



# MALDON ANGLING SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

JAN/FEB/MAR 2024

### LATEST CLUB NEWS

#### David Spalding

After 20 years of holding the position of Club Secretary David Spalding has decided to retire from the role. Anyone who knows David knows how hard he has worked for the club over the years, and he has done a lot of behind the scenes work which a lot of members don't see. I'm sure everyone would like to join the Committee in thanking David for all the hard work he has done whilst holding the role.

#### New Committee members

At recent Committee meetings three new members were voted in until the AGM. Phil Winfield will be taking over the running of the new website. Andy Thomas returns to the Committee as Publicity officer and Dean Cowell joins as an assistant Fishery Management officer.

#### Rule update

Rule 6.3 now reads – Readymade shop bought leaders made from leadcore, braid, coated braid or similar material attached to the mainline via a loop, splice or connector are banned on all Club waters. When using Braid as a mainline a length of monofil or fluoro-carbon can be used to protect the fish from the Braid and act as a buffer during the fight. This should be attached via a suitable Braid to line knot to comply with Rule 6.4 for fixed leads. The Mono or Fluoro-carbon must be of a lower breaking strain than the Braided mainline. Alternatively, braid can be used straight through to the swivel but must have a minimum of 4ft of rig tubing.

### CLUB AGM

This year's AGM is to be held on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> January at Great Totham village Hall with a 10am start. All members are welcome to attend.

### ACI COACHING DAYS 2024

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June – Bog Grove

Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> August – Slough House Farm

Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> August – Heron Hall

Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September – Bog Grove

Anyone interested in these coaching days please contact Chris Burt on 07917 781299

Alternatively view their website on:

[www.anglingcoachinginitiative.co.uk](http://www.anglingcoachinginitiative.co.uk)

### ANGLING TRUST PIKE CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIER

The Angling trust recently held their Pike championship qualifier at Totham Pit. A slow day saw a total of 18 Anglers fishing with just 8 fish being caught. First place was for a total of 20lb 8oz which was two fish of 17lb 15oz and 2lb 9oz. Second place was one fish of 9lb 13oz while third place was two fish for for a total weight of 7lb 11oz.

## REMAINING MATCH FIXTURES 2023/2024

It has been decided that this year's Winter league will be replaced by Canal open matches. These are open to non-MAS members but anyone who is not a member of MAS, CAA, CAPS or BDAC will require a day ticket.

These are £20 entry. All matches are 8.30am draws with fishing from 10am until 3pm

**Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January** – Heybridge Basin

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January** – Benbridge

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February** – Heybridge Basin

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> February** – Benbridge

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> March** – Heybridge Basin

Club matches are open to MAS members only

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> March** – Club match – Slough house farm

To book a peg or for more information then please contact:

**Kelvin Willis: 07706 047342**

## REMAINING PREDATOR MATCH FIXTURES 2023/2024

**Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> January** – MAS Pike match 2  
Totham Pit

**Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> March** – MAS Pike match 3  
Benbridge

To book a peg or for more information then please contact:

**Peter Garrett: 07949 474782**

## CONCESSIONARY MATCH FIXTURES 2023/2024

**Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January** – Paper Mills

**Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> January** – Lakelands

**Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> January** – Heybridge Basin

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January** – Bog Grove

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> February** – Blasford Hall

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February** – Heybridge Basin

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February** – Lakelands

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February** – Tesco Canal

**Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March** – Paper Mills

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> March** – Heybridge Basin

**Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March** – Heron Hall

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> March** – Slough House Farm

All matches are fished 10.am to 3.00pm

For more information please contact:

**Dave Harley: 07845 929110**

**Les Drury: 07880 842516**

**Steve Willis: 07741 494512**

## 24HR CARP MATCHES 2024

Heat one – April 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> – Slough House

Heat two – May 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> – Totham Pit

Heat three – July 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> – Slough House

Heat four – August 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> – Totham Pit

Final – October 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> – Totham Pit

Carp matches are fished from Mid-day on the Saturday to Mid-day on the Sunday

More information on the heats will be announced on the M.A.S Facebook page nearer the time.



# M.A.S JUNIOR SECTION

Another great year of junior events. Plenty of different species caught over all events. The standout events being, Bog Grove with plenty of tench and silvers being caught and Totham pit pike event. We finally caught pike, and a good few too. This year we had a fishing book by Carl Smith to give away to junior of the day. Carl a famous YouTuber, all round angler signed the books giving each book a personal touch. From what I've seen, the juniors are enjoying trying to tick off the different species they're catching in the books log. We had 5 juniors fish our Presidents Match, Issac wining by half an ounce to an Isla chasing her second win. Our youngest member being 3 years old catching a few silvers. Each child gave it their all and everyone took a prize home.

A massive thank you goes out to all members that have donated tackle for our juniors and one kind member that donated a £200 matrix voucher to be spent on prizes for juniors. Without these donations we wouldn't have prizes for the matches. Also, we have kitted out a number of new fishermen/fisherwomen.

We have such a great group and always welcome new junior members of all abilities to join in. I very much look forward to next year's events.

*Richard Turner*



**Isla with her Presidents match catch**



**Ellius with his first ever Carp**



**Tiger Lily with a Bog Grove Tench**





**Tommy with a Totham Pit Pike**



**Ren with a Little London Pike**



**Ren with his Presidents match catch**



**Isla with a Dace from the Chelmer**



**Ellius with a Dace from the Chelmer**





**Ethan with a Crucian from Bog Grove**



**Ethan with a Little London Pike**



**Annabel with a Slough House Farm Carp**



**Issac with his Presidents match fish**



**Issac with his winning fish from the Presidents match**

**THE FISHING WAS GOOD, IT WAS THE CATCHING THAT WAS BAD – A.K BEST**



# M.A.S 24HR CARP MATCHES 2023

We had another successful year with four excellent Carp matches even though the fishing was at times tough. The main thing is plenty of money was raised for charity and all anglers that took part enjoyed some great socials. The banter amongst the anglers started before the first match had even started when one angler who I wont name had to retrieve his Bivvy from the opposite side of the lake after not pegging it down in strong wind.

The first match at Slough House was the toughest with only 4 anglers catching. Jason Berris won first prize with 5 fish with a total weight of 58.13lb.

Tony Hayden come second with 47.12lb, Rob Poulton come third with 30.01lb and Adam Monahan was fourth with 21.06lb.

The second heat at Totham Pit was won by Dean Farmer with Adam Monahan second and Tony Morris third.

Slough house was the venue for the last qualifier and what a match it was for one angler. Keifer Brewer won the match with a new M.A.S Carp match record of 15 fish for a total of 214.04lb.

Adam Monahan come second with 11 fish for a total of 138.1lb, John Guess third with 66.12lb and Tony Hayden fourth with 62.05lb.

The final at Totham pit was difficult to predict with fish showing everywhere when swims were chosen. Adam Monahan on the point took an early lead landing two fish of 15.12lb and 16.13lb. Andy Thomas in Kyffs corner was next to catch with a Common of 8lb.12oz. Two more fish of 19.09lb and 18.02lb followed for Adam Monahan before Andy Thomas landed a stunning Common of 26.07lb.

The shallows certainly seemed to be the place to be during the day and the anglers down the deeps were hoping their time would come at night. Unfortunately, this never really materialised with just a few fish being caught.

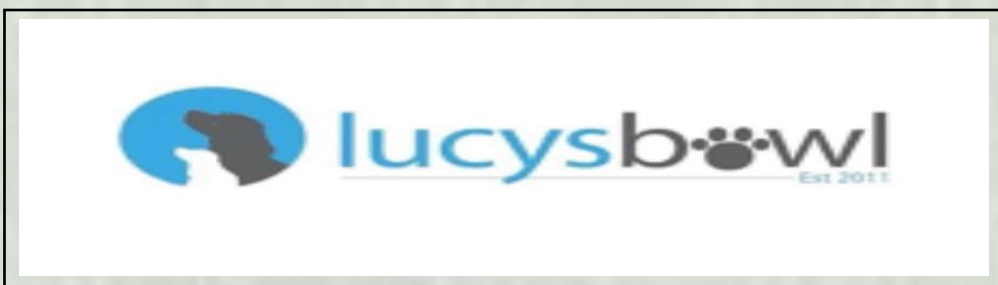
Adam Monahan took first place with 4 fish for a total of 70.04lb, Andy Thomas finished second with 3 fish for a total of 51.07lb, Dean Farmer third with 1 fish of 23.06lb and Malcolm Teader fourth with 1 fish of 22.06lb.

We also held some raffles during the season with some great prizes which we had donated to us. We would like to say a massive thankyou to those who purchased tickets and also those who took part in the Carp matches. Also, a big thankyou to Gary Bayes and Lucys Bowl charity for donating the prizes. We managed to raise over £2000 for the Lucy Bowl charity which is massive achievement.

*Tony Hayden*









# CATCH REPORTS



Totham Pit regular and new Committee member Dean Cowell has been having a lot of success lately whilst targeting the Totham Pit Pike. Dean has been having multiple catches with fish up to 18lb 1oz.



Richard Hopkins with a 27lb 4oz Totham Pit Carp



Ian Wiley has now caught "Dennis" the fish he named himself, from the Pit an unbelievable 7 times since it was stocked. Dennis weighed 13lb which shows a 2lb gain each year since the stocking.





Terry Jefferson with a 26lb 12oz Totham Pit Common. Amazingly this fish was caught during the recent pike match and was caught on a Smelt bait.



Julian Jordan had a cracking winters day fishing at Heron Hall. He started off catching roach up to 4oz before the better fish showed up. Julian ended up with 3 Ide and 5 Bream with the biggest being 5lb. All fish come on single red maggot.

After a planned session at Slough House farm was binned due to high water levels, Julian Jordan and Committee member Kelvin Willis visited the canal at Heybridge Basin and what a session it proved to be. Kelvin finished with a bag of over 40lb which was made up of 9 Tench, Bream, Roach, Rudd and Perch. Julian also finished the day with Tench, Bream up to 4lb, Roach, Rudd, Perch and a pike.



Gary Parsall done a day session on Slough House Farm and was rewarded with three fish, two mid doubles and this stunning 26lb 4oz Common.

**IT DOESN'T MATTER IF THE ROD IS OR ISN'T BENT. TIME FISHING IS TIME WELL SPENT – JUSTIN MORGAN**



# FISHERY IN FOCUS – TOTHAM PIT

Totham pit is a mature gravel pit of 8 acres and is around 70+ years old. Totham pit has everything an angler could want with deep margins, reed beds, lily pads and quiet bays where the fish like to hold up. Totham pit still has a mystery about it as no one really knows what is swimming in its depths. Although it is popular with the Carp anglers as it produces Mirrors and Commons to 30lb+ there are other specimen fish to be found.

Totham pit has in the past produced Tench to 10lb+, Bream to double figures, Pike to 20lb+ and big Eels. Chub, Roach, Rudd and Perch can also be caught.

Totham pit has had extensive work done the last few years with Dan Gower and the Fishery management team making the lake much safer and more fishable.

Swims have been improved massively and pathways made more accessible.

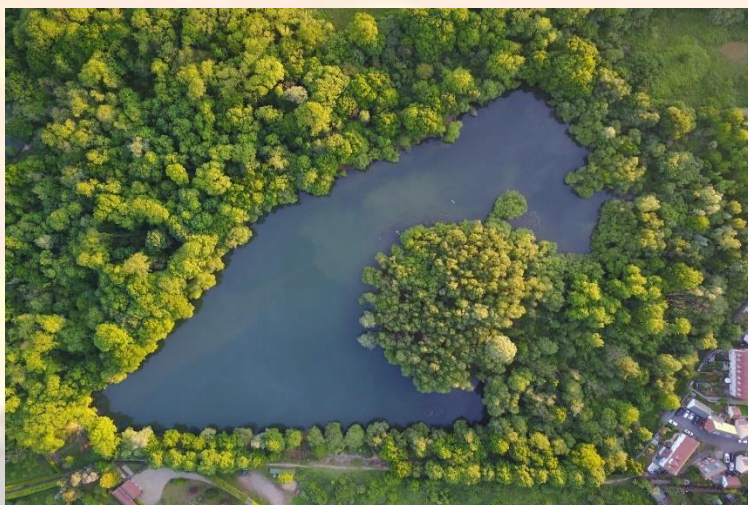
A lot of dangerous trees have also been removed from all around the lake.

In all Totham pit is perfect for all anglers from those who like to sit behind their rods to those who like to walk round and stalk their fish out.

As said before Totham Pit still has a mystery about it which is a rarity in fishing nowadays.

Totham pit is available to fish for members between the hours of 5am and 10pm but can be fished at night by members who hold a valid night permit.

Recent stockings include 350 Chub up to 1lb in early 2022, 23 x C3 Carp between 5.5lb and 11.5lb in March 2021 and 14 Carp between 21lb and 26.5lb in December 2022.



**Aerial Photo of Totham pit taken in 2017**



**Aaron Cheverall with a Totham pit Mirror Carp**



**Committee member Paul Kemp with a Totham pit Pike**



# COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**These are the current Committee members who are looking at getting re-elected at the Clubs AGM on January 28<sup>th</sup>.**

## **Paul Kyffin – Chairman and Membership Secretary**

Paul has been around for as long as most of us can remember. Paul took on the role of Membership Secretary in the 1980's and has done a fantastic job since. He took on the added role of Chairman in 2023

## **Simon Greengrass – Treasurer**

Simon joined the MAS committee in 1993 and has held the role of Treasurer since the 1996.

## **Peter Garrett – Secretary**

Peter has recently been learning the job of Secretary from the departing David Spalding. Peter first joined the Committee in 2020

## **Iain Fraser – Minutes Secretary and Club Welfare Officer**

Iain took on the role of Minutes Secretary in 2023 following Paul Kyffins appointment of Chairman. Iain has been on the Committee for the last 6 years.

## **Dan Gower – Fishery Management Officer**

The Gower family need no introduction to MAS having been about for around for decades. Dan has held the position of Fishery Management in the past and is extremely experienced in his role. Dan has overseen massive improvements to all our lakes since his appointment.

## **Kelvin Willis – Match Secretary**

Kelvin took over the hard task of Match secretary in 2019. In that time Kelvin has worked hard to ensure the Senior matches returned to MAS and is also responsible for organizing the Presidents and Tom Martin Memorial matches.

## **Peter Harden – Deputy Club Welfare Officer**

Peter first joined the Committee in 2012 as a committee member. He took on the role of Deputy Club welfare Officer in 2022

## **Richard Turner – Junior Events Coordinator**

Richard joined the Committee as Junior Events Coordinator in 2020. Richard does a superb job in organizing days for our younger members.

## **Nic Lindsell – Wildlife Expert**

Nic joined the MAS Committee in 2020. Nic Joined as Publicity officer and is now taking on a new club role of wildlife expert.

## **Tony Hayden – Head Bailiff**

Tony took over the role of Head Bailiff in 2019. Tony has built up an excellent Bailiff team in his time in the role.

## **Phil Winfield – Website Manager**

Phil joined the Committee recently and will be responsible for the new website that will be launched soon.

## **Paul Kemp – Assistant Fishery Management Officer**

Paul has been on and off the Committee for a number of years including being Fishery Management Officer for a time. Paul's dedication and commitment is valuable to the club.

## **Andy Thomas – Publicity Officer**

Andy returns to the Committee after a three-year break. Andy is taking over as Publicity officer which includes doing these newsletters.

## **Dean Cowell – Assistant Fishery Management Officer**

Dean has recently joined the Committee and will be working alongside Dan Gower and Paul Kemp in Fishery Management



# FISHERY MANAGEMENT

## RAILWAY POND

We have started the weed removal and de-siltation of the Railway Pond. The Railway Pond is thick with Hornwort that has a unique property of not dying back in Winter, it just sinks to the bottom. Luckily with the warm weather we had it had not sunk so the Truxor managed to cut off anything that was rooted in the silt. The Truxor also has another attachment that scoops up the cut off weed which can be left on the bank to die off. We will now be looking at ways we can manage the silt.

## BOG GROVE

A recent work party took place at Bog Grove with the help of Neil Bannister of Fusion Landscapes. A complete rebuild of 5 swims with steps and a new path was achieved. Also thank you to Southwood Timber for the discounted quality timber used to make the swims.

## TOTHAM PIT

Totham Pit has seen extensive work the last couple of seasons. Over a tonne of pellet feed has been introduced which has seen a much better growth rate amongst the fish. We are continuing to blue dye the lake to have better control of the weed. We have seen issues with overcasting in some swims so there has been distance marker poles placed in the reed's swims. Some swims also have specific rules so please take notice of the signs that have been put up.

A work party took place at Totham pit in early December. We managed to rebuild New Tigers Bay swim, top up sunken swims with gravel, cut lots of dangerous trees and trimmed over hanging branches. We also opened the end of the reeds swim that will replace the long swim that will remain shut.

There will be another work party at the Pit in February to rebuild the path from the Island to Floaters Bay. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details.

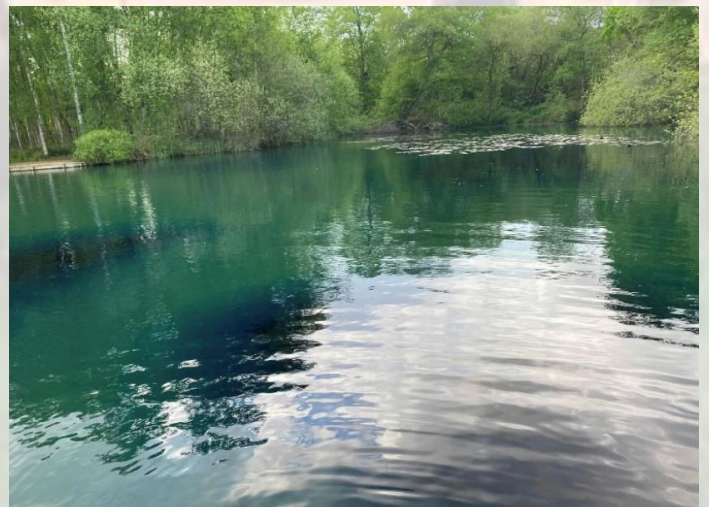
Other work that has taken place is 5 swims have been rebuilt on Heron Hall with help from Fusion Landscapes. Blue dye is also being put into Rook Hall to try to control the weed growth. We have also had an Aerator donated to us by the EA which has come from Rod licence money.

A massive thank you to all those that have helped at Work parties this season, it would be great to see some new faces next year so if you are free on a day of a work party then please come along.

*Dan Gower*



One of the new swims built at Heron Hall



Blue dye going into Floaters Bay at Totham Pit





One of our new swim rule boards at Totham Pit



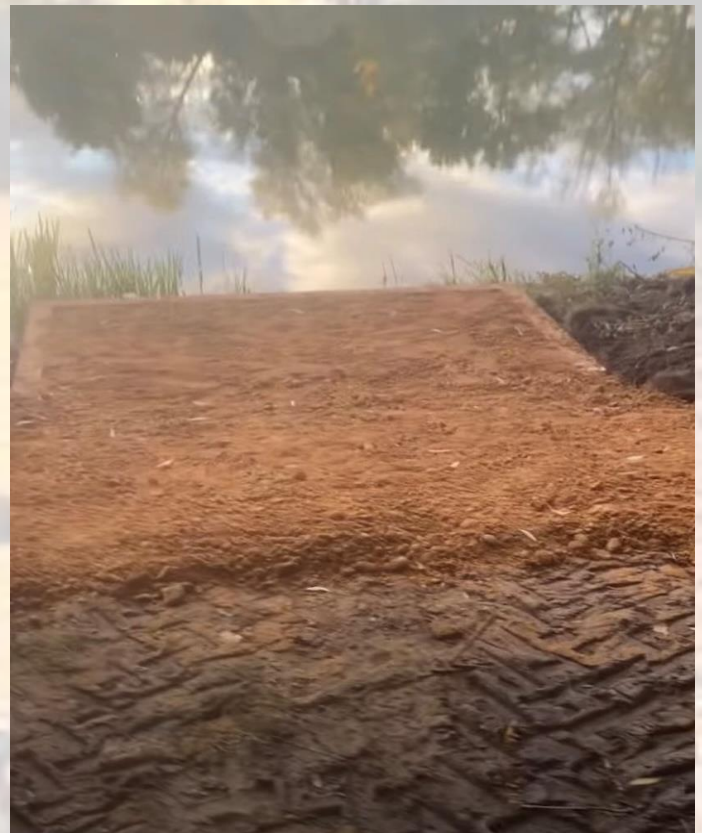
Our New Aerator in action at Slough House Farm

## THE TRUXOR IN ACTION AT THE RAILWAY POND





# PHOTOS FROM THE RECENT WORK PARTY AT BOG GROVE





PHOTOS FROM THE RECENT WORK PARTY AT TOTHAM PIT





# MY JOURNEY IN FISHING

Its 4am on a sunny summer morning. All week at school the excitement of today has been building. The thoughts of what today would end up in my keep net come the end of the day. The venue for the day was to be a small deep lake of around an acre and a half in size that is stocked with Tench, Roach, Bream, Eels and the monster Carp that never seem to be caught. My Dad and myself arrive at the gate to find an empty car park, perfect. Early Morning in the Summer is by far the best time of the day, the early sound of the birds, the rabbits scattering for cover as the gate makes a squeak as I open it. Looking across the lake not a ripple can be found, the only movement is the plumes of bubbles that break the surface caused by the early morning feeding fish below. We settled for a swim in a quiet corner of the lake with a vast reed bed to the left and overhanging trees in the margin to the right. I take the left side and set up my twelve-foot float rod, small Mitchel reel armed with four-pound line. Added to this was an onion float and a size 16 hook baited with double maggot. This was cast as close to the reeds as I dare, and I sat back in anticipation waiting and watching the float closely. After just a few minutes the float moved and then slowly sunk, a roach was my first prize of the day. I believe many anglers of today have never experienced the excitement of this type of fishing. Very few anglers now take up the sport by watching a float but have gone straight into carp fishing and sitting behind buzzers while sitting in a bivvy watching a DVD, very sad indeed. Don't get me wrong, I do now myself fish for carp but for years I'd experienced over types of fishing that I believe makes you understand a lot more about watercraft.

I have been fishing all my life, at an early age my family always had a boat moored on the river blackwater on which we would go out and catch fish for my mother to fry in butter. Although I enjoyed the sea fishing I always preferred the freshwater fishing and, we wouldn't be hampered by tides. One of my favourite waters growing up was Bog grove and anyone who fished there back in the 80s will know what a great Tench water it was back then. It did get busy some evenings but that was only because it was such a prolific water with good bags of fish to be had. There were of course the big dark shadows that cruised around the surface that never seem to be caught. These monsters kept playing on my mind every time I fished and after a while, I felt the time was right to target one of these Carp. I had a stronger "spinning" rod and a bigger reel that had been given to me by my grandad. This had 10lb line on and I would set this up with a two-ounce bomb on a running rig, size 8 hook with cubed luncheon meat as the bait.

The plan was to cast this as far out as I could, place the rod on rests with a fairy liquid top as a bobbin to alarm me to a take. I would also fish with my float rod to pass the time away and I also felt like a pro now I was fishing with two rods.

As you can guess this never materialized into a take and the frustrations kept building so a rethink was on the cards.

Remember this was a time when there was no internet to google "how to catch a carp". There were a few magazines about to help but there wasn't a lot of information on carp fishing. There was only one solution and a trip to the video hire store to grab copies of "go fishing" by the legend that was John Wilson. For the young anglers out there, John Wilson was your Danny Fairbrass or Ali Hamidi, but he wasn't around to try to promote fishing tackle, He was there to show you how to fish for all species and even now I still enjoy watching his programmes from yesteryear.

Anyway, after watching his episode on Carp fishing, I realised I was just not fishing in the right areas. Yes, there was fish over my bait, but these were on the surface 10 feet above my bait. I also realised I had been casting over fish as I never thought that the bigger fish could be in the margins, I think when you are young you just assume the bigger fish are further away from the bank.



My first chance of landing a monster came one scorching hot day in August. I was in a swim with a reed bed next to me. I noticed the reeds moving and with no ducks present it had to be a fish. On closer inspection I could see it no more than half a rod length away, the size was much bigger than anything I'd seen on the bank in real life before. I was shaking as I baited up a free lined bread crust just like my hero had showed me on the videos and I lowered it around a foot away from the fish. Everything seemed to be going perfect with a slight gust of wind coming from nowhere pushing the crust to right above the fish. Then it happened, the fish sucked in the crust and all hell broke loose. I wasn't prepared and the fish darted into the reeds, all went solid for a few seconds and then she was gone.

I was gutted and sat there for what seemed like an eternity wondering what to do next. Although I tried again my chance that day had gone.

At around this time my brother had turned into a "proper" carp angler with two matching rods and reels and these box things that beeped when he got a bite. No maggots, luncheon meat or bread as bait but that these strange small balls that smelt of strawberry and tutti fruit. I honestly thought he was winding me up when he said these were his bait, why would a fish eat these? I could have easily taken up his offer to go fishing with him to catch a carp, but I really wanted to do it on my own terms, and I was determined it would happen.

To be honest once I got a grip of what I was doing it all soon fell in place and shortly after I caught that elusive monster carp from bog grove. A fish of around 7 seven pounds if I remember correctly was my Carp and although it would nowadays get laughed at it was to me a big achievement. Once I'd caught a few I started fishing with my brother more on a local day ticket complex and this was when my Carp fishing took off. I was still at school back then, so money was tight, and I owe a lot to my brother who helped me out with the right tackle and bait to get me fishing. Also, the bailiff at the time turned a blind eye to me fishing and never charged me for a ticket. His view was while I was fishing it kept me out of any trouble elsewhere, not many fisheries would allow this to happen now where fishing just seems to be about money.

Double figure fish back then was the real target and I think there was one or two twenties in the main lake we were fishing at the right time of the year, but we never had any of these. We fished this lake for number of years, and I was 16 when another regular on the complex decided to fish a quiet weedy lake at the back behind the other lakes. It was overgrown and only contained small silvers and Tench, how we were wrong. He had seen a few carp and had pretty much kept it to himself until he landed a carp of around mid-twenties, we were gobsmacked. It was a fat mirror that he named after his wife as she was pregnant at the time.

We decided to take our fishing to the next level and have a go at these bigger fish in the back lake. My first fish from this lake came one cold winter night. My brother, a friend and I decided to fish a weeklong session in the bitter cold. My brother had made a new swim and on our first night he ended up catching the big mirror although I can't remember the weight. My chance came on the third night. I had cast out a popped-up sweetcorn rig in a channel behind an island and fished it with no freebies. I was sitting talking to my friend when we heard my rod screaming off. Shortly after we netted my first twenty at 20.08lb. I couldn't have been happier, and the pictures showed.

My first summer after leaving school was when my fishing really took off, I was working three days a week at a local farm to earn money and fishing the other time. I fished mainly for doubles but did dabble in the weedy back lake which did produce some fish, but the big girl never graced my net, I even lost her twice at the net which clearly meant it was never meant to be. She wasn't even particular hard to catch, it was being in the right place at the right time with her. My brother caught her several times more, once from a clear spot close in and amazing she was there again the following morning eating the same bait on the same spot.



We had the old three month closed season back then which meant no fishing just as the fish were waking up from their winter slumber. The excitement was there as we used to walk round the lakes the few weeks leading up to the glorious 16<sup>th</sup> June. We always chose where we were going to target and to ensure we would get our swims we used to sleep the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> in the car park. The night was always a good social with a BBQ and plenty of drink as you would expect. We would be allowed on to the lake around mid-day on the 15<sup>th</sup> to set up and get ready for midnight. As you would probably expect there was always one or two who would sneakily put a rod out around 11pm and I remember vividly someone getting a take about 11.30 and everyone knowing about it as he had his buzzers turned up full.

I believe fishing back then was so different, anglers were more friendly towards each other, there was no divide due to what species you fished for, and the good thing was you had to work for your fish and come up with your own ideas and not just use the Internet to find something. One tactic we did fall upon was by accident and literally was devastating. We were using popped up dog biscuits which were fished a couple of inches off the bottom, and we were steadily catching on this. One of us then had a fish and realised the shot holding down the biscuit had come off so in fact it was being fished around a foot off the lakebed. We changed over to this tactic and quite frankly struggled to keep two rods in the water. We were casting close to an island and the biscuits were literally right in front of the fish on their patrol route in around three feet of water.

These were also the days where we were making our own bait and would normally spend an evening a week knocking up kilos and kilos of boilies. We started doing this by rolling the baits individually by hand, but we did manage to upgrade to rolling tables that as you can imagine made the job so much easier and quicker.

I was around 19 years of age when I started to lose interest in fishing, I started to focus more on playing football and other things. Fishing started to creep back into my mind once I'd got married and we had our first two children, so I joined local clubs and gave it a go again.

I was at the time working at a local printer doing three nights a week. This job was ideal for fishing as it allowed me to fish Monday and Tuesdays while most the lakes were quiet. Howells, Totham pit and Braxted front lake on the Chelmsford ticket were the waters I targeted, and I managed to do well catching fish to over thirty pounds out of two of them.

Although at this time I could have made the step up with my fishing and joined syndicates to target bigger fish it just wasn't for me. I preferred to fish day sessions, finding fish, and moving around. Spending days bivvied up waiting was just something that didn't interest me and still doesn't. Now my fishing is mainly a couple of evenings a week with the odd night here or there and to be honest I'm happy to just catch whatever comes along.

What are my best memories of the last 40 odd years? That's impossible to answer as there have been so many. I suppose anytime I've fished with a smile on my face and just enjoying where I am must be up there, it's not always about catching but just getting away from the rat-race and enjoying the fact the only sounds you can hear are the wildlife around you.

If I can go back to any time of my Angling over the years that is easy to answer, back to that hot August morning so I can enjoy the Journey all over again.....

*Andy Thomas*





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