



GARY NEWMAN'S
angling adventures

After a decade of being hailed as Britain's best young all-rounder, Gary Newman is now firmly in the big boy's chair on a long-term basis. Follow our Angling Adventures star as he heads off in search of top quality fish.

Having it large in the South West

JACK POMEROY and his dad Simon with one of their bigger bream of the session.



THIS WEEK'S VENUE

UPPER TAMAR LAKE, NEAR BUDE, CORNWALL.

This former trout reservoir has produced carp to over 40 lb and is also home to some good size silver fish, including roach and rudd to over 2 lb, and bream topping 10 lb. Pleasure anglers have been enjoying some great bags of fish from this 81-acre reservoir, which is also a water sports centre and is popular with holidaymakers.

GARY'S AIM

A pleasant day fishing with no pressure to catch any huge specimens. The main purpose of the day is for my friend's son to have a great time and catch some fish.

CONDITIONS

Warm and sunny with very little wind, a nice change from the wet weather that they had been experiencing.

I SPEND most of my time trying to track down big fish, often on waters where action is infrequent at best.

So it is nice every once in a while to have a session that reminds you exactly why you go fishing, where it is all about enjoyment and just catching a few fish, rather than worrying too much about the size of them, which was what it was all about when I started fishing as a kid.

National Fishing Month has just ended, and the aim of this annual event is to get more people into fishing, especially youngsters, and a session with a friend and his young son tied in nicely with this.

My friend, Pallatrax boss Simon Pomeroy, lives down in Devon and last time I was visiting we'd planned to take his nine-year-old son Jack fishing for a day, but then torrential rain and gale force winds moved in and we had to abandon the session, which Jack was really disappointed about.

Another session was planned, and this time I headed down the M5 in glorious sunshine, arriving at Simon's house, near Bideford, at lunchtime.

His car was already loaded with all their tackle and after a quick cuppa we headed off to Upper Tamar Lake, which was just up the road from where he lives.

Despite being a very popular part of the country with holiday-makers there is apparently relatively little in the way of coarse fishing in Devon, with most of the rivers and many of the reservoirs being for game anglers.

Apart from the well known holiday complexes and some farm ponds, there are also a number of venues that are controlled by the South West Lakes Trust, of which Upper Tamar is one.

This 81-acre reservoir is right on the border between Devon and Cornwall and has only been open to coarse anglers in recent years – I remember fishing the neighbouring Lower



Tamar as a kid and at the time Upper Tamar was a trout water.

It has produced carp to 46 lb in recent years and has a very good head of fish, but what really interested me were the big roach that had been pestering the carpers, with reports of fish over 2 lb being caught regularly.

Simon had fished it with Jack in early spring and they'd landed quite a few redfins over 1 lb with the best just short of 2 lb. They'd also had plenty of bream so even if we couldn't locate the roach then we were still expecting plenty of action.

The dam end is the deepest part of the lake, going down to 30 foot in places, and this is

where we decided to set up as this is where many of the big bags of silver fish have been taken from.

We were planning to fish for the rest of the day and through the night, before moving onto another water the following morning. So as well as setting up three maggot feeder rods I also put up my oval brolly and got comfortable.

My rigs were helicopter style, with short hook links made from cutting down a size 18 Super Spade hook-to-nylon to about two inches or so in length and then attaching this to a small ring sandwiched between two beads and rubber float stops. This was fished about six inches up the line above a 30 gr Drennan Feederbomb which was filled with maggots and recast every 20 to 30 minutes, to keep a constant stream of bait going into the swim.

The margins dropped pretty much straight off into deep water and I was only fishing about 20 yards out, which was in about 18 to 20 foot of water.

Simon had opted for his usual approach, which had worked last time he'd fished here, consisting of a Stonze weight wrapped in Method mix and a Strawberry Squab hair-rigged on a size 14 hook.

The Method mix was his own Bloodworm Mix and he'd added a few tins of water snails from his The Naturals range to this.

These snails looked really interesting as they are cooked in the tins to keep all the goodness in, and he also does other things such as shrimp and daphnia in the same way. These will definitely be getting added to my spod mixes in future.

I didn't have to wait long for a bite and pulled into a fish that fought like a roach but didn't look quite right as it came up to the net, and sure enough it was a hybrid of about a pound-and-a-half. I was hoping that all this big 'roach' that the carpers had been catching wouldn't turn out to be hybrids, as carp anglers are notorious for things like this – in the same way that they catch double-figure tench and 15 lb bream all the time but never weigh them!

I think this is mainly because many of them only



Jack and Simon fished Strawberry Squabs with a Method mix loaded with water snails.



All of Jack's fish fell to a simple Method ball moulded around a Stonze weight, and the bream loved it.

fish for carp and that is all they are interested in, so when they catch something else they don't take too much notice of it.

I'd seen Simon's photos of his roach from earlier in the year so knew there were definitely some proper ones in here and sure enough I caught a couple in quick succession, unfortunately the biggest might have made 6 oz!

My next fish looked quite roachy whilst I was playing it and also looked a fair size, giving me a few nervous moments as it banged around under the rod tip – I was using feeder rods with a fibreglass quivertip to help absorb the lunges at close range on my small hooks and light hook links.

On the mat I could see that it had a lot of roach in it, but there was also some bream as well, but I weighed it anyway and it went 1 lb 15 oz. I'm certainly no roach ID expert but often you can just tell when they aren't quite right from the way they look.

Things had been quiet in Simon's swim to start with and Jack was getting restless, especially as I was catching, but then things started to liven up for him with a succession of missed bites. We put this down to either fish being too small to get the Squab in its mouth properly, or that they were bashing the Method ball about hard enough to give a good indication on the bobbin.

Finally Jack struck and made contact and soon landed his first fish of the day, a nice roach of maybe 10 to 12 oz.

From then on he was getting action regularly as the fish moved onto the groundbait in his swim and it was great seeing how excited he was every time they got a bite, something that it is easy to lose once you get older and have been fishing for big fish for a long time.

I was still getting bites and landed a succession of skimmers, small roach and hybrids, plus a couple of larger bream of around 3 or 4 lb. These weren't

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Simon mans the net as Jack bends into yet another fish at Upper Tamar.

“What really interested me were the big roach that had been pestering the carpers.”

really what I was after so I decided on a change of tactics and fished further out and cast less often in the hope that something bigger would find the bait – either a decent roach or one of the big bream which run to over 10 lb.

This didn't work either, as I was still catching fish of the same sort of size, just less of them, and I got the impression that to have any chance of getting through to the roach you'd have to be lucky enough to drop right on top of a shoal of them.

Simon and Jack's swim was alive with fish by now after a few hours of introducing bait and they were also starting to pick up a better stamp of bream, with the odd slab that might have topped 4 lb.

You could tell how much Jack had enjoyed it, because when his Mum came to pick him up just before dark he didn't want to go home!

We'd planned to fish all night but by midnight we'd had enough of getting up for small fish and



My best hybrid of the day at 1 lb 15 oz, not quite the 2 lb roach I was looking for!

wound the rods in to get some sleep.

The session had been great fun as it isn't something I do very often these days, and if you spend all your time specimen hunting then I'd definitely recommend doing something like this every now and again for a change.

The following morning we packed up and headed off to a very interesting water that Simon had gotten us permission to fish for the carp.

It was a trout water that I can't name, and it was absolutely huge in size, literally hundreds of acres and by far the biggest lake I'd fished in the UK, but it was home to hordes of carp and the few anglers who had permission to fish it had been catching them to over 20 lb.

During the drive there it started to rain and the wind got up, and in open areas visibility was quite low, not a great sign when you're about to set up on a huge water on the edge of an open moor!

Access to the venue was limited but we were

able to drive to the area we wanted to fish which was a shallower, weedy arm of a few kilometres in length.

It was very bleak looking and we got soaked as we set up and after an hour of hoping that it would stop it showed no sign of relenting, and in fact it was getting so bad that seeing the far bank was becoming difficult.

We decided to brave the weather and a quick plumb around revealed a clearer area behind weed about 40 yards out, which I planned to bait fairly heavily with boilies and pellets and then fish two rods on bottom baits and one pop-up over the top. Simon found something similar in front of him and went for the same sort of approach.

I catapulted out a couple of kilo of Multiworm Cocktail boilies and then introduced a good few kilos of Coarse pellet over the top, then it was just a case of sitting back and waiting for some fish to hopefully find it, assuming that there were any in

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Weighing my biggest roach/bream hybrid of the day.



The water is popular for watersports but they didn't come close enough to cause us any problems.

the vicinity given the size of the water.

Early evening produced our first action, with Simon getting a one toner on a rod cast off of the baited area with a Method ball around his Stonze weight, but the common he landed wasn't quite what we were after as it might have weighed 4 lb if he was lucky.

It was in pristine condition though, or certainly looked it from where I was sat under my brolly in the dry a few yards away from Simon, who was now soaked to the skin! It isn't often that I don't want to catch, but now was one of those times unless something a lot bigger came along.

The night passed uneventfully, apart from the incessant rain beating down on our bivvies, but soon after first light Simon was in again with a fish not much bigger than the first one.

A group of fish must have moved in as minutes later I was into my first fish, all 5 lb or so of it, and over the next couple of hours Simon added three more, the best probably just shy of double-figures.

The weather was so bad, and showing no sign of improvement, that when Simon suggested packing up 24 hours earlier than we'd planned I didn't object, which is unusual for me as I normally tend to want to stay longer rather than leave early.

The water was interesting and obviously held a good head of carp judging by how easily we'd managed to drop on some given the size of the place, but I think to get through to any bigger fish you'd have to wade through a huge number of singles and doubles.

All of the fish we caught were perfectly proportioned commons that were in mint condition and fought hard, and I wished that the rain had eased up enough that I was able to get my camera out and get some shots of them, but taking photographs when the rain is almost horizontal isn't really possible.

It had been an enjoying few days, apart from the weather, and I'll be heading back down to the West Country in the near future as there is perhaps more coarse fishing to be had than many people realise.

VENUE information

DESCRIPTION. An 81 acre lake with a dam at one end and which is used to supply water to the local area. One end is very shallow and then it gradually deepens, with depths of over 30 ft at the dam. It has a good head of carp, with lots of doubles, and a few years ago it did do a 46 lb mirror. The dam end is good for big bags of roach, rudd and bream on both float and feeder tactics. They also hold a few matches.

TICKETS. Available from a self-service machine on-site and costing £5.50 for a day, or £4.50 concessions, with a 24-hour ticket costing £10. Season tickets are available at a cost of £115 for a day permit or £155 for a 24 hour one. Check out www.swlakestrust.org.uk Or call: 01288 321712. For match bookings call: 01566 771930. The cafe on site does stock a limited amount of tackle.

TACKLE SHOP. Summerlands Tackle, 16-20 Nelson Rd, Westward Hol, Bideford, EX39 1LF. Tel: 0844 8099388.

LOCATION. Turn off of the A39 onto the B3254 (East Road) near Kilkhampton. Head towards Thurdon and you should see signs for Upper Tamar Lake. The lake is located on the left between Thurdon and Alfardisworthy.

