

Carpworld Readers' letters

Jim's a Comedy Carper

Hello Tim,

What a great article on Rod Hutchinson in the August edition. I've still got three of his rods! I started carping shortly after him and had my first 20 from Horton Kirby in 1969. Happy days. Your mag is great – keep it up.

I've done a few years on the bank. It was Horton Kirby, where dad had taken me since I was a kid, that started it all. I saw a guy take a carp off the surface and that did it. I got my mum to get me a Provident cheque and I bought two 10ft Carpmaster rods and two Mitchell 300s. Of course I sprayed them black and customised my Heron alarms! Before that it was a penny on the open spool of my one Mitchell 324 on my Abu Carpmaster rod of 1¼lb test curve! Baits were sausage meat and bread flake mix, moving on to Kit-e-Kat and Pomenteg (a type of groundbait). Those were the days.

I was 15 and playing drums in a pub in Woolwich. I'd catch the 11.20 p.m. train to Dartford and walk the 3½ miles to Horton Kirby. I've kept fishing on and off until today. I've always had to catch up with technology as my non-fishing periods have left me behind. Not a bad thing really because I concentrated on fishcraft (or lack of it) to make up. I fish quite a bit now and have joined Dartford Angling Club so I can fish some of their waters again.

It's nostalgia I'm after rather than a 40. I used to fish sometimes with Jim Gibbinson and the late Gerry Savage – my claim to fame! For the record, my biggest carp is a 34lb 10oz common. I've caught only three 30s but a million 20s!! The first was a fish of 21lb 8oz in 1968. What an old bugger eh?! Anyway Tim, I've rattled on. Here's one of a pair of fish of 31lb 8oz and 34lb 10oz I caught in one morning.

Jim Davidson.

I'm sure Jim Gibbinson will be delighted to know that fishing with him is considered a greater claim to fame than making a successful high-profile career out of the entertainment industry! Thanks for all that Jim. Keep catching them. Tim P.



ABOVE Jim Davidson.

Boxing Clever

Dear Tim,

It seems so long ago when I first met you, yet it was really only 1992 when you and Mary visited us at Wheeler's Tackle Shop in Lincoln.

I have read and reread the 250th edition of *Carpworld*, and it was so nostalgic and brought back so many memories. I really enjoyed Rod Hutchinson's piece and had to chuckle at his telling Simon Crow that Carl Froch would be the real deal at boxing!

Before I became a licensed professional boxing trainer I spent many years as an ABA amateur coach. I'm sure that as a former amateur boxer, Simon can remember the iconic home of amateur boxing, the Commodore Rooms in Nottingham. I well remember Carl starting out there, and Rod was right, he always was in a different class, even then. During that time I was involved with the former WBC Light Middleweight Champion, Glenn Catley from Bristol. I remember telling him that in a few years Carl would be up there with the best.

Anyway, Tim, it is great to have you back in the editor's role at *Carpworld*. You are right on track when you say that even the readers are part of the 'family', and long may it continue.

Terry Taylor.

Taken to Task on Otters

Dear Tim,

You may remember me; I wrote to you not that long ago to correct something you'd written about otter hunting in a *Carpworld* editorial. I've absolutely agonised about whether to write to you again over something Kevin Nash said in *Carpworld* issue 250, and I finally decided I must

correct some of Mr Nash's thinking. I'm very concerned that you'll see me as something of a crank. I'm sorry if you do, but please at least listen to what I have to say and seriously consider the suggestion I make in the penultimate paragraph.

In Kevin Nash's article entitled Thoughts From an Essex Monastery, Mr Nash makes the following assertion:

"I don't think we have any chance on our own as anglers standing up against misguided conservationists and animal lovers wanting to reintroduce species from a past era... I think we should focus on alliance with other powerful bodies, most notably the RSPB. As the otter population increases, and especially once they have wiped out the fish stocks, they will turn to other prey. No ground nesting or water-based nesting bird is safe. This means that ducks, geese, swans, grebes, terns, some birds of prey such as harrier...."

The Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust is currently engaged in Red Grouse conservation research at Langholm in the Scottish Borders. They are proving links between a decline in grouse, lapwing, curlew, meadow pipit numbers and numerous other heather moorland and upland birds and the success of hen harriers in those same areas. The RSPB have got their heads firmly wedged in the sand on this subject though. Even though the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust is respected globally and provides proper peer-reviewed research papers and is frequently the first port of call for DEFRA and other government departments, the RSPB just ignore what the GWCT learn and carry on regardless. To the RSPB, birds of prey and raptors are absolutely untouchable. Even when other bird species are in decline as a result of a bird of prey or other raptor, the RSPB don't seem to care. I don't understand why this should be, but if Mr Nash or anybody else thinks that the RSPB will come riding in to save the day when ground nesting birds are threatened by otters, I'm very much afraid that he will be disappointed. The RSPB vehemently deny that magpies and other corvids will raid songbird

nests and eat the eggs and chicks of those same songbirds. I've only got to look out of my kitchen window to know that it's true. Why can't the RSPB? Is it because the harsh truth of conservation work sometimes means that a very successful predator must be culled?

Mr Nash then goes on to say: "Farmers are allowed to gas badgers when their cattle are threatened supposedly."

If only he was right. In my part of Hampshire badgers are out of control. There are hundreds of them and they are a massive threat to farmers and their cows everywhere, as it has been well proven that badgers pass on TB. And yet, despite an annual cost to the British taxpayer of £63 million in 2009, and an estimated cost of £87 million in 2010 in payments to TB-hit farmers, no cull programme for badgers has yet been agreed. Is the otter any less cuddly than a badger? Is an otter any less iconic in the mind of the average British man or woman than a badger? The chances of DEFRA agreeing to a cull of otters is frankly in the province of cloud cuckoo land. If £87 million won't get DEFRA moving, what chance have we got with the otter?

I think the Predation Action Group may have to bite the bullet and start talking to some other agencies who are already involved in protecting the British landscape and the flora and fauna within it. The two most appropriate organisations would be the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and the National Gamekeepers Organisation.

I can fully understand why the attitude of many anglers to these two organisations would be, 'Why should we, as anglers, ally ourselves with groups who are mainly interested in game shooting?'

I think that's a perfectly fair question. The answer, I'm afraid, is that they want the same thing as we do – a fair crack at controlling the predators that threaten our quarry and our way of life.

Finally, *Carpworld* 250 was brilliant; I read every single word – outstanding. Many thanks and best wishes.

Chris Norkett.