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

Hello and welcome to the May edition of the Freshwater Informer



As I was preparing to write this introduction a comment on the Freshwater Informer Facebook page caught my eye alluding to the fact that, in the poster's opinion, we, as a publication, are too focused on carp. As an observation it is not without merit, but as an accusation it is, perhaps, without justification. We exist to promote fishing in the South East, and to share the successes of the anglers therein. Carp fishing is an incredibly popular discipline within our community and as such, they undeniably dominate the catch reports that we receive. However, we are always keen to promote and share other species, and recent months have seen specimen pike, perch, catfish, roach, bream, chub, tench, and even ruffe, grace our pages. This month we have an exclusive feature on one of the largest rudd ever reported from East Sussex.



Ultimately, the Freshwater Informer is for everyone, and whether your first ever fish, or a long sought after personal best, we will always do our utmost to share your successes within its pages. So if carp aren't your thing, get out on the bank and target something else. We look forward to seeing the photographs. Have a great month.

ENJOY, THE FWI TEAM.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2024	JUNE publication CONTENT DEADLINE 20th May	OCTOBER publication CONTENT DEADLINE 16th September
	JULY publication CONTENT DEADLINE 17th June	NOVEMBER publication CONTENT DEADLINE 21st October
	AUGUST publication CONTENT DEADLINE 22nd July	DECEMBER publication CONTENT DEADLINE 18th November
	SEPTEMBER publication CONTENT DEADLINE 19th August	JANUARY 2025 publication CONTENT DEADLINE 16th December



The Freshwater Informer
email: thefreshwaterinformer@gmail.com

**COPY DEADLINE for JUNE 2024
MONDAY 20th May 2024 at 5pm**

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Beaver Fishery Lingfield, Surrey

Well, what with us having to cope with some horrendous weather conditions over the last few weeks Ben and I have continued our fishery maintenance program and we are slowly getting back on schedule. All of the water works on all of the lakes have been completed, swims woodchipped and pot holes filled which now leads us onto the beginning of the strimming and grass cutting season. Here is a quick report on what's been happening on the fishing front.

Snipe Lake has seen anglers banking commons to 32lbs 8ozs, mirrors to 34lbs 12ozs and the ghostie was banked at 33lbs.

Westlake has seen most anglers banking multiple catfish to 68lbs.

Jeff's Lake has again fished amazing over the last few weeks with the majority all reporting multiple catches, with the new mirrors, commons to over 10lbs, lots of F1's and bream being banked.

Daughters Lake has seen mirrors banked to 20lbs 2ozs, Fully's banked to 18lbs 2ozs, commons to 16lbs and grass carp banked to 27lbs 8ozs.



Terry Edwards - 27lbs 2ozs Majors - New Lake Record!

Eden Pond has seen the tench waking up with plenty being banked to 5lbs, bream to 4lbs, carp to 6lbs and some nice roach to about 1lb.

Maze Lake has again, like Jeff's Lake been fishing really well with anglers reporting multiple catches of mirror carp, commons and F1's as well as bream and silvers.

Majors Lake has again been really productive with commons being banked to 18lb, mirrors banked to a new lake record of 27lbs 2ozs, fully scaled mirrors to 19lbs, tench to 5lbs, bream to 8lbs 13ozs and ghosties to 17lbs 3ozs.

We issue a catch and fishery report on Facebook every Thursday and Sunday afternoons to go into further details of the anglers, their catches and all up to date news from around the fishery.



Jon Strate - 1 of 7



Martin Smith - 64lbs Westlake



Sam Hopkins - 18lbs 2ozs Daughters



Dave Russell - 28lbs 10ozs Snipe



Chris Shepherd - 20lbs 12ozs Daughters



Steve Thompson - 18lbs Majors



Steve White - 32lbs 8ozs Snipe



Chris Edland - 30lbs 12ozs Snipe



Peter Mew - 17lbs Majors



Darren Driver - 18lbs 6ozs Snipe



Ed Rayner - 31lbs Snipe



Callum Hutchins - 34lbs 6ozs Snipe



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Charlie Young - 25lbs Common Carp - Old Lake



Charlie Young with 1 of 88 Match Lake Carp in a day



Scott - 32lbs Common Carp - New Lake



Louie Rye - 18lbs 10ozs Grass Carp - Old Lake



The Bearded Carper - 32lbs 7ozs Mirror - New Lake



Dave Weyman - 32lbs Common Carp - Old Lake



Steve - Monster Baits Mirror - Old Lake



Keiron Fletcher - 19lbs Mirror Carp



Steve - Monster Baits Mirror - Old Lake



Body - 24lbs 4ozs Mirror Carp - Old Lake

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|---|---|

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 SUMMER 7AM - 7PM WINTER 7AM TO DUSK





Tench Spring to Mind

Last May I competed in the National Tench Championships on Oxlease Lake at the Linear Fisheries complex which boasts some incredible day ticket fishing over its vast selection of gravel pits. Linear if you have not been there before is situated in Witney near Oxford and all the lakes hold incredible lake records for all species but it is a very popular and busy fishery. The Tench Champs run by The TenchFishers group (of which I am a member) will be held on Oxlease Lake again on the 17th to 19th May from midday on the Friday to midday on the Sunday, a 48 hour event. Last year's event attracted 34 competitors but only eight anglers managed to put a tench on the scales and sadly I did not trouble the stewards for a weigh in.

I learnt a valuable lesson last year, a lesson that over 40 plus years of match fishing as taught me but I went against it at my cost and I knew within 2 to 3 hours into the event that I had made a huge mistake. I ignored the wind direction and decided to choose a swim off the wind even though I knew by the forecasts that the wind would not be changing around during the event hours.

The Watercraft Draw

Leading up to the event I had been watching the wind direction at Linear and for many days a South Westerly was blowing which as we all know is a perfect wind direction for some bites. Plenty of tench were being caught and some near double figure fish as they go over the 10lbs mark in fact the lake record for Oxlease is 12lbs 6ozs. So expectations were high and I was dreaming of getting my hands on that coveted Trophy and pair of Harrison rods worth £500 as first prize. So on the morning of the event arriving round 8am and parking up I chatted with some of the other anglers as I walked around the lake for the first time, as it was my first visit to the complex. The night before had seen the wind change completely around and was blowing in a Northerly direction and the reports said it will blow that way until well after the event. The noted tench swims were in the 30s and one angler fishing the lake in the week on swim 38 had caught 18 tench in a 48 hour session with a good majority of them between 7-9lbs, great fishing. The draw was going to be a Watercraft draw and that was scheduled for 11am so I spent a good 90 minutes walking around the lake looking for signs of fish rolling and feeding bubbles. As I walked over to the bank where the wind was blowing quite hard there was a good chop on the water whereas the other side on the noted tench bank was flat calm.



Tench at Springtime

I stood around the middle of the lake in the range of swim numbers 6 to 10 and although I could not see signs of fish because of the choppy water it was the head point of the wind direction and my gut feelings were sending me the right signals. It felt much colder than the other side and of course windier but it felt right and the place to be more by a process of elimination. The top end of the lake looked like carp soup as Carp were crashing about all over the place and I was not here to catch Carp, they did not count so the thought of playing big Carp for long spells during event time did not appeal. So I had ruled out that end of the lake, the other top end of the lake was ruled out as that was flat calm by trees protecting it from the wind direction and there were no signs of fish of any sort. As I walked back to HQ for the draw I had two options that I was hoping for should I get an early draw number. Swims 6 to 10 in the wind or swims 30 to 39 as they were the so called noted Tench swims but the wind direction was drawing me towards the wind swims.

Decision Time

After a briefing from event organiser Steve Innes of The TenchFishers the Watercraft draw had arrived and decision time was fast approaching. Placed on the presentation table were 34 goody bags which contained a bag of boilies from one of the sponsors, an official Championship Cap and badge and most important of all a brown envelope with a number inside and that number would determine who will get in order of 1 to 34 choice of swim. I nervously opened up my envelope hoping for a low number and I got number 11 which meant I was going to have a decent choice of swim to select. As I stood in line waiting for my turn to select my swim I could see what the other anglers were selecting on a big map of the lake, many of the swims in 30s were being selected first and by anglers that knew the lake very well. I was starting to doubt my gut feelings of those windy swims as none had been selected by those that had gone before me. The only swims in the 30s left was 30 and 31 and I did not fancy 30 so I thought if 31 goes then I am off to swim 9. The angler before me said after studying the available swims on the board "31, No I will have 24 instead" and before I knew it I was opting for 31 which was bang opposite swim 9. As I walked back to my car to drive it round to the drop off point for swim 31 I was casting doubts about my choice and a little peeved with myself that I had gone against my initial gut feelings but you make your choice and you have to sink or swim by it and sadly for me I sunk along with the entire bank I was fishing as only 1 tench of 8lbs 10ozs had been caught.



Russ - 6lbs 6ozs Swedish Tench



Russ - Tench at Bury Hill Fishery during my match fishing days

I am too long in the tooth now to know that I should not go against my gut feelings especially as the winner won the event from swim number 8 with eight Tench and the most ironic thing is when winner Bruce Ruscoe came up to select his peg there was only swim 8 left to choose from. It has happened so many times in the past during my match fishing days that plenty of times the last peg in the bag throws up the winner. Out of the 34 anglers eight anglers caught and most of them were in the windy pegs to rub salt in the wounds. The event is decided by most tench caught and second and third placed tied on two fish each in fact there biggest fish was identical as well so they had to have a distance cast off to determine the runner up.

The TenchFishers are truly exceptional when it comes to organising events and it was a class event to be part of despite not having a single bite to show for my efforts and the only comfort was none of the noted tench swims produced a single tinca so that change in wind made a huge difference to the outcome.

By the time you read this piece I would have competed in the 2024 event at Linear and not only will I follow my gut feelings this time but I will trouble the stewards to weigh in some tench of mine, I say with fingers crossed.

Let's hope that when I write about the 2024 National Tench Championships I have some incredible news to report on. I will be filming the event for my Fishing Tail Films YouTube channel and I can't wait to share on film how I get on.

If you are out and about over the next few days searching for a nice tench whether it be sitting behind some bite alarms or using a float on the lift method then I wish you good luck and remember there is "a possibility in every cast" especially more so if you follow your gut instincts.

Tight Lines, Russ Evans

fishing tail films

Greenacres Farm Fishery Biddenden, Kent

Please read our rules online before booking, for any enquiries don't hesitate to ring up and ask or drop us a text. We look forward to seeing you on the bank!!

Speci 1 This lake has its up and down moments because of the weather changing all the time but has rewarded people with some lovely carp which have fallen to lightly baited areas fishing a solid pva bag over the top. Now that the temperatures are rising, they have been showing themselves a bit more so don't forget to top up your spots with bait to keep the fish in your area. Perch fishing on here has been rewarding to anglers that are willing to fish for them with some just shy of 3lbs. These fish have all been caught on float fishing tactics by using worm or maggot on the hook and constantly sprinkling maggots over the top on every cast with a catapult to keep the rudd and roach in the swim that then attracts the big perch.

Speci 2 The carp have definitely been on the feed in this lake, with one angler having 9 bites with eight of them being carp and one catfish. The biggest carp was 24lbs and the catfish was 26lbs and were caught on cell boilies in a solid pva bag filled with particle. Now that the temperatures are rising, I want be surprised that this will change and the cats will be the more dominant fish and push the carp out to eat the angler's bait. Catfish will eat anything but to target them the best method is to use high attractant boilies or pellet like krill boilies or marine halibut pellet over a large bed of pellet that's soaked in a fishy attractant.

Heron People have been having a cracking time on here catching large mixed bags of silvers and carp on both float and method feeding tactics. Baits that seem to be working is maggots, castors and worms over a ball of groundbait when float fishing and feeder fishing seems to be banded 10mm pellets.

Kingfisher This lake is the one to be on any time of year as it always produces lovely mixed bags of fish and keeps you going all day. Fish can literally be caught on the top two sections of your pole on any bait that you wish to use.

Bluebell Tench and carp are still being caught out of this pond and the key is to bait up little and often with a pole pot or with a catapult and add a ball of groundbait every now and again just to keep their heads down grubbing around.

Don't forget to dip your nets, slings and unhooking mats/cradles or you will be asked to leave. CCTV IS IN OPERATION!!!!





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Elphicks Fisheries Horsmonden, Kent



Adam Ellis - 50lbs - Westend 02/24



Dan - 46lbs 6ozs - Pullens Lake



Craig Fitzpatrick - 40lbs - North Lake 02/24



Robert Kavanagh - 38lbs - North Lake 03/24



Tim Steele - 49lbs 8ozs - Pullens Lake



Peter North - 20lbs 5ozs - Prairie Lake 02/24



Shaun Monk - 54lbs - North Lake 03/24



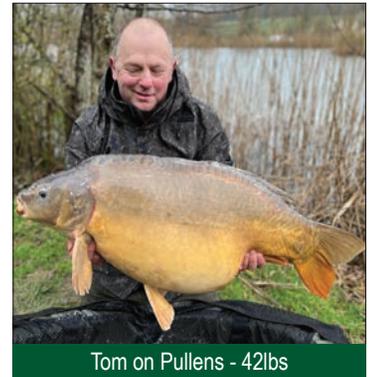
Elphicks - North Lake



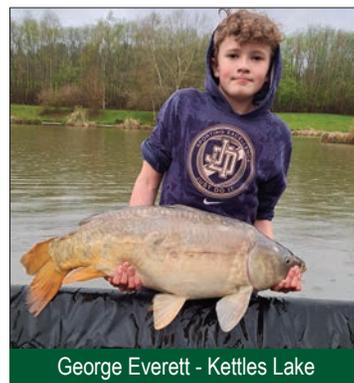
Robert Kavanagh - 40lbs - North Lake 03/24



George Everett - Kettles Lake



Tom on Pullens - 42lbs



George Everett - Kettles Lake



George Everett - Kettles Lake

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James Makepeace - 35lbs 5ozs - Plantation Lake 02/24



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BCAC success for Father and Son team



Representing Rig Locker, the Father and Son team of Kevin and Ben Cloke fished the BCAC qualifier at Linear Fisheries Brasenose 1. Kevin told the FWI

"We set off to linear on Thursday about 2pm and arrived at 4:30pm. After spending the night in the car park we woke up on Friday morning awaiting the draw. We had a look around the lake a few times and picked our pegs, definitely liked the look off A3 zone C zone C1 ,C3. At 9am with notes in hand We went to the draw where we came 8th on the list. With all our top pegs taken we ended up going with A3 39 , 40, right in the bay corner. We were actually quite happy with as on the Friday morning we spotted a lot of fish activity. We knew some big gusts and winds were forecast pushing SSW in the area so were confident the fish would turn up on the new wind.

With the van unloaded we set about finding the spots and eventually got the rods in at 12pm. Within the first few hours I was into my a fish of 23lb, it was nice to get of the mark early! A few hours later Ben hooked into one which weighed in at 26lb, but as the day progressed into Saturday evening we had no more fish. A SE wind turned on us which definitely didn't help us one bit, but as soon the direction changed back to SSW we had a 21lb 3oz, and then shortly after Ben had a fish of 32lb 1oz. Then a couple of hours later we had two more fish weighing 27lb 6oz and 26lb 11oz.

The peg seemed to be a day time spot as we didn't have any bites during the night. Bait wise, all fish caught on wafers with a good bed of Mad baits P- fish and nutz plus doing the business for us. We weren't finished yet though, and on the final day we had a fish early on of 22lb. Two more fish weighing 16lb and a 32lb 6oz rounded off our campaign.

Attending the weigh in confirmed that we'd won our section, and also won outright on Brasenose 1 with a combined weight off 227lb 13oz. Considering we were fishing in 50mph SSW gusts, with trees falling around us, we were well happy.

A big thank you to Tony Wing for being our runner, and thank you to everyone involved."



Ben with a B1 thirty to extend the pairs lead

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999 If a crime is taking place
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Community Project of the Year

The Angling and Mental Health Initiative CIC (AMHI) is thrilled to announce that we have been awarded the prestigious "Community Project of the Year 2024" award. This recognition is a testament to our commitment to promoting mental health and wellbeing through angling, as well as our dedication to serving and supporting our community and the development of angling

The AMHI is a community interest company that aims to introduce people to fishing and highlight the mental health and wellbeing benefits that it can provide. We have been running Free event days since spring 2022, working alongside and within the Haywards Heath & District Angling Society. As of 2024, we had grown significantly where we needed to expand as a separate company, and now we work with several Angling Societies and Day ticket fisheries.

We are fully supported by Bodle Angling (our exclusive sponsor), the Angling Trust, and the Environment Agency. Our initiative works tirelessly to engage with the community, driven by our passion and love for angling. We are also supported by several local companies, who help to provide us with other funding options and social engagement. Adelphi Group of companies and the Freshwater Informer magazine to name a few. The AMHI offers various programs and events designed to promote mental health and wellbeing through angling. These include **FREE Event Days:** Special events dedicated to providing inclusive angling experiences for all individuals. **Collaboration with Special Needs Schools:** Partnering with special needs schools to provide angling opportunities for students, fostering inclusivity and empowerment. **Social Prescribing:** Working with social prescribing programs to offer angling as a therapeutic activity for individuals struggling with mental health issues. **Community Development:** Providing the local community and anglers with fishing events, workshops, and training courses to help promote social connection, skill development and overall wellbeing.



The 'Community Project of the Year' award holds significant importance for the AMHI and the community we serve. It validates our efforts to make a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing through angling. This recognition raises awareness about the importance of mental health support within our community. It highlights the effectiveness of our programs and encourages others to join us in our mission to promote mental wellbeing. For more information about The Angling and Mental Health Initiative, please contact: Email: enquiries@anglingmentalhealth.fish Phone: **07708 917171** Website: www.anglingmentalhealth.fish

In conclusion, the AMHI is honoured to receive the 'Community Project of the Year 2024' award and is committed to continuing our efforts to support mental health and wellbeing within our community. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our supporters, partners, and volunteers who have made this achievement possible. Thank you. Ben Harragan Founder/Director and Lead Coach



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Claygate Lakes Claygate, Marden, Kent

Lake Eva **Bradley Brown** aka 'Bundy' had a good time catching a 30lber, then two days later managed to catch the same fish from a different swim! This lake is fishing really well with a 32lbs ghostie along with numerous larger commons and mirrors being banked. **Yannis** went away happy after landing a rather fat old common. FCB baits pop-ups with PVA bags of matching goo and pellets seem to be working well.

Lake Sophie Tench are on the feed, worm doesn't seem to be a bad try along with prawns catching fish and a bit of bread for later afternoon off the top.

Lake Amy **Kevin Avery**, a field tester for FCB baits, has caught consistently on this brand of bait as have other fishermen that have given it a go. Regulars, **Matt, Ben and Jack** have also found the fish recently and with the water temperature starting to rise the lake has now woken up.

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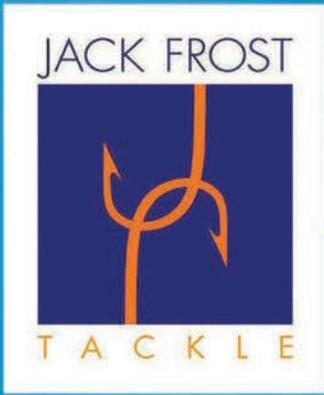
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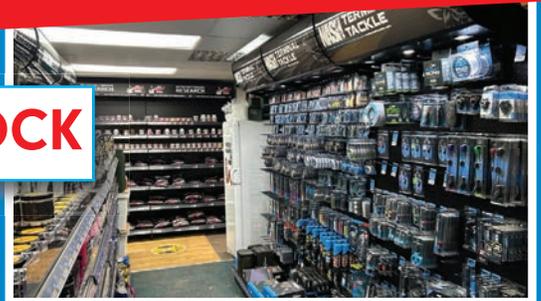


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The Close Season – A point of view

Stewart Allum

Every year around this time, the thorny issue of the close season on rivers arises in the angling press and I noted with concern our editor's statement in the April 'Informer'; so as someone who's long campaigned to preserve the existing three-month break, I hope you'll permit this indulgence. For whilst the recent, seemingly unending rain-lashed winter with its constant floods may have severely compromised the plans of many keen anglers, it hasn't exactly been easy for the fish either, with millions of fry deposited into the fields as fodder for gulls, herons and other predators. In some cases entire year classes of precious silver fish will have been lost in this way, a harsh reality of our ever changing climate.

To enlarge on our editor's assessment of the Mundella Act of 1878 which brought the initial legislation into place, it's worth pointing out that it was the coarse angling fraternity around Sheffield where Mr. Mundella, a non-angler, was the incumbent MP who first approached him with a request for some legal protection to be put in place. Yes it's true that the initial drafting of the Bill was left to Messrs Spencer Walpole, an inspector of Salmon Fisheries and Frank Buckland a prominent member of the Piscatorial Society, both of whom were salmon anglers. However, throughout the subsequent 45 years a number of amendments, mainly from coarse fishing interests were submitted before the 1923 Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act was passed, the terms of which remained largely unaltered until the Close season on stillwaters & canals was lifted by the Environment Agency in 1995, amongst much controversy. In my view, messrs. Walpole and Buckland didn't do a bad job at the time. For despite our changing climate, most coarse fish either spawn, or are getting into spawning condition, within the existing three month break; commencing with perch and pike which generally spawn in March / April (sometimes earlier) and barbel, roach and chub which mostly do so in late May / early June. Thus in my view, the present arrangements have served us well now for a century and a half; and continue to do so. Yes they were introduced at a time when many fished for food and few if any fish which were caught, either for consumption or in competitions, would've been returned alive but I think we'd all agree that although the risks faced by our indigenous fish species have changed; other challenges (increased pollution, over-abstraction, predation, more efficient angling methods) haven't made their lives any easier.

As warmer weather approaches, coarse fish feed hard and their physiology changes as they get ready to lay and fertilise their eggs. This of course is bound to make them more vulnerable to angling pressure and a tempting target for over-zealous types hell-bent on achieving a 'pb' irrespective of the fishes' welfare. Chub in particular (roach and bream of course too) are often in very poor condition both prior to and after spawning. I've caught chub on fly whilst trout fishing as early as mid-April, which have been unusually dark in colour, with very loose scales and dripping milt. They don't handle well at such times and in my view, they really do deserve some peace & quiet as they get ready to spawn and also for some time afterwards, not just a brief closure of a week or so once someone has noticed spawning activity, which is about all the fish get at most still-waters nowadays.

Due to annual weather variations the present arrangements will always appear lacking at times. I've witnessed barbel spawning on the Medway in late June and can well understand the calls by some to have the close season dates changed. However, legislation simply cannot work like that and if we were to have a close season which protected all our coarse fish to the ultimate extent, covering all eventualities, it might well end up lasting from the beginning of March through to the end of June and even I'd be hard-pressed to support that.

Neither is it fair to draw comparisons, as some are bound to, with still-waters; nearly all of which, unlike our rivers, are artificially stocked to some extent. Carp and tench are far more robust than chub and can endure a lot more handling around spawning time. Even so, the relaxation of the old close season on still-waters has seen some terrible cases of mishandling, especially on more popular venues. To give just one example, I have access to a small, snag-ridden but very productive chalk pit which at one time produced tench to double figures in addition to some good carp and other species. It still holds a large head of tench but they rarely top seven pounds these days, the biggest ones having long since ended their days tethered to snags on heavy carp tackle, whilst most of the remaining fish carry the scars of dreadful mouth damage, some having no lips at all. So appalling is their condition that I can no longer bring myself to fish for them. Can we honestly think the same fate won't befall chub or barbel in springtime, that anglers will exercise restraint? Of course not, the obsessive types will be out there in all weathers, day and night along with the match fishermen and their keepnets, plus many others of the questionable competence and poor handling abilities which sadly abound on still-waters in springtime. And all that added pressure, along with the advantages wrought by modern tackle is bound to take its toll on wild fish populations.

Then there's that recurrent plea that the close season should be based on science; well to some extent it already is, as I've previously explained. But what we mustn't forget is that angling isn't a science; it's a pastime based on principles of fair play and respect for our quarry, towards which we have a duty of care. If it wasn't, we'd have long since abandoned the rod & line for nets, otter-boards and worse. The close season, more than anything else, enshrines that duty in law and is a powerful tool in any argument against angling. It's also the only effective legal safeguard we have against illegal fishing or poaching, without which the EA or Rural Crime Officers would face an uphill struggle in bringing any prosecutions. Just how would it look if we were to abandon it; a massive own-goal and for what good purpose? Just so that we could get out on the riverbank a bit more often. Let's not risk throwing the baby out with the bath water, for goodness sake!

Let's face it, if people still want to fish in springtime then they can always head for the coast or pick up a fly rod and learn a whole new skill, as so many of us did in years gone by. Trout and salmon spawn in winter, so they won't be harming them by fishing in spring and more anglers taking up this branch of the sport would be an added boost to the tackle trade, which it lost in 1995 when tens of thousands of coarse anglers no longer took up trout fishing in the close season, a development which also led to the closure of numerous still-water trout fisheries throughout Britain.



A rainbow on the fly from Dever Springs

As for leaving it up to individual clubs to enforce local rules around spawning time, I can't think of anything worse. You'd soon end up with scenarios where rules would vary from club to club, bank to bank. In the worst instance a river could be open-season on one side and closed on the other. Service on several club committees over many years has done little to improve my faith in their competence. In most cases, a good number of their officers have only limited fishing experience (most keen anglers would rather go fishing than serve on a committee) and club policy is often dictated by the more vociferous personalities, sometimes to the detriment of the fisheries they control.

Also; and this is very important, such people (often retired and in their later years), would have no real statutory powers once the close season had gone. What would be their recourse when confronted by poachers? The police probably wouldn't want to know.... Yet irrespective of their poor record in some areas, they and the EA have a statutory duty to enforce the law. Without a close season, we'd effectively abandon what little legal protection our wild coarse fish enjoy and once it's gone, we'd never get it back.

As for the issue of combating predation, another argument that's frequently put forward; well what can we effectively do about it? The answer sadly is very little apart from controlling cormorants, where licences are available to shoot them in certain circumstances. It's currently against the law to even cause distress to otters or hugely destructive seals so we really can't use this as a valid reason either.

It's easy to slip into the habit of viewing our wild fish as commodities, to be exploited as often as possible and, swept along by our enthusiasm, we're probably all guilty of that at times – I know I have been. They are however living creatures and deserve a break. The close season provides us with a creditable standpoint. To give it up would set a dangerous precedent. It would indicate an abandonment of our duty of care, play right into the hands of the antis and represent a dangerous step towards losing the moral high ground on fish protection.

Sometimes, I feel it's not just the fish which need a close season – we too can derive benefit from an enforced spell of restraint.



Repeat capture - 12lbs plus Barbel, January 2024

Hi Alex,

Time for an update on my visits to Claygate Lakes. As you know, my season runs from April to April. Between April 2022 and April 2023 my total catch from Lake Sophie was 620lbs. For the 23/24 season I set myself the target of catching 1000lbs of fish. Some days it was good on the top, and other days bottom baits were the way to go. The bream never really showed. But I caught plenty of carp between showed 4 and 6½ lbs and I moved past the 700lbs mark before the worst of the winter weather set in.

With the constant rain we had over the winter, I thought that I would never reach my target, but with the weather improving I managed to get back out on the bank and in the last couple of weeks the fishing has really switched on.

My best day resulted in 143 lbs of carp, caught on chickpeas. I tend to fish the same swims. Pegs 17 – Peg 20. I think that the fish swim from one end of the lake to the other, and that by fishing in the middle you can intercept them as they travel past you. During my visits between March and April. I managed to catch another 294lbs, achieving my target and bringing my grand total for the year to 1010lbs. **Regards, Robin Piper**



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A Ruddy Great Fish...

There are undoubtedly more anglers in the UK that have caught a 50lbs carp, than a 4lbs rudd. That list, however, got one name longer when it was joined by Nathan Wood after he landed this incredible fish of 4lbs 2ozs. What makes the capture even more remarkable is that unlike the majority of specimen rudd, which tend to be caught from the Norfolk fens or Kent gravel pits, this fish came from a syndicate water near Battle, East Sussex.

The Butte
at 31lbs 4



Captor Nathan told the FWI "I primarily joined the water for the carp but as an all-rounder I'm always interested in any other species that a water may contain. Through conversations with the bailiff Steve, I found out that along with the carp there is a population of decent sized tench and a very small number of rudd. The water has seen a lot of unwanted attention from cormorants over the years, decimating the silver fish stocks and leaving the few remaining fish ultra spooky and rarely seen, to the point where nobody even fishes for them.

This spring I have been focusing my efforts on quick overnight sessions, driving to the lake after work and leaving shortly after first light, in an attempt to target the carp. This particular session was no different. On arrival I introduced some loose feed sweetcorn onto a couple of spots I had found on previous trips, followed by two rods, both baited with trimmed down 15mm bottom baits. Steve was fishing a short way along the bank, and after a quick chat I made my way back to my swim to settle down for the night.

At about 11pm I receive a fast take on my left hand rod and, after a slow and dogged fight, netted a big mirror carp. A fish known as 'The Butterfly', it weighed in at 31lbs 4ozs and certainly made the effort of 'roughing it' overnight on a bedchair with no bivvy worthwhile. With the rod reset, I made my way back into my sleeping bag, where I stayed until woken by a couple of

liners on my right hand rod. The sun hadn't risen, but in the dreary half light of dawn I could just make out a few pin prick bubbles on the spot. I watched and waited when suddenly the bobbin hit the rod with a crack, and the alarm burst into life. Convinced it was another carp I grabbed the rod and lent into the fish. The fact I could stop it made me realise that it wasn't, but the bend in the rod suggested that maybe a good sized tench had picked up the bait. Steve had heard my alarm sounding and had wandered up the bank and grabbed my net. Both expecting a green fish to come to the surface, neither of us could quite believe it when a large silvery gold one popped up instead! There was an air of disbelief as we both tried to comprehend what we were seeing. Was it a small carp? Had a bream somehow found its way into the lake? No, it was a rudd, and it looked huge!

My weighing gear was still set up from the capture of the earlier carp, and I quickly transferred the fish to the sling and held it up for Steve to read a weight out. He looked, looked again, and then said 'your scales must be broken, let me get mine' before disappearing back to his swim. He returned in short order, and we hooked his Reuben's onto the sling. This time he had to give me a number, and when he said 4lbs 2ozs it was my turn to shake my head in disbelief. Both sets of scales had given the same reading, but it still seemed impossible. I started my angling journey as a young kid catching silvers from a local drain, back then a fish the width of my hand was a real monster, so the enormity of this true monster wasn't lost on me. After returning the fish, Steve and I tried to put the capture into some sort of context. Like me, Steve cut his teeth float fishing for tiddlers, and like me, he always takes an interest in species other than carp.

Although he didn't recognise the rudd that I caught, he's spent an awful lot of time watching the water and the stock of the lake, and is convinced that the largest rudd he's seen still bares the scars of a cormorants attention, but he had never put a weight on it for fear of ridicule.

My late father, Patrick, never thought much of carp angling. Preferring instead to use a float rod for what he called 'proper fishing' When he passed, I inherited his fishing gear, maybe now is the time to get down his 'proper rod' for some proper fishing, in search of that proper fish!"

Nathan's Son, Mason with an 8lbs Tench



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ozs



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BARDEN LAKE Some good fishing to be had at the moment with carp to 43lbs being caught, tench to nearly 9lbs and bream to 14lbs 10ozs also being reported. A couple of pike over the 20lbs mark were reported last week.

HAYSDEN LAKE Good pleasure fishing off of the platforms being reported. Mixed bags of silvers with good tench and bream as back up bonus fish. Two carp anglers were plagued by good sized bream on a recent session.

THE OLD BALLAST PIT Carp fishing has been productive of late with some lovely looking fish being caught. The new platforms are getting well used by the pleasure anglers as there is a good depth right under your feet. Pole tactics and the feeder have done well with several reports of 30lbs+ mixed bags which have included some good sized roach.



THE NEW LAGOON Still fishing well with maggot catching lots of small fish on the waggler. Prawn is a good bait for the lovely tench on this venue. There have also been a few good sized perch caught recently.

WEIRWOOD The south bank has fished very well with some great feeder fishing tactics at around 30 metres. Mixed bags but predominantly good skimmers and roach with the odd decent perch on worm.



Mousehole Lakes

Paddock Wood, Kent



Gareth & Ollie Hakeman, 34lb Mirror Carp

Luke, PB 43lb 8oz Common Carp, Kingfisher





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Brandon Jessylee - Common Carp - MVAS Water



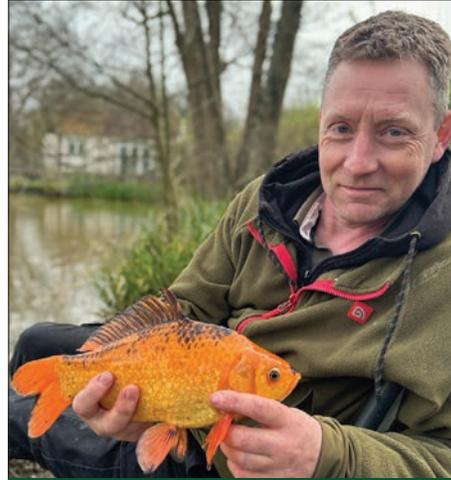
Ben Blackford - 22lbs 12oz Mirror Carp



Neil Wale - Mirror Carp - Members Water



Casey Hogben, aged 13 - 22lbs Common Carp - Cottington Lakes



Keith Richardson - Goldfish - Furnace Brook Fishery



Ian - 25lbs Mirror Carp - Moor Hall



Jason - JVA Carpy Adventures - 17lbs Grass Carp



Stuart Rouse - PB & Lake Record 88lbs - Charlie's Lake



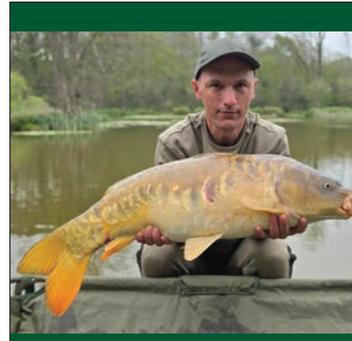
Rochelle - 29lbs 7ozs Catfish - Greenacres Fishery



Tom Norris - 'Tilly' 54lbs Common - Bluebell Lakes



Jude Edwards - PB 45lbs Common - Elphicks North Lake



Andrew Hall - 21lbs Mirror Carp - Frogmore Fishery



Dan Stanley - PB 44lbs 4ozs - Plantation Lake Record



Aspey Beany - 64lbs Catfish - Cackle Hill Fishery



Des Maskell (R) - 58lbs 8ozs Catfish - Hawkhurst



Freddy Clarke - 80lbs Catfish - Lake B, Pittlands



Carl Smith - 19lbs 5ozs Common - Frogmore Fishery



Miller Craven - 31lbs 4ozs - RH Fisheries, Monument 1



Age UK Event - Sandwich Lakes



Dick Iverson - PB Bream - Southern Water



Daniel Read - Pre-Wedding Common Carp!



Matt - Common Carp - Syndicate Water



Archie Brittain - PB 47lbs Common Carp - Elphicks



Lee Nicoll with a nice Mirror Carp from Shirkoak



Daniel Neil - Common Carp - Club Water



Harley Williams - 14lbs Common Carp - Dartford Lakes



Ben Taylor - 2lbs Perch - Furnace Brook Fishery



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Ralph Saunders - PB Common Carp - Majors Lakes



Graham Head - 25lbs Common Carp - Monks Lakes

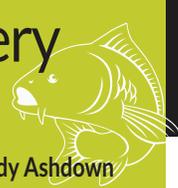


Ryan Hemsley - 29lbs 4ozs Mirror Carp - Elphicks



Alfie Foad - 21lbs Fully Scaled Mirror - Greenacres

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Andy Lush
- The Friendly Fisherman

Transition into Spring

As the daylight hours had increased, even before the clocks changed I'd started to notice the fish were waking from their winter slumber. The water was visibly alive with subtle movements, not caused by the wind. Very occasionally I spotted a fish top, well I didn't actually see this happen, but I could see the change in the ripples pattern, a tell tale sign. To be successful as a reservoir trout angler, an essential skill you have to acquire is to notice these subtle changes. After forty years of reservoir fishing, I've found this to be very helpful in deciding where and how I'm going to start each new fishing session.

Knightingales [TN30 7HA]

This is a water I was unfamiliar with, so I was excited at the prospect of fishing for the unknown. As usual I was going to 'waggler' fish with one rod and 'quiver tip' with a second. I hunkered down behind an island to avoid the savage wind, that was blowing straight off the sea and across the marshes!

After plumbing my chosen swim I decided to fish in the slightly deeper channel just short of the island in 4ft [1.2m]. Initially I loose fed maggots and instantly caught small roach 'on the drop' before the float could settle. I found fishing closer into the margin produced a better stamp of fish, switching from maggot to sweet corn further increased their size. I was kept busy catching chunky roach, that were often too heavy to 'swing to hand'. Happy days!

The quiver tip rod was busy too. I'd cast towards the island, dropping just short of the very shallow margin, to settle in slightly deeper warmer water. I was using a 'heli-rig' with a short 4" [10cm] hook length combined with a mini 'gripper' cage feeder, hook bait was again sweetcorn. I decided to catapult some more bait along the side of the island too. I wanted to create a bigger target area which would allow for my inaccurate casting in the blustery wind. As I said earlier the fish had started to become more active, which explains why I caught three carp to 16lb on the 'waggler'" and another two on the 'quiver'. A good day, enough to make me want to return and explore other swims around this intriguing water.

Return to Knightingales

My next visit a week later saw a much calmer, overcast, damp misty day. I was again using two rods, but this time I was using a leger rod with a run rig, baited with prawn hoping to catch a perch or one of the still-water chub that inhabit this lake. My 'waggler' rod was immediately in action, this time I started much closer to the margin. In fact I could underarm cast the 10ft [3m] needed to reach my baited spot. I fed a mixture of red maggots and eventually just sweetcorn, in an effort to avoid the 'dinks'. Suddenly my bite alarm alerted me to a run on the prawn.



Andy's surprise capture 5lbs 6ozs chub



Andy's new PB chub 6lbs 14ozs

Setting the hook the fish immediately ran straight towards me before surfacing. Instantly my heart was in my mouth as I saw the biggest chub I'd ever seen. The relief was palpable as I slid the net under the fish, and it was mine. Wow, I admired the chub as it sat in the net before getting the scales and sling ready. At 5lb 6oz it was obviously a 'personal best'.

Shortly afterwards while catching roach, 'one a chuck' on corn I hooked another big fish. I expected it would be a carp, so you can imagine my surprise when another chub surfaced, what's more it looked even bigger! Repeat performance, scales and sling were readied as I held my breath, the needle swung round to 6lb 7oz. I was blown away by my good fortune, but the day was still young and maybe just maybe a perch would put in an appearance? I continued having fun catching chunky roach when my alarm registered another bite. I lifted into another heavy fish, but now I was unsure what it would be, carp, perch or chub? The fight was unspectacular and so it wasn't a carp, no head shaking so it wasn't a perch either, it was another chub, and again it was even bigger than the others! I couldn't believe this was happening. Scales and sling were ready, now for the time of reckoning, 6lb 14oz yet another PB! As they say, "better to be lucky than good".

Elphicks - Kettles Lake [TN12 8EL]

I was still chasing the big roach and perch than inhabit Kettles lake. It was too windy for float fishing on this trip, so I cast a perch rod along the margin using a running leger baited with prawn. My "quiver tip" rod was baited with sweetcorn on a running rig with a cage feeder, cast towards the back of the island. I'd primed the area earlier with several large feeders full of groundbait. Further confirmation that 'spring was in the air', as if it were needed, came when I noticed a bulge in the waters surface as a carp swam through my swim. First fish fell to the quiver, a low double common on a 'Fjuka' 2in1 white hook-able pellet. Within minutes the perch rod was away, a mid-double mirror on the prawn! After lunch I finally caught a perch of 1lb 10oz on the quiver, not on prawn but on a cocktail of worm and 'Fjuka' pellet! This was followed by a nice tench of 4lbs, again on the pellet. Just as I was in the process of packing up, the prawn rod was away again, with another superb common just under 17lbs. What a day!



An unexpected but welcome tench

Hartley Lands - Reservoir [TN17 3PS]

I had intended going trout fishing, but yet again the weather had intervened with all the boats at Farnoor being cancelled due to gale force winds! I hastily booked a ticket via 'Swimbooker' the night before, to fish the 'reservoir' at Hartley Lands. I'd fished this water on several occasions, years ago when I fly fished for carp there. Unfortunately that option is no longer available. Anyhow I was back for a recce. Hartley Lands had been on my radar for some time. I wondered if there were any big roach or perch in there? As predicted it was wet and windy. I knew the reservoir would offer some



Note the sporting spawning tubercles on this bream

shelter, if I could secure one of the swims near the car park. As luck would have it, or was it the weather forecast, I had the lake to myself!

First thing I set up the 'waggler' rod and started plumbing my chosen the swim. I hadn't realised how deep the lake was. It dropped quickly into 6ft - 7ft [1.8m - 2.1m] just a rod length out. I wanted to fish at short range anyhow, this would give me much better float control and help me see the bites in the dull conditions. I loose fed sweetcorn, I hadn't had time to get any maggots from 'Medway Tackle' at such short notice. On reflection I only tend to use maggots as a back up for when the going gets tough. I needn't have worried as the fish were happy to eat sweetcorn. I fed a couple of small balls of groundbait and topped up after every fish with a few grains of corn. Almost immediately I was into bream. I hadn't expected these, in fact I caught several

between 2lb and 3lb. They were all in 'mint' condition looking very young and fit. I was so surprised not only by their condition, but by the fact that they fought hard, I know 'who knew' bream could do that?

My perch rod was failing to produce any bites, so I tackle up the 'quiver' rod. This was fished along side the float rod, but cast a little further out, down the shelf in case any fish had 'backed off' the baited area. Both rods produced carp and bream, although I did foul hook several carp around mid-day, when they seemed to come up off the bottom. I think I'd got a little giddy introducing too much feed into my swim, causing a lot of fish to be milling around. I misread their line bites for subtle bites, and striking at these resulted in uncontrollable battles, that eventually ended up with hook pulls!

Lesson learnt. Nevertheless I had the most enjoyable day which I aim to repeat very soon, minus the foul hooking of course!

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

Junior Informer



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Hey Freddy - leave some fish for the rest of us!



It's no exaggeration to say that we could fill the entire Junior Informer section with the catches reported by Freddy Joe Beaney over the last month. The 15 year old has an ability to catch fish with a consistency that many a seasoned veteran would find hard to match. Not only has Freddy mastered a number of disciplines, including pole, feeder and lure fishing, but he puts them to good use across a number of different venues, and for a wide range of species.

Pike, perch, tench, bream and crucian carp have all featured in his recent catch reports, as well as plenty of carp, including his new Personal Best 19lbs 8ozs Common Carp caught from Pittlands Lakes on a feeder. The only reservation we have about awarding him the Sussex Bait Developments bait package prize is that there might not be any fish left for the rest of us!



Freddy Joe Beaney
PB 19lbs 8ozs Common Carp

**Proper preparation
pays off for Finnegan**

11 year old Finnegan Kelly was well rewarded for the time he spent researching perch fishing at Furnace Brook Fishery with this beautiful looking example of 2lbs 4ozs. Following the advice of FWI columnist Russ Evans, who fished the venue earlier in the year for an article, and to film an episode of his popular YouTube series 'Fishing Tail Films', Finnegan chose to fish close to the margins. His preparation paid off handsomely when, along with some smaller examples, this superb specimen stripey took his red maggot hookbait. We have not doubt that Finnegan will be able to put many of the tactics contained within 'The Simple Fishing Guidebook' to good use, as this month's winner of the signed copy of Carl Smith's book.



Finnegan Kelly
2lbs 4ozs Perch - Furnace Brook





Erin Owen, aged 9 - Mirror Carp - Gabriels Fishery



Mason Bridges, aged 8 - Common Carp - Greenacres



Dylan & Evan Goddard, aged 6 - with a nice Tench



Ollie Gates, aged 6 - 13lbs Mirror Carp - Farm Pond



Oscar Leask-Rhodes - 10lbs Catfish - Darenth Lakes



Marlee (aged 6) and Reggie (aged 4) Ovary with a Catfish



Archie Owen, aged 7 - Carp - Gabriels Fishery



Oliver Moxley - 10lbs Carp - Gabriels Fishery



Ronnie Brehme, aged 8 - PB 16lbs Carp - Elphicks



Marlee Ovary, aged 6 - Common Carp



Devon Castleman - 17lbs Common - Clive Vale Water



Olivia Owen, aged 11 - Carp - Gabriels Fishery



Harry, aged 8 and Ben, aged 10 with Catfish of 30lbs & 40lbs



Syd Smith, aged 10 - 11lbs 4ozs Bream - Club Water



Seth David - Common Carp



Harvey Moore - PB 15lbs 5ozs Common - Pittlands



Morgan Bridges, aged 11 - Common Carp - Greenacres

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May update

by instructor Warren White



Something that is often spoke about in fishing circles is the lack in young people coming into the sport. There are many theories to why this is the case, the main one is in the modern era youngsters are spending too much time on indoor entertainment.

In a recent survey for Juniors in 2023, out of a survey of 100 angling clubs and 28,860 members, 6 % of the members were under 16. It then goes on to say that 41% of these clubs do not host any Junior Participation events or coaching days. Quite a concerning report.

There are some good fishing initiatives running throughout the country for Juniors, but in most cases, they are one offs. You get the youngsters hooked, but normally there is no follow up sessions. Like a lot of other people from my generation I went fishing as a child with my dad, which helped to get my passion for fishing. It is important to remember that these days not all young people have an adult willing to take them.

The answer to getting more young people into fishing is to start at school. Its common sense really because it is the place where you spend all your formative years, and a place that you learn. I have worked at Rowhill SEN (Special educational needs) school in Longfield for 16 years and in those years, we started small but now have a thriving fishing hub. It is a brilliant way to get the young people outdoors learning about fishing and nature. If you can have activities such as Football, Cricket and Rugby what is to stop you having fishing on the curriculum. In my experience of working with young people, if you gave students the option of going fishing, they will take up in large numbers. But the school will need to be 100% behind this, and importantly believe in it enough to fund it.

I had a message just before the school Easter break, from a mum of one of my old school students wanting me to take her lad fishing. I had met her lad Todd a few years ago on a Fishing for schools' course, and because he enjoyed it so much, he wanted to carry on fishing and learn more about fishing. Because I knew this lad was keen and wanted to take up fishing as a hobby, I advised his mum to join a local Angling club and being that she lived in Gravesend they joined T.W.A.P.S (Thameside Works Angling and Preservation Society). This works well, as I am also a member of the club, so when coaching the lad, we both had access to all the club waters. We were looking at doing the session on the first week of the Easter holiday but due to rain and cold weather conditions we opted for the Thursday of the second week of the holiday which looked a nice mild day. When coaching youngsters, you only need a short session, so we planned to meet at 2pm and fish on to around 6.30pm fishing into the evening and at this time of year is good time to fish. This was to be the first session of the year for the lad as he hadn't fished throughout the winter. I chose to go to Shorne Country park, as I knew the fish were now waking up after winter and as a coach, it has got all you need to take a youngster fishing. A good variety of fish and good facilities. We started off fishing the Whip, going through the basics of tackling up, plumbing up and feeding little and often. This is a good whip water as there are plenty of silver fish. We could see that fish were on the feed, as before casting a line, we fed a few maggots and watched as they were intercepted by fish, not far from the surface. Todd went on to have a good session catching some nice roach and rudd on the whip.



On this session we were going to look in depth at waggler fishing the modern way. I am not interested in gimmicks but if something works better than an old method, it's worth trying it. Instead of using split shot around the float we used float stops, I normally have one at the top and two at the bottom of the float. I have found using float stops is an improvement on shot, as float stops cannot come off on cast as shot can. If you have never used float stops before, it is just a case of passing your main line through a wire loop that houses the stops and pulling your float stop on the line. Once you are shown it once, this is easy to do. Also, a way forward is using a micro swivel to connect your main line to your hook length, to cut out line twist in your hook length especially when using a light hook length. To be honest, on the day, the waggler was not the best method as the wind got up a bit, but just going through the method of setting up and casting, sinking your line is a good skill for a youngster to learn for when conditions are right. When fishing for silver fish the whip is always a good tool to have in your fishing holdall. As if the weather gets up, and you cannot present your bait well using other methods of float fishing, being able to fish close in where you can keep your presentation under control, can be a game changer.



The third method we tried on the day was ledgering using a small method feeder. The swim that I chose is a tricky one if you don't know the lake. If you cast out too far in front of you, there is a snag, that if you are ledgering you are guaranteed to get stuck and have to pull to straighten your hook or in some cases lose your rig. This is because there is an old conveyer belt that is on the bed of the lake at this end of the lake, something that was left in the days of gravel extraction. Just to the right of the swim, is the end of an island, around 15 metres from the bank. If you can get your bait as near as you can to the island, without catching on a reed, you have got a good chance of a Carp. It normally means a good under armed cast. A good little tip if you are fishing tight to an island is to use a method feeder and bury your bait in feed, as, if you do overcast and end up in the island your hook will not be out on show and get caught in the foliage. When fishing near to an island, it's a method that you need to be aware and near to your rod. We fished this Carp style with a buzzer for any small detections. Throughout the session we tried various hook baits, starting with pellet then corn, but the best bait on the day was a Tangerine Dream 10ml boillie. As expected, if we were going to get a take, it would be later into our session, and it was in the evening when we did get a run. A nice-looking mirror was caught and soon after we lost a bigger carp when the hook pulled. Although Todd had good session catching silver fish on the whip, it is always nice to see a young lad with the rod bent over playing and landing a good fish.

After the Easter two-week break, I had two school sessions planned for Monday and Thursday. It's always nice after a school break, to get back and catch up with the students. Weatherwise you couldn't have got two more different days. On the Monday at Shorne we had gale force winds, torrential rain and a hale storm the lads ended up making snowballs and having a snowball fight. Strange weather for mid-April. On the Thursday at Hadlow, although it started a bit chilly, for the rest of the session the sun shined and that made everyone feel better. Over the winter at Hadlow we try various methods to try and catch a Carp, including Pole and ledgering, and although not easy all methods have their day. Once we return after the Easter break, and the weather should be getting better, the sessions are extended to all day ones, and the lads cannot wait to get going.

A method that we find works well at that time of the year is the waggler. We use this for two methods, fishing on top, which works well at this time of the year as the fish are starting to feed on top, although, still a bit finicky. Or the waggler can be used on the bottom as normal, the same rig for two different methods.

Johny, one of our students, knew exactly what he was going to do today. He pulled out of the holdall a rod with a waggler rig set up. At this time of year we like to use a clear, light, float in conjunction with float stops or split shot around the float and mainline connected to the hook length with a loop to loop, couldn't get any easier. Johny went to his swim and fed a few floating pellets and sinking pellets into the swim. Opting to start off on the bottom, he quickly plumbed up, then using a robin red pellet lowered into the margins under a bush. As it hit the bottom the float was away, and he was into a nice Carp. The pellet must have landed on a carp's nose, which he played well and eventually landed. Johny is a good lad, he will fish holding the rod in his hand all session, whether he is stalking on top or sitting down waiting for a fish on the bottom. Johny went on to catch a bigger carp, 14lbs 8ozs, he insisted on weighing it. Both the fish had put up a tremendous fight. Our other students tried the pole and one student fished carp style with buzzers, but all blanked on the day. Amy, our teacher at the school, swapped from the pole to the waggler and not long after she was playing a good carp. Every day is different, but today the waggler was king.



Johny's carp

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The Golden Years of Coarse Fishing

by Bob Rolph

Legends of the 60's - No.2

Bob Church MBE 1935 - 2019

Born on Boxing Day in 1935, Bob was once voted by the readers of the Angling Times as Britain's greatest all round angler. He took over the column in A.T. that the great Dick Walker had made his own for over 40 years until Dick's untimely death from cancer in 1984, and wrote each week on both coarse and reservoir trout angling.

Bob's first small book 'Reservoir Trout Fishing' first published in 1977 brought him to the attention of the legion of eager trout anglers, all descending on the midlands reservoirs in the 1970s and 1980s keen to take home their limit bags. During the early years of these new reservoirs, you had to get there the night before to gain a swim, even at Grafham and Rutland Water. (Empingham Reservoir as it was originally called)! I was one of those early eager anglers, and thought nothing of driving the 100 miles up from Kent to join the throng on opening day.

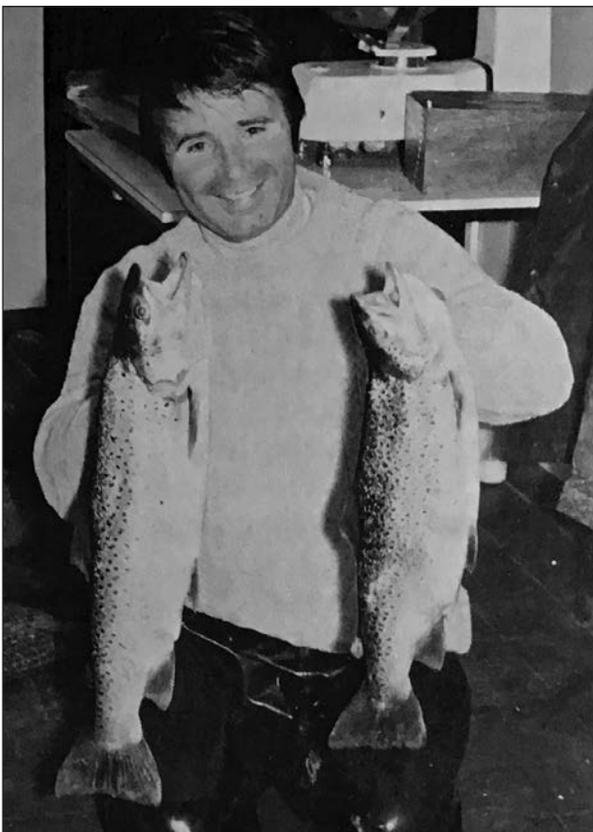
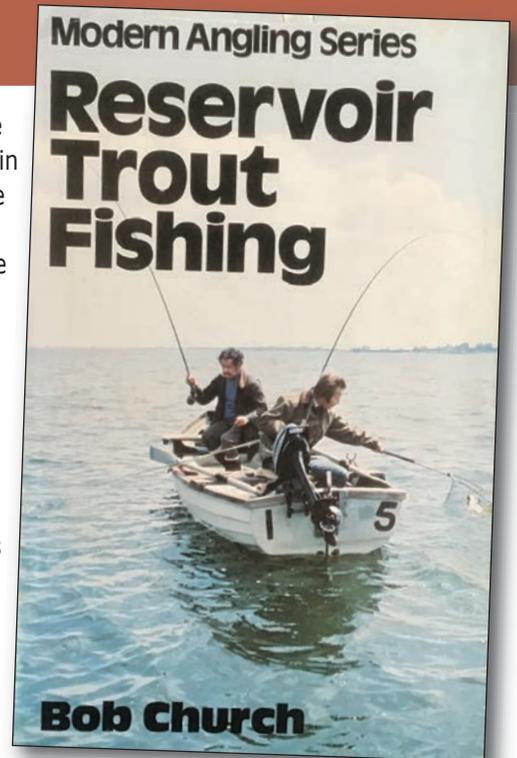
Bob outlined his revolutionary ideas in this new book, about bank and boat fishing at all the midlands reservoirs being built at the time. Although Bob had been coarse fishing for years around his home town of Northampton, he was new to trout fishing and had a weekly column in the Northampton local paper where he was already a well known name in the area for catching big fish. When Grafham Water opened in about 1968, Bob was ready to take advantage of his considerable skills honed on the older reservoirs like Pitsford, Ravensthorpe and Eyebrook, to the newly flooded grassy banks of this Cambridgeshire mega lake, where he absolutely slaughtered the resident Brown and Rainbow Trout which had been introduced during its flooding years by the local river board 4 years earlier. The trout grew fat on the rich farm land of worms insects and other man made introduced fish food, and by opening day the catches of 3lbs trout by the locals were legendary. Word soon got round, and soon trout anglers from all over the country were flocking to Grafham to try their hand at this new Reservoir Trout lark, mostly with totally inadequate tackle and no

clue how to cast a fly! Day tickets were only £1 and you could take home eight trout if you were so lucky.

Bob was already an expert at it, and on the bank could not be matched with his new long distance casting and lure and shooting head technique. Many times during the 1970s I witnessed his fish catching ability in places like Gaynes Cove and Savages Creek where he out fished me 4 fish to 1! His limit bags of 2-3lbs Rainbows caught by long distance casting with small lures like his Church Fry, and I tried to emulate him with my totally inadequate rod and very limited knowledge. Bob took me under his wing and showed me how to do it. I later took all this knowledge down to my local water Bewl Water when it first opened on May 1st 1978.

I first encountered Bob Church on the narrow banks of the Grand Union Canal in 1968 when fishing for big Eels with members of the old National Anguilla Club. We had frequent expeditions up there each spring to fish during the coarse fish close season. We all had 5lbs+ fish, and many bags of 3-4lbs fish, which we kept in black plastic dustbins to photograph at dawn.

All the big names of the 1960s once belonged to the Anguilla club and Bob was no exception. Eels were the big thing around that time under the influence of Arthur Sutton and Terry Coulson who wrote about them in 'Fishing' magazine, our bible. Bob came over from his red brick terraced house in nearby Northampton, where his neighbours were legendary carp anglers Bob Reynolds and Phil Shatford. Fred Wagstaff from Leicester also came to meet us on the banks of the canal. Eels were very prolific around this time, all over the country, many of them but not so big. A 5lber was the fish to aim for, and the record was still only 8lbs 8ozs. Steven Terrys 11lbs 2ozs fish hadn't been caught then!



Bob Church with a brace of 5lbs Brown Trout

One day up on the canal in 68 after a prolific night with the eels, Bob told us all about this new reservoir just built near Huntingdon called Grafham Water, and how he had been catching huge bags of good size trout of the bank since it opened in April, and would we like to go and join him? Well, I had just started trout fishing at Weir Wood and Darwell reservoirs in Sussex and was dead keen to take up his kind offer. He subsequently first met me on the bank at Gaynes Cove and showed me the ropes, demonstrating the double haul shooting head technique with 10 yard no 9 shooting heads, Sweeney Todd lures and sinking line. Soon I was catching 3lbs rainbows and lovely spotted brown trout from 40 yards distant, and I was hooked.

Bob invited me to stay at his house in Perry Street, Northampton on many occasions, and we went off to fish at Ravensthorpe, Pitsford, Eybrook and Grafham on many occasions, where he introduced me to flyfishing legends like Arthur Cove, Cyril Inwood and Dick Shrive.

Beryl, Bobs girl at the time, made me very welcome at their home, cooking breakfasts before we ventured on our way to the reservoirs every week end. The pair of them were starting to develop fishing tackle, - bags, reel pouches, fly wallets and ancillary tackle from simulated leather materials at their home, and I was given loads of prototypes to try out. Soon they started to produce even more tackle and rods, and started Bob Church Rods in carbon fibre.

I had the first prototype Grafham 10ft fly rod which he gave me to try out, followed by the Blagdon, the Rutland and the loch style rod the Loch Watten. All great carbon rods at good prices, and I used them all. Also his carbon fly reel, priests/ marrow spoon, and all manner of gear including rod bags and nets etc. I still use them today, I love his 9ft 6in Blagdon Reservoir Trout Rod which has caught me well over 1,000 trout over the years.

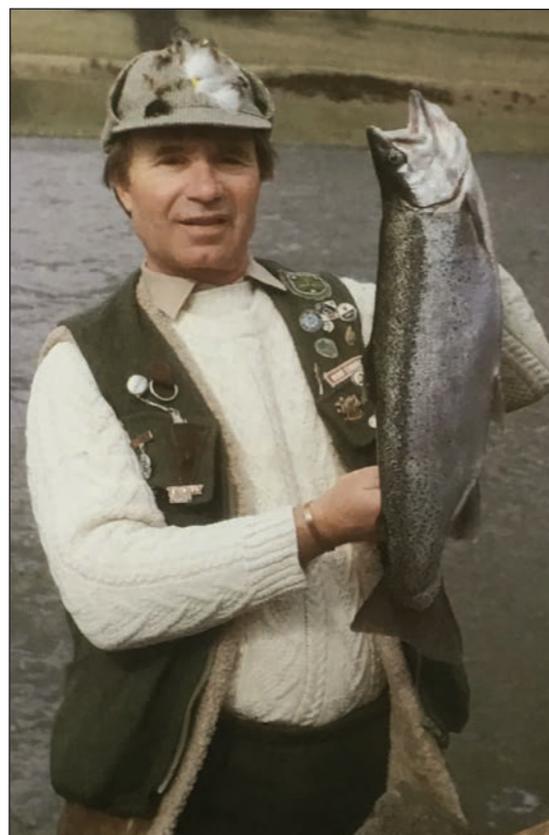
In his later years Bob moved to Moulton nearer to the banks of his beloved Pitsford Reservoir. I never visited this house but have fond memories of our times together up the hill in Perry St Northampton, where Bob Reynolds lived in the next street. They took me on visits to Billing Aquadrome, the scene of 3 of the greatest carp fishing captures of all time in 1957 and 63, and to Sywell Reservoir for the tench fishing which was second to none in July 1972.

Bob was keen on football, and was a director of Northampton Town F.C. The cobblers, as they were known, was a passion of his and he once took me on tour of the stadium in 68 and showed me the very goal where George Best once scored 6 goals in an FA cup match. The Cobblers, the only team to have gone from the old 4th division to the 1st and back again in 15 years.

One of Bobs first loves was Tench fishing, and at Sywell reservoir I fished extensively with him in 1972, but at the that time his legendary skills with the fly rod prevailed, and he started boat fishing with Fred Wagstaff at Grafham and at Rutland from 1977 when it opened. They developed lead core side casting with huge lures for the big brown trout the hugged the depths, and then the extreme, loch style drifting with floating lines in all manner of competitions and team events. He fished for England many times all over the world, but was at one time deemed a professional and was banned for a long time from the competition circuit. He came down to Kent to fish at Bewl Water, and at the European Flyfishing Championships in 1988, presented me with the runners up trophy on my local water. I thanked him for teaching me so well 20 years earlier!

Bob was a founder member of the famous group, the Northampton Specimen Hunters group, and one of the instigators of the notorious events at The Volunteer pub in the High Street, Northampton, when groups got together for a shindig each close season, and Peter Mead and Wagstaff often got blotto!

He was also an expert fly tier, and editor of one of the greatest dictionaries of flies ever produced, Bob Church 'Trout Flies' also the compositor of over a dozen great fishing books. Bob eventually turned back to coarse fishing in his later years, when his poor health and eyesight was suffering. He fished on the Great Ouse for huge Barbel and Chub, and had one over 15lbs from the famous weir up there. He fished for Carp, Tench, Eels, Barbel, Chub and of course Trout, and dabbled with Salmon abroad and in Scotland. He made such a name for himself in all aspects of fishing and charity work that he was made an MBE for services to Angling. Bob fished down here at Bewl on many occasions, and loved the place, but it was on the midland reservoirs that he really made his name and had the greatest impact on the way we all fished for those rainbow and brown trout, and also for the Zander which were to dominate the fishery in years to come. He was one of my angling hero's who I was privileged to have called a good friend, and who's passing left a huge void in the angling scene of this country, and a legacy that carries on to this day.

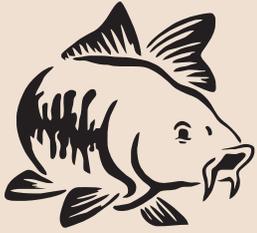


One of many large reservoir caught Trout



Tench were Bob's first passion

Bob Rolph



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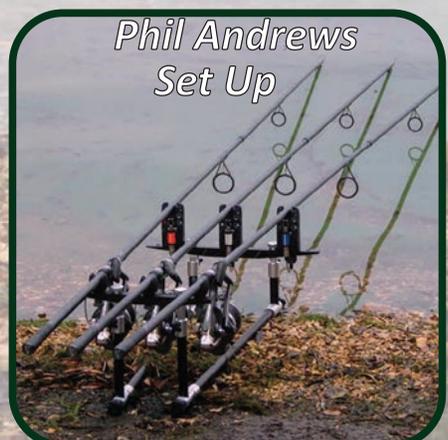
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Medway Man

Bob Morris

It is great to be out on the bankside again at this time of year. Bluebells in the woodlands/hedgerows and the return of all the Spring/Summer wildlife species - or at least many of them. I have seen my Swallows and Martins so just need a Cuckoo or two on site to make it seem like a real spring. I have great concerns about the decrease in the numbers of certain creatures or even the complete absence of some, but it is such a huge subject that I won't go into it at present.

Last time I promised to report on my progress on the spring fishing front and so here is a short account of how it has been going so far. The main target, as usual, has been the Tench and bream with carp being the inevitable hangers on. I have started well with only one afternoon blank session to kick off with and a reasonable amount of action on all trips since then. The best part of this has been that most of the action this year has been on the float which has pleased me, as regular readers will know. Float tactics, notably some form of lift method is just about my favourite way of fishing, particularly when I can use my centrepin reels. I used the phrase some form of 'lift method' because having experimented with this tactic for many years now I have come to realise that different variations and small adjustments to the way this tackle is set up can be very crucial to bite detection and the successful hooking of fish. Once again, I could easily write a whole series of articles about all of this but for the purpose of this piece I will try to explain some of the issues. The basic method is to use a float such as a quill or antennae type (useful in windy conditions) with the shot big enough to sink or almost sink the float. This shot is fixed as near to the hook as possible so that the float tip is just protruding above the surface. The idea is that as soon a fish sucks in the bait and lifts the shot the float rises and keels over often lying flat on the surface. My preference is to strike at this point, as I reason that the bait and hook must be in the fish's mouth. This is effective if the bait is on the hook. However, if a hair rig is being used it is then often more sensible to wait longer, until the float moves away - which was the traditional way to fish this style. It is a matter of trial and error, and the effectiveness of the 'lift' is also very much affected by various other factors such as the thickness/weight and type of line (nylon or braid etc) shape/size of float and shot and of course wind strength and direction. The float is attached 'waggler style' by the bottom end only and used with a sunk line. Braids tend to float, which can also complicate things. If the wind is strong or causing a chop on the water, it is frequently necessary to use a heavier float and shot to counteract this. If the float drags under or the shot is dragged along the bottom, this can normally be rectified by fishing over depth and then tightening the line until the float sits upright. This



works fine but you have then altered the set up so that a fish can produce a perfect lift by blowing or punting the bait toward you. So, it may now be better to wait longer to strike, as you are not always sure if the fish has the bait in its mouth or not. As I said it needs trial and error to get it right. Another thing with this way of fishing is that you, of course, can't hold the rod and must strike from the rests. These are just a few of the factors that can be an issue when using the 'lift method' but when working well it is a deadly tactic. One of my favourite aspects when using it in a swim full of fish is that during relatively calm conditions the bites can be recognised by the lifts whereas the float suddenly disappearing is 9 times out of ten caused by a false bite/liner and you don't then need to strike and scare the fish out of the swim - you do need to concentrate though. There is plenty more to say on the subject but I don't want to get too technical.

During this last month I have been getting amongst the tench carp and bream with the latter also falling foul of close in float tactics and



this is often unusual as they frequently only seem to fall to the feeder approach at 30yd or more. I have not had any monsters and not been weighing fish although I would say Tench to six-pound Bream to seven and Carp to about mid doubles. I may be fishing some other waters shortly with a chance of a biggie. Having said that I am not too bothered about this now as I am getting consistent action, and this is what floats my boat these days. In addition to these float variations and experiments I have been messing about with my feeders in an attempt at improving the hooking rate although it is often difficult to distinguish the bites from the liners - particularly when a shoal of bream is in the swim. One thing is certain, to return to the original theme, it is great to be out at the waterside.

Best Fishes & Spring Tactics, Bob Morris

Piscatorial Politics



Having recently retired from the committee of Royal Tunbridge Wells Angling Club after 40 years of membership, I thought that I would do a short piece with the intention of inspiring other anglers generally to take the plunge and get involved with their clubs. Most people who fish are probably thinking that they have enough grief in everyday life and don't want to do anything other than relax on the bankside. I was one of these anglers originally, not wanting to spend time sitting round a table discussing club outings and matches but eventually, along with a friend realised that the club was struggling to enlist anyone to help run the show and so the same one or two were making all the decisions, often correctly, but sometimes wrongly. We decided to join and take some responsibility. Of course, we were welcomed because nobody else was interested and it was many years before election of committee was even a real issue at the

AGM. I am now happy to report that I am very pleased to have been involved with the club for all these years and proud to see the proactive club that it has become and to see other clubs and organisations getting politically involved and helping with the fight against the outrageous pollution and destruction of our environment and waterways - arguably the most important issue facing us all.

There has never been a better time to get involved with the running of your club and at the risk of sounding like Lord Kitchener I would like to suggest that...
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Bob M



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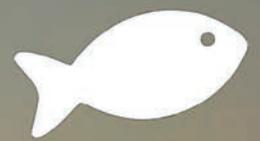
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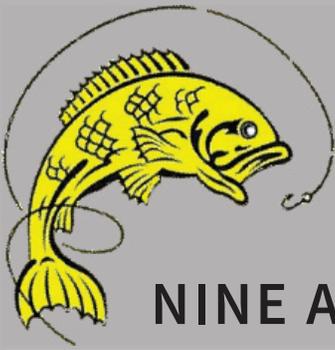
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Linton Angling Society Jason Tuckey on 07983 569220 or email lassecretary@lintonangling.co.uk	
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