



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:** Col reviews *Memoirs of a Carp Fisher The Demon Eye* by Kevin Nash.

The Demon Eye

I'VE never known a carp book with enough ingredients to make a box office blockbuster, and still teach you a few things about catching fish.

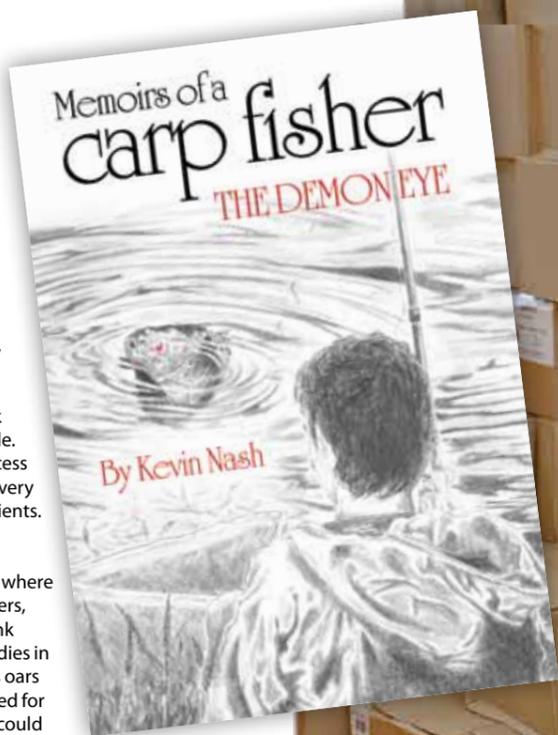
Like the man himself, Kevin Nash's new book *The Demon Eye* doesn't sit in an easy pigeon hole. Carp books – of which there seems to be an excess recently – are often very much like boilies, all a very similar format and with lots of common ingredients. Not this one.

From catching carp whilst raving, to raving lunatics wandering the banks, you never know where it's going next. There are landladies in suspenders, Dobermans that open their own crisps and drink lager, shopping trollies, old doors and dead bodies in a swim, tennis rackets with plastic bags used as oars and murderers with their mother under their bed for a month. I think only someone like Kevin Nash could write a book like this.

It is a truly unique read. It's humorous, serious, a work of history, even a confessional. It's a book about a journey through life, mistakes, successes and self-development. It's brave, and Kevin isn't afraid to wear his heart on his sleeve and bare all. It pulls no punches and exactly as you'd expect he isn't shy of telling you what he thinks.

It begins with lumps of cheese and navigates through bushy haircuts and big collars to record a brilliant and fundamental period where carp angling became what it is today. Particles, specials, burying the hook giving way to the hair (rabbit) rig, silver paper indicators and even liquid mercury inside rod blanks being accidentally fired into drinking water reservoirs – there's a story on every page.

And seamlessly interwoven into a rich tapestry of carp catching tales from the past it contains gems of wisdom on rig theory, baiting, hook and end



ON top of his writing – Kevin Nash. *The Demon Eye* is a truly unique read.



tackle mechanics and carp behaviour without you ever feeling you're reading a technical or instructional book.

It's about successes and also about failure, which makes it about the journey, which makes it a book for everyone. There's a huge truth in history being written by the winners, but Kevin doesn't shy away from failure or disappointment, so clearly illustrated through his obsessive pursuit of the legendary Snake Pit common, which he hooked and lost but never landed before it died.

'You would never be a complete person if you fulfilled all your dreams,' says Kevin. 'You have to fail and learn to deal with that; it's a major life lesson. You have to learn to win and also to fail. Not catching something that important to you is a knock to your ego and self esteem.'

But incredible successes are plentiful throughout, not just from carp as notable as the Essex record, but also with the building of an international tackle brand that along the way developed and innovated a significant percentage of the items we take for granted today. From safe sacks and slings to big pit reels to holdalls that take made-up rods, to oval brollies and the development of modern rig theory, Kevin's contribution has been remarkable.

Finally starting to document his 50-year journey from the beginning of carp angling to the present day has been as important as all of those other contributions.

THE DEVIL WITHIN

MANY might be surprised that Kevin is a very spiritual and philosophical person, making *The Demon Eye* more than a story of catching carp.

It jumped out to me that the title, and even the cover illustration of the moment before Kevin lost the Demon Eyed Silver End mirror, are metaphorical. What does *The Demon Eye* really mean?

'Throughout my life there's always been one fish that haunts me, and I either catch them in minutes or I come up against one that becomes a Demon and I can't catch it,' he says.

'It's chasing the Demon that is that one carp, but it's about more than just that carp. The fact is that one carp can overwhelm me, engulf me and it's like being possessed. Catching one carp becomes the only focus and that's dangerous.'

From the desperate depths of losing the Silver End fish at the net to waking with the cold sweats at Snake Pit, *The Demon Eye* is as much about the angler, the journey and the passion as the quarry itself – something carpers who have experienced absolute all-consuming obsession will understand.



Behind every picture there's a story. Kevin with the Silver End mirror – this is the Demon Eye carp that appears on the cover. It was the Essex record.

GOLDEN TICKET TWIST

IN a typical Nashy twist, there's an amazing lottery-style prize waiting for buyers of his new book.

Ten copies of *The Demon Eye* will contain a Willy Wonka-style golden ticket, giving the winner a five-day session on Kevin's own big carp mecca Church Lake.

Normally only fished on Kevin's invitation, the five-acre venue has produced carp over 60 lb with a huge head of 40s and several 50s. It's been responsible for over 200 anglers breaking their personal best, including notables such as Tim Paisley, Julian Cundiff, Jerry Hammond, Jack Brown, Richard Farnan, Jerry Bridger and Steve Renyard.

HOW TO GET YOURS

Copies are available direct from Nash Tackle at £29.99 with free p&p within the UK. Call 01702 233232 option 8 or visit www.tunarollpublications.co.uk

Copies can be signed and dedicated by Kevin on request.



Kevin will sign and dedicate *The Demon Eye* by request.

A NASH NOVEL NEXT

WRITING has never seemed a favourite occupation of Kevin's, but penning his first book has fuelled his literary ambition.

With a few words under my own belt over the years, I'd agree with one of my peers, Marc Coulson, that Kevin is perhaps the most technically accomplished of all carp writers and *The Demon Eye* is a stonking read.

Not only is there inevitably a second book to follow, covering the latter half of Kevin's carp career, but he is deadly serious about branching out.

'I so enjoyed writing it I want to go in a different direction and write a novel and try something entirely different,' he revealed.

'Remember, I left school with no qualifications in English, so I'd always assumed I couldn't be a good writer,' he admits. 'But several people have said I've got a talent.'

'I've always admired writers with the ability to think up great stories and plots. I would never have imagined I could have done it, but this book has made me believe I can.'

The hugely capable Rosie Barham edited *The Demon Eye*, and not only deserves huge credit for the finished pages, but also for getting the project off the ground.

'With Rose back in my life, she was nagging me endlessly to write a book,' Kevin acknowledges.

ZIGS? A PIECE OF CAKE FOR KEV...

THE book charts some tremendous examples of tactical development through Kev's carp fishing journey, no better example than zigging.

Think catching carp upstairs is a new technique? Kevin went through a spell of exclusively catching carp well off bottom in the 1978-9 season. No tiny size 10s and bits of black foam here, though, the winning tactic was a lump of floater cake on a size 1/0 sea hook fished 15 ft of bottom in 16 ft of water on Braxted Reservoir. The tactic was hit on accidentally after Kevin's fishing buddy Bill Lovett had a piece of cake scooped by a carp as he let it float towards the surface, anchored crust style on a warm October day. The same bait that wasn't catching on the bottom brought consistent carp action right through the autumn and winter, including fish caught 12 in. below the surface in 18 ft of water in dense fog.



From early carp hooks such as Au Lion D'Or to the latest Nash Fang offerings, the book charts an amazing carp fishing journey.

With advancements everywhere, the suspended baits were largely overlooked again in later seasons, but in recent years catching carp mid-water has become a real area of experimentation for Kevin and the Nash team, culminating in the launch of



As well as a great read, you'll find quality illustrations from three teenagers - Jake Hughes, aged 17, Kevin's son Lee Nash and Simon Cotts, both 19.

the company's Zig Bugs artificial fly-fishing style hook baits earlier this year.

You'll find a few red hot Team Nash tips tucked away here, too, including Jack Brown's elastic trick and Alan Blair's tungsten tube to improve hooking.

GETTING A WRIGGLE ON

MAGGOTS for big carp are another more recent trend, but again their use is well documented long before many modern carpers were born.

Working in a local tackle shop as a Saturday boy, Kevin was in charge of ordering the grubs, and mysteriously never got the hang of the right volumes, with any excess taken away by him to fish with at the end of the week. On his earliest carp water, Wrights, the results were devastating. Needless to say he won match after match with carp.

'In a match I'd use about four gallons,' says Kevin. 'I always used to use a size 14 to 10 lb line with double maggot and there were so many maggots in the swim I'd often wind in four or five on the hook. It was 25 years later that maggots reckoned in my fishing again at Warmwell.'



Sourcing the supporting pictures for *The Demon Eye* was a bigger challenge than the writing, because a lot of pictures had been lost. A team from Nash HQ had to trawl through the archives in several publishing houses, and old friends helped out, too.

OF CARP CHARACTERS

THE Demon Eye charts 30 years where carp angling went from lunatic pursuit to mainstream and the majority of the remarkable characters who have contributed to the sport are to be found within.

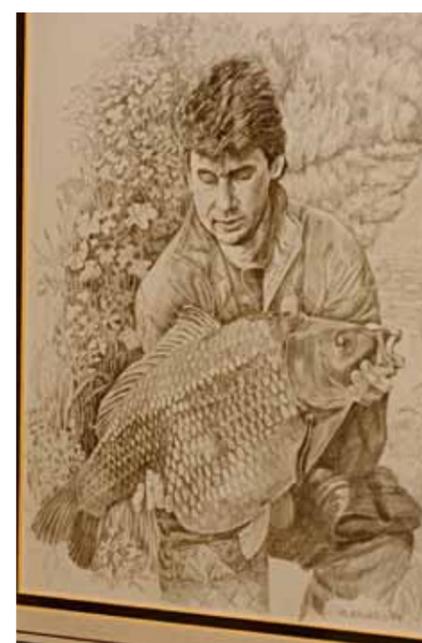
From Fred Wilton to Rod Hutchinson to Rick Gibbinson and Geoff Kemp in the earliest years to Rob Maylin, Zenon Bojko, Dougal Gray and Damian Clarke in the later chapters, they are all there, with stories about each and every one.

To me it's a who's who of the era, but having fished for carp for 25 years myself, there is a brilliant reminder that times move on and the huge boom in the sport has constantly brought in new carpers who don't share the same history.

It's never been more neatly summed up than here: 'Recently I asked the lads in the office what they knew about Kevin Maddocks and half of them said they'd never heard of him,' recounted Kevin. 'That's like young football fans who've never heard of George Best or Pele.'

Aside from the gallery of carp characters, Kevin's personality comes across in spades, too, and there are so many stories that you can't fail to both laugh and learn.

The humour is unmistakable Kevin Nash. Heard the one about a scientific paper on the locomotion of goldfish where they were discovered to turn to the right more often than the left?



An illustration of Kevin Nash with the smaller of the two Snake Pit commons at 31 lb, one of only two carp in the pit when he caught it.

Kevin wonders: 'If I spotted a carp and then it disappeared, maybe I should go to the right to look for it, but then I dismissed the thought with the conclusion that if a fish favoured one direction over the other, surely, it would eventually disappear up its own backside.'

It's drier than sandpaper and the essential reference work for the written one-liner. You will laugh out loud reading it, (that's lol, for you young folk) and the number of carp books in that club is on the small side.

From using bait dye to fake bruising from an industrial accident to a house that needed curtains and carpets replaced because they all smelled of maple, you couldn't make it up, it's full of absolute gems.

WORK ETHIC TAKES THE BISCUIT

AFTER leaving school with no qualifications, and juggling three part-time jobs to fund his fishing habit, there are more lessons perhaps about life than there are about carp.

Insanely hard work underpins the beginnings of Happy Hooker that later became Nash Tackle. From the discovery of a black material with excellent water exchange and stitching sacks and slings in a ladies' boutique out of hours in the East End to making Post Office and banking runs in tea breaks and letting teenage outworkers in to pack and sort orders in the evenings, it really is a story of hard work paying off. Today Nash Tackle supplies over 30 countries and employs 75 staff. The first lad Kevin took on in 1982, Mark Guyton, is still working for the company, and Sarah Moynihan, a machinist who started working for Kevin at 18, is now managing director.

But the hard work involved took its toll when Nash was a fledgling carp tackle company and juggling fishing, women, a full-time job and part time tackle business growing out of control, Kevin dropped to seven stone and was soon told by the doctor he had chronic fatigue from his lifestyle, not helped by existing on virtually no sleep and living on up to 150 packets of McVities Digestives per week.

'If I looked at a packet now I'd feel sick. I couldn't face one,' he laughs. 'The same as macaroni cheese, from eating it too much when I was fishing, including six cold cans in three days once.'



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■ NASH consultant NICK BURRAGE had an impressive first ever visit to historic Birchgrove by taking three carp topped by this 30 lb 1 oz mirror, called the Snow Fish, that is over 40 years old. Eardington, Shropshire-based Nick added commons of 21 lb 4 oz and 14 lb using an air dried Monster Squid 15 mm bottom bait and a 10 mm rainbow pop-up over a light peppering of Monster Squid 10s, 15s and barrels.



■ GREG DRING hired a lake at Kent's Elphicks complex to fish with four mates for the weekend and after a slow start a change in tactics produced two quick bites and fish of 28 lb and 42 lb (pictured). Greg fished a tightly baited area with hemp, maize and Mainline New Grange with a boillie offering over the top.

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■ LEE GOLDING fished a single hook bait at the Long Water, at Hampton Court in Surrey, for this 32 lb mirror. Sutton, Surrey-based Lee used a chod rig with a Mainline Pineapple pop-up boillie for a fast two-hour session and within ten minutes struck into this beauty for a new PB by 5 oz.

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■ A trip over to Horton Church Lake for the very first time ended successfully for electrical engineer for the London Underground DAMON DULEY, aged 37, when he managed this pristine 30 lb 4 oz common. This one fell to a Peach and Pepper chod fished pop-up and gave a good scrap. It made miserable weather conditions more bearable according to Damon.



■ NICK CHANDLER recorded his first 30 out of a new, undisclosed venue when he matted this mirror of 30 lb 2 oz. Nick said: 'The fact that I managed to bag it around this time of year, now that we are well into winter, made me happy. Also, it was the first fish to come out of the lake in around 12 days, and later on in the three-night session I went on to catch two more 20s.'