

KEEP IT angling

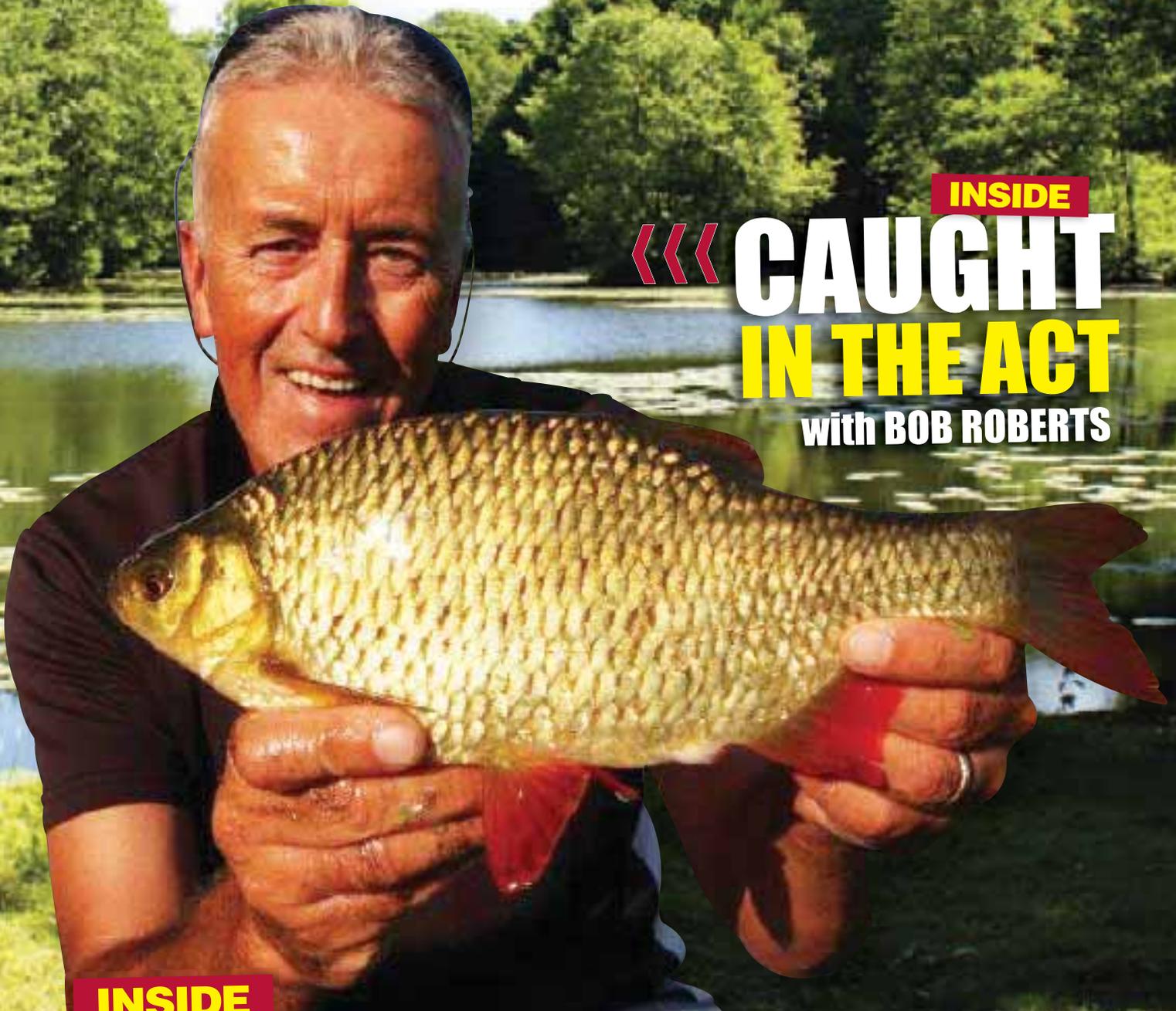
FANTASTIC 12-PAGE

PULL OUT SPECIAL

INSIDE

CAUGHT IN THE ACT

with BOB ROBERTS



INSIDE

DAVE WALKER...

I often get asked as a fishery manager what's the best way to sort out the larger roach in my match lake...



DAVE WATSON...

Big carp are no harder to catch than small ones, you just have to fish where they live...



NICK SPEED...

Tells us how making the most of nature's talent to attract fish into your swim often works.



keep it angling >>>>>

I love my job and it's days like this that make me realise why...

ON THE FLY!



It was just before Christmas last year and I was contacted by a chap wanting to buy his dad an "Introduction to Fly Fishing Session" as a Christmas present. Emails and phone calls followed until all that was needed was for him to surprise his dad on Christmas Day and then for me to phone his dad to arrange a date and place with him.

I phoned him, we chatted, and he said he would like to try Fly fishing as he had never done it before and so we agreed a suitable date. Now I normally suggest a small stillwater for anyone trying Fly fishing for the first time BUT the gentleman said - "I have rights to just a bit of river that runs at the bottom of the garden.

Hardly anyone fishes it and it's not stocked or anything but I guess it will do for what we want."

Now what I heard was - "I have fishing rights on a small section of exclusive wild trout and grayling water". - This was going to be interesting!

The morning arrived and we exchanged pleasantries and sorted out the paperwork.

We then walked down to look at the section of river - it wasn't a very long section but it had more features than the Odeon Leicester Square, was running crystal clear, it was rarely fished, and it was a straightforward wade - in a word "perfect"!

We now needed to get the gentleman to be able to perform the basic casts to an acceptable level so that we could be in the river, fishing, by the time the flies

had started to get lively and the fish had started to get deadly. I thought it best not to share this information as I didn't want to apply unnecessary pressure.

Into the field we went to come to terms with the overhead and roll casts. It was windy and remember he had never held a fly rod before. Making a cast with Fly tackle is about as far removed from casting coarse or sea tackle as you can get and that's all he had experience of.

Before long he was putting in some very acceptable grass casts and it was time to don the waders.

Casting on water surrounded by trees is a little different to standing in the middle of a field but this didn't deter him as he quickly started to adapt and make some good casts.

We moved upstream to the weir pool and soon saw some tell tale. I kept my cool and asked him to deliver the fly to where the fish were moving - and guess what - he did! His first fish was a fin perfect grayling, being out of season it was soon returned to the clear waters. This was quickly followed by another take but unfortunately a lost fish - now you have to do a lot of things right to get the take in the first place and we know exactly where the fish is, so it isn't really lost.

The final fish of the day was a beautiful brown trout of around one and a half

pounds which fell to a nymph on an induced take. Again it was admired, photographed and quickly returned to the river.

I love my job and it's days like this that make me realise why - a perfect day in a perfect place in perfect company!

I have a feeling this won't have been his last trip to the river - fly rod in hand!

For me it's time to clean and dry the tackle in readiness for another trip "hunting with a fishing rod".

Tight Lines!
www.peterlaxflyfishing.co.uk

Big carp are no harder to catch than small ones, you just have to fish where they live...

KEEP IT SIMPLE

WITH the torrent of information available on carp fishing through magazines, websites and TV shows it's easy to see why anyone new to the hobby can get confused. I've had my eyes opened to this after qualifying as a level 2 angling coach and speaking to people I've been tutoring. A main area of confusion is rigs which when kept simple can catch the biggest carp out there. In fact big carp are no harder to catch than small ones, you just have to fish where they live.

Your carp rig has four jobs to do and with a little thought anyone can construct an effective rig. The first task of the rig is to get you out there which is down to the lead and its attachment. Secondly it has to present the bait in a way that it's available to the carp which is down to the hook end. The third job is down to the hook and lead which is nailing the carp when it picks up your bait, then finally the entire rig has to be strong enough to land the carp you've hooked.

Behind the lead you have a choice of tubing, leaders or leadcore although many fisheries are now banning leadcore and leaders. This is due to it being very easy to set up a tether rig with both without even knowing it. Tubing is a safe bet and easy to use by simply threading a length (18inch to two foot is ideal) on the main line and pushing the lead clips tail

rubber over the end. If you choose leaders or leadcore then make sure the rig can fall apart if it is lost then picked up by a carp.

The most common lead attachment is a safety clip and is what I use for most of my fishing. It is simplicity itself to set up and being able to change lead size in seconds also makes it versatile. Be careful though because there are some good clips on the market but also some very poor ones. It should be strong enough to hold the lead and the tail rubber should easily be pushed off. That is where most bad ones fail, by being way too tight and any clip that needs to be modified to use ain't worth your cash.

To make sure your bait is available to the carp is done by knowing what sort of lake bottom you're fishing over. Clear bottoms are easy and my preference is for a bottom bait or semi buoyant, balanced bait. A good starting point for hooklink length is around 10 inches. If the bottom is weedy or silty I use a pop-up hookbait with a shorter hooklink and put it in a pva bag. This leaves you with a tasty clump of bait surrounding the hookbait which is easily sucked up by the carp.

This is where the confusion really starts, the hook end where we need to hook the carp. You needn't be confused, just follow a couple of easy steps. Firstly and very importantly is to make sure the hook is up to the job before tying it onto the hooklink. It has to be sharp enough and I test this by stroking down the point to make sure it is straight. If I feel a slight scratch it means the point has bent over and I'll bin it. Also take a quick look at the eye to make sure it is completely closed. The starting point for my favourite bottom/balanced bait rig is a simple knotless knot with an overhead loop tied in the tag end for the

hair. I always tie my knotless knots with "lucky seven" turns. This on its own will catch carp but can be made even better by adding two small pieces of heat shrink tubing to create angles. The first piece I use is only 2mm and is pushed over the knot onto the hook Shank. The second piece is about 1cm long and one end is cut at 45 degrees as in the picture and pushed onto the knot with the angled end on the hooklink. When shrunk down I move the small piece halfway down the bend and create an angle off the eye with the other. This helps the hook flip over in the carps mouth and hook it.

To ensure the rig is up to landing a hard fighting fish all you need to do is test every knot and component to destruction while tying it before even thinking about casting out.

It's much better to break something yourself than lose a big fish through it. After all, your entire set up is only as strong as your weakest link.

This rig I've described hasn't changed too much in a long time and there is no reason for it too. It works! I have made small tweaks of the years like changing from the line aligner to using



angled tubing and using several different patterns of hooks. The best I've found is the Nash Twister which I've been using for a couple of years and can't see me changing anytime soon.

Far more important than the rig is where you put it. Even a poor rig on the right spot has a chance of catching but the best rig in the world in the wrong spot has no chance. I know that is stating the obvious but I see so many people spending little or no time looking for fish then messing about with their rigs when they catch nowt. I mentioned matching your rig to the bottom you're fishing over which is another common mistake many make. There's no point throwing a bottom bait into thick weed because the carp may not find it or if they do, the hook may be hindered by the weed.

A simple tip is if you are in doubt about what you are fishing over then use PVA bags. This gives a nice pile of bait and protects the hook from weed.

In fact a lot of the successful carp anglers I've met over the years all have a few things in common. Those being dedication, excellent water craft and simple rigs. Put more thought into your location and the carp will come.

Stunning Common caught on the simplest of rigs.





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"Tight lines and see you on the bank sometime."




Tight lines
Mark Watson
www.carp tuition.co.uk

TARE-TASTIC

Dave Walker has been fishing all his life and certainly falls into the category of 'experienced'. He has many big fish to his credit from Spanish catfish to Trent barbel. Now he is in the enviable position of owning his own fishery, Alderfen, Nr Wroot, a three lake venue that holds quality fish of all species.

by Dave Walker

"I often get asked as a fishery manager the best way to sort out the larger roach in my match lake. Especially in the warmer months of the year, the answer is to fish hemp and tares. Back in the day, it was widely popular both on rivers and still waters, yet no one seems to use it much now.

It can be a devastating method which sorts out the larger fish compared to using maggot or caster and importantly only costs around £1 for a days bait.

Prepare your bait the easy way: forget boiling on the stove and stinking the house out, just put a pint of hempseed in a one litre flask, fill nearly to the top with boiling water (if you fill to the top there is no room for the seed to swell

up) and leave overnight. Do the same with a cup full of tares in another flask and your bait is ready.

Tackle wise I like to fish the wagglers with rod and line; I'm not much of a pole angler, but I believe the waggler is more effective for fishing the seed, and if the fish are that bit further out, its quicker too. Use the gear you are comfortable with. I like a 13ft quick action rod, an old Abu 506 and 3lb BS sinking line. I make my own floats, simply because I can't buy any that work as well. They are made from stripped pheasant or crow quills, trimmed to take two BB + 3X No8 stotz plus (and this is important) the weight of a tare, as you will be fishing up in the water most of the time. I make some with a small foam body which take another BB for fishing further out or when the wind is tricky. The floats are fished thin end up, and the top one inch is painted black. Varnished a couple of times, they are the perfect taper for this style of fishing using a silicone float adaptor to attach. Hook wise I've settled on the Drennan Silver Fish Match in 14s and 16s, as they stay sharp longer than any others I've tried.

Tackle up with the two BB's locking the float, start by spacing the three number 8s stotz equally with the "tell-tale" (last one) about twelve inches from the hook, this will give a nice slow fall. Plumb up,



Big Dave Walker with just part of a net of roach taken on hemp n' tares from Alderfen.

seed and give it a try. Alderfen has something for everyone, not just the roach angler...

The Specimen Lake has two islands set in three acres of reeds, rushes and lily beds. It contains tench over 8lbs, rudd over three, roach to just under three, double-figure bream and large perch and crucians, with a low stock of carp to double figures. The five acre carp water is heavily stocked with hard fighting commons and very scaly mirrors to upper 20s. The fish are all English, many of them Leney's or Leney crosses. There are many reed fringed bays, points, bars and an island. There are 16 swims which are large, well spaced and comfortable and night fishing is allowed.

The first lake found on arriving on site is the 30 peg match lake. It covers three acres with a depth of four-eight feet. It is heavily stocked with both carp and silver fish, plenty of skimmers, roach and rudd. The carp average 3lb but run up to doubles, there are plenty large bream and hard fighting tench averaging 3-5lb. Pleasure anglers are always welcome.

To book a match or for any enquiries please phone: 07772033398 or check out the web site: www.alderfenfisheries.co.uk/

Matches have been won with good nets of quality roach, a nice change from commercial carp."

and lay about three inch of line on the bottom start with a 16, and when the fish start really having it, change to a fourteen. It's time to start feeding the hemp; don't feed any tares, they are just for the hook. Hemp seems to pass straight through the fish without filling them up and they'll keep feeding. Just take a pinch of hemp between two fingers and a thumb, and put it out with a catty. Cast over to the back of the patch and let it settle. Put another pinch of hemp out, and reel two turns to lift the bait. Sometimes the float doesn't come back up and there's one on. Another pinch, twitch it again. If you get to the near side of the baited

patch cast to the far side again and feed.

Don't panic if it's slow for the first half hour or so, if you keep feeding every couple of minutes, they will come, and you can expect to get a bite every cast, often on the drop. Shallow up a bit, often about 3ft is a good catching depth. If they suddenly go off, try moving the shots or change depth a bit, two inches will start you catching again as the bait falls differently. Sometimes they don't want it twitched but will only have it still. If you get pestered by very tiny indications that you can't hit move the shot down closer to the tell-tail. Every day is different. Cook some



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keep it angling >>>>>

Nick Speed explains how to make the most of nature's talent...

ANGLING WITH NATURE

THERE are many situations in fishing when making the most of nature's talent to attract fish into your swim often works.

All over the country there are fisheries full of older and wiser fish that only tend to feed out of match hours or just after a match has finished when there's plenty of UN used bait thrown away down the margins.

With a small amount of nature's help it's possible to speed up this process and fool these clever fish into feeding during "normal hours". Let me give example of how effective natures help can be.

Last summer I was at Lindholme lakes on the Oasis. This a canal that averages in width between 14-16 metres. It's solid with all species so during the summer months the majority of fish are caught fishing tight up to the far bank vegetation in the shallow water or down the inside margins.

Directly in front of me I had a slight mud bank, which is perfect for targeting as the activity of feeding fish against the mud bank really colours the water up and induces fish into feeding more confidently.

At the start of the match I caught really well against the far bank, but after the second hour my peg completely died, by this point I had opened up several more lines to a least try and put the odd fish in my net during this slow period, gradually I could see the chances of a match win slipping away.

Looking to my right I could see two swans moving up along the far bank towards my peg. Immediately I went straight across with a full pot of luncheon meat and potted it in actually on the far bank so the swans could see there was some food on a plate for them.

Moments later the swans were stamping about in my peg feeding on my free offerings. I let them feed happily and slipped away from my peg and went for a walk. Upon returning I could see the swans had turned my peg into a mud bath, and among all the chaos I could see a few tails out of the water next to the swan's feet! My peg was now absolutely solid with carp.

Now this is the interesting part. The last thing I wanted to do was suddenly scare the swans by shipping the pole out quickly as this would scare a large majority of the fish away too. It's all about stealth.

Instead I carefully inched my pole out up to the point where the swans could see the pole coming over. I then stopped and allowed the swans to casually move out of my swim.

First drop into the mud pit I was into a lump straight away, this turned out to be a cracking common around the 10lb stamp, within the next twenty minutes I had netted six big carp in as many drops and throughout the remainder of the match I continued to catch in the same hole.

I ended up winning the match with 130lb, almost 40lb clear of the nearest rival! If they could accept money I would have given the swans half my winnings!

What the above theory proved to

me was older fish definitely use birds as a guide line to whether it's safe to feed or not.

I've learnt a lot of this information at Hallcroft fisheries, another venue that's full of wary fish and helpful wildlife. I am on Bridge Pool island peg 13. This peg is situated on the point which is a perfect place for catching down the edge and short as the fish use this area as a main patrol route for feeding. As on most venues you will usually find that fishing to the next platform is the most sensible area to target when margin fishing. WHY? Let me explain.

Throughout the match you are constantly dropping bait into the water under your feet as you fill your kinder pot or catapult up and by the end of the match quite a large amount of bait has built up.

It now comes to weigh in time, you drag your keep nets out. Pulling your net out actually clears the bottom of any loose debris and creates a perfect feeding ground for edge dwellers. The most important part though is all that built up bait suddenly gets spread about into the deeper water.

This alone immediately attracts fish and other wildlife into the area, which is why more often than not after loading your car up at the end of the session you notice a load of birds feeding on the bank side and tails in your peg just where your nets have been.

Waiting for my edge lines to start working I intended to start the session by feeding 10mm meat at five metres directly in front as this is where the crease of the near side shelf is. This again is a patrol route for all species as the crease of the shelf creates not only cover but also a food source, as baits natural and unnatural roll down and collect.

My set up for this session was quite simple, it comprised of two rigs, one for down the edge and the other for my five metre line.

For my edge rig I used a middy carp Grey Float 4x12 tied direct to 0.20 Middy Low Viz Line / size 14 Hook, Middy 63-13. This comprised of four No 8 Stots bulked together five inches from the hook, to act as a bait deliverer to the bottom to avoid foul hooking fish and also keeping the hook bait stable.

For the five metre line where I had a depth of around 6ft at the crease, I used Middy Carp Grey 4x14 Direct to 0.18 Middy Low Viz Line/ Size 14 hook, Middy

63-13. The shooting pattern for this rig was a straight forward bulk of No 8's, followed by 2 x no 10 as droppers spaced 6 inches apart, which then creates an even distribution of weight and also good stability for the float and hence the hook bait.

To start with I was going to feed 10mm cubed Dynamite luncheon meat on the short five metre line. For my edge lines I was mainly going to feed ground bait along with 10mm meat as an occasional loose offering to match my hook bait.

My ground bait mix comprised of three ingredients, Dynamite Green Swim Stim/Dynamite Marine Halibut/Dynamite Swim Stim Natural. The reason for this mix is because the end result is quite a heavy mix that suits this style of feeding in shallow water where you want the ground bait to be quite stable.

The reason for feeding mainly just ground bait is quite simple; it's such a good attracter for most species but especially carp and bream and by not feeding many particle baits in the ground bait this speeds up the process of fish taking your hook bait first.

I'm sure we've all seen it in the past when feeding large amounts of particle baits down the margins and having a load of fish in your peg but not getting any bites apart from line bites. This is because the fish are so preoccupied with the amount that you're feeding that it takes much longer for them to find your hook bait which by this time you will have already had a line bite which is enough for you to spook the feeding fish out of your swim.

The key point to remember when targeting big fish down the margins is to fish in the correct depth of water. Because of the size of fish I'm after down the margins I'm looking to find a depth of around 15-18 inches. This depth would usually put me right next to the platform. Finding the same depth each side also means you can rotate between each swim

without having to change rigs!

When a double figure carp comes into your peg to feed the last thing you want to do is hook it anywhere but the mouth, there's an awful lot of body to hook on an angry carp.

And for this reason as a rule this is why you fish in the shallowest possible part of your peg next to the platform to ensure when a fish comes into your swim it swims in from the open water head first, and not from behind your float where it has to pass your line in order to get the bait.

To start the session I fed just 20x4mm pellets topped with one 10mm cube in a cup on my five metre line, I then immediately lowered my rig in with meat on the hook, within five seconds I was into the first lump of the day which set off like a steam train, I couldn't chase it out quick enough and ended with my rig returning with no hook!

Feeding the same amount again I dropped straight back in, again within seconds I was into another lump, this turned out to be a common carp of around the 10lb mark. I decided to start priming my edge lines as with the prevailing wind I could tell that both edge lines would produce quicker than expected.

To start with I just fed two full pots of ground bait on each line topped with four cubes of meat; I also fed

some bait on the bank to attract some ducks.

Within minutes I had ducks swimming about right over my edge feed and occasionally amongst them you could see fish movement.

I carefully shipped my pole over the banking and gradually the ducks eased away, I then lowered my rig in and instantly I was into the first edge creature of the day, a mirror of about 9lb.

With this style of fishing regular feeding is paramount as it doesn't take long for a single carp to clear your peg of bait, regular feeding also tells the fish where the main source of feed is coming from which is also the exact spot where you want to catch them.

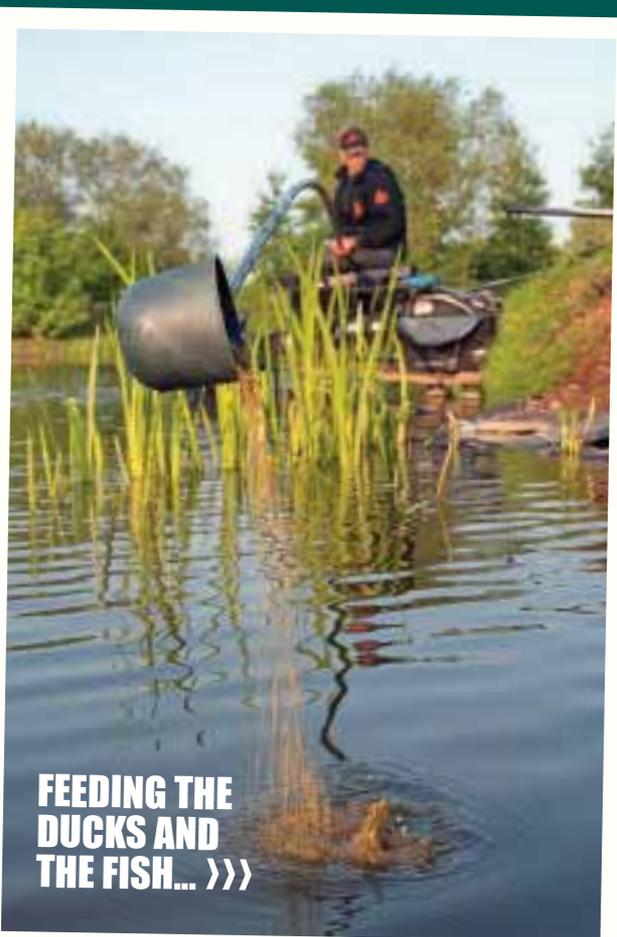
After slipping the fish in the keep net I then re baited my peg with a pot of ground bait but only I single cube of meat in the pot as I wanted to single my hook bait out quicker. Before shipping out I looked to my left line only to see a group of ducks diving for my ground bait. Now I'm sure in most situations anglers would scare the ducks away but actually they are your fish marker.

When ducks are diving this usually tells me that there are no fish present as when there are carp in the peg the ducks are usually too wary to dive. This is why if the ducks all of a sudden stop diving either carp have moved in or there's no bait left in the swim, drop your rig in to find out either way.

Shipping back over to my right edge line I was instantly rewarded with a good size bream, followed by another and another and another. After constantly topping my left hand edge line with the occasional pot of ground bait I eventually saw a change as the ducks all of a sudden stopped diving. I immediately shipped down to the swim and carefully parted the ducks away. Upon lowering my rig in I was instantly rewarded with a big carp that was fooled by the duck trick.

The key point remember is always make the most of surrounding nature as this will without doubt improve your catches.

Nick is available for coaching sessions. Give him a ring on 0785 4123215 or e-mail him at nick.j.speed@gmail.com



FEEDING THE DUCKS AND THE FISH... >>>



A decent net full with help of nature.

Garbolino Lindholme Lakes is a hugely popular venue for many anglers from our area...

EVOLUTIONARY OR REVOLUTIONARY



KEEP It Angling visited Garbolino Lindholme Lakes, for a cup of tea and a chat with the owner Neil Grantham.

It's plain to see on some commercials that the owners soon run out of steam or enthusiasm, call it what you want. This clearly isn't evident at Lindholme, even after over 12 years the evolution of the site is still going on, with improvements taking place year upon year.

Born in Stainforth, a poor mining town, to a working class family, Neil's first job was selling boats earning £20 a week. He goes on to tell us...

"Father bought me a butchers shop when I was 19 which I sold for a reasonable profit, bought my first bungalow at 20 years old and got a job at Rockware glass, Doncaster, working shifts making glass bottles for eight years. Left there to trade in cars, some say that's where I made my money.

I could see the slump in the car game coming and in 2001, after a chance conversation at a Chamber of Commerce meeting, saw an opportunity to purchase Lindholme Lakes. It was a big decision that I would never have been able to take without the support of my wife Beverly. We had a nice bungalow, with an indoor pool, ten acres of land with an indoor riding school. We sold it all and borrowed to purchase the lakes, they cost us £380,000. We lived in the old farmhouse, and with no heating it was a bit of a come down, Bev never stopped crying for three months. My thought was that even if it didn't take off, anything we got from the fishing was a bonus, I thought Bev can look after this, I can sell the odd car and we'll be all right, but it just took off. I put some fish in and it went mad!

Originally the site had one half acre lake and one big 16 acre lake. First thing I did was to form Willows and stock with a lot of fish, we've spent a fortune on fish. Anglers started to come in their droves because they were catching big weights.

I am a business man not an angler so I was fortunate to meet Steve Gregory, a very successful and experienced angler, he was probably the most influential person involved in the development of the lakes at that time. He said stick some carp in mate and you'll fill the place. If I owe thanks to anyone it's to Steve Gregory. He advised me and he got the anglers coming here. All the money generated was ploughed back in. We bought more fish and dug more lakes. We have probably put in around 50 tons of fish (and still going). The second lake I did was Laurels which originally was a little pond full of big carp. The soil I removed helped form the strip. We built a small café and a little tackle shop. The more pegs we provided the more anglers came, we

just continued improving and growing, giving the anglers what they wanted.

I chose to stock mainly F1s. I think I was one of the first to capitalise on them, they make up around 90% of our stock. In my opinion they are ideal. They are good all year round, they don't get too big and they are resilient to the dries KHV and SVC. At the time when I decided to stock them I could have put commons and mirrors in and gambled that I wasn't going to lose all of them to SVC.

F1s are a funny fish, when you stock them you may get 2-5% fatalities straight away. Once you get over that they are easy. So my thoughts were do I want to gamble, am I prepared to lose a small percentage of my stock on introduction, or do I risk waking up one morning and find them all turned over to KHV or SVC. I went with F1s and it's paid off. We have very minimal losses here for the amount of fish we stock.

The Environment Agency are trying to stop me putting them in. They are classed as an alien species. This whole area is seen as a flood risk. They didn't really like it when I put the trout in the coarse lakes, but I found that when I owned Toff Newton the trout would readily take maggots in the winter, they seemed perfect for the anglers coming here through the colder months, so I stocked them. Some disagreed but it was a popular decision with the anglers coming here. I have also stocked plenty of barbel, again not everyone agrees with having them in a still water but they are thriving.

To help with the high stock lev-



"BEV DIDN'T STOP CRYING FOR THREE MONTHS"

els we have aerators on every lake. We are lucky enough to have a natural well on site which allows us to change the water through the winter months. The well water has a temperature of around four-six degrees. It takes careful management to keep the water quality and oxygen levels right.

In 2005 I managed to buy the field to create Bonsai. The soil removed was used to split the big lake and form Loco. Oasis was dug and stocked. We constructed the purpose built club house with a 150 seater café, bar, toilets, tackle shop and shower block and the brick lodges. The original trout lake, Beeches, was improved and put over to coarse fishing. The remaining part of what was the big lake was stocked with a mix of trout up to 18lb, for those who prefer to cast a fly and finally a

small 20 peg lake, Oscars, was created. I say finally but that isn't the end of it. I plan to build another 80 peg match lake this year.

We have improvements going ahead on the Oasis which will eventually have a number of fishing lodges for sale in the centre; each lodge will get its own water front. The road is going to get a covering of tarmac, with speed bumps. It winds me up when they come flying down there! I have bought the field at the back of Oasis that will be used as a caravan site with a play area for the kids and in the mean-time I have promised Beverly that we will finally get into the new house this year!

We have great staff, four of them are full time staff and four part time. My lad Arron runs the well-stocked tackle shop and helps out around the site.

When I set up the UK Pole Championships, Darren Cox was with MAP at the time, he helped with advice and prizes. I was more than happy to work with him again when he became UK Manager of Garbolino UK. The sponsorship of Lindholme by Garbolino has worked well for both parties.

A typical day for me in the summer starts at around 6:30am with a walk around the lakes checking stands etc. Litter pick, you would be amazed at the amount of litter that gets left!

I have made even well-known anglers go around the entire lake removing litter if I have found any in their peg. There is no excuse! After my walk around it's into the café, arrange the matches, pegging etc, draw the open match, I may have a couple of hours break or answer e-mails, sort out future match bookings, caravan and lodge bookings etc. Then back out checking that only Lindholme pellets and barbless hooks are being

used, help out in the shop or café and if needed help with any weighing in. Open the bar at around 7pm, finishing at about 11pm. Then do it all over again the next day!

The hardest part is having to be available 24 hours a day seven days a week and dealing with some customers. Every angler has a different view of how this place should be run. I have learned that it's impossible to please everyone.

I am proud of what I have achieved. I am not cash rich person but the site is developing into the biggest in the country and will be worth a considerable amount of money when I decide to retire. Would I have done anything different? Yes, I would have taken more time for ourselves. We have had over 10 years of hard graft. We have refurbished a couple of bungalows and taken six years to build our new house. When the match results dipped I would go out and spend our money on some more fish. That still happens now. This winter has been hard, it's been hard for everyone, attendances have been well down, we are usually just as busy in the winter as in the summer. As soon as it kicked up a bit I used the income to buy a new tractor and a new dump truck. I need them to move banks of soil and put the new lake in, so Beverly isn't too happy with me!

We support lots of events every year, we donate prizes and reduce peg fees to help raise funds for the likes of Help the Heroes, MacMillan Nurses as well as the Big Bash matches which raise money for Breast Cancer Care. To promote junior angling we host the Junior National at no charge. The Stillwater National peg fees are going to be donated back into the prize fund. Every club booking two or more 20 peg matches gets a free Garbolino rod.

We host some of the biggest matches in the country. The new Angling Trust Commercial Team Stillwater Championship on August 17 is 300 pegs here with 150 at Hayfield and 150 at Hallcroft. We are to be the headquarters on the day. I will provide a marquee and an evening hog roast free of charge. As well as that we have a 300 peg Fish O' qualifier, the CRU National, a Match This qualifier, a UK Champ's qualifier and the Garbolino Clubman Final and we have started doing Corporate Events, we have 10 booked for this year.

Looking to the future. I would like to make this place the White Acres of the north. The touring van site is very popular and the lodges that we have for sale are quickly taken up. North Lincs Council are very supportive, they have been great. I have permission for 100 touring pitches. I would like 100 lodges. Maybe we can then get anglers up from the south and run some really big festivals."



keep it angling >>>>>>

THINK BEFORE YOU FEED!

Many anglers are left somewhat confused when it comes to the science behind fish behaviour. While a lot of people know methods that catch fish, understanding how and why these methods work is another thing altogether. It is no coincidence that some of the country's best anglers often have a background in fish science. One such angler is Roy Marlow.

ROY MARLOW gives an insightful lesson in reading the water...



Roy has a match fishing career now spanning five decades. He has represented England and was runner up in the World Championships in 1967. During the 1970s and early 1980s Roy was an integral member of the all-conquering Leicester Likely Lads match fishing team. He has worked as a product developer with some of the biggest bait producers in the world, including his current sponsors, the Japanese company Marukyu.

These days he does most of his fishing on the fiercely competitive Glebe complex, a series of lakes that are a mecca for anglers from our area, which were designed and built by Roy himself.

Here he gives us a fascinating lesson in the unseen factors that an angler should bear in mind before approaching a water.

1°C TO 4°C
In temperatures lower than four degrees, fish are almost dormant, and certainly will not be actively seeking out food. As the warmest water is almost always mid depth, this is generally where fish will sit in the coldest of conditions.

To catch in this kind of an environment, the key is to fish single, visible hook baits that may attract the attention of a fish. As the fish do not really want to feed, and all you are essentially doing is trying to tempt one into taking your bait, expect conditions to be tough.

Trying different parts of a swim is important because the fish aren't going to move far, if at all.

4°C TO 8°C
Although fish will still be fairly lethargic, they will be willing to feed as long as your bait is not too rich in protein, as fish struggle to break this down at low temperatures. In the Marukyu range, for instance, groundbaits such as EFG 120, 121, 130 and 131 will all work well in these temperatures. Hook baits should also be easily digestible so maggots, corn, JPz and soft expander pellets will all be effective. Avoid high-protein and high fat content baits like halibut pellets, meat or high-protein boilies.

The best philosophy to work to at these temperatures is that you are only ever trying to ATTRACT fish into your peg rather than actually feed them. Feed sparingly, as the last thing you want to do is fill the fish up before you have had chance to catch them.

8°C AND ABOVE
At these temperatures, the fish will be active, and will need to eat a considerable amount to sustain their metabolic rate. When aquatic conditions are right, the fish will be actively seeking out food, meaning more positive feeding strategies will often pay dividends. High-protein bait like pellet, paste, worms and meat all work well at these temperatures, as these prove particularly nutritious to fish when the water is warmer.

In the majority of commercial fisheries fish will eat the most food at high water temperatures, but that is very dependent on water quality and the oxygen concentration in the water.

The measure of the acidity/alkalinity of the water (its pH) can fluctuate quite dramatically in summer, as a result of the concentrations of oxygen, light levels, algae content and bait introduced by anglers. This is bound to affecting fish feeding.

NATURALLY OCCURRING FOOD
One of the biggest misconceptions that is commonly cited by anglers is that fish are overfed. This is usually nonsense, and while fish may back away from bait, it is not that they cannot handle the quantity of what is being introduced but that the bait being fed is too rich in a particular ingredient.

In summer conditions, carp will generally eat between two and three per cent of their bodyweight per day. Typical of many well stocked commercials Pool One at The Glebe contains in excess of 5,000lb of carp. In order to fill these fish up with bait, anglers would therefore have to throw in 150lb of feed every single day! And, this is without taking into consideration the lake's massive head of silver fish!

So what are the fish eating? The answer in the most part is zooplankton – simple organisms that naturally exist in the lake. Then there are other organic food sources like spawn, dead fish and fry.

The abundance of natural food will vary through the year, but as with fish, the metabolic rate of the micro-organisms that fish eat slows down as the temperature decreases. In effect, nature caters for the fish's appetite; at times when fish are hungry (warm weather) there is more natural food than when they are not (cold weather).

NUTRITIONAL BALANCE
With all this natural food available, you might wonder why fish take anglers' bait at all. The truth of the matter is, it provides a quick and easy way for them to fulfil certain dietary requirements. Most carp baits for example are high in protein, so a carp will eat a given amount of bait until it has had enough protein and then move on to another food source where it can pick up another dietary requirement.

It is rather like humans grazing on a well-stocked buffet. We are unlikely to eat every single sausage roll, and ignore the other foods on offer. We might fancy a sausage roll, some cheese on a stick, and some salad, fulfilling three aspects of our dietary requirements.

How should you deal with this? The answer is to use complex bait that fulfils several needs – more of a roast dinner with all the trimmings than a sausage roll!

This is where Marukyu bait scores well, as it contains a great many ingredients that fulfil a number of a fish's needs.

LIGHT LEVELS
Fish feel far more confident feeding when light levels are low. This is no doubt because they feel safer at this time of day, when the lack of visibility means that they are safer from threats from the sky.

Obviously, this presents a problem to most anglers, as we like to fish when light (and visibility) is good. It is no coincidence though that the very best times for actually catching fish are when the sun is going down in the early evening, or before the sun has risen properly in the morning. This is also why specimen hunters generally take their best captures at night.

NOISE
Fish respond to noise in two ways. If they don't want to feed, they will generally back away from it, as they associate it with danger. In winter, the fish will often be found as far away from bankside activity as possible, in the widest, deepest part of the lake.

In summer, or when the fish are actively wanting to feed, they may be attracted to noise if they associate it with food, which is why techniques such as slapping your rig and pole tapping are so effective.

What a lot of anglers don't realise is that bait itself often makes fish-attracting noise as it breaks down. Scientists have found that groundbait containing active ingredients make a lot more noise, and as a consequence it is a lot more attractive to fish than groundbait that has been mixed for a while.

For this reason it is best to mix an active groundbait up in batches; at the start only wetting up enough for the first couple of hours fishing, then mixing more up as and when you need it.

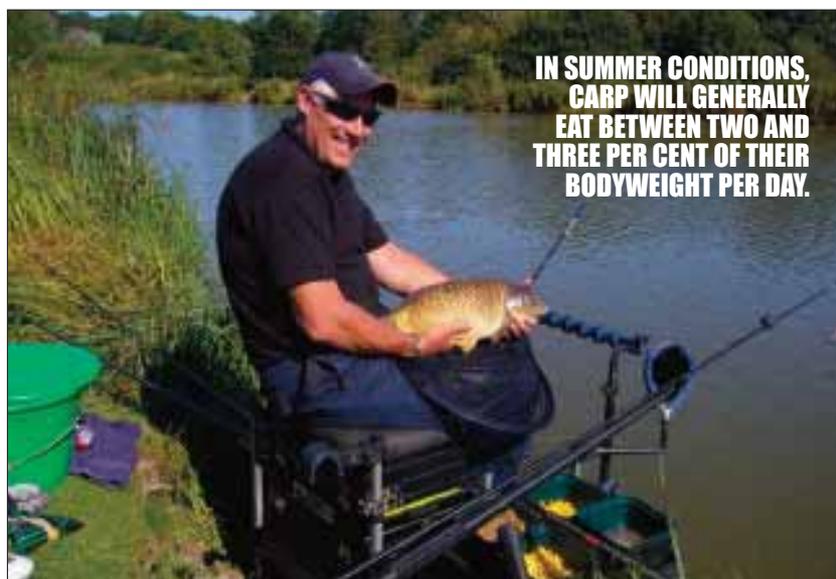
KNOW THE STOCK LEVELS
In order to make a decision as to how to go about fishing a particular venue, it helps if you have a rough idea of the species stocked in that particular place. On a really new venue, building an accurate picture of what fish are present is easy, simply ask the venue owner!

However over the course of time these levels will change though, with certain species breeding successfully and others dying out.

Remember, every fish has a finite life cycle, and this not only affects the head of fish present but also the amount of natural bait that they consume. Obviously, there is always an air of mystery about the exact species of fish present, which is why fishing is such a wonderful pastime!

That said, do not think that just because a certain species was prolific in a venue in previous years, it will necessarily figure the next time that you visit.

TEMPERATURE
This is perhaps the simplest factor for us to consider because to most of us it is obvious that fish feed better in warmer temperatures. The reason for this is that fish are cold blooded and their metabolism is controlled by the temperature of their environment. Put simply, as the water warms up, the fish are more active and therefore need more food to sustain them. To put more fish into your net always consider the water temperature before you feed.



IN SUMMER CONDITIONS, CARP WILL GENERALLY EAT BETWEEN TWO AND THREE PER CENT OF THEIR BODYWEIGHT PER DAY.

PIECING TOGETHER THE JIGSAW

Listening to the science behind fish behaviour makes you think a lot more about what prompts fish to behave in certain ways. It also makes you realise that often, if you cannot catch fish on a given day, it could well be due to conditions rather than anything that you are doing wrong.

THINKING THROUGH THE FOG

Imagine conditions underwater as a thick fog. Sight, sound, and smell are all muffled by the thick air. You are a fish wandering about in this fog and standard bait would be comparable to a torch, so if you're close enough to it you may see it and go towards it, but if you're not then the chances are you won't even know that it is there.

Freshly mixed Marukyu bait on the other hand is different. This is like a bacon butty van with its headlights on full beam, and Iron Maiden playing full blast on the radio! Even if you can't see it, you should be able to hear it, and if you can't hear it then there is a good chance that you will be able to smell it!

In essence, it appeals to many of the fish's senses at once, giving you an increased chance of drawing one into your peg and ultimately catching it.

Every fish has a nose. That tells you it can smell as well as taste. Consider what you are putting on the hook and always think before you feed!

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LIFE CYCLE)))

The Average Lifecycle of Commercial Fish:

- Carp <20 years
- Roach <8 years
- Skimmer <10 years
- Barbel <15 years
- Perch <10 years

SANAGI SECRETS

In the Marukyu range, baits such as EFG 100, 101, 150 and 151 are all deadly when the water is above eight degrees.



Why are these baits so good? The answer lies in one six-letter Japanese word: Sanagi. Translated into English, this means silkworm chrysalis. Although Marukyu are one of the first companies to market this extensively in the UK, its fish attracting qualities have long been appreciated abroad.

Alongside being a key seller for Marukyu on the Asian market, silkworm is also used extensively on the continent, especially in warm climates. The bait is particularly popular in Italy, and formed a key part of their nation's win in the World Championship on the River Arno. Why does it work so well? The simple answer is that we are not sure.



A Japanese laboratory once tried to explain it to me, it still went straight over my head! All we do know, is that it is very rich in protein, and carp in particular absolutely love it!



"THE BEST THING ABOUT MY JOB IS THAT IT GIVES ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO INSPIRE LOTS OF PEOPLE THROUGH DOING SOMETHING I LOVE."

IMAGINE if I'd approached my careers advisor with what I planned to do on leaving school at the ripe old age of 15. It's likely that he'd have had a right old chuckle. The conversation might have gone something like this...

"So young Robert, it says here you want to be a fisherman. You're going to write magazine articles and newspaper columns. Oh, and books. It also says you want to take all your own photographs as well. Anything else?"

"You want to appear on TV. And make films. All around the world! Okay, and what's that, you want to operate the cameras and do the editing as well."

"Don't you think you're biting off a little more than you can chew? It's a fine ambition, I'm sure, but perhaps you might care to look at a few other opportunities until something in fishing crops up, eh? How about a job with a solid future until you get used to working and maybe gain some experience? I can recommend a job in the steelworks. Or mining perhaps?"

It'll come as no surprise then that I started my working life with British Railways. Unfortunately those who don't fish are unlikely to appreciate that fishing isn't a hobby, it's an illness, an addiction for which there's no known cure.

But every young boy and girl should harbour a dream, they should have something they aspire to do no matter how daft or unlikely it might sound to someone else. It was a long time before I published my first magazine article although once that particular genie was out of the bottle there was no turning back for me. I was now a writer and there would be no stopping me if I had a say in that matter.

Since that the first article saw the light of day I've published way over 1,000 articles, written or contributed to countless books, been a magazine editor, written regular columns in a variety of magazines and papers and appeared on TV and radio in the UK, in Europe and even in America. Dreams do come true providing you are sufficiently determined. However the only person who can make them happen is you.

Believe it or not I still maintained a steady day job in the 'real' world until five years ago when I became a full-time angler and turned my attentions to making films.

Since then, along with my filming partner Stuart Walker (also from Donny) I've shot films

in India, Canada, the Andaman Islands, Uganda and Zambia. It's really weird when you see Jeremy Wade or Robson Green on TV in some exotic location and think, I've been there. I have fished that very spot!

Yet despite this I'm still rooted to the Don Valley and derive great pleasure from fishing the River Don and its tributaries. In fact, I've fished on oceans, in mountains, deserts and jungles but I'm just as likely to be found by one of our local commercial fisheries or a river like the Don. Fishing is fishing, wherever you are in the world. It's just a different challenge, that's all.

The best thing about my job is that it gives me an opportunity to inspire lots of people through doing something I love. When I share the passion I have for fishing through articles and films then it's inevitable other anglers will want to follow in my footsteps although you should be in no doubt that a lot more people get in touch asking for advice about how I caught a fish from, say, the Trent, than in some foreign land, even if they did see the footage on Sky TV. It just goes to show that you don't have to fly 6,000 miles when a different kind of paradise can be found on your doorstep.

Stuart and I created four critically acclaimed barbel fishing films for the Barbel Days And Ways series but during the past three years we've been working on a truly ambitious project called Caught In The Act. It is a series of four DVDs, covering 20 separate 'acts' featuring 10 different species.

Made to broadcast quality it would easily lend itself to becoming a TV series but such is the resistance to angling on TV for some unfathomable reason, we haven't even attempted to push it in that direction. It will

be available only on DVD and to be fair we don't really mind. The only folk who get to make TV angling programmes these days are Robson Green and Jeremy Wade. And when did you last see either of them shooting a programme on the Tinsley Canal!

Unlike the vast majority of angling that is broadcast on TV today, including the highly product based promotional series like Thinking Tackle, a lot of our footage was filmed within an hour's drive of the Don Valley and mainly on public access waters to boot. Of course it should come as no surprise that we manage to catch many fish of specimen size but our goal from the outset was always

to create an inspirational film rather than one that says 'hey, look at us' with these huge kippers'. Our aim was to make a film that would have anglers yearning to go fishing after they watched it.

We have been lucky though and I could barely believe my luck when wildlife and children's artist Maurice Pledger gave us permission to feature a number of his paintings in the films and on the individual disk labels. If I was to tell you a number of his originals have sold at Sotheby's and that his artwork has adorned the covers and pages of books that have sold in excess of ten million copies worldwide then you can perhaps grasp what an amazing coup this was for us.

By combining the perfect mood music, authoritative narration, spectacular scenic shots, remarkable underwater footage and filming from an angler's perspective we'd like to believe we've achieved everything we set out to do, but you don't have to take our word for it.

Kevin Wilmont, deputy editor of River Times, wrote to me after watching it and said: 'I have seen a lot of angling films but yours has to be up there with the very best ever made.'

Kevin Green, editor of Improve Your Coarse Fishing, rang to say, 'Bob, it's fantastic, you two should feel justifiably proud!'

Pretty amazing comments and, I'd like to think it just goes to show what a couple of local self-taught amateurs can achieve if they believe anything is possible and are determined enough to make it happen. Imagine what your careers officer would have said, eh?

Caught In The Act is available from Bob's web site, www.bobrobertson-line.co.uk and trailers from it can be watched on www.youtube.com/stubarbel



"FISHING ISN'T A HOBBY IT'S AN ILLNESS"

keep it angling >>>>>

FISHING on the lower of the three ponds Gary set his stall out for the F1s which make up the bulk of the stock in it. He advises: "Set off tight across, that's where the fish are, I can't see the point in going anywhere else, that's where they are and by going there from the off you will put fish in the net right from the start."

Begin a couple of feet off the far bank which will be around two feet deep, plumb up carefully to fish with the hook bait just touching the bottom – dead depth.

STEP 1.

When you have plumbed up mark the exact distance you are fishing with a bit of electricians tape on your pole at the point where you would normally grip it. If you line up your tip on a far bank marker and the tape is at your hand you will be in the exact same spot every time you go in.

STEP 2.

For F1's I use double six latex elastic which is nice and soft, allowing you to hook them without bumping them off.

STEP 3.

Marry this to 0.12 diameter main line and a float with a tip that you can clearly see against the far bank reflections. Hook bait is a 4mm expanser or soft pellet on a size 16 Kamasan F1 which is a reasonably light hook, perfect for the presentation necessary.

STEP 4.

Start off across with a handful of micros in your pole cup. Once you have given the initial feed follow up with a small pole mounted pot filled with slightly wetted micros, every time you go in. It has to be a small pot so that you can really press the wetted micros tightly into the bottom and sides. They should come out with a plop when you turn the pot over and tap your pole. You are trying to keep the fish on the deck for as long as possible.

A lot of my pole pots are made from the lids off fruit shoot drinks or aerosol canisters, drilled so they fit tightly onto the end of my top kits. You can drill the sides of a lid and thread a bit of pole elastic through to hold it tight on the very tip of your pole, so when you feed the feed is going in the exact same spot as your hook bait.

You can usually keep them on the deck for quite a while if you feed the wetted tightly squeezed micros through the small pot. But you'll know when they are coming up, bites get really iffy and difficult to hit. You must lift into every dip on the float. If the elastic doesn't come out chances are they are coming up but they may also be coming



BARNBURGH BAGGIN'
FISH
WHERE THE FISH ARE

WE JOINED GARY WHO WAS HAPPY TO PASS ON SOME HINTS AND TIPS FOR OUR READERS...

A look at the Advertiser's weekly angling results page usually has one name reappearing, that of Gary Jubb, the former Diawa Goldthorpe captain and England international, who has an enviable record at one of the area's most popular venues, Barnburgh Lakes.

towards you, moving into the deeper water. Just come back a few feet and see if you get any indications, feed through the small pot every time you go over.

I have my shot strung out in the bottom half of my on the deck rig, with just one small shot under the float which helps part cock it as soon as it hits the water and serves as a depth marker. I come back into the deeper water with the same rig at the same depth.

I don't feed and fish more than one swim at a time, preferring to give the swim that I am working all my concentration. If bites dry up I then move and start a new swim up. But I may dump half a pot of chopped worm down the edge and have a look over that now and again.

STEP 5.

F1's come up in the water really easily and when they are up I will change to a sprinkler pot, it's just a lid that fits

tightly on with a few holes in it. The micros are put in loosely and sprinkled on the water followed by the hook bait which for me is a hard 4mm banded pellet. A small latex band is tied to a short hair, the band holds the pellet in place allowing the hook to be exposed. To build up a big weight and get into a catching rhythm you need to be getting as many fish as possible on one pellet before it's necessary to change it, that's why it has to be a hard pellet.

Lots of anglers here are fishing a method that has been called the Jigger. It's nothing new. I remember using it on Ecclesfield pond over 20 years ago, in fact I recall doing a feature for The Anglers Mail using it to catch roach on caster to great effect. It is simply a small float body with a tube through it which allows the line to pass freely through it.

STEP 6.

The tube has a wrap of wire which makes it self-cocking. It's over shotted

with a bulk placed above a short hook length. Above the float is a small shot which is set, to start with, at dead depth. The baited hook is simply lowered into the water directly below the pole tip, the bulk carries it down, if it's not taken the tip is lifted and the process repeated. By watching the shot above the float you can work out where they are taking it and adjust it to suit. Feed through a sprinkler pot or a catapult.

STEP 7.

When they are really having it shallow and the water temperature is right you can build a big weight by fishing slop. It's nothing magic, just our fishery micro pellets over wetted and mashed up with your hand until they just drip through your fingers. This is fed through a bigger pole mounted cup on top of the float. Today it's nice and warm and I have got them swirling on top, right in the cloud. The only feed in there is the hook bait.

Lowering the hard pellet in among them is resulting in the soft set latex streaming out every time. If you get the bigger fish coming in 100lb can be done like this, but conditions have to be right or the slop can kill the swim.

You can catch good weights off any peg on any of the ponds. I have done a decent weight in just a couple of hours while you have been here, simply fishing and feeding pellets. Don't go mad with the feed and don't scatter it all over the swim, feed accurately and often. For the F1s don't fish too heavy. I hope your readers come and give it a go, they won't be disappointed.

STEP 8.

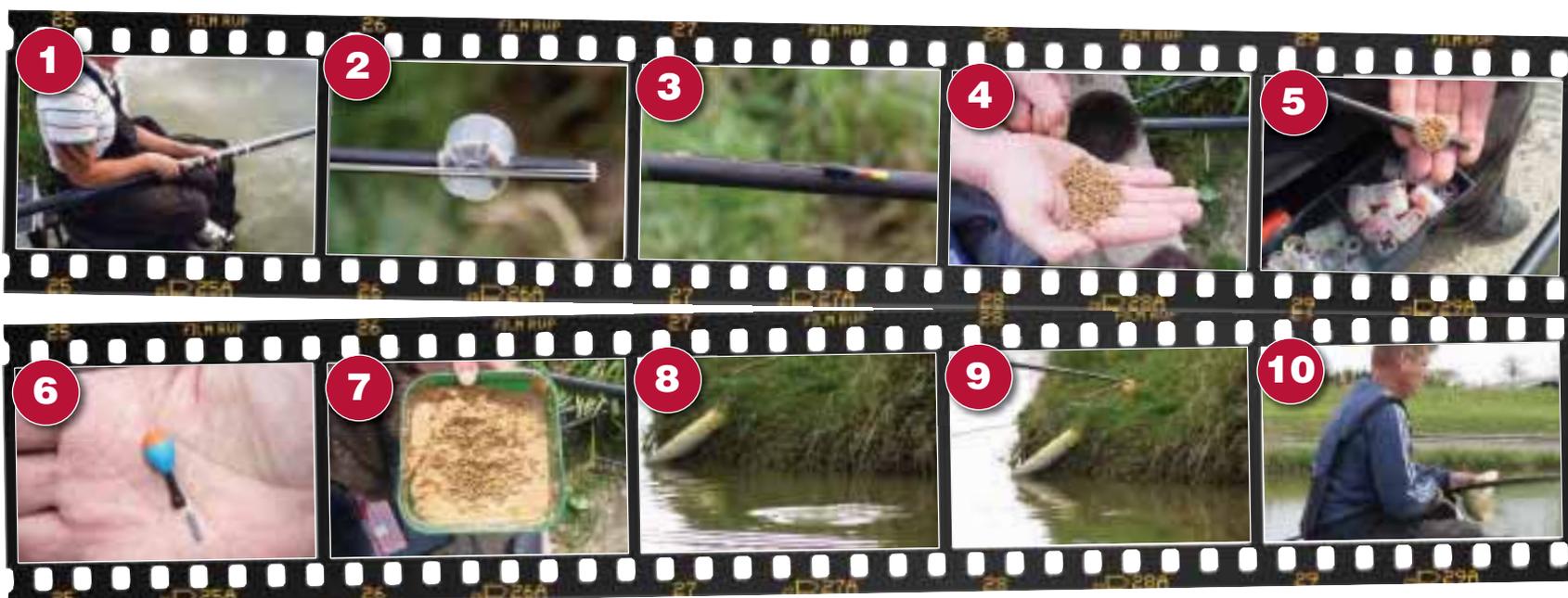
Feed.

STEP 9.

Bait In. Fish On.

STEP 10.

Another one in the net.



Help reduce self inflicted pain by taking a little time to look at how you are sitting...

DO THE BUBBLE

DO you return from a day's fishing with a few more aches and pains than those you had when you set off? A hot shower or a soak in the bath followed by a couple of anti-inflammatory tablets may help, but one thing you won't get is sympathy.

Prevention is always better than cure and with just a bit of forethought it's easy to help reduce this self inflicted pain by taking a little time to look at how you are sitting. You are willing to spend hours tying rigs, whipping hooks, making bait, but by just taking a few minutes to make sure that your box or chair is positioned correctly can prevent the pain that can ruin your day.

It's no good having the best tackle, bait and know how if you can't concentrate simply because you're not sitting comfortably.

YOUR KNEES AND HIPS SHOULD BE ALIGNED

Start off at home, with your box on a flat surface, sit on it and make adjustments until your knees and hips are level with each other then, this may seem over the top, using a spirit level rather than doing it by eye will help to give you a spot on starting point for when you get onto the bank. Use a thick felt tip pen to mark the legs to ensure that you can return to the starting point, if you have had to make adjustments to accommodate a sloping platform or uneven bank.

WHAT PRICE YOUR BACK

Some manufacturers have already identified the importance of having a level fishing station by incorporating a spirit level into the design of the box. Photography shops sell small 'bubbles' that are

used to help set up cameras and tripods. They are around £10 each. Maver have brought one out that is a reasonable £3.99.

With your feet flat on the platform or foot plate your knee should be in a straight, level line with your hip.

Make adjustments until you achieve this; it's well worth it and will reduce problems with hips and back.

POLE ROLLERS

When placing your box on a platform at the start of a session, position it at a slight angle. If we say that 12 o'clock is directly in front, angle the box at one o'clock to allow your pole to rest across your thighs.

With your pole set up at the longest length you are likely to be fishing, slide it backwards supporting it across your leg. At the point where it starts to

drop downwards position your first roller. Continue to slide it across your thigh and over the first roller until it begins to drop again, position your second roller here. Set up your roller(s) correctly and they will take all the weight when shipping in and out. Setting up like this will ensure smooth movements that will in turn prevent bouncing the pole and spilling bait when feeding with a cup and it will go some way towards preventing tangles, especially when fishing shallow.

- Positioning your box wrong will lead to back problems.
- Positioning your roller(s) wrong will lead to inefficient angling.
- Taking just a few minutes to get them both right will add to your comfort and enjoyment – isn't that why we go fishing?



Elm Tree Farm Fishery

COARSE-MATCH POND -42 pegs well stocked with: Carp, tench, bream, crucians, rudd, roach and perch

STRIP POND 8 pegs-well stocked with silverfish

£5 per day £4 concessions £3 after 4pm

SPECIMEN CARP POND

8 pegs, carp to 25lb + pike-to 20lb+ night fishing by appointment.

£8 per day 2 rods £10 3 rods

Night fishing £10 8am-8pm 24 hrs

£15 2 rods £3 extra rod

RIVER DON 7 pegs, barbel, chub, roach and perch

- Secure car park, on site cafe serving probably the best breakfasts in South Yorkshire

- Disabled facilities • Toilets
- Match bookings available



BAITBOX

on site tackleshop

Tackle/Bait/Accessories

Contact Paul or Adam 074539 10352



keep it angling)))))))

Local river enthusiast Andy Kaxzmarczyk waxes lyrical about the Dearne...

MY FAVOURITE RIVER



AS a local river and Dearne enthusiast I am happy to introduce you to what is Barnsley and South Yorkshire's other river, for while many will be familiar with the River Don, and not wishing to dismiss the Rother, the Dearne has always been a special place for me and other local anglers.

The river actually rises in West Yorkshire and becomes the Dearne around Birds Edge and Denby Dale flowing through Bretton Hall Country Park before coming into Barnsley. It is around the northwestern side of Barnsley that it becomes a viable fishery where its shallow runs and pools favour grayling and trout.

It's a matter of opinion, but the river around Low Barugh and downstream of the Millers Pub at Barugh Green is where it becomes a worthwhile fishery for chub, dace and barbel.

The river flows through Barnsley around the Fleets Dam, past the Asda supermarket on through Hoyle Mill Country Park and eastwards towards Grange Lane. Here a road bridge crosses the river before it winds on out of the sight of many skirting between Ardsley and Cudworth before arriving at Darfield.

The river here is accessible and frequently fished for catches of chub, dace and perch with the occasional barbel.

From here downstream, the river winds into nice fishy spots and smooth glides which can be quite productive.

Further downstream is Broomhill and onto a long straight behind the Old Moor Wetlands before skirting Bolton on Dearne and Manvers. The river then flows through Adwick and by Harlington before it joins the River Don near to Conisbrough.

Walking the river in summer, especially during a period of bright sunshine early in the morning with a good pair of polaroid sunglasses is highly recommended. On every stretch of the river, there is lots to see, gravelly runs show barbel, chub, dace and roach.

This is without doubt the key to successful catches for the Dearne at present is a river that has a lot of nothing interspersed with pockets of fish and will save a lot of wasted time when fishing time is at a premium. Some of the fish to be seen are very good indeed, barbel have recently been caught in excess of 14lbs, and the average chub is between two and 3lbs. These two species being the main quarry for the Dearne angler.

Good areas to fish are around the weirs and where access is easiest, for example, from the high weir at Great Houghton to the riffle lower down can produce some good fish.

Access at Broomhill upstream of Marles bridge has produced good chub and in the past double figure

barbel. Downstream past the Old Moor Wetlands reserve, anglers can walk at their leisure and this is as secluded as anyone would wish, but in summer be aware of the nettles. There are no armchair swims on the Dearne!

Bolton on Dearne has its own challenges, the weed can be a problem here in summer but still there are good fish to be caught.

Fishing down on to Adwick will see the biggest variety of fish. I say this because at Adwick is the last of the biggest weirs. Regrettably these weirs create one of the biggest problems for the Dearne as a fishery and one of the reasons why the fish population has suffered. Between Adwick and Great Houghton there are five weirs and each is big enough to prevent fish migrating moving upstream following flooding.

We all know how much rain we have had over the last few years and the flooding that results. This together with a culmination of river channel straightening and flood relief schemes multiply the effects of flooding pushing the fish further and further downstream and the weirs simply prevent their return.

However not all is lost for the future, the Environment Agency's compliance with the water framework directive has seen projects to build fish passes enabling fish movement again. As I write this piece, a fish pass is currently being constructed on the Adwick on Dearne gauging weir.

Consultations by the Don

Catchment Rivers Trust along with other stakeholders will hopefully see work done to remove a smaller weir at the back of the Old Moor Nature Reserve too. Work to meander part of the dyke at the back of the reserve will also help to increase the flow of water into the Dearne and thereby aid fish recruitment and improve the natural stock of the river.

In recent years the Environment Agency has introduced elvers into the river and constructed eel passes on all the major weirs, in time anglers should be catching eels once again.

One issue with the Dearne is access, the vast majority of its banks are owned by the Environment Agency and anyone wishing to fish can do so freely providing they hold a valid EA licence. Access to these areas is usually good but if in doubt check with the Agency. The other issue which bothers some anglers is the state of the banks, access to the water in itself can be dangerous and some of the lightly fished areas have banks which have a sheer vertical drop off, and these are not to be recommended.

More recently, the formation of the Manvers Waterfront Boat Club has resulted in an attempted to take over the river under Canoe England's 'Access for all' canoeing campaign. This has brought local Dearne anglers into conflict with the canoeists, who insist they use the river 365 days a year and pay nothing for their use. Thankfully, an access agreement has been agreed which suits both parties and should see work done to improve the habitat and clean spawning gravels.

The group which has brought this agreement together, and which I am part of, is also looking at litter removal and a general clean-up of the river.



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The Ferret ON TACKLE



THROUGHOUT my life I have taken stock of my surroundings and have often formulated theories and the like regarding obscure matters.

Two of these theories are that, A, 90pc of men look stupid in a baseball cap

B, 90pc of anglers wear a baseball cap.

Why is this do you suppose? Now, admittedly ladies, when we are discussing the dress sense of the average British male, especially those of the 'northern' persuasion, we aren't really expecting too much I know, given their penchant for tracksuit bottoms, a tee shirt, slip on leather shoes and the first coat that's hung over the newel post as they leave the house, but never the less I have given some thought to it.

My conclusion is that the majority of anglers wear a baseball cap because the majority of anglers wear a baseball cap. The point I'm trying to make is that a lot of anglers wear a baseball cap, regardless of whether or not it suits them (not that it possibly could unless they happen to be George Clooney) purely because they have to conform.

Nowadays there is a whole range of branded accessories and woe betide any of us who dares to venture into the tackle shop or fishery café sporting any other than a suitable logo on every item of kit they are wearing. You can't even go buy a pint of maggots without your 'Daiwa' cravat (other brands are available) for fear of being branded a knob by your peers and to be sniggered at the moment you've left.

This trend has well and truly taken over anglers' attitudes lately and now extends to just about every item of tackle we possess from the camouflaged watch strap to the 'Mine's a Pint' key fob. I myself even, a genuine northerner with inbred 'thriff', am currently struggling to find the right luggage for my needs because I can't find a single company that supplies all the items of luggage I require in the right sizes. I am going bereft of suitable gear purely through the vanity of wanting it all to be matching and 'logo'd up' as my kids say.

Yet this dilemma is an entirely modern conception and, despite what is spouted about a recession and austerity, stems from people having more money than they used to. I, like many of my readers, recall 'proper' recessions with mortgage rates at 13pc, beer skyrocketing overnight to 1s 9d a pint, no one having a pot to pass round, and borrowing half crowns from the neighbours to put in the 'lectric. In those days the possibility of spending anything at all on the likes of fishing tackle was non-existent. I remember my mam once sending me back to the corner shop to return an unopened toilet roll 'because the visitors we'd been expecting hadn't turned up'.

But in these modern times of relative prosperity and copious amounts of colour coded tackle there is no doubt in my mind that we have lost a little along the way.....cigar boxes.

A study of a man's tackle (No missus, his fishing tackle!) a mere generation ago would have revealed a plethora of Heath Robinson inventions, re-cycled containers, and various knock-knacks all being put to good and regular use at no expense to the user. It was a joy to behold the array of antique wooden boxes used to hold often home-made, round bodied and brightly hooped, floats or cotton reels around which were wound hook lengths linked together and held in place by a knob pin. Disgorgers were mere cleft sticks and stored in the ubiquitous metal tube that dad had got his cigar in three Christmases ago. Tackle boxes themselves were of the sort designed to hold assorted screws, nails, buttons or bows or even, in the case of the most adept and inventive, the wife's jewellery.

All of this would be housed together in a wickerwork basket which doubled as a seat. There were no adjustable legs yet no one, to my recollection, suffered major injuries through cascading down the bank (well, apart from one time when dearest pater had been to ask for a bit of local knowledge from the pub landlord at South Ferriby, but I do not think that was attributable to the basket). There was no foot platform but, again, no one seemed to be unable to get a firm grip with their wellies.

The rod would be transported in the cloth bag in which it was purchased, the landing net handle being fastened to it by shoe laces. Bait tubs were tea caddies, or shortbread tins, or any other suitable container which the Memsahib hadn't seemed to bother with for some time and would, therefore, not mourn its loss from the kitchen cupboards. Coat pockets were the forerunner of the carryall. Yet, despite this apparent depravity and poverty, anglers seemed to get by quite well, thank you. Fish were caught, fun was had, craic was enjoyed...

Some of this gear was, though, extremely efficient and useful and even until recently I have continued to admire and cadge antiquated and home-made

tackle from some of the old boys in the game. An exploration through their drawers (No missus,..... wouldn't you be better reading Fifty Shades of Grey?) would reveal such niceties as half-moon leads, coffin leads, spinning lures actually fashioned from old spoons, bite indicators adapted from washing-up liquid bottle tops, etc. My latest acquisition was of a number of slider floats literally a couple of feet in length and made from a single reed invented, perfected, and supplied by the late and great Lennie Hackshaw.

Another local legend and purveyor of sound advice and defunct tackle was Kurt Armstrong, long since disappeared off the radar and I assume, but hope to be corrected, also deceased. Kurt was unique. His own appearance matched that of his fishing tackle. A bit of a hotchpotch thrown haphazardly together from bits of old and re-cycled tat. Think Sherlock Holmes meets Worzel Gummidge. His attire was..... functional, yet he would always wear a tie and jacket, even when fishing.

He chain smoked a large and hooked pipe, the bowl of which in today's regime of 'elf and safety' would have required a pair of wheels and two men to fill it, which, from the smell of it, contained a mixture of potting compost and pig manure, not that Kurt ever had a word as posh as 'manure' in his vocabulary, (it had taken us five years to get him to say 'muck'), and the pipe leant him an air of wisdom as he gazed at you owl-like from one half closed eye while trying desperately not to cry out the other. He spoke very slowly and gruffly with the thickest Birmingham accent you would ever hear.

Kurt, though, knew everything about fishing and fish. He could regularly catch 6lb tench despite clearly doing it all wrong, over-shooting a float far too big for the purpose, laying on with far too long a hook length, much too big a hook, etc. He also bred fish in a series of ponds in his garden. Not your usual Koï or goldfish mind, proper fish like roach, bream and

'genuine' crucian carp, some of which mysteriously (and quite illegally I suppose) once somehow found their way into a local pond I oversaw for a few years.

Now before you run away with an impression of a series of landscaped ornamental ponds cascading into each other as the crystal water filters down to a statue of the Three Graces let me tell you these ponds had the distinct ambience of having been designed by Kurt. The same meticulous care had been paid to them as he had to his apparel and grooming. They were lined with tarpaulins, lorry sheets, plastic table cloths, or anything remotely waterproof. They were dug across the entire garden with the merest of pathways between them. The whole eco-system was governed by an old central heating pump linked to a tank next to the shed. Never the less these ponds managed to turn out pristine coarse fish fry year on year.

The single event, however, which remains indelibly imprinted on my memory regarding Kurt was one occasion when I called on him one morning to collect a water lily he'd promised me for my own garden pond. It was a drizzly, dank, and horrible morning with the remnants of a heavy fog still dwindling in the Trent valley when I arrived at the house. I was half sodden by the time I knocked at the front door. The minute I did, however, the scruffiest and wettest old dog came and sat at my feet.

Kurt opened the door and, as usual, cordially invited me in with a threat of me not leaving until I'd had a cuppa and a biscuit. To my surprise the old dog wandered in nonchalantly, completely unchallenged by Kurt, and immediately went and laid in front of the fire on the hearth rug where it began to dry out and stink in equal measures. I recall thinking how the Memsahib would have reacted under the same circumstances 'chez nous' but, hey ho, live and let live I always thought.

The tea was brought in by Mrs Kurt who patted the dog playfully and sighed lovingly before disappearing back into the scullery. By the time we'd sipped our tea, put the world to rights, and the lily tuber had been fetched from the garden the old dog had almost completely dried out and now was gyrating and writhing on its back and grinding the remainder of its coating of mud and dust into the rug. The smell had dissipated to that of boiled cabbage.

With that Kurt reached down, gave the dog a good rub at the scruff of its neck and said, 'This is a good old dog Ferret. How long have you had him?'



Nose Bag AWARDS



If there is one thing us anglers know about almost as much as fishing it's a decent breakfast. What better way to start your day in the fresh air than with a hearty full English? But before someone starts going off about healthy eating, cholesterol and blood pressure let's make it clear the anglers' breakfast is enjoyed in moderation, not every day, as too much of a good thing can seriously damage your arteries!

Over the years I have partaken in quite a few breakfasts from restaurants, cafes, pubs and truck stops in and around our region and consider myself a bit of a connoisseur. So here we have the Keep it Angling totally unbiased, independent submission of what I recommend as good value, decent quality, well served traditional Full English breakfasts.

CROWN HOTEL at Bawtry serves the Great Yorkshire Crown Breakfast from 8am-10 weekends. But as most of us will feel uncomfortable sitting down with the pinstripes in our bream slime stained strides at such a late hour, it gets little more than a mention for the day when you fancy something a bit special or if you have the wife or girlfriend with you and you want to treat her and keep in the good books!

NOSE BAG RATING ★

JAYNE'S PLACE CAFÉ, S81 8HJ is a favourite for many anglers from across the area. Just off the A1 at Blyth on the Bawtry Road. Good quick service, varied menu, excellent value for money.

NOSE BAG RATING ★★

ALEXANDRA'S CAFÉ is tucked away near the retail Park at Parkgate. Unit 13, Rail Mill Way, S62 6JE. If you can manage the Belly Buster of five sausage, four bacon, four eggs, beans and mushrooms for a fiver you're a better man than me! Plenty of room, quick and pleasant service, exceptional value for money, highly recommended.

NOSE BAG RATING ★★★

ELM TREE FARM CAFÉ, Kilnhurst Road, S65 4TE. Exceptional! Tasty, substantial, terrific value. Nice clean little café. For me the best breakfast in the region, well worth a detour if it's not on your route.

NOSE BAG RATING ★★★★

THE CROWN INN AT BARNBURGH, DN5 7JQ. The only fault with this choice is that they only do breakfast for pre-booked parties, but what a breakfast it is! Fresh orange juice, tea, coffee, eggs, bacon, sausages, tomatoes, beans, mushrooms, toast and it's self service so the portion size is totally dependent on your appetite and what you can fit on the large plate! All this for £5.50. Highly recommended for any club or group passing through the area. 01709 893450.

NOSE BAG RATING ★★★★★

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Angling can be practiced by everyone male or female, black or white, young or old...

THE BENEFITS OF ANGLING

If you're not an angler fishing may seem a pointless unattractive occupation, often involving sitting motionless in cold or wet weather, waiting for something to happen. Actually nothing could be further from the truth, for as the motto of the London Fly Fishers Club says '*Piscator non solum piscatur*', which, if my schoolboy latin is anything to go by means '*There is more to fishing than fish*'. And for me that simple statement says more about our sport and everything that it entails than any article, book, or dvd could.

The reality is that for the three million people who fish in the UK, angling is something that gives them enormous pleasure, for the competitive it provides an environment in which individuals can challenge and improve their own abilities whilst at the other end of the spectrum it relieves stress, and provides a unique contact with the natural world. It can keep youngsters out of trouble by giving them something cheap to do with friends and family, and has transformed the lives of youngsters who have got into trouble or who have special education needs. From breast cancer patients to war veterans, angling can provide an absorbing distraction from the bad things in life. Angling takes people to beautiful places, and gives them an excuse to spend time by water, which is great for the soul. And perhaps best of all angling can be practiced by everyone male or female, black or white, young or old. Angling is also an important industry, often bringing jobs and visitors to inner cities, rural areas and coastal towns outside the tourist season. It employs 37,000 people in England and Wales and generates £3.5 billion for the economy. Fishing tackle manufacturers and shops, commercial fisheries, angling guides and coaches, charter boat skippers and angling clubs all employ people who often get to do a job that they love doing.

We often hear that anglers are the eyes and ears of the waterside preventing fish deaths by spotting pollution and other problems before anyone else, their knowledge of the water environment giving them a sixth sense to alert them when something is wrong. But there is more to it than that. When anglers report pollution incidents or report illegal practice it isn't simply the fish that benefit but the whole water environment from the insect larvae and bugs that live in the river to the kingfishers and herons that live on the fish. In short the whole freshwater environment that everyone enjoys benefits.

And anglers provide even more support for the aquatic environment by buying rod licences. In doing so they provide £25 million to enable the Environment Agency to look after rivers and lakes by improving wildlife habitats, building fish passes on

by Martin Read

weirs and restocking fish in areas where populations have suffered from pollution and other problems. A fine example of anglers 'putting their money where their mouth is' and more the pity that other water users and lovers don't do the same.

It isn't simply the fish that benefit but the whole water environment from the insect larvae and bugs that live in the river to the kingfishers and herons that live on the fish.

These of course are simply some of the obvious benefits that angling provides, but there are many more. A major new research report recently spelt out the widespread benefits that angling can bring to individuals and communities. Fishing for Answers: the Final report of the Social and Community Benefits of Angling Research was launched by the Environment Minister Richard Benyon MP.

The report found:

- 25pc of anglers said that they were involved in environmental improvement work, maintaining and improving water-side environments.
- 22pc volunteered in teaching or coaching anglers.
- The UK is a leader in the field of angling based youth education and inclusion work.
- Angling organisations have helped restore and develop local waters as genuine community assets, bringing people together and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Angling can stimulate the economy in rural areas and coastal towns through tourism, particularly outside of the traditional season. In one case study angling tourists contributed around £1 million a year to a remote rural area.

Locally there are a number of examples of such work involving anglers and angling clubs. Phoenix and Parkgate AC, originally based at the very large steelworks that were often accused of polluting local rivers, have a long track record of making environmental improvements, restoring historical features and sharing their facilities with members of the public who are not anglers.

Their story began in 1972 when they purchased Ravenfield Park, from a local farmer as a facility for anglers. However at that time, the fabric of the park, including the ponds which were of major interest to members, left much to be desired. The three ponds were shallow and heavily weeded. Their dams leaked and were in danger of breaching, and the fishing was anything but good. In addition the land was treated as though no-one owned it

and was a haven for vandals, shooters, motorcyclists and the like. In short it wasn't a nice place to visit let alone fish!

However in 1979 the club decided to do something about it. What followed was a long and expensive restoration and development exercise that continues today. Initial efforts centred on major repairs to the historical structures and boundaries and included de-silting all the then three ponds, totally rebuilding their dams and revetments, rebuilding more than 1500m. of stone boundary walls, planting 800m of hedgerows, and establishing a series of concessionary footpaths for visitors to use.

With boundaries secure, ponds repaired, and any unexploded bombs removed (that's another story), the club's horizons focussed on new developments.

The now much improved and extended angling facilities provide income for the future maintenance of the park, while planned fisheries management has resulted in a number of species considered to be at risk, such as frogs, toads, snakes and water voles returning in abundance. But these are only a small sample of the birds and animals that now inhabit the park too, swans, owls and kingfishers, to name but a few, all now nest there and woodland which now grows in areas that

once were barren provides homes for all manner of other creatures.

Some 34 years ago the future of the area as a whole looked very much in doubt, but is now doubtless secure. What was once a magnet for vandals, those with air rifles and motorcycles is now, as someone described it, 'an oasis for wildlife in a desert of agriculture' and all thanks to the efforts of anglers. www.ravenfieldponds.co.uk.

But Phoenix aren't alone in their efforts. Kilnhurst and District AA, set up in response to calls for a local club to look after local facilities in and around Kilnhurst, began fishing Baker's Pond in the late 1990s. Its history had left it with a legacy of industrial misuse with all manner of waste from rubbish on the banks and in the water, to chemical contamination of the silt. Nevertheless, when the factories closed and a local developer bought the land for house building, the club purchased the pond and surrounding land with the intent to develop it as a fishery. Today those who worked alongside the pond would not recognise the change. Gone are the piles of scrap and refractory bricks in favour of grassed banks with



flowers. Rush and sedge grow at the water's edge with white water lilies between specially designed recycled plastic angling platforms. A section of the pond and bank is designated just for wildlife and out of bounds to anglers allowing coots and waterhens to nest in peace. In spring hundreds of newts assemble in the margins to mate while when summer arrives huge dragon flies and beautifully coloured damselflies 'buzz' anglers as they sit fishing. Special treatment of the silt with finely powdered chalk has improved both the depth of water and rendered much of the contamination harmless, increasing as it did so the capability to provide food both for fish, ducks, and other birds alike.

Without the time, money, and attention of anglers it is likely that the pond would have remained the eyesore it used to be, or

worse still have been filled in, and as a result be of no use to anything or anyone. But anglers' efforts are now showing numerous benefits, not only for anglers themselves but also for the residents who now live alongside the pond and for the wildlife that lives in and around it.

As a lifelong angler I cannot overstate the pleasure it has given me in both good times and bad. It introduced me to lifelong friends, took me to far off places and kept me sane when all around was in turmoil. As a youngster being out in the fresh air was something everyone did and trying to catch fish was part of that experience. Today things have changed; many youngsters do not get the chance to experience the world of nature that we older ones did and as a result could well miss out on what angling has to offer. Phoenix and Parkgate AC have established their own junior club working with individuals, local youth organisations, the police, and more recently Hallam University to study why angling is such a useful tool to help youngsters with problems, to keep others away from crime and drugs, and to provide the vast majority with a healthy lifelong interest. Each week from spring to autumn coaches run sessions on Sunday mornings for anyone to attend and one evening each week for local youth organisations.

Similarly a new group has recently been started called the Denaby Main Junior Angling Club. The club, which will take youngsters from anywhere west of Doncaster, will be running a series of coaching sessions on Monday and Fridays throughout the school summer holidays.

Such schemes offer youngsters the opportunity to meet nature face to face, to understand the environment in which they live, and to begin a lifelong experience that will offer them far more throughout their lives than their young minds could ever imagine.

The London Fly Fishers motto is correct, there is *more to fishing than fish*.

Anyone knowing a junior who wants to try fishing can contact Terry Littlewood at Phoenix on 07804 250531 or Tom Fent at Denaby Main Junior AC on 07429 640873.

