

# Spring 'Manorisms' by Jake Wildbore

## Spring on Manor Farm Lake

Linear fisheries in Oxford has always been one of my favourite complexes to fish and in the last couple of years I've dotted around between lakes on the odd occasion I could get down there.

However one lake that has always stood out above the rest for me is Manor Farm Lake, mainly because of the history behind the lake, after reading inspiring books written by Terry Hearn, Adam Penning and Ian Chillcott. All have done their time for the famous Cut Tail that amazingly is still knocking around in the venue to the present day.

At the back end of last year Dan and I planned to start a winter campaign, where everything started brightly with Dan having the Birthmark Linear on the first trip! However, as we all know, last winter was extremely hard and at times the weather made it impossible to fish with the lake freezing for a number of weeks. So after a number of extremely cold sessions through the winter, shooting down when it wasn't frozen, we only managed a few fish on singles.

March finally arrived and I was more than keen to get back on there, so Dan went off to his syndicate water and left me too it. Sadly March was a very slow month on Manor but strangely, only a few yards away, St John's really kicked in.



On more than one occasion I was tempted to move over to try to get a bite or two, however knew that if I missed the time when they all suddenly switched on I would be absolutely gutted! So I stayed put and picked off the odd fish that finally decided to start moving.

After a long time coming I finally started getting amongst them and managed five fish to 36lb; so was over the moon. I tempted them with the ever-faithful zig rig which really gave me a buzz to get back down and hopefully get amongst some of the originals.



A few more weeks passed with still no sign of the big girls, but at least I managed to get amongst a few more fish as the weather gradually got warmer meaning I was able to start trickling them some bait.

Sadly other events cut my Manor fishing short with the BCAC approaching and my syndicate ticket soon beginning so it was soon time to give the Linear venue a break.

However during the one last session I managed to squeeze in before moving on I bagged one of the sought after residents in the shape of the aptly named 'Football' at 39lb 2oz!

Now from the name you can pretty much guess what it's going to look like. Unsurprisingly, it's definitely not a long lean fighting machine, nevertheless I was over the moon - and especially in the way it was caught.

As always, when I arrived at the lake it was absolutely rammed and the only swim free was a peg known as Witney point. Amazingly though this would have been my swim of choice because of the number of fish showing there which luckily seemed to be a few of the larger residents. So I immediately put a couple of singles out and had a low twenty after only a matter of a few minutes, before they moved out and gave me the opportunity to find a spot and get it baited ready for their return. I found a spot covered with light weed and put out a scattering around 100 baits of N-Gage XP soaked in Feedstim XP. Over this I managed a few fish to mid twenties on the first night reassuring me that I was certainly in the right area for action.

As I'd just got hold of the new Korda mouth trap that I'd been playing around with, I thought I'd give it ago on the last night. So I tied up a hinge stiff rig with a 12mm white Northern Special and deliberately fished it just off the baited area. At first light, after a couple of bleeps, it slowly started taking line and after a slow and very sluggish fight, she finally graced the net. Straight away I knew what it was.



It was quite ironic as Chris Blunt and I had been talking only a week previous about how we would both love to catch it and how, due to its awesome spring colours, it was one fish that simply couldn't be ignored. I was so happy to catch this cracking fish and hope it's one of many to come.

Sadly as I said before it was my last session on the Manor for a while, but I'm sure I'll be back down there soon.

*Till then, good luck!*  
*Jake Wildbore*