

FRESHWATER INFORMER

Issue 345 - May 2026



**Free
Magazine**

**Dom Berry
Cottington Lakes
33lb 13oz
Common Carp**



URBAN

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Medway Man
The Friendly Fisherman
In The Edge With Alex

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Welcome to the May 2026! edition of The Freshwater Informer

This month has seen a noticeable increase in the number of catch reports being sent in to The Freshwater Informer, which can only mean one thing – the weather is warming up and it’s becoming far more comfortable to spend time on the bank. With the clocks going forward, we’re also gaining those extra hours of daylight, making the nights feel that little bit shorter for the overnight anglers.

I recently made a trip over to the A12 Lakes and thoroughly enjoyed my time on the bank. You can read more about that session later in the magazine, but it was a great opportunity not only to catch a few fish but also to take some time to think and reflect while I was away.

Over the past few weeks, we’ve also been running a number of prize giveaways on our Facebook page. These have been incredibly well received, and in just a three-week period we achieved over 1 million reaches – a fantastic result. It’s great to see the page continuing to grow, bringing more followers into The Freshwater Informer community and helping push the magazine even further.

There’s not too much planned for me in the coming weeks, but I’ll be aiming to get out on the bank for a few day sessions, along with the odd overnight when time allows.



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

COPY DEADLINE for June 2026 Magazine
Friday 22nd May 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 - 34lb 5oz



Tricklebrook New Lake



Graham Beale - Tricklebrook - Old Lake - 17lb 12oz



Tricklebrook New Lake



Graham Beale - Tricklebrook - Old Lake - 23lb Grass



Joe - Tricklebrook - Match Lake Perch



Brook - Dove - 32lb 8oz Common



Charlotte - Main Lake - 43lb Cat PB



Emily - Main Lake - 27lb Common PB



Nathan - Dove - 31lb Common



Luke - Main Lake - 32.2lb Mirror



James - 37lb Mirror - Specimen Lake

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- 24 HOUR TICKET X3 RODS - £35
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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

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In The Edge With Alex

There's no two ways about it. I'm no good at competition fishing. Leave me to my own devices and I'll catch my fair share. Add in a keepnet and a stopwatch and it all goes to pot.

Obviously this wasn't information that I was going to share with Theia Ayles, my 9 year old charge for the day. It was Crowborough & District Angling Association's first junior match of the year, and I was playing the role of 'responsible adult', which is quite possibly a misnomer in both instances. Theia was raring to go, and I certainly didn't want to dampen her enthusiasm with stories of my lack of competitive success.

Many of our local clubs having a thriving junior scene, but I do feel that the C.D.A.A. go that extra mile in supporting younger anglers with teach-ins, matches, and trophies to compete for, throughout the season.

This first gathering at Pennybridge Lake, was to serve as round 1 of the Junior League, as well as competing for the prestigious Alistair Purves Memorial Trophy.

The inclement weather forecast had thinned the numbers a little, although enough hardy youngsters gathered around the draw bag to make a competition of it, and hopes remained high despite the biting wind and rather ominous looking rain clouds.

With bait and tackle collected (all provided by the club) we made our way to Theia's peg, deposited the gear, and decided upon a game plan.

Pennybridge is home to most species, with the exception of carp, making it perfect for float fishing, and in the case of the juniors, for using a simple whip set-up.

I felt that, due to the cold weather, the crucians that often figure in the summer matches, would have pushed out into deeper water, and rather than try and target them, it would be better to aim for the shoals of small roach that can be found near the edge year round.

Theia had also brought her own rod along, and we decided to set this up on the waggler, with a heavier set-up, to try for a bonus perch, or even an early season tench, if bites dried up on the whip.

As the start time approached, excited chatter was replaced with steely concentration as the young anglers readied themselves for the off.

At the whistle Theia flicked in a pinch of groundbait, followed by her whip fished maggot. Within seconds she connected with a bite and a 2

inch roach was swung to hand. Then another, and another. A fantastic start. One after another tiny roach were carefully unhooked and placed in the keepnet. Then fate took a hand, the wind got up making controlling the whip much more difficult. Over the next fifteen minutes Theia managed to get her float everywhere except the water, and hook everything except a fish. Bushes, trees, me, the landing net, anything within a 3 metre radius was at risk of being impaled on a size 16 hook! The angler in peg 5 was clearly more experienced, coping with the conditions and fishing very well with his own 4 metre whip. He was hitting a rhythm, and putting together a nice string of slightly better sized silvers, whilst Theia lost ground as I untangled her line from yet another bankside obstacle.

A change was called for, and we switched over to the waggler, if only to give me a rest, and Theia a chance to warm her hands up, as the cold wind was really starting to bite. Even the adults were scurrying back to their cars for more coats and jumpers.

The bright orange tip of the float bobbed slightly in the ripple before sliding away. Theia jumped up and struck, but instead of the expected perch, it was a chunky gudgeon that came splashing to the net.

Not a match winner, but enough to reinvigorate her enthusiasm and pick up the challenge. Back on the whip for another 10 minutes saw her land a couple of roach, and miss many more, before the cold became too much and she went back to the waggler. It was becoming a match of attrition for everyone as the



temperature continued to drop, and it proved to be very difficult to keep youngsters spirits up when your own teeth are starting to chatter. The next bite produced a hand sized Perch, which was soon matched by the anglers either side of us.

With half an hour to go, I had peg 5 leading, with Theia falling down the rankings as her confidence faded.

We needed inspiration. Inspiration that presented itself in the form of Theia's mum, Stacey, who arrived to cheer her to the finish line. Theia perked up immediately, determined to catch a fish for her mum, and keep fighting to the end. By this point, I thought that she was probably too far behind to make up the difference with roach. Instead, I suggested that she should go all out for a big fish by cramming as many maggots as possible onto the hook, and fishing as close to the lilies as she dare. If there were any better fish in the swim, that is surely where they would be. It was 'all or nothing' but I had a hunch that there might be some better perch around.

The float remained motionless as the minutes ticked down, before the inevitable call came for 'All In'.

'Bad luck, Theia' I said, 'You did everything right, but luck just wasn't on your side. Reel your rod in.'

She stood up glumly and picked up her rod as I gave a sympathetic shrug in Stacey's direction.

Suddenly there was a shout from Theia. 'A fish! A fish! I've got one!'

Unbelievably, a perch had grabbed the bait as she had started to reel in, and judging by the bend in the rod, it was a better one. 'Don't panic!' I cried, as I panicked and ran around the swim to retrieve the landing net that I had just packed away. Thankfully, Theia kept her head far better than I did mine, and expertly played the fish to the bank and into the hastily reassembled landing net.

Smiles and high fives all round, but would it be enough? Only the scales would reveal that...

I knew it would be close with the pegs either side of us. The first weighed in 14oz. Next up was Theia with 1lb 2oz, and then William, who had caught consistently throughout the match. The assembled crowd held their breath as the scales flickered, coming to rest once again on 14oz.

Theia had done it. The cold forgotten, big smiles and congratulations as Peter Wright presented the trophy on behalf of Alistair's family.

Despite the unfavourable conditions, everyone caught fish, with no one leaving empty handed, as match organiser Dave Flint handed out angling related gifts to all of the participants. A great start to the Junior League that will only get better as the weather improves.



Hugo , Henry, William, Peter Wright & Theia

Alex

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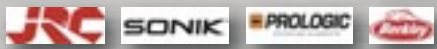
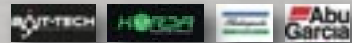
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Prices start at £10 per session on the coarse lakes. For the specimen lakes prices start at £20 for the day rising to £30 for a 24hrs ticket (up to 3 rods). Lessons now available for all ages. Gates open at 7am and close at 6.30pm (Winter hours 7am to 5pm)

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Martin Ewins - Martello Lake
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Aidan Humble - Dartford
Lakes - 34lb 10oz
Poachers Baits



Si Fishes - Cottington
Lakes - 22lb 15oz
Lake Christine



Joe Timmons - Tricklebrook -
30lb - Weston baits



Jack Keutenius - Stour Valley
Complex - 17lb 6oz Mirror Carp



Mark Day -
Sandwich Lakes



Joe Timmons - Mouse-
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Stevie Bates - Pear Tree Lake Hartley Lands Fishery

As a well seasoned Sea Angler, it's been great to get back out on the bank over the past few months and reignite my passion for freshwater angling again.

I fished Hartley Lands Pear Tree lake on Good Friday, during Storm Dave 🌧️ It was wet and windy to say the least. I knew that Pear Tree was not going to be an easy lake to fish but I fancied my chances and managed to book and get on the lake for a day session.

After 9hrs of only the odd bleep here and there and the bobbins swinging in the wind. Another angler who was in the swim directly opposite me fishing the back side of my island, suddenly his alarm sounded into action and he was into a nice fish. Whilst watching from the far bank I was thinking how quiet it had been on the lake all day. It was nearly home time, I was considering packing up and admitting defeat. All of a sudden my left hand rod, fished tight to the island, gave a pretty sure sign that there were fish down our end of the lake so I decided just another 10-15 mins, as now I was feeling hopeful of that "last cast bite".

10 minutes had past when my right hand rod which was tight in the margin of peg 1, the bobbin dropped to the floor. I picked up the rod, wound down the slack and to my surprise connected to a fish and the fight was on. Staying deep, and giving a good account for itself, whilst I sheepishly fought back, unsure of how well hooked the fish was, the fish came up and broke the surface, at that moment I realised just actually how big and beautiful this fish was!

I slipped the net under the fish and I felt complete knowing I had fished hard all day stuck it out and was rewarded with this stunning, fin perfect fish.

On the scales this fished weighed 29lb 1oz and fell to a single 14mm OG Fish wafter on a slip D rig with hand fed Krill pellet and 10mm OG Fish bollies scattered around.

I've fished hard over the winter at various lakes and ponds targeting different species and it is surprising how just one special fish can change how you feel about all the blanks and also reward you for all the effort you put in.

Cheers and tight lines,
Stevie



Carl Milton – local Halo Baits angler – was out on a proper family session yesterday at Wylands Farm Fishery, and while he was on “chief helper” duties saving himself for Wraysbury next week, the rest of the crew absolutely made it count.



Finley smashed it with this cracking mirror, landing it all by himself 🐟 Ellie was on fine form too, banking three carp up to mid-20s 🍷

But the moment of the day had to go to Niamh... After a quiet spell and just as they were packing away, her rod absolutely tore off. What followed was something special – a stunning Sussex strain common weighing in at 30lb 4oz! 🐟 🍷

A new PB and the perfect way to finish what sounds like an unforgettable family session. That’s what it’s all about right there 🍷



🔗 PART TIME JOB VACANCY – JOIN THE TEAM! 🔗

We’re on the lookout for a passionate angler to join our team at Cheam Angling!

What we’re looking for:

- Solid fishing knowledge (essential) Confident speaking with customers in-store and over the phone
- A team player who can also use their own initiative
- Happy to get stuck in with daily tasks, including deliveries (some heavy lifting involved)
- The role: Part-time position
- Rota-based shifts (includes some weekends, with days off during the week)

What you’ll get:

- Competitive salary
- Staff discount

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Email: jobs@cheamangling.com

Or post your CV to: Cheam Angling Limited 705 London Road, North Cheam-Surrey, SM3 9DL

👉 Please share this post if you know someone who would be a great fit!



🔗 FULL TIME JOB VACANCY – JOIN THE TEAM! 🔗

We’re on the lookout for a passionate angler to join our team at Cheam Angling!

What we’re looking for:

- Solid fishing knowledge (essential) Confident speaking with customers in-store and over the phone
- A team player who can also use their own initiative
- Happy to get stuck in with daily tasks, including deliveries (some heavy lifting involved)

The role:

- Full-time position
- Rota-based shifts (includes some weekends, with days off during the week)

What you’ll get:

- Competitive salary, Pension contribution
- Staff discount

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Teddy Jackson - 45lb PB Cat from Stub Ponds Fishery



37lb catfish caught by Riley Jackson - Stub Lakes Fishery



Ricky Young - Hawkhurst Fishery - Speci Lake



Jack Keutenius - Loggies Lake - 37lb 10oz Urban Baits



Haydn West - Hawkhurst Fishery - 27lb Mandarin Catfish



Neil Wale - PB Cat Fish 42lb 10oz - Lakeside Retreats



Sam Heather - Elphicks - 37lb 8oz - PB

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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.

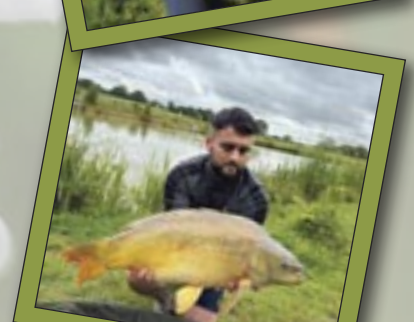
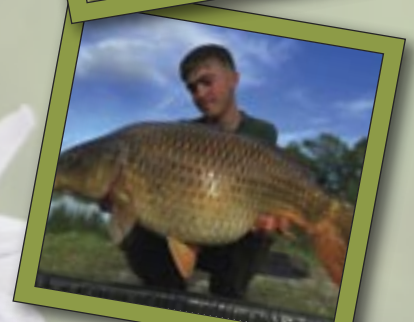
We also have Two new Specimen carp lakes called Oaks and Dogwood that were built June 2020 and opened October 2021. Oaks has 5 pegs on it with carp ranging from 15lb – 33lb.

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





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 Pike to 31lbs 6ozs, Crucians to 4lbs 6ozs and
 Grass Carp to 29lbs 6ozs.
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Crowborough and District Angling Association AGM Presentation Evening.

The Freshwater Informer was honoured to be invited to the recent CDAA Annual General Meeting evening to assist with the presentation of the various trophy and awards. A very enjoyable evening was had by all who attended and throughout the evening we were given an insight to the clubs history and future plan for development and growth.
 The FWI would encourage anglers of all ages to get involved with local clubs as they are the foundation of our angling community and have been a starting point for many anglers journeys.





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Fish of the Month Prize Winner



Daniel Goldsack - Elphick's Fishery 47lb Common



Jason Tricklebrook Fishery 24lb



Aspey Beaney - 29lb - Speci 2
Greenacres Fishery



Ben - Club Lake - 28lb 4oz



Darren Bartholomew -
Horsmonden lower lake



Joe Webb - Cackle Hill



John - Wylands - Masises
Lake - 38lb 12oz



Marc Harris - Wylands -
21lb 8oz Bollicie Boys Baits



Paul Jackman - 24lb 10oz



Dom Berry - Cottington
Lakes - 33lb 13oz Common



Ronnie Platt - Cackle Hill -
38lb 12oz



Kenny Waters - Mushroom
Farm - Speci 33lb 8oz

FRESHWATER INFORMER

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 Daniel on landing a stunning 47lb Common from Elphicks 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!



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FIELD LAKE SPOTLIGHT



WYLANDS
FARM

Wylands Farm Fishery in Battle continues to cement its reputation as one of the South East's most versatile angling venues, and this spring has been no exception. With a strong run of successful matches already under its belt, the fishery is buzzing with activity, particularly around the ever-popular Field Lake.

Field Lake has long been a favourite for both pleasure anglers and match competitors, and it's easy to see why. Well stocked with a variety of species including carp, and silvers, it offers consistent sport and rewards a wide range of tactics.

This spring, match weights have been impressive, with two standout competitions producing excellent results despite typically changeable conditions. Anglers have reported that method feeder tactics and short pole lines have been especially productive, with fish responding well as water temperatures begin to rise.



Beyond the match scene, Field lake is proving to be an ideal destination for family fishing days. The welcoming atmosphere, well-maintained pegs, and accessible layout make it perfect for anglers of all ages and experience levels. Field Lake in particular provides plenty of action to keep younger or less experienced anglers engaged, with regular bites and the chance of landing quality fish.

The fishery team has worked hard to ensure the venue remains in top condition, and it shows. Clean facilities, ample parking, and a friendly on-site presence all contribute to a relaxed and enjoyable experience. Whether you're a seasoned match angler chasing big weights or a family looking to spend quality time outdoors, Wylands Farm delivers.

As spring progresses into early summer, expectations are high for even bigger catches and more memorable sessions. If current form is anything to go by, Field Lake will remain at the heart of the action—continuing to provide excellent sport and reinforcing Wylands Farm's status as a must-visit venue on the coarse fishing calendar.

Wylands Farm Fishery Team

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SHARNFOLD FARM

📍 EASTBOURNE, EAST SUSSEX

1 WELL STOCKED LAKE
MEDIUM DIFFICULTY



Scan the QR to explore our lake at Sharnfold Farm



TEAM FRESHWATER INFORMER

CARP FISHING AT A12 LAKES, AN UNKNOWN WATER FOR ME

Back to What Matters – A Session at A12 Lakes

Fishing has been a part of my life for over 40 years, on and off, and in that time I've seen the sport change beyond recognition.

Years ago, I spent countless nights tucked away on unknown estate lakes, chasing elusive, uncaught carp. It wasn't easy fishing—but that was the whole point. The reward came from the effort, the quiet, and the mystery. And I was lucky enough to have my fair share of success.

Eventually, like many, I moved on to more accessible waters and found myself enjoying commercial day-ticket venues. Back then, they felt more relaxed than they do today. For me, it was always just about the fishing.

I've always preferred fishing alone, especially through the night. Simple setups, minimal kit—just what I could carry in one trip. These days, it feels like everything has become more technical, more complicated. We all take far more gear than we ever really use.

But reminiscing only gets you so far. Times change, and we have to make the most of what we've got—because in the end, it's about enjoying the moment while we still can.



The Session

At the beginning of April, I had a session booked that I'd won through [Swimbooker Plus](#) - a 48-hour trip to A12 Lakes. It was a midweek slot just after the Bank Holiday, and I was looking forward to it.

I did a bit of research beforehand, but like any new water, I took it with a pinch of salt. In the end, I knew I'd fish how I felt comfortable. I went in with a fishmeal approach based on what I'd read—but kept a trusted backup bait with me just in case.

On arrival, I found an immaculately kept fishery with friendly, helpful staff. Ash sorted me out with a peg and even gave me a lift to save the effort—always appreciated when you've got a bit of kit with you.

The weather was starting to warm up, but the nights were still holding a chill—something I felt might slow things down.

Getting It Right

I set up three rods:

Two at range towards a gravel bar at around 14 wraps

One in the margin, where I'd already seen fish moving

The bar had some firmer spots, which I clipped up to and baited with house pellets and boilies.

The margin rod, though—that was my banker. Heavily baited with pellets and chopped boilies, topped with a double 15mm on a simple hair rig. Nothing fancy—just a setup that's accounted for hundreds of fish over the years.

The third rod went out to a deeper area at around 10 wraps, where I'd seen fish showing. The first afternoon and night passed quietly, but I wasn't concerned. Sometimes it's just nice to be out there and get your head down after a busy week.

When It All Goes Wrong... Then Right

The next day, I had a little look around with the Deeper—and that's when things went sideways.

Crack-off.

Not ideal.

The Deeper drifted out into a flat calm area and just sat there. After 45 minutes of watching it go nowhere, I tried nudging it back with the bait boat... which worked—until the prop picked up the snapped braid. Now I had a bait boat and a Deeper stranded mid-water.

So I grabbed the margin rod and tried to hook the braid. Bit of a gamble—but it worked. Eventually, I managed to bring the lot back in crisis over or so I thought.

First Fish on the Bank

With everything back in order, I rebaited the margin spot and got the rod back out. Within minutes—it was away.

A solid fish, safely landed and weighing in at 23lb 1oz.

A great result, especially after all the chaos. More importantly—it meant I'd avoided the blank. That first fish always lifts a weight off your shoulders.

The One That Mattered

After a quick reset and a brew, I topped the margin spot back up—this time using Urban Bait Nutcracker, a simple but proven bait. Later that evening, the alarm gave a single beep... then tore off.

Another margin take. This one felt different—more powerful, more determined. After a proper scrap, I slipped the net under it. 31lb 8oz. Not a PB (mine stands at 34lb 6oz), but this one meant more than most. It was my first 30lb carp in over 13 years. I've had plenty of upper 20s in that time—28s, 29s—but never quite broken back into that bracket. Until now.

Why We Do It

That fish summed it up for me fishing isn't about chasing numbers or impressing anyone else. Truth be told, most "big fish stories" are exaggerated anyway.

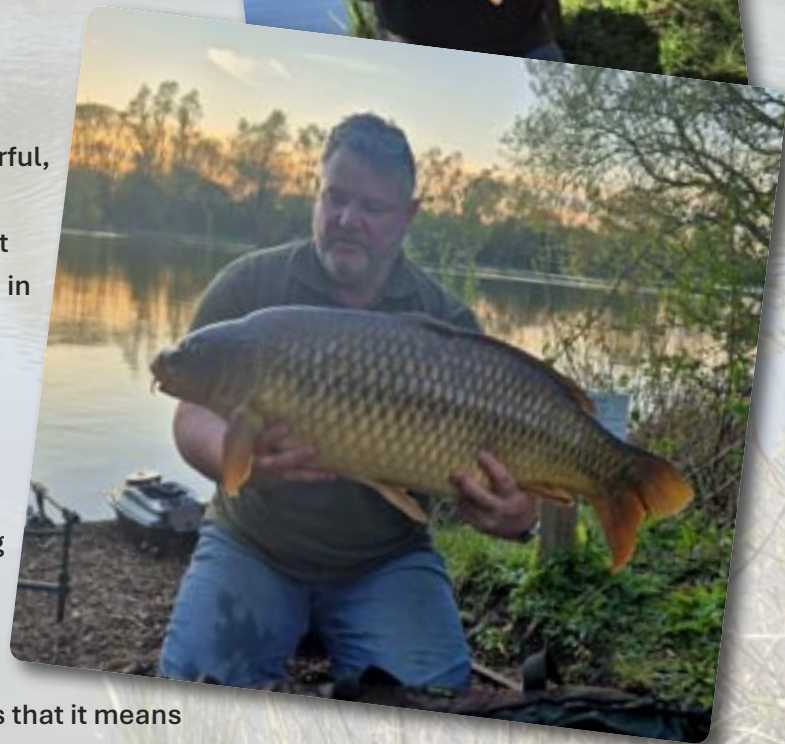
It's about your own journey. Whether it's a 30lb carp or a 10lb fish on a feeder rod—it all counts. What matters is that it means something to you. Fish for your own enjoyment. That's what keeps me coming back for more.

Final Thoughts

I didn't land any more fish that session, but I didn't need to. I left more than happy. A12 Lakes is a fantastic venue. The lake I fished operates on a membership basis with a small joining fee and then pay-as-you-go—well worth it in my opinion.

Speaking to other anglers, it's a water capable of producing multiple 30s, with a few 40s to keep you on your toes. I'll definitely be back. As I left, the day-ticket lakes were busy with families and young anglers enjoying the sport—rods bent, fish coming out. That's what it's all about. A big thank you to the team at A12 Lakes for the opportunity.

If you're looking for somewhere new to try - I'd strongly recommend giving it a go.





GUIDED FLY & LURE FISHING DAYS WITH ANDY LUSH

FLY FISHING One of Andy's favourite methods is no longer just for trout. In recent years Andy has been successful at catching specimen carp, throughout the summer from local day ticket waters.

CARP: Andy shares his knowledge and experience in this rapidly growing form of fly fishing. He has written two blogs for Fulling Mill specifically detailing the tackle and tactics he uses; follow this link www.fullingmill.co.uk

TROUT: Boat fishing on Bawl 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'.

LURE FISHING: A day afloat with Andy, fishing local reservoirs for Pike, Perch or Zander will see you learning how to search these large bodies of water. Fishing from a boat while using different styles of lures, fish finders and drogues is all part of a successful reservoir angler's armoury.

WEBSITE: View available options here: www.thefriendlyfisherman.co.uk
TO BOOK A DAY email: info@thefriendlyfisherman.co.uk with your contact phone number and Andy will call you back and discuss details.



Young Guns on the Bank



Leo Neal joined Andy Lush again;

This time the pair fished Sandwich lake at Elphicks. Andy was keen to show Leo how effective the pellet waggler could be, and had promised an action-packed day. The session didn't disappoint, with Leo catching 15 fish, which doubles his total of carp caught so far, plus a new personal best: a mirror carp of 16lb. Topping this session is going to be difficult.

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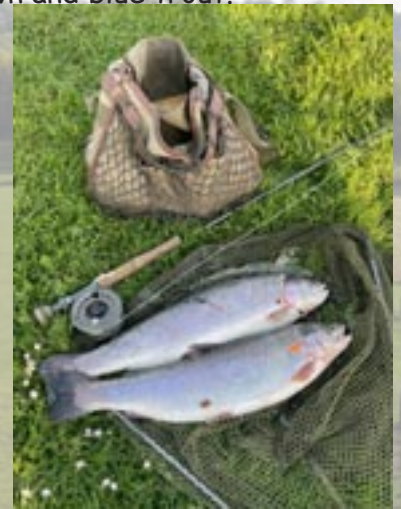
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Lakedown Trout Fishery & Taproom - Check Facebook for March Events

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The Fishery was originally designed & created in 1981 by actor & Rock legend Roger Daltrey.

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Lakedown Tap Room is situated on our family farm and trout fishery; Lakedown Trout Fishery, Swife Lane, Burwash, TN21 8UX.

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Andy Lush - The Friendly Fisherman

Testing Times - Elphicks - Sandwich Lake

As a day angler, I have to be proactive; I haven't got the luxury of time to set traps and wait for the fish to come along and spring one. I'm always watching the water for any signs that might indicate where the fish are, and then deciding whether to move or not. As always, 90% of success is in finding the fish; catching them is the easy part.

One extremely windy day

Elphicks - Sandwich Lake is a relatively easy water with a good stock of carp throughout the size range up to twenty pounds. It's the perfect water to hone your skills on when trying out new methods or when taking a new angler fishing to build their confidence and get them used to playing and handling fish.

I chose to fish Sandwich Lake on this occasion; knowing it would be difficult to float-fish anywhere else. Sandwich Lake is roughly square-shaped, with three of its sides fishable; the far bank opposite the cafe has been left wild and overgrown, the perfect safe haven for carp. The wind funnels up or down the valley, so fishing at either end of the lake puts the wind behind me, which is always an advantage, for better float control.

I could have fished Kettles Lake, which is further up the same valley. It's another favourite of mine, but on this occasion the wind was pushing down its length, which makes it impossible to stop your float from drifting and would eventually drag across the wind. Your bait traveling in this manner is even more unnatural than, a suspended 8mm pellet 2ft [60cm] beneath the surface, Lol.

I arrive shortly after 7.00. Pete, another of Elphick's regulars, had beaten me to the swim I'd hoped to fish: "you snooze, you lose." So I settled in a swim that still allowed me to cast my waggler towards the island. I had to be especially careful, as I've previously lost several of my pellet wagglers on the island. However, I think I come up with a cunning plan. Instead of clipping my reel line into the spool's clip, I now tie a sliding stop knot from pole elastic and clip the tag end into the line clip. Now, rather than running the

risk of snapping off when a fish powers off, the elastic either stretches and slips through the clip, or snaps, leaving the line free running. What's neat about this is that the stop knot is still attached and marks the casting distance. Brilliant. I know, and it's all my own work.

So I started casting my pellet waggler while feeding 8mm sinking pellets as accurately as I could towards the island;

well, I tried. The closer I could get my float to the island's margin, the better, as I know bites come quickly and are more confident, so much easier to hook. This, however, proved nigh on impossible, as the gusting, swirling wind saw my float and feed heading in entirely different directions. The other problem was that the swirling wind was coming from my side. This put a large bow in the line, which dragged my float out of position and created a lot of slack, which would make hooking fish much harder.

I had to move to an area that was more sheltered; however, the island was now much farther away. I selected a 14g Drennan XL pellet waggler to enable me to cast the distance. One problem solved, another rears its head. Although more sheltered, the extra distance made it much harder to see my float. Against the shadow of the island, I couldn't see red or orange tops; but I could see yellow. However, as soon as the float drifted out of the shadow and into the silvery rippled water, I couldn't see any of them!

I grabbed a coffee at the on-site Carp Catchers Cafe, taking a float with me. There, Gary came to my rescue with the loan of his black marker pen, which I used to blacken the float's top. Black shows up so much



better than any other colour in bright sunlight, or in silvery water, in the past I've used blackboard paint.

It worked a treat; in the next three hours, I caught 9 carp. Pete packed up at 3 pm as he usually does, so his swim was now vacant. I jumped in it ASAP, because it was more sheltered. The temperature was dropping significantly; it was now raining, and time was running out fast. I cast along the overgrown margin and fed a sprinkling of pellets.

I had to wait too long for bites, so I anxiously scanned the water for signs of fish elsewhere. Occasionally, I saw swirls in open water, nowhere near the margins or the island. I randomly scattered some pellets in that general area. The carp were obviously looking for food, as I quickly caught several. All the time, I was still sprinkling a few pellets in my near margin. Finally, with my "last throw of the dice" I cast down the edge and was instantly rewarded with a mirror carp of 15lb 12oz, the largest of the session, which ended a very challenging day.



Preston Dura Floats

Pellet Waggler vs Zigs?

Two completely different methods that fish the same depth band, but from opposite directions. I often use both these methods at the same time, while I try to figure out the advantages of one over the other and to understand why.

On my last few fishing trips, on different waters, the water temperature has been slowly rising to 10 degrees C. The carp have moved toward the warmer surface water, not to feed, I believe, but to warm themselves. However, their curiosity can get the better of them, which causes them to take your bait.

With zigs, the bite indication is rather indirect; to register a bite, the line has to be pulled down towards the weight, through the lead, and all the way back to the rod before you know anything about it. Unless the hook takes hold, there's plenty of opportunity for the carp to eject the bait. When your zig bait is nearer the surface, bite de-

tection decreases; the carp can now move in a much greater area, in any direction, before they feel the lead, so bites are very subtle, with the bobbin just lifting and hovering. I believe the carp are hardly moving in the cool water, just mouthing, sucking, and blowing the bait, so the chances of them feeling the lead are greatly reduced. So don't expect to get a one-toner.

Under similar conditions, the presentation and bite detection are superior with the pellet waggler. The float is so much closer to the hookbait and the fish that even the smallest bite is registered. Again, it has limitations; one being that you can only use one rod effectively; another you can't see a float at night; and, of course, the wind and its changeable nature can make your swim unsuitable very quickly. The major advantages of Zigs are that they can be fished with multiple rods, day or night, at greater range, in weather conditions that would make float fishing impossible.

Well, these are my thoughts at the moment. Zigs are still something I'm enjoying using as I endeavour to become more proficient in their use. I still need to figure out when and when not to spomb sloppy bait over them, but it's still a work in progress, and one I'm enjoying immensely.

Until next month, tight lines.

Andy Lush



A pretty Sandwich lake mirror for Andy

Carp Fishing: Dedication, Lessons & True Character Fish

By Brody Simpson.



Carp fishing has always been more than just a hobby for me. It's a blend of dedication, patience, and believing in what you're doing—even when the weather, the lake, and sometimes your own confidence seems to

be working against you. Over the years, I've learned that the hardest sessions often become the most rewarding, especially through the winter months. When the banks are quiet, the temperatures drop, and the bites slow right down, that's when every small success feels twice as special.

Two captures that stand out the most in my journey are a 24lb scaly mirror and a 28lb scaly mirror—both proper character fish, each earned through persistence and sticking to solid tactics.

The 24lb mirror showed up during one of those slow, sun soaked sessions when the heat left the water feeling almost lifeless. Most anglers had already drifted off, convinced the carp had switched off in the midday warmth. But I stuck to the basics: find the fish, keep the presentation clean, and trust the methods I know inside out. When that rod finally tightened and the alarm sang out, it felt like the long, lazy hours under the blazing sky had all been leading to that moment. That fish wasn't just a capture it was a reminder that belief, patience, and staying true to your approach matter more than anything.



The 28lb scaly mirror was even more special. It was the kind of carp that instantly takes your breath away as soon as it rolls into the net, complete with a unique scale pattern, dark winter colours, and a real presence about it. Fish like that stay with you forever. They remind you why you get up early, why you stay out late, and why you put so much into your angling through winter when many others don't.

A huge part of my confidence on the bank comes from being a member of the Mad Baits promo team. Using bait, I fully trust makes a massive difference, especially during winter



when the carp feed less and every bite matters. High-quality bait that breaks down properly in cold water can be the difference between blanking and picking up that one crucial fish.

Knowing I'm representing a brand I genuinely believe in pushes me to fish at my best every session.



Another big highlight in my angling journey has been meeting Alan Blair, not once but three times. Alan has always been someone I've looked up to, not just for his fishing ability but for his mindset and passion. Each conversation has taught me something valuable, whether it's about watercraft, confidence, or staying motivated when the fishing is tough. Those moments have shaped the way I think on the bank and encouraged me to push myself further with each session



When it comes to winter tactics, my absolute go-to method is the solid PVA bag. In cold conditions, carp often feed cautiously and in small areas, so presenting a tight parcel of attractions around the hook bait is perfect. My mix is simple but effective, crushed boilies, pellets, and a touch of liquid attraction to create a small but powerful signal. Solid bags also allow me to fish confidently over light weed or choddy spots without worrying about presentation.

Every solid-bag setup I use is built with Atomic Tackle components. Winter fishing often gives you just one chance, so I rely on strong, reliable terminal gear to make sure everything works exactly as it should when that moment finally comes. Strong hooks, tidy rigs, and balanced hook baits all play their part.

Carp fishing is a constant learning process, and looking back, I'm proud of how far I've come, from catching memorable scaly mirrors, to representing a brand I trust, to learning from anglers I admire. Winter fishing isn't easy, but when everything comes together, it becomes the most rewarding time of year.

Every session adds experience, every fish adds motivation, and every challenge makes you that little bit better.

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Junior Competition Winners



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See Page 19 for more details for MFC



Fish With Carl

MFC Store Prize Winner – Riley Jackson



WINNER



MFC Baits Prize Winner with The Freshwater Informer

Riley Jackson is this month's MFC Bait Prize Winner... and what a capture it is! 🍷👂
Going full stealth mode in the margins, Riley stalked out this incredible old linear and pulled off something special.

Keeping it simple with just a piece of sinking bread, he managed to outwit this absolute unit—tipping the scales at a huge 27lb 3oz from Broadfield Park Lake! 🌟

This is proper angling—sharp watercraft, patience, and nerves of steel... and it's paid off in style.

Massive congratulations Riley, that's a fish to remember! 🐟

Fish With Carl Winner: Ollie Gates

Fish With Carl – Signed Book Winner!

Ollie Gates is this month's winner of the Fish with Carl prize after landing a fantastic personal best stunning common carp pictured on the right, weighing 14lb 8oz.

Ollie was fishing a 24-hour session with his dad at Sam's Lakes and had an incredible trip, finishing with a total of 8 carp. All his fish came to Orchard Tackle Liquid Squid — a result to be proud of!

Well done, Ollie — fantastic achievement 🍷

A big well done to Ollie on a fantastic fishing trip— and congratulations on winning a signed Fish With Carl book!



NEW PB



Aurther - First Carp - Sandwich Lakes



Eli Laker - 23lb Common - Iden Wood Fishery



George Bartholomew - Horsmonden Lake



George Rhodes - Surrenden Lakes - 24lb



Tommy Vidler - Love Lace Fisheries - 12lb 2oz



Harley Williams - Dartford Lakes



Tommy Vidler - Claygate Fishery - 10lb 6oz



Arlo Stickells (6) - Longshore Fishery - 16lb 8oz



George Wenham - Tricklebrook on his 10th Birthday



Hunter Darrison - Hawkhurst Fishery - Catfish 34lb



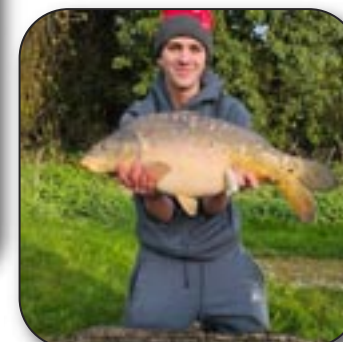
Jack Taylor - Orchard Lakes - Lake 4 - 36lb 10oz



Tommy - Local Carp and Medway Roach



Jayden Brett (8) Orchard Place Farm - 22lb Common



Arlo Stickells - Longshore fishery



James Ridley - Club Lake Common



Luca - Sandwich Match Lake a 7lb 2oz



James Ridley - Crowborough
Club Water 13lb



Tommy Wooldridge - 28lb 7oz
Sturgeon (French Trip)



Alfie Hudson - 9lb Ghosty
Cottingtons Lakes



Jacob Bradley - Ddaps-
Bennett's - 41lb Mirror
NEW PB



Teddy Jackson - Stub Ponds -
33lb 1oz Catfish



Oscar with his 1st ever Carp from
Lake Ribbon Sumners Ponds



Archie Cowling - Green-
acres - 5lb Match Lake



George Bennett, 20lb 4oz
Carp caught on Combi Rig



Joseph Brigden - More House
Farm 19lb Common -
Mud Pigs Baits



Joseph Brigden - More House
Farm 20lb 5oz Common -
Mud Pigs Baits



Zac Bayliss - Sumners
Ponds



Oliver Carter - Cackle Hill
- 25lb New PB
NEW PB



Bradley Kingshott
Hartleylands Fishery -
Samsons



Nathan Roberts Sumners
Ponds 24lb 5oz Common



Carter - Tricklebrook -
Kingfisher Pod 23lb



Harley 6lb 9oz -
Mousehole - Swift Lake



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Mousehole Fishery



30lb 10oz for Lee, Kestrel Lake - Mousehole



Travis - Mousehole - Kingfisher Lake



Lee - Kingfisher Mousehole Fishery



Jim - Mousehole Kingfisher Lake



Jason - Mousehole - Kingfisher Lake



40lb 6oz Mirror Kestrel Lake Mousehole Fishery



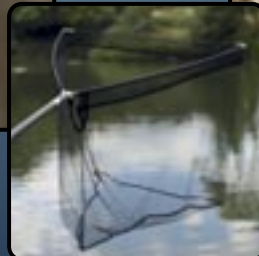
Tommy 32lb 5oz Kingfisher Lake

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The Medway Man

Bob Morris



Unpredictability is often the name of the game as far as spring/early summer fishing is concerned.

May 2026

This is for a whole variety of reasons. Temperatures fluctuate wildly with some nights in April still down to around zero while daytime temps often up to mid-twenties. This can affect feeding behaviour, location and of course, spawning activities.

As it happens I have already experienced carp spawning on one of the waters that I fish and this was mid-April. I don't know what the water temperature was but average daytime air temps that week were only about 12, which seems rather low for spawning. It does seem to me that differing strains of fish may spawn at different times – interesting.



Last time I was talking about float fishing techniques and my preference for this approach. It is a simple method and extremely enjoyable but surprisingly difficult to get right if conditions are not conducive to it. Varying depths, surface agitation / wind direction, floating debris, weed etc, all come into the mix and make the choice of set-up crucial. My favourite method for close range fishing is the 'lift method' or some variation of it.

I normally like to use a short piece of straight peacock quill for this and a single shot (that almost sinks it) about 3-4" from the hook. This is arranged so that the shot rests on the bottom

directly below the float which is then adjusted so that a visible inch or so is showing above the surface. It is the traditional way of fishing the 'lift method' and the system works in-



credibly well - but only in relatively calm conditions. The idea is, of course, that as soon as the fish picks up the bait and lifts the shot, the float rises, tilts over and lays flat. When this happens, you know that as the shot has been lifted off the bottom the bait must be in the fish's mouth. However, if a slight breeze is pushing against the float, it will possibly keep it standing upright even when a bite is in progress which can confuse the issue and delay your reaction. My usual solution to this problem is to adjust the float to fish a bit over depth so that it lays flat on the surface after casting and then slowly tighten the line so that it cocks and sits up to the required point.

This works well but has the disadvantage that a fish (maybe a small one) can push the bait toward the float causing it to pop up and lay flat making you think that you have a confident bite. I try to counter this by waiting a bit longer before striking to make sure that a decent fish is mouthing the bait and will move off with it. It works, but it is not perfect and leads to a few missed strikes. Talking of false bites however, one of the main reasons that I like the lift method tactics is that it normally differentiates between proper bites and liners and this is often a big problem when float fishing over a patch of bait. The float is pushed about all over the place and frequently gets pulled under. Striking at these false indications can spook the fish out of the swim or worse, foul hook one. If you doubt the volume of these false indications, just cast in without a bait on! I think you will be amazed at how many apparently good bites you still get.

The classic version of this is the margin tench swim with a group of fish engaged in a frenzied feeding spell with bubbles coming up all around and the float moving from side to side in the middle of it all. About a week back I had this very situation with a strong crosswind making it difficult to get the set up right. I managed in the end by switching to the antennae type float to minimise the effect of the choppy water. It was not perfect and I still missed a few of what

looked like good bites, but I still ended the session with seven decent tench and a good-sized bream. It can be very frustrating but worth persisting with because when you get it right, I find it the most satisfying way of fishing for most species – particularly when they are moving in the margin or at relatively close range. When fish are further out it is still possible to use a float and very often some form of combination tactic such as a 'float-leger' is often the answer, but as you can imagine there are all sorts of problems here too! I like a challenge though and I am currently working on some solutions. 😊 I will talk more about all of these float fishing tactics again shortly.



Best Fishes & Techniques

Bob Morris

Piscatorial Politics

Spring fishing can be unpredictable as many species are into or preparing to spawn. This can have a drastic effect on their appetite and



I must say that having now experienced both systems, though not perfect, I preferred it.

Bob Morris

location as well as presenting the angler with the dilemma of whether to fish for them or not? It is rightly thought of as inappropriate to target fish that are in the process of spawning, but it is not always as obvious as you might think as not all fish thrash around wildly like carp when they are at it.

Club committees are often faced with the difficult choice of whether to close waters annually for a period during spring/early summer and hope that the fish do the business during this spell or only closing the waters after fish have been spotted spawning. This latter system of handling the situation is fraught with all sorts of problems as fish often stop and start due to the weather conditions and this can go on for some time which creates the possibility of opening and closing venues for spells during early summer and frustrating some members who may have arranged trips and not been able to keep up with the current state of affairs on an hourly basis! It doesn't help that different species may spawn any time between April and July, although it does appear that many clubs are only worried about the welfare of carp!! The old 'traditional' 3-month closure was a bit draconian but at least it did allow a certain amount of stability.

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