

The Yorkshire Gem!

The Pole Fishing duo head to their homeland, South Yorkshire, to investigate the popular Aston Park Fisheries near Sheffield!

Aston Park Fisheries is set in 20 acres of sheltered and scenic surroundings, close to Junction 31 of the M1. There are seven lakes on site, all generously stocked with a variety of fish, guaranteeing year-round sport for anglers of all abilities and ages!

The two newest lakes are Butt's and Bill's, specifically designed for the pole angler. Ranging up to 14 metres wide, these contain a large head of common, mirror and crucian carp, many of which have been home reared on site!

The smaller stockie carp in these lakes range from 6oz to 1lb, while the head of feisty bruisers up to 5lb are sure to get your elastic stretching! There's also a great head of silver fish, with 80lb-plus weights of ide recorded this year.

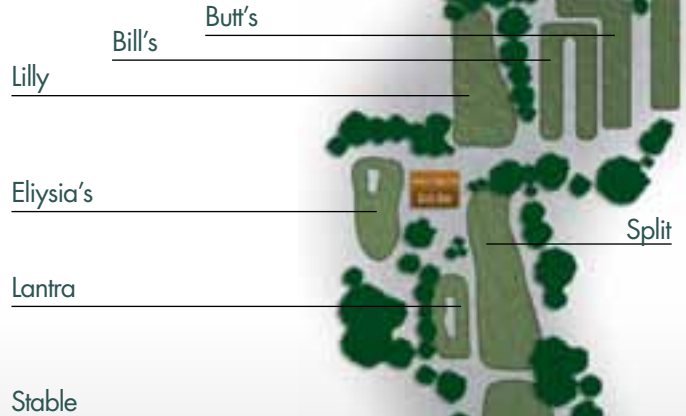
The older lakes include Stable, Split, Lilly and Lanta. These are all well-established waters, with luscious bankside vegetation, large comfortable platforms and thriving lily and reed beds. If it's the bigger specimens you're after, these lakes contain carp to 30lb, extensive stocks of double-figure and match-sized fish, as well as a huge head of quality bream, roach, rudd, tench, ide, barbel and crucians!

Pleasure fishing is available seven days a week and through the winter months all the lakes are kept ice-free with the bubbler systems.

The on-site Water's Edge Café is top class, serving hot and cold food and drinks daily, while you can pick up tackle and bait from the thoroughly stocked on-site Bait Bar.

There are also junior fixtures held during school holidays, weekly open matches, club bookings and leagues run at the fishery year round. If you haven't already done so, make sure you pay Aston Park a visit soon! >>>

Aston Park Fisheries



VENUE FILE

ASTON PARK FISHERIES
Location: Aston Way, off Mansfield Road, Aston, Sheffield S26 5EP
Day tickets: £6; concessions £5
Contact: 07743 845737
Website: www.astonparkfisheries.co.uk

PLEASURE ANGLING ALWAYS AVAILABLE

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SHEFFIELD'S PREMIER FISHERY

Aston Park Fisheries is one of the finest modern day fisheries in the area. Set in over 20 acres of parkland and close to all major links of the M1, A1 and M18, yet it is a haven for pleasure and club anglers. All of our lakes have large stocks of fish, including various Carp to 30lb plus, Tench to 3lb plus, Bream to 4lb plus, Roach, Perch, Barbel.

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www.astonparkfisheries.co.uk

An Old Flame!

Matt Godfrey takes to the bank with Daiwa's relived legend, the brand-new Tournament Pro X 16m!



At full length, Matt was in ultimate control of his rig.



At its shorter lengths, the Pro X was ultra-slick – Matt loved it!



The hungry ide in Aston are partial to a simple maggot approach!



Feeding heavily with maggots down the central track was Matt's killer move.



Our ginger assistant loved the winter action at Aston Park and took the spoils with this bag in just two hours!

TECH SPEC

DAIWA TOURNAMENT PRO X

More Power Package: 16m pole, five Interlastic power kits, two Interlastic match kits, one match top four kit, two Super 4th sections, cupping kit and holdall

More Match Package: Two Interlastic power kits, three Interlastic match kits, one Super 4th section, One match top four kit, two match top three kits, cupping kit and holdall

Features: Match and Power packages, Integrated Taping System on 5 to 7 sections, Diamond Satin Finish on 8 to 11 sections and holdalls included

Spares: Interlastic power kit £84.99; Interlastic match kit £89.99; Interlastic No3 £54.99; Interlastic Shallow power kit £44.99; Interlastic Shallow match kit £69.99; Power Lite Big-Bore kit £74.99

RRP: Match/Power Package £3,999 **SSP:** £2,650
RRP: 16m pole only £2,999 **SSP:** £1,999

Taking a close examination of the package, it's obvious that this pole is designed with the keenest of anglers in mind. The Interlastic Puller Kits mean there's no drilling required when fitting side pullers and the extensive spares package, including brand-new Match and Power Packages mean that you can choose the spares package that suits your needs. The Power Package caters for the more commercial based anglers, while the Match Package is for the all-round angler.

Better still, the pole is one of the most comprehensively compatible wands on the market, with all the sections interchangeable with top-end poles from Daiwa's renowned stable. Whether you're big-river bream bashing, margin lump hauling, or canal roach fishing, if you're an angler looking for a new top-end pole, be sure to put this on your list to test ride!

POLE FISHING BATTLE ROUND 10

The Need For Speed!

Can our assistant editor reclaim victory over his master? A three-hour skirmish on Aston Park's Butt's Lake decides!

When fishery owner Alex Mitchell informed me that we'd be getting a bite nearly very drop-in on his newest lakes, I was already feeling sorry for Tom. I mean, if there was a chance of a late 20lb lump or two, he may have had a chance!

Joking aside, targeting large numbers of fish at this time of year is difficult. In my experience, the key is to keep catching for a full session, and this means covering your options.

In Butt's Lake, there's a big head of varying-sized carp, from 6oz stockies right up to 5lb bullies. Plumbing up, I decided that I was going to fish three swims. This may seem a lot on a snake lake but at this time of year fish can easily become spooked and you often need to switch between different areas of your swim to catch them.

My first two swims targeted the far shelf, where I found two and a half feet of water around a yard off the far bank. I always like to find this depth of water in winter. Any shallower and I've found that fish quickly spook. I plumbed up two lines here, at 10 and two o'clock angles where I could use the same rig. I planned on feeding small amounts of micro pellets with a small amount of crushed expander groundbait too.

My other swim targeted the deepest water in the central tack. I fished this at an angle away from me to the right so that I could steer fish out of the swim with minimal disturbance. Here, I planned on fishing maggots and feeding quite positively by hand to try and get some of the silver fish competing.

Starting across, I was into fish immediately and in the first 10 drop-ins I managed 10 small carp. Although I was feeding micros, I soon changed to using a maggot on the hook because this was more durable when I was getting so many indications. If things went quiet, I'd cut out the pellets and simply tap in a tiny pot of crushed expander groundbait, which soon attracted the fish back without filling them up. Switching between the two swims here and taking three or four fish off each certainly helped me keep putting fish in the net.

All the time I was feeding 30 maggots or so on my track swim and after an hour I felt it was time to do some damage on this. It's fair to say there was no looking back, and using a light 4x10 float with strung-out No11 shot I had a fantastic hour catching quality ide, as well as an odd rudd and some very pretty carp!

Although action was fast, it paid to feed before you shipped out, before laying the rig out right on top of where the loose feed landed. This definitely tricked those bigger and rather cute ide!

I could see Tom catching but by no means was he rushing, and after just two and a half hours' fishing he overruled me and demanded that I shot his photos!

The damage was already done at this point. I ended with nearly 35lb of ide and a variety of carp in all shapes, sizes and colours. It was one of the most enjoyable short winter sessions I've ever had, using a pole that I cannot say a bad word about. In fact, after we'd done the catch shots I stayed on fishing until it was pitch black! >>>

Luckily for me, when the latest parcel from Daiwa arrived in the office I was the first of our crew to open it up and see what was inside. As I unzipped the quality black Tournament holdall and removed the caps of the tubes inside, I was met with what in my opinion is the best-looking pole I've ever seen!

This hottest weapon from Daiwa is sure to top many anglers' Christmas list, with its slick grey finish on the butt sections, classy graphics and a No8 section that looks like it could be part of a fighter jet's engine! However, would it perform on the same superior level as it looked?

I must admit, I have a real soft spot for the Daiwa Tournament poles. I was fortunate enough to own the original Tournament Professional at a young

age and won my three Junior World Championship gold medals using it. Obviously, when the decision came about who was testing which pole this month, Tom had no say whatsoever!

The finish is something that I noticed instantly. Every section ships through your hands like a dream thanks to the Diamond Satin finish. Assembling the pole to 14 metres to reach the island opposite, the pole had every asset of the last Tournament that I held, and more!

The sections felt exceptionally strong throughout, with absolutely zero flex or softness in any areas. The responsiveness of this tool was second to none and amazed with the pole at 14.5 metres, I added the 16m section to see if any assets were lost. It's fair to say that the pole is among the best I've held at this length and even with

a top kit threaded with hollow elastic and a Cad Pot on the end, its balance was exceptional.

Starting the session fishing pellets I was able to control my rig with military precision, sprinkling in my feed with the pole-mounted pot and working my hook bait. At full length, the pole felt like an extension of the arm and I was able to lift at the smallest of indications from the crafty carp that mouthed at my pellets.

On several occasions I hooked a feisty mirror, but not once did the pole even break a sweat! As the session progressed, I switched to fishing my shorter swim at seven metres, where I'd regularly been loose feeding maggots. Here, I was able to give the pole a real ride, and in just over an hour this polished professional helped me catch nearly 40 fish.

Precision And Perfection

Tom Scholey gets on the bank with the Frenzee Precision FXT pole and is left extremely impressed!



There's a diverse range of features that greatly enhance the pole's performance!



These cute little mirrors were reared on site at Aston Park!



Fishing a full 16 metres was a pleasure with the Precision FXT!



The shorter No4 and No5 sections really stiffen up the pole's action at longer lengths!

I have never tested a pole from Frenzee before, so I was really looking forward to getting on the bank with the FXT! Supplied at 13 metres as standard, but with extensions to take it to its full length of 16 metres, the pole boasts several unique features, which I was looking forward to putting to the test.

The first thing that I noticed was that it is only supplied with one kind of top kit – not separate match and power kits as many models are. These are known as 'super 2s' and come already fitted with a side slot puller conversion. To be fair, I can see many other companies following suit. Many match kits that are supplied with poles are now strong enough to take heavy hollow elastics anyway, almost eradicating the

need for a dedicated power kit. A great concept in my eyes.

Another nice idea is what the company is calling its 'medium 4' and 'medium 5' sections. These are something in between what you might call a normal No4 and No5 and a short No4 and No5. The idea is that by integrating a section like this into the design of the pole, you gain all the advantages of a normal-length No4 and No5, while also increasing stiffness and rigidity of the pole, as you might do if a short No4 or No5 section was used.

The pole is also supplied in a classy rod bag, complete with plastic tubes, and with eight top-two kits, a cupping kit, a dolly butt extension and a spare No4 section.

So what did I think of it? Where possible, if I don't know the RRP of a pole, I always make a point of testing it before checking the price. The pole performed very well and was exceptionally stiff, light, strong and well balanced.



A lovely afternoon with a stunning piece of kit!

TECH SPEC

FRENZEE PRECISION FXT

Package: 13m pole, 14.5m extension, 16m extension, dolly butt extension, eight top-two kits, cupping kit, spare No4 section.

Features: Slick Glide Finish, Joint Aligning System, Super 2 technology, Medium 4 technology.

I started off fishing at 11 metres straight in front of me and, as expected, it was simply sublime. Moving out to 13 metres later in the session and the pole was again first class.

What really impressed me, however, was how well the pole performed in the last half an hour of the session, when I moved out to 14.5 metres and then 16. Playing devil's advocate, I gave it a few very exaggerated strikes into the venue's resident small carp and it stood up to everything that I could throw at it.

It was also very strong stiff and light. I fully expected it to command a price tag up there with the very best on the market. I was therefore pleasantly surprised when I learnt that it actually comes in a little bit cheaper than most, with an asking price of £2,300. If you are in the market for a new top-end pole, be sure to look at the new FXT before parting with your cash.

POLE FISHING BATTLE ROUND 10

Hectic Action

Tom Scholey's visits one of Sheffield's most popular commercial fisheries and enjoys a dynamic afternoon's action.

If there is one thing I like when it comes to winter fishing it is getting bites, and lots of them. There is nothing worse than sitting like a lame duck on a freezing-cold winter's day, as icicles form on your pole tip and your fingers turn a worrying shade of blue!

One venue that all but guarantees that is Butt's Lake at Aston Park Fisheries near Sheffield. It is rammed full of small carp, ide, chub and FIs – with in excess of 400 fish often required to win the fishery's matches.

This was our destination for this pole test and when I arrived Matt was already sat on what a local expert described as a flier, leaving me with the choice of a peg described as mediocre, or poor as another dubbed it.

The 'average' peg it was then and I decided to base my approach around a pellet-and-maggot attack. I love fishing these two baits together, especially on venues where lots of small fish are the target. You can be so much more efficient than when pellets on their own are used because maggots stay on the hook far better and give you a chance of catching ide, skimmers and chub as well as carp.

Of course, it is still vitally important to feed pellets in some guise when stockie-sized carp are the main target – they can't get enough of them! In fact, I would sometimes say they can be

too effective because the fish fight that hard to get at them that line bites can be a real problem, again reducing your efficiency.

To get around this, I overwet my micro pellets so that they form a tacky, paste-like consistency. Not only does this stay in your pole pot brilliantly as you ship in and out, but it also sinks to the bottom and helps you get nice clean bites.

Rigwise, I opted for a 4x14 Mick Wilkinson slim, with a bulk of seven No10 Stotz directly above my 4in hooklength. Hook choice was a size 18 Drennan Silverfish Pellet, tied to 0.09mm Reflo Power. Elastic choice was Frenzee's pink hollow, which was just the job!

My method worked brilliantly and I caught a fish every chuck-in, while giving the FXT Precision a thorough workout at the same time.

In terms of my battle with the ginger one, I am not going to make any excuses – I was outclassed. I consider him one of the quickest anglers in the country, and with so many small fish to go at he soon motored ahead of me.

His reflexes really have to be seen to be believed. They have no doubt been born out of a childhood spent avoiding ginger-bashing bullies and dodging rays of sunlight, but the fact remains that he weighed 35lb to my 28lb. Still, we had both enjoyed a brilliant afternoon's fishing and vowed to return very soon! ■