

PUTTING YOU IN THE PICTURE



Alison Barnard is the overall winner of the Ladies Thursday Rover.



Jenny Collins came 2nd overall in the Thursday Ladies Rover Match



Norfolk's most famous pensioner Dave Ward with a 6lb Mirror carp!



# ESPAÑOL

IN AN EXCLUSIVE ARTICLE FOR NEWREEL, SKY TELEVISIONS PRESENTER **KEITH ARTHUR** RECALLS ANOTHER OF HIS FANTASTIC ESCAPADES WITH CATALAN CARP AND CATS ON THE SPANISH MAINLAND....

Have you ever caught a fish over 100lb? Have you ever caught a freshwater fish over 100lb? I've been lucky and had a few sea fish that size; a few species of shark, blue marlin and tarpon, but I'd never had a freshwater fish of that size until.....



"Fancy a trip to Spain Keith to fish with my Dad?" That was the question asked by lovely Liz Hobbs MBE, Fish'O'Mania reporter and former World waterski champion. Liz's parents have a villa in Spain and dad Peter is a keen angler. He'd heard about the giant Ebro catfish and fancied having a go at them.

Unable to resist the temptation I flew to Spain, met Peter and his pals at Alicante airport and set off on the four hour drive north, to Flix (say it 'flesh') some 100km inland from Barcelona. (Incidentally, Ryanair now fly direct to Reus, only about 40mins from the action).

The drive along the Ebro valley is awesome; mountainous terrain and this huge river winding its way through the gaps. Mostly it is shallow and very quick, with the surface broken by swirls and eddies, but there are deeper, slower regions and best of all hydro-electric dams which provide big lagoons. There is one in Riba Roja (reeba rocka) made famous by the Embassy Pairs competition, and another just downstream at Flix.

We had booked two guides, Mike McQuade and his boat, who were going to take us 'catting' and Craig Reed from Ebro Valley Leisure who was collecting us in his 4-w-d for some carping. I drew carp on day one, and what a day! Along with Peter and his Norwegian neighbour Siegfried we were on the bank.

The river below Riba Roja dam is over 100m wide and flows at some pace. Once away from the 'boil' of the dam the water levels out to around 6-9ft deep, but with deeper holes and shallow areas. The banks are awkward in some swims and treacherous in a few, and it was one of the latter where I pitched up.

First cast with a method feeder, the tip wanged round and I was literally hanging on as a carp attempted to make Flix, several miles downstream. I managed to persuade it to return and slipped the net under a 15.8 common. Unbelievably that was to be my sole success of the day, although I lost another 12, yes a round dozen, mainly due to my pigheaded 'I know best' attitude that saw most fish cut me off on zebra mussels, which have invaded the river. But, that being said, I have NEVER had fish fight like it; they are pure animals. Here is an example, not only of their fighting qualities, but of how stupid I can be if I really try.



I had taken a bit of kit with me, only to try it out. Included was a 11ft 2lb test curve Nash Hooligon carp rod. Teamed up with 12lb line and a reel that has beaten tarpon I felt secure. The steeply sloping bank and the fact that I had taken nothing to sit on meant I had to stand to fish. Craig lent me a rod rest tripod and the rod was on that, pointing skywards to avoid the flow.

I was using a method feeder and during the afternoon my groundbait mix needed a bit of a freshen-up, so I threw in a few more pellets, bent down to get some water from the river and noticed the butt of my rod lift from the bank. I reached to grab it, missed, wobbled and fell straight into the drink, still clutching for the rod. I missed, the rod disappeared into the swirling water and I went under. I managed to grab a rock and pull myself out, but it will be a very long time before I do anything that daft again. I was cut on my hands and arms, courtesy of the zebra mussels, and lucky to emerge that intact.

Siegfried managed his first ever carp, 12lb odd, then a magnificent 20lb 12oz common that had the reel singing for some time. All on sensible gear, with long braid shockleaders of course! But then he took Craig's advice and fished with his kit.

The others in our party, Triss, Andrew and Andy had been afloat with Mike

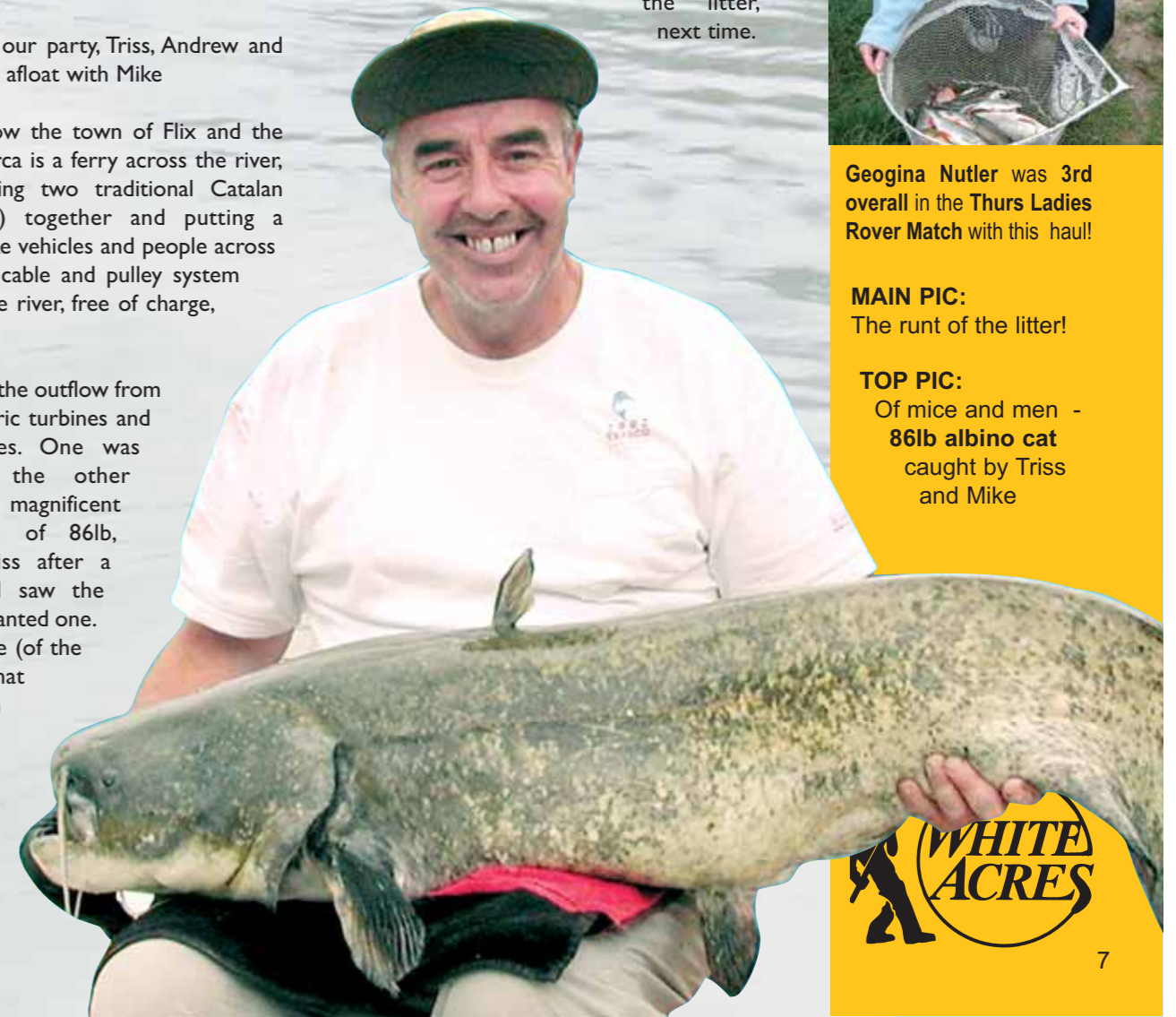
McQuade, below the town of Flix and the 'Barca'. The Barca is a ferry across the river, formed by tying two traditional Catalan barges (barca) together and putting a platform to take vehicles and people across them. Using a cable and pulley system this crosses the river, free of charge, on request.

They fished by the outflow from the hydroelectric turbines and had two takes. One was missed but the other resulted in a magnificent albino catfish of 86lb, boated by Triss after a hairy battle. I saw the picture and I wanted one. I think that one (of the many!) fish that saw me off on the bank was a cat; it fought very differently from the rest of my



conquerors and although I lost so many fish, with most of them I felt I had a prayer, but with this particular creature that tried to tow me to the other bank, I felt completely inadequate.

But the next day Peter, Siegmund and I were to take our turn on the boat. Would we catch? Would we catch a big cat? Well, here's a little taster (MAIN PIC), and believe me little is the operative word. I'll tell you how I caught that fish, which was the runt of the litter, next time.



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Nice Mirror Carp! write in and tell us about your catch!



Geogina Nutler was 3rd overall in the Thurs Ladies Rover Match with this haul!

**MAIN PIC:**  
The runt of the litter!

**TOP PIC:**  
Of mice and men - 86lb albino cat caught by Triss and Mike

