

# FRESHWATER INFORMER



## FREE

**ANDY TILLEY**  
**52lbs GHOST CARP**  
**ELPHICKS FISHERIES**



Sandwich  
 Coarse Fishery 

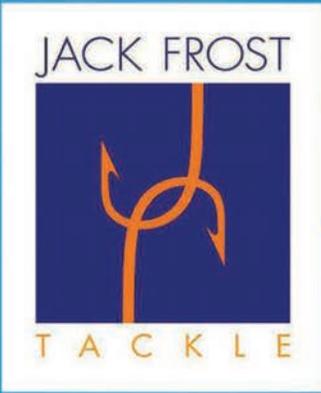
Tel: 07936 409912

email: enquiries@sandwichlakes.co.uk

[www.sandwichlakes.co.uk](http://www.sandwichlakes.co.uk)

Sandwich Ash Road (A257), Near Canterbury CT3 2DA





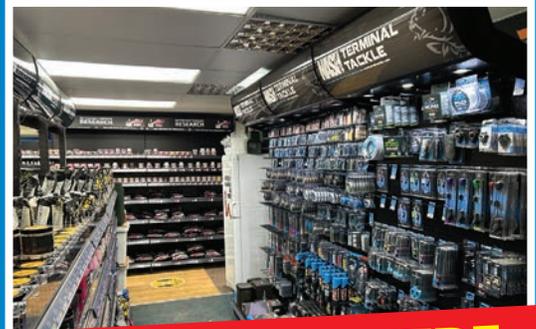
[www.jackfrostattackle.co.uk](http://www.jackfrostattackle.co.uk)

01293 521186

Reynolds Place, West Green, Crawley RH11 7HB



Jack Frost Tackle Crawley. Crawley's Premier fishing tackle shop for carp fishing, match fishing and sea fishing.



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## Hello and welcome to the December edition of the Freshwater Informer

It seems somewhat surreal that we've baked and blown, flooded and floated our way towards the end of another year but here we are in December, staring down the barrel of another year passed. For lots of anglers it will be a chance to reflect on targets achieved, whether that be personal bests, new species caught or new venues fished. For others, including myself, it will be the realisation that they never quite found the time to implement the well made plans and 'can't fail' tactics as time marches on.

As I write this I'm looking at a 5kg sack of unopened floating pellets sitting next to various other assorted baits and tackle that never quite made it to the bank. I can't for the life of me remember why I bought them, or where I planned to use them but I clearly had a plan - if not a cunning one! Hopefully it will come to me during the long winter nights or at least before summer returns!

Not that I can really complain, the few short sessions that I've managed this year have been immensely enjoyable. All the more special because of their scarcity, and I've probably fished better because of it. My latest trip is detailed within these pages and probably rates among my most rewarding.

Perch feature heavily in this month's issue and Russ Evans charts his lifelong association with the species, from catching tiny 'wasps' as a child through to huge stripeys he targets today. Warren White has a student so adept at catching large Perch that he's earned the nickname 'The Perch Whisperer' although he remains just Reggie to non-fishing teachers, and Andy Lush is such an expert angler that it's no surprise that he manages to catch them two at a time - on the same lure! Bob Morris is also an expert angler, but even experts can become complacent. Learn from the folly of his ways in Esox University. Glen and Lee take a trip to Wylands Farm to try and tempt a carp for the camera. No easy task in recent conditions, see how they fared in the centre pages. And whilst so many of us sit watching the rain outside the window and waiting for a better tomorrow, Bob Rolph takes us on a journey back to the glory days of yesteryear.



Lee



Alex

As usual, we also have a round up of local fisheries and anglers catches, including plenty of personal bests, and in some cases national bests. There's also time to drop a few hints for a new winter suit or heated bedchair from one of our tackle shop advertiser for Christmas, to make winter fishing a joy rather than a chore. Speaking of Christmas, on behalf of everyone here at the Freshwater Informer we would like to say thank you to readers, writers, tackle shops and fisheries and everyone behind the scenes for supporting us this year since we took on the magazine. We sincerely wish you a very Merry Christmas and we will see you in the new year,

*from the FWI Team*

*Merry  
Christmas*



**The Freshwater Informer**

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**COPY DEADLINE for JANUARY 2024**

**MONDAY 18th December 2023 at 5pm**

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We opened our doors at the end of 2016 in Sparrows Green, Wadhurst. Bowie is a very experienced professional barber, whether it's a traditional scissor cut or a modern fade, we cater to all styles and ages. Toddlers can enjoy a haircut in our vintage fire engine while adults can enjoy the refreshments and free WiFi. We have parking right outside and plenty more on the street, no appointment needed just come in and take a seat!

For opening times please see website

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- PAYMENT BY CASH ONLY

Bowie's Barber Shop  
Davies Place, Sparrows Green  
Wadhurst TN5 6TE



## Beaver Fishery Lingfield, Surrey

**PLEASE NOTE :- To fish Snipe Lake, Westlake (Formerly Tuscany Lake) Daughters Lake and Majors Lake there are certain tackle requirements in force. Please call or look on our website at [beaverfarmfishery.co.uk](http://beaverfarmfishery.co.uk). Anglers on Westlake are required to have a dedicated Catfish mat and a large unhooking mat and minimum 36 inch net to fish Majors Lake. There will be no exceptions.**

**Before we get into this months report, Ben and I would like to thank all of the anglers that have been in and fished this year, its been a pleasure once again and we both hope that you all have a very Happy Christmas and a healthy New Year.**

Well, as usual at this time of the year Ben and I are getting right into the fishery maintenance. Even though the weather has been awful we continue our winter schedule of tree cutting and felling, marginal growth cut back on all lakes and ponds, strimming and raking out the old woodchip and replacing with new on all of the swims. As I write this, Jeff's Lake and Eden Pond have been completed and the work continues elsewhere.



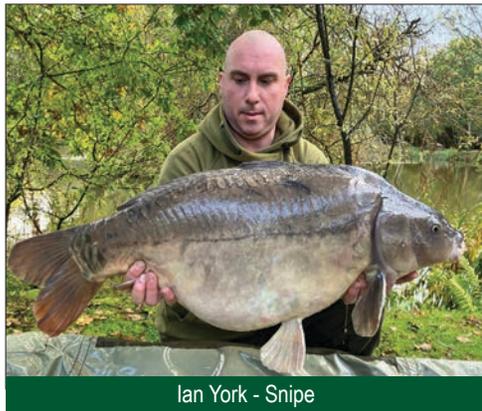
Terry Edwards - Majors

As for the catches, like I mentioned earlier regarding the weather, its certainly affected the day anglers as we have

seen less and less wanting to venture out in torrential rain and high winds. **Jeff's Lake** has continued to produce carp to 9lb and some nice bream, **Moat Pond, Daughters Lake** and **Eden Pond** are closed while the above mentioned works are carried out, **Maze Lake** is also producing some nice carp to just under 10lbs and F1's as well as bream and perch to 1lb 8ozs, **Majors Lake** has been a bit hit and miss but the bream have been banked to just under 7lb and mirrors and commons have been banked to mid to upper doubles, **Westlake** has seen anglers banking cats as its been very mild and the cats are still quite active even as I write this (14th November). Cats being banked to 59lbs and plenty of 20 to 30lbs. **Snipe Lake** hasn't seen too many anglers but a few fish banked to just under 30lbs.



Ellis Thorne on Jeff's Lake



Ian York - Snipe



Terry Edwards - 6lbs 2ozs, Majors



Jason Hills - Maze



Martin Smith - 1of 4 Westlake



Pete Ellis - 49lbs



Phil Clegg - Snipe



Richard Lock - Snipe



Steven Gallagher - Snipe



Tom F - Snipe

## Front cover story - Booking up a storm!

Swimbookers **Andy Tilley** came within a whisker of booking his place in the record books with this massive ghost carp caught from North Lake at the well known Elphicks Fishery complex in Kent.

As the Southeast was battered by Storm Ciaran, Andy battened down the hatches unaware that his next fish was about to create a storm all of its own. The huge Ghostie picked up his Parker Baits OG fish waffer, fished with a solid bag, and Andy found himself in the 'eye of the storm' in more ways than one as he battled both the fish and the conditions.

On the mat the incredible Carp weighed in at 52lbs, just 1lb off the UK best for a ghost carp.

Well worth getting wet for!



Andy with his near record Carp

**Eastbourne Road (A22),  
Newchapel, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6HL**  
Tel: 01342 324006  
Mobile: 07710 656041

**www.beaverfarmfishery.co.uk**

Email: [beaverfarmfishery@live.co.uk](mailto:beaverfarmfishery@live.co.uk)  
Facebook: beaverfishery

**We are a commercial day ticket fishery and have 2 Specimen Lakes, 3 Coarse Lakes and 3 Ponds.**  
Open 7am - 7pm Summer time and 7am - 6pm Winter time. Day ticket, overnight and long stays welcome.

**Facilities include:**

- On Site Tackle Shop
- 9 Car Parks including Disabled Friendly Parking
- Shower/Wetroom
- Disabled Friendly Toilets
- Seasonal Snack Bar with Hot and Cold Food
- 1 hut available for hire



- Concessionary Tickets for Junior, Disabled and OAPs
- No pre-bookings taken for swims
- Win a FREE SESSION with our Fish of the Month Competition
- Automatic Security Gates that close at 7pm (Summer) 6pm (Winter)
- 24-hour CCTV

# Elphicks Fisheries



Elphicks has been designed and built with the modern angler in mind. We have 7 lakes available for day ticket and session fishing. Each lake has its own parking within easy reach of the swims and all swims are 'all weather' - either built of Astroturf, stone or bark. Please contact the fishery for further information on any of our lakes.



Elphicks Fisheries Spelmonden Road  
Horsmonden, Kent TN12 8EL

Tel: **01580 212512**

email: [info@elphicks-fisheries.co.uk](mailto:info@elphicks-fisheries.co.uk)



[www.elphicks-fisheries.co.uk](http://www.elphicks-fisheries.co.uk)

## Elphicks Fisheries Horsmonden, Kent

*To all of our anglers, we would like to wish you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year*

**DON'T FORGET WE CLOSE 5PM 23RD OF DECEMBER AND RE-OPEN 7AM ON THE 15TH OF JANUARY 2024**

All lake bookings for North, Pullens and Westend will be on the swimbooker app, January 2nd 7am.

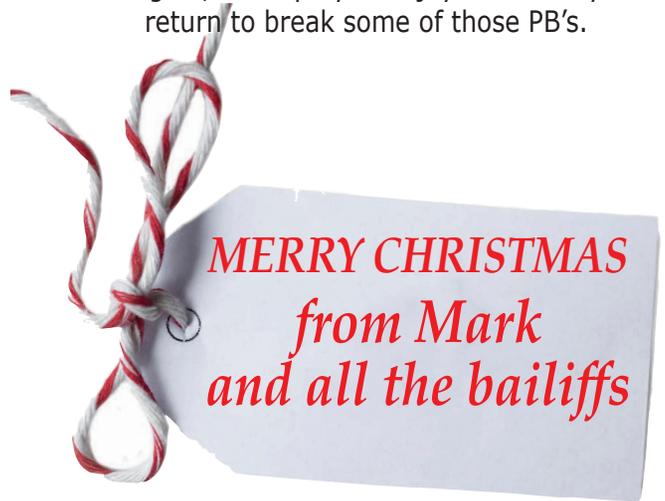
Don't call the office or turn up at the fishery.

We have found a lovely couple to run the café.

It should be up and running for the 15th of January.

Make sure you pop in and say Hi. We will update as things progress on the facebook page and website.

Once again, we hope you enjoy the holidays and return to break some of those PB's.



# Hawkhurst Fish Farm

Hastings Road, Hawkhurst, Kent, TN18 4RT

Ample Parking – Shower & Toilets -  
Tackle Shop & Café on site!

All lakes (excluding Specimen Lake) close 22<sup>nd</sup> December until 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023.

**MATCH LAKE BOOKINGS STILL AVAILABLE FOR 2024.**

CHECK OUT OUR FACEBOOK AND INSTAGRAM PAGES FOR REGULAR UPDATES:

Search: Hawkhurst Fish Farm



## Lake Exclusive Hire!

Book now for exclusive hire of Main Lake (up to 11 anglers) or Dove Lake (up to 6 anglers). Spaces do fill up quickly so please get in touch if you would like to book!

We wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!  
Tight lines.



T: 01580 753813 E: [info@hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk)

[www.hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk](http://www.hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk)

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*"The bailiffs were really helpful, advised me on baits and methods"*

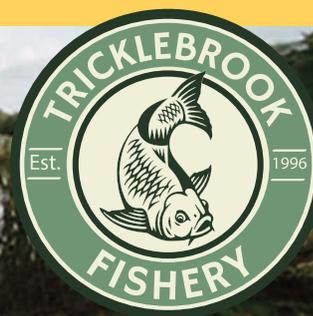
Day Tickets are available on all waters & memberships are now open!  
For more information email: [wantsumangling@mail.com](mailto:wantsumangling@mail.com) or call in to Absolute Tackle, 12 Wealden Forest, Park Herne Common, Kent CT6 7LQ  
Night Bookings and General Enquiries please call on 07570-505934

**PRICES**

DAY TICKET X2 RODS - £15  
 DAY TICKET X3 RODS - £20  
 24 HOUR TICKET X2 RODS - £25  
 24 HOUR TICKET X3 RODS - £30  
 36 HOUR TICKET X2 / X3 RODS - £40 / £50  
 48 HOUR TICKET X2 / X3 RODS - £50 / £60

# NEW LAKE NOW OPEN

## ALL LAKES DISABLED FRIENDLY!



# TRICKLEBROOK FISHERY

This fantastic coarse fishery consists of two very well stocked lakes.

A 4 acre specimen lake stocked with big Catfish up to 50lbs, huge Carp up to 40lbs, big Perch up to 6lbs and beautiful Roach over 3lbs. And a 1 acre match fishing lake teaming with a variety of species weighing up to 28lbs.



**find us on facebook and instagram**  
**FACEBOOK.COM/TRICKLEBROOKFISHERY**



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**A UK CARP TOP 100 FISHERY - BOOK NOW!**

**tricklebrookfishery.co.uk**

TEL 07743 955812 | 01892 835453 | EMAIL [info@tricklebrookfishery.co.uk](mailto:info@tricklebrookfishery.co.uk)

Tricklebrook Fishery | Colts Hill | Five Oak Green | TN12 6SH

Telephone bookings are to be paid in advance and are non-refundable • Credit and Debit cards now accepted

## LAKE RULES

1. A TICKET MUST BE PURCHASED BEFORE FISHING
2. ALL NETS, UNHOOKING MATS AND WEIGH SLINGS MUST BE DRY BEFORE DIPPING IN THE DISINFECTANT BATHS
3. NO NUTS OR PARTICLE
4. BOILIE AND PELLET ONLY FOR SPECIMEN AND BACK LAKE - ALL BAIT WILL BE INSPECTED
5. ALL FISH MUST BE RETURNED TO THE WATER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE FOLLOWING CAPTURE. NO STANDING. FISH MUST BE HELD LOW OVER A MAT/CRADLE FOR PHOTOGRAPHS
6. MINIMUM 15LB LINE AND NO BRAIDED MAIN LINE
7. NO SACKING OR RETAINING OF FISH IS PERMITTED. THE REMOVAL OF FISH FROM THIS VENUE WILL BE VIEWED AS A CRIMINAL ACT
8. EACH ANGLER MUST HAVE A MINIMUM OF 42 INCH LANDING NET AND A LARGE PADDED UNHOOKING MAT/CRADLE REGARDLESS OF TARGET SPECIES ON SPECIMEN AND BACK LAKE
9. BARBLESS HOOKS ONLY
10. NO LEAD CORE, NO FUSED LEADERS OF ANY KIND INCLUDING SAFEZONE
11. NO FIXED LEAD RIGS. ALL LEADS MUST PASS FREELY OVER LEADER KNOTS. RIG CHECKS WILL BE CARRIED OUT
12. RECREATIONAL DRUGS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED - IMMEDIATE BAN FOLLOWS
13. PLEASE INFORM FISHERY MANAGEMENT OF ANY SNAGGED TACKLE OR FISH
14. ANY FISH OVER 28LB MUST BE REPORTED TO BAILIFF
15. NO DOGS ALLOWED
16. BARBECUES ALLOWED IF OFF THE GROUND
17. NO BAIT BOATS
18. FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH ANY OF THE RULES WILL RESULT IN BEING ASKED TO LEAVE AND/OR BANS WHERE APPROPRIATE AND NO REFUND WILL BE OFFERED
19. TRICKLEBROOK IS NOW OPERATING A ZERO-TOLERANCE POLICY TO ANY ACTS OF AGGRESSION OR ABUSE TOWARDS ITS BAILIFFS AND STAFF
20. ALL RUBBISH TO BE TAKEN HOME

**CCTV IN OPERATION  
OVER WHOLE SITE**

**OPENING TIMES**  
SUMMER 7AM - 7PM WINTER 7AM TO DUSK





## ORCHARD PLACE FARM FISHING

13 FISHING LAKES in the KENT COUNTRYSIDE

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01892 838576 or 07860 608218



Carp to 49lb+



Catfish to 112lb+

At Orchard Place Farm you can surround yourself in the natural beauty of the Kent countryside, located just outside of the picturesque town of Paddock Wood, and only 8 miles from Maidstone. The fishery boasts 13 lakes - 10 carp and catfish lakes and 3 match/pleasure lakes.

### FULLY FUNCTIONING LAKE 13 - CARP & CATFISH WATER

Many swims have disabled access • All-weather pathways leading all around the lakes and up to each individual swim • Purpose-built toilets located in the main car park (with hot shower) • Between Lake 3 and Lake 4 (toilet and sink block only) • Block constructed by Lake 7 also contains a microwave, fridge and washing up facilities.

#### SPECIMEN LAKES

DAY TICKETS AVAILABLE  
24HR - £30  
48HR - £55  
(additional charge for 3rd rod)

#### MATCH/ PLEASURE LAKES

DAY TICKETS  
2 RODS - £10  
CONCESSIONS  
1 ROD - £8

**FOOD IS AVAILABLE ON SITE FROM MID-MARCH TO OCTOBER**

[www.orchardplacefarmfishing.co.uk](http://www.orchardplacefarmfishing.co.uk)

Tackle/bait/shop situated in the main car park, stocking all top bait brands including worms maggots etc. Everything you need at VERY competitive prices.



## NEW TO ORCHARD PLACE FARM! HORSMONDEN FISHING LAKES

Two beautiful lakes set in mature, peaceful Kent countryside in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

Carp  
to 38lbs

Top Lake  
Catfish to 85lbs

Bottom Lake  
Catfish to 75lbs

Top Lake has five swims, Bottom Lake has six and both can be fished on a day ticket or lake exclusive booking

Anglers' mess on site with fresh running water, wash basin and toilet

**Horsmonden Fishing Lakes, Grovehurst Road, Horsmonden TN12 8BQ**

All enquiries and bookings to Orchard Place Farm Fishery on 01892 838576

## Great session for Ollie at Mousehole Lakes

13yr old **Ollie Hollands** has been fishing for a while now and after getting a new feeder rod for his Birthday in September was wanting to get on the bank as much as possible. So when the opportunity arose for him to spend a couple of nights at Mousehole Lakes on Swift Lake, with his Grandad Rod, who is a bailiff at the popular venue, he jumped at the chance. Target species for the trip were perch and eels. He had never dead baited for predators before but luckily our very own Lee Nicoll was on hand to offer some advice and lend Ollie a float rod set up for perching.

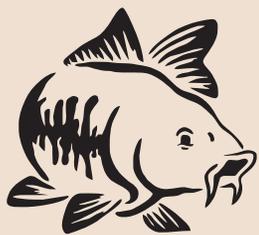


and a nice Perch



Ollie Hollands - 2lbs 4ozs Eel, Mousehole Lakes

With the help of his Grandad and Lee, it wasn't long before Ollie was landing some nice perch, and even an 8lbs common carp on a dead bait. His focus was then on catching an eel and on Friday evening he managed a small 8ozs eel out and was over the moon. Saturday evening saw him land an impressive 2lbs 4ozs specimen 2.5ft in length and was in awe as Lee showed him how to put the eel to sleep by laying it on its back and gently massaging along the length of the eel to make it easier to hold.



## Shirkoak Fishery and B&B



### WHY NOT TRY A POD?

Sleeps two people - included is shower, toilet, wash hand basin, kettle, toaster, double gas ring, sink, microwave, bedlinen, towels, cutlery, crockery & BBQ.

Minimum stay is 48 hours at £120 per day for two people including fishing.



This beautiful tranquil fishery is situated on the outskirts of Woodchurch village, stocked with carp to 30lbs+ and Pike to 20lbs+.

Night fishing is permitted by prior arrangement only. We can also offer food delivered to your swim, our full English breakfast is proving extremely popular!

Fishing prices start at £12 for 2 rods for 12 hours.



**OAP TUESDAY**  
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Pre-bookings only

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for regular updates



[www.shirkoakfarm.com](http://www.shirkoakfarm.com)

For more information please call  
Hugh on **07973 410973**  
or **01233 860279**

## Greenacres Farm Fishery Biddenden, Kent



**Speci 1** This lake has been proving challenging at times with the weather being so up and down, but to those that are up for a challenge have been rewarded with a couple of fish. Solid pva bags over a small bed of particle has seemed to be the winning ways of getting a few fish out. Now the colder months are upon us then the perch should be showing up with the biggest so far been reported at 5lbs 3ozs.

**Speci 2** Still producing catfish with some lovely carp in with the mix, the catfish are slowing up now the temperatures are dropping but one or two are still showing. Catfish are being taken on heavy baited areas of mixed sized marine halibut pellets using single 21mm robin reds or luncheon meat over the top. Carp are being caught the same way but with a solid pva bag with a wafter or a pop up over the top.

**Heron** A lovely mixed coarse lake that has been very popular with the regulars catching a lovely mixed bag of fish with the odd chance of catching a good size carp up to 15lbs, average carp being caught are between 6-7lbs. Best baits to use are naturals like maggots, worms, luncheon meat and bread over groundbait or pellet.

**Kingfisher** This is an overstocked match lake and great fun with a guarantee of catching, brilliant for family's or anyone wanting to teach their kids how to fish. Stay away from boilies in here and use natural baits like, maggots, corn, pellets, worms etc.

**Bluebell** A little pond tucked out of the way, this pond is showing a good number of tench being caught on float or feeder tactics using worm, maggot, paste or sweetcorn on the hook. The carp in here are also stunning fish that can be caught up to 10lbs with also the odd roach, rudd and gudgeon.



## TRADE-IN-TACKLE

Carp, Coarse and Vintage Angling Specialist

Good quality, pre-loved tackle purchased and sold

Stockist of Korda, Nash, Gardner, Middy, Wychwood, Leeda Mainline and many more quality manufacturers.

Fresh maggots and worms always in stock along with frozen deadbaits and a massive range of boilies and groundbaits.

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A warm welcome and a great deal awaits you!

**IF SELLING, PLEASE PHONE BEFORE VISITING**



**GREENACRES FISHERY RULES** - Please dip all nets, slings, cradles and unhooking mats located in carparks before entering any lakes or you will be asked to leave. No one under the age of 16 to be left unattended at all times, this also means to and from the toilet. No one under the age of 16 is allowed to night fish without a responsible ADULT. No takeaways after 6pm. No bins on site so take all rubbish home including cigarette butts. All rules on website: [www.greenacresfarmfishery.co.uk](http://www.greenacresfarmfishery.co.uk)  
**ANYONE SEEN BREAKING THE RULES WILL BE ASKED TO LEAVE WITH A LIFETIME BAN!!!!**

## Iden Wood Fishery



Tel/Fax: Andy Ashdown

**01797 280180**

Mobile:

**07906 232225**

5 secluded lakes set in 60 acres of woodland, containing Carp to 30lbs, Tench to 5lbs, Bream to 9lb plus Roach, Rudd and Chub

Vehicle access/night fishing allowed / match bookings taken

Spring Lodge | Iden Wood Fishery  
| Coldharbour Lane | Iden | Rye |  
East Sussex | TN31 7UT



# GREENACRES FARM FISHERY



Sissinghurst Road | Biddenden | Kent | TN27 8EH

Located on the Weald of Kent in Biddenden we offer syndicate quality lakes for all. There is one specimen lake for carp up to 30lbs+, one specimen predator lake for carp to 27lbs+, catfish to 60lbs+ and pike, one match lake with twenty-two purpose built swims, one coarse lake and finally a tench/family pond. Facilities include a club house with toilets, shower, wet room and kitchen facilities.

*This beautiful setting needs to be visited and enjoyed!*

Prices start at £10 per session on the coarse lakes, £15 for the specimen lakes rising to £25 for a 24 hour ticket (£5 extra for a third rod).

Gates open at 7am and close at 7pm

SENIOR DAY TICKETS ON OUR COARSE LAKES HERON AND BLUEBELL ARE AVAILABLE FOR £5 MONDAY TO WEDNESDAY

To book, please call or text us on **07933 934942**

or visit our website **[www.greenacresfarmfishery.co.uk](http://www.greenacresfarmfishery.co.uk)**

Email : [greenacresfarmfishery@gmail.com](mailto:greenacresfarmfishery@gmail.com)



# SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT WYLANDS....

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- . 9 FANTASTIC LAKES BOOKING ESSENTIAL VISIT: [WWW.WYLANDS.CO.UK](http://WWW.WYLANDS.CO.UK)
- . COARSE FISHING, CATFISH AND CARP LAKES
- . WE HAVE LAKES TO SUIT ALL FROM BEGINNERS TO ADVANCE ANGLERS
- . LARGE VARIETY OF FISHING TICKETS AVAILABLE
- . PRIVATE LAKE HIRE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST
- . SENIOR DISCOUNT DAYS MON/TUE/WED JUST £6 ALL DAY
- . ON SITE TACKLE SHOP AND SNACK BAR
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- . LAKE SIDE POD HIRE
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- . TOILET AND SHOWER FACILITIES
- . NEWLY OPENED FARM SHOP

## Wylands FARM

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION 01424 893394



Jamie Knott - 27lbs Ghost Carp, Hartley Lands



Sebastian Galazyn - 31lbs 2ozs, Falkenvil Fishery



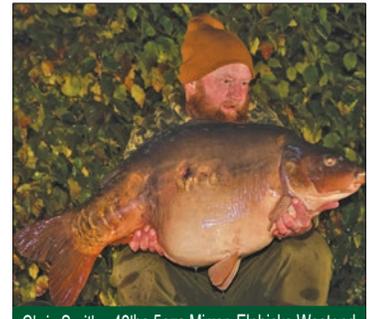
Ben Hogben, 38lbs 8ozs Common, Cottington Lakes



Danny - Leather Carp, Hartley Lands Fishery



Lee Young - Old Lake, Tricklebrook Fishery



Chris Smith - 42lbs 5ozs Mirror, Elphicks Westend

# CATCH CULT

NEW  
SUBSCRIPTION  
AVAILABLE  
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[www.catch-cult.co.uk](http://www.catch-cult.co.uk)

5 lakes and 1.25 miles of the River Eden

**GABRIELS FISHERY**

Advanced booking available  
Day & night session fishing

Toilets and shower facilities

Camping & Caravanning facilities



SWALLOW LAKE & HARE LAKE  
great for beginners

Specimen Lake  
ADMIRAL LAKE  
fish to 41lbs

OAK LAKE  
carp to 30lbs

SILVER  
Match Lake



Well stocked bait & tackle shop open from 7am every day.

24/7 vending machine stocking maggots and worms



Gabriels Fishery | Marsh Green Road | Edenbridge TN8 5PP  
Bait and Tackle Shop: 01732 865355

Email: [info@gabriels-fishery.co.uk](mailto:info@gabriels-fishery.co.uk)

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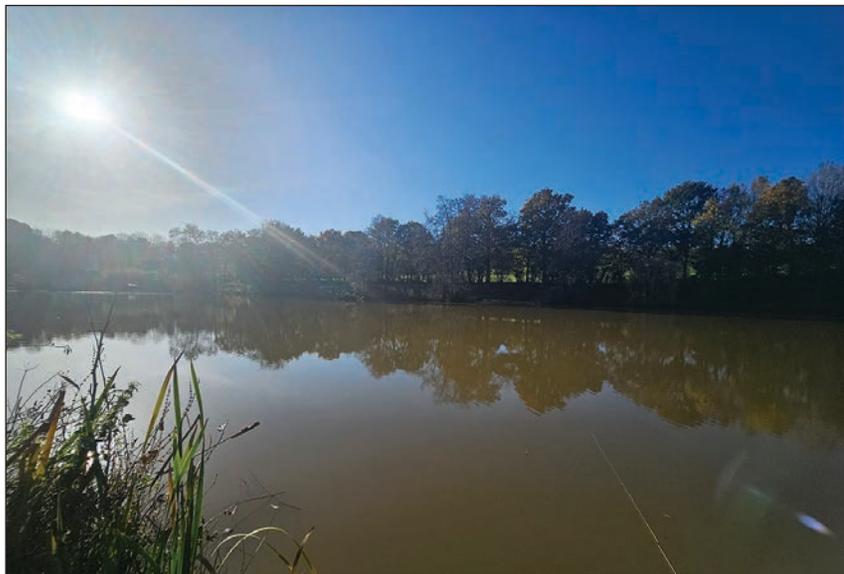
## In the edge with Alex

*Grey and insipid, the dreary skyline was a perfect reflection of my enthusiasm as I trudged along the muddy path. The weather forecast had assured me that today was the best day of the week, although 'best' was clearly a relative term, referring to the short, dull lulls between wind and rain that had been sweeping the country.*

***I was at Furnace Brook Fishery, undoubtedly one of the regions most picturesque fisheries in the summertime, but hiding its beauty behind the incessant gloom.***

I opted for the swim nearest the carpark. I could tell you that was because it gave access to the deeper water, or the marginal features that abound, or the fact that a steady breeze blew directly into that corner, all of which was true, but the real reason was that I was sulking. Sulking that I'd given up my day off to slowly sink into the mud on the word of a weatherman!

Furnace Brook is a true mixed fishery, with a plethora of species, and to that end, I had decided to bring a second rod to allow me to target a variety of its residents. Totally at odds with my more usual roaming, one rod approach, I own neither a holdall or a rod bag but nonetheless, over the course of a couple of trips I managed to drag, drop and balance enough hardware to the swim to pass as an angler. One final trip back to the car to find the finishing touches and I could show willing for an hour or so in these miserable conditions before giving the whole thing up and heading home. A packet of hooks in the glove box, a tin of sweetcorn under the seat, a couple of leads rolling around in the foot well and a forgotten float tucked in the sun visor. When I finally re-emerged from my rummaging it was to a world transformed. The low cloud had cleared, and as the sun crested the tree line so it flooded the valley with sunshine and optimism. Trees, that just minutes before had looked dour and weary, glowed like beacons as the early morning light reflected off their auburn leaves. The ducks and moorhens appeared from their resting place and the electric blue trace of a Kingfisher seared across the width of the lake to a favourite perch. The sky was crisp and blue and suddenly this world seemed a much better place to be.



*The sun made the world a better place*

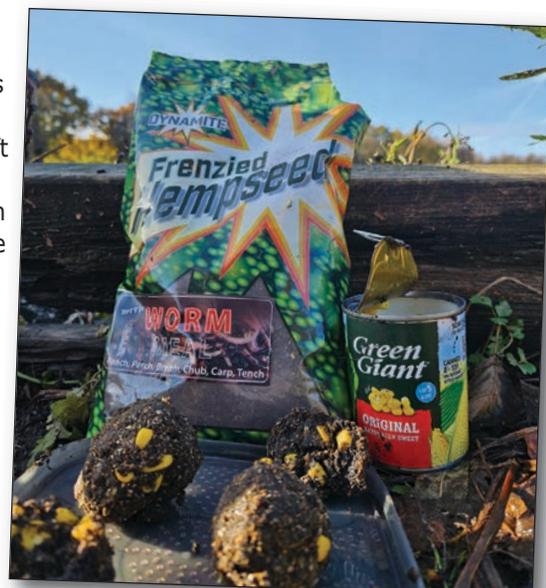
a quiver tip rod. The lake has a history of producing large roach and I would dearly love to catch a two pounder. At the same time, with Carp, Tench and even a few Barbel present I didn't want to fish too light, so compromised with relatively heavy line but with a smallish hook. A method style groundbait, laced with sweetcorn and moulded around a small gripper lead, with a kernel of corn on the hook, was gently lobbed around three rod lengths out before placing the rod in the rests and tightening up. My 'tip' technique would make a match angler weep. I have a tendency to wait too long to hit bites that I should, and strike too soon at the twitches I shouldn't, but somehow the law of averages means that I sometimes get it right.

Almost immediately the tip started to flex and bounce as fish homed in on the groundbait. True to form I struck into thin air on the first three or four casts before I made contact and a 6oz roach came splashing to the net. *(continued overleaf)*

I was still sticking to the corner swim, it had taken long enough to assemble this pile of tackle, less than 25yrs from my car, without venturing further along the rain soaked banks, and it did offer all of the options that I alluded to earlier.

With the first rod I set up a simple float rig. A bobber float, cocked by a swanshot with a size 6 hook baited with a lobworm. This was swung out along the margin with the sole intention of tempting a perch. One of my favourite species, these striped thugs of the underwater world, lurk in the shadows from where they can swagger and bully their unfortunate prey.

For the second rod I was using a makeshift feeder set-up on



*Simple but effective*

A few more misses and a few more roach before the tip bent around in a more positive fashion. It had weight but not power and for a moment I thought that I'd hooked my target, until a Bream popped up in front of the swim. I didn't mind and was just happy that I was beginning to get my eye in and hit bites with a bit more consistency. More roach followed, nothing over 8ozs, before the tip properly bent around again. This time there was no guessing as the bending tip was joined by the rest of the blank as an angry carp powered off into the lake. There's little point in trying to bully a carp on light tackle and I find it far better to let them run into open water and then tease them back. There is always the risk that they could kite into snags on a long line, but with experience you learn when and how to apply pressure and still come out on top. And so despite my feeder rod only having a 1lb test curve it wasn't long before I had a double figure common carp wallowing at the net. Three species in the first hour and I was starting to warm to the task. Bait, cast, bite, miss, bait, cast, bite, hit. The fish were beginning to feed in earnest and, even with my slightly erratic casting, there was a well defined area of bubbles starting to form as more joined the frenzy. A steady stream of roach and small skimmers were interrupted when another carp picked up the hookbait. I thought that I'd hooked one of the lakes bigger residents as rather than run, this fish hugged the bottom and slowly moved across the swim, and was preparing for a 'battle royal' when, without warning and much to my surprise, a long, lean cricket bat common surrendered to the net. Half the size of the first carp, I would have sworn it was at least twice the size if I had lost it!

Midday came and went and with it another bank of low cloud moved in but the fish kept coming. As I knelt down to return yet another skimmer, I knocked my somewhat neglected float rod and it skidded along the swim front. Idly I grabbed at the handle but it kept going and the reel started spinning. Something had taken the worm. I half crawled, half

sprawled across the muddy swim, after the rapidly disappearing rod and fought to bring everything under control. Whatever was on the end had built up a head of steam and was rapidly moving towards an overhanging tangle of branches. I felt sure that a carp was responsible but as I clamped down a big spikey dorsal fin broke the surface. It was a perch, and a good one at that. I gingerly played it, still on my knees, with my hands caked in mud and groundbait and after a few heart stopping moments, where the fish splashed its disapproval, was able to coax it to the net.

I don't weigh many fish but big perch are one of the exceptions and at 2lbs 5oz it was well worth bringing my scales. A dark green back, with bold black stripes, a pale white belly and orange tipped fins made for a fine looking specimen. As I gently returned it, I noticed a number of small silvers scattering along the margins. The drop in light had obviously bought the perch on the feed and they were plying their deadly trade. For the next twenty minutes I switched my attention to the float rod, dropping the bait wherever I saw activity. Despite a few knocks and dips, no proper bites were forthcoming and I could only surmise that the hunters in front of me were of a significantly smaller size than the one I landed, unable to fully take the worm, as they caused terror in their domain.



*Big perch, a sight of which I never tire*

The clouds cleared and the sun returned, signalling the end of the short feeding spell and I once again turned my efforts back to the feeder rod. Picking up where I had left off, building up a steady rhythm as a succession of roach and skimmers came to the bank. I was really getting my eye in and hooking far more than I was missing although the next bite tested my new found competence. It was the smallest of twitches, the sort of indication I had been leaving, but something deep inside told me to strike. I did. The rod hooped over and I felt a similar weight to the first Bream but with more energy and urgency. Maybe this was my two pound roach...

The fish jagged around under a pontoon of flotsam that had accumulated in the front of the swim, until I caught sight of it. Too gold to be a roach, too strong to be a Bream. I was at a loss. I bundled my prize into the net and lay it on my unhooking mat. Peeling back the mesh I looked, and then looked again. Even at the third time



*Golden scales shone in the afternoon sun*

of asking I couldn't quite believe my eyes. In over thirty years of fishing at Furnace Brook I'd never landed a crucian carp from there. I'd heard the rumours, and the presence of naturally occurring F1 hybrids meant they had to exist, but until this moment I'd never seen one on the bank. True crucians are very rare and, due to their tendency to crossbreed, difficult to identify but this fish had all the hallmarks of genuine pedigree. A small, upturned mouth. The high ridged back. The 'slotted' lateral line and a concave dorsal fin all pointed at the fact that this fish was the real deal. I spotted Simon, the fishery bailiff, working on the far bank and quickly sought a second opinion. It took him a moment to work out what I was babbling on about and when he did he gave me a smile. 'Did you check for barbules?' he asked, 'I bet its an f1, I bet it's got two tiny barbules' (crucian have none) 'you wouldn't be the first to be fooled' he continued with a good natured laugh. But I persisted, and he stopped what he was doing, if only to humour me, to come and have a look for himself. He looked, then looked again and looked again a third time, repeating my actions of just minutes before. No barbules! The more we looked, the less we could find wrong. Majority rule won the day as we both agreed it was a true crucian (probably...) The scales were pressed into service for the second time in as many hours, a record in itself, and registered a very respectable weight of two pounds on the nose. I carefully returned the fish and watched it waddle off into the depths, grinning from ear to ear as it did so.

I cast out the feeder once again. Resting the swim had given more carp a chance to move in and within a minute or two there was a huge boil on the surface as another one made a bid for freedom. Not a particularly big carp, but what it lacked in size it made up for in looks and attitude. Immaculate condition with sovereign sized golden scales, flared fins and a tail to match, the carp gleamed in the late afternoon sun as it displayed its full majesty.

The setting sun lay heavy in the sky as I slowly packed away. Countless fish of five different species, with two of specimen weight, one of which was over three decades in the catching.

***I still think that the weatherman got it wrong. This wasn't the best day of the week, this was the best day of the year!***



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## A Specimen Perch ticks all the boxes



*A perfect 3lbs 1oz Perch*

### MY EARLY MEMORIES OF THE PERCH

The first fish I caught at the age of 2 under the guidance of my Dad was a small Perch on a tiny quill float fished close in to the margins on maggots. I still have that float tucked safely away out of harm's way in case the unthinkable happened and I lost it in action. That quill is cherished and caught up in many memories of my early angling adventures of the sixties and seventies so deserves to take its place in my retired collection of floats. Being born and bred in East London the boating lake at Wanstead Park, commonly known then as Perch ponds was my learning ground in my teens along with sections of the River Lea around the Waltham Abbey, Cheshunt and Broxbourne areas. Catching Perch dominated my fishing on the boating lake and a section of the boards at the top end of the lake which was a damn wall construction was where the stripeys would patrol at the bottom of the first ledge about six feet out from the bank. I would sit back from the edge of the lake not to spook the fish and fish right under my rod tip flicking out maggots as loose offering whilst fishing two white maggots on a size 18s bronze hook fishing dead depth after plumbing which offered me about 3-4ft depending where along the boards I was fishing. My favourite peg was under an old oak tree as most of the boards were void of any bankside cover and during the summer holidays the tree offered a bit of shade because if I travelled to the venue on my bike there was no room to fit my umbrella to the bike frame. I lost count of the amount of Perch I would catch every trip and the average fish was in the 12 ounce to pound mark, they were like peas in a pod and I loved catching them as the float bobbed along before gently sliding away under the surface. They were fantastic

memories and I was impressed with the appearance of the Perch just as much as catching them. The striped flanks, rough to touch, big eyes and extra-large mouths that can gorge enormous baits like small roach, gudgeon and jumbo prawns. The odd thing about the Perch was the disappointing looking tail with its orange tint, how can a predator fish that can look so menacing and threatening be given a tiny tail by Mother Nature. It almost feels like so much effort was put in to making the species so grand looking and mighty with its make up that nature run out of time and quickly stuck a tail on the end before calling it a day. With that all said, to me, the Perch is the number one predator fish that swims around our lakes, rivers, pits and canals and I spend many days on the internet looking for new venues to try visit in the pursuit of catching one over 4lbs plus.

#### THE PERCH IS ALWAYS ON MY MIND

In the past few seasons when I switched from match angler to specimen angler the Perch was one of the species to target towards the top of my list and I quickly found myself bagging many 2lbs plus specimens from a variety of waters in the Sussex and Surrey area, I have caught quite a few in the low 3lbs mark but I know to catch a 4 pounder or bigger I need to search out of the area and I have a handful of waters on a list to work my way



*Russ with a stunning brace 3lbs 3ozs and 2lbs 14ozs*



*A nice bag from a match lake*

using. Without causing too much disturbance I like to plumb from the edge of the margin and work my way back out to see if there is a flat shelf on the bottom and if there is a ledge. Ideally I am looking for a flattish area to feed and fish over as I can then be confident I am concentrating my attentions in one area to attract silvers and the intended prey around my hook baits. I feed via a pole pot using the top section plus one so I can drop the bait which is chopped up worms, red maggots and pieces of prawn plus a worm juice scent just where I want it to be, next to my float. I then on a little and often basis flick a few maggots around my float for attraction of the silverfish which will alert any decent Perch into the area in the hop that they will intercept my large prawn or lobworm offering. I am always twitching my float and bait to create movement mainly to antagonise the Perch into competing for my hookbait; it is a tactic that I have found works very well for those bonus fish.

When fishing commercials that hold a big head of match sized carp that most tend to do, water temperature is key otherwise your prawns and lobs will be feeding carp as I have found in the past. I tend to wait for long spells of cold damp weather; even better frosts before I get my Perch tackle out. I often use a water temp gauge to see what the water is reading and I get more confident of a good day's Perch fishing if the gauge is showing a temperature of 6 degrees or slightly under as the carp do go off the feed and allow the Perch to boss the bite count. Hook size is again determined by the bait I am using so if I am using say three red maggots I will use a 16s to 14s wide gape hook, if I am using big lobworms or jumbo cooked prawns then a size 8 will do the job nicely.

### **THE FIVE FISH SENSES**

A simple way to fish for the Perch but a very enjoyable approach on a cold autumn or winters day and on those purple patch days when the light is dim and overcast then the action can be manic and often I have had to throw one of my rods up the bank as fishing with two was too much. The results can be that good if you pick the right time to target the Perch and present the bait and feed in the right manner. It is worth remembering that all fish species have five senses which are smell, taste, sight, hearing and touch plus a unique sensory structure known as a lateral line which enables them to sense vibrations in the water. So if the angler can appeal to the fish senses when targeting certain species and selecting if possible when is the right time to be by the water's edge a productive day can and will be had.

I would like to wish you all a Festive season and don't forget a mince pie tastes even better when you are out fishing at Christmas.

Please check out my Fishing Tail Films You Tube channel and Subscribe as I will be uploading some Perch content very soon.

**Tight Lines and Wet Nets**

through, something I am looking forward to doing as for me it is part of the fun of specimen angling. You Tube is full of fantastic Perch videos from many talented anglers but a good 80% of the videos are catching Perch on a wide variety of lures which is fine if you like to do that sort of angling but I much prefer watching a float slide away after a few indications and ripples around a bobbing float. A few seasons back I had a purple patch of catching big 2s and 3s from Framfield Fishery in East Sussex whilst making a DVD under The Obsessed Angler title and I filmed there with Sky Sports for a Tight Lines episode with Keith Arthur which was very successful and enjoyable times.

### **THE TACTICS AND BAITS, KEEP IT SIMPLE**

The tactics I like to use for catching specimen Perch are simple but very effective especially if you like to catch them on the float. If visiting a venue for the first time I would walk the lake looking for some margin cover or an overhanging tree as they offer ambush situations plus I would scan the lake to see if I could see fish scattering as that could very well be Perch attacking its prey. With my swim chosen I will then set up two 11ft 1.25tc rods with my Shimano Stradic 4000 reels loaded with 4.4lbs mainline and then set up my terminal tackle with either a bobber float and size will be determined with how deep the swim is and what size baits I will be



*Russ with a fine three pounder*

*fishing tail films*  
RUSS EVANS

# The Golden Years of Coarse Fishing

by Bob Rolph

## *My early fishing holidays in Fowey, Cornwall*

*I first set foot in Cornwall in 1954, staying on a farm on the banks of the Fowey river upstream of Lostwithiel, taken there by my parents during the long holiday month of August. I can well recall the small fast flowing river flowing down to the town bridge and noticing large fish hanging back in the streams deep eddys behind rocks.*

These must have been small salmon for they clearly weren't barbel or chub! They fascinated me for years until I finally persuaded my Father to take me fishing down in the estuary nearer to Fowey amid the moored boats in the heart of Bass country!

Lostwithiel bridge was a 14th century packhorse bridge, but upstream there was also a stepping stone crossing of the river nearby, where I spent hours as a 9 year old boy just watching for the fish, and dreaming of catching one. We were told that the Salmon and Sea Trout came up stream to spawn when the river was in spate from Bodmin Moor but not, I think, in August. This was the silly season but it did not stop me buying some flies from the local tackle shop in Town. I was just 9 years old and had never caught a fish, save minnows and sticklebacks from my local streams in Bromley. I was hooked, I didn't even have a viable rod. I can remember those 3 flies today, 69 years on, they were an Iron Blue, a Tupps Indispensable, and a Grey Wolf. They must have caught more young boys than they ever did salmon or sea trout!

The following year we stayed in Polruan at a quest house overlooking the harbour to Fowey, and I fished on the quayside beside the ferry catching mackerel, pollock, pouting and crabs at will. I was 10 by then and had a rod of sorts, and a hand line from the tackle shop on the quay. In those days the commercial fishing boats and scallop boats used to unload their catches each day at 6 pm on the harbour dockside and I would be there to watch this operation and marvel at the huge boxes of fish being made ready to go to market. There would have been over 2 dozen commercial boats and 12 charter boats offering day trips out to the Eddystone Lighthouse reef and war time wrecks 30 miles off shore, where the fishing was outstanding. The boat 'Blue Phantom' with Mike Digby at the helm was a favourite of Bernard Venables, and several times I witnessed him returning from a days fishing with Blue Shark, Conger, Ling and Pollock littering the bottom of the boat. By now I was a boy of 13 in those far off halcyon days of the 1950s, but I have never forgotten watching the huge fish being weighed hoisted aloft on giant gantries, and then just left to die for crab pot bait, and I thought at the time 'this cannot be right'.

Looe, 10 miles east up the coast was the place for shark fishing during the 1950s, and hundreds of Blue, Mako, and Porbeagle shark were slaughtered in the pursuit of a trophy fish. There was no such thing as 'catch and release' in those far off days, all fish were killed and brought back port.



The 'Blue Shark' fishing boat

I was as guilty as most, catching huge bags of fish from Brad Holders boats Blue Shark and Thresher Shark, both Mitchell 36 open back fishing boats with the new modern Echo fish finders and GPS in the 1970s. I often steered the boat back into port as the skipper was busy gutting all the vast number of fish that we had all caught. These fish never went to waste, he must have made a fortune at the fish market with the prize ling, pollock, coal fish, conger and dogfish that we all caught. I think he only charged a tenner to go out for the day, 6 of us in the boat, all hauling out fish to die for.

You can't do it now, the fish are just not there, out for mackerel first for bait, then off the bottom with huge perks and jigs or fish baits. I did my back in catching all these fish one day in 1975!

10 years before, in 1965 of course, I was at Redmire and thought I was to become a top carp angler but other interests prevailed and I fell by the wayside in that respect!

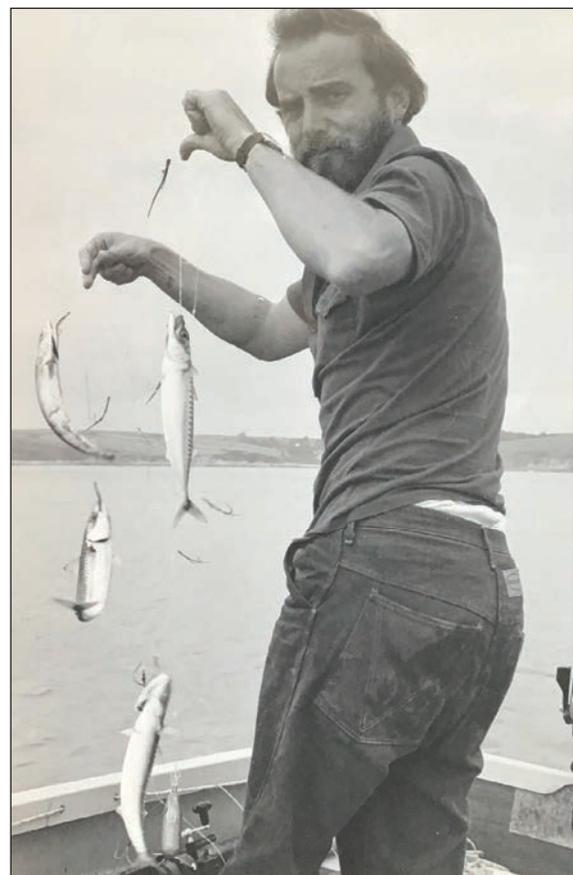
My trips down west on the A 303 started as soon as I could drive in 1964, but it was with my Father in 1954 that I first went to Fowey and was encouraged to take out boats and discovered fishing off the quayside at Polruan. A 2½ lb John Dory was my very first real good fish and then numerous strings of 6 feathered mackerel, cooked on a barbecue at the beach with mussels, cockles whelks and various sea weeds. Our B&B landlady in Polruan was inundated with the mackerel we caught, and we had them for breakfast every morning for 2 weeks! We left them in buckets outside the house and they went like hot cakes!

Dad also took me over a Destroyer moored in the harbour during regatta week in August 1957. And I became hooked on fishing, ships and the sea! Dad was a Ltnt in the RNVR during the war and still had his naval pass to visit this 'guard ship' during the 3rd week of August. I sat on the bridge, astride the guns and inside the gunpowder rooms, then we fished for Bass up the estuary over the Golant shallows, just catching small school ones. The fishing down there in the early days up to the mid 1970s was superb. Fowey town centre sported 3 fishing tackle shops, 2 boatyards and a thriving chartered boat business from the Town quay. The tiny River Fowey had a small salmon run from Lostwithiel, and I even tried my hand at catching some Grilse but it was the Bass and Mullet fishing down river over the shallows and rocks where my small boat and lures really scored. Sand Eels were prolific and proved irresistible to the small school Bass and pollock, until the size limit and ban was introduced. I've towed 4 different boats down to Cornwall in my time, and done most of the estuaries in the south of the county.

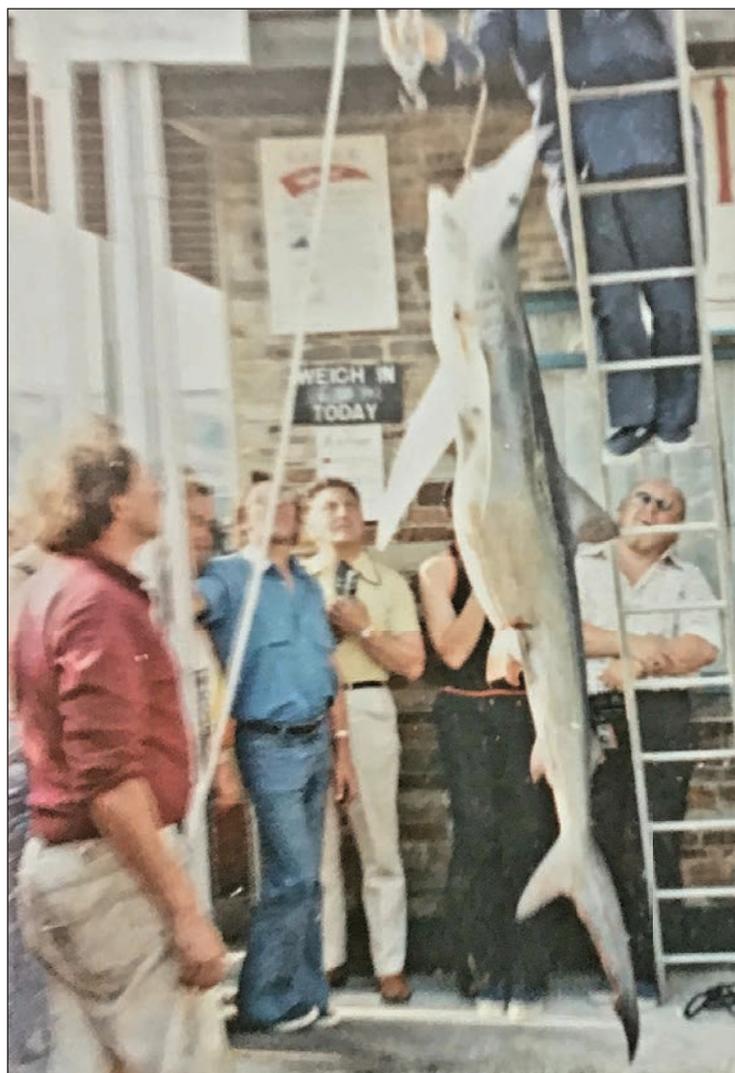
I never caught anything very big down there, but lots of fish and more than enough to cook. The Fowey of today is 4 times busier than it was when I first went there in the 1950s and is now a real sailing town. The houses of former famous writers who lived there can still be seen today, like Daphne du Maurier and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch. It has now become the 'in' place to live or have a holiday home, with people like Dawn French, Gordon Ramsay, Fern Britton and Richard and Judy living nearby and inflating the house prices. Peter Skellern lived in Polruan for 10 years which is over the harbour, linked by a diesel passenger ferry.

More recently, 5 years ago on my last visit, I relived my youth by taking my Grandson and Greatgrandson down there for a 2 weeks boating, fishing and camping holiday in August, but of course it wasn't the same, never is! The fishing was abysmal and we could hardly catch a single Mackerel, where once they were so prolific, feathering for them outside the entrance to the estuary.

I still love Fowey, but don't get down there as much as I once did. The odd huge cruise ship comes into Town today, dwarfing the original China clay ships loading from St Austell. 46,000 Tonne ships spilling out 1000 British pensioners into the small towns very narrow streets. I'm not complaining, - I would dearly like to have been one of them! The last passenger train to Fowey ran in 1968 and the old station is now a very upmarket cafe, leaving only the China clay wagons using the line down river from Par to the docks at Mixtow.



*Mackerel were ten a penny*



*Thankfully, an uncommon sight these days*

Fowey holds great memories for me and my family, and no doubt former girlfriends who I have dragged down there in past years! I remember seeing Rick Stein down there in 1974 when he was looking for his first restaurant to open, before he settled on Padstow, and the great regatta evenings down there in August with great firework displays and the Red Arrows flying just feet over our moored boats in the harbour.

The Town always was a 'scallop' port until Brexit and the French put paid to that! Heavy net dragging was in decline long before though, when you used to see and buy a dozen very cheaply from the fishmongers stalls on the harbour dockside, and we cooked them on the beach. Even local double cod and chips will set you back £20 today, and as for crab and lobster, all but distant memories unless you are a millionaire! I used to fill up my van for £2 to get me down there in 1964, 7 gallons did the 300 mile trip I seem to remember, or was it all a dream? Austin A 35 vans, they don't make them like that any more! - it never let me down!

I have caught 6 trout, 1 carp, 3 shark and 18 sea fish species in Cornwall over 68 years and loved minute of my time spent in this wonderful county. In January of each year I used to go to the London Boat Show at the old Earls Court which was a stepping stone to my outdoor adventures, and I always lusted after a boat or two. There was always a large fishing section, the Irish Tourist Board and the British Waterways Board, becoming in 2012 the Canal and Rivers Trust, these all influenced my love of canals, fishing and boats, and then when I was 11 years old I got my first copy of 'Mr. Crabtree goes Fishing' and I was on my way!

*Bob Rolph*



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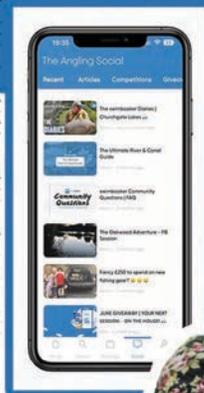
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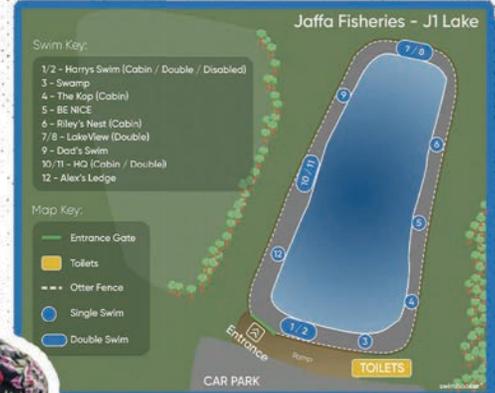
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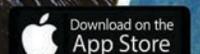
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# FISHERY SPOTLIGHT AT WYLANDS FARM

*with Glen Relf & Lee Nicoll*

**Nestled in 154 acres of beautiful English countryside, just outside of the historic town of Battle in East Sussex, Wylands Angling Centre offers a choice of nine lakes to suit all abilities from novice to the specimen hunter. Glen Relf and Lee Nicoll paid a visit to Middle Lake at the well-known venue.**

The weather had been really bad all week and a lot of water had flooded into the lakes just prior to our trip, which made me a little apprehensive as to if we would catch or not. The forecast was a bit more promising on Sunday with a strong South Westerly and showers we arrived at the lake for our short day session as the gates opened at 7am.

Once parked up and unloaded, we took a tour of the lake to see if we could see any signs of fish. At two acres and with seven swims, Middle Lake is described as 'moderately difficult'. In other words, not as challenging as the out and out specimen lakes but with a lower stocking rate than the 'runs' waters on site. A sort of halfway house, if you will, with a high percentage of the stock above mid doubles in weight and a lake record of 32lb.

The swims are well laid out and covered in woodchip. Close enough to be social but far enough apart for each swim to have its on water. There is no fishing on the car park bank, meaning that you can cast to the far margin without the risk of someone setting up opposite you.

Although the conditions weren't ideal for spotting fish, I did see a slight disturbance as a carp topped in a bay at the far end of the lake. That was enough for me to choose a swim that gave access to the area. With not much else to go on, Lee set up in the next swim along.



**Wylands Common - 20lbs 8ozs**



**Old School**

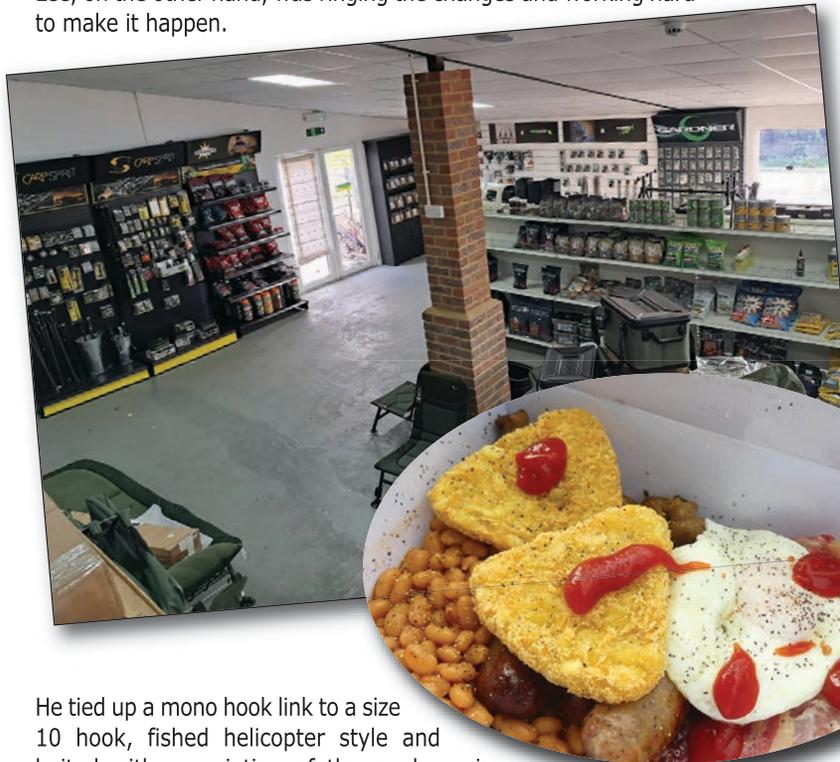


**Rig**

One of the convenient things about Middle Lake is that it is well placed in regard to the facilities that include a toilet and shower block, a farm shop (with a tackle section) and a cafe. It was the last one that drew our attention and once we had our swims sorted, Lee when and grabbed two full English breakfasts to set us up for the day.

Knowing it would be dark by 4:45pm I opted for a bag approach using a wafter hook bait balanced just light enough to be easily sucked into any feeding mouth that came along. My bag mix consisted of broken boilies with hemp and maize. With not a huge amount to go one rod was placed in the near margin, one in open water and the last towards the far margin bay where I had seen a carp top.

Lee had opted to use 2 rods only, both of which were cast to the far margin and initially using similar tactics to myself. For this trip I was using my two 10 foot Rods, which I prefer for day sessions on smaller waters. I also brought along my very first carp rod, which my parents had brought me when I was 12, paired with a Michell 300 and Original Optonic alarm and bottle top bobbin what more could I ask for? "Well a fish would have been nice" I think I spent too long admiring my old setup and neglected that I was fishing in the hear and now. Lee, on the other hand, was ringing the changes and working hard to make it happen.



He tied up a mono hook link to a size 10 hook, fished helicopter style and baited with a variation of the medusa rig, incorporating maggots and half a pop-up. Combined with a solid bag of maggots and boilie crumb and again cast to the far as close to an over hanging bush as he dare. His reasoning was that with the influx of cold water, the fish may well be reluctant to move too far or feed hard and by adding some movement to his hookbait, with the maggots, he might just induce a take.

We settled down for some more staring at my old rod and reminiscing of when we were young.

Although conditions were making the fishing challenging, we were aware that on the more prolific lake above us, House Lake, there were plenty of fish being caught. In fact it had been booked out for a match and we later found out that Freshwater Informer regular, Freddy Joe Beaney, was well on his way to winning with a very impressive weight of 121lb. Some going in late November!

Without warning, Lee got a couple of beeps on the maggot rig, we both thought silver fish were responsible, but then a long gentle pull. Not a savage take but enough to warrant striking. Lee lifted his rod and it immediately took on a fighting curve as what was clearly a carp, bore along the margin and out into open water. The small hook meant that Lee didn't want to play the fish overly hard, but with it clear that conditions were unlikely to produce many chances, nor did he want to risk the fish coming off. Such is the challenge of winter fishing.

I helped out as best I could with helpful advice, such as "Don't loose it" and "We need this fish". Thankfully he listened and after a protracted battle, with the fish hugging the lakebed, he finally had the carp chugging around under the rod tip where I was able to net it. We readied the mat and sling and gently hoisted the fish onto the bank. With poetic timing the sun broke through the clouds and we treated to the sight of an immaculate Common Carp in its winter splendour. Not a scale out of place and with a huge paddle like tail. It looked like a twenty and this was confirmed by the scales, weighing in at 20lb 8oz. Not the biggest fish in the lake but a fabulous example of the sort of quality that's available at the venue. With the pictures taken and the fish returned to its watery home, we re-baited and recast with renewed enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, the rain returned and I went back to looking at my old rod for a couple more hours and with the light failing, it was time to pack up and head to the warm of home. There was no need to be disappointed. We both had a very enjoyable day, an amazing breakfast and, in conditions that were less than ideal, had managed to bank a pristine twenty pounder. Lee showed that it certainly pays to think outside of the box at this time of year and I certainly saw enough to warrant another visit in the near future.

**All fishing at Wylands Angling Centre MUST be pre-booked either via [www.wylands.co.uk](http://www.wylands.co.uk) or [www.swimbooker.com](http://www.swimbooker.com)**

### Bookings

To see full booking details, click on the image tabs below.

Upcoming
Historical

**Wylands Angling Centre**

2 Anglers | 0 Guest | 19th November 2023

<b>Lake</b>	Wylands Angling Centre
<b>No. of Anglers</b>	2
<b>No. of Guests</b>	0
<b>Selected</b>	2 Ticket

**Dates & Times**

Arrival Details: 19/11/2023 07:00

Departure Details: 19/11/2023 19:00



Lee Young - 30lbs Common 'Patch', Tricklebrook



Will Hendo - 33lbs Mirror, Cackle Hill



Martin Lyttle - 44lb Mirrors, Darenth Big Lake



Ralph Saunders - 5lbs Tench, Majors Lake

# PINIONS

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Tony Doss - 41lbs 4ozs Catfish, Cackle Hill



Daisy, Joe & Eve Grimes - Perch, Club Water



Alfie Hogben - One Eyed Common, Cottington

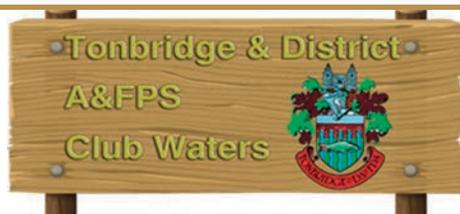


Graham Beadle - 21lbs 8ozs Mirror, Tricklebrook



Mitchell - 64lbs 8ozs Catfish, Cackle Hill

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Also large Roach and Rudd to 3lbs and large eels.

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Student 16-18 years - £35 + £10 Joining fee

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Contact Martyn on **07802 248861**



### Hastings Bexhill & District Freshwater Angling Association

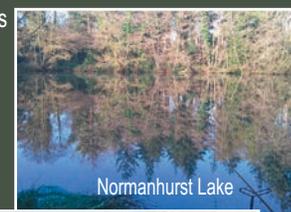
Season runs from 1st April to 31st March.

Established in 1895 the association provides its members and day ticket anglers with various lakes and rivers to fish throughout Hastings, Bexhill and the surrounding area.

We currently have seven waters that provide a mixture of species at specimen weights to suit all anglers' preferences. As well as the lakes run by the association we also offer members the ability to fish various stretches of river in the surrounding area.

The association provides waters to suit all ages, abilities and interests so there's something for everyone.

To apply to become a member please download and print the application form from our website. Complete and return to the Membership officer on the application, alternatively it is possible to purchase your membership from any of the tackle shops listed on our website.



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For further information please contact:

Chris Pagan 07429 65237 Steve Potter 07935 268174

Postal enquiries: S Corke, 2 The Siding, Bexhill-on-Sea TN40 1RF

[hastingsandbexhillangling.co.uk](http://hastingsandbexhillangling.co.uk)

### The Linton Angling Society - Membership Vacancies

We are a small but friendly club with beautiful lake, 2 ponds, 5 reservoirs and over 8 miles of fishing on the River Medway and Bault.

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For further details contact: **Jason Tuckey on 07983 569220** e-mail: [lassecretary@lintonangling.co.uk](mailto:lassecretary@lintonangling.co.uk)

[www.lintonangling.co.uk](http://www.lintonangling.co.uk)

# Simple Sea Fishing

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# TRONIXPRO

## Big Winter Flounder Fishing by Mike Thrussell Jnr

**A**fter a summer and autumn feeding inside the estuaries, the now peak condition flounder begin a slow migration seawards with eventual New Year spawning in mind. November onwards is the very best time to target a specimen sized shore flattie.

The migration is very staggered, with some fish beginning to move out with the flood waters of November, with others holding in the deeper holes of the outer estuary channels during December and January before working their way on to the adjacent beaches. In late February/early March, it's not unusual to see individual peak conditioned flounder yet to head seawards alongside the first thin spawned out flounder returning inshore.

### WHERE AND WHEN TO FIND WINTER FLOUNDER

Pre mid-January, some bigger flounder will stay inside the estuaries and are found in the deeper parts of the estuary channels but moving ever closer to the outflow or bar. They move onto the shallower banks to feed as the tide floods in. They also favour any seed mussel beds and will be found tight to small areas of rougher ground where the sand line meets.

As they move out of the estuaries they will hold for a while on the open beaches and are typically taken from slightly deeper sandy gullies and gutters and will work tight to the tideline and right into the edge of the surf tables. Again, also look to fish close to small areas of rougher ground or mussel beds. They also like to sit in the washed-out holes that are typically found where there are posts in the sand or at the ends of groynes towards high water.

### WEATHER AND TIDES

You will catch big flounder in calmer seas, but the biggest fish like the rougher weather and bigger surfs, especially seas just calming off after a good gale has gone through. They do, though, tend to stay outside the main surf line in the slightly deeper water, taking advantage of any undertow that drags food washed out of the sand back out to sea. They can be caught day or night, though night tides, especially those that see low water, start to flood in darkness, giving the best opportunities, especially on the shallower surf beaches.

Most tide sizes can produce the good flatties, but mostly look to the bigger tides, especially those rising in height each consecutive day, as giving the best chance. Low water through to mid-tide is the optimum time, with the bigger fish less inclined to move to the high tide line areas, preferring the slightly deeper water at this time of year.

### TACKLE FOR FLOUNDER

Estuary fishing can still be done with the lighter rods rated for 2 to 5oz fishing around 12ft in length, the Tronixpro Banzai Light or Banzai Bass is ideal for this. Add a 6000 sized fixed spool loaded with 20lb Tronixpro Power Braid or 18lb Blaze Mono and a 40lb Xenon Shockleader and you have balanced tackle. For the open beaches and bigger seas, look to rods in

Tronixpro Boss  
George Cunningham  
with a quality winter  
flounder



the 12 to 14ft length, rated to cast up to 60zs. Multiplier reels like the Banzai Tournament Mono Mag loaded with 18/20lb Blaze Mono and a 60lb Xenon Shockleader can be used, or an 8000 sized fixed spool reel, like the Banzai LC Surf carrying 30lb Tronixpro Power Braid and a 60/80lb braid shock leader.

For the estuary and open beach, a 1 up/1 down rig works best for these bigger flatties. The hook lengths can be clear 20lb mono like Tronixpro Blackout or better still AXIA Fluorocarbon and no more than 15-inches (38cms) in length. Use 15-inches in calmer seas, go as short as 10-inches (25cms) in rougher seas.

Even for these bigger fish, a size 2 to 1 Tronixpro Aberdeen Hook is plenty big enough. Go bigger and even the bigger fish will try to choke the bait in but don't always get properly hooked.

Beads and attractors for these bigger fish are less effective, but in seas carrying some colour, try a single luminous green 4 mm bead directly above the hook, which can help draw the fish in.

**WHICH BAITS**

Both blow and black lugworm work well in the rougher seas, as will fresh peeler crab if you can get it. Other baits to use are fresh mussel which naturally can be deadly close to seed mussel beds, razorfish which get washed out of the sand in rougher weather, and queen cockle if you get the chance to pick these up on the shoreline after a big gale has churned them out of the sand and washed them inshore. The other top bait is frozen mackerel strip. It's a much-maligned bait for flounder yet is one of the most successful.

King rag will take the odd flounder, but generally speaking, it is a secondary bait and in some areas gets very few bites.

Something to try is to tip lugworm baits with razorfish, crab, mussel, or queen cockle. For some reason, flounder love a combination bait. In the post-Christmas period, if you can get a few snake white ragworm, then try these as they can be killers.

**TACTICS**

As mentioned, your chances improve if you locate the deeper holes in the estuary channels, which is where these flounder like to sit and maybe acclimatise to the more open sea conditions. Also put baits tight to the seed mussel beds or edge of any rougher ground.

On the beaches, take note of where the main inner surf tables start to break and try to cast just beyond these to where the water looks slightly calmer due to increased depth. This is where the big flounder like to hold up and feed.

It always pays to fish the deeper parts of the beach at this time of year. Look for areas where the surf pattern is closer to shore as this notes there is deeper water closer in just behind the surf tables and the big flounder seek these out.

These bigger flounder seem to be lazier at this time of year and won't chase baits that are moving a lot in the tide and waves. To combat this and keep a bait tight to the seabed, add a single or double SSG split shot just above the hook. This stops the bait being lifted as much as a wave passes overhead and makes for a more static target for the fish to hit.

These winter flounder don't always move off with the bait and register a bite on the rod tip. You only know you've got one on when you reel in to re bait.

In these rougher seas use a bigger bait but don't leave it out longer than 20-minutes so that there is a good scent trail leeching out of it. The flounder only follow up strong scent trails, not weak ones.



## Hooked On Bass



Joe Grimes with a 6lbs 9ozs Bass

**A shoulder injury didn't stop Hooked On Greens, Joe Grimes from fulfilling his ambition of catching a bass from a Sussex Beach.**

Fishing through the discomfort, Joe still made regular trips to the coast when conditions looked right. Landing a succession of fish including dogfish and conger eel, it all came together when he swapped to a small live bait, fished on a zip-line rig to land this metallic silver bass of 6lbs 9ozs. Well worth the pain!



Joe with a nice Dogfish



and a shore caught Conger

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# TROUT INFORMER



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Quality Rainbows in the 3-4lbs range have been caught in November mainly on Buzzers and Damsels, with Trout putting up a good fight. We have stocked larger Trout for the Winter so it's all to play for at Tenterden. Water levels are high and the fish are active on the back of the colder nights. We have a comfortable Fishing Lodge for you to make a cuppa with our compliments and enjoy some lunch, which all adds to a good fishing experience at Tenterden. We have a heated/comfortable Shepherds Hut where you can stay and fish with 20% off fishing permits this Winter. We are in the Top 50 Stillwater Trout Fisheries in the British Isles and a Trout Master Stillwater. Gift vouchers are available for permits, tuition and staycations for Christmas. **Christmas Closing: 24/25/26 December only. Open for New Year! We wish all our Anglers and Fishery Friends a very Happy Christmas & New Year!** Follow us on Instagram & Facebook. **Tight Lines, Gaynor, Richard & Audrey.**

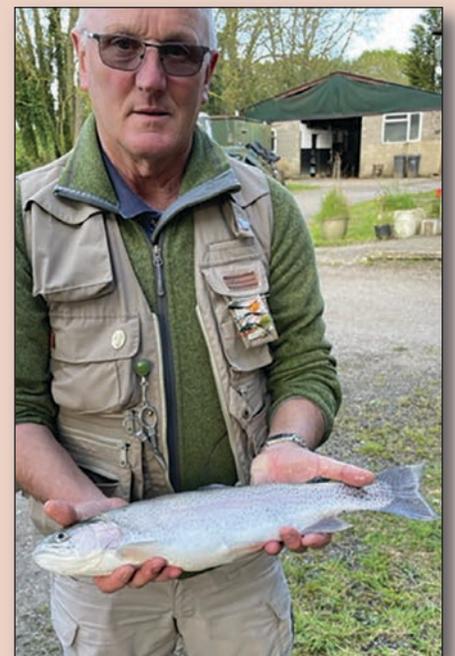


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In last month's article I wrote about a two day trip to Llyn Clywedog reservoir. Our homeward journey saw James Gardner and I heading towards the Midlands where our destination was Draycote reservoir.

### **Draycote reservoir [CV23 8AB]**

James had never been to Draycote before, and I'd only fished there once, many years ago. So we were both excited at the prospect of fishing somewhere new. By coincidence, the 'England Fly Fishers Association' were having a friendly match on the reservoir, with James being a member he was able to invite me as his guest, lucky me. After two days fishing deep at Clywedog, we were now faced with a lowland reservoir where the water temperature was likely to be even higher. So we had resigned ourselves to the prospect of 'having to go "down and dirty" on Di5's and Di7's. A chance conversation with another angler who'd fished the previous day, completely changed my mind. He informed me the fish had been up on dries! Suddenly the overcast, mild day looked like it was going to be perfect for my CDC Hoppers.

After a lot of good natured banter we left the boat dock at 10am, heading up-wind towards 'Rainbow Corner'. We reasoned that if the fish were indeed feeding off the surface they should be heading in that direction. As we neared the bank I spotted a couple of fish breaking the surface in a narrow wind lane. Wind lanes are calm strips of water that trap food and they can be trout magnets. The sides of wind lanes, where the calm water meets the ripple is the "sweet spot". I angled my first cast across the wind putting the two CDC Hoppers into the prime area. James had sensibly opted to fish a team of nymphs, 'washing line' style on a floating line. It would only take seconds to change to dries, if necessary.

Half a hour in and I've missed two offers to my Hoppers, so I downsized putting a Bob's Bits on the point, and a Fulling Mill Parasol Buzzer on the dropper. Shortly after this change I had another offer, this time to the 'Parasol Buzzer' but it didn't attempt to take the fly, rather it tried to eat the bright orange floss that suspends the buzzer!

I immediately took the hint and put a FM Davie McPhail Orange Hopper on the dropper, and a CDC Orange Hopper on the point. This was an instant success with two fish falling to the 'McPhail's Orange Hopper'. James had also caught on his team of flies, one on the [FAB] Blob point fly and another on a Cormorant on his middle dropper.

Lunch-break, time to find out how everyone else was getting on? To our surprise we were in the chasing pack. A couple of anglers had bagged up just off the jetty, apparently where the fish are stocked, who knew? Buoyed up by our success we headed back to 'Rainbow Corner' making short drifts at first, all the way along 'Barn Bank' towards 'The Inlet'. We endured long periods without any signs of fish, only to catch one or two on consecutive casts. We assumed there were small pods of feeding fish out in open water, as we would then endure long fish-less periods. We couldn't predict where or when we would encounter more fish. So we settled on much longer drifts now, more in hope than expectation. We did to bump into more fish, again in open water, far from any obvious holding features. We knew the other anglers were struggling, you can always tell because the other boats are aimlessly motoring around, looking for inspiration!

As the sun dipped closer to the horizon it became very difficult to pick out my flies in the silvery light. I kept drying the 'McPhail's Orange Hopper' and re-proofing it, making sure it sat up on the surface. I replaced the CDC Hopper with a FM Hopper Popper, in Orange of course. I 'Ginked' its foam post to make it more visible, while the body sat below the surface. This worked a treat and added another couple of fish to my tally.

By now James decided to change to dries and immediately caught a fish, but was also struggling with the glare. I gave him one of my 'Tango' flies, a shockingly large 'sugar cube' Shipman's buzzer with 5mm hot orange foam cubes, fore and aft. Believe it or not, he had a 'double up' straight away losing the fish on the 'Tango', along with the fly! Another 'Tango' was sent out and quickly found another willing customer. As our day came to an end, we reluctantly left the feeding fish! The day had been challenging, but we'd caught a respectable amount. James finished in the top dozen, and I'd somehow managed to be 'top guest' rod.

**Fulling Mill  
Parasol Buzzer**



**Fulling Mill Davy McPhail  
Orange Hopper**



**Fulling Mill  
Orange Hopper Popper**





Vibe Blade baits catch all predators

## Predator season

Autumn had finally arrived and, after our enjoyable three day trout fishing break, I was now ready to start my predator fishing.

Visits to Rutland [LE15 8HD] and Pitsford [NN6 9SJ] were uneventful, so it was with some trepidation when I arrived at Bewl Water [TN3 8JH] for my first trip of the season. The water temperature was 17 degrees 'C', similar to the other reservoirs I'd

fished recently. Gary Collins was in charge of the boat, although I did make several suggests as to where we should fish. To my surprise the echo sounder's screen 'lit up' showing large shoals of bait-fish in 20ft to 25ft of water. We hoped these were our target species perch. We cast our lures in the first spot and immediately received a series of sharp taps and plucks, as the baits fluttered down through the last few feet of water before hitting bottom. Cast after cast produced the same result, small hungry perch. Changing lure styles and methods produced the same results, more mini perch, but no 'lunkers'.

Time to search another spot, we headed to an open water feature that is surrounded by deep water. Again the perch were eager to snaffle our lures, using larger lures only resulted in less hooked fish. Gary hadn't expected to be fishing for perch, however his choice of 'Kuusmano' spoons worked far better than either of us had expected. After casting out he let the 'Rasanen' spoon sink to the bottom before starting the retrieve, as soon as he got taps and plucks he stopped and 'fluttered' the spoon back down to the bottom. A brief pause before resuming the retrieve almost always saw him hook a perch. On every occasion the fish had completely engulfed the spoons treble hook, with all three points in their mouths!

I was using smaller baits on lighter tackle which was more tuned towards perch fishing. I was catching plenty of fish mainly on Vibe-baits and Chatterbaits, both of which have a "high frequency" vibration. It was noticeable that I was losing a high percentage of these fish, especially if they were hooked in the corner of the mouth, where the membrane is very fragile. Switching to a softer tipped rod and changing to less vigorous lures saw more fish boated. Without doubt the 'dropshot' method solved the problem completely, but we were still only catching small perch. Using spoons did allow me to fish large areas quickly as I searched the entire feature. I was still hoping to encounter some pike that would be drawn to the feature by the large shoals of perch.

Eventually we had to move on, we were on a mission to identify new holding areas and features which held shoals of bait-fish, regularly. Our aim is to increase the number of spots we fish later this season, when the water cools and we become more focused on pike. In the past we've had a handful of 'spots' that we've fished regularly. This means, if our favourite spots are not frequented by pike, then they will not to see our lures! It's impossible to fish the whole reservoir by ourselves. Our strategy now is to find more features, in various depths, which will hopefully help us identify a pattern in the pike's behaviour. So why bother I hear you ask? Fishing for the unknown is the "holy grail" in our book. With most waters fished heavily there are few surprises any more, and even less unknown fish. Bewl has produced huge pike in the



Gary Collins enjoying his perch fishing

past, but in recent years it has been eclipsed by other trout reservoirs.

Very rarely do we see other anglers fishing for pike on a regular basis, which only goes to show "it's a tough nut to crack".

Encouraging other pike anglers to fish where you are fishing isn't something I would normally do, especially if we were catching. I mean who seriously would want to share their pike fishing? The fact is we haven't figured it out yet despite a lot of effort. We have caught doubles and the occasional twenty.

However we still believe Bewl has the potential to throw up a few very special pike. So if you really fancy a challenge, I'll see you there? But be prepared to struggle, and remember the reservoir anglers mantra "it only takes one fish to make your day, or season".

*Tight lines, Andy Lush*



Two for the price of one!



Chatterbaits can be fished close to snags or weeds



## GUIDED LURE & FLY FISHING DAYS

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**CARP & PIKE** More anglers are looking to find exciting ways of catching their favourite fish. Carp off the top during the summer takes a lot of beating. Pike in the spring and autumn, whatever their size they are a lot of FUN on the fly!

**TO BOOK A DAY** email: [info@thefriendlyfisherman.co.uk](mailto:info@thefriendlyfisherman.co.uk) with your contact phone number and Andy will call you back and discuss details.





# Absolute Tackle

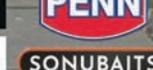


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## Tonbridge & District Angling & FP Society



**BARDEN LAKE** The lake re-opened on 1st November and has been fishing well for the members that have stuck by the club since the loss of 32 fish. Plenty of fish over 30lbs and lots of 20lbs+ fish being caught. A few reasonable Pike also being caught. Day Ticket fishing has been suspended until further notice.

**HAYSDEN LAKE** Good bags of silver fish still being caught plus some nice Pike to 23lbs being caught.

**OLD BALLAST PIT** The platforms on the railway side are now complete and are being well used by pleasure and Carp anglers. Good nets of silvers to nearly 20lbs reported plus some good Bream to nearly 7lbs and Tench to just over 5lbs.

**NEW LAGOON** The Water level is at it's maximum again now and the fishing is still very good. Decent silvers, Carp to 8lbs, Tench to 6lbs and Bream to 4lbs still being caught.



### MATCH RESULTS

**CHEESEMAN CUP Hartlake Down**  
 1st Colin Fowler 8lbs 10z  
 2nd Andrew Goldthorpe 6lbs 6ozs  
 3rd Steve Parker 6lbs 3ozs

**HOUGHTON CUP 3 Haysden Lake**  
 1st Austin Battell 11lbs 9ozs  
 2nd Lee Wakeman 11lbs  
 3rd Colin Fowler 9lbs 14oz

**RON WILLIAMS CUP Ballast Pit**  
 1st Lee Wakeman 33lbs  
 2nd David Brooks 19lbs 14ozs  
 3rd Austin Battell 15lbs 7ozs

**HOUGHTON CUP 4 Hartlake Up**  
 1st Larry Howard 8lbs 15ozs  
 2nd Austin Battell 4lbs 10ozs  
 3rd Steve Parker 4lbs 5ozs



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## A Specimen angler in the making

**Felix Hardie** is a name that we've been seeing crop up more and more on the Junior Informer news desk. Catching a variety of species, from a mix of venues, 12 year old Felix is well on his way to becoming a very accomplished and well rounded young angler. His latest catch came from Rosie's Lake at Wylands Farm. This chunky common carp that weighed in at a very impressive 23lbs 5ozs. We can't wait to see what he manages to catch with this months HULK bait package prize from Sussex Bait Developments.



## Michael's monster move

**Michael Parslow** might only be 12 years old but he is already displaying watercraft beyond his years. On only his second ever predator trip, Michael took the decision to move swims on a hunch that the fish were sheltering in the margins and was duly rewarded when this 15lbs 2ozs Pike picked up



his joey mackerel bait, that he had cast under an overhanging bankside tree. Great angling. We're sure that Michael will be able to put some of the great tips in Carl Smith's book to good use in the coming months.

## The next generation

**Archibald Benjamin Knight** became the youngest ever angler to feature within these pages when his mother, Rosie, sent in a catch report just days before he was born. Now out in the big wide world, Archibald is already joining mum and Dad, Dominic, out on the Bank.





Josh Belton - 21lbs 12ozs Mirror, Wylands Middle Lake



Charlie Siggs - PB 14lbs Pike, Summers Ponds



Jayden Kavanagh - Common Carp, Orchard Place Farm



Devon Castleman - 16lbs 1oz Mirror, Clive Vale



Joshua Keilthy - 15lbs Common Carp,



Charlie Young - 34lbs 8ozs Mirror, Tricklebrook



Reggie Tanner, age 4 - 1st ever fish



Theo Watting, PB 13lbs Common, Club Water



Ollie Hakeman - Perch, River Medway



Tia Kentell & George Cox and their Carp



Freddie Steel - PB Tench, Holiday Park, Devon



Tommy Goodman - Specimen Perch, Tricklebrook



Zac Cross - 10lbs Common Carp, Wylands



Harvey Cassidy, PB 22lbs Common, Hawkhurst

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## December update

by instructor Warren White



**Now with clocks going back and the nights drawing in and fishing in general getting harder due to the weather getting colder, it is that time of year that school coaching sessions get cut from an all-day session to half a day, which works well. As an angling coach, with winter approaching, if you are going to carry on coaching throughout the winter, especially if you are working with young people, you have got to have some venues up your sleeve that you know you are capable of catching from, which is never easy.**

Our main venue at Hadlow college, which is an excellent fishery that we use a lot from spring to Autumn, is now getting hard to catch. The Carp, that we have been catching on top up until a few weeks ago, are now in the lower layers of the lake trying to find the warmer water. The Silver fish that are normally in abundance have now stopped feeding.

On a recent visit to the fishery with Rowhill school students, the lads whip fishing with maggot never got a bite, the lads using rod and reel fishing the waggler, with corn and pellet blanked but the best method on the day was pole fishing in the margins. Corn and band pellet were tried but to no avail, but a bunch of maggots on 10 hook caught the only two Carp of the day. This shows that in cold conditions, Carp want a live bait.

We tend to fish the local river cray and Darent at this time of the year, mainly because they fish well,



*A nice Carp caught on maggots*



*Nathan with a fine Dace, caught trotting on the River Cray*

but a lot depends on the weather. Ideally you want the river to be flushed through with rain. The Cray and Darent are small rivers, in the summer they look low and in places you can walk across the river in wellies, but come the Autumn and a drop of rain, the rivers are transformed into a different river. I personally like fishing the river after a lot of rain has passed through and the river starts dropping. As the still waters get harder to fish at this time of year, the rivers are a great option to take our students. Not only because there is a lot of fish on offer including Chub, Dace, roach and Pike. But in doing so the young people get to try new fishing skills such as trotting and are catching river fish such as Dace and Chub and Pike, that they wouldn't normally see fishing the still waters in summer.

We have some really good students on our courses at the school, one lad who recently enrolled on the BTEC

fisheries course at the school is Reggie, who I named 'The Perch Whisperer' for his knack of catching big Perch. Reggie is a nice lad, he is certainly a beacon of light at the School for everything to do with fishing, he is ultra keen and would fish all day and night if he could. As well as attending the BTEC Fisheries on Thursdays, he also attends as many other angling sessions going on at the school, as he is allowed. He certainly thinks out of the box when fishing and has had some cracking catches of good Perch on a number of different methods.

To be able to learn about fishing at school really suits a lad like Reggie, as this is a subject he is good at, and one he loves. It might be that you are not so academic in school, but doing something you really like brings out the best in you. But don't think it is all about going fishing, by enrolling onto the BTEC Fishery course, there is a certain amount of paperwork that has to be completed, but you would be surprised how quick the students can get their worksheets completed, if the reward is to go fishing.

Recently highlighted in media circles is the increasing amount of student absenteeism in the wake of the pandemic. A huge slice of the Covid generation have never got back into the habit of regularly attending school, which is a worrying fact for the student's education, but I have found on my fishing courses that attendance is high.

I have heard some of Reggie's friends, jokingly say he only comes to School to go fishing, that's fine by me as long as it encourages him to go to school and get a good education. Most angling coaching that goes on, tends to be in the warmer months from April to Sept when the weather is warmer and the fish are on the feed and is when the most of the coaching events happen throughout the year. There are the odd specialist coaches that teach Pike fishing in the winter months but on a general rule, angling coaching is kept to the warmer months.

At Rowhill School, because we teach fishing throughout out the year, come rain or shine, as a fishing coach, it is in late Autumn and the Winter that you really earn your money. When I go fishing myself, and I wake up in the morning on a Winter's day, if it is bucketing down with rain outside with a easterly wind blowing, like most of anglers, I would probably stay in doors. But if you coach throughout the Winter you have an obligation to the school and its students to provide some form of tuition. To be honest I love coaching throughout the winter months as this involves doing more fishing on a our local rivers and it is great to get young people to try river fishing as most young people only fish on still waters these days. Organizing sessions at this time of the year does have its challenges. Last week, I had a fishing session arranged for one of our School groups, looking at the weather forecast the day before, it was forecasting heavy rain and gale force winds for the day of the session, which wouldn't look good on my risk assessment form. Come the morning of the session, myself and the school were contemplating cancelling the session, but we decided to give it a go and if the weather got bad we would stop fishing. In gale force winds you have always got to be cautious of trees coming down, and at the end of the day, the student's safety is paramount. As it happened we turned up at the fishery and the wind and rain wasn't as bad as expected, but what we hadn't bargained for was that the nearby small river had burst its banks, flowing onto the fishery entrance, which made it impossible to enter the fishery. Sometimes you cannot beat nature!

With Christmas just around the corner, one question I often get asked by parents of young people that I coach is "I want to buy my child a rod and reel, what do you suggest?"

All good tackle shops will be able to offer advice and have a selection of reasonably priced starter kits. I can particularly recommend The Tackle Box at Dartford, who sponsor our work at Fishing 4 Schools and are always happy to help young anglers get started in our great sport.



*Reggie 'The Perch Whisperer' with an impressive Stripey*

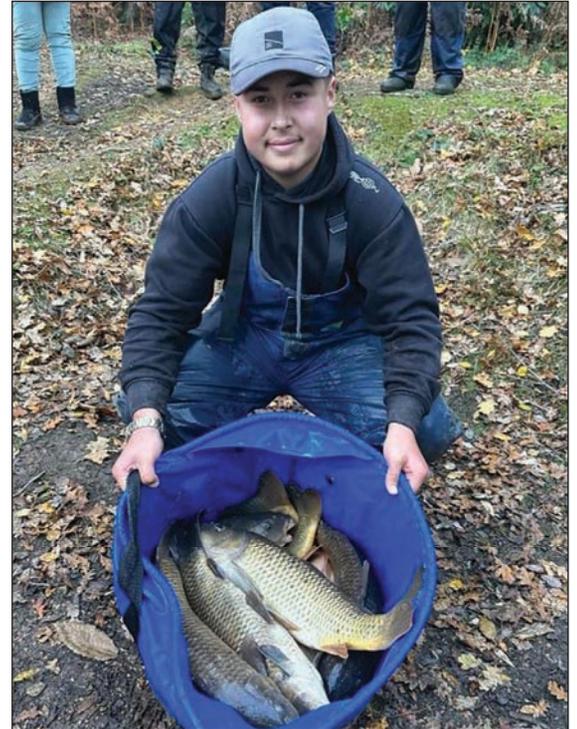
## Like a fish to water

**Jen Pocock** has only been fishing a short while but already has an enviable catching record, landing twenty pound carp, big tench and huge roach. Her latest exploits took place at Shirkoak Fishery where she chose to target the venues predator population. True to form, it didn't take long for Jen to hook, and land, this formidable looking pike of 15lbs 2ozs and set yet another personal best.



## Freddy wins again

Freshwater informer regular, **Freddy Joe Beaney** has continued with his winning ways since turning his attention to match fishing. At a recent match on House Lake at Wylands Angling Centre, Freddy beat his nearest rival by over 30lbs, weighing in a total of 121lbs feeder caught carp.



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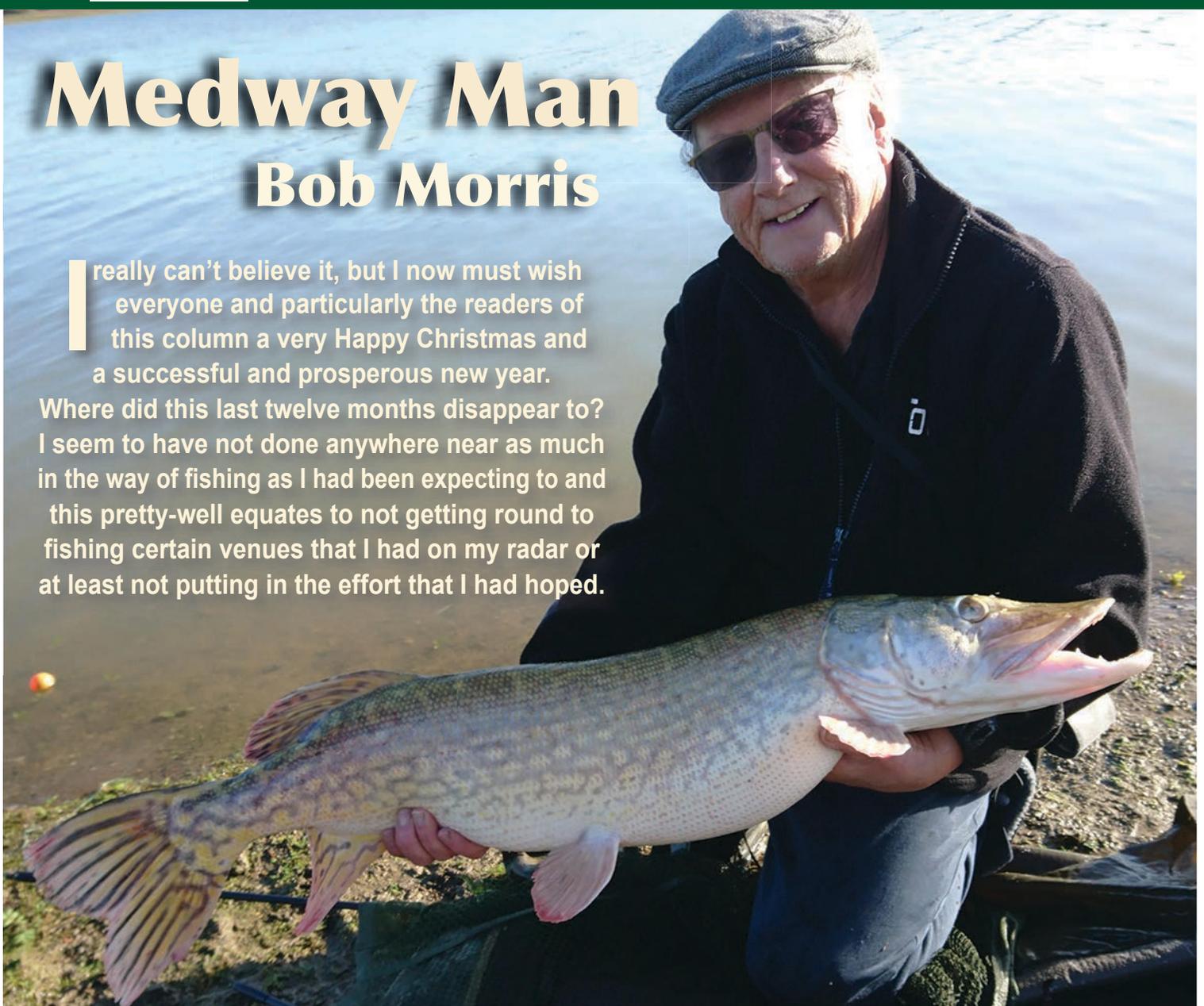
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# Medway Man

## Bob Morris

I really can't believe it, but I now must wish everyone and particularly the readers of this column a very Happy Christmas and a successful and prosperous new year.

Where did this last twelve months disappear to? I seem to have not done anywhere near as much in the way of fishing as I had been expecting to and this pretty-well equates to not getting round to fishing certain venues that I had on my radar or at least not putting in the effort that I had hoped.



Does it matter? Well, going back a few years I would have said yes because the whole angling experience was tied up with targets and achievements of one sort or another. This often, at least initially, revolved around catching big fish from certain waters or in more recent years cracking a new venue and getting the best results possible from it and this is still my usual objective to this day. I do however find these days that I am more likely to simply gauge my fishing success by the enjoyment of simply being out and about at the waterside and taking in the atmosphere of the environment. This does not mean that I don't get disappointed with a blank session or a series of them, but I realise that despite my best efforts this is always going to be a constant feature of angling, particularly when you put yourself up against new waters with unknown potential. As I have said before, often a grim session on the action front has been well and truly salvaged by my observations of the local wildlife and environment.

I am well into my piking now and although action has been slow, to put it mildly, I have been really enjoying my sessions – even the ones where I have not only blanked but also got a severe soaking from the extremely heavy rain showers that have been a regular hazard so far this autumn.

Last month I described how I had been using a sliding float system without a depth stop to cut down on resistance to a taking fish due to weed and various other obstructions. I am pleased to report that, although few and far between, recently most of my action has come while using this tactic. As I said before this has yet to be tried in deeper water but my experimental frame of mind on the Pike front has been activated here and I



*A nineteen pounder caught on a barbel rod and centrepin (the blood is from Bob!)*

will now do some trials on different venues, although arguably this method would not be needed in most normal situations. I also spoke last time about my use of barbel rods and centrepin reels for piking in some of the close-range areas that I have been fishing (frequently on rivers, drains, canals etc) and I was delighted a couple of weeks back to catch my best pike so far this season while fishing this way. The fish weighed 19 1/4 lb (pictured) and gave me a spectacular scrap on this light set up – something that you often don't get when using heavier gear. Something else that I have been trying for a little

while now is the elastic hair rig. As regular readers will know I use single barbless hooks for my piking combined with a hair rig and relatively small dead baits. I normally use a strong nylon or braid for the actual hair but have been experimenting for some time with what you might call a 'bungy' version. For this variation the hair is constructed of elastic or rubber (see picture). The reasoning behind this is that if a pike is clamping the bait tight in its jaws at the point of striking, it is possible that the hook will not move and so, fail to get the Pike hooked. The stretch in the elastic in theory allows enough movement to rectify this problem. I have been using this method recently and although it is almost impossible to prove that it helps, I have not lost any pike while using it. Watch this space for more info.



...repent at leisure - wear a glove!

A final point about pike this month. Although it is true that by using the above methods, I find that most fish are hooked just inside the scissors (corner of the mouth) which removes the need to engage in grisly bankside surgery, I still believe it a good idea to use a glove when handling them as it doesn't matter how well you think you can handle them it is always possible to make a mistake. I found myself without my gloves when handling the 19 pounder in the picture and managed to severely gash the back of my fingers when my grip slipped. I was then unable to hold the pike up for a picture and it took the best part of the evening to stop it bleeding. Fortunately, I found that a couple of pints of real ale at the pub later that evening sorted it out in the end.



Sin in haste...



Best Fishes, Festivities & Safety Measures - Bob Morris

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**Angling Clubs & Societies**

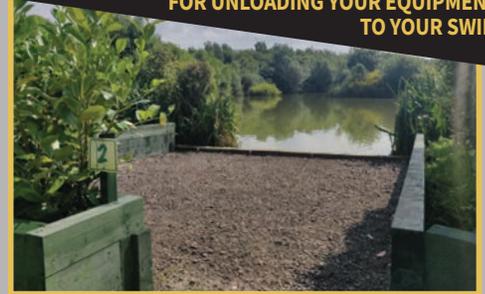
<b>Bromley (Kent) &amp; District AS</b> PO Box 895, East Grinstead RH19 9ND Email: <a href="mailto:bdas-kent-enquiry@bdaskent.co.uk">bdas-kent-enquiry@bdaskent.co.uk</a>	
<b>Cinder Hill Fly Fishing</b> Membership available from email: <a href="mailto:r.nathan@btinternet.com">r.nathan@btinternet.com</a>	<b>01892 770903</b>
<b>Hastings Bexhill &amp; District</b> Postal enquiries to S.Corke, 2, The Sidings, Bexhill On Sea TN40 1RF Chris Pagan <b>07429 655237</b> / Steve Potter <b>07935 268174</b>	
<b>Linton Angling Society</b> Jason Tuckey on <b>07983 569220</b> or email <a href="mailto:lassecretary@lintonangling.co.uk">lassecretary@lintonangling.co.uk</a>	
<b>Tonbridge &amp; District A &amp; FPS</b> PO Box 131, Tonbridge TN11 8WB	Martyn <b>07802 248861</b>
<b>Wantsum Angling Association</b> or contact via website <a href="http://www.wantsumaa.co.uk">www.wantsumaa.co.uk</a>	<b>01227 678063</b>



# Mousehole Lakes

NINE ACRES - THREE LAKES

**BAILIFF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**  
FOR UNLOADING YOUR EQUIPMENT  
TO YOUR SWIM



Kestrel Lake



Swift Lake



Swift Lake



## SWIFT LAKE (Match/Pleasure) up to 2 Rods

Day Ticket : £10

## KESTREL LAKE up to 3 Rods

Day Ticket : £25

24 hours : £40

36 hours : £55

48 hours : £70

5 days : £145

6 days : £160

60 hours : £85

72 hours : £100

84 hours : £115

96 hours : £130

7 days : £175

Exclusive Hire up to 6 anglers for 48 hours : £450



Kingfisher Lake

## KINGFISHER LAKE up to 3 Rods

Day Ticket : £20

24 hours : £35

36 hours : £50

48 hours : £65

5 days : £140

6 days : £155

60 hours : £80

72 hours : £95

84 hours : £110

96 hours : £125

7 days : £170

Exclusive Hire up to 15 anglers for 48 hours : £1,000



◆ **NEW CAFE OPEN** ◆

## Mousehole Bait & Tackle

is open 7 days a week for all your needs. Contact Joanne on **07725 783405** for any bait and tackle enquiries.



**TOILET & SHOWER BLOCK WITH DISABLED FACILITIES**

FREE shower for overnight & 48hr plus sessions

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**07725 783405**

[www.mouseholelakes.co.uk](http://www.mouseholelakes.co.uk)



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**Eight lake day ticket fishing complex**

**Carp to 40lb, Perch to 4lb+, Bream, Roach, Tench and more!**

**Purpose built complex with cafe, bait shop, toilets  
and shower suite for overnight guests.**

**Two Specimen Lakes (open 24hr+ 7 days a week).**

**Six Main Lakes (open Friday to Sunday for day tickets).**

**All swims pre-booked to ensure no overcrowding.**

**Easy to book your lake & swim online in advance.**

**Book & Pay Online (Mobile Friendly)**

**[www.frantlakes.com](http://www.frantlakes.com). Tel: 01892 616424**

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