

CATCHING UP ON CHRISTCHURCH!

By Scott Lloyd

Its been a year since I last put pen to paper so I thought it would be best to tell you how my 1ST season on Christchurch finished off and bring you up to date with this season so far. In my last article I covered up to late July 2010 so I'll pick up from there and let you know how things went.

After landing the awesome 'Scar Mirror' I was gagging to get back behind the rods even though it wouldn't be for a couple of weeks due to work commitments. Then, after a very long wait, I was finally on route to 'Oxland'. I wasn't too enthusiastic about it though because I'd phoned ahead and was told the lake was packed out and very few fish were hitting the bank. Cutting a long story short (which I have covered in a previous article) I did my first night on Stoneacres without success and moved over to Christchurch the next morning, squeezing into a corner stalking swim where I found plenty of fish on the end of the wind. I had a very hard 24hrs trying to get a bite but eventually my Neville just melted away early morning. A fish known as "The Big Simmo" fell to the trap; 36lb 8oz and a very happy me, CC Moore's N-Gage boilies proving themselves once again!!



'The Big Simmo'. She isn't actually a Simmo just looks a bit like one- hence the name.

Over the next few weeks I hit them hard with the N-Gage XP boilies, giving them 10kg of washed out baits each session. It proved to be working well; I had some big hits doing it. One session that springs to mind was when I'd got in "the end trees" - my favourite swim by far. The weed was very thick and right up to the surface. It was just over the main spot in front of the swim and I had to wait for it to drift to the left before I could get the rods out and apply the bait. Then it would drift back over and I knew I was fishing on a mint gravel area with the rigs sitting sweet under a cover of weed, nice!! However landing fish from the spot was a different story. To help I positioned my rods diagonally from right to left across the swim in the hope the fish would kite to the right against the line pressure and away from the mass of weed.



The rods positioned from right to left. The spot is in line with the Xmas tree on the horizon and you can just make out the mass of weed.)

It proved to work, landing 4 stunning fish. (26.10, 27.2, 27.8 and 27.8). However I did lose two fish in the space of 20 minutes on the same rod. As you can imagine I wasn't a happy man, but what can you do hey? I was on a role and the fish were loving the N-Gage XP boilies so I thought it best to book the next mid-week off work and return after the weekend.

Getting down in the darkness whilst it was hammering down with rain I found the fish were still in the same area; loving the weed. The 'end trees' swim was taken (shock) so I set up camp in the swim opposite called 'the point'. My plan was to fish long to a spot which I had noted in my book at the back of the same weed bed I'd fished the previous week. I got the rods and bait out to the best of my ability, zipped down the door on the armadillo and whacked the stove on full blast in the hope to dry off. I could faintly hear fish crashing in the distance but the constant pitter-patter on the bivvy roof didn't make it easy. As you probably imagine I was stressing by this point but I was confident of a take so that acted as my stress relief, as did a nice fag and a brew.

After about an hour of brews and drying out I was getting plenty of liners, and thought it couldn't be long until I got a take. The fish obviously loved the washed out n-gage which I had prepared a couple of days previously. A short while later my left hander tightened up, so did the middle and so did the right..... "TRAILER!!" I was in a right mess, getting soaked yet again and to top it all off I lost the trailing fish near the edge which was a pain in the ass as it could just cause more problems through the night. Whilst messing about with the trailing fish I could still hear fish crashing on the spot. This made me feel slightly better until I got my three lines out of the water looking like a bowl of spaghetti, what a mess!!! Oh and of course I was wet yet again arrrrghhh!!!!

I got my head together and opted to fish one rod until morning, this hopefully having less chance of picking up the trailing fish and less casting disturbance for the feeding fish. The method proved to work because by morning I had two fish waiting for photos. I did a mat shot of one which was a nice scaly upper double and was waiting for my mate Nick to come round to do shots of the other. He confirmed it to be "Baby Orange" at 33lb 4oz; a right minter and a lot of hard work had paid off once again.



Baby Orange after a hard night.



An old scaly warrior

Over the following 4 weeks I was struggling to get down and when I did I was blanking in fine style. I'm putting this down to a hat which my good friend Adam gave me what had some sort of jinx on it (ha-ha!) Eventually after 12 nights of blanks I got to show off my hat for the camera with a nice long common of 26lb 8oz and also breaking the jinx on the hat!



The jinx breaker, phew! (And the famous Granny Camou Beanie Hat)

My next session down was mid September. Flying down the M6 yet again with Myles (aka Gyles) rocking to the radio trying to make the 2 hour journey go faster and Gyles thinking he's got the X-factor lol. Anyway after arriving and speaking to one of the regulars he informed me that a swim called 'the plate' had kicked right off and was doing some big fish. This was one of the four swims that covered the central area of the lake and I hadn't fished any of them??? I'd focused mainly on the end swims of the lake which picked up the northerly and southerly winds.

The 'plate swim' was obviously taken so I jumped in the swim opposite and fished long; naughty!! I picked up a fish almost instantly and it soon became apparent it was a trailing fish but it couldn't have been trailing for long having not even ditched the lead. I landed the fish and she swam away unharmed. I remember thinking surely the carp gods would repay for my good deed!!!

24hours later and there had been no repayment from the carp gods. I had a wander round the lake and Phil who was fishing in "the plate" informed me he was leaving. I had to pack down quickly and got in there swiftly. I don't really like jumping in swims but on Christchurch it's got to be done. If you don't, someone else will. It's just how it is on there.

I put three rods a foot apart on the main spot which is around 70yds in front of the swim. It's a large silt area amongst the weed which had been cleaned down to gravel in places. All of the rods were baited with N-Gage XP Wafers on my usual helicopter setup fished to the front of the spot in the deep silt combined with X-line leaders. I gave them a good hit of washed out n-gage with the spod and sat on my hands.

24hours passed and I was starting to wonder whether there was such thing as the carp gods!!!

I'd heard a lot of fish down the south end of the lake in front of my favourite swim "end trees". I had 24hours left and wondered whether to move? I packed down but left the rods out and went next door to Adam for a brew and pondered on the thought of moving. Whilst chatting away my Neville sounder box just melted away and I was like Usaine Bolt running to the rod!! The fish was making its way from weed bed to weed bed in an attempt to find safety. Eventually when I freed it from the weed it was just chugging around in the depths of the water and nodding its head from side to side; all the tell tale signs of a decent sized fish.

Eventually I slipped a big mirror over the cord and the carp Gods had proved themselves in fine style. "Baby Pooleys" at 37lb 8oz, what a warrior of a carp this was!!!



The carp Gods do exist!



Things really started slowing down after that; winter was closing in fast and the angling pressure decreased. I managed to pick up one last fish before the big freeze though.

I'd pre-baited a spot with 2kg of N-Gage XP boilies on my 1st night down. I then fished a different lake on the complex. On my last night, in the pitch black I moved over to fish my pre-baited spot. I clipped 2 rods perfect to the small area and got a right screamer soon after.

A much appreciated 28lb 8oz floppy tailed mirror fell for the trap.....Sneaky!!!

Short term pre-baiting proving it can be effective. This ended up being my last fish of the year.



After a long harsh winter.....and a lot of partying I was back behind the rods by early march. I was eager to try out zigs on the lake as I knew these particular fish loved them. I'd missed the previous year's best zigging time so it was time to give them a blast.

My first trip down I got in the 'point swim'. I knew the fish were spending time there because Myles had landed two 40lb+ commons from this swim a few weeks previously. A quick climb up the tree proved me to be right. I could see plenty of fish hugging the reeds and soaking up the early spring sun. They definitely looked up for a zig with them being in the upper layers of the water however the flat calm lake didn't make the best zigging conditions.

Soaking up the early spring sun in front of the point swim..... but far from the best zigging conditions!

I went on to blank that session but knew there was a good chance of a fish out of that swim during my next session if the wind picked up. I did three nights a week in the point for the following three weeks and managed to lose four fish on zigs!!

Not the best end of a season but I did manage to land one fish on my last session before the season came to an end, and what a minter it was.



"The Pretty One" wearing her winter coat at 34lb. It made the cold blanks of winter and the four lost fish worthwhile.

To sum up my 1st season on Christchurch, I'd say it was mega really.

I'd managed to catch two of elusive forties from the lake in "Slate Grey" and "The Scar Mirror" whilst also getting my hands on "Baby Pooley's", "Baby Orange", "Big Simmo", "Tel's Common" and last but not least "The Pretty One".

I've continued to fish Christchurch this season but have been struggling to get down there as often as last season due to buying a house which needs a lot of attention.

I've only managed to do 7 nights but landed 6 fish; not bad going really, with one fish being a recapture of the Slate Grey at 44lb 2oz; nearly 3lb bigger than the 1st time.....and very welcome.



I don't mind recaptures like this, I'm sure you agree?

I will continue to fish the rest of the season on Christy and I've also been getting on linear fisheries a bit too lately but I'll keep you updated on that.

Until then, be lucky all.

Scott