



INTERVIEW

"Quote/Unquote"

This week: Lee Collins continued...



Are you superstitious when angling, you know pay the lake, greet the maggies, have a lucky mascot, that sort of thing?

I am not superstitious. The only thing I used to look out for when targeting lakes was moon phases and I try and coincide my trips around a new moon if possible as these seem to be when I have caught most of my big fish.

A daring question, but is there anything that scares you when you are out on the bank?

I supposed the only concern when I am on the bank is having my gear stolen while I am asleep. You often hear horrific stories of anglers being beaten up or thrown in the lake in the sleeping bags, people being hit with baseball bats trying to protect their prize possessions.

Tell us the most ridiculous thing that has ever happened to you whilst angling?

It must have been while I was on Christchurch on the Linch hill complex I had sneaked a snide rod out leaning against the reeds now to cut a long story short in the middle of a down pour I heard my spool spinning so I picked up the rod played the fish in the rain for about five mins then I caught a glimpse of the fish it was only petals my legs turned to jelly after a brief tussle I managed to net here I did all the usual things weighed her and she went 45lb 10oz my first English 40 just before I was about to do the photos I took the fish back to water in a safety weigh sling while a couple of the guys sorted out their cameras while holding the fish in the margins the fish went mental and the zip opened on the weigh sling and the fish was gone no photos or anything I was gutted at the time I will never make that mistake again but I can look on the bright side now as I caught her



again twice more making it three times in a row at 48lb and 47 lb so it was a bit like tag and release as she wasn't big enough lol

Nowadays you are employed in the angling business, what did you do before this move, and do you have any regrets moving?

When I left school I was taken on by a local shop fitting company which trained me up to be a fully qualified Carpenter and Joiner. I went to college for three years on and off on block release and by the age of 21 I had all my qualifications. By this time I had moved out of the workshop and was out working all over the country moving from town to town doing different jobs. The company I worked for was refitting a lot of the high street clothing shops like Top man, Burtons, Gap as well as Banks Building Societies, Supermarkets and even concessions in Harrods. A lot of this work was weekends and unsociable hours depending on where you were working so my fishing suffered and if I was lucky I might get a two weekend sessions per month. In 1999 the company I had worked for the last nine years ceased trading and as a result I was made redundant. I now look at this as a blessing in disguise as, if I hadn't have been made redundant I wouldn't have had the opportunity to work in the tackle industry. They say things happen for a reason and this was one of those. The only regret I have moving up to Newcastle is that it has restricted my fishing massively as there are very few lakes up here that contain Carp over 20lb so I have to travel to go fishing and find myself doing minimum of a four to five hour drive to get to the lake which is not ideal.

Perhaps you'd like to give us a brief insight into your day to day



role within...Hardy Greys Chub?

My job varies from day to day so I don't really have a structure. But I will give you a brief overview of what goes on with a product before it hits the market which I am involved in the day to day of I am involved with all of the Carp projects from start to finish and I will sit down with a Cad designer drawing the initial concepts of the projects and tweaking until we are happy with the product. This then gets sent off to the supplier to make a counter sample. The sample can take anything from two to three months until it comes back and it then depends on what the product is as will be tested to see if it is functionally correct and see if there is any design flaws. Then, if there are any changes needed the Cad drawings will be amended and another counter sample requested. This can then take another 2-3months and if this comes back correct I will take the product to a pricing meeting to set the RRP of the item. After this the item has to be set up on the system with a bar code and forecasted to see what quantity we will sell for the year. The order is then placed with the manufacturer and the stock can take anything from two to three months. I will have to write the technical specification sheets for the products for the catalogue and the websites and also design the packaging with help from a design agency. Once stock has arrived at our warehouse I have go and inspect the stock to see if it is correct to our final sample. Usually you are talking about 1 year form the design concept to stock in the warehouse.

How do you see Hardy Greys Chub developing their already extensive and innovative range in the future?

Well we always try to identify gaps

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INTERVIEW



in the market to develop products to fit this criterion and whether that is a certain price point we will be also be taking look at our existing range of products and updating a lot of the products in the next couple of years so watch this space

Give us a little insight into your current day angling, aims and aspirations, if you have any in particular that is?

My aims and goals have slightly changed since I have moved up to Newcastle as my time fishing has become even more limited. So I have to put things into perspective. As I haven't got time to start chasing low stocked water say 100 acre venues with ten fish present I am quite happy just catching carp regardless of their size obviously I would like to be catching 30s and 40s each week but the reality is I won't be. It is still my goal to catch a 40lb common some day so that is still on the agenda but that's been put on the back burner for a while.

Are you a bait head, you know it is as important today to you or are there other things you feel are more important?

I would say that putting all the pieces of the Jigsaw together is more important than one individual thing as there is no point having the best rig or bait in the world and putting it in the wrong place. I think using good quality bait is essential and I use Mainline Baits and have done so for the last ten years minimum. I don't chop and change my baits every year and tend to stick with what I know - if it's still catching what's the point of changing so I will be using Cell for the forcible future. I see part of the jigsaw as to getting the fish feeding on your baited area so they are as confident possible which in turn will make it easier to catch them. There are hundreds of different rigs

out there more designed to the catch more anglers than fish don't get me wrong there are certain fish that are more clued up to dealing with rigs than other fish I use fairly simple rigs probably the same as 90% of other people but I always use a shrink tubing to help the hook turn in the fishes mouth.

Is there anything that particularly gets your hackles up about modern day carp angling?

The jealousy and general backstabbing and bitchiness you get in the Carp world if you are catching as they say well it's like it's ok for him so and so because he gets all his gear or bait for free no wonder he is catching or if I could fish three nights a week I would catch as many as him, they don't see how hard you have worked to actually get these deals in the first place and they expect everything to be given to them on a plate to them without the hard graft and effort

What would you change if you could in angling today, given the opportunity?

It seems that every lake you seem to walk on these days seem to be getting busier and busier all the time almost like there is a shortage of fisheries so I would like to see more fisheries created to accommodate the ever growing population of anglers

You are a very accomplished angler but if you had to have two anglers on your side to make a team who would they be and why?

Terry Hearn & Frank Warwick. I have to say these two anglers inspire me but both for different reasons. Terry's sheer determination and drive to catch big fish is second to none and the amount of effort he puts into his fishing makes him stand out head and

shoulders above most other anglers. One instance of this is when he was driving an hour and a half each way to bait a lake up that he wasn't even fishing to get the fish used to picking his bait up. Another instance was when he baited a 100 acre lake for a couple of months and waited until the conditions were right i.e. wind direction temperature to fish the lake, the result was three fish over 30lb up to 39lb. Terry's record of catching big fish is outstanding.

Frank is one of the best thinking anglers I have fished with - you only have to look at his results in the UK or on the Continent to see how successful he is. Frank has been at the forefront of carp fishing for years and battered a lot of the harder northern waters in the eighties and nineties, he is very well known as a bit of a rig man. Frank invented the original version of the Chod rig which at the time was called the short rig for fishing on silty mere's to stop the hook bait being dragged in to silt when fishing an extreme range and he was the guy behind the boom of the hi viz over flavoured bright pop ups then the wafter hook baits which has been a massive success. Frank is also not scared to be different and try something away from the norm to improve his results.

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

Hopefully a millionaire I live each day as it comes as life is too short if somebody had told me five years ago I would be sat working in an office for a fishing tackle company I would have laughed at them I don't really have any expectations at the moment just enjoying life.

Many thanks for your time Lee or should I say Ronald MacDonald, its very much appreciated.

Fitty of the Month

