

***'This is the first in a ccmooore.com exclusive series written by highly respected big fish angler Alan Welch. We feel very privileged to have Alan writing for us, giving us an insight into some of his many angling experiences formed on a number of the U.K.s most testing venues' - Ian Moore***

Welcome to the first part of an ongoing series of articles I have written, covering bait design, application and some big carp catching tactics, which have helped my friends and I to consistently catch some very large carp from many of the countries most demanding venues, over the last twenty years.

My thoughts and ideas on bait come from an unquenchable thirst for knowledge on all things connected to carp angling and the many varied ways that the end result can be achieved. But alongside location, using a bait that the carp in your chosen venue really likes the taste of and enjoys eating, will go a long way to helping you catch carp and by using a bait that is in someway nutritionally beneficial and regularly applied will sort out the bigger fish for sure.



I make no claim to being an expert on the bait side of things and my writing will be based on a pool of knowledge I have acquired over time, from listening to and reading up on the people that have been involved in bait formulation for many years and in my opinion could be described as experts.

Although very little of this knowledge is scientifically proven and more often than not is based on good or bad results, I still absorb as much as I can and combine it with my own thoughts and experiences. Over time this has proved to me that there are without doubt numerous ingredients and combinations that have consistently caught carp for many years and will continue to do so, used sensibly and at the optimum levels.

**A true born survivor, at nearly 60 years old, this carp is the largest remaining mirror from the original Leney stocking of 1952**

Any of you that have experienced the seemingly magical power of a really good boilie, I am sure would have enjoyed some of the most memorable sessions ever. Once the fish have a taste for your boilies and appear to eat them whenever and wherever they find them you really are in wonderful place. An established boilie or nut for that matter (I have experienced both) can mean very little else may be caught for long periods unless you are on the going bait. Also when you have reached this period of boilie or nut lust, rigs have very little importance and require no more thought than a presentation in which you have confidence and is strong enough to land the biggest fish in your lake, because by then for sure it will be on the lookout for your bait. Mind you saying that, even if you were unfortunate to hook and lose the big-un, I can remember plenty of times where the lakes biggest fish has got a real taste for the bait and will repeatedly be caught on exactly the same feed, sometimes the following years as well! Not being able to get your fancied swim appears not to have a huge effect also, if you choose to offer a well presented single, a stringer or a scattering of feed it appears at times that as long as it's in the wet stuff you're in with a chance...

Many of you reading this will have no desire whatsoever to create your own boilie, why should you? There are many proven, tried and tested boilies available that continue to catch year in year out, with absolutely no need to tweak or change them in anyway.

I am going to start with some basic thoughts you may want to consider when you are deciding which base mix and liquid combinations to use. With so many outstanding ingredients available it can appear confusing at first and very

tempting to produce in my opinion, a complex and expensive bait with many additives. However by choosing an original recipe and just by adding a few extras at times can make a good bait even better and give you with very little fuss a boilie which you can call your own, whether it is designed for a specific fish's pallet, tailored to suit the type of lake you are fishing or more importantly the type of bottom where you intend to pre-bait. To combine that with being able to have the shapes and sizes needed for the job in hand, you are on your way to finding the corner pieces of the jigsaw and the beginning of a boilie which will be screaming "eat me" even if it has been out there for days.

One thing I really want to talk about before we get going is why you might want to go down the road of producing a designer bait. Well for me that is easy because there is something in my nature that once I know something has worked for me, I have an almost uncontrollable need to change it, although I am not as bad as I used to be, I still have the urge. Many of my friends are using methods that have worked for years and are consistent in their approach with some truly outstanding results. I do feel at times as though I am missing out by chopping and changing a few things but the enjoyment I get when a tweaked boilie, an alternative hook bait or slightly unusual method works for me, is a great leveller.

I have for a long time understood the importance of getting one bait in the right place at the right time, a tactic I know which has caught some really carp over the years, after the fish have shown you exactly where to reposition your hook baits. I have in fact fished for a couple of seasons on different lakes using just singles and very little feed but I have to say that for the rod hours fished I still caught carp and some big ones as well but there were some very long periods between captures because I never had any pre-baited areas to drop onto when the fish were not showing. This is something on large, reasonably low stocked lakes I think is an absolute must, if you intend to fish the place regularly and expect consistent results in a variety of conditions.

Those lean times were a stark lesson to me and confirmed what I knew already and had witnessed many times from other anglers, that the preparation of areas that are fed regularly, will reduce dramatically the amount of rod hours per fish by an unquestionable amount.

Any angler, who has a limited amount of time to get the rods out, really would see a huge change in fortune if they pre-baited two swims maybe one at each end of the lake, or wherever, with twenty to fifty baits a few days before fishing. Preparation for me is as enjoyable and equally satisfying as when I return with my rods to spring the trap, short sessions at the right times can be just as rewarding.

When the groundwork is done properly the time spent in preparation can go along way to building a big carp's confidence in an area, by feeding on your free offerings without encountering lines or having any of its group of testers getting caught from the pre-bait, may allow the cautious feeder to relax, lower its guard and become quite catchable, if all goes well.



**This Wraysbury 1 common was part of a brace taken from an area that had been pre-baited some three days earlier.**

For as long as I can remember I have made some special hook baits, slow sinking bottom baits or pop ups mainly. Sometimes I try to match them to my free offerings but more often than not I will try to make them stand out by using elevated levels of powders and liquids to boost the taste, attraction and occasionally bright colours which appeal to the carp that are completely turned on using all of its senses to find food, or aggressive big male carp that appear sometimes to show a preference to bright coloured hook baits.

It must be well over ten years since I stopped rolling my own boilies instead I have used some of the many ready rolled freezer baits available to mail order or straight from the tackle shop freezer. This is certainly not the cheapest way to buy boilies but when ordering large amounts mail order deals were offered and the tackle shop allowed me to buy a small quantity of bait which I may of heard had been catching well or could offer me an alternative with which to use up against the bait that was working well for me at the time.

There are certainly a few companies ready rolled freezer baits I have used which have been successful without pre-

baiting, caught from the off, and continued to catch, which can be at times be a sure sign that the boilie is a good one. But equally I am aware that many times I am making the bait appear above average by fishing well with it and putting it in right place, occasionally at the right time.

Several years ago when purchasing some particles from C.C Moore I asked if they could send me a list of products because as far as I was aware they were an animal feed supplier somewhere out in the sticks, but offered nuts, seeds and pellets delivered at price that was appealing to me at the time. If I remember rightly I had ordered seven sacks of aniseed particle blend and a couple large black buckets one of which contained a product list on a couple of A4 sheets. I must at this point say that it contained one of the most comprehensive lists of bait ingredients I had ever seen, available in small quantities to the retail market, not having to bulk buy sacks of this and that when I only wanted kilo or two, which seemed to be how all of the similar feed merchants traded.

After a good look at the list it was obvious for all to see that they sold a huge amount of proven carp catching ingredients at very reasonable prices, which would allow me should I choose, to have a base mix with a little of what I fancied at a price I could afford. Most importantly in my mind I could make a bait that contained more goodness and natural attraction than any standard product on offer from other bait companies and could include high levels of key components that would simply be too expensive to be commercially viable for widespread release.

An advantage in having your own special recipe boilies is that the investment of your money will allow you to have a bait with your own unique taste, attractors, shape or colour etc. If you are looking at sticking to one bait all year, on your own or as a small group you could easily spend hundreds if not thousands of pounds on your boilies. So a slight change to a standard proven recipe to make your bait individual is well worth considering and could be less risky than starting completely from scratch.

That will go some way to ensure when you start catching and others are not, anglers who maybe lacking in confidence at the time and not willing to work hard for their result cannot simply find out what is being used, copy it and maybe catch one of your most wanted fish. This is not as some may think being selfish and secretive, you are simply protecting your investment. Although I am not to sure how much this happens there does appear to be some ruthless anglers ready to capitalize on other people's hard work and good fortune. So if you are angling on a busy lake and are looking to try and gain an edge, a bait that is your own and applied regularly on the carps patrol routes could see you catching more than your fair share of carp, in the time you have available to you.

For those able keep which boilie you use to yourself you need look no further than one of the standard recipes. But I know how easy it can be to share good information when things are going well or you have just brought a barren spell to an end, revealing to your photographer or anyone that happens to be within earshot, some incredibly useful information that will be shared with others, as we all know good news travels fast.

A few years have passed since I first had my eyes opened by what C.C Moore could offer me bait wise. I am sure many of you will be well aware of the how the company is growing in many ways with new lines being added and products being developed continually. The driving force behind this growth is really down to the hugely enthusiastic highly motivated Ian Moore, anybody who has had any dealings with C.C Moore or Ian will be fully aware of the way they pride themselves on the consistent level of service offered, which runs throughout this well established family run business. One of the new products that came about a few years ago was from a range of ready rolled freezer baits that contained some of my all time favourite ingredients, which I will talk about in a while.

Several companies over the years have produced some really great baits that catch not only a lot of carp but appear to catch the really big ones, a genuine big fish boilie. This is something I may talk at length about, but for now, what I will say is that some boilies will catch you a carp of average size from your venue with the occasional larger specimen, whereas an above average boilie will not only produce more carp of a higher than average size but will also produce the largest catchable carp in the lake. There are some common denominators in the make up of many big carp baits and something as simple as changing the shape and size of your boilies could be all that is needed to fool a wary, old grandmaster with a very acquired palate. But also be aware that a driven angler with a regular supply of good quality bait is an incredibly effective combination, which should given time catch, if desired, the fish of their dreams.

We all have different things we take from angling and there are many different levels of enjoyment to the millions of us out there doing it, but over time and through progression for me personally, the higher that I raise the bar and the bigger the challenge I take on, using a boilie that is designed to satisfy my every want and need is an absolute must,

total confidence in a bait, so when I am on fish that are feeding I can always expect action.

Let's now look at the range of frozen ready rolled boilies available to you from C.C Moore. All of the boilies in the range are highly nutritious, superbly digestible and contains some very soluble powders and liquids which basically means that each one is equally effective as an all year round bait and represents an extremely credible food source, perfect for a quick bite or a long term baiting campaign . The first bait that I used from the range was CCM Meteor, which contains the following, all of which I rate highly, robin red, enzyme treated liver, hydrolysed meat and fish proteins and a wonderful blend of many of my all time favourite ingredients both in powder and liquid form. This one was the bait that stood out for me and would be an obvious first choice. Spicy red fish meal boilies have been a big carp favourite for a very long time and still are responsible for the downfall of many huge carp every year.



**This island lake mirror really had a taste for my Robin red boilies.**

One thing I will say about Robin red is that many companies include this extremely effective but costly additive in their base mixes but at undisclosed levels, even boosting the red appearance of the finished bait with red dye, a genuine red herring. (Pun fully intended). I know that the Meteor contains 15% robin red, which I would guess is considerably more than most proprietary products contain, thus giving a deep red coloured boilie with a spicy aroma and an incredibly long lasting taste. These attributes make it perfect for pre-baiting in weed or soft bottom, both areas where carp naturally look for food. So if it takes a few days for the carp to come across your free offerings the Meteor boilie will probably be covered in natural food trying to eat it as it breaks down but still retaining a good taste that maybe recognised. Robin red has been around for years and has evolved slightly in recent times but still continues to produce the goods and at times appears to be mildly addictive to the carp, similar to chilli in its various forms.

CCM Meteor worked well for me the very first time I used it. Checking my diary the session started on October 29th lasting five nights and from my records I can see that it produced twelve hooked fish, one on the first night a 20lb original common, two on the second night a cricket bat common of 15lb and a 29lb mirror. Then it went a bit crazy with four takes on the third night the biggest being a mirror at 35lb, the fourth night produced a further four takes, a 24lb original common and a 28lb stock mirror were the biggest that night. By then I had run out of boilies but still managed 31lb mirror the following morning. For me that was an outstanding tally of carp which came from a swim that I had pre-baited five days before, with five kilos of 24 mm spread over an area of soft bottom tight to an island. Using two rods all fish where caught on standard bottom baits straight out the bag which where 24mm and a two bait stringer of the same. Over the duration of the session I got through a further five kilos, which was obviously being eaten with gusto as the majority of the carp whilst being unhooked and weighed were excreting the bait from their vent at a very impressive rate. As you can imagine I was more than happy with the result and very pleased with the bait, which produced the goods for me first time out, when the water temperature could definitely be described as chilled. Another positive about the bait was that the fish caught where a good mix of original carp, stock mirrors and two thirties, with the thirty five being one of lakes most wanted.

I continued to use Meteor but was aware that there were two other boilies in the frozen range that I needed to try out for myself because they also appeared to be catching very well from a number of different venues.

CCM Odyssey XXX was a new mix that Ian Moore had been developing for a while. Based on the existing CCM Odyssey boilie but with a few nice tweaks and a mouth watering 10% of New Zealand's finest Green Lipped Mussel extract, carp absolutely love this and show a preference to baits that may only contain a small amount. GLM is another of my all time favourite additives and one that has been included in my cork ball pop ups for many years. I know that GLM contains a natural trace of betaine (another good one to include in your hook baits) and I remember reading somewhere it was one of the main attributes that made it such a good additive, but I think that carp really love the taste and enjoy eating boilies that include this incredible crustacean extract; try some on toast with a little melted butter, it is absolutely delicious, honestly.

CCM Odyssey XXX in the last year or so since its release has been catching not unsurprisingly a staggering amount of carp. It is a supreme all year round big carp catcher which in my opinion is destined to become one of the best baits around. High praise indeed I know but feedback from customers I have talked to and the huge amount that is being

purchased leaves me in no doubt that this one is a bit special. XXX contains, in its make up, among many other things, digestible milk and marine proteins, with pre digested and low temperature fish meals also. But this is not what I would describe as a fish meal boilie more like a milky bait with a very appealing texture that includes fish meals and GLM at 10%, giving a great long-lasting taste and a superb fishy aroma that is further enhanced by adding a crayfish concentrate.

I have used XXX for a while and have done some serious hauling when using it, all be it in a slightly tailored version to suit my needs on certain venues and to protect my investment, but I can honestly say that I don't think my version is in any way better than the standard XXX and for the foreseeable future on certain lakes I visit, the standard XXX will be my first choice.

CCM Live system contains no fish meal in its make up so offers a genuinely different boilie than the other two baits in the range. Made using some highly digestible milk and vegetable proteins and a live ingredient that is worthy of inclusion, this bait has a well rounded and very palatable sweet creamy taste and a coarse texture, very similar to the type of boilie which I used around 15 years ago when bird food boilies were more popular.

Cream, vanilla and milks are proven additives that like Robin red have been sorting out the big-uns for over two decades and again because of results make them all time greats. There a few companies in the know that still produce a sweet, creamy boilie, I can think of four off the top of my head just now. They are mainly sold as an alternative to summer fish meal type baits these days, but I used them and caught in summer, autumn and winter, in the days before the fish meal boom of the early nineties. One thing that I really like about the old bird food type baits was the lovely crunchy and crumbly texture that you could make your boilies. I remember using quite a few different types of the most popular bird foods at the time with one called EMP that I mixed with semolina working well for me. EMP was a moist feeling bird food that had honey, egg biscuit and crushed seeds in it with a good vitamin and mineral content. As with most bird foods there was quite a bit of breadcrumb in their make up and I can remember when experimenting ending up with a unworkable sticky mess, on more than one occasion. I do think that with many baits these days having a very similar feel, soft and fine textured, a bait with a crunchy, crumbly texture and a knobbly feel to it could bring an instant response. Live system certainly falls into this bracket. Cream boilies catch big carp.

With each different boilie in the range containing proven, tried and tested ingredients which have a been sorting out the big fish for many years, whichever one you decide to try first you will be using a bait that is of the highest quality and without doubt a big fish boilie. If you are thinking of trying out the freezer bait for the first time, why not get a kilo bag of a different bait to your main choice, that way when you have baited your area with your main choice boilie you can offer an alternative on your second rod over the same area. I absolutely love angling in that way and do it a lot. Offering alternatives over the baited area gives me great pleasure. During some sessions, an absolute preference is shown, enforcing my long term belief that just because you may have a lot of bait over your area, does not mean the carp have to eat it all before you start catching. At times they will be incredibly selective when deciding what to feed on, irrespective of the volume of bait still in the area.

I will write about selective feeding and my thoughts on the subject later on in the series but for now if you use two or more rods and fancy giving it a go. I can highly recommend it as a genuine edge and at times a real eye opener.

My next article will be along the same lines but with a more in depth look at some key elements that I may consider when creating a designer a boilie using the range of ingredients C.C Moore offer. The subjects covered will be shape, size, texture, buoyancy, dry powders, liquids, solubility, digestibility, taste and nutrition with a few more which I will think when I am writing.

If you are reading this it means that you have stayed with me right until the end and for that I thank you and hope that some may be of use to you. I must say that this my first time using a laptop for writing and it has had a similar affect on me as a game console, in as much as it is a great way to use up some spare time and quite addictive in an enjoyable way. I have just noticed that I have used the word boilie over forty times, which really surprised me and concerned me initially, but I have just done some calculations and in an article containing over four thousand words it works out at only one percent, which made me feel slightly better and considering that is what the article is based on I suppose makes it acceptable, but it still does seem a lot. As with most things we do for the first time there is always room for improvement, anyway that is enough from me for now, after all you are the weakest link... goodbye !

ALAN WELCH