

Just One More Bite

Simon Buckman

I decided to concentrate on a new river this year, having fished several different rivers over the last few seasons. It's always exciting when you fish a new river for specimens, you never know what your next fish will be, it's similar to fishing an unfished lake, only better! I carried out my research (as I always do) and settled on an area where I knew large carp and barbel

had been caught from before. The river offered a gravel seam plus cover for the fish, and a nice bend.

I approached my buddy Karl Starnes about producing me a bait which I felt would be a good catcher; it included Caviar, Liver, Oyster Shell (the fish love freshwater mussels) and it just smelt really fishy.

The first couple of weeks of my campaign amounted to a lot of time spent baiting up, both before work and after – yes, I have a full-time job and have to go to work even when the conditions are prime!

With a couple of lovely carp under my belt early on, I continued to fish and bait the area with large amounts of boilies, pellet, vitalin, sweet-





corn, peas, tinned fish and meat. This was just to try and gain the fishes confidence and more importantly the interest of the big whiskers.

After about 10 to 12 nights of fishing the river, it was around 4am on a stunning misty morning when I received a very 'Breamy' sort of take which had me reaching for my spoon net and making for the rod. After a good fight my first Barbel from the river was in the net! I knew that it looked like a very good double but when I weighed it at 15lb 2oz I was over the moon. The Impossible was complete!

It was about a week later when my next encounter with a Barbel took place, I had just returned from work and planned on fishing the night. On arrival I baited heavily with boilie and pellet and plopped two rods out where I felt the gravel deepened off

a bit. Within an hour or so I had a very fast powerful take which I knew from the off was a good fish. After about 10 minutes under the rod tip, i was fully expecting a decent carp to appear, when i caught a glimpse of the biggest barbel I'd ever seen, all I could think was "Oh my god". She was weighed in at 16lb 6oz, the fish of a season (or so I thought).

So after this I decided that the area I was fishing was too good to give up on and so

turned my attentions to a 30lb river carp (my biggest before was a stunning fish of 29lb), or another monster barbel - I always wanted to catch just one more! Subsequently I managed to get myself a 33lb mirror carp, which I landed on my Youngs Centerpin and Drennan Series 7 Specialist Avon Quiver 12ft 1.5lb rod; a fight which I won't forget in a hurry!

Soon after that I heard rumours of big roach in the river, and as they are my



favourite species, I spent a lot of time feeder fishing with corn over my baited areas, and when I was rewarded with a new PB Roach of 2lb 8oz I was on cloud nine! One of the most stunning creatures that I have ever seen.

So at that point I'd had the river carp PB that I wanted, a new roach PB, and a large barbel. So why was I still going to all the effort of travelling to the river after work, baiting up and fishing overnight? To be honest I didn't know myself, the river had already blown me away and this was set to continue...

It was a horrible windy, rainy night, with the elements testing my brolly to the max, there were whole reed beds, weed, tree trunks and just about everything coming down the river taking out my lines on a regular basis. Most guys I know would have wound in, or not been there

in the first place! However, for some reason I stuck it out knowing the conditions were good for a fish too.

I awoke in the early hours to a screamer of a take; I thought it must be something that had gone through my lines again. But the run just continued as I ran to the rod and it then became obvious that a fish was responsible. The fight was powerful, juddery at times, which left me thinking that I had hooked into another barbel; well I hoped I had! When the fish was ready for the net I could see it was a big fish, but under low light and in driving rain it was hard to see just how big. It wasn't until I lifted the net out to carry it to the mat that I realised how heavy she was! I thought, I've got another 15lb+ fish here!

I slipped her in the sling and when I saw my Avon Scales approaching 20lb I had to put

her down and check again. But the same thing happened – and I settled on a weight of 18lb 4oz, which I checked a third time before I put her in the net to await the arrival of my girlfriend to do the photos. “Gobsmacked” is the word that best describes how I felt. But I was made-up that all the effort I'd put in had been worth it, as that's not always the case in angling. I ended up with five Barbel and around ten Carp from the river in 2011, which I feel is fairly good going - I know of other stretches that have produced only two Barbel to a whole syndicate.

My captures seem to have been attracting a lot of attention, both good and bad. There is a lot of jealousy in angling these days and bad feeling towards other anglers, you only have to look at some of the forums...



Simon Buckman's Tidal Barbel Rig

