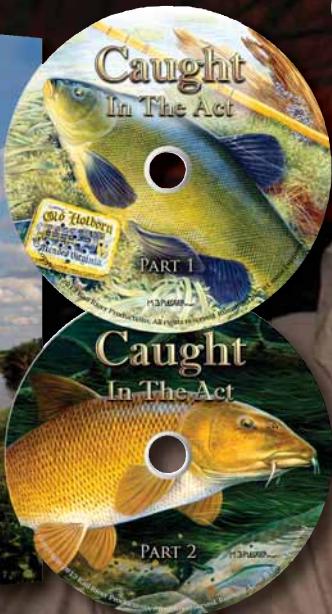
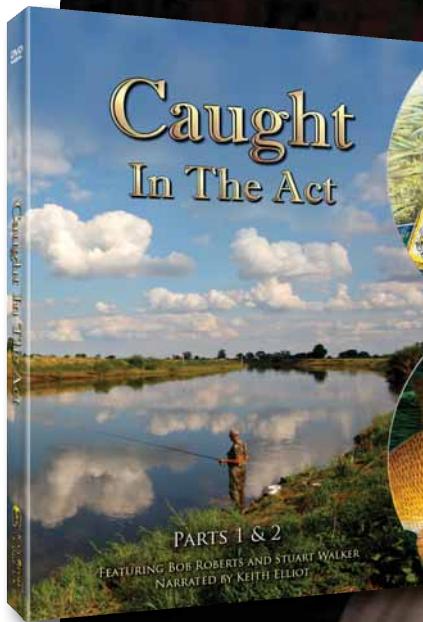


The Making of Caught In The Act By Bob Roberts

The Making Of Caught In



The Act

It was so tempting to make another barbel film. Stu and I were in no doubt there was ample demand for us to shoot one but the plain fact was we'd created a bit of a monster and feeding any monster is a tall order.

It's not just enough to make a film for its own sake, it's about keeping things fresh and lively.

Over the course of our four Barbel Days And Ways films we'd pretty much lifted the lid on barbel fishing. We'd shown conclusively how noise stimulates feeding, how baits behave in the flow, how important it is to get the feeding right and how fish react to tackle (or don't as the case may sometimes be). In practical terms we'd shown how to read a river and prepare a swim. We'd shown rigs and baits and we'd shown a rake of fish.

Unfortunately it was turning into our own Forth Bridge painting regime. We'd pretty much reached the end and it was time to return to the beginning. Yes, we could have filmed on different rivers with different anglers but the majority of them would want to fish with a feeder, or a lead, with a couple of pellets on the hook. What could we actually bring to the table that was new?

Only this week I had an email from a guy saying how much he loved the films but at the same time complaining they were 'pellet centric'. He's right. But don't blame us. Barbel anglers in general are pellet centric

and for very good reason. They're cheap, easy to store, non-perishable and they're extremely effective. Why change a winning format?

It was time to take a break. Did either of us actually need to make another film? Stu has a very successful business outside of angling and a family to raise while I'm enjoying the kind of comfortable retirement I always dreamed of and I sure as hell don't want to spend every spare minute of it thinking about, or fishing for, barbel. There's a big world out there to explore and it's patently clear that sooner or later those who obsess over barbel will lose the plot. You only have to read some of the rubbish being spouted on the Internet to appreciate that.

I suppose you have to understand that Stu and I don't make films as a job. We don't rely on income from sales to put food on the table. We don't even have to make a profit (although it would be foolish not to at least try!). It's our passion and this gives us great creative freedom. We don't have deadlines. We don't have a paymaster. But most of all we don't have to cut corners.

Go on YouTube and type in Stubarbel. It'll take you to our page. Check the hit

counter. By the time this magazine is published we should have sailed past ONE MILLION individual film views worldwide. That's astonishing, but do you see any annoying adverts? No. We choose to keep clear of that and forego the financial benefits.

Check out the films we've made in India, in Uganda, the Andaman Islands and in Zambia. Watch them in HD and tell me they are not the equal of anything you can watch on TV, yet do we charge for this privilege? No. We funded those adventures ourselves. We put in the work that showcases our film making talents for no other reason than we wanted to create the ultimate holiday movies for our own entertainment. They were fun to make but this does come at a great inconvenience.

Not only do we have to drag all that gear around the world but someone has to sacrifice fishing time to operate the camera. Fortunately our good mate James Gould is as enthusiastic as we are but the bottom line is simple, one of us always has to be in charge of the camera equipment while the others fish and that means you sacrifice one third of your

fishing time to the common good on each and every trip.

Clearly we're as passionate about the filming as we are the fishing but crunch time arrived and discussions took place around 3 years ago as to whether Stu and I really wanted to devote 6 months or more to making another barbel film, or did we maybe fancy a fresh challenge.

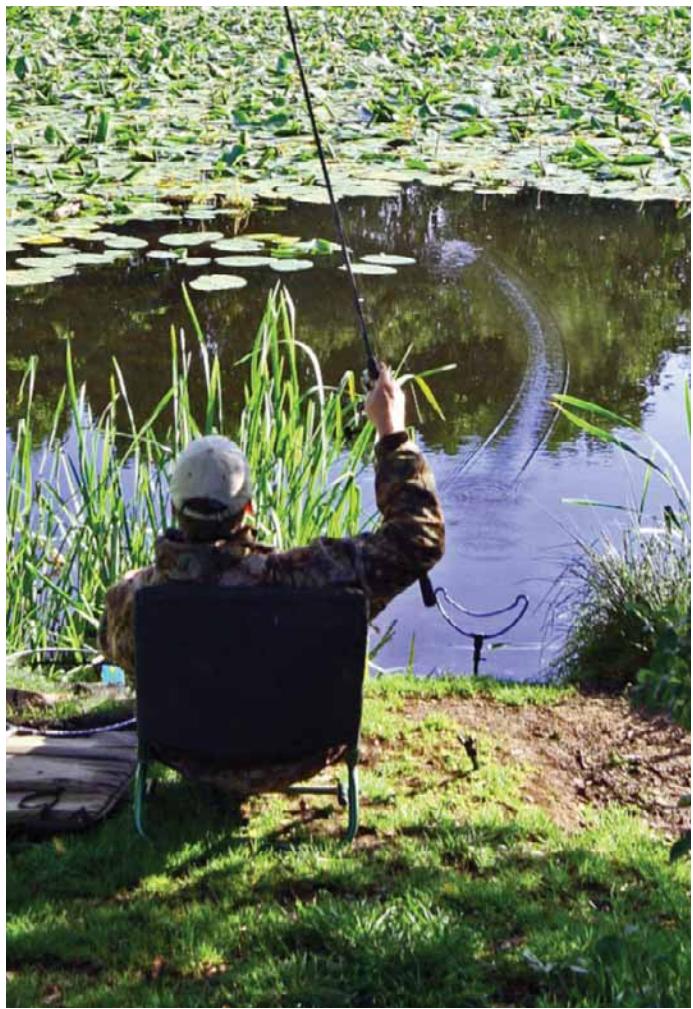
Neither of us really fancied making another barbel film if I'm honest.

And it could so easily have been left there. We'd very little left to prove. Having shown that we could do it we could easily now concentrate on making our own indulgent adventure films instead. But letting go is not that easy. How about if we widened our horizons? What if we made a film about other species as well as barbel? How would we do it? Which species would we target? Where could we film? Would we involve guests? Would it contain underwater footage? And how would we achieve that?

Questions, questions and more questions. Very few answers.

To be truthful it was difficult at first to get our heads around a concept.

The Making of Caught In The Act By Bob Roberts



Fortunately I had an idea for a title, Caught In The Act. The film would be a series of 'Acts', not dissimilar to what we did with Barbel Days And Ways. Keep everything short, snappy, punchy. And of course, it would have to include our hallmark. If the tension wasn't built and the bite didn't happen on camera then there was no point in showing some idiot holding up a fish to the camera. It had to be done real time or not at all – so no pressure then!!!

Think about it. Grab yourself a sheet of paper and write down what you would like to see in your ideal film. Remove the blinkers, expand your horizons and write down how you would set about inspiring anglers. Then decide how you'll hang it all together. Can it be done? We had a hundred ideas and none really seemed to work if I'm honest.

We wrote down a list of target species, ways we thought we could catch

them, places, baits and minimum target weights. But could we deliver this from mostly public access waters? And fish alone weren't good enough, each sequence had to have its own storyline. It's only then that the enormity of your challenge hit home. Lord knows how Martin must have felt when he set out to film 'Impossible' with slave driver Hugh as taskmaster!

Fortunately we were not trying to replicate 'Impossible'. If anything we wanted to do quite the opposite, we simply wanted to portray what was possible. We wanted to concentrate on realistic aspirations from the kind of waters our customers had access to. We joke that our project should be called 'Catching The Possible' because that's what it is. We





didn't want viewers to come away with the impression that it was alright for us fishing all those syndicated lakes and rivers or thinking that any fool could catch the fish if they had access. It had to be something they might achieve if they had a mind to follow in our footsteps and were prepared to put in the effort.

Never the less we did set ourselves a number of fairly ambitious targets and do not underestimate how filming affects your fishing. These were not targets that we simply had to catch, we had to catch them to order with a number of cameras in tow and if possible, film them under water as well and fit all this in around the limited times when we were both available and free to film. And we had to do it 20 times over because our goal was to create 20 'Acts'.

That doesn't add up to 20

days filming, by the way! If only...

Suddenly a 14lb barbel sounds a lot harder to catch if you have to do it next Tuesday with some idiot standing on the skyline to get the right angle, especially when you've also got to deliver a 6lb chub, a 4lb perch, double figure bream, 20 lb pike, 30lb carp off the surface, a 2lb rudd and so on. And that's only a third of the targets.

However we didn't just have to catch the fish, we had to catch them in a pre-determined way on a given bait. We also wanted the viewer to experience all four seasons ranging from ice and snow through to baking heat, throwing in the sunrises, the sunsets, traditional fishing, stalking, float fishing and much, much more. How on earth can TV angling be captivating if it consists of some fat bloke chucking out

a bolt rig with rods perched on bite alarms as he regales you with a less than subtle advert for some sponsor's gear? We wanted to take the viewer with us on a journey, not send him to sleep.

And let's be honest, at the outset we didn't have a clear vision. We simply had faith in each other's judgement and allowed the project to find its own direction. Had we realised it would take us the best part of 3 years to complete I doubt we would now be on the verge of releasing the first two of four films in what is surely our proudest achievement in film making to date.

We spent months feeling our way in, developing styles and inventing plans on the hoof, trying this and trying that. And costs were rising all the time. Driving over to Cumbria hoping to snatch 10 seconds of underwater footage when it's minus 10

and there's snow everywhere is typical. Investing in new camera equipment, microphones and software – it had to be done.

We had learned from past experience that the use of voice-overs at appropriate moments will enhance the viewing experience. It gets across what the angler is thinking. We chose to strip back the bank side waffle and use a narrator to deliver the insights but how could we do that without a script, without a beginning or an end, without knowing what we would catch, or how?

Well, something must have gone right because volumes one and two are completed. I'm guessing they'll actually be on sale by the time you read this. The next two are in the can and editing has begun with the intention of releasing them in November but please don't underestimate

The Making of Caught In The Act By Bob Roberts

the work involved in that process. Post production of the polished product makes the filming and catching look fairly easy by comparison. It's where the really hard work starts and a process not dissimilar to that of a grubby looking chunk of kimberlite being cut and polished into a gleaming diamond. And there's still the scripting and narration, sleeve design, manufacturing and distribution to consider.

And then there are all the people who helped us make this happen. The list substantial and they all get their credits on the film, however, perhaps I should highlight one example. Maurice Pledger, author of While My Floats Still Cocked 'Mole' is a fantastic wildlife artist. His illustrated books have sold more than 10 million copies. His wildlife paintings have been auctioned at Sotheby's no less, yet he gave us permission to feature several of his paintings in our films. How cool is that?

Arriving at where we are today has been a massive team effort all round so is there any wonder my blood boils when I hear even mild



doses of unjust criticism, especially on from Internet trolls who haven't even watched it!

But is it any good? I suppose the first real inkling of what we had achieved came when we shared the early rushes with Daiwa. Bear in mind at this point there was no narration and the acts, although roughly edited had not received their final polish. They in turn showed them to their bosses and to a few people who don't even fish.

'I never really understood fishing before,' Said one

viewer, 'but I do now!'

Praise doesn't come much higher.

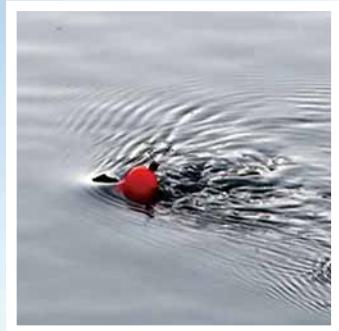
I'm sure you'll have noticed Daiwa's new corporate philosophy – Feel Alive. Well, it reflects fishing as a lifestyle, not just a sport. Fishing as a journey where we follow a series of different paths rather than one specific style or discipline throughout our lives. Not surprisingly they believe the atmosphere and beauty of Caught In The Act delivers a perfect fit.

So, having explained that it is very different from

Days And Ways, what does it offer the barbel angler? Well, thirty per cent of the first two films features barbel fishing. Stu goes stalking, then roving in total darkness and I chip in with a cracking bit of float fishing. To be honest I think it's unfair to label the vast majority of folk who set out to catch barbel as blinkered barbel anglers. Yes, we all love to catch barbel but be honest, most of us fish for other species when the fancy takes us, or conditions are set against us, or during the closed season.

Caught in the Act





includes something for everyone. It's a film that aims to inspire. At the outset we ask a simple question. 'What makes us go fishing?' I'd like to think that we will not only answer that in the four disks but you'll be straining at the leash to get out on the bank long before you've finished watching them.

Do you recall that moment in the first Days And Ways film where Stu fishes the Dove on opening day? Tell me you're not willing his tip to pull round. And when it does, how many of us will confess to having felt a subconscious urge to grab his rod? Well, 'Caught' has so many moments like that. If you're not willing the float to go under or the tip to pull round then it's time to call a doctor or maybe the undertaker!

Caught In The Act (Parts One and Two) can be purchased direct from www.bobrobertsonline.co.uk. The two disk set costs £29.99 including postage and packing. Parts Three and Four will follow in November. All 4 volumes of Barbel Days And Ways are still available at the same site.

