

Chasing Gold in the Valley...

“Our resident ‘winter-crazed-nutter’ certainly proved to be dedicated. He’s now facing a new challenge. Let’s find out how his winter obsession started. More importantly... ‘that’ Linear.”

BY JAMES ‘SMITHY’ SMITH.



James' new challenge looks tougher than before. But he's enjoying every minute.

I first became aware of the “Big Linear” whilst scanning the pages of Carp Talk, a fish caught my eye and I looked on in awe.

To my surprise the pit was only located about 14 miles from home and before I knew it a ticket had been purchased and landed on my doormat a few days later.

I started my pursuit of the “Big Linear” in the spring, I was slow off the ground to begin with but gradually as the season wore on I tuned in with the water and began to meet its’ resident’s including the infamous “Dumpy” twice! and the “Baby Linear”.

I fished hard through the winter and kept the fifth Element going in on my productive spots, I woke up to a frozen lake on more than one occasion but the thought of that bar of gold kept my fire burning.

It was now mid-march, as I drove round the far bank to the car park I glanced over the lake and could make out “Grumpy” netting a fish. Shortly after he punched the air, “that’s gotta be something special for him to show emotion” I thought!!!

As soon as I pulled up in the car park I jogged round the frosty path to Russ just in time to see him hold up the “Big Common” for the camera, he was absolutely over the moon, he had worked hard for that fish so I knew what it meant to him. I congratulated Russ on his superb capture and shook his hand then walked back to the van to load the kit onto the barrow.

I set up back on my productive spots which due to the nature of the lake was only a swim down from Russ so a social was on the



Finding James under the oval in the depths of winter was a regular occurrence for Syndicate members!



Russ, with the ‘Big Common’ - well deserved!



Dumpy, one of the lakes characters. James was lucky to meet her twice on his way to the bar of gold.



Balanced pop-ups were instrumental in James' success.



The Baby Linear... what a way to build up to the "Big One". Stunning creature in it's own right.



A "proper" carpy morning...

cards that night to celebrate his capture. My baits were placed on their respective spots with little effort required and 5kg of mixed 5th Element and Malarkey were spread over the 3 rods.

The fish were showing well that morning but as the day wore on the shows began to slow down although that evening whilst having a brew with Russ we could make out the sound of the odd lump boshing in the darkness over my baited area, I went to bed confident that I would be woken by the Neville.

It was about 6:30 am when I heard the unmistakable sound of the alarm screaming, I jumped out of the bag on the rod. As soon as I lifted into the fish I knew it was one of the better ones, I shouted up to Russ for some assistance and after a tense 10 minute battle I gradually steered it towards Russ with the waiting net, it was then that I saw the row of scales glisten in the morning sunlight.....it was the one I'd dreamt of, my heart started pounding and the beast shook its head in vain trying to escape but eventually the old girl rolled over the net cord. I parted the net to double check, there was no mistaking it, I looked at Russ who just said "Go on then".....so I let out the roar waking every carper in the Valley.

To catch the fish of my dreams was a special occasion and to share it with a close friend only made the occasion even more special especially considering his slice of good fortune the previous morning. Once alone I sat on the edge of the bedchair reflecting on the last season, I couldn't believe I had finally done it, my mobile went into meltdown as the news had filtered through the grapevine before my battery gave up the

ghost.

I left for home on cloud 9, my feet didn't touch the ground for weeks, then I heard whispers about a Linear of Monstrous proportions only a few miles away.....here we go again!

Smithy



A steady application of a combination of 5th Element and Malarkie saw James bank "The Big Linear".



The Big Linear. An absolutely stunning carp, but it's starting all over again for James as he's on the hunt for **another**. Here we go again.