



Colin Davidson's CARP WORLD

Learn loads about the big carp scene by following our carp star, Colin Davidson, in his thought-provoking column. **THIS WEEK:** Davo and his girlfriend Ness check out a French estate lake.

Magical Molyneux



WONDERING where to book up for your next French carp trip? It's becoming a crowded market place and it's all too easy to pick a venue that disappoints. Doing your homework and picking reputable venues is absolutely crucial.

I got lucky after being passed the details of an English owned venue Etang de Molyneux at Christmas which was ticking all the boxes for a quick cross Channel visit over Easter with my good lady Ness.

New to the Angling Lines portfolio Molyneux is just 90 minutes drive from Le Havre, a hell of a bonus when fishing time is limited. With some venues by the time you've driven seven or nine hours you lose the best part of a whole days fishing at either end of the trip. A quick hop down the French motorways and the rods would be out, just what we needed.

A 13 acre spring fed estate lake set in a very pretty 19 acre site in the Normandy countryside Molyneux has matured in the 40 years since it was dug with large trailing willows, lots of flowers, three wooded islands and the usual underwater features such as gravel bars, silt, shallows and weedbeds.

Formerly a campsite there's great vehicle access around the lake to make getting your kit to a swim straight forward, and there's a brick built English toilet and shower block with hot and cold water.

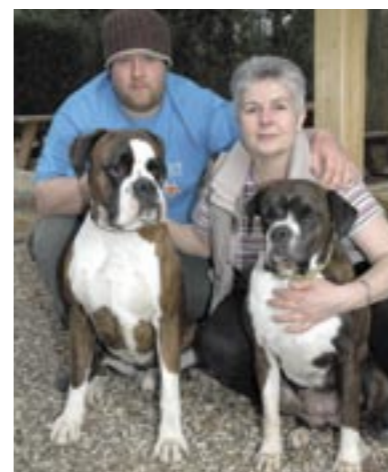
So what of the fish on offer? It contains carp from an original stocking in 1979 that have reached over 40 lb and the stock was boosted in 2005 with fast growing Dink and Royale cross carp up to 50 lb. No poisson chat and still largely unpressured, it had everything going for it - location, sport and comfort.

We got really lucky when a cancellation unexpectedly left the purpose built lakeside chalet free, offering double and twin bed accommodation, toilet and cooking facilities, all overlooking a generous platform fronted swim on the south bank of the fishery.

Time really was on the short side, an overnight ferry from Portsmouth on Monday night, clearing customs, through Le Havre and down to Pacy-sur-Eure saw us on the lake by midday Tuesday, with a departure time set for midday Thursday, leaving 48 hours to get amongst the carp at Molyneux. Here's how we got on...

“No poisson chat and still largely unpressured, Molyneux had everything going for it - location, sport and comfort.”

1 Mother and son Judith and Andrew Molyneux are in their second season running Etang de Molyneux, with help from their energetic boxers, Socks and Cleo. You can opt for drive and survive or be fed English breakfast and a two course evening meal by a trained chef, choosing whether to eat in your swim, or in the purpose built cabin. With 12 swims available but the maximum booking being six anglers for the week there's plenty of room - just one of the really nice little touches that makes Molyneux an attractive destination. There's also the option we took up of a chalet to fish from for your stay.



2 Where do you start with 13 acres of water and plenty of island hidey holes for the carp to be lurking in? Andrew walked us around the lake, pointing out productive areas, but the female contingent decided that the wooden cabin with space to sleep four, cooking facilities, running water, heating and toilet was the only choice. The swim in front of the cabin commanded a lot of water with a long island running diagonally away to the right, and shallows to the left. Despite conditions being less than ideal and the wind bringing cold air from the north the same swim had fished the week before which was a good pointer that some action was to be had.



3 With two days to catch and the clock ticking my initial tactic on a couple of rods was to mould huge Method balls the size of grapefruits around feeders or flat pear in-line leads and drop them out of the Viper Mk 3 remote boat.

The groundbait was good old Vitalin, crammed with Dynamite chopped tigers, Mainline crushed hemp stick mix, Hinders shrimp pellets and fresh tuna - great carp grub anywhere.

Two or three small tigers on the hair completed the trap. When time is short pick tactics to catch something, anything and everything to get action and clues to location as quickly as possible.



5 Molyneux does contain a small head of tench, and they seemed to find the Vitalin, tuna and tiger nut Method groundbait combination irresistible. Because I was dependent on the remote boat to take hook baits to the productive spots I dropped the Method tactics, ideally wanting each run out and drop from the boat to produce a carp not be pounced on by a tinca within minutes, wasting time and battery life. Switching to filling the boat hopper with a handful of 14 mm boilies, frenzied hemp and Mainline hemp pellets did the trick, bringing tench action virtually to a standstill.



7 The front door of the cabin was only 15 yards from the platform the rods were sat on, but the EOS-R alarms and RX3 remote sounder were invaluable, ensuring not a single bleep was missed even if the kettle was boiling and the door was shut. Because the two rods producing most of the action were fished at around 120-130 yards extra drag weights were added to the bobbin bodies, almost all of the takes slowly pulling the bobbin the couple of inches up to the blank, before pulling the tip round and hitting the line clip. The Stratos free-spool was tightened up to prevent carp taking line freely, encouraging them to kite out into open water.



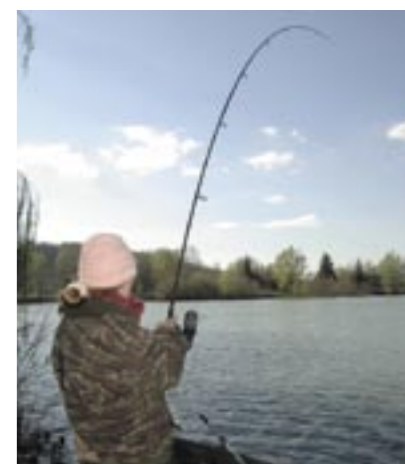
4 It only took a few hours to start getting amongst the carp, the giant Method ball towards a snag tree on the island margin producing fish of 17 lb and 21 lb late afternoon. Both were small for Molyneux, fish typically averaging 25-27 lb. Just after dark I suffered the only loss of the trip, then just short of midnight the same rod boated out to a deep hole ten yards off the island snag tree produced this irregularly scaled 29-pounder. Keeping a rod in this deep hole produced steady action again on the second day, which continued right through until we left. It turned out to be tremendous hotspot.



6 The brilliant Viper Mk 3 remote boat allowed us to take advantage of the cabin accommodation but still cover a substantial amount of water. Large capacity, fast twin jet propulsion, navigation lights and an option to use a boat mounted Smartcast fish finder the Viper has got the lot. With the steady north wind in our faces and so much action to the long range rods both batteries had to be on permanent recharge to keep the hook baits going back out. A UK-European plug converter and power sockets in the cabin made it easy. Spare rechargeables were also required for the handset.



8 Because the action was so localised from the deeper hole a Nessie rod was quickly added to the same area in front of the island snags to share the action. It started producing just as regularly as the rod closest to the woodwork, you didn't need to be tight up to get bites. With her not having fished for big carp on heavy gear before I tackled Ness up with through action 12 foot 2.25 lb Fox Controller rods to help cushion the final stages of the scrap under the rod tip and make the fight more fun. After winding one carp in on my lovely 2.75 lb Matrix rods she declared her softer rods far superior...



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9 Switching from semi-fixed to 3 oz flat pear running leads threaded straight up the line stopped by a bead improved indication for the long range rods. The business end was a 10 in. Coretex combi rig armed with a long hair and Fox SSC Arma Point size 7 with a small shrink tube extension. Hook bait was a 14 mm CC Moore Odyssey XXX bottom bait with a 'Davidson' white chocolate pop-up presented snowman style. We only suffered one carp loss and all the hook holds were rock solid. There's a barbed hooks only rule at Molyneux which I'm totally in favour of.



11 I took a selection of boilies, around 2.5 kilos of CC Moore Odyssey XXX, the same of Solar BYT and a kilo of Solar Club Mix. Odyssey baited rods were on the hot area so they were all used up first, but all three are great baits. Because we were only there for a couple of days bait storage wasn't an issue, Fox air dry bags keeping them in first class condition without any need for cool boxes or ice packs. There are freezer facilities on site and the cabin we stayed in contained a fridge-freezer, so keeping quality bait frozen for the duration of a week long stay wouldn't have been a problem.



13 Fresh or frozen boilies are only a small part of the bait requirement for a trip abroad. Take baits to feed and fish with your boilies that are shelf-life so you've got plenty in reserve but if the fishing is slow you haven't wasted a lot of money on bait that you can't take home. Shelf-life jars or tins of particles like Dynamite Frenzied tigers and hemp are essential. Particles are allowed at Molyneux subject to approval by Andrew the bailiff to check they are correctly prepared. Hinders shrimp pellets, Mainline hemp pellets, corn and Vitalin, dips and various pop-ups completed the bait bucket.



10 By half way through the Wednesday we had it pretty well sorted, action coming steadily to the long range baits out to the right. Try as I might I couldn't get anything to happen on the other rods. Hemp and tigers in the margins, a scattering of boilies on a gravel spot, baits off the tip off the island and down towards the shallows... I tried all sorts, until I finally snaffled a solitary low 20 on a pop-up along the main bar down the venue on the final morning. Keeping up with the action from the long range marks made it hard to put a sustained effort in with the other rods. We were too busy winding in deep, colourful mirrors like this one, all peas in a pod and mostly 24-28 lb.



12 Keeping on top of just the two rods that kept producing steadily was hard enough work, and we were kept so busy with the boat running baits out long range that from start to finish we rarely had all the rods in the water. Every time we tried to sit down, tidy up, tie rigs or retackle rods we'd get another take. Other than dinner I didn't sit down or stop for two days but having the cabin to use as a warm, comfortable base made the fishing much more civilised and really enjoyable. We even both had takes that interrupted us cleaning our teeth which made for a frothy-mouthed run to the rods.



14 The final morning the north wind had blown itself out. A couple of carp head and shouldered in the producing area at first light and within five minutes of boating the first hook bait out it was away, shortly followed by the second rod only minutes later. The final scoresheet was 17 carp with 14 of them over 20 lb and nine of those big 20s in just 48 hours. Ness beat her personal best several times, her haul being five 20s to 27 lb 10 oz. Next year all those big 20s will be 30s for sure. It doesn't get much better in two days! We had a tremendous time, and not having tangled with any of the venue's real biggies there's a great incentive to book up and go again.



DAVO'S
WEEK AHEAD

“I'm stocking up with Fox Arma Point SR hooks and Rigidity bristle filament for crimping chod rigs. The slightly out turned eye of the SR ensures the D loop and the pop-up sit perfectly together...”

TICKET
Information

BOOKINGS for Molyneux are exclusively through Angling Lines, more details at www.anglinglines.co.uk Special thanks to Judith and Andrew Molyneux for their hospitality through our stay.

Ness was well happy with five 20-pounders including a PB 27 lb 10 oz lump.

Carp Cup

WIN £1,000's OF NASH KIT

HOW TO ENTER Call 0207 261 (5980) (6025) (5972). If posting pix, include a completed report form (see big gallery). If e-mailing, include details, plus image to: gary_newman@pcmedia.com All pictured here win the Nash T-shirt (left) and then get judged for rich monthly and annual rewards.



Richard Scott had a productive session at Cambridgeshire's Fenland Fisheries when he tackled Willow Lake for this 31 lb mirror. Richard, from nearby Sutton, added others of 28 lb and 23 lb plus two doubles during two nights when he targeted a lightly weeded area. Successful tactics included a large bed of Nash Baits Maple Squid boilies and pellets with a paste-wrapped bottom bait fished over the top. Venue latest: 01487 841858.



Getting amongst the fish at Elphicks Fishery was LT Baits director Ben Toyer with this 42 lb mirror. The local angler tackled the Kent water with a prototype boilie that he was field-testing fished over a bed of spod mix. Along with the big 'un, Ben had another one weighing 35 lb 2 oz. Venue latest: 01580 212512.



All the other anglers had gone home at a Northamptonshire syndicate water, but Jason Green decided to stay for the Sunday afternoon and do a bit of stalking. It paid off for the 33-year-old groundworker, from Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, when he hooked this 34 lb 6 oz mirror off of the top. A cut-down Nash Baits pop-up presented on a size 10 ESP hook to a 10 lb Drennan Double Strength hook link did the trick.



Lea Valley Parks fisheries officer Lee Robbins tackled their Bowers Lake for this 36 lb 8 oz mirror known as Goldie. Lee, from Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire added others of 34 lb 4 oz and 26 lb 6 oz within two hours when he fished a bar 60 yards out with a pop-up over a kilo of Baitworks Atlantic Heat boilies. He used a size 6 Korda Wide Gape hook to a 15 lb Kryston Mantis Green trace. Venue latest: 01992 892291.



The recently re-opened Yateley North Lake produced this 29 lb 4 oz common for builder Ben Allen. The 30-year-old, from Caterham, Surrey, found a clear area 40 yards out and within two hours of casting out a Mainline Pro-Activ Pineapple boilie he had a take. The session also produced a 34 lb 2 oz catfish plus a double-figure mirror. Venue latest: 01932 583630.