

FRESHWATER INFORMER

Issue 347 - July 2026

Ed Owen
Martello Lakes
42lb 8oz

Free
Magazine



Catch Up With:
In The Edge With Alex
Medway Man
The Friendly Fisherman
Russ Evans



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FOOD IS AVAILABLE ON SITE FROM MID-MARCH TO OCTOBER

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Welcome to the July 2026! edition of The Freshwater Informer

This month has once again been a quiet one for my own fishing, but Alex and I did manage to make a trip to Sumners Ponds with Sussex & Surrey Angling Tuition. We spent the day with people of all ages who wanted to experience fishing for the first time. These events are a fantastic way to discover whether angling is the right hobby for you, without the expense of buying all the equipment before knowing if you'll take it further. You can read more about the day on page 30.

June brought some very warm weather, with many fisheries across the region temporarily closing to allow carp to spawn. Towards the end of the month, record-breaking temperatures made fishing even more challenging for both anglers and fish, reminding us all of the importance of fishing responsibly during extreme conditions.

Looking ahead, I have a session booked at Elphicks Fishery in July, which I'm really looking forward to. Fingers crossed the fish are feeding, and I'll have an exciting report to bring you in next month's edition.

As always, a massive thank you to each and every one of you who reads, shares, and supports The Freshwater Informer. Your continued support means everything and helps the magazine grow month after month.



I'm working hard behind the scenes to bring you even more great content throughout 2026. If there's a fishery you think we should visit, an event you'd like us to cover, or a fishing story you'd like to share, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Until next time, tight lines, stay safe on the bank, and enjoy the July edition of The Freshwater Informer!

Have a great Month tight lines to you all

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The Freshwater Informer
email: info@freshwaterinformer.com

COPY DEADLINE for August 2026 Magazine
Friday 25th July 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



Graham Beale -
Tricklebrook -
New Lake - 36lb 8oz



Tricklebrook New Lake



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



Tricklebrook Match Lake



Tricklebrook -
New Lake



Andy Thompson had this
peach from old lake at 28.6lb



Jamie Flisher - Speci Lake -
29lb 6oz



George Acres - Dove - 22lb
10oz



Shane Nixon - Dove Lake
22lb 4oz



George Lucian Paun - Main
Lake - 35lb



Joel Bunting - Quarry - 24lb
7oz



Jamie Flisher- Speci Lake -
34lb 7oz

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



In The Edge With Alex



**The Longest Day.
The day dawned bright and early.
Me? Not so much...**

I'd had enough sense to set my alarm, but not the sense to put my phone on charge. The anticipated 3:30am wakeup call never came. Blinked out of existence when the battery died at some point in the early hours.

Instead, I awoke in a dazed and confused state, blindly stabbing at a blank screen and trying to work out why it was so bright outside. Clawing to make sense of the world through bleary eyes and hazy understanding. Gradually, pieces of logic fell into to place. The Summer Solstice, the longest day of the year, the day to catch my first chub of the season. Not just any chub, but one of myth and mystery. A fish that I wasn't even sure existed.

All of these things, and I'd already missed the best part of it, and it was still only 7:30 in the morning.

As antiquated as I am, I couldn't go fishing without my phone. If I had to charge my phone, I might as well make a mug of tea. If I have time to drink tea, I might as well make toast. If I have time for toast, I may as well cook bacon. You get the picture...

Two teas, a full English breakfast, a partially charged phone, and five hours later than intended, I was finally ready to face the world outside my door.

My destination for the day was a tributary of the River Rother. It doesn't have the access, or the stock, of the main river, which meant that despite my tardy start, I would still most likely have the stretch to myself. It's a place where I frequently walk, and over the course of the close season I'd taken to introducing a bit of bait here and there. Not masses, just whatever was left in any bait boxes after a stillwater trip. A handful of maggots, a couple of balls of groundbait, a few cubes of meat.

It was a tactic that served me well at the beginning of the 2025 season when I hooked my first chub within two seconds of casting out. This season however, had got off to a far less auspicious start. With a couple of weeks left of the close season, I had spooked what I thought to be a rather large chub from under a tumbled down bridge. For context, the average chub in this part of the river is probably under 2lbs, this one, if it even was a chub, looked all of twice that.

For the next two weeks I'd concentrated my bait-

ing in and around this area, even supplementing it with the occasional handful of pellets, although I never saw the fish again. Come the glorious sixteenth I popped down for an hour after work and blanked. A couple of evenings later I did the same, although this time I was sure that I saw the ghostly silhouette of a big fish glide past as I packed away. I couldn't be certain, but it was enough for me to set aside the longest day of the year in its pursuit.

Unlike my two evening trips, I was leaving nothing to chance. I had packed an assortment of different baits and tackle in my stalking bag. The added weight, combined with the mass of a full English, gave me considerable momentum on my journey down into the valley, and there was a very real danger that my bottom half wouldn't keep up with my top half. This dynamic was immediately reversed the very second I began to climb the other side. I huffed and puffed, using my landing net handle as a walking staff until I reached my first proper obstacle of the day, an electric fence. Too short to step over, too full to bend low enough, I had no choice but to resort to a commando roll. In my minds eye I fancied myself as looking slick and professional. In reality, I looked more like a potato being rolled down a flight of stairs. I stood up, brushed myself down, grabbed my stuff, and instantly rested my carbon landing net pole on the live wire, sending me into an involuntary dance and a tirade of expletives that have no place in disturbing the peace on a Sunday morning. This outburst attracted the attention of a herd of cows, that up until this point had been grazing peacefully at the top of the field. En masse, they began to lumber towards me. Every angler knows that chub are spooky fish, mythical ones even more so, and increasing my number one hundred fold would do little to advance my prospects of a capture.

None the less I tried, although it quickly became apparent that even if the chub didn't mind the cows, they could hardly be considered an unintrusive addition to my bankside presence. They jockeyed around me, pushing and shoving one another, keen to check out this strange man crouching next to the river. The brim of my hat started to fill with saliva as they sniffed, snorted, and generally dribbled on me.

Even though I still wasn't sure that my target fish even existed, if it did, it would be able to traverse the stretch of river that bordered the next field. A field without cows in. I made the decision to move. This time however, I chose to walk the extra distance to the field gate rather than risk frying any other part of my anatomy.



This next field contained the broken down bridge where I spooked, or imagined, something big in the water and so that is where I headed.

Finally, with some peace and space, I set about fishing in earnest. A handful of pellets followed by a chunk of luncheon meat on a simple link ledger. The sun was getting ever higher in the sky and I was starting to sweat, but I at least I was fishing. I concentrated on the water. I concentrated so hard that I failed to see the tractors enter the field on the opposite bank. Seconds later there was a huge revving of engines and tremendous clanking of machinery, as a haymaking crew made the most of the sunshine. A huge cloud of dust blew in my direction, instantly sticking to my arms, chest, face, and dribble covered hat.



I grabbed my stuff and staggered off, looking like a demented scarecrow. I'd suffered too much to give up now. Below the remains of the bridge was a bend where the winter floods had carved out a small shelf at river level. The deer had obviously been using it as a crossing place and had worn a narrow track down to the waters edge. I am neither as svelte, or as nimble, as the average fallow and so far from been dainty, my descent was more of a crashing one, adding nettle stings and thorn scratches to an ever increasing list of fishing inconveniences.

Bloodied, bruised, covered in dust, with sweat stinging my eyes, I removed my boots and socks and cooled my feet in the shallows. A shoal of

Minnows danced in the current. I swung my bait out to the far end of the pool and lay back, using my unhooking mat as a makeshift pillow. The big breakfast, the heat, the gentle gurgle of the water, the events of the morning, all took their toll and I dozed off.



How long I slept for, I can't say, but when I woke my face was burning and my feet, still in the river, were wrinkled. A calmness had settled over the valley, and indeed my rod, which was still yet to move. I dried my feet as best I could and began to put my socks back on. Maybe I had imagined it, maybe there was no giant chub, maybe I was chasing shadows. I manoeuvred to put my other sock on and saw the rod tip jolt. Space was tight and I'd probably just knocked it. I contorted once more. The rod was almost pulled into the river. I jumped up, my socked foot instantly back in the water, my bare foot on sharp stones, seized the rod, and bent into a fish. There was an explosion of spray at the far end of the pool as my little river rod arched over. I played the fish for far longer, and more gently, than require. Haste would not rob me of my prize. Eventually a deep bodied bar of bronze slipped gracefully over the net. I hadn't imagined it. It did exist. I had the proof.

It really had been the longest day, in more ways than one.

Alex



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Luke Pettit 18.7 Sandwich lake



Lee Rooke 45.14 North Lake



Dave Woodcock 64.2 Pullens lake



Mrs Beaven 30.3 Plantation lake



Adam Brend North Lake 2026



Chaz 35lb Pullens lake

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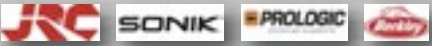
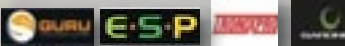
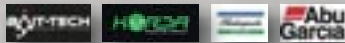
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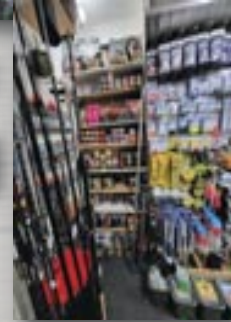


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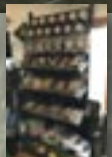
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Prices start at £10 per session on the coarse lakes. For the specimen lakes prices start at £20 for the day rising to £30 for a 24hrs ticket (up to 3 rods). Lessons now available for all ages. Gates open at 7am and close at 6.30pm (Winter hours 7am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

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A Fantastic Week at Sandwich Lakes 🐟

We had a great break away in our caravan last week at Sandwich Lakes. With temperatures soaring to 35°C, we made the decision to fish during the late afternoon and evening sessions for the safety and wellbeing of both the fish and ourselves. The fishing was excellent, with plenty of action throughout the trip. These three fish were the standout captures from many caught during the week:

- 🐟 Albino Carp – 15lb 8oz
- 🐟 Orange Koi Carp – 11lb 5oz
- 🐟 Ghost Carp – 10lb 3oz

Alongside these, we landed plenty of commons and mirrors ranging from 8lb to 10lb. All fish were caught using bread, fished on 8lb line with a size 16 hook, proving that simple tactics can still be incredibly effective.

A fantastic few days of fishing, great weather, and plenty of memorable catches.

Kind regards, Mark 🐟 🧰 🐟!



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Dan Smith - River Medway - 4lb 4oz Perch



Paisley- Rae Thompson - First Pike 10lb - Free River Stretch Paddock Wood



Dan Smith - 4lb 4oz, perch, 3lb perch, & A 28cm founder - River Medway



Ryan Hemsley - Cackle hill lakes specimen lake 2 - 40lb Cat Fish

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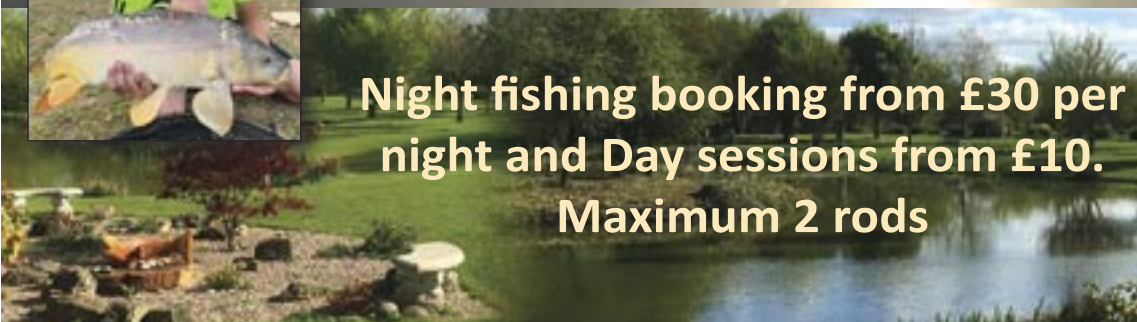
Our toilets are brick-built and open
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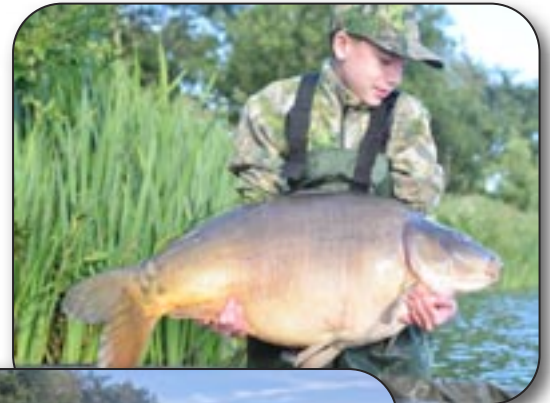
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New PB and First Ever 40! Oscar Owen

Fishing a 30-hour session, I targeted the deeper water just off a marginal shelf, introducing a mix of pellet and boilie freebies over the top. The rig was a fluorocarbon D-rig fished with a leadcore leader, 2oz

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URBAN

Fish of the Month Prize Winner



Ed Owen - RKB Leisure - 42lb 8oz (Gibbo)



Ed Owen - 34lbs 8oz Mirror Carp Martello Lakes



Will Adams - Hawkhurst - Dove Lake 26lb 4oz



Matt Black - 30lb 6oz Ghost - Local Club



Matt Black - 26lb 12oz Ghost - Local Club



Archie - Low 30lb Common caught using SBD HULK



Elvis Reed - New Pepper - 33lb 3oz Cottington Fishery



Frakie Ray PB Common - Caught with his Fish With Carl Bundle



Harley Williams - Surface Caught 24lb Common



Terry Lynch - Tricklebrook - 35lb



Jack Keutenius - Embryo - Norton Disney - 32lb 7oz



Jack Keutenius - Loggies lake - 8b 2oz Common carp

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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 Ed Owen on landing a stunning 42lb 8oz Mirror From RKB Leisure — 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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MIDDLE LAKE SPOTLIGHT



As anglers begin their summer sessions, it's worth looking back at the work carried out on Middle Lake over the winter. The focus was on three key areas: snag removal, silver fish reduction, and swim maintenance. Together, these improvements have created a cleaner, safer, and more balanced fishery with excellent potential for bigger and more consistent carp catches.

WINTER WORKS

Known problem snags, deadfall, and marginal debris were removed to reduce fish-safety risks and improve access for anglers.

Result: Safer fish-playing, fewer lost fish, cleaner margins, and more productive fishing areas.

SILVER FISH REDUCTION AND STOCK BALANCE

A targeted reduction of excess roach, rudd, and small skimmers has helped lower competition for natural food sources and supplementary feed. Leading to more available nutrition for the carp, supporting improved growth rates and stock quality.

INTELLIGENT WINTER FEEDING

Throughout the colder months, a low-oil, highly digestible feeding programme kept carp active and feeding without increasing waste levels. This means fish maintained their condition through winter and responded strongly as water temperatures began to rise.

WHAT ANGLERS CAN EXPECT

Bigger carp & improved growth - With less competition for food and a consistent feeding programme, more nutrition is now reaching the carp. Average weights are expected to continue rising, with the current lake record now standing at 31lbs 4oz.

Cleaner spots - Due to snag removal and swim work, mean more efficient rigs and better hook holds, reducing lost fish and stress on specimens.

More fish - Reduced line hazards allow anglers to fish confidently around features that were previously difficult to target, resulting in safer battles and more landed fish.

TIPS FOR FISHING MIDDLE LAKE

Location is key - Watch for liners and fizzing to confirm signs of fishing activity before introducing bait.

Keep presentations simple - Short combi rigs or D-rigs with balanced wafers are ideal over the cleaned areas.

Make the most of peak feeding times - First light, last light, and periods of falling pressure remain prime opportunities. The winter feeding pattern often carries through into spring, so edges remain a smart shout.

By removing snags, reducing excess silver fish, and feeding intelligently throughout the winter, Wylands has created a safer, more productive fishery where fish welfare and angling success go hand in hand.

Wylands Farm Fishery Team

FISHING LAKES IN DORSET & EAST SUSSEX

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VARYING IN DIFFICULTY



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1 WELL STOCKED LAKE
MEDIUM DIFFICULTY



Scan the QR to explore our lake at Sharnfold Farm



Fishing Tale Films

The Secret Water

Unlocking an Unknown Perch Paradise

There are moments in an angler's life that feel entirely driven by fate. In our pursuit of specimen fish, we pore over maps, scan internet forums, and read magazines, yet the greatest opportunities often arrive when we least expect them. Such was the case during a winter evening on another angling adventure, sitting by a roaring fire in a country pub, talking fishing with a small group of locals. A friend of a friend quietly joined the conversation, listening to my passion for big perch before leaning in and mentioning a forgotten, private 10-acre lake. He gave me a simple, unyielding condition: if I promised to remain absolutely tight-lipped and honour his request to keep the location a total secret, I could fish it. I did not need to be asked twice. The journey began that very night. Honouring the owner's request means this wonderful water must remain entirely nameless, a hidden gem tucked away from the modern world. There is an incredible, electric thrill in waking up at 5:00 AM knowing you are headed to a venue that has never seen the pressure of public day-ticket crowds. Driving through the darkness of the early morning lanes, the steering wheel cold in my hands, the sense of anticipation is almost overwhelming. This is the first of what I hope will be many trips to this mysterious lake this year, an exploration of a blank canvas where true monsters could be hiding in plain sight.

First Light on a Nameless Lake

Arriving at the estate gates in the grey, pre-dawn gloom feels like stepping through a portal into the past. Walking down to the water's edge as the sky begins to bleed a soft, icy blue, the true scale of the lake reveals itself. At 10 acres, it is a magnificent expanse of water, flanked

by mature, towering oaks and dense reed beds that haven't been cut back in decades. A thick blanket of morning mist rolls across the surface, completely obscuring the opposite bank and enveloping the swim in a quiet, haunting solitude.

The atmosphere possesses a raw, untouched magic. There are no man-made fishing platforms, no littered nylon lines, and no worn paths in the grass. The only sounds are the occasional splash of a rising fish out in the fog and the distant, lonely call of a pheasant in the woods. To stand on a bank like this is the ultimate dream of the specimen hunter. The owner had informed me that the perch grow to well over 4lbs here, undoubtedly fattened up by the lake's massive, undisturbed shoals of silverfish. Beneath that glassy, cold surface lies a pristine ecosystem where the predators have reigned supreme for years.

Stealth Tactics for an Untouched Realm

Because these fish have rarely, if ever, encountered modern angling pressure, a tactical approach based on precision and maximum attraction is paramount. I set up my two trusty 11ft Darent Valley 0.75lb test curve specialist rods. Their soft, progressive blanks are the ultimate tools for absorbing the violent, jagged lunges of big perch without tearing the hook from their delicate mouths. I pair them with my favourite white-bodied Shimano Stradic 4000 reels, their incredibly smooth rear drags dialled in perfectly to handle a sudden, close-quarters bolt. My mainline is a supple, low-visibility 6lb monofilament, ending in an ultra-sharp size 6 wide-gape hook.

For presentation, I opt for two exquisite Perch Bobbers from the Black Bottom Float range, shotted precisely so only the bright tips peek through the surface film. My left-hand rod is baited with a plump, pink king prawn, while the right-hand rod mounts a giant, juicy lobworm.

To draw the nomadic pack into my chosen swim, a deep, silty drop-off right against an overhanging tangle of ancient tree roots, I prepare a highly concentrated bait soup. Using my bait scissors, I vigorously chop and mush together a rich blend of red



maggots, dead maggots, peeled cocktail prawns, and chopped dendrobaena worms. Once it forms a thick pulp, I douse it in Predator Plus red liquid for a striking visual cloud, followed by a heavy glug of dark Liquid Worm extract. For an unmistakable, pungent punch, I add a shot of oily krill juice.

To ensure this devastating mix lands exactly where my floats will sit without creating any unnecessary disturbance, I skip the catapult. Instead, I ship out a dedicated margin pole kit fitted with a large pole cup. I slide the pole out over the drop-off and gently tip the cup, depositing the bleeding, crimson attraction mush in a tight, concentrated pile on the lake bed. Both Black Bottom Perch Bobbers are swung out underhand, settling perfectly over the secret feast.

A Brilliant Flash of Reassurance

As the morning mist slowly burns away under a weak winter sun, the lake begins to breathe. I sit motionless back from the water's edge, completely blending into the skeletal bushes. Suddenly, a familiar and beautiful sight cuts through the quiet, the local kingfisher, working its private beat. Over the next few hours, this magnificent little bird passes my swim a few times, a vibrant bullet of neon blue and burnt orange against the winter gray. At one point, it perches on a low, frosted branch mere feet from my left-hand rod tip, its head tilting as it eyes the water before diving like a stone to claim a tiny rudd. Sharing this secret sanctuary with such a master hunter deepens the magic of the morning, a sign that the silverfish are active and the predators cannot be far behind.

The initial wait is a test of nerve, but on an untouched water, you know that when the pack arrives, the action will be frantic. The two exquisite bobbers ride the tiny ripples on the surface, perfectly still for two hours, before the trap is sprung.

The Crimson Awakening

At precisely 10:45 AM, the Black Bottom Perch Bobber on the worm rod jiggles violently, sits high for a second, and then buries clean out of sight with absolute, breathtaking speed. I lift the Darent Valley rod, and it instantly hoops into a magnificent, heavy curve as a powerful fish fights back in the deep water. The Shimano Stradic's rear drag clicks sharply as the perch makes a series of aggressive, jagged head shakes, trying desperately to reach the safety of the sunken tree roots. The 11ft rod handles the lunges beautifully, cushioning every thump. Slowly, I pump the fish toward the upper layers through the clear

water, and a stunning, thick-backed warrior breaks the surface, its bold tiger stripes slicing down its golden-green flanks. I scoop the net forward, and the first secret of the lake is mine, a beautiful, pristine perch of 3lbs 11oz. The sheer excitement of landing such a magnificent specimen from a completely unknown water is pure euphoria.

What followed over the next three hours can only be described as a red-letter dream. The crimson mush had done its job, locking a massive pack of hungry, competitive perch right into my margin swim. I quickly shipped out another small pole cup of the scented mix and cast back out.

The floats could barely settle before sliding away. In total, an incredible session unfolded, yielding 9 magnificent perch ranging from a punchy 2lbs 7oz up to that spectacular 3lbs 11oz opener. Four of the fish comfortably cleared the magical 3lb barrier, their fiery orange-crimson pelvic fins glowing brilliantly on the unhooking mat. It was a masterclass in modern predator fishing, proving that when pristine fish meet targeted, precise tactics, the results are unforgettable.

Leaving the Sanctuary Intact

As the afternoon light begins to fade and the winter frost starts to reclaim the grass, the bites finally slow to a stop. I pack down the Darent Valley rods and case the Shimano Stradics, my hands cold but my mind absolutely on fire with the adrenaline of the day. This is the true pinnacle and allure of the sport, the privilege of fishing a secret paradise, testing your skills against untouched giants, and honoring a promise that keeps the magic alive. I look back at the 10-acre expanse one last time as the fog begins to roll back in, completely erasing my footprints. A return trip is firmly on the cards very soon, and the dream of finding that elusive 4lb monster is burning brighter than ever.

Tight Lines

Russ Evans – Fishing Tail Films!



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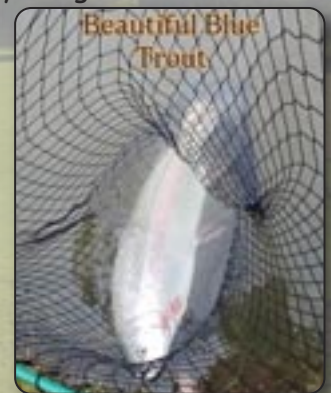
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Andy Lush - The Friendly Fisherman

A Return to Spain.

I drove three hours south-west of Madrid, heading towards the unspoilt region of Extremadura. It is largely unknown to most international travelers, yet it is larger than Switzerland, with a population of fewer than one million. I was returning to the region after a long layoff; my fishing trips there had stopped when southern Spain was hit by severe droughts that had lasted for six or seven years. Another interesting fact is that 30% of all the dammed water in Spain is in Extremadura, so plenty of water to explore. My destination was the small village of Helechosa de los Montes, my home for the next ten days. I would be fishing a large reservoir; my target species would be the Iberian barbel, of which there are several species. I wasn't expecting to catch any specimens; I had chosen this water because I knew it well. Also, it offered me ample opportunity to catch fish using my favorite fly-fishing method. How I catch the fish is more important to me than how big they are. Most UK anglers will have heard of the Comizo barbel; the Spanish record is 41lbs, small-head barbel can grow to over 20lbs, common/Iberian barbel can grow to over 20lbs, and Andalusian/Gypsy barbel can grow to over 30lbs

I would be stalking the reservoirs' banks as I searched for these special fish; my backup plan was to nymph-fish for carp that also shared the same areas. As the drought had broken only two years previously, I was unsure to what extent the fish population had recovered.

After a good night's rest, I was keen to start my quest. I had a boat at my disposal, which would allow me to cover vast amounts of bank on this large body of water. As always, location is key to success, so I headed to where the River Guadiana enters the reservoir, from my previous experience, I knew there were many bays and creeks off the river that would be home to the barbel and carp. Finding their food source would also be



One of Spain's finest, a Comizo barbel

important; the Spanish barbel will feed off the surface if there's a hatch of grasshoppers. My expectations were very low; finding barbel wouldn't be easy, as my trip to Portugal last spring had proven.

I left the launch site and headed to the river inlet. It was good to be back in my "happy place." A warm breeze was just enough to take the edge off the 35 °C heat. As the river widened, I could see large bays on either side; some were over a hundred acres in size. One side was green, with very little vegetation other than grass, while the other side was rocky, with shrubs and occasional patches of grass.

I ventured to the far end of the green bank before gently motoring towards the shore. I beached the boat and tied the painter rope to anything I could find that was secure. Now the hard work began. It seemed I'd hit the jackpot on the first attempt; grasshoppers were everywhere! This looked promising; all I needed now was to find some barbel. When it comes to grasshoppers, I'm no expert, but judging by their size, there were at least three different species here. The largest was around 3 inches in length [80mm] and as thick as my little finger.

The water temperature was already 28°C, and very clear; the sun was bright, perfect for fish spotting. As I walked along the shore, I immediately noticed a small patch of cloudy water in the margin; I knew this was due to carp activity. The carp weren't as numerous as in previous years; however, their average size seemed to have increased. There were two distinct sub-species present: prussians, which at first glance looked like a crucian carp, short and deep-bodied, weighing between 2-3lbs, and long "wildie" commons weighing between 5-10lbs. Further along the bank, I spotted what I was looking for: a barbel. Strangely, this fish was two-toned. From its head to mid-way down its body, it was almost black, while the back half was light tan, something I've never seen before. Further along the bank, I disturbed a number of terrapins that were sunning themselves on rocks. My next discovery was very interesting: in the margin, the waves had condensed some surface scum, and there were several carp beneath it, poking their mouths through and feeding on who knows what?



Comizo's can differ in colour, from bronze to golden yellow

I was now ready to start fishing; all I needed now was to figure out what fly to use. I was hoping I could catch using Grasshopper imitations, but I hadn't seen any signs of hoppers on the water's surface, nor had I seen signs of barbel in the margins. So, I was prepared to fish below the surface with nymphs using the "drag and drop" technique. Both carp and barbel would take my fly if I got the balance between sink rate and depth right. I was travelling light: a small box of flies in my pocket; my selection consisted of some Proctor's active mayfly nymphs, woolly buggers, damsel nymphs, and grasshoppers. Plus, scissors, forceps, leader material, and the all-important canteen of water.

My first day was a success; I'd caught three carp on Proctor's active mayfly nymph, and a bonus comizo barbel that charged my foam-bodied grasshopper. It took the hopper so deep that forceps were required to remove it. I had been casting beyond the shallow margins, out over the drop-off as I worked my way along the bank, looking for a target to cast to. This fish appeared out of nowhere, so a complete fluke, but one I was very grateful for.

Day Two, I decided to fish the opposite bank. It was very tempting to return to the area I already fished, but I would learn nothing if I did that. So I parked my boat on the "ferry bank," remnants of an old ferry were decaying on this bank. Exploring new ground is exciting; I was hoping I'd find some elusive barbel, but was content to catch a few carp in the process.

Two more carp, touching 5lbs, took a liking to my mayfly nymph; it was proving to be irresistible. I moved into what looked like a sizable bay,



Fulling Mill Proctor's active mayfly nymph [8350]

but on further investigation it just got bigger before splitting into two creeks. The banks got much steeper now, making it hard to concentrate on fish spotting while trying not to lose my footing.



A truly wild Spanish carp

The higher bank made a good vantage point, much easier to survey the water from, and I saw a barbel, but by the time I'd got into my casting position the fish was gone. I did, however, catch another two carp again on the mayfly nymph; the carp are definitely getting bigger; these were between 5-7lb, both gave a spirited account of themselves, testing my 9ft #5 rod to the limit.

The rest of the day was more of the same as I searched for ten hours in the 35 °C degree heat. I did encounter another comizo barbel cruising the margins; it was a decent fish of around 7lbs, it just drifted into deeper water and was gone before I could even make a cast. Despite the frustration of these missed opportunities, I continued fishing hard, adding several more carp, all caught on the mayfly nymph, which proved to be the most consistent pattern throughout the grueling day

The next few days were spent alternating between areas I'd already fished and exploring new places in the reservoir. On the advice of Lee Parks, my host, I ventured through a myriad of islands to the far western side of the reservoir, where the landscape was completely different, with open banks of chest-high straw-coloured grasses. It was quite beautiful, but I didn't find any barbel or grasshoppers. Another tough day with only a couple of small carp to show for my best efforts.

I was enjoying my time on the reservoir. I was so focused on quietly searching for barbel that I almost missed seeing the deer that were grazing peacefully in the backs of some wooded bays. I didn't spot any wild boar this time, but I saw their fresh tracks and their scrapings where they wallowed in the soft mud near the water's edge. However, all good things must come to an end, but not before another mini-adventure.
To be continued.....

In my article next month, I'll cover the basics of how to fish "the drag and drop" technique. I'll also give you my first impression of the mighty Embalse Orellana after I spent two days fishing there.

Til next month, enjoy your fishing, and tight lines

Andy Lush

Junior Competition Winners



Kindly sponsored by MFC Outdoor Store & Fish With Carl



See Page 17 for more details for MFC



Fish With Carl

MFC Store Prize Winner – Brianna Brame



This month's MFC Baits Prize Winner is Brianna Brame... and what a stunning capture

Fishing at Hawkhurst Fishery, Brianna landed this incredible 21lb Common Carp from Quarry Lake

Massive congratulations, Brianna! That's a fantastic fish and one you'll remember for a very long time. The smile says it all, and it's great to see young anglers enjoying success on the bank.

Thank you for sharing your catch with The Freshwater Informer and MFC Baits. Enjoy your prize, and we look forward to seeing what you catch next!

Fish With Carl Winner: Harry Adams

Fish With Carl Winner in The Freshwater Informer

A fantastic day on Oak Lake at Gabriel's Fishery for brothers Harry Adams (6) and George Adams (4)! Fishing a day session with Hulk bait, the action was nonstop and they could hardly keep their rods in the water!

The highlight of the day was this beautiful 14lb capture, helping make it an amazing session packed with fish and smiles all round. It's great to see young anglers enjoying our sport and creating memories that will last a lifetime.



Well done Harry and George – we look forward to seeing what you catch next!

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





James Ridley - Club Water - Tench



Liam Enderby - Lincoln Lane Lakes - 14lb Common



Young Aiden with his first ever Cat 14 lb 8 oz from Latchetts



Harry Evans - Tricklebrook fishery - 20lb Mirror



Finley Milton - Hartley Lands - Mirror



Finley Milton - Hartley Lands - Common



Finley Milton - Hartley Lands - Perch



Finley Milton - Hartley Lands - Bream



Jude Whiting - Trickle Brook 22lb New PB



Jack Taylor - Hartley Lands Fishery - 15lb 7oz Leather



Brianna Brame - Hawkhurst Fishery - 22lb Cat - Quarry



Max Leakey Age 10 - Wylands New Specimen Lake New Pb 24lb Common Carp



Oliver Carter (13) with nice Chub - River Darent



George 20lb Old Lake Tricklebrook



Elise Oxley - Dad managed to get my favourite swim for my 9th birthday weekend on New Speci Lake at Wylands. Dad picked me up from school on Friday afternoon - the birthday weekend had started!! Within an hour I was into my first 30lb carp! Absolutely stunning common! The best birthday present and one I'll remember forever!

Parkerbaits never lets us down! The session ended with many special fish, but nothing more special than my 9th birthday 30!

THE FRESHWATER TEAM SUPPORT SUSSEX & SURREY ANGLING TUITION



Torrential rain was probably the last thing anyone expected on the first Sunday in June, but that's exactly what greeted the **Freshwater Informer team** as we arrived at **Sumners Ponds**, near Horsham.

We had been invited to attend a **Get Fishing event** organised by Paul Jackman of **Sussex & Surrey Angling Tuition**. As the name suggests, the aim of the day was to introduce young people to angling, providing them with the opportunity to experience fishing first-hand and discover the fantastic venues available across our region.

I'll admit that, with the weather doing its absolute worst, neither Alex nor I expected much of a turnout. Paul,

however, remained quietly confident that there would still be plenty of youngsters keen to have a go at catching their first fish. One thing we all agreed on was that anyone willing to brave those conditions already had the enthusiasm and determination needed to become an angler.

Thankfully, Paul was right. From the moment the event began there was a constant stream of families arriving, eager to get their children out on the bank. Not only had people ignored the weather, but they had travelled from far and wide, with attendees making the journey from places including Watford and Essex.

It wasn't long before every swim was buzzing with activity as the team of Level 2 coaches shared their knowledge, helping youngsters master the basics of float fishing while encouraging plenty of fish into the landing nets.

My swim proved particularly popular. Having had the foresight to bring along an umbrella and extra chairs, the anglers were able to fish in relative comfort. Those unlucky enough to be allocated to Alex's peg, on the other hand, had little choice but to stand out in the rain alongside me! Needless to say, my planning looked a lot smarter than Alex's by the end of the day.

Despite the relentless weather, there were smiles everywhere. Every youngster caught fish, gained confidence, and left with a goody bag packed full of tackle and essentials to help them continue their fishing journey.



Days like these show just how important Get Fishing events are for the future of our sport. They provide a welcoming introduction to angling, supported by experienced coaches who are passionate about passing on their knowledge and inspiring the next generation.

If you'd like to get involved or know a young person who would enjoy giving fishing a try, keep an eye on the **Sussex & Surrey Angling Tuition** Facebook page for details of upcoming Get Fishing events across the region.





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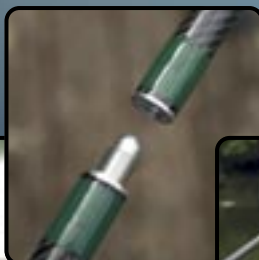
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The Medway Man

Bob Morris

I think that we can finally say that it is Summer now!

July 2026

Following a mini heatwave in May producing record temperatures and even tempting me out for the first few nights of the year – as predicted last time. Even so I did experience one night about three weeks back when after a wet and squally evening the sky cleared and temps dropped to 5 degrees at 4am- which is still a bit nippy for mid-June.

Having said that I was getting action and managed to catch nine decent Tench during my twenty-four-hour session. The previous week on a different venue, I had a very similar result, and the interesting thing was that on both occasions most of the action was during the daylight hours. This is something that I have often noticed at this time of year and I have not really got any conclusive answers as to why it happens - yet! I don't want to complain because it is always good to get a decent night's sleep. Not that I have failed to notice the wildlife around me after dark which has recently included Badgers, Foxes, Rabbits, a Stoat and a couple of very close encounters with two Species of Owl.



My ground bait feeders had dropped a certain amount of loose feed around my swim, and this had attracted the attention of a small mouse that appeared to be almost oblivious to my presence and was happily feeding away on this bonanza as dusk gave

way to darkness. Incredibly, I was not the only individual to notice this little creature and I nearly jumped out of my chair when a big dark shape dropped on top of it causing it to squeak loudly. All of this happened literally an arm's length from where I sat on my small chair and I think that the bird immediately realized this mistake and instantly took off again. Amazingly the mouse survived the night and revealed itself again shortly after dawn albeit in a rather dilapidated state and not interested in breakfast. I am about 90% certain this this attack was the work of a Long-Eared Owl and although I could not positively identify it in the darkness, I know that Tawny Owls are not present in this area. If this was the case, it is only the third time in my life that I have seen one - a real event in my book 😊 The other one was the beautiful Barn Owl that entertained me with its hunting activities at dusk and dawn during my previous session on another water. My night fishing efforts have continued successfully since then although once again most of my action has come during daylight hours with the only exceptions being a couple of nice carp and one tench that disturbed my slumber about a week back and I really do find that I suffer badly these days if I go all night without sleep! Weather has been relatively kind recently with it not getting too cold and only one night where I really needed my brolly. I would say that I have had a productive spring on the tench fishing front with at least 100 fish caught from several different venues – with many of



them of decent size. As I have said before I am not chasing big fish these days and consistency of results are far more important to me as indicators of success. Having said this, it is always a welcome bonus to get a 'biggie' especially if it is a new PB for the water you are fishing. Overall, I am happy with my results and only a couple of blanks have occurred just to stop me from getting too complacent.

I normally fish the opening night on the river, and this has become a bit of a tradition in recent years. However, I could not manage it this season so will have to play 'catch up' shortly and I have a few ideas about how and where to start. One of the dilemma's I always find is whether to target a new stretch/ river or rely on the old well known and tested spots. It is always tempting to opt for the relatively safe bet of old haunts, but I know the buzz that always comes with getting to grips with new territory and I still believe that the first fish from a new targeted (virgin) water is one of the best feelings in angling 😊. This is usually proportionate to the efforts that you have put in to achieve it. Time available is a big consideration here and distance to the chosen venue. If I am hoping to mainly fish short evening sessions, then

this is a restriction. So, I have got to make up my mind about where and when as far as my river fishing activities go.

I have to say that this is rather a nice problem to have and one thing is certain. I won't be losing any sleep over it 😊.

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