

# FRESHWATER INFORMER

Issue 344 - April 2026

Jack Keutenius  
Loggies Lake  
31lb 5oz

Free  
Magazine

Catch Up With:

Medway Man  
The Friendly Fisherman  
In The Edge With Alex

URBAN



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## ORCHARD PLACE FARM FISHING

13 FISHING LAKES in the KENT COUNTRYSIDE  
Pearsons Green Road, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6NY



**Carp to 49lb+**

**01892 838576 or 07860 608218**



**Catfish to 112lb+**

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

### SPECIMEN LAKES

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

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

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

### MATCH/ PLEASURE LAKES

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

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

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

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



## NEW TO ORCHARD PLACE FARM! HORSMONDEN FISHING LAKES

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

Carp  
to 38lbs

Top Lake  
Catfish to 85lbs

Bottom Lake  
Catfish to 75lbs

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

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

**Horsmonden Fishing Lakes, Grovehurst Road, Horsmonden TN12 8BQ**  
All enquiries and bookings to Orchard Place Farm Fishery on 01892 838576

**Welcome to the April 2026! edition of The Freshwater Informer**

We arrive in April in what feels like the blink of an eye. The year is already flying by, and it's been a busy one here at Freshwater Informer HQ.

As the magazine continues to grow in popularity, so does the work behind the scenes. With our audience expanding week by week, there's always more going on to keep everything moving forward—and that's exactly how we like it.

You may have noticed across our social media channels that we've been sharing prizes we've been fortunate enough to receive from across the fishing world. These giveaways have proven incredibly popular, and it's fantastic to see the engagement from all of you. Not only does this strengthen our position within the fishing community, but it also proves that Freshwater Informer is very much alive and kicking—despite being told otherwise by one company who, it's fair to say, won't be working with us anytime soon. In just three weeks during March, our giveaways reached well over one million views. That's an incredible milestone and a true reflection of the growing community behind the magazine.

This month, I'll be heading down to A12 Lakes on the 7th and 8th, where I'm looking forward to getting back on the bank, hopefully landing a couple of fish, and enjoying some well-earned time away from the office and screens.



As always, a massive thank you to each and every one of you who reads, shares, and supports The Freshwater Informer.

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](mailto:info@freshwaterinformer.com)

**COPY DEADLINE for May 2026 Magazine**  
**Friday 24th April 2026 at 5pm**

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

Tricklebrook Fishery



Steve - Tricklebrook - Old Lake - 22lb



Steve - Tricklebrook - Old Lake - 20lb



Steve - Tricklebrook - Old Lake - 25lb 5oz



Joe - Tricklebrook - New Lake 19lb 8oz



Tricklebrook New Lake



Joe - Tricklebrook - New Lake 19lb 8oz



Dan - Dove Lake - 16lb 2oz Common



Brook - Dove Lake - 18lb 4oz Common



Jamie - Dove Lake - 22lb 4oz Common Carp



Rob - Quarry Lake - 19lb 10oz Catfish



Max - Main Lake - 24lb 7oz



Rob - Quarry - 14lb Common

### Hawkhurst Fish Farm

Hastings Road, Hawkhurst, Kent, TN18 4RT  
T: 01580 854702 E: info@hawkhurstfishfarm.co.uk



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

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



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

**PRICES**

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



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



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

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

## LAKE RULES

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

**CCTV IN OPERATION  
OVER WHOLE SITE**

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



# In The Edge With Alex

*'Has Potential. Must try harder...' words that were scrawled on countless report cards back in my school days. Four decades on, and those words are equally apt in describing my pursuit of perch this season.*

It started so well. A trip to the C.D.A.A. controlled Pennybridge Lake back in the autumn yielded eight nice perch, six of which were over 2lb. A great way to kick off my perch season, but what was even more rewarding was the fact that I had caught them on the often overlooked method of float ledgering, a tactic that I thought would suit the relatively deep margins of the venue.



Things got even better on my next outing when I unexpectedly caught a pb river perch. I spotted it hiding in amongst a group of chub and managed to tempt it using a tiny slither of prawn as a hook bait.

Such an auspicious start fuelled my enthusiasm for the onset of winter, swelled my ego, and encouraged me to overestimate my ability to the point where I came up with a ridiculously grandiose plan of attack. To start with I would target the River Rother and land a two pounder from flowing water before turning my attention to lakes and ponds in the new year to hunt unknown giants.

The thought had barely formed in my head before the heavens opened, the rivers flooded, and a deluge of biblical proportions set in for the foreseeable future. Unperturbed, I fast-forwarded my plans and turned my attention straight to stillwaters. Our region has a history of producing unexpected record sized perch to unsuspecting anglers. Furnace pond in Horsmonden, and Stream Valley, near Crowborough, to name but two.

With this in mind, I set about researching waters

that in the past had produced large perch, before falling by the wayside in more recent times. I poured over old F.W.I articles, sifted through faded photographs, and chatted to countless anglers who knew a bloke, that knew a bloke, who'd met a bloke who'd caught a biggun.

Eventually I settled on three waters. Each with their own unique charm and challenges, whilst sharing the common theme of being largely overlooked in terms of their perch potential. The other thing that they had in common was, as with Pennybridge, that they all had deep margins, perfect for my float ledgering approach. Over my initial trips to each water, I refined the technique further to give better presentation, better indication, and a better hook up ratio. Unfortunately, despite my best efforts, these now unmissable bites were coming from either very small perch, or very large carp! During one memorable encounter I was forced to play an angry double figure mirror from four different swims before it eventually ran out of lake and had no other option but to succumb to my net. As entertaining as the carp were, they were also a source of great frustration.

Churning up swims, running me ragged, and generally being a nuisance. I spent so much time trying to avoid catching carp that I spent very little time trying to catch perch. As Christmas rolled around I had all but given up, and when I caught a nasty case of man-flu at the turn of the new year, I was on the brink of admitting defeat. Then, out of the blue, I was contacted by Andy Cowdery of Black Bottom Floats. He had crafted some inline perch bobbers that he thought would lend themselves to my approach, and would I be interested in putting his artisan creations through their paces?

In my fever fuelled, delusional mind, I imagined that he valued my expert opinion on their potential, in hindsight, it was probably more the case that if they could survive my ham fisted attempts at angling, then they could be genuinely sold as 'idiot proof'!

Either way, a few days later a carefully packed

parcel arrived. Along with the aforementioned bobbers were a selection of his other exquisitely constructed hand made floats. They proved to be the perfect tonic, and I hurriedly set about tying hooklinks and buying bait with renewed vigour and enthusiasm.



By this point we were in the dying embers of the river season, but I made the effort to make one last trip. Slipping and sliding, I found the Rother chocolate brown and rising from yet another overnight downpour. I dipped one of Andy's floats into the water a couple of times, thought better of risking losing it, and stogged back home. True to form, on the morning of the 15th March, the clouds parted, the sun shone, and the river looked in fine fettle – roll on June 16th.

Two of my chosen stillwaters also observe the traditional close season, and, with perch fast approaching their breeding season, I was running out of both time and options.

Rather than wrestle with more carp, the obvious solution was to return to the carp free Pennybridge. I arrived, bristling with tackle and confidence. If on my first visit I'd caught well when I knew nothing, now I knew something, success was surely a mere formality. Four hours later, and I was still stood watching two motionless floats, willing them to move.

The pool was eerily quiet. No breeze, no bubbles, no small fish dimpling the surface, and most importantly, no signs of perch. Was I too late? Were they already grouping up in readiness to spawn? Had the drop in overnight temperatures pushed them into deeper water, or were they simply not feeding? Maybe I was just in the wrong place? I started to leapfrog swim to swim, checking out every likely looking spot before moving on. Nothing. My imagination got the better of me and I thought that maybe the fish were ahead of me, so I skipped a few swims in order to catch up. Still nothing. Running out of time, and starting to panic, I imagined that somehow I might of overtaken them and they were in fact circulating behind me, and so I started fishing back the way I had come. Long story short, I put a lot of effort into ending up

where I had started, and, other than burning a few calories, achieving very little.

Back in my original swim dusk was fast approaching, the lowering sun flecking the water with reflections of amber and pink. No matter how frustrating a days fishing has been, sunset always brings me a sense of calm. As I paused to admire the scene, a small roach zig-zagged across the surface to my right. A sure sign that a perch was on the prowl. Without waiting to check the depth, I flicked my bait out into the ripples. The float momentarily bobbed to the surface before sinking down. No real surprise as the margins shelve off quite steeply, but when my line started to snake across the surface I realised that it was more than just the depth. I struck and felt a heavy head shake. The fish arced around to my left and I could make out the white of its belly as it writhed underwater. I don't think that I've ever played a fish so gingerly. This wasn't just a chance to save the day, but an opportunity to redeem my season. Eventually, I drew it over the net and marvelled at its deep body, high shoulders, and bold colours. I thought that it would comfortably make the three pound mark, but perch flatter to deceive and it had been a while since I had seen a big one.

2lb 14oz, not that it really mattered. A seasons best and a great way to finish. I slipped the fish back and started to pack up. In the melee of unhooking and weighing I had simply dropped the rig out under the rod tip. The float, which had been lying on its side, was now causing a wake as an unseen force pulled it into deeper water. I grabbed the rod and felt the thump of a second fish. Two perch in as many minutes. This time there was no mistake as the needle spun around to 3lb 1oz.

As the sun finally slipped behind the horizon I made my way home, chortling to myself as I went.

**Try harder? I'm at my best when I don't really try at all!**



# PINIONS

## FISHING BAITS

Open 7 days a week  
Monday - Saturday 9am until 5pm  
Sunday 10am until 4pm

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# Elphicks Fisheries

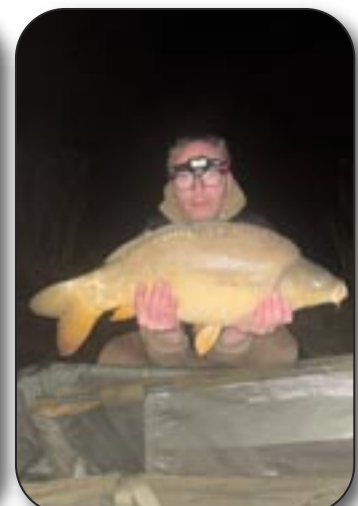


Elphicks has been designed and built with the modern angler in mind. We have 7 lakes available for day ticket and session fishing. Each lake has it's own parking within easy reach of the swims and all swims are 'all weather' - either built of Astroturf, stone or bark. Please contact the fishery for further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

**Elphicks Fisheries** Spelmonden Road  
Horsmonden, Kent TN12 8EL  
Tel: **01580 212512**  
email: [info@elphicks-fisheries.co.uk](mailto:info@elphicks-fisheries.co.uk)




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



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

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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!

24 hour fishing by prior arrangement  
Non-members £25  
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01323 840889 / 07707 759364

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

5 lakes and 1.25 miles of the River Eden

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

[www.gabriels-fishery.co.uk](http://www.gabriels-fishery.co.uk)



# 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)

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Alex & Gareth Stokes - Birthday Fishing -  
Monks Lakes



George - River Rother Monster - 23lb Pike



Peter Lee - Wylands Biggest Carp  
39lb 2 oz - Maises Lake



James Ireland -  
Thanet - 8lb Pike



Ronnie Cave - Shirkoak farm - Lure  
Caught Pike



Chloe Brock - Shirkoak farm - A Fine Perch

## 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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Spring Lodge | Iden Wood Fishery  
| 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!

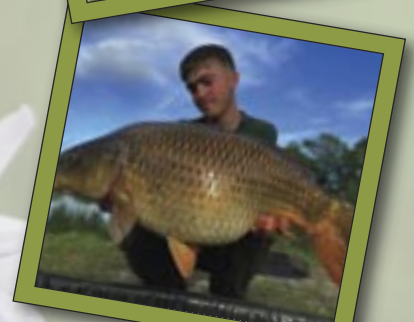
More House Farm is a rapidly expanding fishery set in the beautiful Mid Sussex countryside. It currently boasts five lakes. They are all set in very tranquil surroundings, bordered almost entirely by open countryside.

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](http://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,  
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## Tonbridge & District Angling & Fish Preservation Society.

### Match Championship

Final Top 5 Standings

1st - Phil Edwards - 91lb 15oz

2nd - Steve Parker - 89lb 13oz

3rd - Colin Fowler - 89lb 10oz

4th - John Copper - 74lb 2oz

5th - Mick Smith - 71lb 3oz

## TONBRIDGE & DISTRICT ANGLING & FISH PRESERVATION SOCIETY

Barden Lake has been fishing well with specimen Carp and Bream being caught. Several Bream to 12lb 8oz have been recorded by Ian Seamer and Olly Sugden managed 5 decent Carp in a morning. The Old Ballast Pit is producing Carp to nearly 30lb, Danny Pashley had one of 29lb. Also decent Bream and the odd Tench coming out.

A few decent Pike were caught on the river during the last week of the season.

The Society has recently purchased 4 Protek bird lasers which have been doing a great job in pushing the Cormorants away from their roosting sites and helping in keeping them from working our waters. Society member Jason Craven broke his Barbel PB whilst on a visit to the mighty River Trent, landing a stunning fish of 18lb 1oz.



## Welcoming anglers since...1948

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**URBAN**

**Fish of the Month Prize Winner**



Anthony Stygal 32lb Caught in Memory of Rocky

**FRESHWATER  
INFORMER**

This competition is open to all species. To be in with a chance of winning, send your catches to: [info@freshwaterinformer.com](mailto: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 Anthony on landing a stunning 32lb Mirror from A Kent Syndicate 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!



Jordan Knight - 36 lb North Lake Elphicks



Apsey Beaney 1 from a 13 fish Haul from Cackle Hill Lakes



Jordan Knight - 15lb 8oz Mirror Loggies Lake



Damon Scott - Gedges Hill 13lb 2oz - 1st Night Catch



Nick Daw- 19lb 5oz Mirror - Martello Lakes



Jack Hurst - 16lb 5oz Common - Dartford Lakes



Harry Diamond - Orchard Tackle - Paddock Wood



Sam Giles - Cackle Hill - 39lb Mirror



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# WYLANDS WINTER MATCH ROUND UP



The winter match scene at Wylands Farm Fishery has been nothing short of exceptional this season, with anglers enjoying consistent sport across the complex despite the colder conditions. Our latest match once again highlighted just how well the lakes are fishing, particularly Field Lake for carp and House Lake for silvers.

Conditions on the day were typical for this time of year—cool, calm, and clear—but the fish were clearly in a feeding mood. The standout performance came from the match winner, who put together an impressive net of bream weighing up to 5lb. Targeting the right areas and feeding accurately proved key, with the bream shoaling well and responding confidently to a steady approach.

Over on House Lake, the silverfish sport was equally remarkable. One angler reported an incredible tally of 184 roach, alongside a quality 3lb hybrid, showcasing the sheer volume of fish currently present. These results underline just how productive the lake has been for those opting for lighter tackle and a more finesse-based approach.

Steve, who secured third place, demonstrated just how effective a roach-only strategy can be, landing an all-roach catch for a superb 27lb total. It's great to see such consistency from the silvers, especially through the winter months when bites can often be harder to come by.

Adding to the excitement, two specimen perch were also landed during the match, a welcome bonus and further proof of the variety and quality of fishing on offer across the fishery.

Field Lake has continued to produce well for carp anglers, with steady catches rewarding those willing to work for their bites, while House Lake remains a top choice for silverfish enthusiasts looking for action-packed sessions.

It's fantastic to hear such positive feedback—"brilliant" sums it up perfectly—and we're delighted to see anglers enjoying the rewards of winter fishing at Wylands. With the lakes in great form, we're looking forward to more excellent matches in the year ahead.

We would like to thank all the clubs and individuals that have organised and held matches here at Wylands, and look forward to welcoming you once more.

Wylands Farm Fishery Team



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# THE FRESHWATER TEAM FEATURING KENTS ONE AND ONLY CARPING LEGEND - DEAN ASHBY

With much anticipation, the day finally arrived as Dean booked the Friday off work and headed bankside for his first night of the year. His destination was Hawkhurst Fishery, where he planned to spend a couple of days on the Dove Lake with two clear goals in mind: first, to get off the mark for the season, and second, to beat his long-standing UK PB of 23lb.

Dean had caught fish at nearly every weight below that mark over the years, but that elusive 23lb+ carp had avoided his net—until now. Determined that this would be the year to change that, he arrived full of confidence. Making the session even more special, Dean was joined by his wife Lou, who was also fishing, as well as his nephew Ollie also his birthday. The group were celebrating there birthday with a 48-hour session to kick off their carp fishing season in style.

Meanwhile, I had planned a trip over to the fishery myself to restock the magazines, as they had already run out from earlier deliveries. Jim and I took the opportunity to jump on the bikes, head over, and even squeeze in a breakfast at the café. Just as we arrived, my phone beeped—it was a message from Dean...

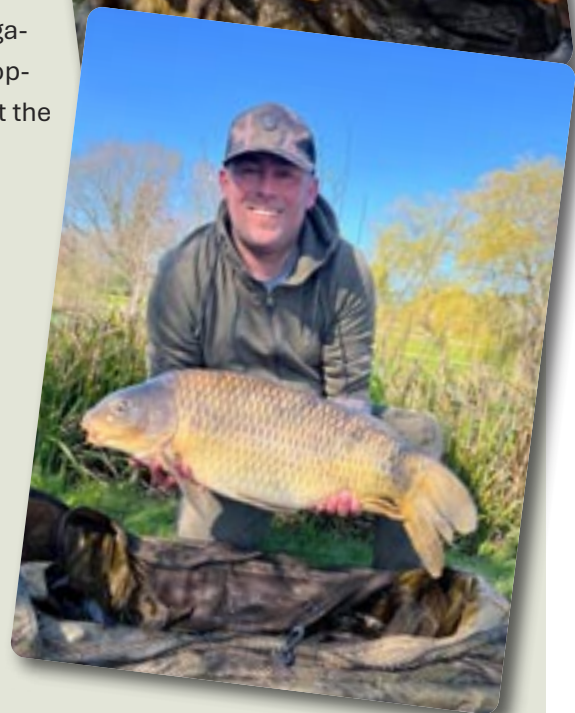
He'd only gone and done it.

Dean had smashed his PB with a stunning 28lb common carp—what an incredible birthday gift! Clearly, we'll take a bit of credit and say it was the advice from The Freshwater Informer that helped land that one!

But it didn't stop there...Dean went on to land two more quality fish during the session, weighing in at 16lb and 25lb. That meant he ended his trip with not one, but two fish over his previous PB.

What a session. What a birthday. And what a way to start the season.

Massive congratulations, mate—and Happy Birthday from all of us at The Freshwater Informer! 🎉





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**TROUT:** Boat fishing on Bewl Water or Powdermill reservoir, learn how to locate and catch fish on these large intimidating waters, or fish one of the smaller local fisheries. Learn where trout find their food during the changing seasons; understand this and you will 'catch more fish'.

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**Young Guns on the Bank**



**Leo Neal**

After a lean period pike fishing rivers this winter, Leo Neal was keen to try his hand at some carp fishing with Andy Lush, AKA the 'friendly fisherman'. They headed to Hartley Lands, Cranbrook [TN17 3PR], choosing to fish the popular reservoir lake. After a slow cold start, the fish gradually became active as the day warmed up. Leo enjoyed a very successful afternoon; targeting the margins proved to be his best tactic.

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# Andy Lush - The Friendly Fisherman

## *A Beginner's Guide to Pike Fly Fishing. Part 2*

### **A Beginner's Guide to Pike Fly Fishing Part 2 - Tactics and Techniques**

#### **Surface presentations**

Although not the most productive tactic, fishing flies on the surface is the most exciting way to catch pike; it's not for the faint-hearted as takes are often explosive, making even the calmest angler jump out of their skin! A short 5-foot [150 cm] leader will be necessary to turn these bulky flies over.

Larry Dahlberg's Monster Divers [Fulling Mill 2646] or Rainy's [USA] Joom Divers are irresistible when fished close to emerging weed in the spring. Both patterns sport weed guards so you can get very close to where pike live. You can retrieve these flies either with a slow constant retrieve, just creating a surface wake, or use a short fast strip and pause routine which sees the fly plunge beneath the water to resurface shortly afterwards.



**Fulling Mill Dahlberg's Monster Diver (2446)**

An alternative would be to use a surface popper such as Fulling Mill's Mylar Poppers [2630 & 2631]; the beauty of these is that they do not need to be retrieved constantly. It's best to "heave' em and leave 'em" for a short while, before giving a couple of short, hard strips to pop the fly across the surface, then pause again, before resuming the pop, pop and pause routine. You may find it an advantage to use 'hard mono' instead of fluorocarbon for this presentation, as mono is more buoyant so will not drag the nose of the fly under the surface.



**Fulling Mill Mylar Popper (2631)**

#### **Cast, search and retrieve.**

You will be using this method most of the time, so it's a good idea to be aware of several retrieve options. By selecting an unweighted fly fished on an 'Intermediate' line, you will be able to search through various layers of water, starting just sub-surface and systematically working your way down through the water column. Simply cast out, count down, don't they hang on! your retrieve. Try slow strips, short sharp fast strips, figure of eight for a constant retrieve, but don't forget to pause occasionally as this is a key part of the retrieve, allowing the pike to strike. As you can see, the combinations are endless. The important thing to remember is unweighted flies will fish at the same depth as the fly line throughout the retrieve.



**Fulling Mill Paolo's Wiggle Tail (9614)**

If you select a weighted fly such as Fulling Mill's Dougie's Clouser [2626] or Flashtail [2649] you can fish exactly as above but with two subtle differences; firstly Dougie's Clouser's hook runs upside down avoiding snags which is very useful, but more importantly, when you pause weighted flies will drop, this is a major trigger that changes a following pike into an attacking pike!

By selecting a buoyant fly in conjunction with your 'Intermediate' line you have a slow sinking fly that's fishing all the way through the depths as you count it down. Once you start retrieving, remember your fly will be swimming just above the level of your line; a pause will see



**Fulling Mill Flashtail (2649)**

it lift before resuming its original level again as you recommence the retrieve. I think fly fishing has an 'edge' over other styles of lure fishing; with imagination, you can achieve so many subtle variations in depth, speed and angle of retrieve.

### Cold water retrieves.

The methods I've described so far have been mostly for active fish; once the water cools in winter, there's a need to present your fly much slower and closer to the pike and the bottom, sometimes even static, with just an occasional twitch. Now is the time to select your 'fast sinking Di7' line; the leader length is critical in presenting your fly at the right depth. Select a buoyant fly such as Rainy's [USA] Tsunami [593k] or Pinocchio [765b] with a foam 'dink' slid onto the exposed hook shank. With a 5-foot [150 cm] leader and a slow constant retrieve, the fly will be swimming just off the bottom avoiding snags, weeds and leaf litter. If you need to slow the retrieve to a crawl or want to throw in a few pauses, you will need to reduce the leader's length down to as little as 3 feet [90 cm] including the wire tippet; with such a short leader you're ensuring your fly is still in the pike's feeding zone, even when static! This short leader presentation combined with a very buoyant fly creates an exaggerated 'rise and fall' movement; each time you pause, the fly pops up quickly, each pull sees the fly dive aggressively towards the bottom. It's hard for even the most lethargic pike to resist this presentation. You can easily create very buoyant flies by adding 'plastazote' foam cones to your regular flies.



Rainy's [USA] Pinocchio



Rainy's [USA] Dinks

### Colours

I've not fished enough in coloured water to have any definitive recommendations; my own selection includes predominantly baitfish colours to pass as roach or perch, with some brash Fire Tiger and Red & White patterns. Do not forget to have a few black patterns; this colour has proven to be successful in dirty water.

### Construction

When starting out I would recommend you pick flies that are made with synthetic materials such as 'Craft Fur' and 'Slinky Fibre' as these shed water quickly making casting far easier; natural fibres like bucktail and furs like rabbit strip have fantastic actions but are far harder to cast due to water retention.

### Locations

I've left the most important bit till last; this is a subject that deserves a lot of thought if you are going to be successful: "find the fish first"; catching them is the easy bit! A bold statement I know but if you're not on fish you cannot catch them.

### Spring

We will assume the pike have already spawned; they will be feeding actively in the shallows in order to recover their condition. These fish are on a mission to feed and regain their strength quickly. They will stay in the shallows, the water's warmer here, which speeds up their metabolism and their ability to digest food. The most likely location is going to be close to the spawning bays; these will usually be stream-fed with extensive shallows, possibly with weed, but not always. If there are several bays that fit this description, choose the one that has the warmest water!

### Summer

Once the shallows become uncomfortably warm, the pike will relocate to deep "cool" water, immediately adjacent to the shallows. Look for the marginal shelf that drops off into deep water; the pike will be at the bottom of the drop-off where it levels off. Finding baitfish around this feature is great for confidence, but do not dismiss an area just because baitfish are not present. Pike will also suspend over deep water, so fishing from a drifting boat with sinking lines is the method to employ.

When casting ahead of a drifting boat, you need to retrieve the slack line to keep in contact with your fly, while counting down, which reduces your fishable re-



Ed Wade about to hand land a pike

trieve. I recommend casting across the wind; this allows your line to reach the desired depth, while counting down, keeping you in constant contact with your fly, without having to retrieve any line. With this simple tactic, you'll get the full casting distance to retrieve.

### Autumn

A time of change; the pike have got their feeding heads back on; they can be anywhere, so searching methods should be employed. Be impatient; don't stay too long in any one area unless you've found pike. Don't forget to use fast and or erratic retrieves. The feature to find is food, i.e. shoals of bait-sized fish! If baitfish are present near any features such as weed beds, underwater stream beds, reefs or drop-offs, then concentrate on them. It's worth noting what depth the shoal fish are in, as this will indicate the depth you should present your fly.

### Winter

The water will cool rapidly through December; the distribution of the bait fish changes as they move into deeper water and form tighter shoals, the pike will not be far away. The pike are less active now with the colder water, so retrieve your fly slowly, close to the bottom using the 'fast sinking' Di7 line and buoyant fly combination. It's better to fish from an anchored boat as this allows for a much slower, methodical approach.

By January, the water will be at its lowest temperature; the pike, accustomed to it, will move into shallower water again, especially if there's a mild spell. The margins warm quickly, so target the shallows on the west side of the reservoir as it gets the sun all day; this will be the warmest water, where the most active fish will be.

Finally by mid February the days will be noticeably longer; this is the pike's cue to start their annual migration to their spawning sites, so be prepared for this. The expended energy of relocating can trigger a short feeding spell and you could easily catch your biggest pike of the season.



I hope this inspires you to try this exciting method? Do not neglect the rivers and drains as they are ideal for the roving fly angler who is not weighed down by mountains of tackle!

Tight lines.

*Andy Lush*

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Fish With Carl

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**WINNER**



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Six-year-old Ronnie-Ray enjoyed a session to remember when he landed a superb 28lb common carp during a recent trip to Love Lace

Fishing tight to an island, Ronnie-Ray presented a yellow NS1 pop-up on a Ronnie rig and was rewarded with a powerful take that resulted in his new personal best. After a spirited fight, the fish was safely guided into the net, marking a huge achievement for such a young angler. At 28lb, the carp was too heavy for Ronnie-Ray to hold by himself, so Dad stepped in to help support the fish for the photographs. It made the moment even more special as it was their first time back on the bank in over a year, and to see him return and land a fish of that size was a proud moment for them both.

### Fish With Carl Winner: Frankie-Ray

#### Fish With Carl – Signed Book Winner!

Frankie-Ray with his new PB common carp Unfortunately, we didn't have the scales with us at the time, but it was definitely a new personal best! Caught using the Fish with Carl feeder bundle that he bought with his birthday money – A great effort and even better reward

A well-deserved winner for The Freshwater Informer magazine

A big well done to Frankie on a fantastic day's fishing — and congratulations on winning a signed Fish With Carl book!

**WINNER**



**NEW PB**

# Junior Catch Report



Zara - Juniors Lake



James Ridley 4lb Carp - fishing a few grains of corn and a 1950'S Ambidex Mk1 Half Bail Arm Reel "It fought like a freight train"



William Green - Sams Lake (Bottom) - 7lb 8oz



Oliver Carter - PB Common 22lb 8oz Baldwin Lakes



Joey Wilkins - Orchard Place 18lb Common



Max Gawler - PB Roach



Theo - Quarry Lake - Common @ Hawkhurst



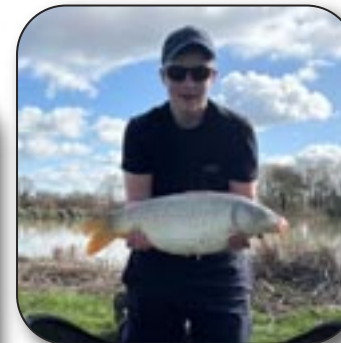
Molly's Son Hawkhurst Carp



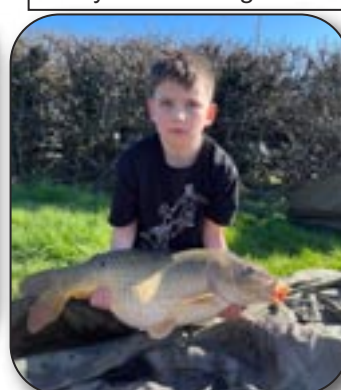
Bobby Lane - Longshaw Farm - 16lb 6oz - PB Ghost Carp



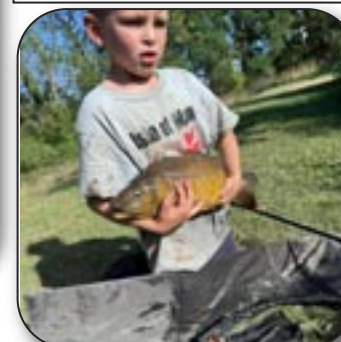
Joshua - Quarry Lake - 34lb 4oz Catfish



Jack Taylor - Pittlands 12lb



Arlo Stickells - Longshore fishery



Thomas 17lb Common



James Ridley - First Gudgeon



Joe Webb - Stubbs Pond - 49lb 8oz  
using Boilie Boys Bait



Fred Oliphant with "Royzy" - A truly special capture at 30lb 8oz. named in honour of his dad. A stunning fish and a fitting tribute that makes the moment all the more meaningful. Moments like this are what angling is all about — more than just the fish, it's the memories and the stories behind them.



Apsey Beaney- Cackle Hill Fishery -  
Part Of a 13 Fish Session



Apsey Beaney- Cackle Hill Fishery -  
Part Of a 13 Fish Session



Apsey Beaney- Cackle Hill Fishery -  
Part Of a 13 Fish Session



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Michael - Kestrel 28lb -  
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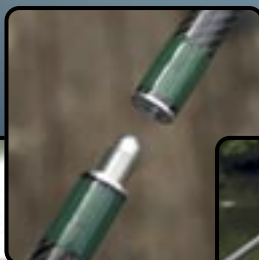
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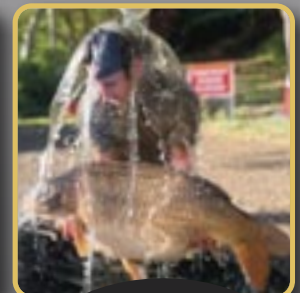
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Sunday: Closed Bank Holiday: Closed



check out our Facebook and Instagram  
for the latest news and competitions!

You can find us on:



**WIBA**  
Winchelsea Beach Angling

Our Opening Hours Are:

Monday 9am - 2pm

Tuesdays Closed

Wednesday 9am - 2pm

Thursday 9am - 2pm

Friday 9am - 6:30pm

Saturday 8am - 4pm

Sunday 9am - 1pm

Contact number: 07738 261541

Contact email: winchelseabeachangling@gmail.com



Winchelsea Beach Angling - Unit 5 Suttons Industrial Park  
Winchelsea Beach - East Sussex - TN36 4LZ



## Shirkoak FISHERY AND B&B



### WHY NOT TRY A POD?

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

Minimum stay is 48 hours at £130 per day for two people  
including fishing.



Shirkoak Fishery, Bethersden Road, Woodchurch, Ashford TN26 3PZ

Follow us on Facebook  
'Shirkoak Fishery'  
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[www.shirkoakfarm.com](http://www.shirkoakfarm.com)



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

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

Fishing prices start at £15 for 2 rods for 12 hours.



**OAP TUESDAY**  
**£10 incl. bacon roll!**  
Pre-bookings only

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

# Cackle Hill Lakes & Coarse Fishery



## SPECIMEN LAKE'S 1 & 2

2 Rods / 3 Rods

24 Hours = £35 & £40

48 Hours = £60 & £70

36 Hours (2days 1 night) = £50 & £55

36 Hours (2nights 1 Day) = £55 & £60

60 Hours = £80 & £90

72 Hours = £95 & £110

Mixed Lake - 1.5 acres

2 rods - £20 per Adult - £17 for over 65's & Juniors

Extra rod £5

### Species present in our lakes

- Common Carp up to 40lb • Mirror Carp 47lb+ • Leather Carp 32lb+
- Grass Carp 42lb+ • Catfish 125lb+ • Tench 8lb+ • Bream 8lb+
- Perch 5lb+ also F1's, Rudd, Roach and Chub

**Full Lake Bookings  
are Available**

## CAKCLE HILL Tackle and Bait Shop



### ALL YOU NEED FOR A GREAT DAY'S FISHING

Stocking fantastic brands e.g. Mainline Shelf Life and frozen boilies, pop ups and dips. Also a variety of quality groundbaits, particles and pellets, Fox, Korda, Clothing, Gas, Batteries, headlamps, catapults, rigs, alarms and much more...

## CAKCLE HILL HOLIDAY LODGES

... perfectly placed for both fishing and golf with a Nick Faldo designed golf course just over the road.

Biddenden boasts a Michelin starred restaurant as well as a traditional tea shop and a popular pub, while nearby

Headcorn has a good selection of shops and a station with trains to London, Canterbury and the coast



Spacious 1, 2 or 3 bedroom holiday fishing lodge, ideal for fishing groups or families, set within the grounds of Cackle Hill Lakes Fishery

Available all year round



## CAKCLE HILL CAFÉ

*Serving hot, freshly cooked food.*

*We are open for service to non anglers as well as our Anglers, come and relax and enjoy our tasty menu come rain or shine*

*Why not try a Cackle Hill Takeaway - check out the menu on our website.*

**HOT AND COLD FOOD  
AND DRINKS  
AVAILABLE**



Headcorn Road | Biddenden | Kent TN27 8JW

01580 292292 | 07885 284500

[www.cackle-hill-lakes.com](http://www.cackle-hill-lakes.com)



## The Medway Man

### Bob Morris

April 2026

All change again on the fishing front as the spring arrives full of promise for the ongoing piscatorial year. The winter efforts on the pike front have been frustrating and inconsistent, although I did manage to finish up with a couple of decent fish and hopefully

a few lessons have been learned. I look forward to continuing my 'Esox education' later this year – which I am hoping doesn't arrive too quickly.

I mentioned last time that I had

already started having a few short sessions after the tench, Bream etc, and I have been expanding on this, as the weather has improved. This has been interesting and initially rather slow although one or two fish have now come my way.

Spending time out on the bank at this time of year amongst the emerging wildflowers and new foliage is always a great experience and certainly something that always floats my boat - irrespective of my catches. I am, however, as usual, extremely concerned about the evidence of the general downward spiral in the fortunes of our native wildlife, usually because of our pollution and poisoning of the planet in one way or another. Having said this, it is not all bad news as there are now some encouraging indications of a much more nature friendly approach to farming in some areas and the general way we treat the environment with the whole issue of pollution now frequently 'up front' in political debate and starting to be treated to the seriousness that it has always deserved. This has largely been brought about by pressure from the public who are now demanding greater and faster action from government and environmental watchdogs etc. Publicity of these critical issues, particularly sewage discharge has

played a huge role in this, and if you haven't seen the documentary 'Dirty Business' I urge you all to watch it ASAP. Overall, the situation is still grim, but signs are emerging of a reversal of policies in some of the more harmful practices on the intensive agricultural scene (chief culprit, globally) and efforts to hold water companies to account for their dubious activities!

Keep at it.

It is strange how the world of angling sometimes throws up an interesting experience that has little to do with fish. I rarely go to angling or tackle shows these days but as there was a huge Carp show at Brands Hatch recently which is relatively local, I decided to go for the afternoon on the second day with my pal Paul. Due to the persistent wet weather over the winter, there was a problem with the parking which would normally spill over into the nearby fields during race meetings. The mud had made this impossible which caused a major change of plan for the Sunday. Cars were allowed to park on the track which meant that I got to drive my little car around the circuit. 😊 This was great and worth the ticket money in my opinion. As far as the tackle show itself was concerned it was extremely busy and I hope that the dealers all had a successful day, although I was told that it was busier on the Saturday. I must say however that both Paul and I found it all rather overpowering (Piscatorial Purgatory) and we ended up only staying for a couple of hours. It just reinforces my belief that the whole carp scene is not for me these days even though I guess that this sort of turnout is good for the tackle trade and the angling world in general.

When I start my spring fishing there is always a sort of unconscious competition between my float and leger tactics and frequently one or the other wins out. Strangely enough this spring so far action has been equally split between the two although it must be said that sometimes the swim or weather conditions can dictate how to fish. Readers of this column will know that I





favour float fishing tactics where possible, and particularly the lift method at close range. There are some situations where it is possible to fish both methods side by side and cover two areas which is good and should increase chances. The trouble with float fishing is that you really must give it your full attention, and I find that because of the distractions of the bankside wildlife and environment I often struggle to do this which occasionally causes me to miss a bite or even lose a fish. Also, the beauty of the float is the sensitivity of it and the relative calmness of the water plays a part in this. It is possible to float fish in relatively rough conditions by adjusting your setup, but this often means that this sensitivity is lost. For this reason, a small leger or feeder is often a

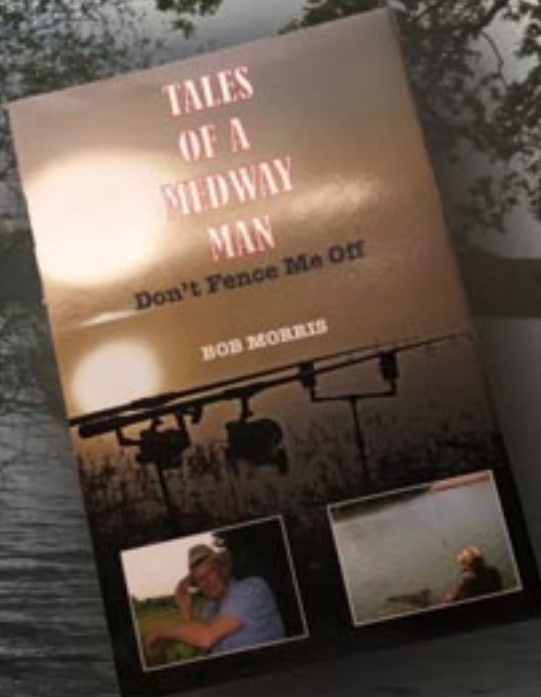
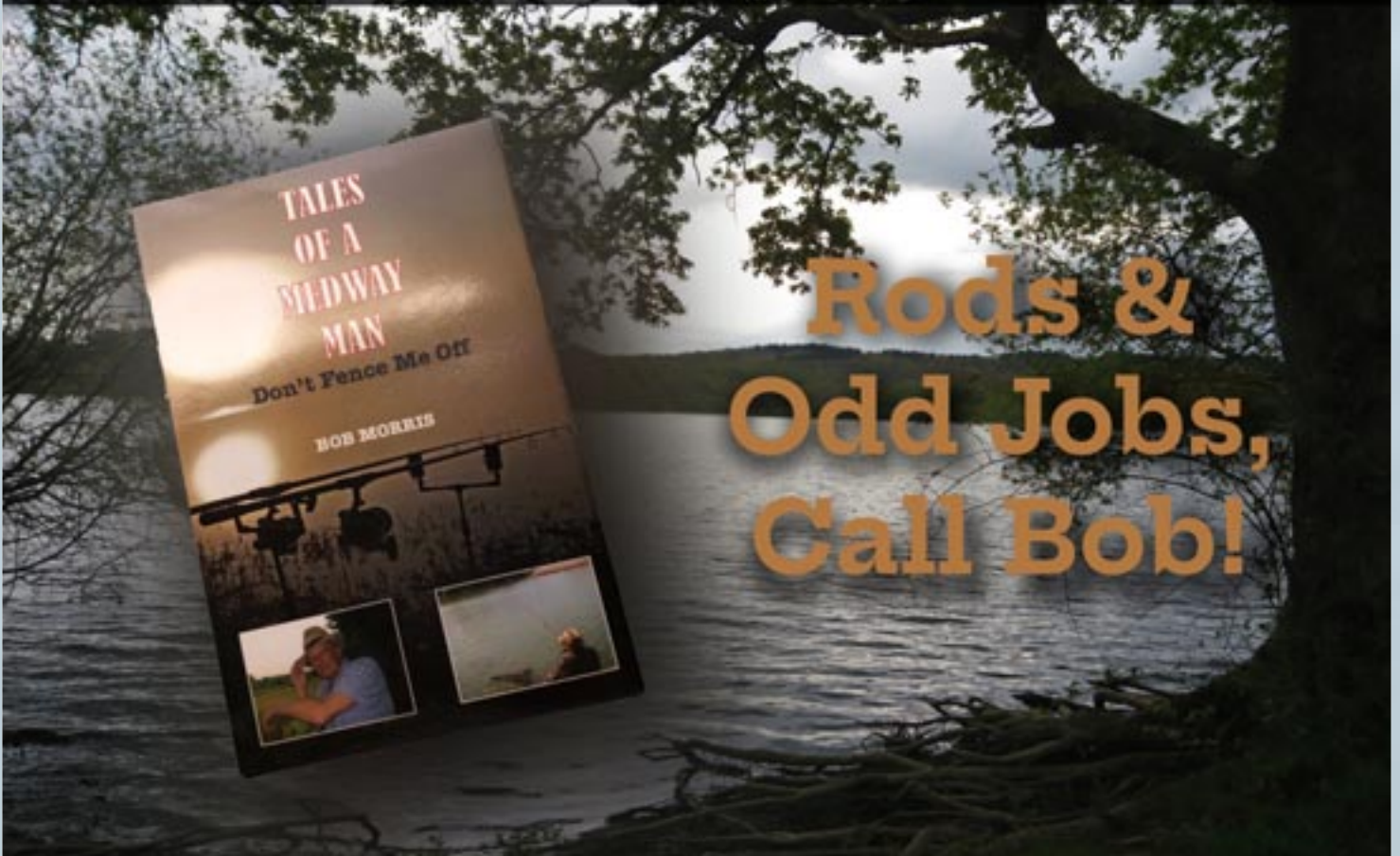
better bet. As you can imagine I am frequently messing about with the float arrangement to make it more efficient and this is very interesting - with a couple of float-leger versions currently under investigation. 😊

Best Fishes & Experiments

**Bob Morris**



BobMorrisCustomRods (in) Bob-Morris-93450776 (e) Bmt1@btconnect.com (t) 01322 866015



**Rods & Odd Jobs, Call Bob!**

2nd Book Still Available

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Scan for Website and more details



Pittlands Lakes Angling Club  
Churn Lane  
Horsmonden  
TN12 8HL

# PITTLANDS LAKES

## 07716 065900

At Pittlands Lakes we provide Day and Night Tickets to ALL  
The onsite Bar and Restaurant is open during the season for a variety of hot and cold refreshments including breakfast and lunches, all at reasonable prices. Winter and Summer times vary please check with us.

**CARAVAN CLUB SITE THAT OFFERS MEMBERS CARAVAN AND MOTORHOME FACILITIES**

*Even if you're not fishing please come and sample our Sunday roasts and enjoy the beautiful lakeside views*



Our toilets are brick-built and open throughout the season, including disabled toilet and shower room.

Night fishing is very popular and is available every night of the week, with just 24hrs notice to secure a place, please call 07716 065900.



We have designated kids fishing with their own lake complete with pole hire, nets and bait for all children under 16 who must be accompanied by an adult.



There are 3 other lakes for the more experienced angler with Catfish to 100lbs, Carp to 32lbs+, Bream, Roach, Tench, Crucian and Perch.

**Night fishing booking from £30 per night and Day sessions from £10.  
Maximum 2 rods**



# FRESHWATER INFORMER



Photo by Alex Coutts *Black Bottom Floats*