

The Claw Rig

If you will allow, I would like to share with you, my fellow members, another tale of great tolerance, of the warmth, compassion and understanding that know no bounds and have allowed me a rare and valuable insight into the mind of the new breed of carp angler. I have drawn upon my positive experiences in creating a harmonious relationship with the dog walkers at Big T to allow me to do the same with these new wave trendies. I am ever hopeful that perhaps there are others in our merry band who, being encouraged by my meanderings, will do the same. We are, after all, children of the same God and here the lesson begineth.

I was up at Big T, in the Steps, (no relation), swim, catching some rays and wondering if the Carp Gods would bestow one of their gifts upon me. I was flat out on the bed chair thinking how peaceful it was when a voice uttered those oft heard words, "Any good mate?"

I looked up and there, resplendent in white T shirt and camouflaged baseball cap with Korda emblazoned across it, was what looked like a new and youthful member. I just thought how his stalking attire might possibly be a tad counter attractive to any margin cruising carpus thinking of picking up my bait. I felt like replying, "No you stupid prat, this is Big T, what do you mean, have I caught anything you daft pillock. You never catch anything here, now bugger off".

But I didn't. It was the new and mellow Gert shining through. Friend of pike anglers, lily planters and dog walkers alike, taking his new duties seriously and setting an example befitting one of his years. I just replied, "No young man, nothing to report" and, believe it or not, I smiled, which in retrospect was a grave error on my part as he seemed to take it as an encouragement and invitation to engage in conversation.

"What bait you using?"

"Boilies"

"Yeah, good ain't they"

"**kin brilliant", (now p*ss off)

"Yeah I use them all the time"

"Me too"

"What flavour?"

"Magic Potion – get it off Ian Wootton"

"What rig you using?"

Now this is starting to go a bit too far.....what rig am I using? That's a bit like asking a lady her age. But.....I've mellowed and replied quite truthfully, "Hair rig".

"You want to be on the claw rig mate. Gets 'em every time. Killer rig. In all the mags. Emptied everywhere. All the top rods and big names are on it".

"Do you read Crafty Carper?"

"How did you know that?"

The guy continued to extol the rig's virtues then asked my opinion of its effectiveness. My opinion of the Claw rig? What's a f*ck*ng claw rig? I had no bloody idea what the bugger was let alone how effective it might be. I wish these little sh*ts wouldn't sneak up

on me when I was half asleep and try to catch me out with their trick questions. I grunted and grumbled and nodded my head sagely and mumbled something about finding it best when used in conjunction with a teflon coated hook!! I thought that would impress him and make him think I was actually at the cutting edge of rig design. I quickly tried to change the subject for fear that my total ignorance of this rig, and others for that matter, should become apparent. I didn't want him thinking this old duffer had no idea what he was talking about, even if, in reality, that was the case.

Fortunately, at that very instant, a frisky young bream picked up my Stoney Baker and managed to impale him, (or her) self, on my Au Lion d'Or. It not being the breeding season another of my failings was laid bare – that being my total inability to sex bream

Upon unhooking the bream my new found friend picked up my rig and looking bewildered, asked, “What's this?”

Somewhat sheepishly I replied, “Stoney Baker mate”.

“Riiiiiiiiiiiiight. My Dad told me about those. Didn't know anyone still used them. Don't see 'em in the mags. Get on the claw rig mate and you'll start hauling”.

With that he wondered off leaving me totally devastated to learn that the rig I had been using with such great confidence for the last 8 years was in fact, a heap of outdated crap and totally bl**dy useless. I left for home shortly afterwards feeling completely dispirited and in absolute ignorance of the modern carp scene.

To avoid further embarrassment I resolved, there and then, to make myself au fait with the latest carp angling techniques and rigs. To start with I would make myself an expert on the claw rig so I could, straight away, involve myself in meaningful conversations with trendy young carp anglers upon the banks of our fair waters. The first thing then, was to find out what this killer rig was.

What better place to start than with my old friends Stony Baker and Knowlsey. Now Stoney is in his third year at Sparsholt but even he didn't know. Knowlsey is a crab pot mechanic by trade and I thought a tenuous connection might exist between his occupation and the claw rig. Once again I drew a blank. Chris Martin, a commercial fisherman was tried, so was Coombsie who got all technical at a work party once when describing the merits of his claw hammer. In desperation I asked Jack. He suggested Si but I wasn't that desperate. I contacted the Cornish Birds of Prey Centre and the Screech Owl Sanctuary but no one anywhere could help me. Dominic suggested I buy a magazine – yeah right!!

Nowhere could I find the answer then Alex, a male model and technological whiz kid suggested I try the internet.....and Hallelujah, there on the Rigs are Us website was the claw rig. I couldn't wait. All my blanking days were over. I could look new wave carp anglers in the eye and talk with great authority about the latest rig and teflon hooks. Not only the claw rig but also the Shocker rig, the advanced 360 rig, the upside down double swivel rig, the subsurface rig and so on. No sense in trying to walk before you can run I though. One thing at a time, first of all I clicked on the Claw Rig and up she came. A hair rig with the hair coming off the hook at the bend. The b*st*rds, they were taking the p*ss – the hair coming off the bend!!!!!! This was the original hair rig

just reinvented by some t*ss*r in a trendy magazine. There was sod all new here, it was in Carp Fever, 20 odd years ago, shortly after it had been invented by Kevin Mad Dogs and Leonardo di Middleton.

A few days later and I was down at Big T once more. Catching a few rays again, (thornbacks along with a couple of blondies), and bugger all else. Along came my rig guru.

“Ok mate, on the claw yet?”

Remembering my new found tolerance, depth of compassion, warmth and understanding I replied.....

“On it you little sh*t? On it I hear you say! I was on it before you were born you dozy twassock. I also know that the shocker rig is a running lead with a backstop and that was the only rig 30 years ago apart from a link ledger and I suspect some super star will reinvent that in the weeks to come. You haven’t even cast a line out in this lake yet and you are telling me which rig I should be using? Now piss off and leave me alone before I take this external pivot rig, barbed version so it wont tear, and stick it right up your *rs* on the end of my stainless steel and carbon composite storm rod”.

With that riposte he shot off in a rather startled fashion while I lay back with a rather smug smile on my face. Young whippersnapper trying to put one over on a knowledgeable old hand like me I thought. Not a chance, what was he thinking of? Little had I realised that I’ve always been there at the forefront of rig design – just took me a while to recognise that that was the case.

Me exercising spiritual tolerance to other anglers – b*ll*cks!!!!

Cutting Edge Gert