

## FISHERY FOCUS

An in-depth guide to the best stillwaters, rivers, and canals that you can fish for the price of a day ticket

Woodside Fishery, Worcestershire

# Variety rules at mini marvel

**Mat Linforth** and **Phil Reynolds** visit a hidden gem where bites galore from several species are on the cards throughout the year

Words & Photography Tony Grigorjevs

**T**HERE are thousands of commercials dotted across the country and it's often the biggest of the bunch that get the lion's share of the praise.

A wide selection of lakes, facilities spread throughout the complex and a near guarantee of a brilliant day's fishing are just some of the reasons that anglers wax lyrical about their experience.

These fisheries are worthy of such compliments, but

bubbling beneath the surface are plenty of smaller venues that are equally appealing.

What many of them lack in size they claw back in character and Woodside Fishery is a classic example of somewhere that slides seamlessly into this category.

Located close to the Shropshire market town of Cleobury Mortimer, it instantly sinks in as you enter the complex just why locals keep coming back. ►

## TOP BAITS



## VENUE FACILITIES



## MAT'S TACKLE

### Pole

Daiwa Connoisseur 690

### Elastic

Mosella Ozone Grade 3-5 (Long) or 6-8

### Mainline

Preston Innovations Powerline 0.15mm

### Float

PR Floats Open Water Chimp 0.5g

### Hook

Drennan Silverfish Maggot Size 18 pretied to 0.10mm line

## PHIL'S TACKLE

### Pole

Maver Definition

### Elastic

Maver Tricore Grade 12-14

### Mainline

Stroft 0.18mm straight through

### Float

PR Floats Margin Chimp 0.4g

### Hook

Gamakatsu Gama Power Size 14

Each of the three lakes (another is undergoing maintenance) are surrounded by a plethora of greenery, with enticing features catching your eye from all angles.

Islands, lily pads and weedbeds are plentiful, giving you confidence from the word go that you'll be placing a rig close to an area likely to hold fish.

In a refreshing break from the modern day norm, there's a traditional touch to the complex. Parking, toilets and a couple of well-kept holiday lodges are the only onsite facilities, with the quality of fishing and charming backdrop doing the talking.

Local duo Phil Reynolds and Mat Linforth have developed a soft spot for the place over the years, with numerous factors helping to create such positive vibes.

"If you sat here all day and didn't get a bite, you wouldn't care less because of how stunning and peaceful the fishery is," explained Mat.

"But don't worry, all the lakes are stuffed with fish and the owners have placed an emphasis on variety."

To show us what lay beneath the surface, the lads

teamed up on Island Pool for what was expected to be an action-packed autumnal session.

## Never a dull moment

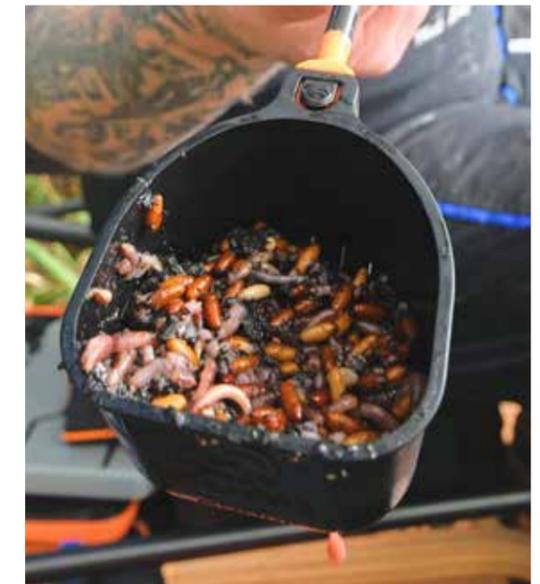
Island Pool has built up a reputation for being a lake that has the potential to produce the goods in quite literally any weather conditions.

The carp and FIs muscle their way in at any opportunity when the nation is basking in the warmest heat of the year, before the silverfish get heavily involved when the temperatures drop.

Netfuls of roach and skimmers regularly hit the 30lb mark and if you're itching to bank a personal best perch, this could be the place you achieve that dream.

Fish to over 4lb lie in wait, and I can personally assure you there are plenty of back-up fish having banked a brace of 2lb 14oz and 2lb 15oz (still my pb to this day) in consecutive casts just a few years ago.

When the duo joined us on the bank, crisp brown and yellow leaves were slowly fluttering down from the trees, with the bright sunshine failing to penetrate



**LEFT:** Mat's swim choice gave him plenty of features and areas to target

**ABOVE:** A sensitive set-up is key for spotting bites from silvers

**TOP RIGHT** A mix of worm and caster was fed over a line at 5m

**RIGHT:** Bright hookbaits are a winner for carp when fishing a Method feeder



*"Netfuls of roach and skimmers regularly hit the 30lb mark"*

## MAIN SPECIES



as it had done just weeks before. Put simply, it was typically autumnal, but recent form suggested it was the prime time to catch a bit of everything.

Phil set his stall out for the resident carp, with Mat scaling down to focus on the silvers.

## Fighting fit

A quick wander around the lake helped them both make a decision where was best to sit for the day, with Phil plumping for a swim that left him spoilt for choice.

"I've got two islands in front of me, one which I can chuck a small Method feeder to and the other is within pole range. There's also plenty of cover down both margins and that'll give me options."

Starting on the Method, he was soon getting indications as fish were clearly grazing over the top of his micro pellets.

Recasting every five minutes soon drew a response, with the tip wrapping round aggressively as a carp sped off at the rate of knots.

The battle had all the hallmarks of a proper lump being attached to the end but, within minutes, a 4lb common was in the bag.

"All the fish in here are fighting fit and in great condition. It's certainly not the sort of place you ▶



and caster slightly later in the day, but in order to boost his fortunes, he gambled and went earlier with it.

Having allowed it to settle for 10 minutes, he dropped a worm head hookbait over the top and it had barely hit the bottom before the elastic was streaming out.

An 8oz roach was the culprit and it was the first of many quality silvers, with perch to just shy of 1lb and a few skimmers thrown in with the raft of chunky redfins.

It was by far the best line on the day, with the long line only used to rest it when there were signs that a carp may be nearby.

He'd put together over 25lb of quality silvers and when combined with Phil's 70lb netful of carp, the diversity of the complex was clear to see.

"I think today's session shows what an underdog Woodside is," said Mat.

"The standard of fishing is up there with any of its bigger rivals and while the form of other fisheries may wane in the coming weeks, you're in for a busy day here regardless of the conditions."



**ABOVE:**  
Another fish falls to Phil's Method feeder

**ABOVE RIGHT:**  
Mat's open water swim produced lots of silvers

**OPPOSITE PAGE TOP:**  
Phil bends into another powerful Woodside carp

**OPPOSITE PAGE:**  
Mat and Phil proudly display their impressive bags of fish

want to fish light when the carp are your target."

Half-a-dozen fish fell to the Method in the first hour before he switched focus to the long pole. Four half pots of pellet and corn had already gone in and there were hopes that the swim would be alive from the first drop in.

His double corn hookbait was slowly lowered in before the float sat still for a moment. That brief pause didn't last long, though, with the tip thumping under before a solid strike led to another determined effort from a fooled carp.

Topping up whenever bites dried up was the order of the day, with fish to 6lb coming to the net.

**Silvers success**

While Phil was forced to apply a little force to win his

battles, the scene was a very different one on the next peg along the bank.

Mat had a lot more open water to explore, with this peg purposely selected in the hope that it wouldn't prove as appealing to the resident carp.

"I've put two lines in today - pinkies and maggot over groundbait at 12m and worm and caster at 5m. It gives me a couple of areas to rotate, giving the silvers somewhere else to feed if the odd carp does get greedy."

Starting long on pinkie hookbaits over a couple of balls of groundbait didn't exactly produce what was hoped for, with either tiny roach or disruptive carp the early showers.

Perseverance produced the odd better roach, but it was slow going.

Mat had planned to first feed his short line with worm



*"The fish in here are all fighting fit. It's not the sort of place you want to fish light when the carp are your target"*

**VENUE FACTFILE**

**Location**  
Woodside Fishery, Cleobury Mortimer, Worcs, DY14 0BU

**Contact**  
Call 01299 271305 or visit [www.woodsidefishery.co.uk](http://www.woodsidefishery.co.uk)

**Tickets**  
Adults £7, concessions £5

**Rules**  
Barbless hooks only, fishery nets must be used, no braid or fixed rigs

