

## Spring has sprung by Kev Wilson

The start on my chosen spring venue following the Car Park Lake closing turned out to be a tough one to say the least. The harsh winter we experienced really seemed to delay things this year. I had been doing my other 2 nights after the Car Park Lake on this venue from the start of March but didn't start seeing positive signs until early April. The fish were out at extreme range and all I could do was get baits as near to them as I could physically cast; thankfully this produced my first take from the lake at the beginning of April. The fish looked massive in the net but once on the mat it was soon obvious it was a very short and tall fish - a 'Simmo' that turned the needle to 26lb14oz; a chod rig with 18mm Meteor cork ball fished on it's own doing the business. The change from my faithful Odyssey XXX had been made as I had been warned about the bream on this lake and I knew the carp had seen plenty of Meteor in the past.

With the weather picking up in the next few weeks I spotted signs of fish towards the shallower end of the pit so began baiting and concentrating my efforts in this area - the swim in question had a deeper area with a snag which looked good and also shallower areas where I had seen fish moving through, so I could cover both the deeper and shallower options with my 3 traps. With the weather taking a step backwards so to speak for the next few weeks this turned out to be a good decision and I lost a fish from the deeper water snag around mid morning in the third week in April. I was gutted but at least I knew they were getting on the baited spot, so put in what bait I had left - around 3kg of 18mm Meteor.

Work couldn't pass quickly enough that weekend and arriving at the lake Sunday morning I was happy to find the baited swim free. Having sorted out clips, by walking up the bank, for the rods from the week previous, the rods were soon in position with a light scattering around each rod. Worryingly though, by nightfall I hadn't seen a single sign of a fish, so made sure I was up just before first light to spot any signs. Again nothing gave itself away and by 10am I was getting seriously itchy feet! A quick walk around this end of the lake revealed a few signs in the shallower water that was out of view from the current swim, so I hastily moved round to the area in question. The signs of fish slowly became less and less throughout the day and I wasn't very confident of take come nightfall. The phone went at around 8pm and it was Phil telling me his mate had bagged '3up5down' at 38lb 8oz from the deeper snag in the swim I had moved out of! Obviously I was gutted to say the least and cursed myself for not staying on the baited area, but these things happen in this game and I tried to stay upbeat about it all.

Getting up at first light revealed nothing and by 10am the swim still looked devoid of fish so I wound in for a walk round and to go and congratulate the captor and have a look at the pictures of this lovely old Leney. With that out the way I set about finding some fish and I didn't have to go too far!

Walking back past where I had fished that night the next swim I came to was one which controls the main body of water where the fish move into the shallower area. It looked pretty lifeless at first but then I saw a show at range behind a snag bush which enters a bay on the left of the swim. Five minutes later and another show around the same area had me running back to get my kit. I couldn't reach the area the fish were showing but could just reach the snag on the corner of the bay which they would hopefully move up the margin to. The gulls were a real nightmare that night and I probably ended up only getting a light scattering of 20 baits around my chod rig from the 100 odd I must have put out in the stick!

Around 7:30pm that night, just as I was just tucking into my dinner, the locked up rod on the snag let out a few beeps before being lifted up at the front off the buzzer! Grabbing the rod before it disappeared, a stalemate occurred where an obviously good fish was going mad on the surface - knowing any amount of line given would end in disaster, the rod was kept heavily bent and slowly the constant pressure meant the fish began moving bit by bit towards me. The other thing heavily playing on my mind was if the fish then decided to shoot left into the bay it would've meant a loss for sure.

Thankfully though, the fish kept coming on the same line and eventually made its way right, away from danger before pretty much coming into the waiting net. I was sure I had seen to big rows of scales as it went in the net and a closer inspection confirmed my thoughts - unbelievably it was indeed 3up5down which had only been out the night before - my name was on that one! With the light starting to fade I quickly rang my mate who, after some persuasion that I wasn't pulling his leg, came round to do the necessaries.



Weighing in at 38lb8oz again I was over the moon and, after struggling with the shots due to the uneven little point I was set up on, set this stunning 50+ year old Leney free back into the depths of its home feeling privileged to say the least!

Nothing else occurred that evening and I set off home feeling pleased with myself the next morning.

Again the weather had changed considerably since last week's blazing sunshine to overcast and cool and, on speaking with a mate who was fishing the swim with the deeper snag spot over the weekend, there were fish showing and he went on to lose one and bag a nice old common in the low 20's.

With it being a bank holiday weekend I dropped into where I took 3up5down from, which was surprisingly free, before moving into the swim behind my mate. At around 2:30am the next morning I was awoken by a single bleep on one of the shallower areas, closely followed by another with the bobbin just tweaking very slightly up then back down. On bending into it, it honestly felt a bit 'tenchy' - a shaking sensation with not a lot of movement. The fish kept coming straight in without doing much but felt a bit heavier than a Tench so I grabbed the net just in case. Good job I did as a long carp popped up and went straight in! On the mat it turned out be another of the few Leney's the lake holds at 25lb2oz.

Unfortunately it had been mistreated in the past and had sadly had its tail broken but I was still buzzing with another of the old Leney's under my belt. There was no more action that session and the spots were primed once again for my return.

Rightly or wrongly, I headed straight to the baited swim on my arrival, happily finding it vacant. I stuck my water butt in the swim and had a trot round that end of the lake but after seeing no signs decided to drop back in for the night where I'd caught from last week. During the middle of the next morning, and with a devoid looking swim, it was obvious I'd made a bad choice and hastily packed up to see what was happening down the other end. On speaking with a bailiff I found out that there had been quite a few fish caught over the weekend from the end I was now wondering about. A few fish showed out at extreme range again in the same area I had my initial first bite from and with the other swim on the opposite bank already taken, I figured the single chods as far as I could chuck them would again be my best chance. A few shows off the corner of the island to my right at about 30 yards behind one of the rods just before dark left me to nod off hopeful of a chance.

It wasn't to be though; although I did see the fish out at range again - if anything further over to the far side than the shows the previous day. I had a trot round to the far bank around lunchtime and after chatting to the guy opposite found out he was off the next day. Although I still didn't think I would be able to reach them from there either in all honesty!

Continuing my walk I came to the sailing club from which the majority of the water in front is unfishable due to much of it being out of bounds and the vast number of buoys present. A mate had told me how he'd seen a massive show in front of here a few days back so I sat and had a smoke whilst watching the water. Within 10 minutes I had seen a ridiculous number of shows - they were out there big time as if they knew it was a safe zone for them. All I could do was drop in behind matey further round who was away tomorrow. It was the closest I could get to them by chucking left up to the island and hoping at least a few would move that way.

Thankfully they did and at around 5:30pm the left hand rod bent right round. After an epic battle in the margins under the other two lines I finally managed to get a good looking mirror (which looked like another Leney) into the net - its rudder was huge, no wonder it fought so well! It was indeed another of the Leney's and at 31lb 8oz I was a happy bunny!



Next morning at around 9:15a.m and the same rod was away again although this time it was instantly obvious that the culprit was a smaller fish; a 17lb10oz 'Simmo' being the result. As I was slipping the fish back the middle rod (which I had turned the alarm off on due to the 17 trying to pick up the line) shot sideways off the alarm - I hadn't noticed the tip pulling round as I was more bothered about getting the 17 returned.

After not too much hassle, a clean looking linear went into the net- albeit a bit bigger than the last at 24lb10oz. The move was certainly the right one in the end and instead of heading home with a blank; I set off on my journey with a big grin and 3 fish under my belt - including another of the magical Leney's.

All three fish were taken on the Meteor, again with chod rigs and a scattering of roughly 100x18mm baits applied with the throwing stick.

***Kevin Wilson***