

FRESHWATER INFORMER

Free
Magazine

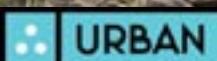
Issue 342 - February 2026



ARCHIE COLLADO
Royal Military Canal -
5lb pike PB

Catch Up With:

Medway Man
The Friendly Fisherman
In The Edge With Alex
The Freshwater Informer Team



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

Welcome to the February 2026! edition of The Freshwater Informer

Welcome to February. Looking back over the last month, it really has been a case of everything being thrown at us. Conditions have been far from kind for time on the bank – wind, rain, snow and ice have all made an appearance, with many lakes carrying an icy lid and rivers pushing through in flood.

If you've managed to get out and put a few fish on the bank during all that, then you've done very well indeed. This time of year is always a tough one, and we often have to prize the pictures from you. That said, it's a fun way for us to give something back, and we ran a small draw on Facebook for anyone who sent their captures in to us.

With the potential for the weather to start turning in our favour, let's get back out on the bank, support the fisheries, and as always, give us a mention where you can. Every bit of support helps keep this free magazine alive and available for everyone.

I'm working hard behind the scenes to continue growing the magazine and to bring you even more great content as we move through 2026.



If you've got a venue you think we should visit, or a story you'd like to share, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Until next time—tight lines, and make the most of every second on the bank.

Have a great Month tight lines to you all

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The Freshwater Informer
email: info@freshwaterinformer.com

COPY DEADLINE for March 2026 Magazine
Thursday 19th February 2026 at 5pm

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In The Edge With Alex

Visions of monster pike were torn from my dreams as the alarm dragged me noisily from my slumber.

I rubbed my eye as reality blurred into focus, but something was wrong. I had set the alarm in good time to ensure that I was up and out on the bank before sunrise, but instead of the expected darkness, an eerie glow illuminated a gap in the curtains. Surely I hadn't overslept? If it was something trivial such as work, I might have done, but to miss out on precious fishing time was unlike me. I forced the overnight fog from my mind, as my brain struggled to make sense of the situation.

I got up, pulled back the curtains, and all became clear. It was still early, it was still dark. Overnight snow had given the ground a crisp white overcoat, and it was the reflected light of the moon that was causing the room to glow.

One half of my brain was satisfied that the mystery was solved and drifted off into comfortable absent mindedness, whilst the other sparked awake in panic.

There wasn't lots of snow, but there was enough to question whether I really wanted to be the first person to attempt the cross country drive down narrow lanes to what was a fairly remote fishing destination.

I put the kettle on and sat down to try and come up with a plan, over a steaming mug of tea. I really wanted to go fishing for pike, but pike fishing for me has been quite patchy this season and I didn't really fancy risking my car for a blank, although the lure of the knowledge that my intended stretch could throw up a big fish still made it a consideration. Chub, on the other hand, are known to feed in the coldest of weather and would offer a safer, and better, chance of getting a 'snow shot' for the photo album. I was torn. In the end, discretion proved to be the

better part of valour and I settled for a brisk walk across the fields to a tributary of the river rother, rather than a thrill filled drive to the far edge of the county.

Bait was the next issue. Of deadbaits, I had a freezer full. Primed and ready to go. For chub, not so much. A quick rake around the fridge revealed the remnants of some leftover cheese from the festive period. Grated into a bowl, bulked out with a couple of slices of bread and a liberal helping of flour, I soon had a workable ball of cheese paste, and a worktop that resembled the ground outside! Add to that a handful of prawns left over from a perch session, and I was armed, if not particularly dangerous...

Tackle was the next consideration. Small rivers and streams tend to present a myriad of challenges. One moment you might be fishing a long shallow glide, the next a deep slow moving pool, or trying to present a bait in a tiny gap beneath an overhanging tree. Add to that that you need to remain mobile, and it is very easy to weigh yourself down with rods and tackle 'just in case'.



None of that sits well with me, and so over the years I have developed what I like to call the Roving River Rig. It is a very grandiose name for what is a very simple rig, but its simpleness is what makes it so versatile and effective. In my experience it works best with bigger baits such as paste, lobworms, meat, or large prawns, and is ideally suited to bold biting fish such as chub or perch. It is no more complicated than threading a float adaptor onto your mainline, held in place with two float stops, and then tying on an appropriately sized hook. It is how you use the adaptor that gives you options. In its most basic form you can use nothing at all and basically freeline. This is probably more suited to summer fishing when the fish are high in the water, or at the tail end of shallow glides and pools. For float fishing simply plug a float into the adapter. It wants to be buoyant enough to support the bait, but small enough to be cocked by the weight of it. I carry a selection of painted cork balls, with a small length of bamboo skewer glued into them to act as a stem, although the Stubba floats from Korum are a very good ready made solution. You can then use the float stops to vary the depth that you need to present a bait at. Lastly, it can be used as a makeshift leger rig. Any small swivel lead will do, but again, I've been very impressed with the 'touch ledger' weights from Korum. Available in two sizes, they come in packs of three and are ideal for bouncing a bait into position or any likely looking lie. Instead of setting the depth, you can use the float stops to vary the length of the hooklink, and depending on how tight to the adaptor they are, create a semi-fixed rig, or a running rig with a back stop. You do need to be careful with leads of over an $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce, as they will most likely come off during the fight, so I only use them if the situation dictates.

With my head clearing, and a plan in place, I put on as many layers as possible, grabbed my rod, landing net, a pocket full of bits, and set out across the fields. The air was cold and crisp, the world was still, and save for my puffing and panting, it would have been easy to think that I was the only living thing for miles around. But the snow told a different story. A lattice work of footprints traced the path of those that had gone before me. Fox, rabbit, deer and badgers had all passed this way whilst I was still in a state of earlier confusion.

I arrived at the river. A dark thread stitched across an otherwise white landscape. I ruined the first pool before I had even started. Steep banks can be precarious at the best of times, more so when snow covers hidden dangers. I

had made it half way down before missing my footing and unceremoniously sliding on my backside to the waters edge. It was only my pride that was bruised. The copious amount of clothing that I was wearing, cushioning the fall. I clambered back up the bank, glad of the fact that it was only the wildlife that had witnessed my stupidity. The next pool I elected to fish from field level. An eddy had created a raft of branches and leaves. The perfect spot for a hungry chub. I fitted a float to the adaptor, squeezed some paste around the hook, and lowered the float into the water. It bobbed along, coming to rest at the front of the raft.

I imagined the bait wafting enticingly in the flow. With a sharp jolt, the float disappeared. I struck, and my rod hooped over as tremors thumped up the line. The fish fought so hard that, for a moment, I thought that I may have hooked a rouge trout, but as I extracted it from under the cover it revealed itself to be a chub. And a good one at that, for such a narrow stretch. With my landing net handle fully extended I could just reach the water, and bundled the fish, plus a few twigs and branches, into the net. I didn't weigh it, I didn't need to, I had achieved what I had set out to do by catching a fish in the snow. I even managed to add a second one a hundred yards downstream using the leger, before the cold really started to bite at my toes. Mission accomplished, happy but freezing, I set off home for more tea and to tidy the kitchen...



Alex

PINIONS



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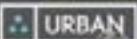
431 London Road, Ditton, Aylesford ME20 6DB
(Only 5 minutes from M20 Junction 5) Ample free parking



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Horam Manor Fishery

10 secluded lakes in the Sussex countryside

Mixed coarse fishery with carp to mid 20s
Perfect for families and experienced anglers

Day ticket fishing - Dawn to Dusk - Only £5 per rod!



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Annual Day Ticket membership 1 rod - £80 / 2 rods - £120
Buy a whip, bait + Day Ticket for just £15!

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01323 840889 / 07707 759364
www.horammanorfishery.com

Hawkhurst Fish Farm

Hastings Road, Hawkhurst, Kent, TN18 4RT

2026 Match Lake bookings

We are now taking bookings for exclusive hire of our 20 peg match lake. It is very well stocked with carp from just ounces to over 12lb!



Exclusive hire: £175
or



£10 per match angler (for 10+ anglers)



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www.hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk

Mousehole Fishery



Danny 21lb 8oz Kingfisher -
Mousehole

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Netting at Mousehole 5lb



Perch from the resent
Netting at Mousehole

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Elphicks Fisheries



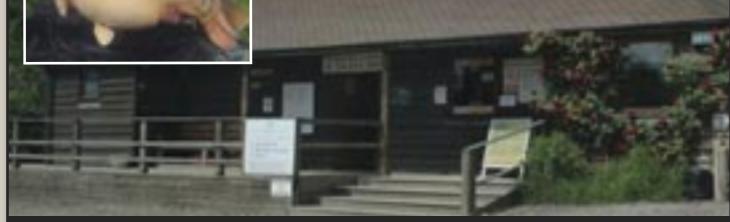
Elphicks has been designed and built with the modern angler in mind. We have 7 lakes available for day ticket and session fishing. Each lake has its own parking within easy reach of the swims and all swims are 'all weather' - either built of Astroturf, stone or bark. Please contact the fishery for further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



Elphicks Fisheries Spelmonden Road
Horsmonden, Kent TN12 8EL

Tel: **01580 212512**

email: info@elphicks-fisheries.co.uk



www.elphicks-fisheries.co.uk



Jason VanArkadie - Mousehole
40lb 8oz PB



Apsey Beaney - Cackle Hill - 30lb Grass Carp



Steve Castle - Boxing Day Common



Graham Dann - Mushroom Farm



Sam wells - Local River - Stunning 28lb Pike



Graham Dann - Barrett's Park



GREENACRES FARM FISHERY



Sissinghurst Road | Biddenden | Kent | TN27 8EH

Located on the Weald of Kent in Biddenden we offer syndicate quality lakes for all. There is one specimen lake for carp up to 30lbs+ 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





Luke Ellis - Winter Tench



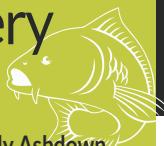
Scott Clack

Phil Norman - Float Rod
Caught CommonAdam Fairclough -
More House Farm FisheryJames Big Fish Lock - 1st Pike of the year -
Hydneye LakeLogan Hutchison - Notyouravreaangler -
Piking for a Change

Mark Day - Plucks Gutter Early Morning Pike

Liam - 25lb 5oz Military Canal - 20+ Years Trying to beat
a 17lb PB since Liam was 12 years Old, Well Done

**Iden Wood
Fishery**



Tel/Fax: Andy Ashdown
01797 280180
Mobile:
07906 232225

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

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allowed / match bookings taken
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| Coldharbour Lane | Iden | Rye |
East Sussex | TN31 7UT

More House Farm Fishery



catch

catch

In order to fish any of our specimen lakes you must become a member first. To do this simply continue with your catch booking then upon arrival of the venue we will sort out your membership and issue you a membership card. We have been asked to add multiple tiered memberships by you amazing anglers so that's just what we've done!

More House Farm is a rapidly expanding fishery set in the beautiful Mid Sussex countryside. It currently boasts five lakes. They are all set in very tranquil surroundings, bordered almost entirely by open country side.

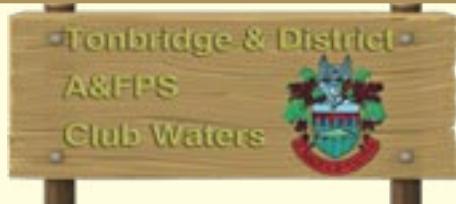
We also have Two new Specimen carp lakes called Oaks and Dogwood that were built June 2020 and opened October 2021. Oaks has 5 pegs on it with carp ranging from 15lb – 33lb.

Dogwood has 11 pegs on it separated by islands we have 18 tench and carp ranging from 8lb – 32 lb and already the lakes are showing great promise and as soon as the Pictures come in I will make a new section on the website for them.

The fishery is located at More House Farm
Lunce's Hill, Wivelsfield RH17 7RE

For a map and further directions to find More House Farm please go to our contact page.

www.mhff.co.uk



14 miles of River and 7 Lakes containing:

Carp to 52lbs 4ozs, Tench to 12lbs 8ozs, Bream to 19lbs+, Barbel to 15lbs 2ozs, Chub to 5lbs+, Perch to 3lbs 6ozs, Pike to 31lbs 6ozs, Crucians to 4lbs 6ozs and Grass Carp to 29lbs 6ozs.

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

WE HAVE NOW JOINED CLUBMATE

View the waters on the web

www.tonbridge-angling.co.uk

or

<https://tdafps.clubmate.co.uk/register>

NEW Gold Membership £225 + £10 Joining Fee

NEW Silver Membership £85 + £10 Joining Fee

NEW Bronze Membership

OAP 66+/Student 16-18/Disabled

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For all enquiries please email:

info@tonbridge-angling.co.uk

The Linton Angling Society - Membership Vacancies

We are a small but friendly club with beautiful lake, 2 ponds, 5 reservoirs and over 8 miles of fishing on the River Medway and Beult. Our waters contain Carp to 32lb, Pike 30lb+, Tench 8lb+, Chub 7lb, Perch 4lb and Roach to 3lb, including some good Bream and Eels. All year fishing, member's guest permits, night fishing allowed. We run over 30 matches a year and have a large junior section. Concessionary rates available for OAPs, Disabled and Juniors.

For further details contact: **Jason Tuckey on 07983 569220**

e-mail: lassecretary@lintonangling.co.uk

www.lintonangling.co.uk



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Telephone: 07873 322562

Email: email@crowboroughanglers.org.uk

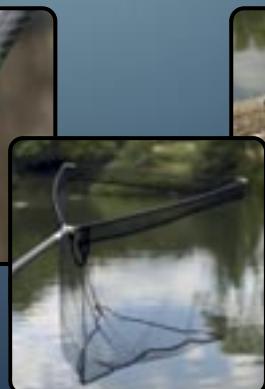
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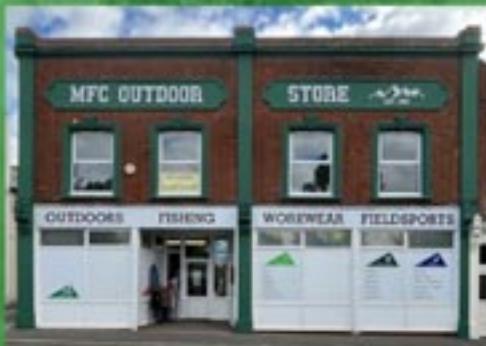
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Fish of the Month Prize Winner



Joseph Mcrandal - Birchmere Lake - 33lb 4oz Mirror Carp



Damon Scott - Gedges Hill Fishery - 24lb 7oz



Gustas Sirvys - Pitlands Lakes - 10lb 2oz



Joe Webb - Local Park - 20lb 4oz



This competition is open to all species. To be in with a chance of winning, send your catches to: info@freshwaterinformer.com or our Facebook Page, Winners will receive a:

Freshwater Informer / Urban Baits Session Pack
2kg of Boilies 1kg Stick Mix, 500ml Liquid and Hook Baits to match in either their **Nutcracker, Red Spicy Fish, Tuna & Garlic, Strawberry or Fully Loaded Range**

Winner's Spotlight A huge congratulations to Joseph on landing a stunning 33lb 4oz Mirror carp from Birchmere lake Fishery — our Urban Bait Prize Winner!

Your continued support is what makes these giveaways possible! Stay tuned for next month's prize — you won't want to miss it!



Jack Hurst - Baldwins Dartford Lakes - 18lb 1oz Common



Jack Hurst - Dartford lakes - 13.4LB Mirror Carp



Steve 31lb New PB Mousehole



Ben Low - Local Lake - Mirror Carp

 **In The Edge With Alex**

YouTube

A YouTube channel logo for 'In The Edge With Alex' featuring a fish icon and the word 'YouTube'.

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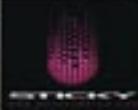
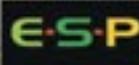
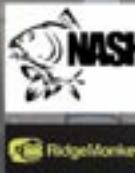
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Between Canterbury & Herne Bay on A291 - just 10 minutes from either!

Email: badders22000@hotmail.com

BAIT AVAILABILITY DEPENDENT ON TIDE AND WEATHER CONDITIONS

WINTER FISHING AT WYLANDS FARM: A WINTER ESCAPE AT ROSIE'S LAKE



January brought a cold start to the year at Wylands Farm, with much of the complex briefly frozen. Fortunately, conditions quickly improved and anglers were soon back on the bank enjoying the fishing.

Renowned for its excellent facilities and welcoming atmosphere, Wylands Farm offers great winter fishing throughout February and March, with special seasonal offers available to both season ticket holders and visiting anglers.

Rosie's Lake provides a peaceful winter fishing experience in beautiful surroundings, making it ideal for both experienced anglers and newcomers. Winter discounts are available on fishing pods, offering warm, comfortable shelter, while non-members can also enjoy competitive day rates.



WINTER FISHING OFFERS

36 Hour Special

£ 30

Saving £17.50

On select lakes only

24 Hour Special

£ 20

Saving £10

Lakeside Pod

£ 40 PER NIGHT

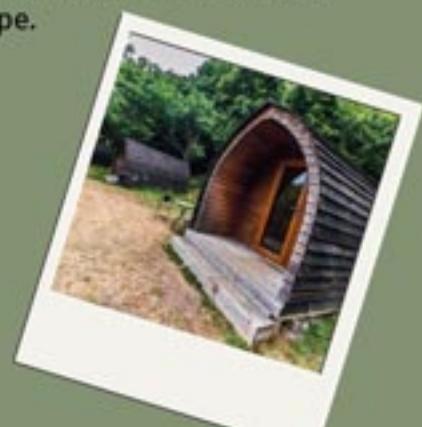
Saving £10.00

The 2-acre lake is well stocked with Carp up to 28lb, Crucian Carp and even Grass Carp, and features reed beds, water lilies and an island. With easy access in dry weather, it is also suitable for disabled anglers. Fewer winter crowds mean a quieter, more relaxing experience on the water.

With attractive winter offers and tranquil scenery, Wylands Farm is the perfect destination for a calm and rewarding winter fishing escape.



Wylands Fishery Team



FISHING LAKES IN DORSET & EAST SUSSEX

WYLANDS FARM

📍 BATTLE, EAST SUSSEX

9 WELL STOCKED LAKES
VARYING IN DIFFICULTY



FISHING HOLIDAYS
IN OUR ONSITE ACCOMMODATION



ONSITE CAFE AND TACKLE SHOP



Scan the QR to explore our lakes at Wylands Farm



LYONS GATE

📍 CERNE ABBAS, DORSET

4 WELL STOCKED LAKES
VARYING IN DIFFICULTY



ONSITE SHOP



Scan the QR to explore our lakes at Lyons Gate



SHARNFOLD FARM

📍 EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX

1 WELL STOCKED LAKE
MEDIUM DIFFICULTY



Scan the QR to explore our
lake at Sharnfold Farm



TEAM FRESHWATER INFORMER

6HR SESSION AT WYLANDS FARM FISHERY

A January Short Session – House Lake, Wylands Farm Fishery

January can be a painful month for most anglers. A long wait until payday after the festive break, coupled with generally poor weather, often keeps us away from the bank. This year we've seen it all – snow, rain, strong winds and frozen lakes. Despite all that, I still wanted to get out.

With Jim working and unavailable, I made the effort to sort my kit for a short session on House Lake at Wylands Farm Fishery. It's close to home, which meant no stress with an early start, and House Lake is generally an easier water with a smaller stamp of fish – ideal for a few hours when time is limited.

With my bags packed the night before, I opted to fish two rods. One was a quiver rod set up with a method feeder, and the other a simple hair-rigged bottom bait with a small mesh PVA bag of pellets.

I started by sorting the bottom-bait rod, casting it towards the dying reeds around half a rod length out, hoping to nick a bite tight to cover. That rod went on the alarms, giving me time to set up the quiver rod. I mixed a small batch of method mix, adding some pellets and a little extra flavour, making sure the consistency was spot on.

For the method setup, I chose a short mono rig attached to a quick-change method connector, allowing me to swap rigs easily if needed. With the feeder moulded and ready, I cast a few rod lengths to the side of my swim, fishing in front of the inlet.

One of the benefits of fishing House Lake is the comfort. You're never far from the café or toilets, which makes for a very pleasant day on the bank. My swim was shingle, which was a bonus as the rain had made many of the banks very wet. I even had a robin come to visit, scrounging for bait – and he didn't leave empty-handed.

It wasn't long before the hair-rig rod produced a bite. A slow pull-away and I was into a fish – blank

saved at least. I took my time playing it to the net and made sure I got it unhooked and photographed, just in case it turned out to be my only fish of the session.

With everything reset and the rig back on the spot, I refreshed the method rod. Only a few minutes later the quiver tip wrapped round and line peeled from the reel. Picking up the rod, it immediately felt like a better fish. On light gear everything feels bigger, but that's all part of the enjoyment. The fish put up a cracking fight on the lighter line, reminding me just how much fun smaller carp and mixed species can be on balanced tackle.

Once the fish was safely in the net, I sorted the camera and grabbed a few quick shots before slipping it back. I didn't weigh the fish, but it scrapped hard and certainly ended the session on a high. With that, I packed up, making sure everything was tidy before heading home.

Short-session fishing can be incredibly rewarding, especially when you're using lighter equipment. These days, fishing for me is about enjoyment rather than sitting it out for big lumps. I can't always afford the time, and it doesn't feel quite the same when fish are stocked bigger than your PB. The quest for the unknown disappears.

Having five or six hours and targeting whatever swims in the pond has far more appeal. It's simple, enjoyable, and makes for a perfect morning or afternoon on the bank.



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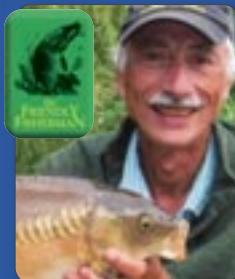


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Andy Lush - The Friendly Fisherman

Zig Rigs - Kettles Lake, Elphicks

November 19th

A wet cold start, barely 4 °C, I had the lake to myself so I chose a swim that gave me access to the deep water channel that led up into the narrow end of the lake. For once I had taken the precaution of bringing an umbrella; the wind was bitterly cold, so I was grateful for the shelter it provided. Both rods were cast into 12 feet [365cm] of water, one set at 5 feet [150cm] off the bottom with a red hookbait, the other was at 6 feet [180cm] with a yellow hookbait. Once in position I cast ten mini spombs of sloppy cloudbait over both rods which were positioned roughly 10 feet [300cm] apart. For the first hour I topped up the swim with a further ten spombs every 15 minutes; after that I reverted to spombing every 30 minutes.



Waiting for a Bite

Around midday the temperature dropped suddenly and was followed shortly by a flurry of snow which lasted for an hour! As the snow eased I saw the first signs of carp in the vicinity of my rigs; followed by small lifts and trembles on the bobbins, with occasional bleeps from my alarms. Finally at 1.15pm, while spombing, I had a slow steady run on my red hookbait positioned at 5 feet [150cm]. Although not a large carp, the 10lb common was a great confidence booster. After this it was as if a switch had been flicked, as I received a double take at 2pm, shortly after I'd finished spombing. I landed a small common, but unfortunately lost the other fish, which I'm pretty sure was foul-hooked, as it was uncontrollable. I didn't have too much time to ponder on this as at 2.10pm, my yellow bait set at 6 feet [180cm] on the right-hand rod burst

into life with another 10lb common. 3pm, I land a 15lb mirror on my right hand rod, while unhooking it on the mat, I got another run on the red bait set at 5 feet [150cm]. I rushed to the water's edge, plonked the landing net back in the lake, with the mirror still in it, and set about bringing another mid-double common to the net. Just as I was about to scoop it up, the hook pulled. Doh!

I was now getting loads of indications, which saw the bobbins lifting slightly before dropping back; I imagined this was caused by fish swimming into my long hook lengths. I adjusted the depths frequently knowing there were fish in my swim. 3.15pm, a double figure mirror fell to the right-hand rod with a yellow bait at 6ft [180cm]. 3.50pm another mirror of 8lbs on left-hand rod, red bait at 5 feet [150cm].



Tape markers at 6" and 12" are used for accurate depth adjustments

As the light faded my bites stopped; I started to see signs of carp swirling just sub-surface, over my baited area. On reflection, I should have repositioned my baits closer to the surface, but having had so many bites at 5-6 feet [150-180cm] off the bottom, I was still hoping for another picked up. It's easy with hindsight to know I should have changed the depths of both zigs; or at least I should have staggered their depths closer to the surface. I didn't, so I blanked for the last hour; "you live and learn".

November 24th

What a difference; it was several degrees warmer on this visit, and no snow. I was very

confident after the success of my last trip. I was fishing the same swim as previously, so knew the depth and the distance I needed to cast; this enabled me to get both rods positioned much earlier. Once I was happy they were in position and not tangled, I cast ten midi-sized spombs over them to kick things off. I rebaited every 15 minutes for the first two hours, as I intended to be more positive in my approach, hoping this would attract the carp much quicker.

Not having seen a sign of carp in the first two hours, and without any liners to indicate fish were in my swim, I decided to rein back the spombing, to rebait every 20 minutes. I wasn't too anxious at this point as all my bites last week had come after 2pm. At 2pm, the bobbin of my left-hand rod set at 5 feet [150cm], with a red bait slowly lifted and hovered for a few moments. I've noticed that takes on long hook lengths are not as positive as those on shorter ones. I believe the carp don't feel the lead as quickly due to the long hook length pivoting; although the hook is in their mouth, it doesn't panic them in the same way; hence the indications are not very positive. I picked up the rod, winding down quickly until I felt some weight, before sweeping the rod low and sideways to set the hook. I've found striking this way is more effective when using zigs, as it draws the line through the lead, rather than a conventional upward strike, which only lifts the lead off the bottom, cushioning the strike, which bumps the fish off. As I played the carp, I was already imagining the action was about to kick off. As the fish surfaced my hopes evaporated; I'd foul hooked a bream in the dorsal fin! Obviously it had swum into my long hook length. Over the next few hours, despite changing depths and switching colours of bait frequently, I blanked! I packed up disappointed and confused. On my drive home I wondered what I could or should have done differently.



December 1st

Very windy and only 6 °C, a different venue this time, but one that had a similar area of deep water, which would give me plenty of scope to search through the depths with the adjustable zigs. I was more cautious about the amount of bait I fed this time, reducing my spombs to five every 15 minutes for the first hour, then reducing to five every 20 minutes.

Sitting under my umbrella I watched the water like a hawk, looking for any signs of fish. I was positioned at the bottom end of the wind, so unless a carp launched itself out of the water, I wouldn't have seen it! I wondered if I should have chosen a more sheltered spot, upwind? Occasionally, I walked up to the calm end of the lake, hoping I would see something that might give me a clue what I should do. Unfortunately I saw nothing, and added another blank to the diary.

December 17th

I returned to my usual water, after the break from fishing elsewhere. It was a very cold start 1 °C, water temp 6.5 °C. I decided to fish a couple of swims further down the lake towards the main body of deep water, as I imagined this was where the carp were holed up. I had reverted to using a mini spomb, and only feeding five spombs every 20 minutes. I was being more cautious as winter had finally arrived, and the fish were now inactive. An early fish at 9.40am on a red bait at 5 feet [150cm] was a great confidence booster which unfortunately wasn't the beginning of a feeding spell. I had to wait until 12.25pm for another bite, which resulted in a bream, again at 5 feet [150cm] off the bottom on red. Despite my best efforts, that was the sum total of the action: on a rather disappointing day.

After this session I came to the conclusion I should wait until March before I resumed my quest to master zigs. In the meantime there are pike, perch, roach and zander waiting to keep me occupied.

Til' next month, tight lines.

Andy Lush

Junior Competition Winners



Kindly sponsored by MFC Outdoor Store
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See Page 13 & 31
for more details for
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Fish With Carl

🎉 MFC Store Prize Winner – William Stevens 🎉



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🎉 MFC Prize Winner – The Freshwater Informer 🎉

Cold northerly winds made conditions tough, but fishing to the deeper water produced this very welcome Common carp.

A hard-earned capture and a fitting last carp of the year, earning the MFC prize 🎉

Send in your catch reports to be featured and be in with a chance of winning in future issues!

🎉 Fish With Carl Winner: Archie Collado 🎉

🎉 **Fish With Carl – Signed Book Winner!** 🎉

Five-year-old Archie has had a fantastic year on the bank, catching carp and just about every species of coarse fish going. Lately though, all he's been watching is lure fishing on YouTube, so this marked a new venture for both of us with a full day spent down on the local canal. As the year has gone for him, he was the only one to manage a catch and, of course, it was his target species. 🎉 Proof that enthusiasm, patience, and a bit of confidence in your approach go a long way, no matter your age.

Keep those photos coming for Future issues of The Freshwater Informer! 📸





Fraser McGoldrick - 8lb 5oz
Pike Wallers Haven



Jamie Thomas - Darenth Fishing
Complex - 60lb Wels Catfish



Edward Baldwin - Shirkoak farm
and fishery - Pike 10.42 lb



Devon Castleman - Wylands
Middle Lake - 14lb Mirror



Archie Kitchen - 20lb Common -
Hulk doing the Buisness



Harry Ricket (10)
Hythe Canal



Jacob Murray - 21lb Mirror -
Maggots



Arlo - 2lb-12oz-Perch - River Medway



Alyssa - Knittingales -
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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
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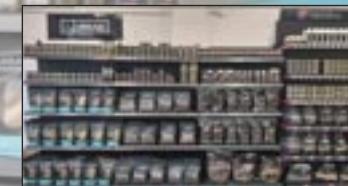
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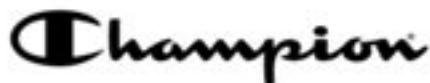
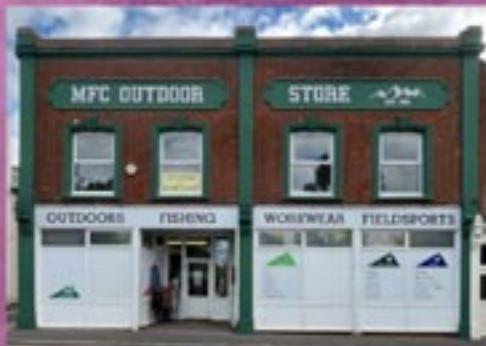
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The Medway Man

Bob Morris

Feb already!!!

I really hope that this year is not going to fly by as quickly as the last one. They say that as you age, time seems to accelerate and I must say that I can't disagree with that assessment of the situation. On the fishing front, this tends to translate into not having the time to tackle some of the venues that you had planned to or not feeling that you have given it your best shot. I don't think that there is a clever solution to this unless you are prepared to neglect your family and other commitments and these days the old priorities have changed or mellowed, and I don't worry too much if I can't get out on the bank. Some would say that this was an improvement – no names mentioned.

Certainly, the last month seems to have disappeared in a flash even though I can't complain about not getting out enough with an average of two days a week, which is fine for me these days. I have even managed to get a few Pike during these day sessions, normally of about 7-hour duration. Having said that I must say that having viewed some of the underwater footage of pike behaviour in the vicinity of dead baits it makes me wonder sometimes how we ever catch them at all.

To say that they often demonstrate that pike can be extremely cautious when investigating our baits would be an understatement and often, they can frequently be seen punting or knocking the offerings along the

bottom before rejecting them, just as a suspicious carp would. Balancing or popping up the bait does not seem to fool them, but it is

difficult to conclude what it is that that gives the game away and puts them off. I think that I have mentioned the twitches and dropped takes that I have been experiencing from time to time, which is extremely frustrating. This of course is irrelevant if they don't even pick the baits up in the first place. It may be that the wire trace causes the dead bait to move in an unnatural

way – difficult to say unless the reaction is directly compared to a free offering which I have never seen on camera.

Strangely, I don't like watching these videos, as interesting as they are. The reason is that I get more keen on watching the pike and they become a bit like pet fish, which then makes me less inclined to want to catch and distress them. As far as Pike dropping the baits is concerned; I am convinced that the resistance caused by the various tackle set-ups is a key factor and this whole subject is something that I am currently working on and it really deserves a lot more column space than is available here. It is certainly not a simple case of resistance scaring them full stop. All these problems are, of course, magnified on waters that receive a lot of angling pressure as the pike will get more chance to learn the errors of their ways. There is obviously a lot more involved than just an aversion to resistance because, sometimes I have experienced the same sort of rejection behaviour while fishing with free-lined baits - something that I will now only do at close range when fishing rivers, canals or along the lake margins.



The problem with freeline tactics is that it is possible for the pike to pick up and then swallow a bait without giving much indication at your end. This is responsible for a fair percentage of deeply hooked pike and is why it is essential to use an indicator heavy enough to detect drop-backs and slack line bites. This also applies to any set up which uses a fixed or semi-fixed lead - such as a paternoster. I even use a slack line indicator even when a running lead weight is used, as it is always possible for a tangle to occur on the cast or weed to clog up the swivel or ring, effectively turning it into a fixed lead.

I will, no doubt, discuss these tricky issues again in future episodes - hopefully with some conclusions and maybe even a few solutions.

Best Fishes & Priorities

Bob Morris



All Creatures Great & 'Fewer'

My love of wildlife and the environment have led me to keep records over the years and the inescapable conclusion I have come to is that the overall diversity of species has drastically fallen during the past few decades. This observation is in keeping with most surveys carried out by nature conservation organisations. The RSPB have flagged up this decline in recent times. The Garden Birdwatch is carried out at this time of year nationally and it is something that I consider to be of great importance. The variety of birds visiting my own garden and using the feeders over the last decade or so has dropped from an average of 20/25 to a situation where a count of 10 is hard to achieve. This is a disastrous fall in diversity and although there are strong signs that the whole

issue is now being taken more seriously, I know of many individuals who don't seem at all bothered about such things. In response to my explanation about recent contact that I have had with relevant authorities and MP's etc, one guy asked "why the hell do you want to get involved with all that Sh**". This reaction is a disappointing indication of how a certain percentage of the population will never see the relevance of these issues to them unless it penetrates their personal bubble. It is my belief that it is well possible for us to progress with sorting out the problems/needs of our society without throwing the natural world under the bus. If we continue to bury our heads in the sand over these urgent environmental requirements and protections, it will surely come back and bite us all up the arse 'Big Time'.

The angling world will not be immune!

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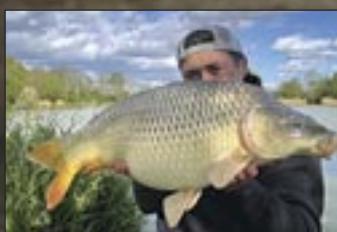
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Maximum 2 rods**



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Maximum 2 rods**

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