

# A Sandhurst Stunner

by Dave Graham

I arrived at MacDonald's to find Steve and Stu already finishing their brekky. Not to worry I'm a quick eater and by the time Bill and Tony rolled up in a ball of smoke, I'd nearly polished mine off too. Just enough time to eye up the talent before the journey up to Yateley started.

All the way up the motorway we were leap-frogging each other racing past one and another; all in rusty buckets and chuckling like kids! We arrived in Yateley at 11 and found out we couldn't get to the lake before midday. An hour in the pub – when can we go to the lake?

11:55 and it was a mad dash to the lake and once all in the gate, we separated like ants and began looking in every nook and cranny in the hope of seeing one of the illusive Yateley Carp; but no signs, no bubbling or jumping, just coots, ducks and just a very brave Heron.

Back in the car park we settled for the draw and happily I'm second out. One of the swims I liked went first. I was supposed to say peg 31 known as 'pipes' but instead I said 6! What was I thinking of? I've just given up the best swim on the lake. I'll be blanking for sure.

A couple of hours later and we had one of the heaviest showers I can remember for a long time. I decided to get the marker out and undeterred by more rain, I plumbed around and found what I was looking for; an elusive piece of silt amongst a desert of gravel.

I decided that was the spot for me and having clipped two rods up, in went the bait. CC Moore have rolled me a very special bait already nailing me one 30 and 9 twenties in the 5 weeks I have been using it, so my confidence was high.

Rods and bait sorted and a break in the weather meant a trip back to the car to get everything else, then sit there and wonder what might be. In the back of my mind, the gremlins were already settling in. Were the baits right, could my rigs be better, was I in the right swim etc? A quick text reminded me how well I had been fishing and to be confident that everything was right.

Time to cast in, the coots have eaten enough and must have aroused one or two of the larger residents to the swim. Both on the mark and the third on a overhang, I settled down with a beer, a ciggie and my thoughts of what might come through the evening.

I was sitting in the door of my bivvy waiting for the night to take over what had been an exciting day. Looking at the ripples on the lake I was wondering where the leviathans of the deep were. I'd heard a couple had come out but quite far away from where I was fishing. Am I in the right spot? Should I move? Maybe in the morning when we have had a good night's kip.

I slept through Tony's fish and a number of others only to be awoken at 03:31 by a wailing Delkim and the bright lights of the remote burning into my eyes. What was going on? Am I dreaming? No its real and one of the monsters of the deep have picked up my bait. Like a robot I jumped out of the bivvy and struck into the left hand rod, the fish had stripped off 30-40 yards of line and the battle was in the distance somewhere...

Around 20 minutes later, I had a fish at the net, pulling it closer its nose touched the spreader block but the tail was still over the chord. I knew what I had caught was one of the bigger girls. Shaking like a leaf and giggling like a kid. I ran to the next swim to wake Bill. I needed someone else to see what was in my net and I needed a pinch to make sure I wasn't dreaming!



***What a stunning fish!***

The dial swung confidently past 30, 31, 32 and settled at 36lb 4oz and a new pb smashing my previous by over 4 lbs! With some pictures taken and a hand shake from Bill she went back where she came from and rejoined her friends in Sandhurst.

Without any tea bags in sight, a quick beer and a fag then off to bed until sunrise.

What an incredible feeling, waking up knowing I wouldn't blank this time and that I had smashed my five year old pb. In my mind I knew the weekend couldn't get any better so I spent a lot of it wandering around talking to the others on the social and enjoying the limelight just for a little while.

After an incredible barby, great raffle and plenty of laughs I went back to peg 6 and just sat there. I didn't want another fish so the rods stayed in and I went up to Tony in 12 and helped consume more of his tea and recount how we had grown up on or around lakes, canals and streams chasing our quarry.

Night fell and the rods went out, but I wasn't expecting to catch another fish, Sandhurst had been kind to me and I knew that. Morning came around as quick as night left and there were a few more fish on the bank. More pbs broken and smiling anglers before we wrapped up at midday and went off back to civilisation.

I really owe a lot of my fishing success this spring and summer to Ian, Steve and the team at CC Moore and long may it continue!



***Bragging rights too!***

*Tight lines,  
Dave Graham*