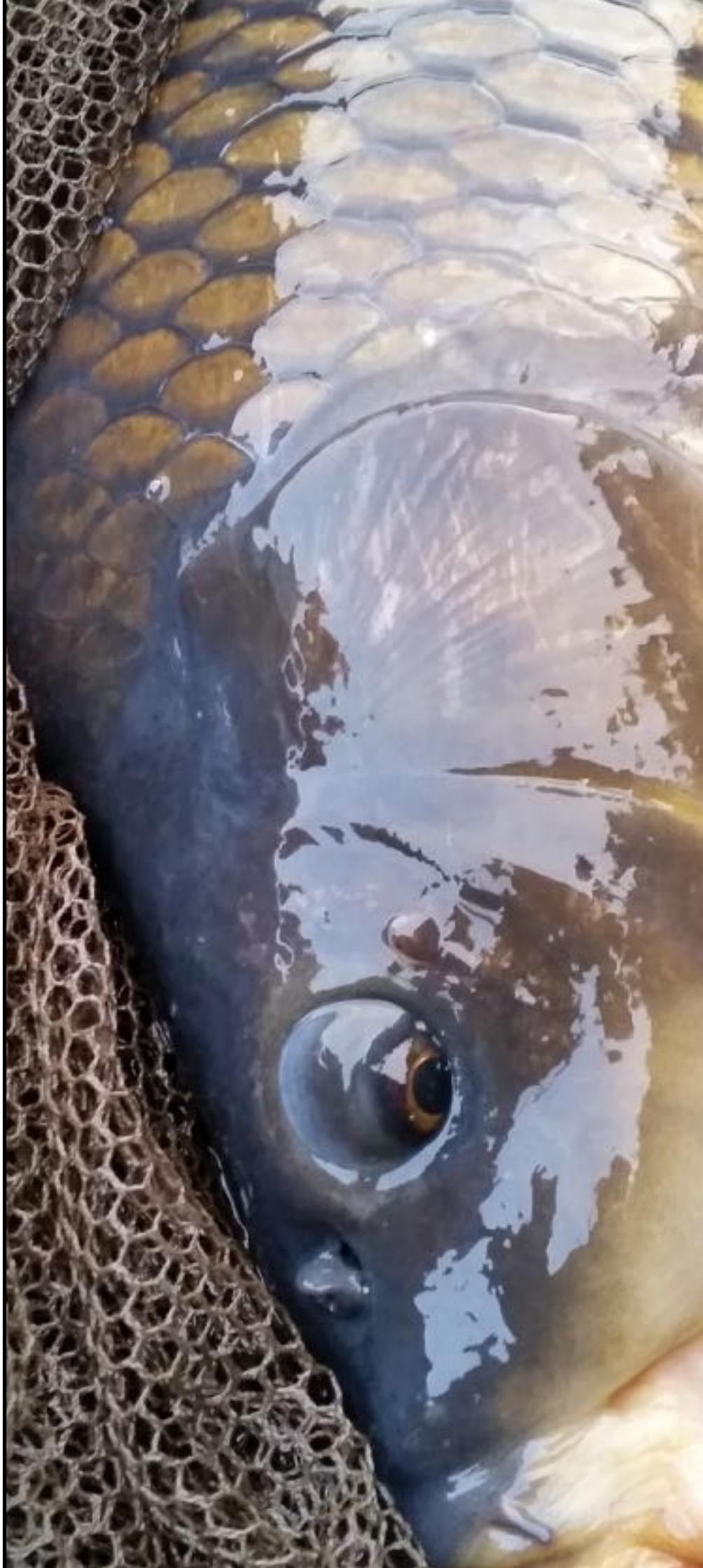
The fish tried to take line but as I was fishing against the snags, I was locked up.

The fish put up a good fight and after a few minutes a nice plump mirror lay in the net. It wasn't one of the A team, it was one of the stockies that were introduced the previous year.

On the scales she went 16lb 4oz not massive but welcome all the same, I was delighted.

No more fished graced the net until early the next morning and I had two commons in quick succession both doubles and both stockies.

Catching is for me always part of the puzzle and when the pieces slot into place that's when the magic happens.



My following session was up at The Dell, I blanked in style but enjoyed my session never the less. Being on the bank for me is my escape from the hustle and bustle of life and work.

It was now the beginning of May and it was up to my syndicate water for another crack at the two A Team members I want to catch.

I dropped into the same swim I previously fished. The information from my last trip was noted in my fishing log, so finding the spots was easy enough.

The rods went out and a couple of kilos of boilies were sprayed around each one.

I also introduced a dozen balls of goodness around them containing Robertson's particles.

I didn't have to wait long for my first take at around midday I landed a plump looking common of 12lb. Later that evening I banked another stockie of 10lb again a common.

I was starting to think the bigger fish were either not interested or they just weren't there. The next morning,

I was up at the crack of dawn, I reeled the rods in and went for a walk down the other end of the lake.

I sat opposite the swim I have fished in previous seasons at this time of the year. I didn't have to wait long; A few bubblebers were present followed by a lovely dark mirror crashing out!!





That was it I ran straight back to my swim and grabbed what bags and bits I could and made my way down the other end into the swim

I should have fished at the start of the session. After a couple of hours, I was settled into my new swim and it felt homely I must say. I cast a bare lead to roughly the area the fish crashed out from.

I found a very hard spot in amongst light weed that will do for me. I wasted no time in getting a baited rig out to the area, once I had noted it down in my log. I introduced a few kilos of boilies and a couple of balls of goodness. I found cleanish areas for both my middle and left hand rods and again the same baiting strategy was applied.

I sat back watching the water for any signs of activity once everything was sorted and another big dark mirror popped its head out right over the baited area.

I was excited to say the least, just waiting for the rod tip to pull round and my alarm to sing like a bird. Twenty minutes passed, then it was an hour and nothing happened, I started questioning myself, has the fish got away with it, is my rig presented right, etc etc I think we all do this at some point when fishing and to be honest when your questioning yourself you don't seem to get the answers or support you're looking for.

Another angler Steve turned up later in the afternoon and went into a swim further down to my left. We had a chat as you do and wished each other good luck. I had one night left and

I was hoping the carp gods would grace my net with one of the big girls.

Later in the evening a fish crashed out in front of me but I could see where as it was pitch black. I retired to bed around 22:00 and was hoping to get rudely woken up but a screaming take.

At 04:45 that's exactly what happened the left hand rod was away, I burst out of the bivvy was on the rod like a whippet!

The fish wasn't in the best of moods and put up a great fight, when the fish started plodding about I knew it was a goodun, I then started saying to myself "Is it one of my 2 targets?" I then started praying that I didn't get a hook pull or lose the bugga.

After 5 minutes or so the fish was lying in the bottom of the net, I was so relieved and happy at the same time. Once in the cradle I knew what fish it was, I had landed “The Pretty

One”!! She is an old fish but what a stunner the old girl is. On the scales she went 33lb exactly chuffed to bits was an understatement.





The fish was secured in my floatation sling while I sorted the camera out. Just as I had put the fish in the water Steve came walking past with his barrow as he was off to work. I asked Steve if he would do some photos for me which he kindly obliged and cracking photos they are too.

With the photos done and the fish treated and returned I made myself and Steve a cuppa. We chatted for 10 minutes or so then Steve left for work, I sat watching the water grinning like a Cheshire cat, all the effort of moving yesterday was so worth it. I take a lot of gear with me so moving takes a lot of effort. But like a great angler once said Effort Equals Rewards!! In my next instalment I will share with you my very next session in which I had one of the A team at a lake record weight. Until then enjoy your fishing, stay warm and be positive ☐ Scott.

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Dad, Can I Come? - Mark Darnill

It all started back in 2013 when Lexie Said “Dad can I come fishing with you?”

My first thoughts were that she was probably going to drive me bonkers and lose all interest after the first hour! How wrong I was. She played her first carp over the cord with a bit of guidance and that was it, she wanted her own rods there and then.

To watch her smile with excitement was priceless.



After the short session Lexie wanted to be back out and the next visit was to Saltfleetby.

The rods went out and were placed on the Delks waiting for bobbin to raise and the rod

to pull round. We didn't have to wait long and the sound of the Delkim filled the air and line started to strip of the reel.

I slowly tightened the clutch to slow down the carp that had bolted off and handed the rod to Lexie. Again I watched my daughter with what seemed to be a heavier carp slowly guide it over the spreader block and boom her first double figure mirror.



This was the moment Lexie had the buzz and was well and truly hooked.

Over the next two years we continued having great fun and making some brilliant memories including a new uk pb mirror for me sending the scales just over 30lb and Lexie banking a pb mirror weighing in just

over 26lb both caught at ADH fisheries in Lincolnshire on a 48hr session.



(Lexie's 26lb 04oz mirror caught over a bed of chops, sweet corn and chick peas.)



(My pb 30lb 01oz mirror caught over a bed particle and boilie.)



ADH Fisheries situated in Lincolnshire, where both personal bests were caught. A great place to catch 20lb plus carp. Nick the owner is a top guy for allowing Lexie to fish there at 10yrs of age.

As we moved into 2015 we focused mainly on one venue which was Hunters Lodge Fishery in Elsham Brigg, again a venue that welcomes young anglers.

We arrived late Afternoon to fish a 24hr session in spring the only expectation being to enjoy ourselves and have fun.

We decided to fish a spot in the middle of lake and put out 1 1/2 kilo of chops mixed with hemp, sweet corn and a good slug of aqua amino. We both sat back watched the water and waited.

Nothing, no liners, no signs of any carp. The lake seemed like it had shut up shop.

As the temp dropped and the light faded away we got in our sleeping bags with the anticipation of a possible run and eventually drifted off to sleep. 11.45pm Lexie shot out of her bag after being awoken by a one toner.

I pulled open my bag in pursuit of Lexie only to run straight into my carp cradle smashing my shin into it and tumbling almost into the edge.

Lexie was on her rods already playing an angry carp in the quiet darkness of the night the only sound was the clutch on Lexie's reel ticking over.

The mirror was slipped into the net and the carp was Lexie's ready to be photographed.



The rods went back out and we laid in our bags soaking up the glory. About 6 hours later the receiver lit up and I was in.

On lifting into the carp it felt like it was going to be one of the smaller ones, but as I peered into the net to my surprise it looked bigger than it had felt when playing it into the bank. Round the needle went and I had a mid twenty common.

Hunters Lodge holds some Gems and when one comes along for us it's a bonus.

mirror taken on a solid bag with two chops on the hair.)

Having spent Feb to mid August at this venue with some great results we were invited to fish a Lake called Southcliff Fisheries situated next to Lincolnshire show-ground.

We had 48hrs to bag ourselves some fun and hopefully a few carp. We set up in the corner of the lake away from the pressure of other anglers after seeing a couple of carp show and quietly began to get the rods set up.

Little did we know this session was going to be over 20 carp each, with Lexie taking 8 off the top up to 18lb 07oz by free lining bread. As usual we had no expectations, then Lexie had a take on her left rod and it steamed off down the left margin and then into the deeper water.

What felt like an age for Lexie and made her arm ache was a new pb Ghostie!



Behind every picture there is a story to tell. It's not always just about the capture but the memory it holds.

This was special to both me and Lexie caught at Old Mill Lakes, Market Rasen.

It was captured during a Fund raiser for Children's cancer research, Martin Clarke very kindly signed his book and it was put into the raffle.



As we moved into December we struggled to get as much time on the bank with work being busy and the festive fun beginning we managed one more session of 2015 back at Southcliff fisheries.



We only fished for about 6 or 7 hours due to the daylight being short. Lexie wrapped up her rods after finding her spots and clipped up.

Out went a scattering of chops resulting in a nice upper double five hours later for her troubles. So it's been a great year for us both joining four teams during 2015.

Carp couture Clothing, Deception Angling, Castawaypvaak and Culture Baits. We look forward to making more memories in 2016 to look back on.

Try and Get your kids out on the bank with you. You never know they may just find a passion they can share with you, like me you may end up with a new fishing buddy for Life.



Tight Lines all

Lexie & Mark ☐



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**Before the blossoms pop -
Wies Ennekens**

The silence is overwhelming.

Every sound is absorbed by the fresh snow. As it gently drizzles down on the banks it slowly thickens the white carpet covering the earth. In a state of total contentment i wander along the banks of my favourite canal. Nature is at its finest this time of the year.

The only thing I hear is the noise of compressing snow under the soles of my boots. I look back and see the trail I just made. How many times have I walked this path before?

And only now I notice that I subconsciously avoid all bumps and holes even when they are covered in snow... It makes me wonder, haven't I had it yet with this place?

Isn't it time for something new? How about change for the upcoming season? Why not do something completely different? Expand my horizons? Start all over on another watertype?

But not this year. There is no snow, there are only nights of 10 degrees Celcius. There is only rain and wind.

Flowers which normally pop their heads above ground in March start showing already.

For some reason the weird weather we are experiencing makes me impatient. The urge to fish is untamable, these conditions have unleashed a beast inside of me that tells me to keep going. Don't stop, keep baiting, keep fishing, but do not stop.

Although I know that things can change in a shake of a lambstail, I have a feeling this will be a winter to remember. Earlier today I saw a post passing by of a young bloke who broke his PB tonight.

Not the most usual time of year for records to be broken... In "normal" conditions its the layer of ice in the bucket that has to be broken in the morning after a december night session.

Or it is the persistence of the angler that breaks as he runs out of gas to fire up the stove in the bivvy. And the silence, the all absorbing silence of the snowcarpet, that gets broken by the two ducks fighting for that little food they find... But not this year.

So we have a mild winter so far. That can only mean one thing, preparations have to be done, fishing we must...

But the mild temperatures don't mean that the behaviour of the fish isn't influenced. they are preparing for winter, but not like in the autumn, they still take food just not as greedy as we want them to.

I believe that canal fish will continue all winter because the water is never still. The fluctuation of the canal makes it almost impossible to lay back and stop moving, so they need some food to maintain energy.

But I also believe that we cannot fish them the same way as in summer. The traps we set have to be perfect, the bait adapted to the situation.

And numerous other things have to be taken in consideration. And exactly that is what makes a difference between a good and an average angler.

The untamable feeling we get to gather information, to break the code of the water we so dearly love.



I can spend hours just thinking about how and what, when and where. A few months ago we had a regional meeting with VBK (Vereniging Belgische Karpervissers/ union of belgian carp anglers)

The guest that night was Jean-Baptiste Morel, main consultant for Fox in France. His knowledge about the canals is what makes him a great angler, with even bigger results.

The key to success lies within the water, you just have to find it. And winter is the perfect time to do that.

Sessions are less frequent, so the more time we have to update knowledge, material and tactics. Since the winter is so mild, it gives me the perfect opportunity to get the boat out and

find myself some new spots AND reinvestigate the old ones.

What was a good spot in the past is no guarantee for the future. Some believe in depthscanners to find the fish and drop the bait right on their nose. Not me, call me old-fashioned, but i dont like high-tech when it comes to fishing.

I prefer to trust my senses. Looking, feeling, smelling, hearing and tasting... I rather spend hours finding a few fish whilst rowing my boat than by looking at a monitor and interpretate grey-lines. Don't get me wrong, I do not criticise those who do. That's just how I like to do it.

Although our stomachs are still stuffed to the brim with warm apple pie topped of with a big ball of vanilla-ice cream,

in my opinion now is the perfect time to get the season started. Instead of hanging in the couch all holiday long, I need to head out there, explore, overthink and start planning the coming year.

Since a lot of 'saloon anglers' have put their gear already to the side. Only the chosen ones remain bankside. It doesn't always have to be fishing.

Using the loneliness (secrecy ;)) of the riverbanks can save a lot of time when the season kicks in again. And as soon as the first warmer days arrive, the rods only need to be placed. Thus creating a peace of mind during wintertime is essential fo me.

I said 'when the season kicks in', but for me the season never stops.

Yes, the catchrate and banktime will lessen, but the spirit remains high. It's like smoking, in winter you will not as fast go out for a smoke since it's cold.

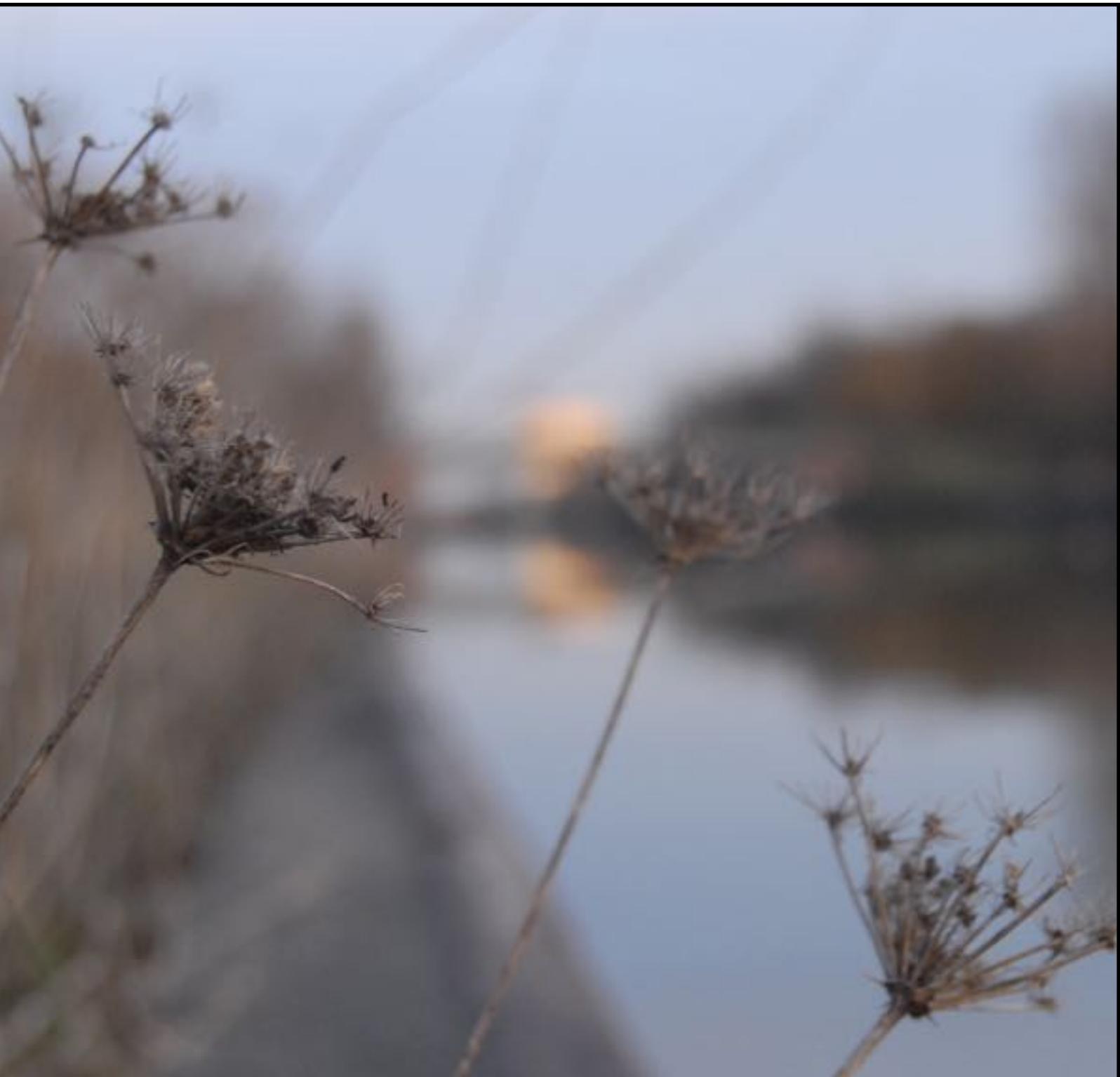
But you will go out sooner or later, just because you simply NEED it. We, fine gentlemen, we are addicts.

Whether we like it or not. Its a little beast that wanders through our veins, infecting our deepest braincells possible. And when the beast orders us to go, WE SHALL OBEY.

And for some the beast awakens every day, for some just a few times a month. Some peoples urge only awakens when the first warm days come.

But not for me. My beast awakens even before the blossoms pop...

Enjoy the banks !!!





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COMPETITION

Firstly a big congratulations to.....

Nik Taylor Pugh!! winner of our Facebook Competition to win a Ridge Monkey Toaster and Rig Tag DPM Sleeve. Please get in touch to claim your prize.



The A.C.A carbon throwing stick Mark Hutchinson

A lot of people know me for my long range casting or fishing and my baiting up with a spomb is my normal approach, but sometimes I like to spread my bait especially when using just boilies, so I like to use a throwing stick but it has always been very hard to get the baits out at long range. Not only the distance but was a killer on the arm, but not now! "Why?" you may ask, well I've been using the ACA carbon throwing stick for just over a year now.

I first used one on Boxing Day 2015 when I used Daniel Abbasians at Drayton res and I was struggling to get my boilies out at the distance I wanted with the throwing stick I was

using (at the time it was the best I found for distance) and that's when big Dan said "You've not tried my bad boy!" laughing I said "I've got the best bad boy".

Well, I was totally wrong and can honestly say it blitzed the one I was using by a mile, not only on distance but it was lighter too.

I also had to put less effort into it to get the distance, which helps if putting a lot of bait out in matches. I've put over 40kg out in less than 36hrs before now! I was loving it and was that impressed I was ordering one the next day. If anyone looking for a distance throwing stick then look no further trust me, I've tried them all and this keeps winning.

THROWING TIME

Best distance I've done with this stick is over 190yds and that was measured.

A few tips are to make your baits as hard as you can or in my case I buy bigger baits, air dry them and soak them in water with a little flavour for a bit just before giving them a good thrashing. This helps put some weight back into them for the distance but also keeps them strong. Remember this stick generates a lot of power!!

I'm hoping to talk to Kevin Knight about doing me some super hard baits just for this sort of work. I'm not the only big hitter that is using the ACA carbon throwing stick either, as my good friends Terry Edmonds, Lee Merrit, Frank Warwick, Mike Dagnall, Max Cottis, Scott Rowson and Les Bowers all use one too.

**I think that says it all.
Tight lines, Hutch.**



The ACA carbon throwing stick can be purchased from the Facebook page Anglers Charity Auctions Products and has a R.R.P of £69.99 plus P&P.

ENTER HERE

NOW.... WHO WOULD LIKE THE CHANCE TO WIN AN ACA THROWING STICK???

For a chance to win the A.C.A carbon throwing stick please answer the following question.

Q) What is the best distance Mark Hutchinson has achieved throwing boilies with the ACA throwing stick?

A) Answers on the Talking Carp Facebook page on the "Throwing stick answers" post.

A winner will be picked at random and announced in issue 3.

Best of luck!!!

Wyreside Lakes Fishery

Sunnyside Farm, Bay Horse, Lancaster, LA2 9DG. Tel: 01524 792093 email wyresidelakes@btconnect.com

www.wyresidelakes.co.uk

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



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



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



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



My Way With Pva - Ross Hunter

A lot of anglers to-day use pva bags and mesh stocking, but don't fully utilise the opportunities open to them, as most will just use boilies, broken or crumbed, or pellets, and one or two may use particles.

Well here Ross Hunter shows you how to get the most out of a little parcel of food to get the carp grubbing round all year round.



Step 1:

I like to have a mixture of Carp particles ultimate spod mix, High grade Pellet from Skretting crushed into crumb, Mad bait's Pandemic Boilies crushed into crumb and then mixed altogether. Getting it mixed well is essential to how this will break down when put into Castaway PVA bag.



Step 2:

I like to put the mix into a secure bait box, which allows me to have enough room to make plenty of bags and mix without losing any of the mix in the process.

I use a large Krusha to crush the pellet and boilie and tip it in. This allows for a mix that has very small food items right up to some larger ones.

Keeping the fish rooting around as there is always something different to feed on and at the same time has a variety of food items that take various times to break down around the hook bait, giving you attraction at all times, and keeping those fish interested.



Step 3:

I like to use winterized oils, I would always use Carp Particles hemp or Salmon oil as this is already winterized and is ideal for winter fishing.



In this though I was asked if I couldn't get hold of CP hemp oil and tackle shops were closed what oil would I use. Tesco's Good Oil is in fact hemp oil and is also winterized so is perfect for using in the winter as well as in the summer.

When I say winterized oils, what I mean is it doesn't congeal in the cold water because it is highly refined oil and will perform better in the 'cold test', which basically means it will last longer at zero-degrees prior to solidifying.

Make sure you put in about four cap falls and this the perfect amount to allow around about a minute break down time in winter weather.



Step 4:

I do three small scoops which is more than enough, and allows for the finished bag to be small enough and aerodynamic enough to not affect the cast when going out to the all-important spots.

So now we have put the three scoops into the mesh, it's time to now compact it down and keep doing so until you can't compact it any more. Keep it tight and tie it off, now I know what most think, it looks to small, but it makes up for its small size when the bag breaks down in the water, and you'll be very surprised at just how much food is in that bag.

I personally like to slide this onto the hook link rather than attaching it to the hook. Why? well tank tests and seeing it in the lake has allowed me to see the better presentation that putting the hook link through the bag gives, compared to just attaching it to the hook does, and that for me gives me total confidence in my presentation.





Step 5:

As you can see even though the finished PVA bag looked small, you can clearly see the size and area that after break down to food items cover and is more than enough to get a bite without over doing it. allowing for quick takes, while still leaving attraction on the spot, keeping it active until the rig is put back out.





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A Year That Was - Peter Carr



Reflections are a wonderful thing, not just from the perspective of looking back but also thinking how far you have come in such a short period with both luck and true friends on your side....

2015, in truth was by far not a great start for me from a work perspective, being self employed and a cab driver my livelihood was written off Christmas Day 2014, which without exception led me at one stage to thinking that I had to sell up my van and fishing tackle just to get myself back into the position of being financially stable, I can't tell you just how close I came up it several times as this appeared to be the only option to fund a new car going forward!

Upon reflection, how glad I didn't as indeed I can look back now without a shadow of doubt just how close I came not fishing at all into 2015...

With the issue resolved I soon turned my attentions at hand to my angling and how I was going to set my stool out for the coming year. Whilst a number of opportunities were in the pipeline I have learnt from experience that you only get back what you can put in!

From both a work and angling perspective, I have no doubt that this is so relevant today and if you have this thought pattern going forward I sure it helps to create your own luck!!

Many of you may know me from some of the social media sites, those that do

know of me, know by far I'm not a full time angler, having to juggle family and work commitments and effectively fit in my angling sessions which in my mind make the potential rewards even more fulfilling.

Fishing to me without doubt has taken on a whole new meaning, mainly due to both time and family constraints. Rarely now do I take it for granted, that maybe next week I'll be out on the bank and have the pre conceived idea where, how or indeed what approach I'm going to adopt.

For me the highlight of my year came in July when I drew the short straw and had to book a social with 9 good buddies to fish a lake over in France....

After weeks of debate, potential fallouts, as indeed not everyone can agree on the same thing... A lake was booked which I have previously had good success on...

The lake itself, is around 25 acres and without doubt is a jewel in the crown in my eyes, whilst there is no website, without doubt it received a lot of attention from foreign anglers, although it not classed as easy by any stretch of the imagination. Being just 2 and half hours from Calais situated in the Oise valley the drive time was within easy reach for all concerned. Being French owned, it is drive and survive with basic Eco toilets and sheds in each swim for cooking and storing of equipment, with local supermarkets within a fifteen-minute drive.

Naturally this is not everyone's cup of tea, but my view has always been to book lakes based on fish stocks, previous experience and recommendations, any deficiency in amenities etc can quickly be overcome by a trip to your local camping shop for mobile showers etc, yes you get the picture!! Baits boats are a must on this water and having a feature finder is an invaluable aid in mapping out the likely areas to place rigs and set the traps. Fishing is often at range dependent on the time of year, wind direction, weather conditions and timing can be critical to success or failure!

Personally for me, July would be a month that I would avoid mainly due to the increasing temperatures, long hot sunny days, high pressure and naturally the carps reluctance to feed given these conditions, this said many of the group agreed the date based on prior commitments elsewhere and many, rightly or wrongly, rather than looked upon this for not what it is, a fishing trip, treated this as a holiday or social excuse just to socialize irrespective of time of year!

In the lead up to the impending date, you can only imagine the number of conversations that took place with all booked on the trip. Particular discussions around equipment, preparation, bait etc etc were discussed to untold lengths based on previous experience and results, thus ensuring that those who paid attention hopefully would be sufficiently prepared for what could lay ahead.

I don't know about others views but mine irrespective of group bookings or individual basis is to do my own homework on the venues I fish. Call it what you wish, but without doubt doing the groundwork without exception ensures you are set up to hopefully to reap the rewards that may lay ahead. With social media, forums and blogs, it's easy to locate this information and I'm shocked just at the number of conversations that I have had on various venues here and

abroad where anglers just don't prepare!! Frankly, I'm not surprised as too many anglers expect this to be handed on a plate and do nothing but whinge and complain when things don't turnout in their favour!

How many times have you had a conversation with other carpers who say the previous venue they fished was totally crap and then go in to slate it for all the wrong reasons! Probably in truth, it wasn't the venue, stocks of fish etc etc, it's probably more likely their ignorance or laziness to find out in advance of the best approach to the chosen venue. Considering the costs these days for a weeks session here or abroad, I find it incredible that these anglers are still in abundance!!

I'm the type of angler that leaves nothing to chance, I view my time in France as a means to exploit the potential to catch fish, big fish and fish in numbers! My set up, approach, bait type and quantities, yes I can go on, all ensue I'm there to catch fish!! Naturally it's called fishing and not catching for a reason, as sometimes despite all you do and prepare for, there are occasions where 'it just doesn't happen' this said how often do you change your approach, tactics etc, too induce takes or change your luck?

Me personally I question everything, if it's not working, try something different! Often a simple rig change, change of spot or indeed taking stock of the current situation can turn things around in your favour.

Without doubt, I'll do this time and time again until it comes right, if in the event however, it doesn't, at least I can go away knowing that it just wasn't my time!! Don't get me wrong, there have been a number of failing in the past and no doubt in the future too! That's fishing!!

The experience level within our party was quite mixed with a number of the group used to fishing abroad and handling big fish, whilst a few needed to experience it first hand by themselves with support from others. To ensure fairness, a swim draw by individuals and swim took place this ensuring there was no preferential treatment given to either angler or swim!! Effectively whilst there were 5 double swims on the lake two each of the numbers were placed in a hat, which upon drawing determined both swim and partner for the week in hand! Naturally if individuals decided thereafter to change its in agreement with those involved!!

After what seems an age, the kick off date is upon us, delays at Dover and Folkestone lead to a frantic change of set off time and the phone goes mental with some of the group panicking as to whether

we are going to meet the departure time for the train!! Several hours later, the journey proves relatively uneventful, just the usual border checks to go through and the vans randomly searched by yes you guessed, Mr bloody jobsworth who is hell bent on tipping out the entire contents of the van!! Only to say on your way and leaving you to frantically finding sum way of bundling everything back within the van without thought or logic!

With a slight delay on the train journey we were off arriving some 45 minutes later in France, no doubt all weary of the early start time. With a convoy of several vans all in tow the usual pit stops for those with a weak disposition to relieve their bladders was comical given that several no doubt had a few too many prior to leaving...ffs the bloody phone didn't stop ringing with call after call, need a stop!! Got to stop! And Christ stopping now!!!

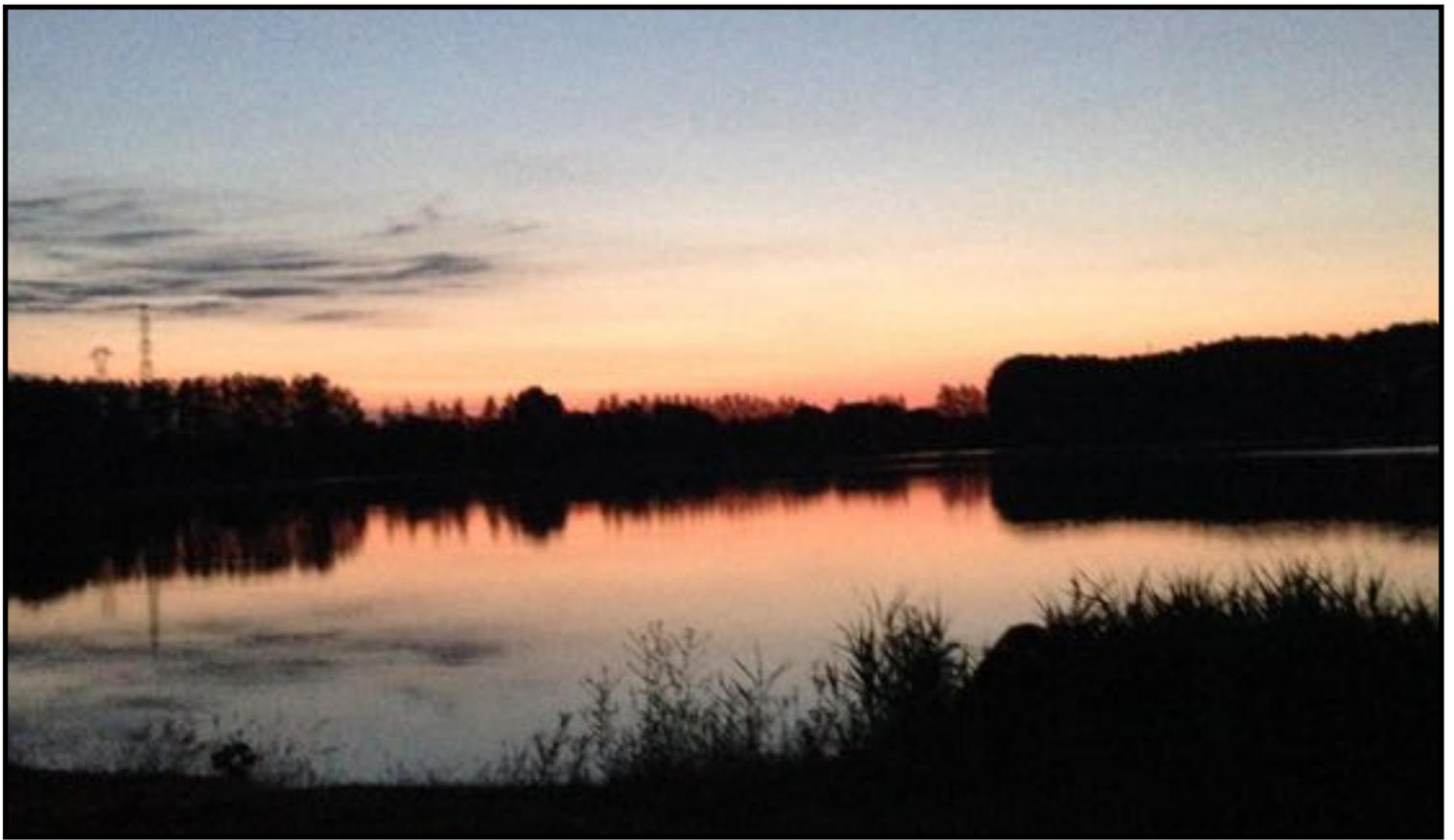
Arriving at the lake some three hours later the previously fresh faced party resembled the aftermath of a stag party gone into meltdown with weary faces literally falling out of the vans in some cases! Clearly comical for those watching but without doubt painful in the extreme for one or two...

I can only imagine the look from other anglers who were departing as to what the hell had just descended upon them and

no doubt thinking thank Christ we're off!!!

A quick check with several Belgium lads still packing away indicated that several swims fished well within their week, the faces of one or two within our party was a picture as news of sum number of catches were had and going to the opposite end of the scale, sheer disappointment for those placed in the respective swims that for one reason or other fished poorly...

The group all agreed to locate to their swims and commence the set up for what hopefully was going to be a scream, both my mate Jay and myself agreed upon setting up ourselves we would be around to help others who had not fished the venue prior and to give them a starting point on where best to locate and set the traps for the week ahead, sum naturally keen to wet a line went straight for cast out placing rigs in all major of locations, comically, I shall not name the individual, but despite spending several prior hours tying up new rigs, line etc, yeah you get the picture! You could only hear a mouthful of B's, C's and W's being herded across the lake as crack off after crack off resulted in all his hard work going to ruin in around 30 seconds flat!!



With my base camp set up, the first thought turned to a cold beer and a quick bite to eat!! Fatigue is now truly set in and quite frankly I'm bushed!! Despite this a quick catch up with those in need of help locating spots etc is completed and it's back to my swim for a couple of hours respite prior to getting the rods sorted.

Despite good intentions of resting, my mind goes into 'warp mode' thus ensuring that I get no kip, despite prior preparation there is so much to do in the sense of bait preparation etc etc and also helping my partner with the tasks at hand.

Amazing really, despite spending weeks if not months discussing bait, equipment and tackle requirements, there is always one or two who for what ever reason just

don't take notice!! These are the the type of anglers I previously eluded too earlier who thinks that it's all going to come to them without putting in the effort in the first place, I cannot begin to describe my feelings on this and this is supposed to be a team effort to maximize fish on the bank!!

Frustration over, a number of rigs are tied, I use a simple approach favoring the blow back rig with a line aligner to help set the hook and provide a mean of anti eject. This are all tied to a size 4 hook, sharp as you can get them.

The rig itself is based on a multi rig, where I can easily adjust the length of the hair to suit bait type and set up but also ensure that after every fish I can rapidly change the hook and get the rig back out onto the spot with the

minimal time out the water, leads every time are drop off, and I have been putting vardis heavy duty clips to the test!

This is tied to a fluorocarbon snag leader, not only does this ensure that four 3 rod lengths are pinned to the deck, due to the mussel beds and step margins that can with a second result in a break and resulting in losing fish.



Bait wise, I feed heavy!! I'm fortunate enough to be with 'mainline baits' and bait quantity is not an issue if you place your order sufficiently in advance!! For this trip I have in excess of 170 kilos of Hybrid, pop ups and wafers with the respective dips and glugs to play around with, additionally this is supplemented with 4 sacks of hemp, sack of mini tigers and two sacks of pellets!! Christ you might say, that can feed my lake for the whole year if not two!!

Yes, I agree, but then again on on a lake that carp love bait and to hold them to have to feed them!! All too often this can mean the difference in catching huge numbers or a just a few!!! Have you seen what a 40-pound carp can eat!!! you will be shocked!! Imagine a shoal of 40 pounders can devour in minutes!!! Bloody frightening....



Boilie wise I never just take out of the bag and use. I have this thought process that being different from others on the bank gives me total confidence and I will always do something to them such as chops, halves, glugs, etc. etc.

The first job is to chop 20 kilo of Hybrid into buckets and add the required bait soak or particle soak to them. I lightly cost them, give the bucket a good shake up and reapply accordingly until I'm happy that all of the chops are coated, I'll do exactly the same to whole baits and then mix the buckets up with whole, chops and halves!

I believe this makes one hell of a difference and enables you to switch bait presentation as required. Fortunately, whilst one company make a bait chopper, I favor one made for me by my good pal Jay, as one it's longer and can accept more baits, the simple design ensures my hands don't get sore and feel the pain of what's available on the market.

Right let's get fishing!!

My swim in question has numerous plateaus, drop offs, gullies and mussel beds out in front, you can fish at range or indeed closer in dependent on year and weather conditions, and naturally not ignoring the obvious signs of fish activity within the swim!! Whilst fishing four rods, I tend to favor two rods on one baited spot,

with the other two rods in different areas to cover as much water as possible. I will chop and change according to the fishing situation but always without exception mark my lines accordingly.

If bites come in certain areas within the swim, I'll often end up with 4 rods fishing 'two' spots to maximize takes but also to ensure that I can minimize the baited area. This allows for you to feed the swim and introduce a regular top up of bait following each run. For this lake it works particularly well and more often than not when you get it right multiple takes do occur on a frequent basis.



The weather naturally plays an important factor and can determine success or failure!! The start of the week whilst around 28 degrees has been consistent against the two previous week, although a pressure front moving in could be a turnaround needed, firstly to boost confidence and secondly get the fish moving.

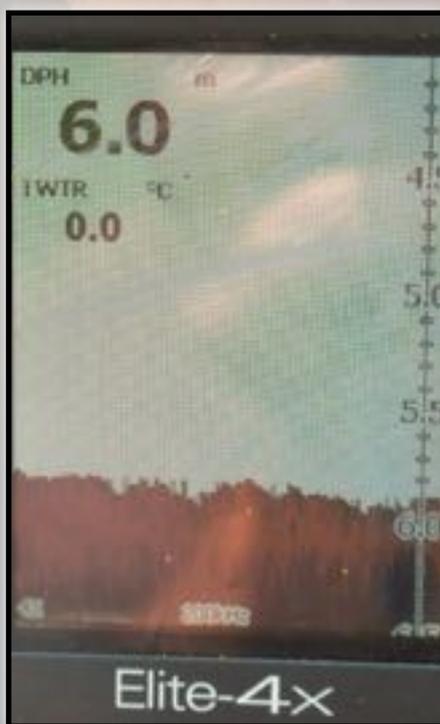
From the initial reports from the Belgium guys it was clear that my draw number in swim 1 failed miserably last week with only 4 fish banked for the week, and yes they were frequent anglers to the venue, naturally whilst this gave me concern, the weather change relayed those fears to some degree.

Sunday night and the week begins with the setting of the traps, fatigue without question has kicked in and I have no doubt that I have placed the traps half heartedly, my priority is to get me head down and recoup as previous sessions have taught me to sleep whenever possible!!



I use a bait boat with an echo and this allows me to place the rigs with accuracy onto the spots, once chosen I'll send the boat out and place around 5 kilos of bait consisting of boilie, hemp, tigers etc etc per rod, this may seem initially heavy but depths in the swim and past experience has taught me that this is about right, this is done for all four rods ensuring the I have enough goodies within the areas to attract the carp.

Bearing in mind also, that most lakes have so called nuisance species in the form of roach, Rudd, bream etc and believe me they can wipe out your baited areas in no time at all! I'll repeat this process both day and night, although I'll often take my rods out of the swim during the day to allow the fish a free feed, gaining their confidence to come back later in the day or evening. Upon every take, I always feed more, however i tend to reduce the amount to around 1 kilo of boilie with 3 kilo of particle per rod per take when the runs begin to come.



Given that the lake is primarily a night water, runs tend to come around 2 hours after sunset, I have learned by experience that if the rods are not producing takes i will reel in one or two rods at a time and replenish hook baits and again too up the swim, I truly believe when taking steps like this it not only introduces fla-

vours and attractant back into the swim it also again rings the dinner bell once more, the number of times this has proved successful I have lost count, all I know is that it puts fish in the bank.

Given that I have already given you all a good insight as to what can be achieved with prior preparation, research and applying your own little tricks, one thing to remember is always be willing to change your approach if things aren't going the way that you either expect or through others who are banking fish. one major learning curve I can give other than the research, is never be afraid to ask others on the bank what they are doing, you will be surprised that all anglers want to catch and help others along to catch also.

Into night one, the right hand rips with the one toner if the ATT and results in a mid thirty into the net, my partner in question out for the count. weighed and put straight back without even a thought to a photo, I re-bait and settle back into the bed-chair, crocs just off and the bloody same rod is off again! Frantically rushing to the rod. What seemed moments later a scrapper thirty mirror grazes the net!



Two fish in probably 10 minutes fills me with confidence! Yet now I'm fully awake and tea and a fag is on the menu. In short Sunday night produced 7 takes to 6 fish and whilst none of them monsters that I prayed for it proved once again that my approach was working!

Monday arrived in a blink of an eye, and giving the bags under my eyes, very little sleep was had! I certainly not complaining but a cup of strong tea, several cups actually were required to awaken me from my slumber!

Thoughts soon turned to the day ahead and the preparation required to get on track for the week in hand, my swim resembled total chaos with not with just last night's carnage but also that from a half unpacked van and a scrambled attempt to set everything up as you would normally do for a weeks session!

The morning just disappeared and time had just flown by but at least now I was sorted, finally, time for a chill out and much needed food to see me into the evening.

Despite the first nights success, all but one of the fish came to just two rods so the afternoon was spent adjusting the position of the rods, once happy with the new spots as with the previous night, the spots were treated to 5 kilos of goodness onto each spot, although at this stage I didn't place the

rigs just yet! Choosing to leave the swim alone until just before dusk.

A quick walk around the lake for a catch up with the other lads on the venue was in order one just to enable a catch up but also to understand how they were doing as it was clear during night one with the number of head torches on, that a few fish were banked during the night!

Upon getting into my usual fishing partners swim who was in swim two, it was clear he and his partner for the week were off to a good start as indeed I thought my swim resembled carnage from the night before! but the chaos here could only mean one thing, yes!! A chunk & 56lb, along with several mid forties were banked. Now given that we were into mid afternoon, what stumbled out from their respective bivvies is difficult to express without a number of swear words being used within the sentence, so I will leave it to your imagination as to the expletives that I greeted them with lol...

Clearly after wiping the laughter years away and still chuckling as I left their swim it was clear that that had a fulfilled night catching but also that of taken advantage to have several beers too many to help them sleep of the fatigue from the journey etc...

Back into my swim, thoughts were to getting ready for the night ahead,

everything prepared with rigs ready I set about placing the rigs into the chosen spots, with around half an hour or so prior to sunset you could literally feel the activity within the lake coming alive!

A number of shows out in the lake at range and the tell take signs that the fish were beginning to head out and away from the main sanctuary were clearly visible and whilst these were the smaller or nuisance fish at first, past experience on here know that the Carp won't be far behind.

With light fast fading the final rod drops its spot and the lake this evening resembles a whirl pool of hype through activity, show after show, multiple shows and heads nudging the surface are in abundance filling me with hope and anticipation. Into darkness and the activity doesn't let up with the occasional hippo heard crashing just beyond the baited lines...

With four rods out surely it's only a matter of time before one of them leaps into action. Moments later and the left hand ATT sounds, one, two, three tones and the gentle lift of the bobbin indicates activity on the rig. Albeit either just a liner or an ejected take...

Naturally I'm now watching, ready to leap, but to no avail, the second left hand rod on the same spot indicates similar activity although again the same result as before with no take in hand. Without prior indication the 4th rods screams with the distinctive tone of the ATT, a one toner.... And I'm quickly bent into the first run of the night!

What seems as only a few minutes into the fight, I'm now knitting!! Pearl one, stitch one as this angry carp decides to give me the merry dance through the swim, thankfully fur to the nature of the swim I drop my leads on each take thus ensuring the carp comes up high into the water, nether the less it still manages to ensure that I repeatedly having to go over and under my other rods as it decides that it's not coming in without a fight! Thankfully my rod tips are in a high position as this is not the first time in this venue that carp seem hell bent on going from left to right and right to left to avoid the net! Just as I nearly there and without doubt others on the lake can see the rejection of my head torch doing a merry dance, the left hand rips into action and the clutch rattling off to another take, thankfully I slip the first one into the net just in time to pick up the rod and now I'm juggling around like a loony tune grappling the first net into a safe position whilst my mate comes to my rescue.

Now with what resemble the light show from the northern lights, two head torches back and fourth across the swim, I can here my phone ringing and have no doubt that's it's Jay Mungo opposite trying to get hold of me to understand what all the commotion is all about...

With the second fish safely in the net both are weighed with the best just shy of 4 ozs of the magical forty, both carp placed back without a photograph and a cuppa is in order prior to dispatching the rigs back out to the spots.

Despite all hopes, I could only sit within the swim and watch as the activity switched to the other side of the lake for the remainder of the night, with both swim 4 & 5 coming alive, now it's my turn to watch the light show and lights from the bait boats heralding a return to another trap set in preparation.

Tuesday morning arrived and given the forecast it was going to be a hot one, with only two fish the night prior, I wasn't despondent more thankful that I managed a good nights kip, but it was clear that the opposite side of the lake produced a number of good fish both in size and numbers with the best being just over 60lb.

My thoughts turned to a short plateau out in front around 85 yards that at this time of year Has only 8-9 foot of water on top of it, with around 15ft

at the bottom of the shelf, this would be ideal for the conditions and previously given that I have already placed bait onto the area now would be good to hopefully get some day time action.

Rods re baited with only two rods placed onto the areas a breakfast was now the order of the day, constant liners kept interrupting the much needed refuel of food & tea but luckily I was just polishing off my blt stick when the left hand rod shouted out a one toner signaling the start of a manic session....

What started as what I deem a slow start, suddenly erupted into total chaos as the fun came thick and fast, not wanting to miss any opportunity I placed a third rod into the plateau and at no time did I manage to have all three out at any given time... The morning came and went with no fewer than 21 takes with the best coming in at 43lb, with several double takes resulting with two in the nets at the same time...

The more often I placed the rigs into the spots the less time they stayed there, twice in fact the rig must have hit the deck and once again it was away...

Despite the hectic session, the big girls weren't here, my magical sixty still being elusive, although a double take at 38lb & 22lb meant in some respects I landed a sixty of some description!...



Into the night I placed the rigs once more, with the day session yielding a fantastic days fishing I decided to keep two rods on the short area and placing the other two onto the original spots.

Well I don't think you could of written it.... The session was just getting better and better with another 13 takes to 11 carp! And yes the magical 60lber in the shape of a 60.09 mirror graced my net during the hectic period with carp of 56,48,44,42 and several thirties adding to the tally.....



“just shy of 4 ozs of the magical forty”

Upon waking up the following morning it was dawning on me that this week was proving very special, despite the big ones only showing themselves once, the tally so far was over 40 carp banked with several days remaining I was confident of a good hit...

As each day past, I placed updates on Facebook and the comments conning thick and fast, I reviewed untold private messages egging my on to keep plugging away... Not least two who I shall not name but had a bet going on between them that this was going to end as a special week...

Around the lake, others were having a mixed bag, but it was clear the lake had woken up with the far side netting not just one 70 plus carp but two anglers having new 70 plus pbs to their names.

Now I can carry on, with the day by day breakdown, but I think you all are now getting a little tiresome of the day by day blows.....

Well my week, incredibly ended up as what is termed 'a tonne up' week with no fewer than a list of 83 takes to 72 carp

1 x 60,
3 x fifties to 58lb,
5 x forties to 48lb,
41 x 30's
Stacks of mid 20's

In total, out of ten anglers, no less than around 250 carp were caught for

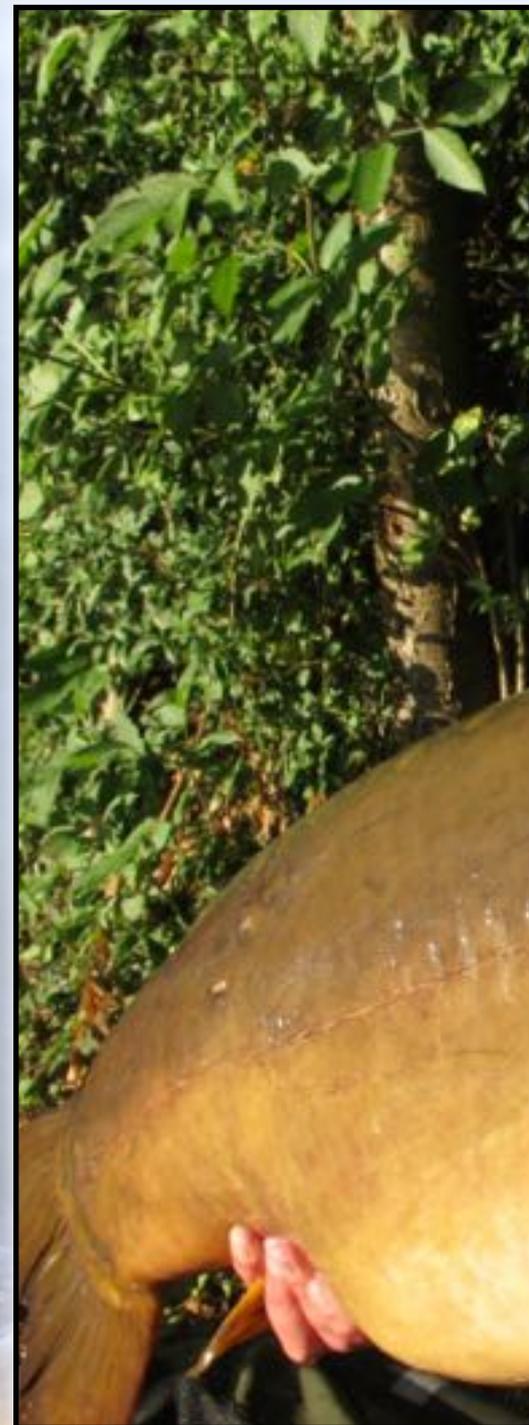
the week, this number excluded cat fish, sturgeon and grass carp!!

No fewer than 5 of the team caught personal bests ranging from 40lb through to 75lb, with two 70's being banked for the week.

All anglers caught which without exception made for a great social, although naturally some struggled to hit fish in multiple numbers!!

I dread to think what the total wright in carp caught that week, but it is estimated over 3 tonne to 10 anglers!! Now in my book, that is an exceptional weeks fishing!

Fortunate for me, I had two weeks booked for this period, and I'll fill you in on my next session very soon... Watch this space.





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The Quest for a Twenty

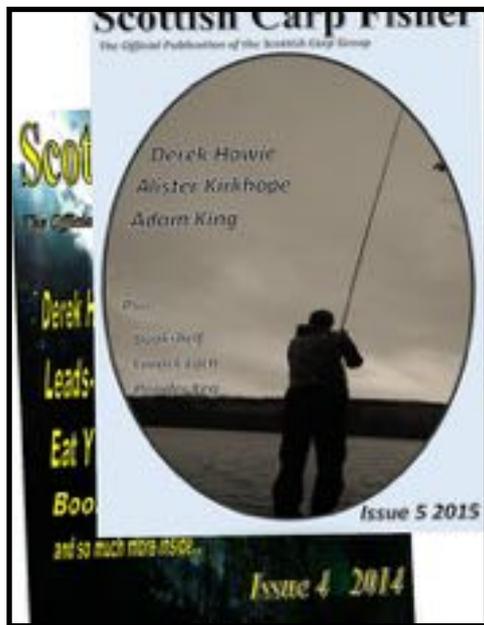


I've only been fascinated with the King Carp species since 2007 so I might also be known as one of those recent 'Just Add Water - Instant Carper' but hailing from Aberdeen in the North-East of Scotland I couldn't be further from carp central. This region of the U.K. is famed for the so-called King of Fish - The Atlantic Salmon, but around these parts it's relatives have also taken all the other titles as well - Queen, Prince, Duke and Lady! The few carp venues that do exist are several hours from here by car and even the more experienced Scottish carpers will tell you that every Scottish carp you catch is worked for. I'm just grateful to the individuals that brought carp fishing this far North several decades ago...

For the last 2 seasons I've been fishing Lanark Loch which is a 12-acre water that has approximately 120-140 carp in it and is located just under 30 miles South-East of Glasgow and 156 miles from my home. If you've seen my 'Diary of an Advanced Beginner' articles, on either my own Facebook page or through the Scottish Carp Group's members-only publication

Scottish Carp Fisher, you'll have read about my gradual progression from comparative beginner upwards, that has had my personal goals changing almost on a session by session basis. Initially it was just to catch another carp after a 3-year hiatus from carp fishing and the S.C.G. and to my own surprise this was achieved on my very first session on the loch and this was

repeated on my second trip as well. My previous P.B. had stood for 5 years before being cancelled by a Mirror Carp of 17lb 2oz on my 4th session at Lanark, on my 7th trip I caught 3 carp within the 65 hours of a normal trip; my most productive session to date. My 9th and 10th outings both included 1 fish on each of those trips.



Having done over the 700 hours by the waterside, apart from a few photos, I've failed to actually see, let alone snare one of the 20lb+ fish that swim within this park loch and it's become my next goal as I slowly climb this learning curve I've chosen.

I feel it's something I need to do before I can move on to one of the other S.C.G. waters which is slightly nearer to my hometown but is a far larger and more demanding water.

I know in the grand scheme of U.K. carp- ing a 20lb'er isn't that big anymore, up here in Scotland it is actually a large specimen. As current records go the largest carp from a Scottish water is a smidging over half the size of its English counterpart and there-

fore a tartan 20lb could be considered in the same vein as an English 40lb fish?

Now I could easily travel far further, south of the border to where there are venues which have a higher chance of a 20lb fish but a Scottish 20lb carp is such a special creature and I'm not sure how many of the U.K. carping elite have one of those in their photo albums.

In the last 24 months I've only managed 11 multiple night sessions, on this my 12th trip to the South Lanarkshire venue and the final session of 2015 I'll take you through one of my Scottish carping sessions in my quest for a twenty.

After travelling for several hours from the salmonid dominant North-East coast to Lanark, I pulled in an empty car park and even at 04.00 it was still pitch black. I assumed that the lack of vehicles signified the water was also devoid of other anglers as is usually the case during the week. Since re-joining in 2013 I've based these sessions around the lunar cycles and this wasn't any different as the moon was just 2 days away from

starting its phase as a New Moon and surprisingly accompanied by the planet Venus in the early morning sky.



The early start meant I made fantastic progress on the road and breezed through the roadworks and detours that laced the journey south and as a consequence I had arrived about a 1/2 hour earlier than was anticipated. Under what little light the moon was emitting I watched the water intently from the position of the elevated car park, observing the flat calm loch for any of those signs which would give me an indication of some Carp's location while I sat snugly in the warmth of the car. I saw plenty of waterfowl but no water carp!

As soon as I could finally see what I was doing the barrow was rapidly loaded with everything for one of my normal 3-day sessions (except the frozen pre-cooked chicken and milk which stays in a cooler in boot of my car) and as there wasn't any signs of the fish visible in the 60 minutes since I had arrived.

I transported the gear round to the west side of the loch. Gliding down the hill, through the joyfully silent play park and past the popular Grass Triangle swim and then slalomed the Scotch Pines on my way to what was becoming a second home, a swim known as 20 Point.

I always have the rods semi-set up before leaving home and It's just a case of attaching my usual Semi-Stiff Hinged rigs to the quick change (Q.C.) ring swivels that I've started using this year and clipping on a distance-shaped lead to those new Heli-safe clips which has made ditching the weight while fishing with rotary rigs a doddle!

I started fishing helicopter style without leaders or tubing in

2008 and as it kept that side of my angling less cluttered and near on invisible I've never changed, although it's the actual rigs where I tend put all the bells and whistles.

There can't be many more rigs in carp fishing that are more awkward to construct than the Hinged Stiff Rig and as such I tie a few at home before hand as well as carrying a box of already made up Stiff Rig sections.

It's certainly been written about many times before but this is my set up- Running on the fluorocarbon mainline between 1 semi-fixed beads and a tapered Line Saver bead is the size 11 Q.C. ring swivel, I use a figure of 8 loop knot and cut down anti-tangle sleeves to secure the rig this swivel.

The rig is made up of a coated braid boom section that's tied with a Palomar knot to a ring swivel of an already tied up and curved Stiff Rig which has a crimped loop to the other end of the swivel.

These stiff sections consist of a pre-sharpened hook which been knotless knotted to the thick, stiff monofila-

ment and has a micro pellet band looped onto a tiny ring swivel that's slid on to the tag-end before forming the 'D'. Once the bait is attached and balanced with a little putty around the crimp and 1 or 2 pieces on to the coated braid section, it's ready to go!



The first 2 rods went out into the loch without any fuss except for a slight delay on surrounding the hook baits with some freebie boilies designed to lure the carp in. After a couple of catapults worth were added, the resident black-headed gulls were soon aware of my intentions and I had to retreat and let them return to their second home, on the floating buoys of the kids Bumper Boat enclosure some 250 yards away. I would then start the process again, 2 catty pouches with 3 or 4 baits at a time were launched into the area of the baited rig before the ravenous winged raiders were also on top of it and then retreat, wait and then repeat.



On the 3rd rod I employed a 6ft. Zig-rig with a red foam hook-bait. This had been so successful for the day session angler I spoke to on my last outing, but this drew in even more interest from the squabbling birds. After 3 recasts I realised that the only way to get them to leave it alone was to fool them into a different area of the loch with the boilies I'd previously wanted to keep away from them.

These gluttonous gulls were soon chasing individual boilies that I launched into the unoccupied water of Wishing Well Bay and they soon forgot about the tiny piece of non-edible

foam located 12 inches below the surface, job done.

My naturally pasty skin began to feel the heat from the quickly rising autumn sun and I was a little reluctant to erect the bivvy to shelter from the burning rays at first, until I heard a 'Splosh!'.

On spinning around I saw the rippled water surface which was the aftermath of something breaching the surface film and it was rather close to the suspended foam bait. After a few seconds I saw a fish leap clear out of the loch.

'Carp!' I said. This activity cancelled out any doubts I had about erecting the shelter in this swim as it was clear I had some fish out in front of me. It wasn't long after I had the bivvy up and finally enjoying the first coffee of the day that I started to get the occasional single bleep on the alarms of both the centre and right-hand rods, a little while later it came as no surprise when the receiver reflected a very positive 'Beep, beep.... beep....' of the speaker which was simultaneously accompanied by bulge on the surface of the loch directly in line with the middle rod. Although the swinger arm barely moved.

I soon got a location as to the sound of something breaking the water's surface was a little giveaway, but as is normally the case any fish that's pulled towards the edge of its world will usually pull back a bit harder and dive below into its watery domain in a bid for freedom.

As I very slowly gained some line on this seemingly larger specimen I was able to make out where the line entered the water in what little light the Waning Crescent Moon combined with the red light of my head torch gave off but this fight was far from over before it powered off on another run into the darkness.

After some minutes I began making progress with the fish and was bringing it in closer and closer as I got my new landing net into the water. As I prefer to fish alone I had some trouble landing fish on and had replaced my old net with one with a 230cm long handle which would increase my reach by 90cm and it had a shallower mesh so it should be less wieldy once in the water than the old one which had a stupid depth of 140cm.

As the fish was plodding up and down just beyond the shallow margins, the thoughts in my head couldn't stop thinking about that magical number '20' from appearing even though I'd not even seen it; Some composure was needed!

The fish stayed just on the edge of the drop-off as it held its distance from the bank and I knew not to bully the fish as it was clear it still had some energy to burn. Any pressure I applied to bring the carp towards me was resisted with a surge of power in the opposite direction and more line was taken from the spool, although at a slower pace than previously.

This went on for the next few minutes until I was able to see the head of a decent sized Common Carp in the red torchlight and it was soon clear that it was incapable of fighting back any longer as I steered it towards the enclosure of knotless mesh and when the carbon arms and stainless steel spreader block was raised just above the water level

I let out a 'YES! YES! YES! YEEESSSS!!!' in celebration of yet another Lanark Carp to grace my net. This was soon followed with a few fresh air punches as I dashed back to the bivvy to collect a more secure way of retaining the fish than a net loosely positioned in the margins.

The fish was soon slipped in a floating retention sling and positioned in the deeper water with just the successful rig to be removed.

Next I collected my Scale box, this is 1 of the 3 modular boxes that are housed in my large holdall with all necessary equipment for a session.

The Scale box has Digi-scales, weigh-sling, 2 antiseptic liquids, disgorgers, forceps, bankstick & camera adaptor and my camera, everything except the unhooking mat is contained in a single box.

This makes it significantly easier when dealing with captures alone and the setting up for a self-take in the dark as the adrenaline soars around my body.



Just 14 hours in the session (which is my quickest result to date) this 16lb 6oz Common Carp had me fooled during the fight as I thought (foolishly), that my quest for a 20lb'er may be over and although it disappointed my scales it's still a P.B. for that particular

strain of King Carp and is my 2nd biggest Carp overall. I still had plenty of time to catch another fish before I departed. So soon afterwards the fish was returned to grow into that possible 20lb'er that I crave, I attached another freshly baited Q.C. chod rig

exactly like the one that had just nailed the carp and once the rod was cast out and placed back onto the bite alarm I put the kettle on for a caffeine free fruit tea as I sat in the sleeping bag and looked over the photos of the fish I had just caught.



While skipping through the multiple picture of the fish I had on my camera I began to realise I might actually have seen this fish before. It was the missing scales on its left side that made me think that this was a fish a friend of mine opened his account on the loch with, virtually a month ago.

Even with a slow Internet connection I trawled through Kevin's Facebook page trying to confirm if it was the same fish, and as it turned out it was but 3 ounces lighter at my end or are my Digi-scales more accurate?

The updating weather report also wasn't very good as indicated by the red triangle flashing on my screen announced the onset of torrential and constant rain for the day after next and as I had one in the bag it was an easy decision to pack up early and leave tomorrow instead of waiting to pack up when there was a serious perchance that all the gear would get put away soaking wet and that doesn't mix with the 1-bedroom flat I live in.

It was the sounds from the darkness of hooting Tawny owls, quacking Mallard ducks and the very occasional sound of a splash that left me with a rather broken night's sleep. I was woken several times by the active wildlife before returning to the land of nod only to be woken again.

I presumed that it was carp that were active within earshot of my swim. I had no further action during the hours of darkness. I was awake much earlier that my pre-set phone alarm was due to summon me but as it got dark just before 20.00 I still managed 6 hours of shut eye even with the interruptions, so I was up and dressed, fed and watered before the sun and the feathered loch dwellers had risen as was the norm on every other trip to the South Lanarkshire venue.

As the chilly breeze that blew into my open-faced bivvy was more wintery than autumnal and even after the sun had hovered in the sky for a few hours, the temperature was simply nothing like yesterday's highs. Just like the birds, the fish were somewhat shyer

today in these cooler conditions as I'd not seen any signs of fish until I received a double-bleep line bite just before 15.00 and that was the last incident from this weather shortened trip and all the lines were out of the water at 16.10.

But my session doesn't end there. I spent the next hour or so, walking out the mainline on each of the rods and cleaning it by winding it through a taut wet wipe and repeating this a couple of times as it also removes any of that frustrating line twist that can build up over the course of the fishing.

I take good care of my gear and everything from rods, reels, alarms and bank sticks through to line clips, bobbins and slinger arms are all wiped down before being packed away and gladly on this occasion mostly all dry, any remaining moisture is usually taken care of by the multitude of Silica Gel sachets I keep in all my bags and boxes.

Once back at the car park it is then reloaded in exactly the same configurations as always, because I drive a really tiny Renault Twingo.

Once I've driven the 3-hour return leg, the process of unloading begins. As I transport my tackle up the 3 flights of stairs, I deconstruct each bag as they enter the 2nd floor flat.

I prefer to do the arduous tasks of deep-cleaning the food bags and utensils, sorting out the dirty clothes or recharging the batteries before starting the far more enjoyable and equally time consuming duties of uploading and editing the multitude of photos I take, sort-

ing through listing the used end-tackle and food supplies or the compilation of these rambling while looking retracing the session through my handwritten fishing logbook.

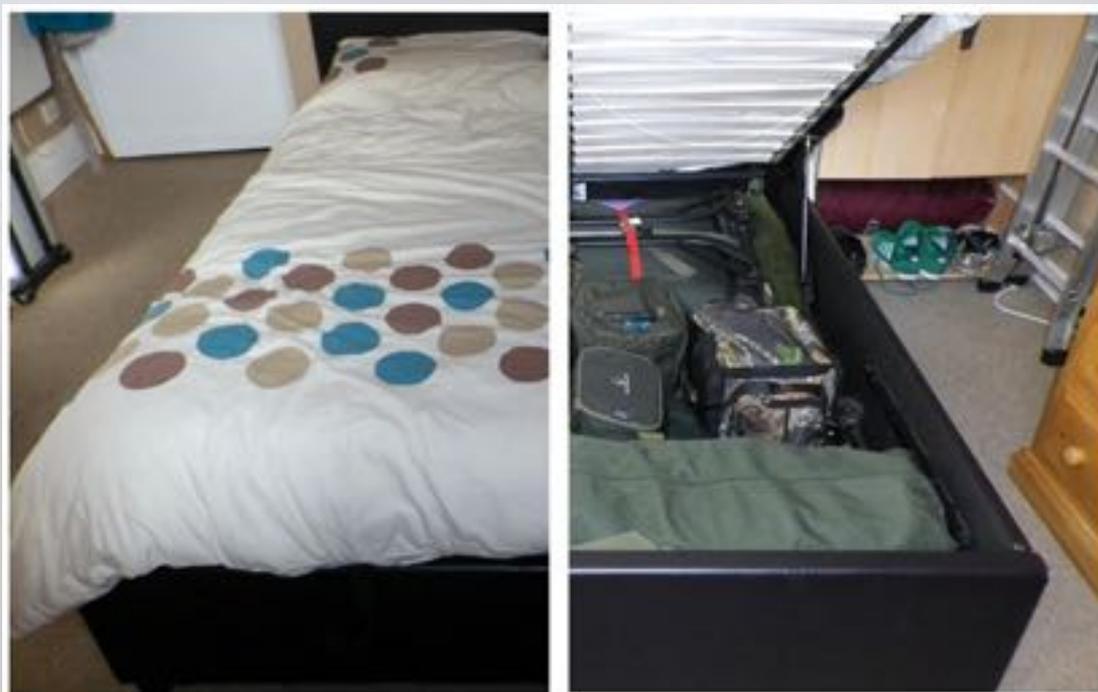
Once everything has been stripped down, cleaned and thoroughly dried for 24 hours, it's all stored away in the identical location for next time in a fabulous thing my wife Kelly bought for this very purpose, our Ottoman bed.

For a non-angler she's been a fantastic support throughout the last 2 years of this carping malarkey, who wouldn't love a woman that lets you air dry your leftover boilies in the airing cupboard,

gives you a drawer in the freezer for soon to be ordered fresh ones and NEVER moans about my 3-day trips away!

With the change in the seasons comes the end of my carp fishing for this year but not to the excitement that is ever increasing for the next trip south to again begin my quest for a twenty. If you enjoy my ramblings don't forget, there's more to read on my own Facebook page which features previous carp sessions and a whole host of other articles. Until the next time, take care and get fishing.

Derek Howie



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Ah, the Scouse that got away- Danny Dixon

I think this one will haunt me to the day I die. Now I will say this before I go on, I never went to go fishing, I never targeted the carp but yet...

Well just read on and see for yourself!

So my other half's sister and partner live in Liverpool and attend university there, so we went up on the train early one morning to visit. Whilst there, Jason told me about the various ponds and lakes in Liverpool with the majority being park lakes.

Not something I am totally familiar with but it's a body water and a tea vans are not usually too far away. We actually managed to somehow convince the girls to let us go fishing for the day while they did their thing, result!

Now the thing about Jason that I love is that he opens his coat and out drops a telescopic rod (fishing rod don't get too excited), this lad also hammocked between two trees

whilst I bivvied up on a comfy bed chair and sleeping bag while he slept wild to give you an idea about him, (that's another story for another day) proper boy that.

So we grabbed some maggots and a carrier bag with a few floats, a few hook lengths, a pot of shot and off we went.

We walked round to find school kids bunking off school. Sat in chairs with carp rods set up. I don't condone not having an education, but, if you're going to skive school this is what you should be doing!

I asked them a few questions and well for me being from Yorkshire I needed subtitles or a Liverpudlian to Yorkshire dictionary!

If you are carp fishing a park lake, there is no bait any more devastating than bread!

This would be my number one bait, especially in the warmer summer months on a zig rig due

to the amount of people who feed ducks, you have to consider bread as being part of the fish's diet in a park lake. A green laser pen seems to keep the wild birds away so you can use zigs with minimal fuss as usually birds can be a pest on a park lake, being used to close human contact.

I found a wall to sit on nice and comfy, found the biggest float I could and tied on a tiny size 20 hook, perfect for two red maggots so I could try and pull out a few nice roach. I flicked out the telescopic rod to, (this is hard to write, I am still upset!) So I flicked the rod to a spot I though suitable. I never plumbed the depth or anything! I just chucked it out and that was that!

I sat there waiting for my first roach or even perch, when the float knocked. Strange? Then it rose out of the water, even stranger?

Then it very slowly sunk under at an angle, fish on!



How to explain the next thing that happened? At first, it felt like a roach it was coming in nice as it was swimming towards me until the biggest, plate sized tale breached the water as it turned. Yeah time to stand up on the wall, we're into a carp! Now the next hour and 13 minutes are a bit of a blur but I remember the line just slowly coming from the reel as it clicked with each movement.

This fish didn't know it was hooked, or so it seemed. This carp casually swam around the lake and there was nothing I could do but hope he would swim towards me and I could somehow wade in and get behind him. Half an hour had passed and the 3lb bottom link was still holding strong with the size 20 hook. By this time a crowd had gathered, but even with their support I was losing this battle of wills!

In the ensuing fight the carp rose 2-3 times although never for long enough to get a real close look. There isn't to be honest a lot more to say, it was all a case of reeling in the slack as it swam towards me and allowing him to

take line as he swam away. The time passed and we had soon been attached together by 6lb line for little over an hour before I had a decision to make. I couldn't stay like this for the rest of the day!

I made the decision to try and entice him to the bank by putting some strain on the rod. Every underwater acrobatics the fish did I just waited for my arms to spring back to my body as the tension in the rod gave way but it didn't as for spells, I seemed to be edging as the hunter. The fish kited to the left, to the right but still the hook held.

The fish then darted to some reeds but still the little rod and hook stayed strong. Shaking like a leaf, sweaty palmed I carried on the battle. What an audience behind me! The lad from Yorkshire had found himself attached to a fine fish when for me the inevitable happened. The line drooped from the eyes of the straight rod, and what had felt like my whole world and just suddenly imploded into nothing. The buzz of excitement from behind was still alive as people watched with anticipation, not realiz-

ing what had happened until I said, "Its off...

it's off".

We have all lost fish and it wasn't my first and god it will not be my last. The two things that hurt the most was that I had been attached to my quarry for 1 hour and 13 minutes and the most painful thing of the two for me was that it was a hook pull.

So sure enough the size 20 came skipping back across the water as I reeled in. For me a hook pull is worse.

I feel like I could have played it better if the hook has managed to pull out, maybe I just gave it a little bit too much I don't know. The fish may have been a high single figured fish to a low double, I will never know and it's a pure guess, but if I had landed that on the coat pocket rod and carrier bag of tackle I would have been over the moon, but on this occasion it wasn't to be.

However, I do know this, I will be back in Liverpool in 2016, ready for round two!



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CARPBAIT-SOLUTIONS

1975 and on - Hookpull

I was just about a teenager when it started, it just kind of happened. Catching carp!!!!

I had been fishing since I was 10, my parents wanted something that would get me out of the house for a long time I think so they got me a fishing rod and some bits.

The usual, down the park lakes in Stoke catching silver bits and the occasional HUGE 2 or 3 lb bream or tench. We went night fishing in the parks, getting through holes in the fence after walking a couple of miles with rod bag, basket, yes basket! I had a wicker basket my nan bought me for my birthday, it was as big as me. A flask, few butties, pack of fags and fold up chair was all that was needed no alarms then.

Oh yeah, and a couple of mates so we could have a laugh. Got a roasting off the police a few times but they left us alone as we were behaving ourselves, well, most of the time.

Then I started to pester my dad to taxi me to other places, he was a star!! In from the pub at 11 or 12 (him not me) then I would have him up at 4 to take me and a mate or 2 fishing. He worked at H R Johnsons tiles in Tunstall.

Many reading this will know of the Golden-dale common there, well that pond is not far down the canal from where he worked so we would fish when he went to work and then pick us up after work. Going off subject a bit I think that fish somehow swam from Tunstall Park or Westport Lake when it was 17lb, heard different stories?

It would be about 1975 when I heard a rumour of this place called Gorsty hall, huge fish were climbing out of the lake.

Well it was nag my dad time. The normal would be up around 3am, walk to the bakery shop down the street and knock on the door to get a fresh

loaf, the baker was brilliant, got to know him well so he said I could go any time and just knock on the door or the window.

We fished how we knew how to, float, 18 or 16 hook, maggots, bread and corn.

That lake must have been breeding heaven for carp, we had loads of small 1/2 lb to 2 lb mirrors and commons. Then we would hook a monster, absolutely no way were we ever going to land one of them, got broke loads of times.

The men there were fishing what we considered to be a really odd method, we had not seen anything like it before. They had thick sea fishing rods up in the air beach caster style, they really were sea fishing rods as carp rods didn't exist then. The line looked like rope with a huge piece of bread on cast over the lily pads. I saw one catch the biggest fish I had dreamt of never mind seen, probably a low double.

That was it, I wanted one of them!!!! I was skint as usual because I was stupid and thought it was clever to smoke then so had to wait until my birthday to buy some rope for my Black prince reel. I managed to get 100 yards of rope (I bet it was about 8lb line) on my reel.

The plan was set, make dad a brew, wake him up, go get my bread, pick mate up for the fishing, off we go. I was one of them irritating little so and so's that would be sitting next to a bloke fishing asking questions all the time, always had been. I picked a few things up by being nosy and copying what they were doing.

The rig I am embarrassed to say, and please don't anyone do this, was a three-way swivel with a 3 foot dropper to a lead, not a weak link, and 3 food hooklink, think the lake was about 5 foot deep. Simple bait was floating crust. It worked I caught some monsters not far off double figures.

Gorsty is still there I think, nothing like it was, I think there are houses there now? When I started go-

ing it was a big hotel with bushes and trees around the lake so separate pegs, lovely place. It was sold on and the new owners realised they could get another 10 anglers on if they cut the bushes and trees down. I think a few fish started to "disappear" it ruined the place, time to move on.

The problem at Gorsty was our little feathered friends and the flying rats better known as sea gulls, they would steal our bait and the bread didn't take much to knock it off by the fish.

Not sure of the timing but I read a story of sponge cake for fishing, (I was a success story of the Stoke education system, I could read). My mum had 'a right old giggle' when I said I wanted to make sponge cake for fishing. The secret was to put green dye in to deter the ducks and 2 oz of wheat gluten to make it rubbery so it stayed on the hook. It worked!!!

I was a genius????

As usual because I am a sneaky secretive kind of person I kept it to myself and caught more than most other

kids. I didn't know at the time but I was getting hooked on catching carp.

The inevitable happened as a teenager, girls, fags, beer and also work was interrupting my fishing. No more 6 week holidays. Luckily a guy I worked with went fishing so I blagged a lift off him to Capesthorpe hall, we would go after work once a week fishing about 6 till 1am then work the next day.

You couldn't fish after dark but the game keeper Arthur would turn a blind eye because we got to know him very well. Lovely old bloke, we called him the tench because he had red eyes that were always watering and he was constantly wiping them with a handkerchief. I later found out it was because he had been captured and tortured by Japanese soldiers in the war and had his eye lids cut off.

Wasn't so funny after I found that out, I felt lower than a snake's belly!!

I had been messing about with fried luncheon meat, paste baits, cat meat mixed with flour or crushed Weetabix the normal stuff, going back a bit I remember some powder that was sold in a small tub, Hi Pro I think it was called, guarantee to catch loads of massive fish?? Nothing changes does it! It stank horrible, I now know it was fishmeal. It didn't work.

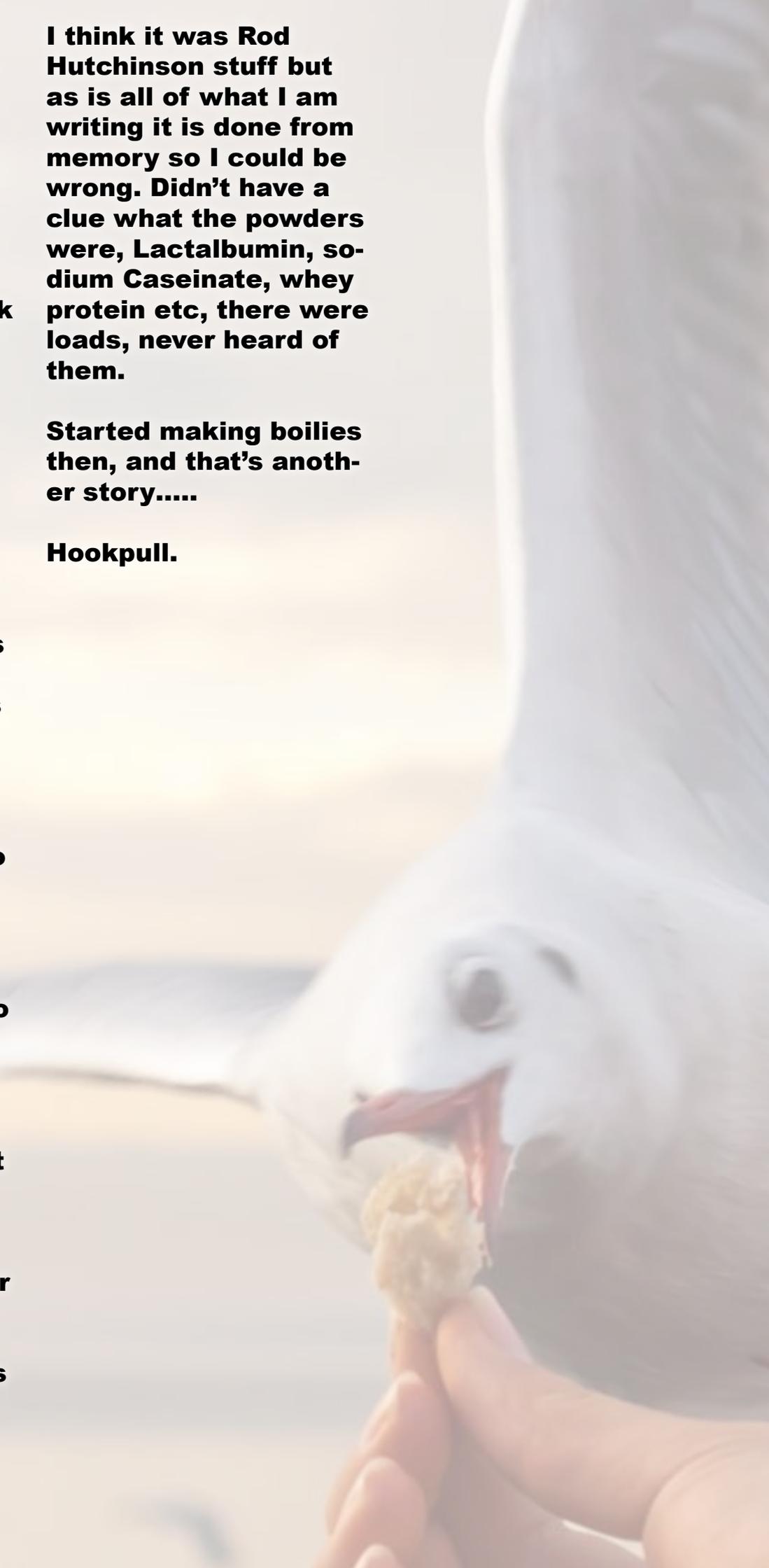
I saw some lads about the same age as me fishing with some balls at Capesthorne one day, this I would guess was early 80'S, didn't know what they were I hadn't seen them before?? (The balls not the lads) Got talking to them one was named Frank, he looked like the guy that used to dance a lot in Frankie goes to Hollywood who hadn't yet made it to stardom, turned out to be Frank Warwick.

They were boilies, first time I had seen them. I went investigating these balls and came across loads of powder stuff that they were made out of and as looked like fun to mess with, it was play time.

I think it was Rod Hutchinson stuff but as is all of what I am writing it is done from memory so I could be wrong. Didn't have a clue what the powders were, Lactalbumin, sodium Caseinate, whey protein etc, there were loads, never heard of them.

Started making boilies then, and that's another story.....

Hookpull.



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Target Fishing - Lee England (featuring Mick Smith)



It's a term used more regularly nowadays in fishing, by anglers who chase a variety of species not only us carp anglers. To 'Target' a certain fish in a water and base your approach around catching that set 'Target' can consume us as carp fisherman.

It can take several seasons for us to bank that fish of a life time, with endless hours on the lakeside studying the fish's movements and feeding patterns.

For the lucky ones it only takes a couple of months, but I believe that that is the beauty of targeting a certain fish in waters that contain many. You never quite know when the journey will end.

With so many lakes around that hold a wide range of stunning specimen fish, it can be a task just choosing your target. Looking through pictures that previous captors have posted, aiming your fishing at the biggest resident in the water, or even listening to tales of uncaught monsters that supposedly lurk in un-tapped waters, there's a variety of reasons why we do it.

Personal achievement being top of the list, so called 'bragging rights' maybe, or even just the thrill of the chase.

One thing is for sure though, once you have chosen your target and set out to try to catch it, there is definitely nothing more rewarding then seeing the one you've been after slip over the cord after a campaign targeting it.

I understand the appeal of this type of fishing, having targeted fish myself on a local syndicate.

The lake itself was four & half acres in size, full to the brim with dense blanket weed. It had snaggy bays at each end, eight-foot-tall reed beds and large overhanging willows along the back margin.

With plenty of places for this fish to patrol and hide up, the task in hand wasn't an easy one by any stretch of the imagination.

I'd fished this water for two years prior when half way through my third season it threw up a 29lb common, whilst this is not a massive fish, when I saw the photos I immediately wanted to

catch it. It was how the fish known as 'Blackspot' looked that enticed me to target him. It had an incredible dark complexion to the scales that almost shimmered grey, with a wide frame, large shoulders and a massive tail.

It wasn't long before I started looking back through the clubs albums for pictures of this fish easily identified by a small black spot on the underside of its belly just behind its front pecks to see if I could work out what swims it had slipped up in.

It didn't take long to work out that the majority of its previous captures were down at the woods end of the lake, although one thing seemed to stand out to me.

After being held up for a picture down in the woods, the next picture of the fish I could find would be along the road bank in one of the willow swims.

Now, it could have been just coincidence, but to me this seemed to happen far too regularly.

Knowing he had just come out in the woods, I started to concentrate my fishing in the willow swims in the hope of a reoccurrence of what seemed to

be the usual pattern. On my second visit to the willows on a warm September night, I managed to bank three fish, one of them being my tar-

get. I was over the moon having taken the time to piece together the puzzle, it had to have been my most memorable capture that season.



Everyone targets fish in different ways. Here is NEB's Mick Smith's account on how he went after a Yorkshire 40.

Targeting a certain fish can be very much time consuming, a lot of hard work, effort and somewhat frustrating at times, but when it's finally achieved it is one of the most rewarding and special moments of an anglers life.

I was fortunate enough to achieve this with one of my own personal goals and lucky enough to for fill it in my first season. Here's

a little insight as to how I approached my target fish.

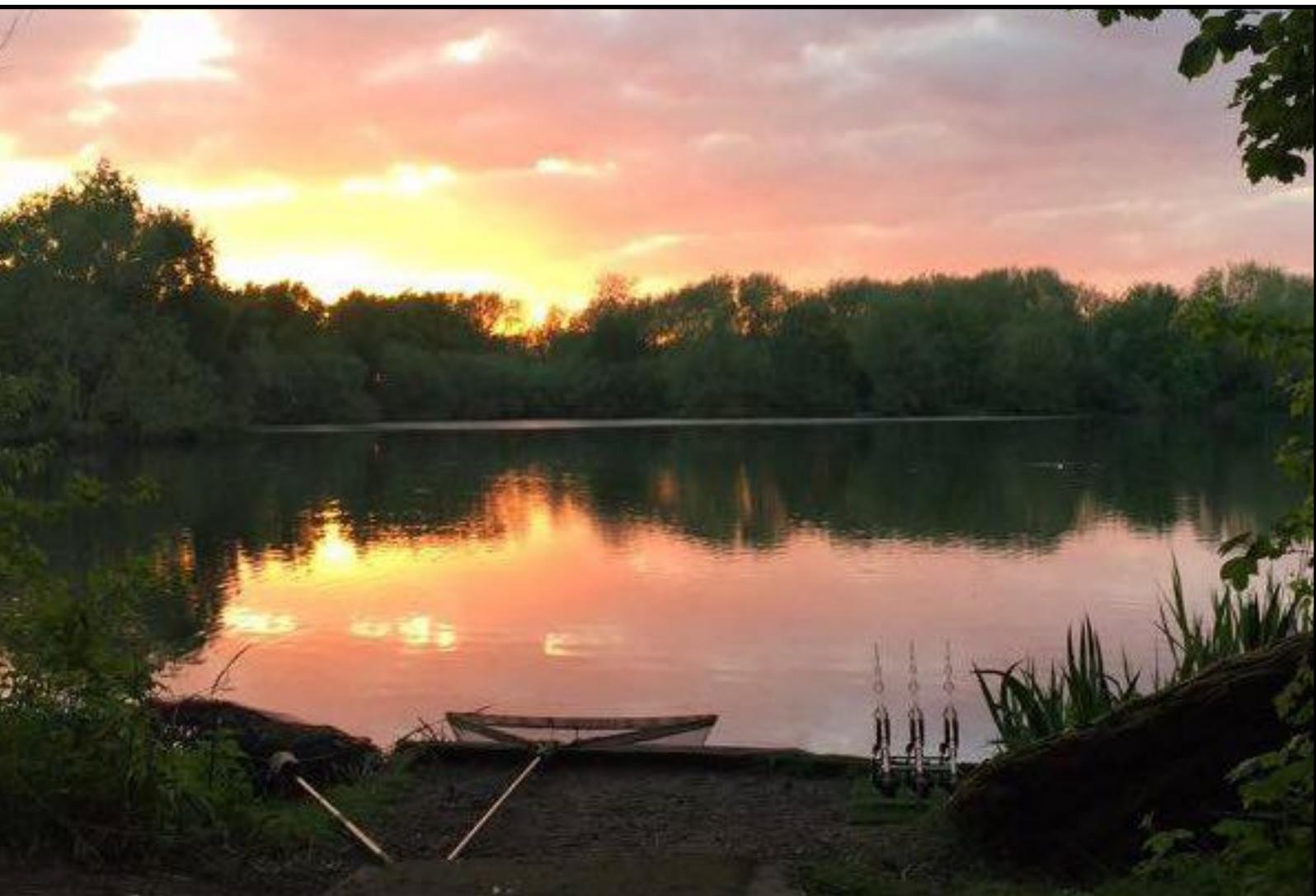
After constantly hearing from other anglers in the area about a certain lake close to home that holds a near 40lb fish, I started seeing a handful of pictures of her in her mid-30's, I just had to investigate it even further.

I managed to get in touch with the owner, and after short wait I landed myself a ticket. I started fishing the venue days after joining as I couldn't wait to start my campaign. My approach to start with was just standard boil-

ie fishing using North East Baits Krill Punch, a bait that I'd previously had success on and with my usual rigs at the ready I had the utmost confidence going into the session.

My first 24hr session unexpectedly produced 2 stunning fish to mid-20's.

After baiting up the same spot before I went, I left with high hopes for my next visit.



To my surprise the next 10 or so single nights were the total opposite. During those quiet sessions I took it upon myself to constantly watch the water, talk to other anglers, and even pop up for the odd hour every few days and do some feature find-ing.

Trickling bait in the known spots that the 'Big Girl' tends to visit and in this short space of time I saw my target fish on numerous occasions but I could never get it to feed in front of me. One day I decided to take a different approach and rather than spread my baits, I opted for solid bags, more of a one bite, one mouthful strategy.

I used NEB mixed pellet, crushed Krill Punch boilies and stick mix to construct these. I shortened the rigs to

3 inch and went for a smaller hook bait of a single corn topper from North East Baits.

What happened over the next several sessions left me gob-smacked? I stuck to fishing the visited areas of the 'Big Girl' regardless of the conditions, and I managed at least one fish a night over the next six times I visited. On one 24hr trip I had a ten fish hit and this time I knew I was getting closer and closer to my target.

One day I turned up to the lake and headed straight to my main baited area. The rods all clipped up with bags and rigs all made ready to go. The conditions couldn't have been worse, but after spotting numerous fizzing I stuck to my guns on the baited area.

This paid off within an hour I'd managed a five fish hit. One of these fish was an upper 20lb linear that I had observed swimming with the 'Big girl' a few times, you can imagine my excitement knowing I still had the whole afternoon left.

Literally five minutes later, after getting the rig back out I was in again, but this time I was on the phone to my mate, making that phone call that you dream of to say you have your target fish in the net.

To make things even better it was at its top weight and a new lake record of 44.8lb. This was my first UK 40 plus fish, all the blood sweat and tears had finally paid off and were more than worth it! This goes to show that you should never give up on your dreams.



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The Ashima Carp Championships

In February 2014 I was given an amazing opportunity with Ashima UK, tasked with running the Social media, a new website and general promotion of the brand.

A first for me and something I really got my teeth into. 2014 also was my first time of entering the main carp competitions. There had always been talk of Ashima doing there own in house competition but no one to take it on and drive forward! Thats exactly what I have done and in October 2014 we launched the Ashima Carp Championships.

We decided that we didn't want to make ANY money from this and keep it NON PROFIT, just provide and event that people like you and me would be comfortable entering if you like a bit of fun BUT with the chance to win some decent money and prizes along the way. We will also be presenting a sizeable cheque to Anglers Charity Auctions at the final in October this year.

The setup is simple. 4 Qualifiers and the Final. 12 pairs in each qualifier with the top 4 going on to make the 16 pair final. The top 3 positions in each qualifier have a prize fund and also sponsor package with prizes for the biggest fish of the weekend. Not bad just for a qualifier?

£300 per pair is the fee to enter and you can easily win that back and more by getting 1st place! 3 of the 4 qualifiers had sold out within days of being on sale, a great result! Fear not we have limited spaces on the Merrington Qualifier!

I have been fortunate enough to get some great sponsors on board for this years event we have Mainline Baits, Richworth, Tor Baits, Carp Particles UK, Active Baits, BankTech Innovations, Ashima, The Force Rod Design, Hydra Baits and Parallelum Lines. Nash Tackle will be providing the fish care. Its not always an easy task getting companies on board and I appreciate everyone who has helped make it possible!

The Final at Broadlands will also be filmed by Tales Angling Media, after speaking with John he was excited to be asked and we are super excited to have him on board. Keep your eyes peeled for March's issue of Talking Carp for an in-depth review on the Southern Qualifier and Final Venue Broadlands Lake home of many finals!

I just want to take this time to thank everyone who has helped make this possible and to all the Sponsors for getting behind us! If you would like anymore information regarding the Carp champs please don't hesitate to get in touch we have our Facebook page or you can check out all the info and rules on the website

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Until next month,

Tight Lines

Jason Budd



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Pulling Power!

- Scott Rowson

Following my piece on the Ebro last month I've had a few people ask me if I do any catfishing whilst I'm over there and the simple answer is yes! I must admit I'm not the biggest catfish fan although the power of these things amazes me, I've fished for sharks, stingrays and all sorts of other species but these big cats are like nothing else I've ever hooked up to!

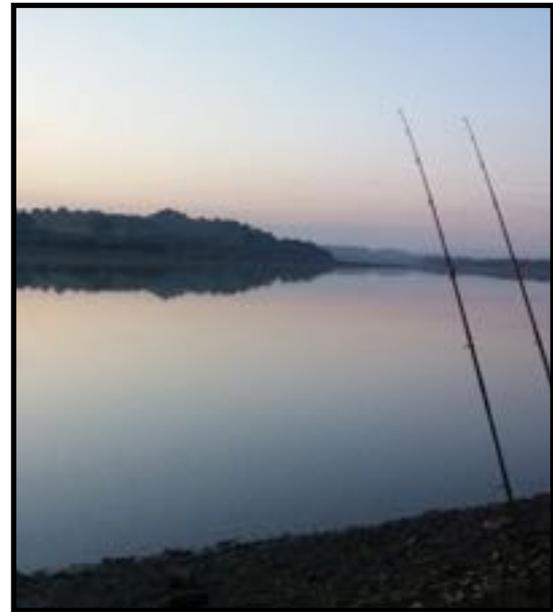
The tackle we were using comprised of a Harrison cat tamer 7lb tc rod, original shimano 6500b loaded with 150lb braid. This setup is probably the most balanced setup I've ever used with the rod having a beautiful action and for me the reels lets you feel more of the fight rather than cranking a multiplier up.

Now as I say I'm no cat expert so when it comes to rigs and things I always listen to my pal Paul Fagan from Ebro dreams who has developed his rigs and methods over the years and they are

tested to the max on the Ebro! He has come up with a rig that instead of using a big 12oz lead he uses a thick band into which he inserts a rock.

This helps in a couple of ways firstly as soon as you strike the rock comes off so you are left with nothing on the line except the cat, a bit like dumping the lead while carp fishing and secondly it's safer to fish by snags because you have no lead or anything to get snagged up while the fish is running, simple but very effective! Bait wise my favourite would be a whole squid mounted on a penel rig made up with O'Shaunessy hooks.

Of course while you are carp fishing there's always a chance that you get a take off a cat on carp gear then the fun really starts!



As long as the cat is not huge or the river section is not too wide you can be playing these cats up and down the river for hours or more if you don't fancy getting in a boat to chase after them, I remember 1 night last year I had 2 takes on carp gear and both of them completely despoiled me and there wasn't a thing I could do about it but the next night I did manage to land a 115lb on the carp gear!

The fight on cat gear with a big cat can be back breaking at times it's hard to explain if you've never hooked a 150lb plus cat before but if you are not standing one foot in front of the other they will pull you over when they turn and run not surprising really when you could have something well in excess of 15 stone on the end that is all tail and muscle it's a bit like having someone on a motorbike on the other end constantly trying to rip the rods from your hands!



Double hits are also very common when the cats are in your area and those can be arm breaking if you don't get a break in between takes to rest your arms, my favourite one happened a couple of years ago when I took my dad for his 65th birthday.

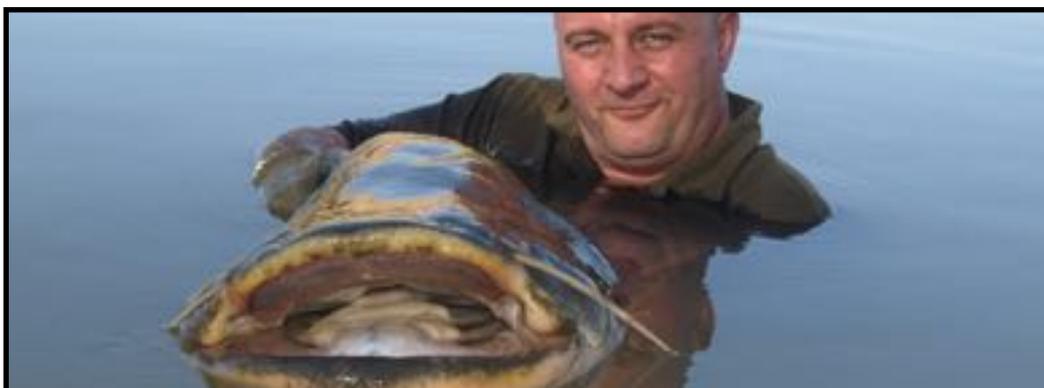
He had never been before or even seen a cat but he was adamant he was taking charge of the cat rods so we let him get on with it and before too long he struck into a cat that was around 50lb and said it was the best fight he had ever had, we all laughed and told him it was only a kitten and before long he would hook a "proper" one. The next day he had a take which we knew was a good fish because the rod arched over and stayed over so within seconds he wound the rod down and he was into the fight of his life!

I was filming the fight for about 15mins when I noticed the other rod going so I dropped the

camera and grabbed hold of it and knew straight away it was another good fish! Now we were in a mess because they had crossed each other about 100yds out so I had to jump in the boat and get them untangled which we managed to do but then I was in the middle of the river with a 150lb cat that Paul said had to come in the boat with us!

We managed to get it in the boat and safely return to the bank where my dad had just landed his. We weighed them both mine was 151lb and the other was 180lb on the button a right result and my dad goes over regular now he loves the power of these creatures so if you fancy doing battle with a fish that is quite likely to be heavier than yourself get over there or if you want any more info don't hesitate to get in touch with me and I will help any way I can.

Tight lines. Scott.



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GETTING IN TOUCH:

A Suitable Case For Treatment - Phil Bury

Some of you in the North West will know these places, and may even have a connection. Others who live down South will never have heard of them, either way, most people have early memories of some kind of fishing. I'm sure most of us could dig deep, and remember when we suddenly found ourselves addicted!

There are too many carp anglers and not enough water now, especially in the North West. It's really been a victim of its own success I think, the secret whispers of those in the know regarding fish, baits, rigs and such, coupled with the enormous advances in tackle and creature comforts, all appealing to boys who love toys. These days there are quite a few what some call "instant carp anglers" the only reason they are here is because carp fishing and tackle are now available on a far greater scale than twenty or thirty years ago. There's loads of

reasons people do it, escapism, somewhere to have a toke and chill for a day or two, travelling to foreign climes, even some who are just excited by 'camo'. I've always loved any kind of fishing, I'm not really sure why, it just had so much excitement for me from planning to execution, whether it was bit fishing or sea fishing. The thing everyone has in common is this. We all started somewhere; there was a time when we all made that first cast, here's mine.

No puns intended, but once I'd landed my first fish, I was well and truly hooked, and a deluge of water has flowed under the bridge since I caught it, but even before that, I have some fishy memories, only misty ones, and likely they've been favourably distorted by my grey cells to suit my fond memories.

The oldest fishy memory I have was wandering up and down Marple Locks on the canal, but not too far away

from my Dad, who was fishing. We'd travelled there on Dad's old Honda C70 (the one with white fairings), me with no helmet! I think

I was too young to be at school, or maybe I was off sick, (hardly likely, as far as old man was concerned you had to at least lose a limb to justify a day off school)! Dad's friend "Mattress Maguire" (always asleep when he should have been working at Ringway Airport apparently), came down for a chat. He gave me a 10p coin, or maybe it was two shillings? So it must have been around 1970/71, making me four or five years old. I remember being very excited at such a large sum of cash and already had plans for it, Bazooka Joes, Black Jacks, Lucky Bags and the like from the sweet shop in the village.

Not long after he left, I remember seeing a small upturned dead fish floating in the canal, a perch or roach maybe. As Dad hadn't caught anything, I was absolutely determined to get that fish from the middle of the canal, just to inspect it. I picked up a stick from the canal side bushes to throw at the fish, hoping the waves would push it my way. A big throw in the right direction was met with disaster!

I was holding the coin in three fingers of my throwing hand, whilst trying to throw the stick with two fingers. The stick flew past the fish, and the coin went forth into the canal, where it lies to this day. I don't remember crying, but I remember not telling Dad in case of any forth-coming punishment for my stupidity. What a plonker! Don't know why I remember that little episode; maybe it was one of my first financial lessons too?

Another thing I remember from around that time was seeing mum with a cane rod in the air, tangled around some low lying willow branches, and a fish hanging from the end of the line in mid-air.

It was the result of an over zealous strike. I'm sure it was Roman Lakes in Marple. This almost seems like a figment of my imagination, but it's so vivid I'm sure it happened. Like most middle-aged people, I used to be able to remember lots of stuff, but these days I suppose my head must be full. Let's see if I can empty a few memories and make space for some new ones.....

Peel Hall Moat, Wythenshawe.

I remember when it started; it was late June or early July 1976, the really hot summer we had. I was in what we called back then third year juniors, I think it's year six now, so would have been ten years old, heading towards September and my last Junior school year.

As I was one of the oldest in my year, I was always put in the class with the younger pupils from the year above. I sat at a desk on this occasion with Andrew Heywood, whose claim to fame was appearing on Coronation Street. His dad worked there, and had landed him a small role which involved him stealing

Rita Faircloughs (maybe Elsie Tanners?) new fur coat, which he then made into a "Guy Fawkes" and knocked on Rovers Return door begging "a penny for the Guy?"!

"Have you ever been fishing?" he asked. "No," I replied, "but I went with my mum and dad once." "If you fancy it, be at my house tonight at half five, on your bike, you don't need anything, I'll sort the tackle," he said. I was very excited, but a bit nervous. As an easily influenced ten-year-old I'd heard all the exaggerated tales of how rough it was, and how they used to bash anybody from Heald Green! We were going where the angels feared to tread...Peel Hall in Wythenshawe!

We cycled the two miles or so and arrived at Peel Hall, another lad from school, Ian ("Arnie") Arnfield met us there. Peel Hall itself was just a dilapidated building, of which the only thing remaining was the footings.

It was surrounded by an overgrown moat, which was filled with the ubiquitous rusty bikes and shopping trolleys. The moat surface was covered to the in weed, which grew from the bottom, with small three or four foot holes here and there which the kids had cleared out so they could “fish.”

I still didn't know where the tackle was, but all was soon revealed, as Andy and Arnie snapped a few four or five foot branches from the privet bushes for our rods, to which we tied some two or three-pound line which Andy had brought. We then tied a matchstick (found on the floor) to this, and finally a granny knotted bent pin around twelve inches away. We lifted bricks and black bags of garden waste which surrounded the moat, and collected various sizes of worms for bait, these were then impaled on the pin, and dropped into the water!

I can't remember who caught the first one, but it wasn't me. I remember Arnie and Andy catching at least ten each before I caught. There was a knack to it.

We were trying to catch

Three Spined Sticklebacks, which as most people know are spikey and very tiny. The trick was to give the fish time to suck on the worm, which would get stuck in its throat; this would register when the matchstick float stayed under the surface for a few seconds. We then lifted the fish out smoothly so that it didn't drop off.

I soon got the hang of it. We saved the fish in an old white bucket we found so we could count them at the end, of course, we had an argument over who'd caught the most, the biggest, and the reddest!

I'd never had so much fun and excitement, and we stayed out way too late for young lads on a school night.

It was all we talked about at school the next day, and for many days after. We spent all our spare time fishing in the moat over the next few weekends and into the summer holidays.

Arnie's dad went fishing, and had given him a packet of real fishing hooks to nylon, about size 16, and about two weeks after he turned up with a real fishing rod and reel as well. We

and all the other local lads, who we had come to know, were amazed!

We were completely spellbound watching him with real tackle. It was about an hour later when he starts shouting that he had a perch. It was probably less than an ounce in weight, but with its striking markings and colours it was superb to look at, and it was a real fish. After watching it swim around a bait box for ten minutes or so, and pulling its dorsal fin up and down, we all ran off determined to catch our own.



This picture shows the first swim I ever fished at Peel Hall Moat, the platform is a recent addition. I fished just where the longer twigs on the left enter the water. I used to think it was massive! Amazing I still remember this 40 years later!

Andy Heywood's cousin lived near the moat, which was how Andy first discovered it. His cousin came down one day showing off a really rubbish Woolworths five-foot rod he was selling...it was bright red! On the way home Andy said he was getting the money from his mum to buy it from his cousin the next day. I called at Andy's around teatime the following day to find out he'd got in trouble and his mum wouldn't

give him any money or let him out. I went home and scrounged the required funds then cycled to his cousins in Woodhouse Park, Wythenshawe. There I acquired my first rod minus the tip ring, for the princely sum of... 65p.

When Andy found out he went mad, administered the sort of beating lads who were one year older gave to their juniors, and we had a bit of a fall out over it,

but as it is with young kids, we were best friends by lunchtime. I was very excited about my purchase and on my birthday only a few weeks later I was given a brand new reel and line, plus an old tackle box with some bits from my Granddad Joe. Now we were cooking! I had also "acquired" some floats, split shot, and hooks from various friends and relatives. I was now a REAL fisherman!



The old bridge still standing over the moat.

I couldn't find any pictures of the original Hall, only text information. Peel Hall was constructed by John de Arderne during the mid 14th century. The house passed to the Stanley family in 1408 and remained in their hands for 100 years, after which it passed through a succession of different owners until acquired by the Tattons. The house was eventually demolished in 1809 and replaced the following year by a farmhouse, which in turn was demolished in 1975. Remains from the occupation of the site include a waterlogged moat which is 8-14 metres wide and 1.2 metres deep. An outer bank 10 metres wide and 0.3 metres high flanks the moat's northern arm. Crossing the moat is a triple-arched sandstone bridge dating to the 17th century.

Black Lake, Lindow Common.

Andy heard of a lake about five miles away in Wilmslow, which was free to fish for children. We planned our first ever trip there with great excitement. His dad was going to drop us off in the morning and pick us up just before tea. We spent the week prior to our trip working everything out, what to wear, which bait, which float, where we would fish by looking at a map, no detail was missed, and this was before we even saw the place!

Andy had shown me how to set up my rod days before we went, and I spent hours putting up and tying floats, hooks and weight on, then checking the amount of weight for each float was correct in the bath!

We even went down the field practising how to cast, so we could get really far.

Neither of us were aware of how to fill a reel up at this time, so the line was well short of the spool lip, this just made it very difficult to cast, I thought it was my rod was too short, as Andy, who had borrowed a rod and

reel of his dads could cast much further.

The day arrived and we were dropped at the lake with our tackle, maggots and sandwiches. We fished about twenty yards apart and both sat there on what was quite a cool Autumn day staring at our floats. We didn't know how to set the depth, or whether or not we were in weed, we didn't know anything, and it didn't matter a jot! We were just so excited to be there.

The excitement lasted about an hour. Surely with our proper rods and reels we should have caught by now? Andy showed me a "special weight" shaped like a barrel. He told me that if I put it on I could cast very far and the float wouldn't sink.

Well, he didn't really have a clue, he was right about the distance, but the float sank like a brick! I didn't care; to me I had cast to the horizon, at least twenty yards.

We decided to walk around the lake to see if there was anything interesting. We left our lines in the water and wandered off for an hour, getting diverted

by anything, like throwing stones at ducks and swans!

On our return we decided to have a re cast. I picked up my rod and began to wind. Hold up, what was that? I was sure I felt a little tug, but put it down to the big weight (1/2 oz) I had on. As the float and weight came to the edge I could not believe my eyes, there it was, my first real fish, a roach of around two or three ounces had hung itself while we were off playing and I duly swung the fish onto the gravel path.

Andy unhooked the fish with a disgorgers, (what a horrible word), and we put the fish in a bait box for an hour and just kept picking it up and touching it, and putting it back in the box.

I could tell Andy was upset at me catching, and off he went to try his damdest not to be outdone by somebody younger and less experienced.

I put the fish back eventually and cast my line again, but couldn't find any more suicidal fish! What a fantastic day!

The Perch Pond (or The Horse Field as some knew it)

I didn't fish with Andy again after that summer. He moved away in Winter and went to a secondary school out of the area.

I still met up with Arnie occasionally down the park where all the local youths hung around. It was during one of these meet ups that he mentioned a pond he had found which he said was full of perch.

One of his new friends at secondary school had shown it to him, and they had been a couple of times and caught up to five fish in a day, which to us was fantastic. I couldn't wait to go and we arranged to go that weekend, with me just watching while he fished. We rode up on our bikes early in the morning, and crossed the field to the pond avoiding the numerous horses. Looking back, it was so dangerous for a couple of kids walking around the field, the horses used to charge up and down occasionally, bucking wildly.

Once he had set up, Ian impaled the tail end of a lobworm on his size 16 eyed hook and dropped his float into the depths, this method was to become my favourite bait

at the time. It was only a few minutes until the float bobbed and then sank out of site as the first greedy perch made a mistake, and Ian duly struck, and lifted the fish from the water.

He went on to catch about ten fish that day up to about 8oz, which for us was a Leviathan! I couldn't wait to have a go myself, and rode home as fast as I could down East Ave, I barely had to pedal, as it was downhill all the way.

I got together my red rod, what few bits of tackle I had scrounged during the summer break, and with the help of some Fairy liquid, collected a bait box of juicy worms from our back lawn.

The next morning, I was casting my float into the half light. I really couldn't believe it when the float went under, but was soon in the swing of things, catching about five or six for the day. Of course, in hindsight the tackle was way too heavy and coarse for the small perch, but as they say, ignorance is bliss!

I spent many hours at The Perch pond, and soon caught my first tench, (which we liberated to John Higgins garden pond)!

Over the next few months, lots of things happened. It transpired

that Martin (my elder brother) had a few mates who also liked fishing, and before long, there was a gang of us from around 10 to 14 years old trudging up East Ave or Queensway to the Horsefield, excitedly yakking about where we were going to fish.

Inevitably, the older kids got the "best" pegs, and had better gear than me, but we all had occasional moments in the lime light, catching perch up to 11/2lb, and tench of nearly 3lbs, all with a shared landing net.

We also saw our first carp ever that Autumn, and it was HUGE! It was just sat with its face protruding from a weed bed for about three hours, its lips opening and closing. We were informed it was around 13lb, a local scallywag had stolen it from "Smithies" lodge down the road. We didn't even try to catch it, after everything we had read about carp fishing it was way beyond us kids to even try.

Christmas Day that year was like a dream, dad surprised us and produced new 13ft float rods and Mitchell 324 reels for Martin and me. Guess where the three of us went on a frosty Boxing Day morning? Too right we did! We caught as well, only a couple but on real tackle, a 13ft rod that I could hardly pick up!

We used to go up to Droylsden to visit my grandma, and could talk fishing there with Uncle "what you after, Sharks?" Michael (the matchman), or Uncle Barry if he was about. Our cousins in Droylsden used to fish too, and we'd spend time comparing notes and tackle, each trying to outdo the other.

They were great times when we were young, over the years we caught loads of small fish, even a few small carp near the end, until eventually the Horsefield pond was filled in and houses built on the site, what a shame.

King Georges.

We fished loads of places over the years. One lake was in Altrincham, called King Georges` Pool. It had a fair few coarse fish in, plus some big (for the time), carp. We used to see these men fishing with electronic indicators with wires all over the place, leading into

early style bivvies'. They would fish all night in pursuit of the carp, and were very secretive of their baits and methods. This obviously provoked even more interest from us young kids, and I suppose we all wished to be chasing big carp when we were old enough. At the time, one or two bites a day were rare when trying to catch carp, the methods were crude, and the baits and tackle just wasn't available like it is now.

We were at King Georges one day with Martin and one of his friends from school, Michael Pemberton, ("Peb"), who was about six foot four when he was fourteen. We were fishing for whatever came along with maggots and worms. Suddenly, we heard this constant beeping coming from inside a bivvy a couple of swims down, and a hairy, camo clad carper came running out and struck his rod. The rod bent double, and we watched in awe as he played the fish to the edge. He landed the fish then carried the landing net to the grassed area at the back. He lay the net down and unhooked the fish, which he then weighed in a hessian sack, 10lbs 2 oz. We had never seen anything like it before in the flesh and were as gob-smacked as the crowd of around twenty onlookers who had gathered. All the usual questions followed." What bait?"

"How far?" "What pound line?" "Does it bite?" "Are you going to eat it?" There was no doubt about it, everybody was impressed, including us. I do remember Martin asking the "what bait did you catch it on?" question, to which the guy replied. "double maggot". I remember thinking what an arsehole the carper was, replying like that to a young inquisitor. But I did so want to catch one of those fish.

We went back to our pegs with renewed enthusiasm. Pebs disappeared under his umbrella, and came out with the most bizarre rig ever! A pike float, under which was a ledger weight stopped by a swivel then some wire trace to which was tied a size 8 treble hook. He then got a full slice of white bread, removed the crust, and rolled it into a ball, then covered the whole hook completely! It looked like he was casting out a bloody golf ball! Even then I knew he wouldn't get a bite, but after seeing the big carp, he was determined to catch one. He cast the rig and bait as far as he could, and we sat down for lunch on the grass. Pebs went to the toilet block just behind the swim, and me and Martin hatched a plan. The three of us sat there for ten minutes or so, eating jam butties.

Then I stood up and announced I would get the next bite. Unbeknown to Peps, whilst he was otherwise engaged, I had cast a lead over his "big fish rig" quite far out. I dipped my rod tip under the water, and then reeled as fast as I could! "Peps! Peps!" I shouted. "Something has taken your bread bait". He looked up to see his pike float skimming across the surface at a rate of knots! He ran, knocking over his can of coke, and tripping over a deckchair on the way to his rod. He grabbed his rod giving an almighty strike!

Then he wound furiously. It all became apparent too quickly as me and Martin fell about in fits of laughter. Peps was fuming! He threw the rod down, marched over to me, and smacked me right on the nose, making my folding deckchair collapse with the force! There was blood everywhere, but I still couldn't stop laughing, it kept snorting out of my nose as I laughed. We got the two buses home covered in blood and stinking of roach slime, all still the best of mates and planning our next trip! Happy Days!!

I don't remember ever falling out with fishing, even as I got a bit older, it was my true passion, something I dreamt about, read about, day-dreamed and talked about in school.

Carp fishing was becoming more and more popular, the draw of the secretive lives of carp anglers, and the extremes they went to for a big fish was all too much and soon enough a seed would be firmly planted!



Me around eleven years old in Ireland.



Brother Martin was as addicted as me in the early days



Grandma Florie showing off a Dab, caught beneath the iron bridge during our annual Rhyl holidays. I think we did actually eat this! What a mop of hair! If I knew I would be a baldy I would have treasured it!



Chorlton water park had some Chub in.



Chorlton Tench (& Perch) on Lobworm.

The Turning Point.

Over the years, Martin and I fished all over the place, anywhere we could, sometimes together, sometimes with mates, sometimes on our own. It was on a trip to a fishing shop in Northenden that we discovered a leaflet for Chorlton Water Park, owned and operated by Trafford Council. This is where I first intentionally fished for carp, and losing a big fish on luncheon meat made me more determined than ever to land a carp from Chorlton.

I was friends with a lad at school Col Williams. He was quite keen on fishing too and we soon became best mates and spent most of our weekends and school holidays on Chorlton Marina. Col would fish a rod for pike whilst I always had a rod out for carp. We were happy fishing for anything that came along, and soon came up with the ultimate secret Crucian rig. A size 18 hook to which we impaled about twenty maggots threaded up the line, I've still no idea how or why we came up with it but it worked brilliantly, we had lots of good fish on it. We even started doing the odd night too, probably a bit stupid really, but we were ignorant of any dangers in those days. We were just mad for fishing!

Dad was taking me to Chorlton Marina one time, and as we passed a bus stop at the end of the road there was a lad perhaps a year older than

me stood waiting for a bus with his tackle. We knew the bus route and we were travelling most of it, so stopped and offered him a lift, (you'd probably get arrested for it these days)! It transpired he was meeting a friend at Sale Water park for the day and proceeded to sell me the idea that it was full of big carp that were more than catchable. I agreed to go with him and try Sale for a change.

We arrived at the car park and I was duly pointed to the pylon near the car park as a good area to fish. I set my tackle up and sat on my seat box. There was no need to plumb the depth in those days, I just fished a shot near the hook and slid the float up and down to suit my mood.

I put on one of my many porcupine quill floats and cast out. I thought I had my float over shotted as it disappeared from site. On lifting the rod, there was a tug signifying that a perch had indeed taken my lobworm on the first drop!

This continued throughout the day and my keep net was brimming with perch, some up to a pound in weight. Occasionally I would look to my right and a chap who, judging by his set up and his impersonation of Ian Heaps with his 'tache was quite a competent match angler was absolutely hauling carp out one after the other, most around the three to four pound

mark.

I had to try for one of these and ran back to my peg and impaled an enormous lobworm on a size 8 hook. I cast miles (about forty yards)! Put a piece of silver paper on the line for an indicator and sat back.

A short time later the foil twitched a bit, then a bit more, then rose to the top. I struck into, then played in the biggest perch I'd ever seen.

It was about two pound in weight and was duly deposited in the keepnet with it's stripy brethren to show dad on collection. Dad came all the way for me after tea, and was very impressed with my catch.

All the way home I talked about what a great a place it was, and how I would love to catch one of those big carp in there. I didn't have a clue what was sneaking up on me, I never saw it coming, but that was the turning point, because as we drove home, I was already planning my next session, and it was most definitely for CARP!!!



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And So It Began - Ady Fytche

I have always wanted to contribute a few words to a magazine and have rarely had the opportunity to do so. I am not 'the world's best carp fisherman' nor am I a professional but what I can say is that for the last 44 years I have done all types of fishing, in many different locations and have been lucky enough to experience some fantastic moments.

My first experience was with my Grandfather Fred, who took me down to the Worcester Canal when I was 5 years old with a small rod and little tin reel and a tin of maggots picked up from a local farm who used to hang a dead sheep up in the barn for producing the maggots! I quickly became very interested in fishing and joined a local club in Sussex and also fished most of the summer holidays on the Norfolk Broads. I continued to do this but also became interested in fly fishing in Scotland and Wales in later years and pike fishing on the broads.

Pike fishing brought me many thrills and winning a pike match in Lincolnshire using a fly rod and home tied pike flies was a particular victory. At first I never really took to carp fishing, however I became hooked on natural carp stalking, always having a rod in the car on my travels. I have moved 25 times and lived all over the UK and

even abroad on occasions. I have blue water fished in Antigua and worked there for a while. An amazing experience catching wahoo, dolphin fish, sword fish, marlin and pleasure fishing for the pan of snapper! Its really only in the last 3 years I have become truly hooked on carp fishing. I was asked to accompany a good friend, Glenn Leban on a trip to a 'runs water' and that was it, I was totally and utterly hooked and renewed my interest in the pursuit of carp.

I promised myself I would not become a tackle tart, that I did not need to spend loads of money on the latest equipment and that I would not become mesmerized with boilies and particles to the point of obsession. **HOW WRONG I WAS!** I started to totally rebuild my tackle collection and look in to all kinds of areas. I was hungry for knowledge. I watched carping blogs and videos, looked at the Thinking Tackle series and whilst I became a tackle tart, I never lost the opinion that at the end of the day, catching carp came down to knowledge, presentation and perseverance!

Over the first few months, I met and made many new friends and always had a keen interest in challenging myself with new venues, perfecting my watercraft and applying my new found knowledge. I never forgot my early carping experienc-

es and to this day will often put a chunk of luncheon meat on the hair to good effect. I think that it is so easy to become obsessed with the latest boilies and glugs and goos and soaks. The truth behind all of that is that whilst you can build an attraction and stimulate the carp in to feeding, it was important for me to hold on to reality and concentrate of watercraft and presentation.

My other observation on the tackle side was that there was a trend happening with regard to tackle. If you didn't have a 50mm butt ring, a big pit style reel or a certain test curve rod or the latest equipment you were deemed as old fashioned, outdated and obsolete. To this day, whilst I love some of the new rods, I still have and use a set of Greys X-flite original 3lb test curve rods and 3 of the Shimano Baitrunner 10000 reels. Yes the rods have a 40mm butt ring and **YES** the reels are not big pits but the equipment performs well and does what I need it to do! **CATCH FISH.**

I have travelled to many different venues and I would like to think that the readers of this e-zine would like to have some real time, honest reviews of these waters, without the hype and the marketing angles thrown in for free! I hope that this would be useful if readers can put up with my ramblings....



About a year and a half ago, I decided that I was going to make my own carp bait. I had joined the Facebook page 'Home Made Boilie/ Steamie Secrets'.

I had heard all the rumours about the top boilies and learnt from as many people as possible about the ingredients, ingredients balance and flavours used and came to a decision that I would start to develop my own boilies.

Pete Green, now Allure Baits, is an idol in my book and the FB page residents and Pete helped me to put together my first boilie.

A red birdfood boilie which did very well. I wanted, however, to learn and to develop my own bait and have since developed my own

Squid and Banana Boilie which is on its 7th revision. I am very excited and it has already produced fish to 29 pounds!

The bait making process though is for another article in the future as I am sure, my bait developing process may well be an inspiration to carp anglers wanting to roll their own bait or a warning not to!

One last observation I have made is that it has seemed to become the 'vogue' to be a team member or a consultant allied to a particular company.

I think this is a good thing if you truly believe that the products offered by that company are quality products and that they work for you, although, it seems it

has got slightly out of hand and once again, the art of catching fish seems to be relying on marketed products and jazzy names rather than good old fashioned learning and knowledge.

I myself am a member of the Deception Angling Team and that is because I believe in the product and the price point and the quality. I will still continue to try other end tackle and passionately feedback the results to this company, but I will always keep in mind the true aim, which is to ENJOY CARPING, ENJOY THE COUNTRYSIDE, BUILD MY KNOWLEDGE AND ABOVE ALL CATCH CARP.



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An Anglers Journey - TeeKay

I described in my last piece how I became disillusioned with fishing for Carp and had temporarily veered off course, heading towards the match fishing side of our sport. I had thoroughly enjoyed my Sunday morning coach trips to the rivers Trent and Severn and looked forward to the draw for pegs as well as the weigh in at the end of the match.

I can now fully understand the attraction that matchmen have in competing against each other and I have felt chest bursting pride when you have the caught heaviest weight, beating all your rivals hands down, this feeling only came my way twice and on both occasions it was large chub that helped me to win the pool money. Up until

I started going on coach trips to distant rivers I had never seen a chub in the flesh, but when I did eventually catch one I was in total awe at the size of it, although it weighed four and a half pounds it looked twice that size and its mouth looked far too big for its head, a veritable eating machine.

I will now jump forward a couple of years and introduce my cousin Paul Morris, because of his surname he had acquired the nickname "Mo" I will credit him for starting me back along the big fish trail.

Mo was a couple of years younger than me and lived in the next street, his family had always gone on camping holidays and he used to make his expeditions under canvas sound really exciting especially when he told me stories about camping on the banks of Bala lake in Wales and fishing into the night for whatever came along, his tale of the angry pike he had caught held me spellbound and wishing I had been there to see it.

Mo started to accompany me on my fishing trips; he had quite a bit of fishing tackle, loads of enthusiasm but not a lot of experience but he was more than willing to learn. It was whilst on a perch fishing trip one cold and frosty February morning on a small lake in Lyme Park that the conversation between me and Mo got around to night fishing and how much easier it was to catch the bigger fish; I wouldn't know as I had never fished a night through; it later transpired that neither had Mo! Anyway a plan was hatched to go night fishing once the weather warmed up a bit in a few months time.

My uncle Michael, who years before had given me a Mitchell 300 reel, lived in the village of Foulridge near Colne, Lancashire his house was a fairly short walk from the banks of Foulridge reservoir, which fed the nearby

Leeds Liverpool canal, over a hundred years ago it was a watery lifeline for local industry , I think Foulridge is also known as Lake Burwain,

I had fished the lake numerous times when my family stayed at my aunt and uncles house for our weekend visits to the countryside and I usually caught some nice roach and perch as well as the odd two pound jack pike.

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Mo and I planned to carry out our first night fishing trip to Foulridge reservoir for a couple of reasons,

Firstly if during the night we needed to pack up for any reason we could stay at our aunt and uncles house until we could catch the bus home the next day and secondly we could have our tea at their house before we started fishing which was a bonus as my aunt was a brilliant cook and usually gave me loads of homemade cakes to take with me on a fishing trip. We drew up a list of what we would need to take with us and then counted down the days to our adventure.

A few weeks later we were at Chorlton Street bus depot in Manchester, climbing aboard the grimy X43 bus to Skipton, it was a Saturday afternoon and very busy, we got some very strange looks from the other smartly dressed passengers as we boarded, dressed like young soldiers and carrying a mountain of smelly fishing gear.

The kit we had with us appeared to be everything but the kitchen sink, but it later turned out to be so inadequate that we nearly had to call off our adventure before midnight; we were so cold and uncomfortable that night, that it very nearly became our first and last night fishing trip!

I don't know exactly how many acres of water made up Foulridge reservoir but to me it was big, bigger than Debdale Park reservoir, it was fed by another reservoir higher up the hill, this reservoir was a private trout fishery, from it flowed a small feeder stream which ran under the main road and into the shallower end of Foulridge, which was dammed at the opposite

end, its depths there were twenty feet deep or more and popular with matchmen who used to fish the slider float to good effect. Most of the banks seemed to be made up of gritty sand and were pretty easy to fish from unless the water level was up, then the bushes and stone retaining bank edges made it difficult to fish from.

I had been told by my uncle that there were some large shoals of big bream present as well as the odd tench and carp, I had always wanted to catch a large bronze bream, and had read a book from the Catchmore series of fishing paperbacks called Catchmore Bream so at least we had done our homework and we should if all went well put a couple of "dustbin lids" on the bank. For the younger generation amongst us "dustbin lids" in those days meant large bream not young children, just in case you were wondering!

Our chosen swim was on a gently sloping stretch of bank we knew as the "The Graveyard stretch" this was because of the adjacent cemetery, the swim itself was fairly shallow with very clear water, it had some mares tail weed growing in small clumps throughout its depth, the bream, we were told liked to root about in the weed searching for morsels of food, the area seemed an ideal place to set up camp. When I say set up camp, you might picture in your mind a bivvy with bed chairs and army style sleeping bags along with all the associated paraphernalia that goes with today's carping scene but in the mid-seventies the reality was very different.

Our camp consisted of my green 32" inch nylon umbrella sat up like a mushroom with some opaque plastic sheeting pulled over it and pegged down with some large stones from the bankside, another piece of plastic was used as a groundsheet, it looked like an Eskimo apprentice had messed up on his first attempt at building an igloo. Mo had his own thin nylon sleeping bag but the only cover I had was a single grey army blanket borrowed from my mum's airing cupboard. We had one wicker fishing basket between us because in those days nobody would be seen dead sitting on a chair whilst fishing, not that fishing chairs had been invented then anyway.

When we set out earlier that day we both thought that we had brought too much kit with us and considered leaving behind the sleeping bag and army blanket, thank god we didn't!

The day had been roasting hot, the sun shone fiercely through a cloudless blue sky and carrying our tackle from my uncle's house to the lake had made us hot and sticky, without the slightest breeze to cool us down we were both soon drenched in sweat. With frequent stops to adjust the balance of our fishing gear and also to take a cooling drink from our rapidly diminishing lemonade supply, we eventually arrived at our chosen peg and set up camp.

Once we had everything in place we set up our rods, one each! It would be years before fishing two rods became the norm. Our rods

were fibreglass float rods; I also had my trusty Mitchell 300 filled with 5lb Platil line whilst Mo had an unusual silver reel the make of which I had not seen before, I think it was an American fixed spool spinning reel.

We had brought with us some white breadcrumb groundbait and a large container of lobworms, the groundbait along with a large quantity of humanely chopped up worm was quickly despatched towards the edge of the mares tail weed, in slightly deeper water about twenty yards out. We knew that the best time to catch large bream was going to be around dusk which was about three or four hours away, so we had a bit of time on our hands before the witching hour. We were both set up fairly close to each other; this was so we could sit in the "bivvy" and still keep an eye on our indicators which believe it or not consisted of a small ball of bread squeezed onto the mainline with a 15" drop, when ledgering I would normally have used a Fairy Liquid bottle top but my last one was lost on the strike a few weeks before, my mum warned me about nicking another one so it was back to basics once more.

I don't think bite alarms were commercially available in 1973 when I was a teenager so we had to stay awake in order to strike when we got a bite, we couldn't afford to leave our torches on all night as the batteries would run down after a couple of hours so we used the old system of placing a candle in a jam jar which was a cheap and effective way of lighting up

your dough bobbin indicator. You had to be careful though because if the light source was too close to the bobbin you ran the risk of a gentle breeze swinging the line over the naked flame causing it to melt!

Whilst waiting for dusk to slowly descend upon us, we started to eat our meagre supply of dry, curled up sandwiches, bags of sweets and the cakes my auntie had given to us, it wasn't long before nearly everything had been eaten and we had no more lemonade to drink, it would be fair to say that our expedition planning was not what it should have been and by all accounts it was going to be a long night without any refreshments to keep us going .

As the sun slowly dropped down towards the West, a breeze suddenly came from nowhere and quickly put a ripple on the previously mirror like surface of the lake, this didn't bother me at first as I prefer it when there is a ripple on the water as opposed to a flat calm surface. I started to notice that my sweat dampened Tee shirt was not enough to keep me warm so I reached for my jumper and put it on in order to keep out the chill. By 7:30pm I had also put on my quilted army type jacket and still felt cold, the breeze had whipped up over the last few hours and was decidedly arctic and to make things worse was blowing straight into our swim and funnelling directly into our shelter, we had nowhere to hide from the biting cold. Not having stayed out overnight in the wilds before, I was wearing the clothes that I would normally wear during the

day, I had no thermal underclothes with me because I didn't own any; I had no hat or gloves I was completely unprepared for night fishing, Mo was in a slightly better situation than me because he had brought his sleeping bag with him whilst I could only wrap my army blanket around me to try and keep warm. We discussed what we should do, should we cut and run to our auntie's house and have the Mickey taken out of us forever more or stick it out and laugh about it tomorrow, foolishly we chose the latter.

We decided to move the position of our shelter so the breeze wasn't blowing straight into it, we also doubled up my blanket and put it on the groundsheet to stop the cold coming through and covered ourselves up with Mo's sleeping bag which was slightly thicker than my blanket, the changes immediately made a difference and we both started to feel warmer and more comfortable.

Comfortable is a slight exaggeration, we either sat or lay on the ground which was cold, unyielding and anything but comfortable, the hard compacted gritty sand we sat on started to hurt our hips and backsides, no matter which way you positioned yourself, you could only gain some pain relief by constantly moving about in an attempt find a softer bit of sand to sit on, but invariably pins and needles returned to your backside only to be eventually replaced by numbness, then the whole cycle would start all over again. Joy!

By the time we had sorted out our camp it was almost completely dark and our attention was once again focused on our dough bobbins which hadn't moved an inch since we cast out our baits. Mo had the great idea of making a small fire and set about collecting twigs and bits of wood from around the bankside, and pretty soon he had a welcome fire crackling away, it was funny really because he had built it like an American cowboy would make a campfire with a circle of stones surrounding the burning wood, he was happy and the fire kept him busy searching for wood in a wider and wider area around our campsite. At about 10:30pm the cold breeze dropped and thick cloud started to slowly sweep across the night sky, we needed to replace our candles as they were almost done, as I was trying to estimate how much burn time was left my dough bobbin slowly lifted straight upwards and stayed there on a tight line, I was so surprised that I just stared at it, I eventually came to my senses and struck firmly.....nothing!

Mo suddenly did the same and again.... nothing, we quickly rebaited and excitedly cast out to where we had previously been fishing, as I was putting the bobbin on my line it was suddenly pulled from my fingers and sailed silently upwards, another strike had the same result as the last time, what was going on? Mo in the meantime was having the same problem as me, over the next half an hour we must have had about fifteen to twenty bites between us, none of which resulted in a

fish on the bank. I had resorted to leaving the bail arm off my reel and I let the fish take as much line as it wanted but when I struck there was nothing there. All of a sudden everything went dead it was as if a switch had been pulled and the bites stopped.

It wasn't until much later that we learnt about lines bites that bream are notorious for, had we known that the bream was probably closer to the bank than where we were fishing we might have caught a couple but as it was we were probably fishing our baits nowhere near the main bream shoal. The night dragged on and on, it was never ending and I began to regret the decision to stay and fish and not go to my auntie's house to await the morning bus. The cold prevented either of us getting any proper sleep; I was hungry, damp and miserable and vowed never to go night fishing again, I sulkily walked up and down the bank trying to generate some heat to keep warm but without success.

The inky darkness of night slowly started to give way to the weak greyness of dawn, the wood smoke from our dying fire slowly drifted and swirled around our shelter giving the impression of a misty morning; it was then that eerie thoughts of ghosts and ghouls made me look over towards the cemetery with trepidation, it was a very spooky atmosphere and one I didn't like very much. The lake had once more become flat calm, dotted with the ripples of feeding roach and rudd. In mid walk, I suddenly heard a loud metallic click and

looked towards where the noise had come from, which was Mo's rod and reel, his rod tip was bent and pointing along the margin towards the thickest clump of mares tail, it seemed to be happening in slow motion but all of a sudden his clutch went into overdrive as an angry fish powered through the shallow water and pulled his rod off the front rest.

Mo who one minute before had been fitfully dozing in the shelter was now standing by the water's edge holding his rod in full battle curve, line was being ripped from his reel at a rate of knots and the fish was making a meal out of trying to escape, its powerful lunges soon had small waves lapping the sandy bank, the roach and rudd which had been confidently supping the surface trapped flies had disappeared into the watery depths looking for sanctuary. Mo kept the fish on a tight line, not by choice but out of sheer fright, he didn't want to lose whatever was on the end of his line and he just kept reeling and reeling much to the annoyance of the clutch which shrieked in agony at its mistreatment. It soon became apparent that the fish was a large pike, which had picked up the worm hook-bait, it steamed off like an express train with Mo chasing along the bank trying to keep up with it, there must have been dozens of pike all along that bank, as Mo's fish ploughed through the shallow water, others panicked and shot off in all directions causing mayhem.

I followed the now jogging Mo, landing net in hand, the size of which now seemed

inadequate, eventually the pike stopped and floundered about in some slightly deeper water about eight feet out from the bank but it wouldn't come any closer, we had travelled well over a hundred yard from our camp and no longer felt cold. After what seemed an eternity the fish allowed itself to be slowly towed nearer to the bank, Mo had at my request tightened his clutch and gained slightly more control over the fish, he walked backwards away from the water's edge until the pike was in very shallow water and had turned on its side, its gills flaring and dark emotionless eyes looking straight into mine.

It was well over two feet long and very thick around the body, its mottled green and brown colours made it the perfect predator, I noticed a tiny worm baited hook nicked into the flesh just on the outside edge of its scissors but as I went to put the small landing net near it, it shot off along the margins once more. There was no way that it would fit into the landing net and there was even less chance of me putting my hands anywhere near it in order to pick it up!

I ran back to our camp and unscrewed the landing net head from the handle and then replaced it with our eight foot keep net and made my way back to Mo who by this time had managed to get the fish near to the bank once more, I slowly manoeuvred the keep net towards the tail end of the pike and on the count of three quickly scooped the net around the fish, it went ballistic, thrashing the water to foam and snapping

Mo's line in the process. We had done it; we had beaten the freshwater shark! We both jumped about like kids, I was as happy as if I had caught the pike myself, it was a joint enterprise with both having equal shares in its capture. I don't know how much the pike weighed as we didn't bring any scales with us,

neither did either of us own a camera at the time so its image is only stored in my memory, but I can still see it now in all its glory. It probably weighed between ten and thirteen pounds but we had set out to catch a big fish albeit a bream and had been successful. I was back on the road to specimen hunting once again

After releasing the fish, we decided to break camp and make our way to the bus stop to catch the bus back to Manchester, we were already making plans for another night fishing trip but next time we would be better prepared, we had learnt a harsh lesson by being totally unprepared for the long cold hours of darkness, what would we have done if it had rained or if we didn't have the safety net of having relatives living nearby?

The pain didn't end when we reached the bus stop at 7:30 am, we knew that the buses arrived on the hour every hour but what we hadn't realised was that the bus service on Sundays didn't start until 10am, we sat at the bus stop until our bus arrived at 11am, we hadn't dared leave the bus stop and go to our aunts house for a brew, because as soon as we moved a bus would have arrived, you just know that would have happened don't you!

In my next effort I will jump forward in time to 1980'ish, by this time I had foolishly married very young and had acquired a wife and mortgage as well as a job I hated, how lucky was I?

It wasn't that bad, I also had a car, an Austin Allegro bought for £200 so could now travel in style to the lakes and Mere's that were almost on my doorstep but not quite. I had also narrowed my favourite species down to carp and pike, and had taken to buying Coarse Fisherman and Coarse Angler magazines in order to keep up to date on any developments in the big fish world; I think these two mags were the forerunners to all the current specialist magazines we have today.

I remember reading in Coarse Fisherman how Matt Black (Tim Paisley) described his time fishing at Roman Lakes; I was amazed at this because it was it was a fishery so close to where I lived. I think nearly all of Tim's articles were written in code, which could be broken eventually, once I managed to decipher over a couple of months a simple boilie mix which had Minamino added to it, but the one thing he hadn't mentioned in his articles was that you had to boil them! I ended up with a bag of soft paste marbles which were useless, talk about a missing link!

I also remember reading articles written by a young Frank Warwick who at the time was known as a distance caster; Frank had made a boilie rocket out of Alka-Seltzer tubes when he was fishing Redesmere all those years ago, apparently he used one of the dissolving tablets to hold the boilies in place which in turn were under tension with elastic within the tube and once the tablet had dissolved out flew the boilies. Voila!

Having flown one nest to get married, I was now finding it hard to leave another in order to get up out of bed and go fishing, but I had arranged to pick my brother Phil up to go piking on Redesmere, so no matter how tempting it would be to stay where I was, I was duty bound to be on time so that meant getting up at 4am in order to load up my car and be on my way. I had only been married about six months and most of my time and money had been spent on doing the house up, I didn't stop from the minute I came home from work until very late at night and I desperately needed a break from the general DIY that you tend to carry out when you buy your first house, it starts off as fun but the novelty quickly wears off, a bit like marriage really! I probably had an inkling that we had rushed into things when she (I will call her Lisa, as in Mona) didn't see the funny side when I used to introduce her as "This is Lisa, my first wife!" Some people just can't take a joke!

Anyway one of the benefits of being married was being able to afford a small car; I put forward a really good

argument that we would need one to transport all the paraphernalia that is required to transform our small terrace house into a veritable palace, and also because my beloved was from Scotland, we would be able to travel up there regularly in order to visit my in-laws, that was the clincher! and was eagerly swallowed like a hungry pike would consume an unsuspecting roach livebait. Game on!

My fishing wagon, I mean car was bought off a pensioner who had had his driving licence revoked due to his ill health. I paid £200 for a mustard coloured Austin Allegro with 15000 miles on the clock, he had looked after it like it was the most precious thing in the world, and it was immaculate. It had no street cred but if it saved me from getting the bus everywhere then I didn't care, the only thing wrong with it was that it had an almost square steering wheel which was a very strange design faux pas.

I had managed to find out that Redesmere was about half an hour from where I lived, and that you could get day tickets on the bank for a couple of quid, if my memory serves me well I think it was Prince Albert who used to run the Capestone Estate fisheries before Stoke on Trent AS took over, I also recall that the bailiff was a friendly blonde woman called Liz Hayes, she used to do her rounds accompanied with a couple of giant hungry looking Rottweiler's in tow, I don't think anyone ever failed to pay their day ticket money! Oh, how things turn a full circle, Prince Albert AS is now back in the driving seat

and Liz and her husband are still looking after the fisheries welfare.

I stealthily sneaked down the carpetless stairs trying to avoid the protruding nails and creaky steps near the bottom, whilst making a mental note to add the job of fixing them to my already full "To Do" list, As I entered the kitchen I kicked over our kittens milk saucer and then stood in the spilled milk which made me retrace my steps in order to get some dry socks from the bedroom, "why don't you make some more noise?" said a small sarcastic voice from under the bed covers, I replied "Sorry, my precious" and made another mental note to leave the toilet seat up before I left, The beloved one really got annoyed by people who did that! Also I filled the kittens milk saucer up to the rim and left it behind the kitchen door, it was purely in case the poor little kitty became thirsty in my absence you understand

I quietly loaded up the Allegro with enough tackle for me and Phil to go for a day's pike fishing, Phil didn't have much tackle, only a 12-foot match rod and some bits and pieces so he used to borrow some of my tackle when we went fishing. Two weeks previously Phil and I had been out catching some small roach and perch in preparation for our pike fishing trip, the half dozen or so fish were frozen and kept in my mum's freezer compartment of her fridge, Phil still lived at home with mum and he organised the food for the day and defrosted the bait. We managed the journey in a very short space of time and quietly pulled into the grassy layby at the shal-

low end of Redesmere and walked through the small cut through to find the place empty, we had our choice of swims and chose to fish an area that covered the middle of the shallows, the atmosphere was electrifying, it was a warm but cloudy day, it had rained overnight and you could smell that earthy smell that you sometimes get when it has been hot and then rained, I noticed that the water surface was fairly flat with a very slight ripple on it, the trees on the opposite bank reflected on the water about half way across giving us a Green backdrop if you sat low down on the grass.

I had walked around both Capesthorpe and Redesmere about a month before, I didn't have any tackle with me at the time though, me and beloved had gone for a Sunday drive and stumbled across Redesmere by pure chance (cough) and walked hand in hand through the woods and past the floating island towards the sailing club, we eventually reached the shallows where I spoke to a friendly old guy who was Pike fishing, he told me about the carp and pike that he had caught over the years and suggested I should have a go for them as there were some big ones in there.

A game plan had already been hatched before we had even left the Mere and then we headed towards Capesthorpe Hall which was the nearest place that a toilet could be found for beloved, another coincidence I might add.

I set Phil's tackle up first, he used his match rod coupled with a spare reel be-

longing to me which held 10lb line, I placed a small semi frozen perch dead-bait on the trebles, and the whole set up was attached to a small Orange pike bung set at two feet deep, this was flicked out as far as it would go, my set up consisted of a second hand 11 foot fibreglass carp / pike rod of an unknown make, and my trusty Mitchell 300 reel also loaded with 10lb line, I was fishing with a running ledger rig, a small roach deadbait was fixed to some trebles and launched as far as it would go, my baits loud splash landing made me wince as the noise of its entry into the Mere disturbed the tranquil atmosphere and caused large ripples to emanate in an ever increasing circle, a small Orange Polystyrene ball indicator about an inch and a half across was clipped onto my mainline with a hair grip which had been pushed into the lightweight ball, the indicator was set between the two bottom rings on a fifteen inch drop.

Within half an hour Phil had a run on his perch bait, the lake had become very still and the first thing we noticed were a few small ripples spreading out from Phil's float, as we watched his float, it very gently started to bob more and more causing larger and larger ripples, it then slowly started to submerge before completely disappearing under the surface, Phil stood up to strike but I told him to wait a minute until the line started to move off, thirty seconds later it did just that and his line started to lift upwards off the surface as it tightened to his rod tip, I shouted for him to strike.

A full blooded strike caused his rod to arch over in an impressive hoop, this caused the unseen fish to panic and drop the bait, disappointed Phil reeled in his now bare hook trace, and we rebaited and recast his rod. Almost immediately I had a run on my rod and struck hard but the fish felt small and was soon thrashing about in the shallow margins, the pike was only small and weighed about three pounds but its colours were beautiful and vibrant, it would be a prize when it grew bigger.

Throughout the next couple of hours, we had a quite a few more takes between us, I caught two more small jacks, the biggest being about five or six pounds, Phil had caught one fish about a pound in weight but unbelievably had had about six or seven runs, but because his rod was designed for float fishing and not pike fishing it was apparent that his more than robust strike with the flimsy rod wasn't setting the hooks, which by the way were not the sharpest things in the world anyway. Sometimes we managed to retrieve our deadbaits but eventually we were left with one tooth ravaged roach each, it must have been divine intervention when out of nowhere a young lad about eleven years old wandered up to us and asked how we were doing, I told him we had had a few but would be going home soon as we only had one bait each and when that was gone we were going to pack up

The young lad asked us if we wanted any livebait, confused I asked him if he had been fishing himself and had some in a keepnet, but he said no there will be some in the overflow. Phil and I reeled in our rods and the young lad took hold of our landing net and asked us to follow him, we ended up along the dammed part of the shallows near the right hand bottom corner where the water lapped over the concrete edge, dropped about six or seven feet into a small round pool which in turn flowed into a little stream and through to the Top Pool at Capesthorpe. The lad climbed down to the tiny pool and with one circular sweep lifted up about a fifty fish all between four and six inches long, I could not believe my eyes! There were roach, perch, skimmer bream and tench all flapping about and thrashing the water into foam. It was like watching a trawling programme; the young lad couldn't lift the net out of the water so me and Phil jumped down to help him. Between us we picked out about a dozen roach to use as livebait and let the rest go back to where they had come from,

I couldn't bring myself to use the tench as pike bait, they have a mystery about them which compels you to treat them differently to other fish when it comes to bait fishing, the perch and skimmers would have been fair game on any other day but a fit shiny roach would be ideal for a spot of livebaiting, the only trouble being Phil was using the only float we had. We thanked the young lad and made our way back to our peg with the bait still in the landing net, we rigged up a temporary holding pool by supporting the landing net head out of the water with some twigs so it could be used as a sort of keepnet for the lively roach. Phil was

soon swinging fresh bait out as far as he could and it immediately started swimming erratically towards the other bank, at one point it stopped and swam around in circles for about fifteen minutes, it suddenly stopped and swam quickly towards the far bank towing the pike bung along with it, something had scared it. I said to Phil that he would probably get a bite soon, as the words left my mouth Phil's bait was smashed into savagely, the disturbance caused a few of the nearby waterfowl to flee in panic adding to the mayhem.

Phil quickly tightened down and struck hard walking backwards as he did so, but his strike met no resistance and he disappointedly reeled in his baitless hooks and started all over again. I had managed to catch another two pike, the biggest was about seven pounds in weight, but most of the time I was sat there watching Phil casting out and striking at the numerous takes he had during the day, I really felt for him, he had had about twenty runs and had only managed to land the smallest fish of the day which was just a bit bigger than the bait he was using, but to his credit he just laughed about it and was enjoying the fact that he was getting more runs than me.

I had a take which I missed and then reeled in my bare rig, I selected the biggest of our remaining roach which when you touched it flexed and arched strongly, it was a shame to use it as bait but time for remorse was short lived and it was soon sailing away into the distance, landing with a loud splash, I clipped on the Orange Polystyrene ball which was tied with string to my back rod rest, but after a few minutes it became apparent that the roach had composed itself after its maiden flight and

wanted to be off. Just to make sure it wasn't a take I gently pulled my line back and felt slight resistance so was satisfied there wasn't a pike on the end, this went on for about five minutes and I got fed up with checking it wasn't a run and resetting my indicator. I decided to reel in the annoying roach, I tapped it on the head, which stunned it but didn't kill it, it was then recast to the same area as before and after tightening up, I clipped on my indicator, Bloody Hell! The roach was still trying to swim off albeit very slowly, I once again went through the retightening, resetting procedure before clipping on my indicator once more.

That seemed to have sorted it, but a minute later the indicator ever so slowly crept upwards, I unclipped the Polystyrene ball and gently pulled the line backwards, it came back easily enough but felt different, like as if there was weed on the line, when I had pulled the line back it hung limply for a few seconds but then started to creep upwards again, I was confused, something was messing with my bait, I opened the bail arm on my Mitchell 300 and sat down with Phil to watch the line, after a minute or so it slowly flicked and moved upwards, I decided to reel it in again but Phil said to leave it for a few more minutes so I did. The line ever so slowly moved forwards and tightened which caused a loop to fall from my spool, as this tightened another loop spilled from the spool, this happened so slowly that it could only be the bait trying to limp off and find some underwater cover.

Suddenly two loops of line flicked off the spool, followed by two more, and then it happened, the line fizzed off the spool as though it had been cast out, and it was literally a blur. Phil as usual stated the

obvious “I think it’s a pike” I stood up, flicked over the bail arm and struck hard, the next sequence of events all seemed to happen in slow motion and was very surreal! As I struck, I saw my line quickly slicing through the water, about forty yards out there was a massive boil and my line suddenly started to travel at speed to my right, you could actually hear it cutting through the oily surface of the Mere.

It was very strange experience because although all of this happened in seconds, I can only remember it in a freeze frame type of motion, it was like time had slowed down. As the fish sped towards my right, it suddenly leapt completely out of the water, tail walking, it shook its head violently, and its mouth wide open, all I could think of was “f**k, that’s massive”. As the giant fish shook its head, I saw the roach bait spin in an arc through the air and I knew I had lost the monster pike, as I noticed the roach flying through the air the tension on my rod eased off, but the instant the pike re-entered the water my rod was almost pulled straight downwards, it was still on!

After that initial burst of power, the fish gave a good account of itself with many slow powerful runs, I could feel it shaking its head in anger and as I played it closer to the bank, great vortexes swirled and eddied just beneath the surface, it then just turned and casually powered off into deeper water once more causing my clutch to go into meltdown. I can honestly say that my legs were shaking; I was expecting that any minute now the line would fall slack and the black despair of a lost big fish would fall down over me and cloak me in misery.

I noticed at this point, that I had an audience, a lad a bit younger than me was standing nearby, and he looked like a professional angler with camouflage jacket, waders and loads of kit, he asked me if I needed any help landing my pike and produced a landing net so massive it would have engulfed Moby Dick. I gladly took him up on his offer, as my net was tiny in comparison, but it would be another fifteen minutes before I managed to get my prize anywhere near the bank and into a netting position.

After what seemed an age, the fish tired and allowed itself to be brought close enough to be netted; it slid through the shallow margins on its side, and was expertly netted by my new found friend.

We lay the fish, which was still in the net onto some soft grass and slowly peeled back the mesh which covered its massive head and muscular flank, it was an amazing sight, the colouring and markings were exquisite, its gills slowly flaring as it tried to regain some strength, it was a prehistoric predator that was living in our modern times, you could literally feel its aura and sense the feral anger that emanated from it, it was truly an awesome creature. I noticed that the bottom treble was lightly hooked at the front of its lower jaw and a quick twist with my forceps freed the metal-ware from its mouth, another couple of minutes and the hook hold might have given way and I wouldn’t be kneeling there admiring my catch. The lad, who had kindly landed my fish, set up some scales and zeroed them, whilst Phil produced my mum’s camera, which was a state of the art but rubbish disc type compact camera with only two exposures left on its circular cardboard

disc. Phil used up the last two shots with me crouching down holding my catch, its head looked very large and was well adapted for holding onto the large prey that lived in the Mere, but as the title of the book says, the Predator becomes the Prey. The fish was weighed and it pulled the scales around to 21lb 7oz, we then slipped it gently back into its watery home where with a flick of its tail, it glided away and out of sight.

I thanked the lad who had helped us with the fish, he stopped and chatted for a short while, he was staying overnight and was fishing for carp, but that’s all he would say, I didn’t push it as he was a bit evasive when I asked a few direct questions, Phil and I decided to pack up and head home, we kept the remaining bait for another day. En route home we went over and over the great day we had both enjoyed and planned another day’s predator hunting in the near future. Phil had had more runs than a hospital full of dysentery patients but was mad keen to come fishing with me again. I was on cloud nine; I had caught a fish bigger than anything I could have wished for, in fact looking back it was bigger than the cased fish I had admired at Arrowsmiths tackle shop all those years ago.

Our journey home flew by and I was soon parking the car up outside my house, when I suddenly remembered the uplifted toilet seat that beloved would have noticed by now and winced at the thought of the kitten’s full bowl of milk that I had placed behind the kitchen door, maybe in the cold light of day they weren’t such good ideas!

Teekay.

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February - Dan Hulme

February 2016 Article

It's been the wettest January since records began, river levels have peaked, and the consequent flooding of local areas has been a hot topic for the headlines. Let's just say the conditions have been less than favourable for angling. However, a quick review of the local catch reports via social media indicates that many anglers have been out there braving the conditions and have still managed to catch some fish, every credit to them!

So, what effect have these recent conditions had on fish? They've obviously still been feeding!

Many of you may already be aware that the sheer velocity of our rivers when in flood pushes the majority of resident fish species to seek any available slack, slower moving water. This behaviour helps the fish to preserve vital energy. Unfortunately the recent abnormal flooding resulted in numerous fish seeking refuge in the middle of flooded fields.

These fish became trapped in the temporary pools created within the fields as the river levels eventually subsided. The festive period saw numerous reports of ramblers stumbling across fish mortalities, but it hasn't all been doom and gloom. Local enthusiastic anglers and the Environ-

ment Agency have helped to rescue a number of fish from these temporary pools and successfully reintroduced them back into their original river habitats.

The village of St. Michael's, a short distance away from Myerscough College was severely flooded as the River Wyre burst its banks in dramatic style.

A very distressing time for the local residents, many of the staff at Myerscough College have been affected, with property restorations ongoing.

I received numerous phone calls from people reporting the observation of distressed koi carp and brown trout in their back gardens, these fish being escapees from ornamental garden ponds and fish seeking refuge from the raging River Wyre.

Stillwaters venues have also been affected by the heavy rainfall. I'm aware of a few local commercial venues where the numerous lakes on site became merged into one giant water body. One of the problems associated with this is that known fish stocks in specific lakes may now be located elsewhere if they've moved across the normally inaccessible lake boundaries. I predict that these venues may crop up a few surprises to anglers this season!

The flooding and heavy rainfall has been a hot topic of discussion amongst my Level 3 Fish Management students. We've been surveying the effects that the flooding has had on the water quality and available fish habitat within the River Brock. We're very lucky at Myerscough College as almost two miles of the River Brock flows through our estate and is therefore a valuable teaching and learning resource.

The River Brock provides the perfect habitat and territory for the non-native North American mink. This is a small mammal closely related to the weasel, stoat, badger and our native otter (it is much smaller than an otter).

The North American mink was brought over to the UK for the fur trade several decades ago. Unfortunately there were both accidental escapees and purposeful releases from such fur farms and as a result this small mammal has wreaked havoc on our ecosystems. The mink is somewhat of an opportunistic predator, it will consume many food sources including bird eggs, young chicks, and fish.

Responsible cage trapping and culling of the species is a suitable control method. This is an activity we undertake as part of our ongoing management strategy. Unfortunately the festive floods pushed the mink out of its preferred river territory. In the quest to find available food a mink explored our estate and found a food larder in the shape of one of our onsite fishing ponds. The typical evidence of mink activity was present by the pond, small footprints, scat (faeces) and the half-eaten remains of fish carcasses, along with numerous fish scales scattered over the feeding area. Traps were set, but with no success. It seems that as the River Brock subsided the mink returned to its preferred territory.

Although we lost several coarse fish from our fishing pond, it did provide for a useful learning experience for our students. Some of

the fish scales were collected and the students observed them carefully under a microscope in an attempt to determine the approximate age of each fish.

Fish scales develop growth rings on them, in a similar fashion to the rings found within a tree trunk. During summer the water is warmer and there is some noticeable spacing between each ring, indicating that the fish has been growing actively in the warmer conditions. The reverse is true during the winter, when the spacing between the rings is much narrower, indicating that the fish is growing at a much slower rate. The evident banding of rings on the scales gives an indication of how many years old the fish is/are (see the image for an example).

Many of our students are eager to get out on our forthcoming field visits, especially to Walney Island in

Cumbria where they will be undertaking an ecological survey for their final aquatic ecology unit assessment. This visit could provide the opportunity for many of them to observe both common and grey seals for the very first time!

The poor weather conditions have provided the students with ample opportunities to progress with many of their written assessments, safe in the knowledge that once the weather improves their studies will be primarily outdoors. Once again, thanks for reading and I'll report back with updates linked to the fishery studies courses at Myerscough College in next month's issue.

If you wish to find out more about the range of courses offered at Myerscough College then please visit our website;

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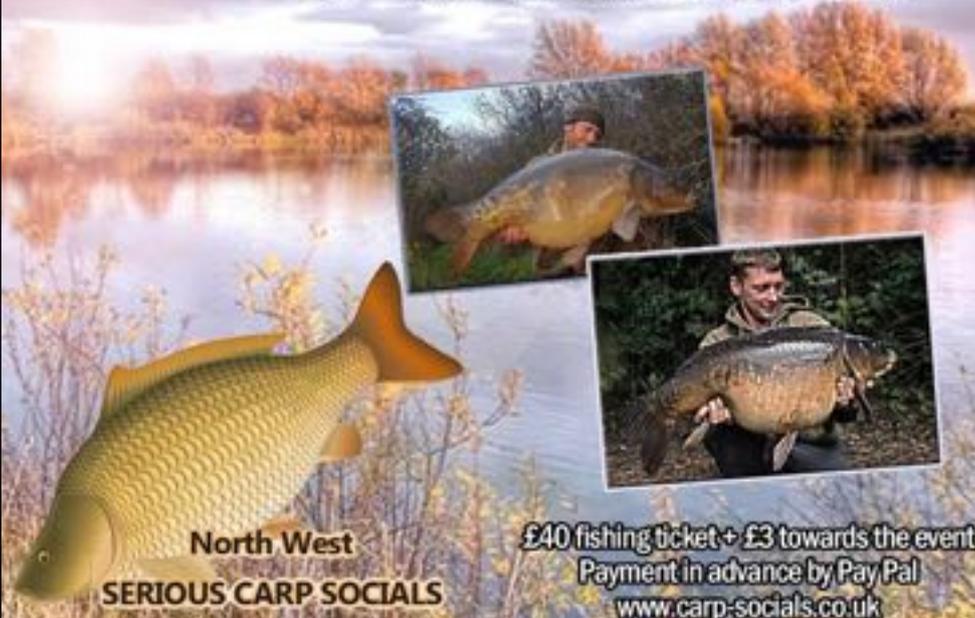


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Winter Session on Jonchery - Ross Hunter



If it's action and the chance of some real lumps you're after, then this could be the lake for you. Affordable venues that can be booked for just 2 anglers are rare but at Jonchery 7 you have exactly that - a venue to book exclusively for just you and a mate. It's owned by the prominent fish farming Bachelier family and is set close to the dam wall of the Lac d'Orient. It's quiet and tranquil and has good vehicle access to your swim.

The lovely 5-acre lake sits on the same complex as its larger brother, the Jonchery main lake. It has just one large double swim which gives you access to all areas of the lake - it's perfect for 2, or at a push 3, friends to enjoy a week's all round fishing experience in France on a prolific venue.

After getting to the lake after 3.5 hours from Calais, I couldn't wait to get my session started. I had fished the main lake in September this year, and just fell in love with the whole place.

I mean not only does Mark Slade know the lakes like the back of his hand, the service is second to none, the food package is great and the welcome you get, along with being made to feel at home while there is brilliant.

I really thought that this was going to be a walk in the park, I mean let's face it, we have all heard the saying "five minutes in the right place, is better than 24hrs in the wrong one", so what could go wrong. I was on the fish, the water temperature was great, and the weather for this time of year was too,

The carp really did put on a show throughout that first Wednesday night, it was easy to get the rigs on the spot and a few boilies out with the stick. Had total confidence in the rigs I was using as they have caught me fish from every water I have fished in the last 20 years.

The first night was a blank, I had fish jumping all over the spot's, liners all night

as the fish moved from left to right and again as they moved from right to left into the shallows in the early hours of the morning. It seemed that they moved out from the shallows at night and into deeper water, then back into the shallow water during the day, which is unusual, because they do tend to like the deeper water in the winter months.

As the day went on, it was becoming clear they didn't seem interested, but just sitting there resting, and every now and then showing us both what we could be catching, by leaping from the lake and teasing us. So on went the waders and out into the lake I went. The middle rod in hand, I sneaked up to a point where I could cast to a spot I had seen quite a few shows from, as I cast and felt the lead down there was a firm thud as it hit the bottom, as Mark had said earlier I was now fishing on a nice 3ft wide clay spot in about 2ft of water with a home-made pink pop up on, and balanced to sit just an inch of bottom.

I did the same to my left hand rod and put it on another spot which was just off the inflow pipe which comes from the mighty Lake Orient and was very close to the bank, with a Mad Baits Wicked white waffer just hovering so that the hook was just touching bottom.

The Third and right hand rod was put straight out at around 100 yards on a little hard spot. It wasn't easy as I am not the tallest person in the world, and the lake was at a height where it was just about at the top of my waders, so had to be very careful while out in the water, but I just managed it.

The nights came in really fast, and before you knew it, it was pitch black as there is no light pollution, and the stars are so bright and so clear to see. Thursday night was going quietly, until

I just sat down to have my dinner, when all of a sudden my ATT burst into life with an absolute one toner. Finally, I was into a fish, it felt good, nice bend in the rod and was putting up a really good fight. It's hard to describe the excitement I feel every time I hear those alarms go and feel that first

surge the fish gives you, and even more so when it's on home-made baits and for me that feeling has never changed in all the years I have been angling. After a short hard fight, I had what looked like a Leather in the net, not massive but just as welcome all the same.

I didn't take more than few minutes to have it weighed and photographed, as I had done all the sling, scales and cradle well before hand. Very nice mirror of 15lb's on the bank and then safely returned. The amazing thing about this little mirror was it reminded me of the near exact same mirror I had from the main lake back in September, only difference really was the weight, as that one had been 37lb.

Both had only a few scales' in near enough the same place, it was uncanny



Out into the lake I went again, pitch black but for my head torch. I must point out, don't do this on your own, as anything can happen, and it's better to be safer than sorry. If you are on your own wait until daylight to get that rod back out on the spot. I was lucky in that I had Mark with me on the bank and was able to get the rod back onto the same spot.

That night passed without any more takes, it just seemed that no matter what we put in front of them they were able to ignore. Changing baits, and going through every home made and shop brought pop up and waffer I had but to no avail.

I had started with 16mm bait's and Ashima Tackle's coated hook links of around four inches long with a fair sized PVA bag, but to get the carp interested and curious enough to take a bait I had to go down to 8mm baits with very small PVA bags and supple hook links...





06.00 Friday morning I bought the rods in and went down to the house with Mark as I had been asked if I would like to experience the French fish farming way of netting and sorting the stock ponds, I had agreed as it's something I loved doing when I was at Hadlow doing my Fisheries Management.

Spent all day netting and putting fish into various stock ponds and removing others that were being sold on, into the transport tanks. I really enjoyed it and would like to thank Paul and Mark for allowing me to join in and gain that experience.

At the end of Friday, the temperature really dropped and went from 8 degrees down to 2, the mist came down so heavy that I couldn't see my hand in front of my face, and deep down I didn't think I would have anything through the night, that feeling was proved right because by Saturday morning it had been a blank night on the carp front.

Late Saturday afternoon after playing around with rig length's and flavoured bait's I ended up with a fruity pop up that I have been playing about with alongside the Mad baits wicked white's base mix and a pink dye and a few extras added.

I was just about to cast when a mirror carp just launched itself clear out of



the water and looked a really good fish, so I cast to it, landed within a foot of the fish at about 140 yards. I didn't have to wait long before I got a very unusual take, the bobbing lifted, stopped and then dropped slightly before coming level with the ATT and stopping. It didn't move so I hit it and I'm glad I did as there was a fish on, which then took about 30 yards of line and really put up a great scrap, about 15 minutes or so later, I had a lovely big mirror nestled in my net.

Now I have to say that I was trying out a new self-take device as I usually use a remote which I hold in my fingers whilst holding the fish. While the fish was safe in the net, I got the camera and tripod sorted and plugged the new LCD timer remote shutter in. I got it from EBay for £7 and have to say what a great buy that was.

I put the settings on it to take a photo every 10 seconds and it works great, giving me time to get the fish settled and into position for the photo's very well, no struggling with the remote in my hand any more that's for sure, and the device works for most of the modern cameras on the market too, so after the mirror went 28lb on the scales, doing the self takes was so much easier, and I actually enjoyed it more, as it felt comfortable



and didn't feel like I had to rush to get that good shot.

As the day came to a close, again the temperature really dropped and the mist descended for a second time, with the lake going totally silent. At about 3am I was woken up by a loud noise which I think was a boar, can't really be sure but just as I was returning to my lovely warm bed, the ATT screamed in to life, I turned and hit it, and for about ten minutes I was definitely into the biggest fish of the trip so far, every time I gained line it would rip line from the spool, and I would have to start again.

Now earlier in the evening I had a few little bleeps, and I thought it might of been a musk rat having a go at the bait as it was close to the margins but nothing else happened until the take so I didn't think much of it, until after about 10 minutes I lost the fish. When I retrieved the rig and looked at it the hook link had broken half way down the link and it looked like it had been chomped at the break. The musk rat must of had a pop at it but not got it, but done enough damage to the hook link, which left me totally gutted. With heavy heart after such a loss, a new rig was made up and cast out to the spot, hoping that another one would make a visit, however it wasn't to be.

Sunday morning was really sunny and the temperature began to climb again. most days I had tried a bit of stalking as the lake is very good for this with plenty of ambush areas along either side of the lake, with over hanging trees, two small shallow bays one on the bottom left with the inlet pipe and one on the opposite side of the first one. Hadn't had any luck until Sunday when after about 20 minutes sneaking around

I found some carp just under a huge over hanging tree.

I only just managed to get the baited rig in place as it was in such an awkward place. I waited for what seemed like days, but was only 30 minutes before finally I got a take, the water absolutely erupted and the went everywhere as the depth was only about a foot of water. grabbed the rod and held on as best I could, but that fish knew exactly where it wanted to go and went straight

into a snag I didn't know was there and left me in the huge branch under the water.

After somehow managing to get my gear back I walked beaten back to the swim and put the rods back on the spots. A bit disheartened but determined to at least have one more before I left for home Monday. So as Sunday's light was starting to fail the right hand rod ripped off, and this fish I think thought it was Arnie. Had me all over the lake and in the end, took out my over two rods before I could finally get him into the lake.

This mirror was a really scaly one and at first glance both Mark and I thought it wouldn't go much more than 18lb but when we weight it, we both were shocked when the scales hit 25lb. either way I was really happy and really wanted more so, once it had gone back, the rods put back out and

I was really hopeful of another take. The weather had

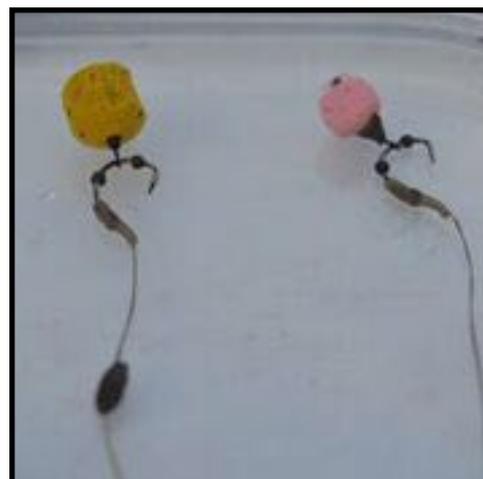
other ideas, and went down to -3 overnight and Monday morning came round all too quickly.

Everything was frozen solid and it was a few hours before I could defrost everything enough to get packed away for the trip home.

I have to say that has been the hardest winter session I have ever had, I have never had to work so hard and change so many things just to ensure a take.

The fish were so picky and the bites so finicky, that now sitting here writing this I have come to realise that I actually had more takes than I thought at the time, even though the fish I did have gave me really good takes.

I have also come to the conclusion that you can never have enough pop ups, and wafers of every flavour because, if it wasn't for the fact I had so many with me I could well have blanked in this winter session.



It's also been a very good learning curve because I never really fished with anything under 10mm but had to in this session and adjust the rigs to suit the method, and enable me to catch these fish which had become very tricky in these conditions. Mark Slade was very good at giving advice and again his knowledge of the lake helped me bank those fish.

He knows the lakes so well and is a joy to fish with. I know that some of you find it hard to listen to others when it comes to your fishing, because we all like to do it our way, or we have set ways of doing things, but out of this session, the best bit of advice I can give you is, listen to local knowledge and try the suggestion's before turning them away and doing it your way, and above all, don't be afraid to try and keep trying until something works. Learn to be adaptable and versatile in your approach and you will put those extra fish on the bank even in the hardest of conditions.

Mark and Anita run a stunning fishery and also provide a great food package at Jonchery for all tastes, along with great facilities in the anglers lodge, where you can charge phones and bait boats, keep your bait fresh in the freezers or even your food in the fridges, along with a clean toilet and shower rooms. If you are looking for a really well looked after and clean fishery, then visit Jonchery as you certainly will not be sorry you did.



ACA Monthly Update
Autumn Lily Has just returned from 12 weeks in Thailand undergoing her stem cell treatment and is responding positively to it. Our fundraising currently stands at an awesome £72,000 we are still hoping to reach the £80k target for this lovely little girl. We still have some great auctions lined up.

Also this month we have been helping raise money for costs towards a funeral for a young man.

and his mum is registered disabled. With him being so young no plans were in place for his funeral and as you can gather the family are heartbroken so we have decided to help raise some money, the amount currently stood at £1664 and we were aiming for a £3000 target which will help the family considerably, and now together with #TheRoseAppeal, we have donated the rest ourselves and the money has been transferred to a Southport funeral director. The family now have one less worry and can concentrate on a fitting send-off. All this has been done by a group effort. Not an individual but a group, and we thank you all.



Today's rant....

There's been a few tethered carp recently and fishery owners are putting the blame on the anglers as well as the tackle firms but are the tackle firms to blame for this? Are the tackle firms tying their rigs? Putting together the components on the bank? Problem I see is that certain anglers don't like losing leads and

I have seen super glued tail rubbers first hand, so are the firms to blame? No they are not their end tackle has allegedly been tried and tested so it should work as described on the packaging shouldn't it? Isn't it the angler that wants to cast that few inches closer to that snag on the horizon? And isn't it the angler putting too much pressure when

playing a carp causing hook movement? Then that leads me nicely to the barbed vs barbless debate as during the battle isn't barbless causing more damage as the barb in my opinion locks the hook into place? That's my opinion, and as always I have yet to be proven wrong! Until next time... play nice ! Angry.

Coming next month, we have "A Chat with.... Mr Julian Cundiff" a man who needs no introduction whatsoever, so if you have a question you would like to ask Jules then please get in touch with us and your question may be in issue 3!

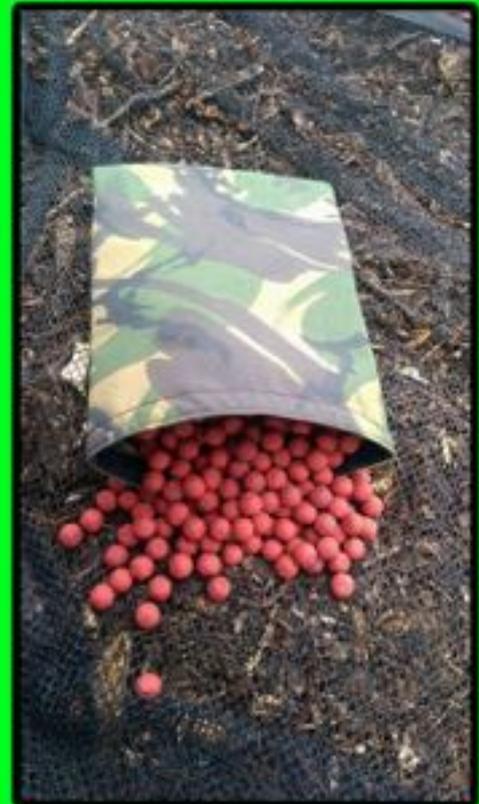
We hear from Scott Grant as he shares more from his personal carp diaries Keith Moors joins Talking Carp and you know you don't want to miss his writings!

Lee Whittaker shares his thoughts on prepping for a new season. More tales, hints, tips and thoughts from our regulars Lee England, Ethan Carper and Ross Hunter as well as a host of guest writers. Don't miss the next piece from Teekay as he talks to us exclusively.

Watch out for our big competition as we give away a bait package to kick start your season / ATTENTION: Fishery owners, tackle and bait businesses... If you would like to see your business in these pages and be seen by our thousands of readers, then please do get in touch. brian.dixon@talkingcarp.co.uk

Anglers... fancy yourself as a writer for a magazine? Get in touch with me at the email address above anytime and maybe you could see yourself in the very next issue.

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