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CARP FISHING MADE EASY – IAN CHILLCOTT EXPLAINS HOW

Dusk often brings with it a bite or two.

ANGLER FILE

RUSS EVANS
Age: 47
Nickname: None
UK PB: 28lb 2oz
Sponsor: Cotswold Baits

AFTER HOURS

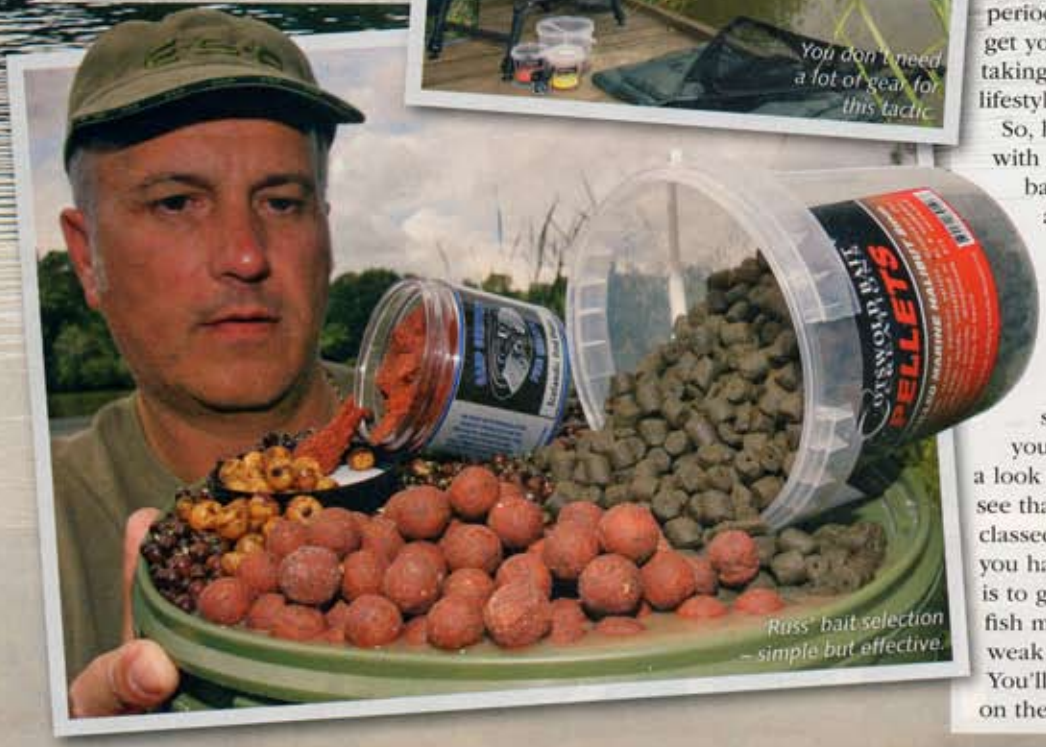
Spend a few hours on the bank, catch some carp and be home in time for tea. Read on and learn how to make the most of your evenings.

Feed margin spots on a little-and-often basis.

Having a family, full-time job and fishing matches, as I must confess to being a practising match angler, the time I have for carp fishing is limited. As such, I make the most of every opportunity by getting out on the bank for a couple of hours after work. Working in the on-site tackle shop at Old Bury Hill Fishery, I have a distinct advantage in that as soon as I clock off I'm at the venue. That said, if you live or work close to your venue, or can only get out for a couple of hours in between other commitments, then these tactics are just the job.

During the matches that I fished I noticed that the anglers who drew pegs where they could fish close to snags were forever hooking and losing carp. These bigger carp clearly spend a lot of time among the snags. By targeting these areas with proper carp gear I can be sure that I'm fishing in the right area from the moment that I arrive – vital when time is limited. If you can't get close to the snags on your venue, or it doesn't have any, then any cover is worth targeting. Reed beds, lily pads, overhanging trees and suchlike are perfect.

You don't need a lot of gear for this tactic.



Russ' bait selection – simple but effective.

The majority of carp anglers, at Old Bury Hill at least, become fixated with the islands and far bank and ignore the margins – which is another thing that this tactic has going for it.

Fishing for a couple of hours in the evening has a number of advantages. First off, you don't need to take much gear. A chair, unhooking mat, landing net, rod and reel, tackle box and a little bait is all I need. Second, you are on the bank for one of the best feeding periods, the evening. Third, you can get your 'fix' of carp fishing without taking a day or two out of your busy lifestyle.

So, how do I set about catching with only a few hours on the bank? I've explained that fishing alongside snags and bankside cover is the place to be. While you should fish close to these areas, use common sense. Don't fish so close that a hooked fish is in the snag before you have a chance to steer it away from danger. Keep your rig simple and strong. Take a look at the step by step and you'll see that the rig I use can almost be classed as freelining. The less 'clutter' you have on your line, the less there is to get caught in the snag should a fish make it to safety, and the fewer weak points there are on the rig. You'll notice that I have a small float on the line that's made from two

RUSS EVANS' MARGIN RIG

STEP 1 A knotless knot (see page 178) tied with supple braid makes up the business end.

STEP 2 The braid hook link is tied to the main line via a swivel. Note the anti-tangle sleeve.

STEP 3 Russ makes his own 'cocktail float' (see opposite) which is threaded onto the main line.

STEP 4 The finished rig is simple, strong and extremely effective.

Ensure that your clutch is done up tight when fishing near snags.

HOW TO MAKE A COCKTAIL FLOAT

STEP 1 Using a baiting needle, thread a 14mm cork ball onto your main line.

STEP 2 Trap the cork ball in place with a 15mm length of cocktail stick.

STEP 3 Push a 10mm cork ball onto the end of the cocktail stick, job done.

Tools for the job – 9ft stalking rod and reel loaded with 12lb line.

A 15lb mirror caught for the TC camera. Proof that Russ' tactics work.

cork balls. I make these floats myself, which I call cocktail floats, so they're cheap to replace.

This float doesn't damage the line in any way and serves as bite indication. A float will give indication of a bite far earlier than any lead set-up and the earlier you can detect a bite, the better chance you have of getting the fish clear of danger.

On the bait front, two pints of hemp, a pint of tares and half a kilo of boilies is enough for an evening session. I feed the swim on a little-and-often basis and wait for telltale signs, such as bubbling and tail patterns, before gently flicking my hook bait into position. Because the set-up that I use is lightweight and creates little disturbance, I can get away with flicking it among feeding fish without disturbing them. Wherever there's a big head of bream and tench, as there is in this venue, I'd advise against chucking a lot of bait in. Chuck all your bait in at the start and these nuisance fish will eat it all before the carp get a look in.

When you're sat waiting for a bite, keep disturbance to a minimum. You'll be fishing close in so loud noises, sudden movements and casting a shadow over the water will spook the carp. Always hold your rod because you need to react quickly when you get a bite. Takes are often fast and violent, so do not leave the rod unattended. What's more, ensure that your clutch is done up tight and employ hit-and-hold tactics when a carp is hooked. If the carp gains any line it'll get into the snag, reeds, or whatever you're fishing alongside, and you'll lose it.

Employ hit-and-hold tactics to get a hooked fish away from the snags.

Total Tip

Boost the pulling power of your hook bait by wrapping it in paste, which will slowly dissolve and leak attraction into the swim. Don't mask the hook, though, because this will impede hooking if you get a quick bite.

Nipping out after work and fishing as described has caught me more than my fair share of carp over the past few months, including a number of twenties, but it's not just a summer tactic. It'll work from spring through to late autumn. Give it a try and you will reap the rewards.