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Letchworth, Herts, a lawnmower company where Walker was a director.

Roughly three weeks after Walker landed Clarissa, a new British record carp of 44lb, in the early hours of Saturday 13th September 1952, a commercial version of the MkIV became available to the angling public through B James & Son, of west Ealing, London. Their first advertisement for Walker's MkIV appeared in the *Angler's News* on October 4, 1952.

The first batch of rods, minus the top few coats of varnish, were sent to Walker so he could personally check them. This he duly did, and then wrote his signature in indian ink on each as being approved by him. Once back at James's in Ealing, the top varnish coats were applied, making the rod complete.

In all the years, I have only ever come across two examples with Walker's signature written up the rod.

In all the years, I have only ever come across two such examples. Both rods had Dick's signature written up the rod. When Walker knew he could trust James's workmanship, a transfer of his signature was added. All production rods made thereafter carried this transfer signature, which was placed at a 45-degree angle around the rod.

Though long forgotten now, Dick also came to an agreement (for no money, I might add) with JB Walker of Hythe, Kent, which meant they could supply MkIVs in kit form. More details of these are given in *A Century of Carp Fishing*.

Collectors, fisherman and even non-carp anglers have a passion for owning a B James & Son MkIV carp rod these days. During the past 10 years, prices have reflected the rod's appeal, with many hundreds of pounds being exchanged for good-condition ones.

Earlier models dating from the turn of 1953 through to 1955, in good condition, are highly prized, especially so if whipped in green (this was an option, with maroon



Jim Bruce Jr. (the son in B. James & Son) with a collection of the author's MkIV's. Picture taken about 15 years ago.

whippings generally were the order of the day.) Better still, as sometimes would happen, a custom order for non-standard whipping colour would be completed.

B. James & Son alone produced about 15,000 MkIVs between October 1952 and 1966, when production ceased, and many other companies manufactured their own versions of the rod too.

For years, the Mark IV totally dominated

the market. Anglers who were expecting big fish — any big fish, not just carp — used a MkIV.

As far as collecting goes, because a great many B. James & Son and other versions of MkIVs were made, don't buy the first one you see. There are plenty of good ones still around. Check out tackle fairs, auctions and For Sale columns and you will find what you're after. It's worth the effort!