

# LIFE

through the lens  
Jon Arthur



Long-standing group editor, and former deputy editor of Match Fishing, Jon Arthur is off to pastures new. We asked him to recollect some of his fondest memories of his time with us.

**Bloodworm Breamers**

**1** A baptism of fire! It was my first-ever unassisted feature, where I was left to take the pictures all by myself down at Willow Park in Hampshire. Despite the weather, I shot a really nice feature with Ben Leach and Simon Willshire. It was dark by the time I left and I still remember England legend Steve Gardener asking: "What are you still doing here, Jon? Most journalists would have been gone hours ago!" Well I'm not your everyday journalist – plus we were still taking it in turns to catch a fish at the end! Incidentally, it was a case of the blind leading the blind when it came to my early forays with a camera, as I don't think Dave Harrell, my boss at the time, had a clue either! Several months down the line a technician was shocked that I could take pictures at all with the camera equipment I'd been given. Despite the body and lenses not pairing up I was somehow overriding everything with near-impossible settings to take pretty good photos. A bit like driving a petrol car with diesel in the tank!

**Going Long**

**2** This feature always looked nice on the page and showed my old mate Simon Richardson fishing anything up to 21 metres – he's still obsessed with fishing stupid lengths of pole, by the way! What many people may not realise was that this was my first return visit to King's Pools in the West Midlands, a venue where I was in fact banned! That was the result of only my second-ever End Peg diary column, where I was a bit overzealous with the story and mistook a cuddly water vole for a huge rat attacking my pole! It was a tongue-in-cheek account, but the fishery owner saw red – somewhat provoked and pestered by my so-called mates and regulars constantly going on about rats 'as big as beavers' for the next year! I still feel quite bad about the whole incident and have since learnt the hard way that I should be careful what I write. Not everyone has a sense of humour...

**Wye Wonder**

**3** This day felt very surreal and really hit home to me how privileged I was as an angling journalist, as I stood on the banks of the mighty River Wye, fishing a big bolo float down the middle with none other than Dave Harrell feeding my swim with his catapult! The same day I also slipped down the bank and hurt my back. That apparently dislodged a kidney stone as a couple of days later I was pouring with blood before being stuck in a filthy overflow ward at the George Eliot Hospital in Nuneaton for over a week – officially one of the top 10 worst hospitals in the country! The day after I was dismissed I came down with the C difficile hospital virus and was stuck at home in bed with chronic diarrhoea for a week. Good times!

**Italy Inspires**

**4** The trip we made to the Colmic factory in Italy was amazing. Not actually the factory itself, as that was just a big warehouse, but spending two days fishing with the legendary Jacopo Falsini was unreal! The first day he fished a bolo for chub using 0.08mm main line and a tiny size 25 hook. The second day we were all treated to an amazing catfish bagging session on the Arno, loading a size 12 hook with up to 10 maggots and each getting through a bucket of stickymag and marzipan groundbait. Clonk! Catfish on!

**End Of An Era**

**5** Dave Williams was the last of the commercial joker collectors in the UK and I felt very privileged to be able to document his story. However, I had travelled all the way up to Bolton only to find my camera had completely packed up. By some complete fluke, Ian Chapman, one of our freelance photographers, lived just five minutes up the road from Dave... and was at home! He kindly leant me a spare camera and I managed to shoot the entire feature on automatic. I soon found myself crawling under a fence and stuck in a sewer chute, retching from the smell and detritus floating by and panicking in case I got Ian's precious camera wet. It was definitely worth it for such a unique article, though!

**BBC Beckons**

**6** This was a weird day. I thought I was getting a prank call when someone rang me at our Daventry office asking about my two UK Championship titles and claiming to be BBC sports journalist Ian Winter. I thought it was the Ian Winter who fishes the River Severn all the time! Forty minutes after that the BBC arrived and were interviewing me for the first episode of a Sports Unplanned series! An hour later I was loading up the car to go fishing on the Coventry Canal in the middle of the city – where I had just won a big competition. With the cameras rolling I was into bream and roach on bread and in just 90 minutes Ian and I had several pounds of fish. The programme was edited and broadcast on the BBC the very same evening, too. Thinking back, I'm pretty sure Ian was fishing without a licence...

**QUICKIES**

**A** I loved shooting the head-to-head between Ben Leach and football ace Jimmy Bullard at Coleman's Cottage. Jimmy narrowly won, and what a funny and down-to-earth bloke he was!

**B** I am proud to say I had tears in my eyes when England were crowned World Champions in Italy in 2008. It was the first-ever World Champs I had flown over to cover, and what an experience!

**C** I drove all the way up to Thirsk, in North Yorkshire, to try and get on a Fisho qualifier but just missed out. Instead, I shot a Stopwatch feature with Matt Hall. He won on the day and, four years later, Sensas still uses this pic!

**D** Winning the Wychavon Champs in 2011 with 8lb of big roach felt very special. It was also nice to pass Alan Scotthorne the trophy in 2012... and even nicer when I had it back again in 2013!