

# UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

IAN RUSSELL teaches a TC reader everything that he needs to know about stalking.

**THE MASTER** IAN RUSSELL



AGE: 49  
OCCUPATION: Angling tutor  
UK PB: 43lb 10oz  
SPONSOR: Avid Carp

**THE PUPIL** PAUL CARTER



AGE: 46  
OCCUPATION: Chief sub editor  
UK PB: 20lb 13oz  
SPONSOR: None

Ian carefully lowers a rig into position, after spotting a 20lb-plus carp feeding confidently in the edge.

Pointing towards a large common that's feeding on a handful of boilies in the margins, Ian whispers: "That beauty has to be pushing 20lb."

This month's pupil, Paul Carter, is a keen carp angler who wants to know a little bit more about stalking. He's tried his hand at the tactic but there are certain aspects that he would like clarified.

The venue for this Troubleshooter is Tri Lakes Country Park; a complex of two lakes situated in Sandhurst, Surrey. The enchanting lakes are positioned just a stone's throw from the park's farmyards. Fishing the lakes is a unique experience because you have to carry your gear past the llamas, chipmunks, pigs and sheep to get to them.

"Paul and I wandered around Lake One this morning and introduced a few handfuls of boilies onto a couple of marginal areas. I've been working on

a new boilie range for the past few months, so it will be nice to put the bait through its paces," explains Ian

There are already a couple of carp feeding on one of his baited spots. However, he is in no rush to get a rig in the water.

"If you're trying to stalk a carp from the edge take your time and don't just chuck a rig towards them. Carp can be difficult to catch at the best of times, especially when they are feeding a couple of feet from the bank."

It's apparent that Paul is dying to get a rod into position as he restlessly watches the carp cruising around Ian's baited area. They aren't particularly feeding with any gusto and they occasionally drop to the bottom and snaffle the odd boilie.

"When I'm stalking in the edge I tend to use an inline-lead arrangement fished drop-off style. Avid Carp has recently released drop-off kits, which are absolutely perfect for this style of angling. Inline leads are



Ian imparts the advantages of using an drop-off-style lead.



Paul introduces boilies onto a few likely looking margin areas.

**STEP-BY-STEP** HOW TO CREATE IAN'S INLINE-LEAD ARRANGEMENT



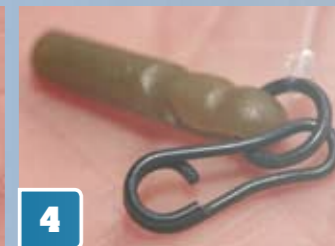
**1** You will need a packet of Avid Carp Drop-Off Stems and a couple of tail rubbers.



**2** Carefully thread your main line through the centre of a tail rubber, like this.



**3** Tie the Drop-Off Stem onto the end of your main line using a half blood knot.



**4** Now attach an Avid Speed Link to the Drop-Off Stem so that you can attach your hook link easily.



**5** Now push the stem into the centre of an inline lead. Ian prefers to use large leads.



**6** Make sure that your main line sits in the groove that runs along the centre of the inline lead.



**7** To complete the lead arrangement, push the tail rubber over the stem.



**8** The finished arrangement will look like this. The lead will drop off as soon as the carp is hooked.

great because the carp are in direct contact with them as soon as they pick up the hook bait. Drop-off systems allow you to use much bigger leads because they will drop as soon as the carp picks up the rig and bolts."

While hiding behind a large bush, Ian flicks another handful of boilies into the edge. After 20 minutes the carp seem to be feeding with a little more enthusiasm and Ian thinks that now is the time to get his hook bait into position.

"Are you going to attach a PVA bag?" whispers Paul.

"Definitely, I never cast out without a PVA bag, whether I'm stalking in the edge or fishing at range."

With the fish devouring the freebies, Ian crumbles a boilie and flicks it into the water. The disturbance of the boilie crumb spooks the common and it slowly swims out of sight.

"Why did you do that?" asks Paul, a little baffled.

"Don't worry, it will be back," chuckles Ian. "The crumbed boilie didn't scare the fish, it just put the carp on edge a little and it drifted out of the area. Now it has gone we can lower a rig into position, ready for when it returns. The fish knows that there's a free meal to be had here, so it will definitely be back. You'd better lower the rig into position quickly."

Paul delicately crawls towards the water's edge and lowers the rig into the margins. He engages the free-spool facility and places the rod on the floor. In situations like this there is no need for a bite alarm because, more often than not, you will be able to watch the carp pick up the hook bait. It doesn't get any more exciting than this.

"Do we need to put any more bait out?" he asks.

"Once the PVA bag of boilies dissolves there will be a small cluster of boilies around the hook bait," replies Ian.

"Lots of anglers get carried away when baiting the margins, because it's easy to chuck a few handfuls of boilies in. Ten boilies or a handful of pellets is all you need. Any more than this and you could ruin your chances of getting a bite."

Paul is soon bent into the common and it soon becomes apparent that it's not very happy about being hooked.

Ian and Paul have been crouching behind a large rhododendron bush for what seems like a lifetime, when the large common waddles back towards the baited spot.

"It's back," whispers Paul.

"I knew that the greedy sod would come back for a bit more grub," observes a satisfied Ian.

The duo watch on intently as the large common inches closer and closer to rig, devouring all the freebies in the process. Finally it sucks up the white hook bait, shakes its head a few times and charges out towards open water.

"Grab the rod," screams Ian.

Paul is soon bent into the common and it becomes apparent that it's not very happy about being hooked. It charges around the small bay, leaving poor Paul holding on for dear life.

"Take your time," comments Ian, "we've got all day."

Eventually, a huge common emerges within netting distance and Ian expertly does the honours.

"Well done mate!" enthuses Ian, securing the landing net in the margins.

Paul scrambles around like a headless chicken, zeroing his scales and dampening his unhooking mat.

"All ready," he says.

Ian carefully lifts the ancient-looking common out of the water, places it onto his unhooking mat and shouts: "It's a cracker!"



Bright pop-ups and small PVA bags of boilies are all that you need.

While Paul admires the fish, Ian removes the hook and pours water over the carp's flanks.

He weighs the fish while Paul looks on in anticipation.

"How big is it?" he enquires.

"20lb 2oz!" exclaims Ian. "Well done Paul, stalking a 20-pounder a few feet from the bank is a massive achievement."

Ian and Paul pose with the magnificent common before slipping it back to its watery home.

Ian slips the net under a stunning common that is hooked just feet from the bank.



"I think we should go and catch a couple more," Ian says.

The pair wander off around the lake, stopping every so often to check the areas that they have baited.

"Stalking is one of my favourite tactics," reveals Ian. "If you stay

mobile, keep your wits about you and bait sensibly you will catch lots of fish. There's nothing better than watching a large carp pick up your hook bait."

By the end of the day Ian and Paul manage to tempt two more commons of 15lb and 17lb, proving just how effective this tactic can be.

"I've really enjoyed today and I will certainly be giving stalking a try the next time I'm on the bank," observes Paul. "I can't believe that we've managed to catch these carp when other anglers around us have been struggling. I suppose it just proves that trying something a little bit different can produce the goods." **TC**



This wonderful common tipped the scales to 20lb 2oz.

## HELP

If this feature has whetted your appetite for a bit of learning, Ian Russell is here to help you solve your carp fishing problems. Write in and let us know what you need to work on and we'll try and do the rest. Good luck!

NAME:

ADDRESS:

POSTCODE:

TELEPHONE:

E-MAIL:

PREFERRED LOCAL VENUE:

I NEED HELP WITH:

**Send the completed form to:**  
 Troubleshooter, Total Carp, DHP Ltd,  
 2 Stephenson Close, Drayton Fields,  
 Daventry, Northamptonshire NN11 8RF