

MARCH 2024

# FRESHWATER INFORMER

No. 321

**FREE**

**PERCH  
FISHING AT  
KNIGHTINGALES  
FISHERY  
see page 22**



Sandwich  
Coarse Fishery

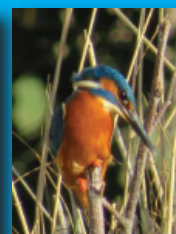
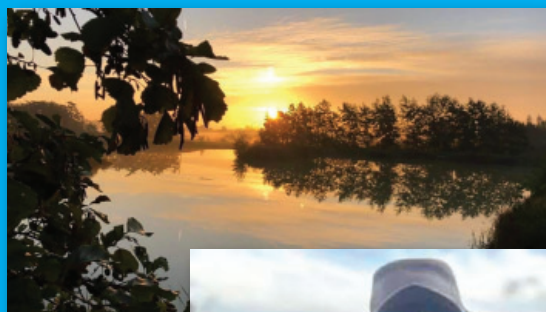


Tel: 07936 409912

email: [enquiries@sandwichlakes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@sandwichlakes.co.uk)

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

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







## ORCHARD PLACE FARM FISHING

13 FISHING LAKES in the KENT COUNTRYSIDE

Pearsons Green Road, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6NY

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.

### SPECIMEN LAKES

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

### 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.

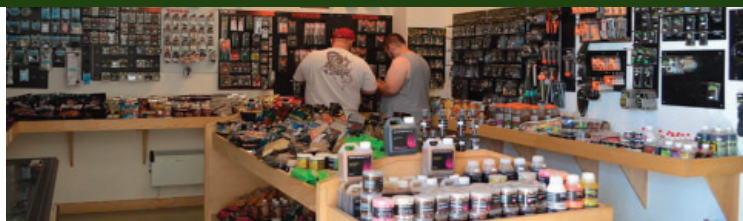
### MATCH/PLEASURE LAKES

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



Hello and welcome to the March edition of the Freshwater Informer

Daffodils and snowdrops have burst into flower and the sun is starting to make its presence felt. If you ignore the torrential rain, high winds and chilly nights, you could almost be forgiven for thinking that spring is on the way! We're not quite there yet, but every day is a day closer, and hopefully by next month the miserable winter that we have endured will be no more than a distant memory. Something else that is also getting close is the end of the river fishing season. For those that don't know, it starts on the 15th March and doesn't reopen until 16th June. Every year there is a debate over whether or not rivers should follow the lead of stillwaters and scrap the close season. I'm sure that this year will be no exception. In the past I've always been a staunch supporter of this enforced break, more because of the expectation and excitement that surrounds the 'glorious sixteenth' than any practical reason, but with rivers becoming almost unfishable from flooding by autumn, and unproductive due to low levels during the summer, I am slowly changing my mind. It is incredibly frustrating that the only time of year that they are truly fishable, you can't.

One thing that has changed is the decision by the British Record Fish Committee to reopen the catfish record. Suspended back in 2000 over concerns of the importation of large catfish from overseas, the Committee now accepts that there is a self sustaining population in this country and is open to claims in excess of 130lb. The recent discovery of a 110lb giant in the match lake at Hawkhurst Fish Farm (see page 16) suggests that this weight could be met sooner rather than later. Speaking of records, it would be amiss not to mention that Lloyd Watson has beaten the longstanding British Pike record with an phenomenal fish of 47lb 5oz from Chew Valley.



Lee



Glen

FRESHWATER  
INFORMER

DATES FOR  
YOUR DIARY

2024

APRIL publication	SEPTEMBER publication
CONTENT DEADLINE 18th March	CONTENT DEADLINE 19th August
MAY publication	OCTOBER publication
CONTENT DEADLINE 22nd April	CONTENT DEADLINE 16th September
JUNE publication	NOVEMBER publication
CONTENT DEADLINE 20th May	CONTENT DEADLINE 21st October
JULY publication	DECEMBER publication
CONTENT DEADLINE 17th June	CONTENT DEADLINE 18th November
AUGUST publication	JANUARY 2025 publication
CONTENT DEADLINE 22nd July	CONTENT DEADLINE 16th December

This is the time of year that predators tend to reach their top weights, and we have received lots of reports from anglers beating their personal bests for both pike and perch. In fact Perch feature in articles from both Russ Evans and Alex Coutts. The main difference being that Russ is successful because of how he fishes, whilst Alex catches fish despite how he fishes.

He could probably do with a few pointers from Andy Lush, who takes a friend fishing in his article on page 32, or possibly some advice from Warren White's students, who study the effects of water temperature on fishing, in his Fishing For Schools piece on page 35. Elsewhere in this months issue, there is plenty of evidence that the regions fisheries are waking up, with some fantastic early season catches been reported. It certainly bodes well for Easter weekend at the end of the month, which in many ways has become the start of the fishing season for a lot of anglers. If you are looking for a venue to wet a line, there's no better place to start than with those contained within these pages. If you are already out fishing, remember to send in your catch reports and pictures.



Alex

Enjoy, The FWI Team.

The Freshwater Informer

12 Marigold Avenue, Horebeech Lane, Horam TN21 9DF

email: thefreshwaterinformer@gmail.com

Advertising – Lee 0787 3203998

Catch reports – Alex 07484 699437



COPY DEADLINE for APRIL 2024  
MONDAY 18th March 2024 at 5pm

The Freshwater Informer cannot accept responsibility for the quality of goods or services advertised in this publication. All views expressed are those of the contributors concerned. All images received are accepted as being true and accurate and as described.

BOWIE'S  
• BARBER SHOP •

A man is getting a haircut. The barber is using a pair of scissors. The man is looking in the mirror.

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

01892 783 130 • [www.bowiesbarbershop.com](http://www.bowiesbarbershop.com)

The interior of Bowie's Barber Shop. There are several barber chairs and a counter. The shop is clean and modern.

- MENS CUT £14
- CLIPPER CUT £10
- BOYS CUT (AGE 12-16) £12
- KIDS CUT (UP TO AGE 12) £10
- OAPs £12
- BEARD TRIM (FREE WITH HAIRCUT) £4
- PAYMENT BY CASH ONLY

Bowies Barber Shop  
Davies Place, Sparrows Green  
Wadhurst TN5 6TE

A vintage fire engine. It is red and black. It has a large chimney and a water tank.





Beaver Fishery Lingfield, Surrey

Well, let's start with some exciting news. We have continued our yearly fish stocking program again this year. We took delivery of some absolutely stunning C2's from Chilston Fish Farm. These fish were between 2-3lbs and we introduced 160 into Jeff's Lake and 130 into Maze Lake. We are sure these fish will make a great addition to both lakes and we hope we will have more stocking news in the coming weeks.

As for the catch report, we have seen some carp banked on a tricky **Snipe Lake** to 26lbs 3ozs, **Westlake** has seen a few anglers getting amongst the cats to 64lbs 12ozs but like Snipe Lake it hasn't woken up yet, **Jeff's Lake** has been doing very well with some great catch reports with most anglers banking large amounts of F1's to 8lbs, carp to 10lbs 3ozs and some cracking bream to 8lbs as well as a few nice perch to 1lb 8ozs, **Daughters Lake** hasn't seen many anglers on but there have been a few commons and mirrors banked to 18lbs 2ozs, **Maze Lake** has seen a few anglers banking F1's, bream and plenty of silvers and **Majors Lake** has seen mirrors banked to 26lbs 3ozs, ghosties banked to 18lbs 5ozs, commons to low doubles, bream to 8lbs and even a couple of pike to 14lbs 8ozs.

Ben and I have been making good progress on the fishery maintenance and we have completed all of our scheduled winter works on Snipe Lake, Westlake, Jeff's Lake, Daughters Lake and Eden Pond which means that Majors Lake and Maze Lake will be completed in the next month or so. Both of these lakes will continue to be open and fishable whilst we conduct the work needed.



Ian York - Snipe Lake



Lewis Perren - Majors Lake



Toby Collister - Snipe Lake



Sonny Col - Majors Lake



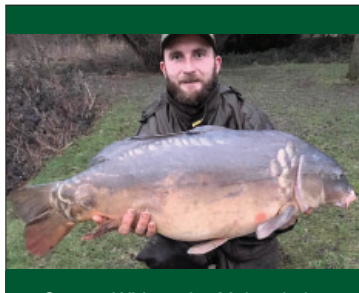
Liam Baldwin - Daughters Lake



Darren Webb - Daughters Lake



Dave Russel - Daughters Lake



George Whitworth - Majors Lake



Chris Shepherd - Majors Lake



Ian Thomsett - big F1 - Jeff's



Martin Smith - Westlake



new stocking





TACKLE WAREHOUSE

FOR ALL YOUR FISHING  
TACKLE NEEDS



CARP – COARSE – SEA  
PREDATOR – FLY

OVER 60 LEADING  
BRANDS

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**01273 933050**  
contact.baitbucket@gmail.com



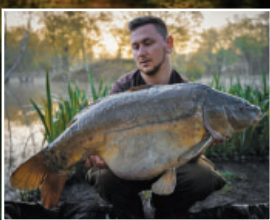
Eastbourne Road (A22),  
Newchapel, Lingfield, Surrey RH7 6HL  
Tel: 01342 324006  
Mobile: 07710 656041

[www.beaverfarmfishery.co.uk](http://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





**Non Stop Angling**  
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**Bexhill**  
**TN39 3LE**

**New product launch**  
**Open evening**  
**Non Stop Angling Bexhill**  
**Wednesday 27th march**  
**6-8pm**  
**10% discount on our baits**  
**With code TeamOWAT10**  
**Discounts on terminal tackle**

**Come and meet the team**  
**and find out why our bait is**  
**banking instead of blanking**



*Fish of a lifetime*

**Kev Finch** proved that timing is everything when he visited a lake in Aylesford. Using a whole sardine as bait he accounted for pike of 6lbs, 17lbs, 19lbs, 20lbs and topped off with this new **PB** and, in his own words, 'fish of a lifetime' monster scaling 32lbs.



**Hawkhurst Fish Farm**

Hastings Road, Hawkhurst, Kent, TN18 4RT  
T: 01580 753813 E: info@hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk



**Junior Coarse Fishing**

Open 10am – 5pm, 7 days a week.

No booking or experience required! With 3 very well stocked ponds, it's the perfect place for novice anglers (young or old!) to come and enjoy the pleasure of catching a fish – or several!

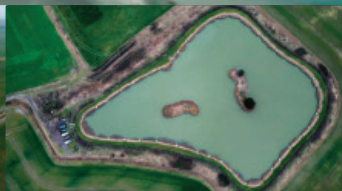
We've got everything covered, from equipment hire to rod licences, and our water bailiff will be there to offer assistance.



Check [www.hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk](http://www.hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk) for more info!



**WANTSUM ANGLING ASSOCIATION**  
Marshside Lakes - River Wantsum - River Stour



Wantsum Angling  
PO BOX 1238  
Herne Bay  
CT1 9UL  
  
**NIGHT BOOKINGS AND  
GENERAL ENQUIRIES :**  
**07570 505934**  
[wantsum\\_angling@outlook.com](mailto:wantsum_angling@outlook.com)



PRICES

- DAY TICKET X2 RODS - £15
- DAY TICKET X3 RODS - £20
- 24 HOUR TICKET X2 RODS - £30
- 24 HOUR TICKET X3 RODS - £35
- 36 HOUR TICKET X2 / X3 RODS - £45 / £55
- 48 HOUR TICKET X2 / X3 RODS - £60 / £70



Book now on  
Swimbooker



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.



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[FACEBOOK.COM/TRICKLEBROOKFISHERY](https://www.facebook.com/tricklebrookfishery)



Open from 7am 365 days a year!  
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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





# A return to the Brook in search of Perch

There are some venues that hold a special place in your heart and after a few seasons away I returned to one of those special places, Furnace Brook Fishery near Hailsham in the beautiful East Sussex countryside.

If my memory serves me right it was 2013 when I first fished at this wonderful lake, catching bream, skimmers, roach, rudd, carp and hybrids. It was, and still is, a mixed species venue and I just love that for what it is. You never really know what the next bite is going to be and for most anglers that is a special thought.

On my third or fourth visit I started to pick up the odd small perch on sweetcorn, of all baits and it got me thinking. I wonder

how many perch are in the lake? Simon the bailiff came along and we chatted about the lake and when I said how big do the perch grow he looked a bit puzzled in my direction and said "there are not many perch in here, we have never stocked the lake with perch" Oh I said, this would have been Spring 2014 or 2015 now, well I have had a few small ones with the biggest just over the pound mark. It got me thinking that with all the silvers in the lake and if the perch could breed and grow in numbers which they clearly were then they would pack on the weight and size in no time, boosted by munching away through all the silvers stocks swimming around them. The lake then went on my perch radar and I kept a close eye on catch reports and what I had seen with my own eyes. A friend of mine had told me that he had a decent perch from the lake (2017) and reckoned it could have been close to 2lbs, I liked the sound of that news very much.

## Friends Reunited by the water's edge

I had not fished the lake at Furnace Brook since before Covid and I had a couple of failed attempts to visit the fishery after but thankfully last month I put that right and it was fantastic as always to catch up with Diane at the fishery for a catch up chat. Alistair, Diane and the team at Furnace Brook have been working hard at the fishery since my last visit in 2019 and the fishery looks even more stunning than before. It was also good to chat with Simon again as he came along in the morning doing his bailiff and maintenance duties as I was doing some filming pieces for the video I was making of the day for my You Tube channel. I felt relaxed to be by the lakeside of one of my favourite places and I just knew that

I was going to have an enjoyable and successful session fishing for the perch.

## "I love to see the float bob before sliding away"

When I fish for the perch, I use float tactics as I love to see the float bob up and down before sliding away and out of sight. So what tackle do I use for a good days perching? Well for the session today I am using a two rod approach with both rods positioned down the margins to my left and right so I can maximize the swim I am fishing as I have found in the past on other waters that most of my biggest perch come from fishing not too far away from bankside cover with overhanging trees. I am using a pair of the 11ft Darent Valley 1.25 test curve rods that have a nice forgiving action but also a bit of strength if I hook into a carp and I am using my old favourite Shimano 4000 Stradic reels spooled up with 4lbs mainline as I plan to fish straight through to a size 8 Korum All Rounder barbless hook which I highly recommend. My Korum floats vary as I want to try out the very sensitive loaded blobs 3gram and a 4gram Stubba, again which is highly sensitive.



*The perch had grown plump feeding on silvers*



*A 2lbs 8ozs Furnace Brook perch*





*A surprise 9lbs 8ozs mirror carp*



*The best of the day, a 2lbs 12ozs perch*

My bulk shots are placed a third of the overall depth from the hook and I have plumbed the depth at 4 ½ foot and lifted the float a good 12 inches over depth as I want to pin my hook baits on the deck. As I have found with successful previous perch sessions the key to catching the better stamp fish is feeding and bait selection.

### ***Bait and feeding is vital for success***

I have with me for the session lobworms, dendrobaena worms, large and cocktail prawns plus a couple of pints of red maggots. To kick start the swim down both side of the margins I introduce via my pole cupping kit for accuracy my worm feed mix which consists of cutting up some worms and prawns plus maggots with a glug of Sensas Aromix worm juice which I like to use to aid in the scent trail. I pour over where I am going to fish repeated twice on both lines and then on a little and often basis thereafter flick over the top of my float red maggots to attract silvers into the swim which in turn should attract the curious perch. I sometimes use a krill juice in the worm mix to aid scent as well as I know from the past perch love the taste of krill.

On my left hand rod I am using a large prawn and on the right a big fat lobworm tipped with a couple of red maggots for visual attraction. In no time both floats are showing bobbing up and down bites before the temptation is too much for a perch and the float sails away. It is only a small perch of 8oz but it is a start and over the course of the first two hours I pick up more small perch plus roach and rudd. Most of the fish are coming on the lobworms with the left hand rod just showing signs of fish playing around with the large prawn hookbait, obviously no big perch have arrived as yet.

### ***The temptation is too much for a big Perch***

With ideal conditions of gusty winds and overcast cloud cover with odd showers I am getting very confident a big perch will show up and eventually it did and what an amazing looking fish it was. A switch over to a prawn cocktail tipped with 2 red maggots did the trick and the float buried out of sight very perch like. After a good scrap I slipped the net under a magnificent stripey of 2lbs 12oz which was followed by another of 2lbs 8oz, 2lbs and 1lb 15oz plus much smaller perch.

In amongst all the predator action Mr Carp in the shape of a 9lbs 8oz mirror came along and what a fine looking specimen with a tinge of golden flanks lined with an impressive set of scales.

I had a brilliant session on the perch from a swim I have not tried before on the lake but it looked perchy after walking along viewing some other swims when I first arrived, I chose well. I can't wait to return in the very near future to the magnificent Furnace Brook to see if the perch grow bigger and I suspect they do, much bigger. If you want to see how the day panned out and the excellent perch I caught then you can by watching the video I produced on **Fishing Tail Films** on You Tube titled 'FURNACE BROOK PERCH'

During the time this article has gone to print I would have visited a fishery in Hampshire with a couple of fishing buddies for another perch trip plus I am sure I would have had another visit to Furnace Brook in the search for more big perch. February, March and April are months I love to fish for the perch and roach so definitely more sessions are going to be planned which of course gives me more opportunities to write about for the magazine and film for my channel.

A happy angler is a busy angler and as my motto states there is always "a possibility in every cast". I hope your next fishing trip is a successful one for whatever species you like to fish for.

**Tight Lines, Russ Evans**



*Fishing and filming*

*fishing tail films*



Right tools for the job!

The FWI group chat went into meltdown when **Glen Relf** announced that he had purchased a special 'Chub and Perch Weigh Sling'.

'How's the fish supposed to know what it's been weighed in??' read one comment. 'What if you catch a roach?' Said another. Unperturbed, Glen paid a visit to Furnace Brook Fishery, where using prawns as bait he promptly landed a new **Personal Best** Perch of 2lbs 2ozs.



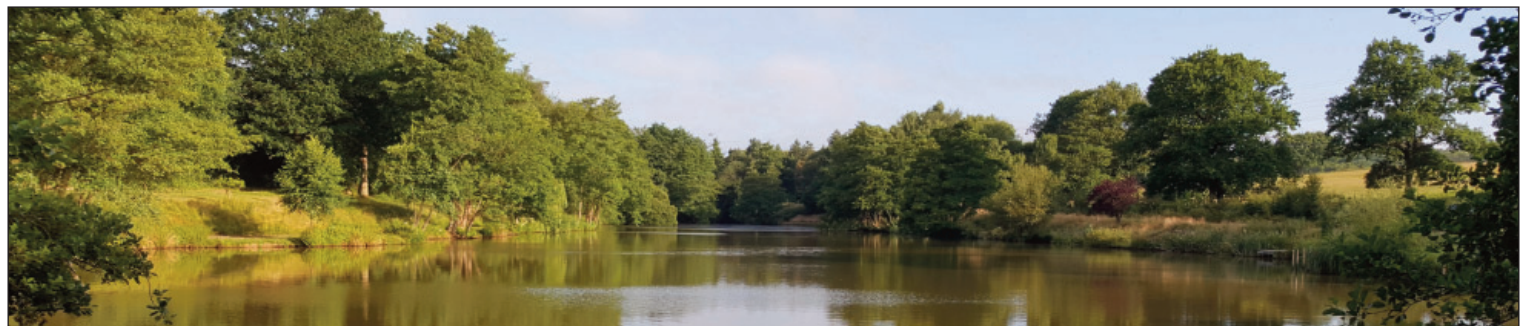
Glen put his new weigh sling to good use with this PB 2lbs 2ozs Perch



...and then backed it up with a fantastic PB 6lbs 9ozs Chub

And then to prove the point, on his next trip he fished Knightingales Fishery at Stone in Oxney, where he fished a maggot feeder to catch a monster chub, and another **PB** of 6lbs 9ozs.

As he gleefully reported on his return, 'It's all about having the right tools for the job!'



"A piece of angling heaven"

River-fed 5acre lake with a range of specimen fish including:

- Tench (5lbs +)
- Perch (3lbs +)
- Roach & Rudd (2lbs +)
- Bream
- Barbel
- Carp (up to 25lbs)

Furnace Brook CIC is a Certified Gold Standard Member of the UN's Generation Restoration



Batsford Hollow

For group overnight stays

Facilities:

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- Bespoke overnight shelters
- Catering facilities
- Showers

Main Lake

Day & overnight tickets

Facilities:

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- Catering facilities
- Showers







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+ and perch to 5lbs, one specimen predator lake for carp to 30lbs+, catfish to 60lbs+ and pike to 15lbs, one match lake with 22 purpose-built swims, one coarse lake and finally a tench/family pond. Facilities include a club house with toilets, shower and wet room.  
*This beautiful setting needs to be visited and enjoyed!*

Prices start at £10 per session on the coarse lakes. For the specimen lakes prices start at £20 for the day rising to £30 for a 24hrs ticket (up to 3 rods). Lessons now available for all ages. Gates open at 7am and close at 6.30pm (Winter hours 7am to 5pm)  
**SENIOR DAY TICKETS ON OUR COARSE LAKES HERON AND BLUEBELL ARE AVAILABLE FOR £8 MONDAY TO WEDNESDAY**

To book, please call or text us on **07933 934942**  
or visit our website **www.greenacresfarmfishery.co.uk**  
Email : greenacresfarmfishery@gmail.com





# Elphicks Fisheries



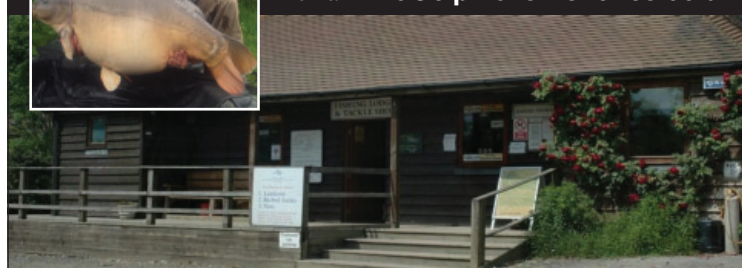
Elphicks has been designed and built with the modern angler in mind. We have 7 lakes available for day ticket and session fishing. Each lake has it's own parking within easy reach of the swims and all swims are 'all weather' - either built of Astroturf, stone or bark. Please contact the fishery for further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

## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE AT WYLANDS....

SET IN THE HEART OF 1066 COUNTRY  
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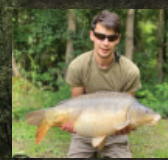
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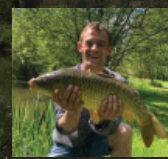
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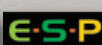
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# My Fishing Travels by Russ Evans

Fishing Tail Films is a reflection of my Passion for Angling and catching a variety of species throughout the seasons from Perch in the cold months to Bream and Tench in the spring. Fishing large gravel pits and rivers is where I like to spend the majority of my time by the water's edge. Specimen Chub, Carp and Roach are also on my target list each season.







**HAWKHURST FISH FARM's Match Lake** has always been well known for its impressive match results, with Match anglers visiting from all over the South East for a chance to bag big match wins. Back in 2009, a new Match Lake record was set, with a total weight caught of 2,600lbs, the first place result being an incredible 682lbs! Over the years these numbers have been slowly decreasing, with average winning weights of below 200lbs. When asked, Tony, the owner, said he had assumed it may be down to Match anglers losing their touch! However, in the Summer of 2022, it was proved to be something else, when a couple of our pleasure anglers reported hooking onto a catfish that they were unable to bring in! This was proved correct when one of these anglers managed to reel in a 32lbs Catfish on 8lb line, using a single corn as bait. Realising that the catfish was not meant to be there, this angler thankfully called our bailiff who was then able to relocate the cat into our Main Lake. It was at this stage we realised we may have a problem on our hands with other catfish still being reported in the lake! We went as far as to offer a cash prize for the capture of the catfish that was terrorizing the Match water.

Fast forward to December 2023, it was time to close our lakes for the Winter. This is something we do every year as it gives us a chance to carry out works without disrupting our anglers. Match Lake was top of our list of works to complete, as it needed bank stabilisation work, and the jetties needed replacing. We completed approximately 400m of bank stabilisation work and new edging, which is 6-8ft deep. This required over 500 x 10ft stakes being driven in - no small task let me assure you! We also used a total of 3,200m of 2" tanalised 6x2 to complete the edging. The works required that we drained down the water level, and whilst the water was down and the jetties had been removed, it gave us the ideal opportunity to net the lake and check just how our stock was doing. You can imagine our disbelief when we found a monster catfish weighing a whopping 110lb!! At this size, the Match Lake fish were obviously the perfect snack, hence it's incredible weight. We are unsure how long it had been in Match Lake, and can only assume an angler moved it over from Main Lake in the past, not realising the consequences it would have on our Match Lake stock. After some debate, we made the choice to move this monster Catfish into Main Lake (our specimen water), so it can live out it's days in relative peace, without causing any more trouble in



Match Lake! Our biggest Catfish prior to this stocking was last caught at 88lbs, and whilst we don't expect this Cat to grace the bank often, we look forward to the excitement of seeing an angler land it for the first time. It certainly is a beast!

Works on our Match Lake are ongoing, and the lake is being geared up to reopen in the Spring, with new jetties and a wider back bank. We do have availability for Match Lake bookings this Summer onwards, so please contact the office if you'd like to make a booking. You'll be pleased to hear we have also restocked the lake with small carp, to make up for the loss caused by The Hawkhurst Beast!

**Editors Note** – After being suspended in 2000, the British Record Fish Committee have just announced that they have reinstated catfish to the record list and are open to claims over 130lbs. It might not be too long before we see the 'Hawkhurst Beast' in the record books...





Oscar Green - Main Lake



Oscar Green - Main Lake



Alfie and Lee Hills - Main Lake



Ben Sugden - 50lbs Catfish - Quarry Lake



Alfie and Lee Hills - 30lbs Common



Alfie and Lee Hills - 28lbs common - Main Lake



Oscar Green - Main Lake



Simon Judd - 25lbs Common - Main Lake





Gary Willis - 20lbs PB - fly caught Pike



Nick Gordon - 10lbs 14ozs Pike



Graham Dann - 2lbs 3ozs Perch - Furnace Brook



Alex Smart - 2lbs 3ozs Perch - Furnace Brook



Freddy Joe Beaney - PB 2lbs 12ozs Perch



Leah Lucy - PB 2lbs Perch - Shirkoak Fishery



Freddy Joe Beaney - 2lbs 4ozs Perch - Park Lake



Joe Grimes - 2lbs 2ozs Grayling - River Itchen



Callum Lovejoy Everest - 18lbs 6ozs - Tricklebrook



Freddy Joe Beaney - 15lbs 12ozs Pike



Freddy Joe Beaney - 2lbs 10ozs Perch - Park Lake



Claygate Lakes



A 3lbs Perch from Tricklebrook Match Lake



Warren Edwards - Tricklebrook Match Lake



Joe Morland - 18lbs 15ozs - Old Lake, Tricklebrook



Callum Lovejoy Everest - New Lake, Tricklebrook



Luke Ripley - 2lbs 2ozs Perch - Furnace Brook



Chris Watling - 31lbs 4ozs Mirror - Swanborough Lakes



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## Claygate Lakes Claygate, Marden, Kent

Well the lakes are definitely full to the brim. The weather has warmed up and the fish have woken up

**Lake Amy** Well done to **Kevin Avery** and **Harry Granger**, for sending in their catch pictures!

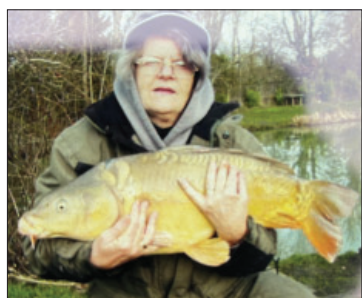
**Lake Eva** We have added 100 carp between 10 and 32lbs to add a bit more variety for the guys that are after bigger carp. This lake now has over 200 carp weighing over 10lbs along with lots of other smaller carp. Well done to **Matthew Good** on having a 25lbs and 30lbs. Regular **Bev** also had a nice surprise with a 16lbs 9ozs and she's still catching off the top.

**Lake Sophie** **Richie Rich** went away after having his first 100lbs+ days fishing. Can't believe that the tench are still showing up through the winter.

**Claygate Membership & Day Tickets** We are a day/night ticket fishing but due to the cost of living we are offering 12 months membership on all lakes. Please visit our website for further details or pop down on a weekend to discuss membership details and have a look around.

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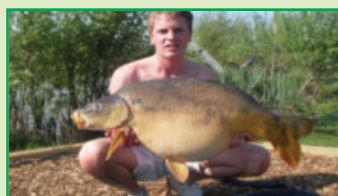
## New Claygate Lakes

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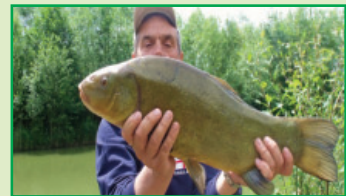
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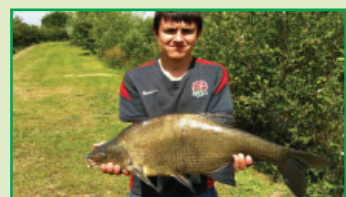
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LAKE EVA - Match/Pleasure. Carp 30lb+ Tench 11lb+ Chub 5lb+ Barbel 6lb+ Perch 5lb+ Bream and other silvers



LAKE SOPHIE match/pleasure - Carp 16lb+ Tench 8lb+ Chub 5lb+ Barbel 4lb+ Perch 3lb+ Bream 11lb+ Roach 2lb+ Skimmer Bream and other silvers



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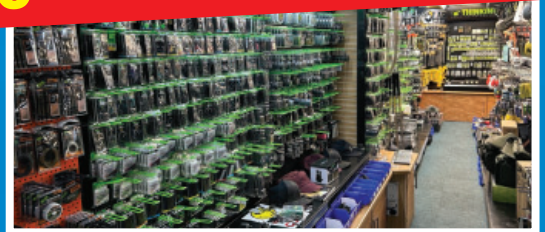
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# In the edge with Alex

***Perch must rate as one of my favourite of all the coarse species that reside in our waters, and I'm not alone as a growing number of anglers turn their attention to this enigmatic species during the colder months. Small perch, quite literally, have eyes larger than their stomachs and will throw themselves at a hook with gay abandon. Specimen perch, on the other hand, are hugely impressive creatures in both appearance and attitude. As Richard Walker once famously said 'The biggest fish of all'...***

To any casual observer it would be easy to overestimate my ability as a perch angler. Less than ten minutes into my day and I was already returning a chunky example of the species. In reality, this was the culmination of a number of trips in pursuit of these spikey predators. My first, on a freezing cold day in January, saw me quite literally become 'at one with nature', as I slowly froze to the bank in the Arctic conditions. I stuck with it as long as I could but when I got so cold that it felt like my toes may shatter, I headed for home.

Two weeks later and I was back. This time conditions look perfect. Almost too perfect, as in my haste to get fishing I slipped, lost my footing and deposited a days worth of maggots two feet short of the lake. The robins and sparrows had a field day, whilst I soldiered on with the meagre handful of grubs that I'd been able to salvage. Towards late afternoon I thought that my determination had paid off as a fish made off with one of my hookbaits. No doubt still scrambled from my earlier fall, my brain struggled to unravel what my senses were telling me. With my eyes I could clearly see the dark mass of a good sized carp but the stuttering jigs and jags that were being transmitted up the line made it feel like I was playing a roach. Something was amiss. All became clear when I netted the double figure mirror. A pronounced kink in its spine had created a fish of two halves. The front end, heavy set and every inch a twenty pounder. The back end, withered and useless. Somehow it summed up my day. After all, only I could catch a fish that swims with a limp!



***Only I could catch a fish that swims with a limp...***



***The wind made playing fish challenging***

But now I was back, gone were the maggots, replaced instead with groundbait and pellets. Partly because they were easier to pick up if dropped, and partly because high winds were forecast and I wanted a bait heavy enough to reach the bottom without getting blown across the lake. Hookbaits stayed the same in the form of chunks of raw prawn. Despite the lack of fish, my previous visits had been far from wasted. Perch are predators, predators eat prey, find the prey and the Perch won't be far behind. Through watching the water I'd been able to identify a number of areas where the roach and rudd were shoaled up. Not only that, but by making a mental note of how and when these fish would flee, I could accurately predict the perch's feeding times and their direction of travel. Books will tell you that dusk and dawn are the prime times, and on many waters this is the case, but I had seen a marked increase in silverfish activity around midday, becoming sporadic throughout the afternoon, before growing in intensity towards last light. With the wind growing ever stronger and the chop on the water increasing, getting my timing right would be all important.



I'd settled on two spots, one a relatively open water swim, sheltered from the worst of the weather by the steep bank behind it, the other a mass of dead reeds, a classic perch swim and perfect ambush point. Both received a liberal helping of groundbait and pellet to ramp up the silverfish activity, and encourage the perch into a feeding frenzy.

I started in the steep banked swim, the aforementioned chunky perch falling to a bait presented around a rod length and a half out to the right of the swim. This was followed by a fish, all of two pounds, a short time later. Things were coming together nicely. The wind was being problematic. Not only did it prevent me from seeing the silvers from fleeing, and thereby giving me a much needed prompt to concentrate, but it also kept dragging my floats out of position. I swung in my right hand rod, increased the depth I was fishing at and added another shot near the hook. A stillwater version of what river anglers call 'laying on' and a way to combat any current or undertow. A fresh prawn section on the hook, and I swung it back out into the lake which had taken on the complexion of milky tea as the wind continued to churn the water up. Just as I reached to repeat the process with my other rod, the tip of the first bounced and the centre pin reel gave off a series of clicks. I quickly grabbed it and lifted into my third fish of the day.



*The moment that a three pounder comes to the net*

The first two fish had both stayed close to the margins during the fight, this one had other ideas and headed out into open water before veering left towards an island. Although I was yet to see it, the fact that it was taking line made me hope that it was a proper specimen. We teased back and forth when all of a sudden a large head, mottled green and black, broke the surface. Even through the waves I could see this was a good fish. She went in the landing net at the first time of asking.

I don't weigh many fish but just from a quick glance, I knew that this fish was very close to my PB. I left her resting in the net whilst I rummaged around in my tackle box looking for my scales and weigh bag. Eventually, along with my unhooking mat, I had everything sorted and went to retrieve my net and the prize within.

3lbs 2ozs. A new Personal Best. I celebrated by chasing my hat along the bank, as the wind whipped it from my head, just managing to catch it, by unceremoniously treading on it, before it was blown into the lake.

I wiped off the worst of the muddy footprint that now adorned the crown, unflattened it as best I could, and pulled it down low on my brow. Steel grey clouds scudded across the skyline and the water in front of me was whipped into a cauldron. So strong was the wind that the rods were getting blown off their rests and it was proving hard to even keep a bait in the water. I fished on and added two more perch in quick succession, one of them comfortably over the 2lb mark, but undoubtedly missed just as many chances because of the challenging conditions. In frustration, I decided to go and check out my other spot. Away from the protection of the steep bank the wind was even more vicious, laden down with tackle and bait it was all I could do to put one foot in front of the other. The one saving grace was that the reed bed that I had baited earlier in the day provided just enough cover to create a narrow strip of calm water. Whilst I was getting blown around like a rag doll, at least the float would be protected from the relentless buffeting. The spot only called for one rod and just as I went to lower it into position I caught sight of a carp tail, then another, and another. They had obviously found the groundbait and pellet. Two commons and a good sized mirror. On any other day this would have set my pulse racing but today I was here for perch and to hook a carp would only destroy my chances. I waited for them to drift away before dropping my bait on the edge of the ripple. Immediately the float buried. I struck, the rod hooped over but nothing moved. Cursing under my breath, I was sure one of the carp must have doubled back and taken the bait. Not what I wanted in such a confined space. I increased the pressure in an effort to encourage the fish to move into more open water. It responded, slowly rising up from the depths. I saw colour, definitely a carp.

Then, like the tattered sail of a long forgotten shipwreck, a huge spikey dorsal fin broke the surface. It was a perch! If my earlier PB was impressive, this fish was impossible! Too huge to comprehend, a true galleon of a fish.

*...continued overleaf*



*A sign of things to come - a new PB of 3lbs 2ozs*



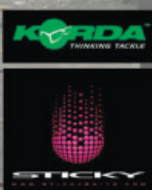


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For just a moment, time stood still and the world went quiet. No wind, no sound, I could see every fin, every scale, every minute detail in perfect clarity. Almost in slow motion the fish's mouth began to open and the gill covers flared as it erupted from its world to mine, in a huge shower of spray that brought me crashing back into reality.

Panic set in, headshake after headshake had taken the fish out into the wind lane. I followed along, grabbing my landing net as I went. Disaster! As I swung the net out over the water a huge gust of wind caught the mesh, wrapping it around the frame. I battled to bring it back to the bank whilst desperately trying to control the fish, which had turned broadside, doubling its resistance. Needing to do two things at once, I did neither. The fish pulling me one way, the tangled net, now acting like a kite, pulling me the other. Caught in a moment of indecision I glanced down at my rod, scrawled above the handle in gold ink were the words 'Hold-Fast', the makers mark from over half a century before, tarnished and tatty, but great advice in my current predicament. I heaved with all my might to get the net head back on the ground, whilst simultaneously using it as a pivot to wheel around and close the gap to this mighty perch. Once past, I loosened my grip on the landing net handle which allowed it to cartwheel after me, turning itself the right way out in the process. By now I was level with the fish, but fast running out of bank. If the perch made it downwind of me, I was sure the chance would be lost. I planted my feet, braced the net handle across my body, and with a monumental effort, swung it through an arc of 180 degrees and into the path of the fish. Lowering the rod tip, the sheer power of the drift swept the fish into the mesh. I dropped the rod, grabbed the net handle with both hands, then half scooped, half dragged, the whole affair to the safety of the reed line.

I wandered up and down the bank in a daze, trying to process what had just happened, not quite believing the hugeness of the fish I believed to be in my net. Maybe I was mistaken? Maybe the wind was playing tricks on my eyes? somehow magnifying an ordinary perch into an extraordinary apparition? I barely dared to look, not wanting to break the spell. Surely the image of this monster rising from the depths couldn't be matched by the reality of actually knowing? But I had to know. I knelt down and tentatively parted the mesh. Huge shoulders, followed by a prehistoric head, the fish glowered at me with a beady eye and flexed its spiney fins. At least I knew that it wasn't all a dream or that I wasn't completely mad.

I found a sheltered spot in the lee of a hedge row and gently lowered the fish onto the mat. Now out of the water, I could get a true impression of the sheer depth and breadth of this magnificent creature. Black bars over an olive background gave way to a white underside, tipped with fins of orange and red.

For the second time that day, the scales would be pressed into service. I attached them to the weigh sling and turned them on. 'ERR' appeared on the small screen. At first I thought that the scales must be in as much disbelief as I was at the size of the fish. I clicked the button off, and then back on, the blue back-light flickered for a moment, then faded and died. If weighing fish is only an occasional exercise for me, then checking the battery life of the scales is even less so.

The only gauge I had was a mental comparison to my earlier PB. That fish was my first ever three pounder and a very impressive perch, but it paled into insignificance, by every measure, when compared to what lay before me.

With no other option, I gently returned this fish of all fish to its watery home. Watching it pause before slowly dissolving into the depths. I chuckled to myself, as Richard Walker had said 'The biggest fish of all' but how big, I guess I'll never know.



*Another two pounder followed soon after*



*The biggest fish of all - a true galleon of a perch*



Tonbridge & District Angling & FP Society

Fishing has continued to be a challenge of late, especially on the river with it being up, coloured and running on and off over the last month or so.

**The Old Ballast Pit** is fishing well, with some near 20lbs bags of silvers being caught. Some nice Tench, Bream and Carp also being caught.

**Barden Lake** is producing some nice Carp with one fish over 40lbs and several 30lbs+ and 20lbs+ also showing. The Pike are responding too with 3 20lb+ fish being caught and a few good doubles.

**The New Lagoon** has been quieter than normal but has produced plenty of the usual species present.

**The river** has fished well in between the wet spells with some nice silvers being caught, the odd half decent Bream to around 3lbs and Chub to around 3lbs.



TONBRIDGE & DISTRICT ANGLING & FP SOCIETY - MATCH RESULTS

HOUGHTON CUP 6 – Sportsground

1	Paul Reddy	12lbs
2	Steve Parker	9lbs 11ozs
3	Colin Fowler	9lbs 10ozs

HOUGHTON CUP – FINAL PLACINGS

1	Austin Battell	37 points
2	Colin Fowler	35 points
3	Steve Parker	34 points

PIKE MATCH – Haysden Country Park

1	Melissa Fordham	19lbs 10ozs
2	Darren Barton	3lbs 8ozs

PIKE LEAGUE 3 – Haysden Country Park

1	Adam Mole	9lbs 10ozs
2	Tony Cooper	9lbs 7ozs
3	Larry Howard	8lbs 7ozs
4	Jason Craven	8lbs 4ozs
5	Austin Battell	11ozs

WINTER ROVER – Muckstream

1	Martyn Hill	11lbs 12ozs
2	Colin Fowler	11lbs 8ozs
3	Lee Wakeman	7lbs 14ozs

FINAL PLACINGS

Melissa Fordham	19lbs 10ozs
Tony Cooper	15lbs 7ozs
Pete Groombridge	14lbs 9ozs
Adam Mole	9lbs 10ozs
Larry Howard	8lbs 7ozs
Jason Craven	8lbs 4ozs
Austin Battell	11ozs

Most Fish – Tony Cooper	2
Biggest Fish – Melissa Fordham	19lbs 10ozs







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Barbel to 15lb 2oz, Chub to 5lb+, Perch to 3lb 6oz,  
Pike to 31lb 6oz, Crucians to 4lb 6oz and  
Grass Carp to 29lb 6oz.

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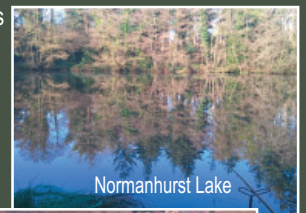
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For further information please contact:

**Chris Pagan 07429 655237 Steve Potter 07935 268174**

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

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



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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)**



### *Don't follow the crowd*

**Tom Dickinson** visited North Lake on the Elphicks complex for a 24hr session, his first of the year.

With the lake quite busy, he opted to move away from the bulk of anglers up into the shallower end of the lake. After watching for a period of time, Tom saw two subtle shows in the same area

A Single yellow pop up cast long to a showing fish resulted in the capture of this 42lbs common only 2/3 hours into the session.



### *Early season success for Luke at Tricklebrook*

**Luke Andrews** sent in this report on his first two sessions of the year at Tricklebrook Fishery, nr Five Oak Green. It was my first session of the year, I decided to approach the session with a solid PVA bag with a short braided rig, topped with a pineapple pop up.

It was my first time fishing Tricklebrook fishery and not knowing much about the lake, I stuck to what I thought would work best and it produced a lovely 22lbs 4ozs mirror carp. This fish had an extra little touch as not only was it tough with the cold conditions, but it also ended my ten month blank after I went to France last year.

A week on and I returned back to Tricklebrook to fish the Old lake for a further 48hrs. I was lucky enough to get myself back into swim 13 and I used the same approach as the previous week, PVA bags and a pineapple pop up. To start the night I had a double take, one got me snagged up within the tree and spat the hook out and the other fish I landed at 8lbs. A stunning little fish and I'm sure it'll be

**22lbs 4ozs Mirror Carp**



**14lbs 11ozs Mirror Carp**



a cracker once it starts packing on those pounds.

The following morning I was graced with the sound of my Nash Sirens screaming, the only alarm any angler wants to wake up to on a Saturday morning. After a fair fight my net was graced with a beautiful common carp weighing in at 17lbs 4ozs. Whilst I let the fish rest in the net I knew I had to get my rod back out on the spot. I quickly got my PVA bag ready and got it right on the money. By the time I finished weighing and getting pictures of the common carp, my right rod was off. I couldn't believe it to begin with. This time of the year you're fishing for one bite and to have multiple opportunities of catching I was over the moon. My net was graced yet again with a lovely mirror carp weighing in at 16lbs 2ozs and it was a good day for me. As the day was settling and the lake became very still due to the low winds, I decided to get a fresh PVA bag out to increase my chances of

another bite. Shortly after getting the rod back out, a mirror carp fell to my trap and I managed to land another stunner weighted in at 14lbs 11ozs. My confidence is through the roof and I'm positive with my angling this year.

**17lbs 4ozs Common Carp**



**16lbs 2ozs Mirror Carp**





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# TROUT INFORMER



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Tenterden, Kent

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March is the start of the Trout Fishing Season so we are well placed for this with all 3 lakes fully stocked and it's a great time to fish too before the weather warms up again. Water levels are high and the fish are active. We have a comfortable Fishing Lodge for you to make a cuppa with our compliments 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 year. 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. Follow us on Instagram & Facebook. A warm welcome awaits at our family fishery in Kent.

**Gaynor, Richard & Audrey.**



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WITH ANDY LUSH

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**FLY FISHING** One of Andy's favourite methods, Trout, Carp or Pike can be targeted.

**TROUT** Reservoirs or smaller stillwaters in the South East. These days are suitable for beginners or improvers who wish to learn 'how to catch more fish', or just have a FUN day with an experienced fly fisherman.

**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.



Steve Roberts - Brick Farm Lakes Trout Fishery



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## Andy Lush - The Friendly Fisherman

# Adapt or moan!

*With our climate changing we'll all have to adapt if we want to continue enjoying our sport.*

Most fly anglers will tell you that their local trout fisheries no longer offer good fishing during the summer months. That's not the fisheries fault! In the last decade it's become apparent that trout fishing in the south of England is on a knife's edge. Our milder, wetter winters do not reduce the core water temperatures to the level they once did. This has a knock on effect of seeing water temperatures "spike" much earlier in the year. A brief spell of settled hot weather in May sees water temperatures exceed 20° C. At this point the trout become "heat stressed". They stop feeding in the "upper layers" and seek deeper water, in excess of thirty feet [10m], below the 'thermocline'. Here the cooler, more oxygenated water is comfortable. In reservoirs the trout can survive at this level consuming daphnia and other small water borne insects. On small still-waters it's unlikely the fish can find such deep water, but they will head to the deepest areas to survive. If the weather breaks soon enough the fishing will recover, if it stays hot then we'll struggle to catch! The reason trout fishing declines as water temperatures rise is quite simple. Trout thrive in cool oxygenated water, and as water warms it loses the ability to hold as much oxygen and the trout fishing suffers. We don't have to have a very hot summer for this situation to occur now, it happens every year.

I now start my fly fishing much earlier in the year for this very reason. Typically I start in January, visiting smaller still-waters first, as they offer more shelter than the reservoirs. Another reason is the possibility to search the whole fishery on a short winters day. If there's a break in the weather I will fit in a visit to a reservoir. All the reservoirs now open in March, adapting their seasons to the changing climate, some even close for a few weeks in the summer!

### Fishing with a friend

Over the last few years Pete Groombridge and I have arranged a fly fishing trip in the Christmas holidays. Despite our best efforts last Christmas the conditions were more suited to kite flying than fly fishing!

Our re-arranged trip saw us arrive at Tenterden Trout Waters [TN30 6XA] on an overcast, blustery morning. We were greeted by Audrey who informed us that all three lakes were fishing well, with the most successful fly being the ubiquitous 'blue flash damsel'. We bypassed the two smaller pools and headed straight to the main lake. The water was coloured, the result of "run off" from the surrounding fields. Fortunately the settled weather over the previous couple of weeks had seen the water visibility improve a little.

The wind was blowing across the lake rather than down the valley. As Pete is a relative newbie to fly fishing I decided we should start on the dam. From here we could cast "down and across" the wind into the margins where I expected the fish to be. It's not "rocket science", when the water's very cold early in the year the trout will be concentrated on the downwind shore line. The current created by the wind carries food and surface warming water into this area. As these shallows warm, so the insect life multiplies and where there's food, there's fish! Location, location, location! This rule applies to both small still-waters and reservoirs.



Andy lands the first fish of the day

Pete tackled up with a floating line, a Gold Head Damsel on the point of his 12ft [3.6m] leader with a Cormorant on his single dropper, positioned about 6ft [1.8m] from the Damsel. My starting gambit was to use the 'fast glass' intermediate with a single, black and green snake fly. It's always a good idea when fishing with a friend to use slightly different approaches, until a successful pattern emerges. You learn so much quicker in this way, and you quickly realise how often the visual appeal of your fly is less important than its "depth and speed".

No fish and no takes from the dam saw us heading to the downwind bank. Casting into the teeth of the wind would be testing. I told Pete not to worry though as the trout should be very close to the drop off, which appeared to be about 10ft [3m] out. Shortly after our move we heard a fish breach close to one of the small clumps of reeds, that indicated the edge of the drop off. Over the next hour we saw more splashy rises that didn't look like feeding fish, rather more like they were clearing their gills? Whatever the reason, it showed there were plenty of active fish well within our casting range. Pete was first into action. I'd told him earlier that a good tactic was to hang his flies at the end of each retrieve. Having covered a 'showing fish' at close range he lifted and hung his flies, as he did so he saw his leader straighten. He set the hook and briefly had a "fish on" shortly followed by "fish off", I think that's what he said?



Seeing more 'shows' further down the bank, I leapfrogged past Pete. At this point I was still using the 'fast glass' line, but felt I was fishing underneath the fish. I quickly tackled up my spare rod with a floating line, putting a 'Gold Head' black tadpole on the point with a cormorant on my single dropper. Casting into the wind wasn't proving too difficult, watching the 'Gold Head' land gave me confidence my leader was turning over. I immediately started retrieving as soon as the flies landed, using a fast continuous figure eight retrieve. I wanted to keep both flies above the trout's head, in their 'field of vision'. By now I suspected there were fish in the open water too. I'd noticed slight deviations in the calmer surface up-wind of us, which at first I thought was caused by zephyrs as the breeze swirled.

A fish splashed by one of the clumps of reeds very close to me. I quickly covered it and almost immediately received a savage take. The trout shot towards me at speed, slack lining me in the process, so I wasn't surprised when it also came off! I re-cast into the same area and saw my line tighten sharply again. I hooked and lost another fish, doh! I was now confident the fish were much shallower than we had first thought. Casting into open water I hooked and landed two fish quickly. I was now "on the ball and in the game", setting the hook sharply I made sure I gave them "no slack line". Both fish fought very hard, which wasn't surprising considering they were over 3lb!



*Pete finds out how powerful trout are!*

I now needed to change my point fly, off came the 'Gold head', on went an un-weighted mini viva lure. Next fish fell to the viva, which for those who don't know is another black and green fly, very "old school". I was now convinced I had it sussed, so changed my point fly to another un-weighted pattern a black 'Apps' bloodworm. Oh my goodness my catch rate just kept increasing, now I was able to hold my flies within inches of the surface, at a very slow pace.

## **Pete's tactical changes**

Having shared my thoughts about the depth the flies needed to fish, Pete had altered his leader length, shortening the section between his point fly and dropper. Now his flies were presented shallower, they meet with almost immediate approval. Another tweak he made was changing to lighter weighted flies, which gave him the option to alter retrieve speeds and styles, switching between pulling and twiddling. I noticed his fly choices now included orange, which proved beyond doubt the trout were seeing colour too.

I was very impressed with how quickly Pete adapted to the changing conditions. He made his own choices of presentation, flies and retrieves based on the feedback I was giving him. Which only goes to show that Pete listens, and learns quickly!

*Til' next month, tight lines,  
Andy Lush*



*A quality Tenterden rainbow "happy days"*

Although I was getting takes and catching fish, I still felt I was fishing faster than necessary. I wanted to fish shallow at a slower pace. So I changed my dropper fly to a 'mini' candy floss booby with 3mm foam eyes. The idea was its buoyancy would shorten the sinking section of my leader, preventing the point fly going so deep. This would allow me to slow down my retrieve, another couple of quick fish followed this change. What was interesting was they both took the booby, this confirmed my point fly was still going too deep, especially now I'd slowed my retrieve. What was also interesting was they could see the subtle coloured fly despite the stained water. It's worth mentioning in dirty water the most visible colour is black! When the light is filtered out, we and fish see things in silhouette, and black offers the strongest silhouette.



*Candy floss booby and black Apps bloodworm*



*"Effort = reward" Pete earned this rainbow*



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## A mega Mirror for Dom



Fishing with a friend, 14 year old **Dom Windsor** visited a well known southern park lake determined to catch a large carp. Casting out his popup bait, fished on a helisafe rig, in conjunction with a pva mesh bag of groundbait, the session was nearly up when he received a take on one of his rods. After a determined fight, Dom and his friend Mason, were able to net this superb 20lbs 10z mirror carp.

Although not a **PB** for Dom, to land a winter twenty from such a pressured venue makes him a worthy winner of this months Sussex Bait Developments bait package prize.



## Jayden's winter gold



Five year old **Jayden Read** had a bitter sweet experience when he visited Hawkhurst Fish Farm with his dad Steve. On the one hand Jayden caught plenty of fish, including this lovely common carp, using a combination of 12mm cell and maggots. On the other, he unfortunately snapped the tip section of his fishing rod. Something that has undoubtedly happened to many a seasoned angler over the years, and whilst we aren't able to replace young Jayden's rod, we are able to award him this months signed copy of Carl Smith's book 'The Simple Fishing Guidebook' which is full of great tips and advice hopefully to avoid a similar mishap in the future.





## March update

by instructor Warren White



*Over the last month we have certainly seen a variation in weather. Conditions, we have had a cold snap, gales, floods and now we are in a really mild spell. Overall it seems to have been a really mild winter. It won't be long before we are full of the joys of spring but as with most mild winters, there still could be a sting in the tail.*

### Thermometer

Something I have learnt more about, myself, while teaching students on their fishing qualifications, is how important water temperature is in the life of a fish. Different fish need different temperatures and fish need certain temperatures to reproduce. Aquatic Flora, such as Algae in high water temperatures, can bloom which in turn can then starve the water of oxygen and kill the fish.

One of the biggest things that effects fishing in the winter months is Water Temperature. A rapid fall in water temperature when a cold snap happens is normally the kiss of death for fishing, but in a prolonged spell of cold weather the fish will adapt and will feed for short periods. Fish are cold blooded which means the fish's body temperature depends on the surrounding water, so in colder waters, fish slow down and need less food. Its the opposite effect in warmer waters, where the fish are more active and need more food to survive.

After a recent cold spell, we made a visit to the river Cray at Hall Place. On arriving at the venue, I went and had a look at the river, the River was low and clear. So I knew the fishing was going to be tough for our students. For todays session I decided to test the Water Temperature, using my Thermometer, which is something I do in my own fishing. This was also a chance to show my students how to use a thermometer, as part of their BTEC fishery course involves learning various water sampling techniques.

As fisherman we know what the weather is doing around us but under the water is a different question. A lot of people will say, who cares what the water temperature is? I am going fishing, whether I catch or if I blank. But the idea is, if you take the water temperature on a cold day, you have a marker for the rest of the session. By testing a few times throughout the session. If it goes up, meaning the water temperature is getting warmer, you have a good chance of a bite. But if it goes down, meaning the water Temperature is getting colder, it reduces your chances of catching a fish. A good gauge for most coarse fish is any temperature below 4 degrees centigrade means the fish are shutting down and will not feed. Anything above, and even better if it is rising, is enough to lift your confidence and tell you the fish should be on the feed. In the short session today we tested the water temperature a couple of times throughout the session and on both occasions it read 5 degrees Centigrade which is cold. Needless to say the fishing was really tough.

On other occasions, mainly when Barbel fishing on rivers in Autumn, when I know the water temperatures are cooling from the summer, I use my Thermometer to test the water temperature, and have had some good catches when the water temperature is rising. I think, just getting a positive reading of rising temperature makes you more confident some occasions I have stayed on longer fishing into the evening as I know I am in with a chance. I own two different thermometers a digital and standard one. Personally I prefer the Reuben Heaton standard model which is accurate and does away with using batteries. You can take an accurate temperature, in the margins by hand, or attach, and cast out with rod and line.

On the River Cray which is a small river I tend to put the thermometer into my landing net then rest it underwater in the margins for 5 minutes to get a good temperature reading. I would just finish by saying, that although a thermometer is a great indicator of what is going on under the water, it has to be remembered that Chub and Roach have been known to feed on the coldest of days.

### Session at Grove farm, Hadlow

After a spell of fishing on local rivers the lads decided it would be good to try a lake now they had thawed out after the recent frozen weather. We decided to go to Grove Farm, Hadlow college, which is an excellent fishery but one that fishes hard in the winter months. Like all winter fisheries, a sudden change of cold weather is the kiss of death, but if the weather is constant for a period you have got a chance of catching a Carp on the Pole in the margins or ledgering.

For most of the session we tried the Pole down the edge and also tried various methods of ledgering including the Method and pva bag, but the Carp were not interested. One of the group, Reggie (the Perch Whisperer), set up a 3m whip and fished close in on maggot. There are some cracking silver fish in the Lake but normally at the end of Autumn they switch off and fishing through winter for them can be near impossible. But 10 minutes into fishing, Reggie informed me that he had missed a bite, I must admit I thought he might have got snagged on the bottom, but a few minutes later a shout went up and he was playing a nice Roach, which he landed. It proved today a young lad, thinking outside the box saved a definite blank.



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**700lbs in 72hrs at Orchard Place Farm**

**Justin Ascheri** fished a 72 hour session on Lake 7 at Orchard Place Farm, Paddock Wood, landing an incredible 52 fish. Justin's amazing catch consisted of 39 catfish and 13 carp. His biggest catfish set a new **PB** for the species at 38lbs, with several over the twenty pound mark. On the carp front, he equalled his personal best with a fish of 24lbs with the remainder weighing in between 10lbs-21lbs.

**Yet another big Catfish****PB 38lbs Catfish**

The total weight for the three day trip was over 700lbs and Justin reported that on a number of occasions he barely had time to clip on his bobbin before another fish made off with his dna baits wafter hookbait. In fact the action was so hectic that Jason reeled in his rods overnight to get some much needed rest. An incredible result at any time of year.

**The result of a double take****A PB equalling Carp of 24lbs****Jason Siggs - 40lbs+ - North Lake, Elphicks****Joe Morland - 22lbs 12ozs - Old Lake, Tricklebrook****Callum Lovejoy Everest - New Lake, Tricklebrook**



A dawn surprise for Mark

**Mark Day** is a familiar face in the Freshwater Informer and well known for his river piking exploits, but occasionally even he gets an unexpected surprise. As was the case when this cracking 5lbs 2ozs chub picked up his sardine hookbait intended for pike. After landing the chub, a new **PB** for Mark, and who's fishing is normally restricted to just a few hours at dawn, went on to land a lovely example of his intended species.



New Lake Record at Wylands

**Ian Harley** certainly kicked off his New Speci 2024 campaign at the popular Wylands complex near Battle in style by landing a new **PB** in the shape of this impressive 33lbs 8ozs carp. The large common, which also sets a new lake record, fell to a pop-up bait fished to the island.



Tsunami is making waves

Sussex Bait Developments proprietor, and sponsor of the Junior Informer, **Sy Kitch** spent a wet and windy couple of days at Elphicks, fishing on North Lake. Despite the less than favourable conditions, Sy used one of his own Tsunami barrel wafter hookbaits to tempt this fantastic mirror carp that swung the scales around to 38lbs 8ozs.



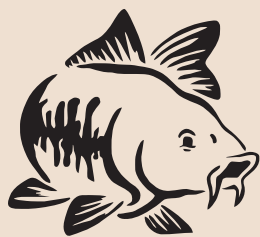
Danny Young - PB 27lbs 3ozs Mirror - Tricklebrook



Danny Young - Old Lake, Tricklebrook Fishery







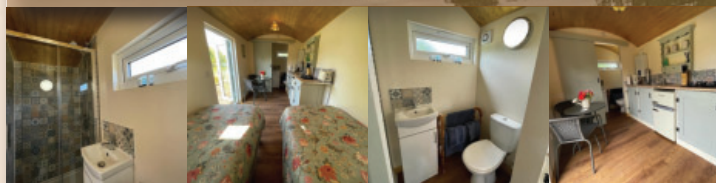
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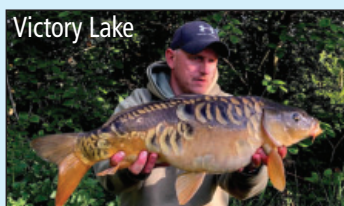
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# Medway Man

## Bob Morris

**S**omehow, yet again, time has flown, and it is almost the end of the river season. I have not been out at all! Various reasons for this including weather but I had been looking forward to it, as I had only done a few autumn afternoons on the chub trail and the river piking has also been shelved! Still a couple of weeks to go, so I suppose that I still have a chance but looking at the social calendar I am thinking that this looks unlikely.

My last few sessions on the pike front have been slow with only one trip producing action from one low double and a couple of jacks. Late winter piking can be very productive with the fish usually gathering in groups to get ready to spawn. Temperatures and other conditions dictate exactly when this will happen, and it also varies from one water to another and differs across the country. I was once playing a decent pike but kept feeling knocks on the rod tip. I could not work out what was happening but when the big female was eventually netted three smaller males followed her into the mesh. The Pike weighed twenty-five and a half pounds with two of the males being low doubles and the big girl was totally empty of spawn. This was late march and it had been a cold winter which may have meant that the spawning cycle was behind normal. Pike normally do thier spawning in shallower water, often along the

margins where weed and vegetation grows in three to four feet of water. Typically, the group will consist of one or two big females and a group of smaller males and unlike the wild thrashing that accompanies carp spawning activities the pike swim slowly along the selected area just gently nudging each other and often just small swirls and the odd fin breaking the surface is all the evidence that will be visible. It has always seemed strange to me that the spawning period of carp and course fish is protected by closed seasons and breaks whereas in the pike world it still appears that the big pregnant females are actively sought after. Pike are certainly more prone to damage by mishandling and even just repeated capture than carp; so there seems to be a discrepancy here – particularly as pike fishing is often

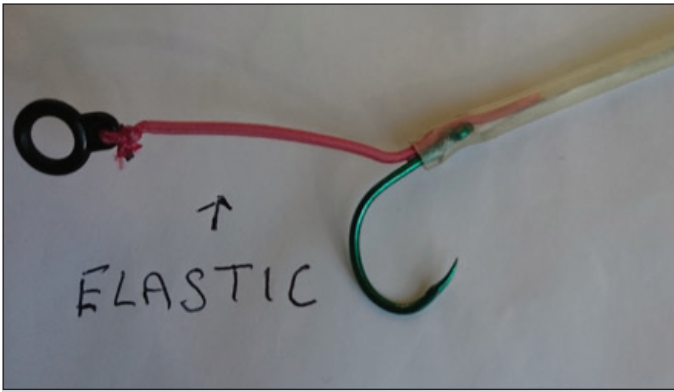
banned until 1st of October on many waters? I am sure that there is plenty of room for a debate on this subject.

I can't say that I have had a brilliant pike season this winter and have suffered a lot of blanks although I guess that the main waters that I have been fishing do not fall into the category of being easy. I have landed about twenty fish with the best half a dozen being upper doubles. I am not really bothered about the size so much, but I like to feel that I have done consistently well on my targeted waters – as I write this, I am not sure on that one, although as usual I have thoroughly enjoyed my efforts.



*Pike spawning, the female is 30lbs+*





***Don't be afraid to try new ideas***





***I've had some success***


One of the troubles with pike fishing is that unlike fishing for other species it is often very difficult to increase your chances of action by your own efforts. As an example: if you are after carp tench bream etc, you can bait up an area, try different baits and tactics along with fish spotting in various areas. All of this can give you an edge and boost your results. With piking the best tactic is often to try different areas and swims to give yourself a chance of dropping onto them. As you can tell from my 'University of Essox' section of this series, I am always trying different ideas and new methods and sometimes this makes things easier and often helps to cope with different situations but as far as putting more fish on the bank is concerned the advantages are often minimal. This winter I have been experimenting with a couple of new float set- ups and my elastic hair rigs, both of which have proved effective, but the bottom line is always that you first must get a take, and this is proving difficult on the venues that I am currently fishing. I am however still working on this and will look forward to another term at the University this coming winter.

Looking forward to the spring campaign, I am already sorting my float and feeder gear out and will no doubt be having a session of two within the next few weeks.

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Featuring contributions by Bob's Friends; Cliff Webb & John Carver



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<b>Eureka Fishery</b> Nicholas Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent TN25 4AG	<b>07597 879621</b>
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<b>Gabriels Fishery</b> Marsh Green Road, Edenbridge TN8 5PP	<b>07730 066088</b>
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<b>Wylands Farm</b> Wylands Farm, Powdermill Lane, Battle TN33 0SU	<b>01424 893394</b>

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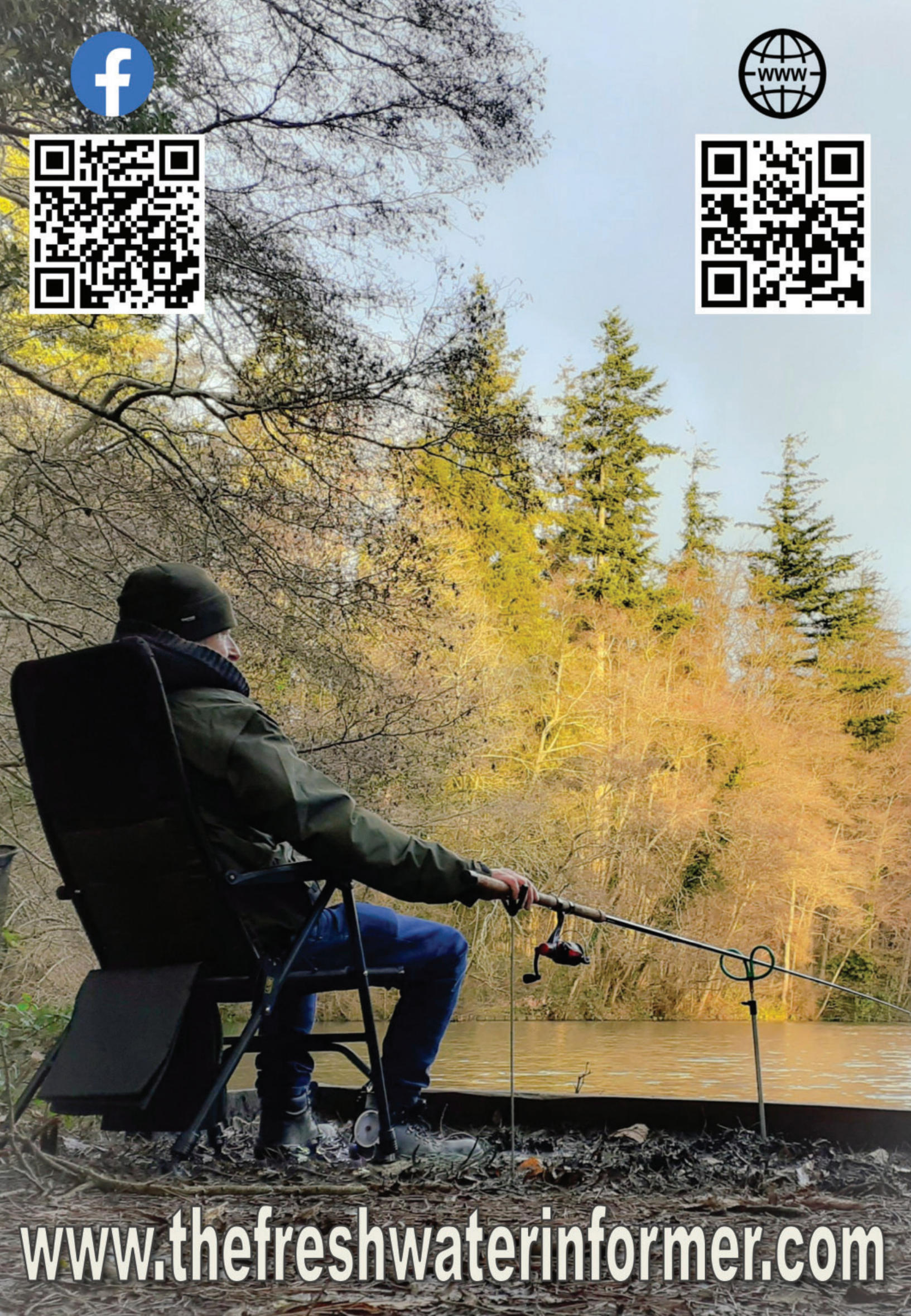
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