



plus the MkIV insignia written vertically up the rod.

builders of the time. A rod that probably falls into this category is a 1955 MkIV that Walker made for Horace Smith, who fished at Tring reservoirs. This is now in the possession of Chris Yates. He made another MkIV as a retirement present for an employee of Lloyds & Co. Ltd of



A 21lb common carp caught 43 years to the day after Walker's record-breaking 44-pounder.

Still great for catching carp

SO MUCH for the past. Readers will probably be aware that new split-cane MkIVs are available from several companies these days. The question is, what's a vintage B James MkIV like to fish with? Remember, first and foremost, it is a fishing rod. Over many years, I've used cane rods for some of my carp fishing. I did have a pair of James MkIVs in the early 1960s, but chopped them in when their glass-fibre version, the MkIVG, appeared. Anyone with experience of fishing with cane will know that some are up to the job, while others (even if you bought a pair at the same time from the same stable) seem fraught with problems. The main problem is nearly always the rod's reluctance to revert to being more or less straight after a heavy battle, or the line becoming snagged. In my carp room, I have a collection of fine cane rods, many from B James & Son. These rods can withstand the abuse of bringing a good-sized carp to the bank with aplomb, yet remain unscathed from the experience. One of my regular fishing rods, a mid-

1950s onion handle James MkIV, had an exhausting workout last year. In an afternoon, I hooked five carp. The first, a shade under 20lb, was followed by a foul-hooked 20-pounder in the tail. The MkIV eventually beat it after a 25-minute battle. A trio of 20-pounders followed, making it a memorable catch. The rod, though heavily taxed at times — particularly when a fish plunged hard and ran quickly at range — was up to the job. My antics brought attention from another angler, who asked whether the rod was going to break while I battled with a fish. Thankfully, it never did! Several other MkIVs from my collection have landed 20lb carp over the years too. All these captures were taken from lakes that had little weed present. I leave cane at home on waters with heavy weed and other snags. In my book, they are clearly not efficient rods for this work. Just last week, some 45 years after manufacture, the James MkIV mentioned earlier brought a 25lb mirror to the bank in less than 10 minutes.



ar and Ealing address; 1955 version: onion handle, hook-keeper, no on handle, hook-keeper, shoulder collar, London England address.