



# DES TAYLOR

FLOATING BAITS CAN BE A KILLER METHOD ON STILLWATERS AT THIS TIME OF YEAR – AND ON RIVERS TOO, NOW THEY'RE OPEN

## NICE ONE CHUM...

Forget bottom baits, carp love floaters. Give them a go...



JACK Cutherton and I enjoyed some great carp fishing on a local lake using floaters.

**A** SOFT, warm southerly wind was blowing across the lake, and for hours I had been catapulting Chum Mixers on to the surface.

Up until now nothing but fry had been showing an interest in the baits that were gently moving across the surface. Then, all of a sudden, about half a dozen carp cottoned on to these floaters. And boy, did they look hungry!

My young companion was Jack Cutherton, and I shouted him to come and have a go for them with the floater rod I already had made up.

Jack is one of the new generation of anglers. He has all the expertise, has read all the magazines, has the most up-to-date rigs and catches everywhere he goes. I reckon he's another up-and-coming Martin Bowler if ever there was one.

But he's willing to listen, too, and he learns very quickly.

I had shown him a new Rob

Hales rig for attaching a cut-down square pop-up boilie to a piece of elastic band glued to the back of the hook. It incorporates one of those TFG Missile floats which automatically hook almost every fish, and are quite superb.

A good carp was showing about 20yds away, so Jack cast 10yds further on and drew the float back very slowly to the 'taking' area. It had not been there more than 30 seconds when a big mouth came up

and swallowed the square pop-up. Jack rightly waited for the line to tighten.

At his age I reckon I would have been shaking like a leaf, but this lad was as cool as ice and set the hook into what turned out to be a mirror of 15lb-plus.

Thanks to careful feeding throughout the day, Jack and I had mirrors and commons to over 20lb, which was great fun to say the least.

While we did this we had bottom rods out and couldn't buy a bite, proving the carp were willing to feed – but not on the bottom.

At nightfall I had one of 26lb 8oz on the bottom, but not until the sun and heat had gone

out of the sky.

At this time of year, you can waste many hours fishing baits on the deck, because very often the fish are in the top third of the water.

A zig rig or a surface-fished bait will often catch you a lot more fish, so don't be lazy and sit behind the buzzers.

Instead, spend time catapulting a few mixers across the surface, especially between 6pm and 9pm on a warm summer night, and I bet you sooner or later you will start to see mouths taking baits from the surface.

Set the bait around 6ins from the float and wait for the line to tighten. It couldn't be simpler, could it?

## ...AND WHY NOT TRY FLOATERS ON THE RIVER?

TALKING of floaters, don't be scared to do exactly the same on the river.

Chub are suckers for a freelined piece of bread or a mixer, and often the very best fish of the shoal will fall to the surface-fished bait.

I've caught on bread, marshmallows, cat biscuits and, of course, Chum Mixers. Chub love them, but would you believe I've even had river bream on them...on a hot summer's day, too?

My mate's going to give it a try on the River Severn

this year where he's been feeding floating bread to carp over 30lb – yes 30lb – on the river. I'm not a fan of carp in running water, but at that weight it won't be long before we see the bivvy brigade on the venue.

Mind you, nowadays a lot of the barbel anglers fish exactly the same as carpers, with bolt rigs, boilies, buzzers and bivvies.

I know these methods will catch plenty, but personally I like to fish different methods and baits, otherwise I soon get bored.

## AND ANOTHER THING...

### I was in the bivvy the other

night, fast asleep, when suddenly I found a bag of boilies being pulled from under cover into the open. I jumped up in complete surprise and quickly realised it was a bloody huge rat!

I kid you not, this rat was the size of a guinea pig and even when I swore, cussed and threatened to tear its head off, it still kept hold of the plastic bag! This thing was not going to let go – until I gave it a bucket of water. I nearly fell over with laughter because there it sat (and you'll have to excuse the pun) just like a drowned rat, looking pretty miserable to say the least!

After that it cleared off, but it did return before dawn, only this time I had put my baits away.

It only goes to prove how many times creatures come around at night and could be sniffing and eating your food if you leave it on the floor. Best be safe from disease and clear up before nightfall.

### This time of year can be so

frustrating for anglers because carp tend to have their minds on sex and not food. Not that I can knock them for that!

But I was fishing a lake the other night in perfect conditions and I really did fancy putting a few fish together. The carp had other ideas. Although they had spawned the previous week, they still had the other on their minds, with fish jumping in the reeds and tearing across the surface at great speed. Typical carp foreplay! So I sat there, watched and blanked in proper style!

As I said, it's a frustrating business at this time of year. The good news is that when they have completely finished they will eat everything that is thrown at them. All I need to do now is get the timing right.

### Look out Martin Bowler, the old

man is on the warpath!

In the past

few months

I've had a

35lb cod,

two

double-

figure trout,

two 50lb

carp, two

40lb carp,

seven

tarpon over

100lb to

175lb and four 20lb carp in a day!

It's not a bad list, is it?

Then again, I suppose I should keep quiet, being as young Bowler has had a 5lb perch and a 10lb tench to go with a near-3lb roach and a 1lb 2oz dace!

But I wonder if he will still be doing it when his waistline is 12ins bigger, his hair has turned grey and he has to have the buzzers on extra-loud to hear them from two yards away!

### I wonder if you managed to get

out on the opening day of the river season?

I still look forward to the 'glorious 16th' with the same degree of enthusiasm as I did when I was a lad but I have learnt that it can sometimes be an anti-climax. Everyone rushes down to the river for the grand opening – only to find the fish haven't switched on after the three month lay-off.

Let the rush calm down, wait for the rivers to sort themselves out – and bag up big style!

There is always something special about catching on running water – just make sure you don't miss out.

