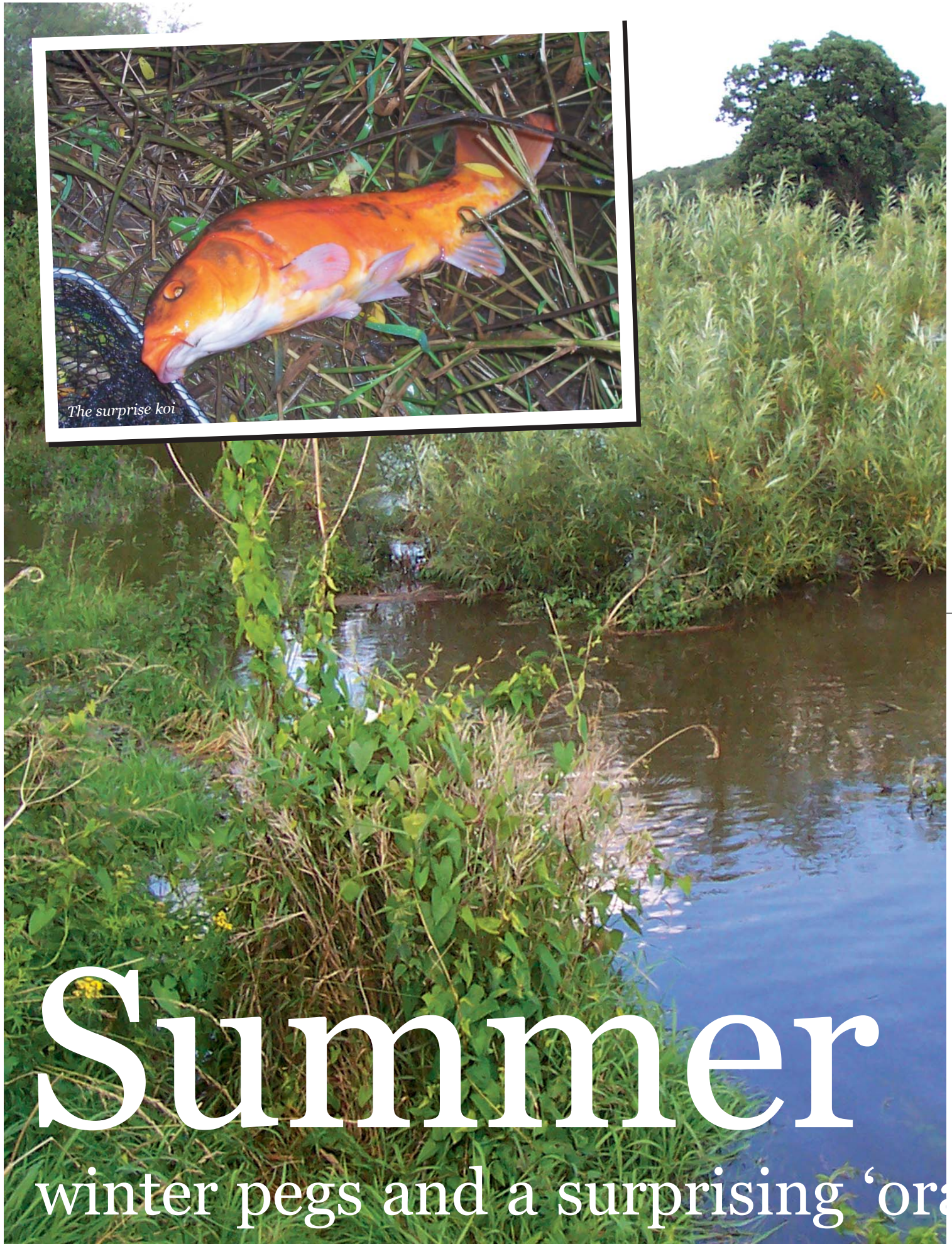




Summer Floods By Steve Brown

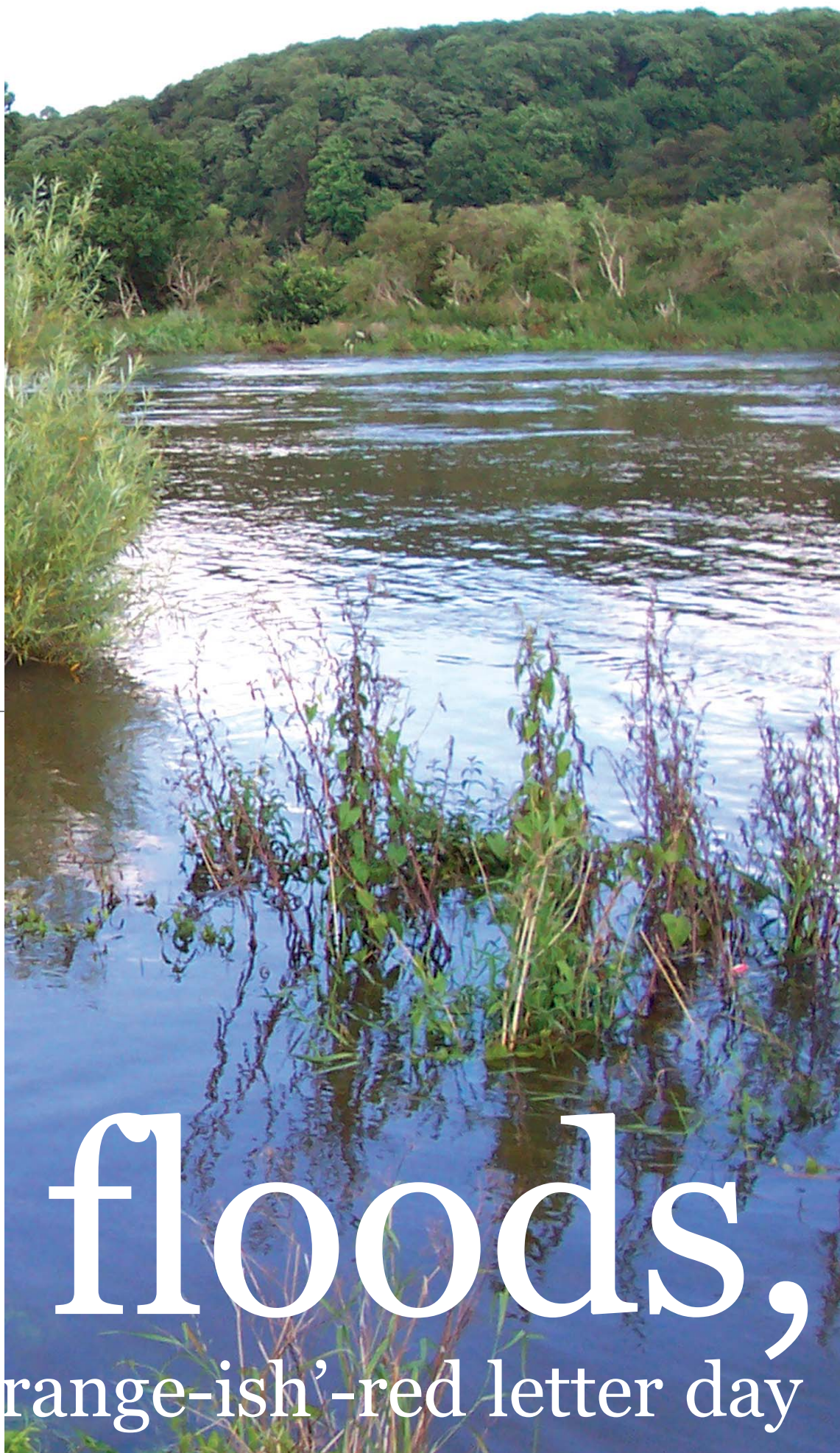


The surprise koi

Summer

winter pegs and a surprising 'ora





floods, orange-ish'-red letter day

This season started as no other I can recall. Heavy rains lashed the country and, sadly for many, with devastating results. My favoured Middle River Trent was constantly in a state of flood from the start of the season, and almost all visits until late July were spent fishing pegs usually associated with winter months. It was challenging trying to remember where the bank side vegetation ended and the river started, checking that it was safe to 'pitch camp' and not to slip on muddy banks. Easy enough in winter when the weed beds, nettles and Himalayan Balsam have died down, but not so when they are all in full bloom, enjoying the near perfect conditions for them to thrive.

More often than not it rained... it rained heavily... it rained very heavily, on each and every trip, and the garage always littered with gear drying out and black slugs leaving slime trails over the floor, having ensconced themselves in the bait bucket, rod bag and holdall, seriously testing the patience of 'er in doors. Having to carry heavier leads and feeders, the expense of losing so many, though some being recovered when the floods receded, but I'm still in negative equity!

Few anglers ventured onto the banks during this period, allowing the choice of the best pegs..... and the fish were having it. No need to stay too late, I often arrived between 3-4pm, leaving before 10pm, having had my fill, and home to get my much needed beauty sleep. I had managed 7 sessions from the start of the season until 17th July, making the 92 mile round trip about twice a week. I had caught a grand total of 40 barbel to 10lb 1 oz,

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a few bream to 7lb, and a couple of grandiose roach to 1lb, who took a fancy to 14mm pellets.

Onto Tuesday July 17th.....My 'Orange-ish'- red letter day. An impromptu session, kidding myself that I was going to join mate Brian, who was having a last dabble before jetting off to Peru for a month's bird watching. The river level had reportedly dropped during a lull over the weekend, but risen again following heavy rain during Sunday night and throughout Monday. I arrived at 4pm to find Brian in his most productive peg, where he had been since mid-day and had caught 5 barbel and a couple of chub. Whilst we chatted, we watched a pair of buzzards souring higher and higher over the far bank woods, quite a splendid sight. We were also treated to the antics of 4 young kestrels, dive bombing each other as they honed their hunting

skills.

I set up 30yards downstream from Brian, in a now familiar flood peg. Tackle comprised of a BFW iPower 1.75lb TC rod, (little plug for Andy and Claire), Shimano Aero 5000B GTE bait runner, spooled with 12lb X-Line. A 6 oz home made feeder, and a hook length of 2ft of Mantis to a hair rigged size 9 Drennan Barbel Specialist. The tightness of the peg and strong flow did not allow for the usual Trent Carbellung set up of 2 rods, previously and clearly described by Paul Owens and Lee Swords in earlier publications and BS presentations. The preferred bait was 14 mm Halibut pellet, supplemented with ground up halibut pellet, 'padded' out with brown crumb and a few smaller pellets.

The first fish was tempted within 15 minutes, at 5.30 pm, a nice chub of 4lb, followed immediately by a



pristine barbel of 8lbs. Fish came steadily thereafter, along with frequent squally showers, 4 smaller barbel, and 2 more chub, up to 9pm, when Brian had to leave to prepare for his trip, he having caught 5 more barbel in 5-6lb class. The showers continued and the light was fading fast as I decided to have one last cast....well don't we all. The rod buckled over and I was attached to some thing that fought very differently to barbel, chub or

bream. It did not feel particularly heavy, but it set off in mid water like a drug addict on an overdose of speed, then suddenly it just stopped, and yielded to the iPowers' power. As I prepared the landing net in the gloom and lifted the fish towards it, I was stunned by the sight of an 'orange-ish'-red koi carp!! It was beautifully coloured, it's back had a lovely marbled black pattern, and it's fin were pale almost translucent, and apart from a split in it's left anal fin, it was in pristine condition, pulling the Avon's around to 6lbs 8 oz.

Pictures taken..... and one last cast..... resulted in a lovely barbel of 9lb 2 oz. Home and beauty sleep then beckoned and I un-tackled and trudged off to the car at 10pm, minus a couple of feeders, laden with slugs, and memories of a fabulous session. Where had the Koi come from? Washed out of a nearby garden pond, or a commercial fishery during the floods or disguard by a fish keeper.....or will we ever know? I recently heard tell of a similar capture of an 11 lb Koi from a swim close to the swim I fished, maybe we have a shoal on The Middle Trent!! Since that day, and as I pen this piece, the river has returned to it's normal summer levels and the fish have not quite re-settled to their usual haunts yet, and thus the catch rates have fallen.....but I'm still having a few.



Well above the usual summer level