

Freshwater Informer



The **FREE** Publication for Freshwater Anglers in the South-East

350th Edition

30 Year Anniversary Edition

October 2026



Catch Up With:

In The Edge With Alex
Stewart Allum
Julian Cundiff
Russ Evans
Carl Milton
Warrick Francis
The Friendly Fisherman
Freshwater Team
Medway Man

Powder Mills — Where many story began in October 1996. Founded by Roger Standen with three simple words: "All Ways Fishing." 30 years on, the words remain at the heart of The Freshwater Informer.



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This month brings us to a very special milestone for The Freshwater Informer – our 30th Anniversary and the 350th issue of this great magazine. The Freshwater Informer was first put together by the late Roger Standen and published in October 1996. Thirty years on, it is incredible to look back at just how far the magazine has come, while still holding on to the same values that made it so special in the first place – anglers sharing their fishing, their captures, their stories and their passion for the sport.

For many of us, the magazine has been part of our angling lives for decades. Like many of you, I remember collecting it from the local tackle shop during those many visits to pick up bait, tackle and everything else we needed for a day by the water. Thirty years on, it is a real honour to be the person now putting together this bumper anniversary edition. I have had the pleasure of working on the magazine for some time now, and to be able to mark its 30th year and 350th issue is something I am incredibly proud of.

The magazine has changed considerably over the years, but the heart of it remains the same – anglers sharing their fishing, their captures, their stories and their adventures with other anglers. It has always been about much more than the size of the fish. It is about the people, the memories and the enjoyment that fishing brings.

For this special issue, we have a few additional writers and contributors who have all, in one way or another, played a part in the success and history of The Freshwater Informer over the years. Whether through written pieces, photographs, catch reports, advertising, support or simply helping spread the word about the magazine, every contribution has helped keep these pages going.

There are some fantastic contributions in this anniversary edition from, in no particular order, Bob Morris, Andy Lush, Russ Evans, Julian Cundiff, Glen Relf, Alex Coutts, Carl Milton, Warrick Francis and The Tackle Box Dartford, along with many others who have continued to support the magazine.

It is particularly fitting to have Bob Morris involved in this anniversary issue. Bob was mentioned on the front page of the very first edition of The Freshwater Informer following his famous Medway barbel capture, shortly after the British Record had been caught. To have someone connected with those very early days still contributing 30 years later is a fantastic link between the magazine's past and present. Looking back over 30 years, there are so many people who deserve recognition – the anglers who have sent in their photographs and stories, the tackle shops and fisheries that have supported us, our advertisers, contributors, distributors and, of course, all of you who have picked up a copy over the years. So, from me, a very simple but very heartfelt...THANK YOU.



Thank you to everyone who has supported The Freshwater Informer over the last 30 years. Thank you to those who were there at the beginning, those who have joined us along the way, and those who continue to pick up every issue. I hope you enjoy this special 30th Anniversary edition as much as I have enjoyed putting it together. Here's to the next chapter of The Freshwater Informer.

30 years. 350 issues. One great angling community. Thank you for being part of it.

Glen Relf
Editor – The Freshwater Informer

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Tricklebrook Fishery



Niel Khambay - New Lake Pods



Tricklebrook Old Lake - Alfie Keetch - 32lb Common



Chaulking Morris 25lb - New Lake-Tricklebrook Fishery



Niel Khambay - New Lake Pods



Master Khambay - New Lake Pods



Chaulking Morris 23lb - New Lake-Tricklebrook Fishery



Ricky Young Specimen Lake
26lb common



Ricky Young Specimen Lake
29lb 12oz



Stephen Shoesmith - 40lb
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Cameron - Quarry Lake



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Cameron Andrews - Main
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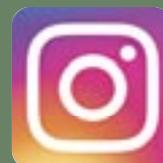
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5. ALL FISH MUST BE RETURNED TO THE WATER AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE FOLLOWING CAPTURE. NO STANDING. FISH MUST BE HELD LOW OVER A MAT/CRADLE FOR PHOTOGRAPHS
6. MINIMUM 15LB LINE AND NO BRAIDED MAIN LINE
7. NO SACKING OR RETAINING OF FISH IS PERMITTED. 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
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In The Edge With Alex

**“Don’t worry, I’ll catch her in September”
Steve smiled and slowly shook his head.**

The Steve in question was Steve Boreham, fishery manager.

The venue, Speci 2 at Tanyards Fishery.

The fish, a mirror carp known as No-Pec.

The person making ridiculous predictions was none other than myself!

I’d first seen a picture of No-Pec in an issue of The Freshwater Informer, when Peter Shepherd had landed her at 25lb. I don’t really do ‘target’ fish, but that image stayed at the back of my mind for the next few years. In the February of 2001, whilst chatting to Steve, I’d suddenly blurted out “I’m going to catch No-Pec”. Where it came from, and why I said it, I can’t explain, but forces deep at work in my unconscious mind were taking me on a path with destiny.

I fished Tanyards a lot throughout the late 90’s and early 2000’s, but the Pike and Match lakes (later speci 1 and 3) were my stomping grounds. No-Pec resided in Speci 2, making my bold prediction all the more bizarre. Over the next few months I doubled down, repeating the mantra every time we spoke, until Steve pointed out that if I was to catch the fish, I should at least cast a line in the lake where it lived. This is where the September part of the prediction came in. Again, there was no thought behind it, it was as if someone else was speaking through my mouth. I did, however, start paying more attention to the lake as I stalked back and forth between Pike and Match.

Three things quickly became apparent. Firstly, the going method was to use active-8 cast tight to the island. All of the captures came to active-8 cast tight to the island. It didn’t take me long to realise that if all the anglers were fishing active-8 tight to the island then the only way the fish could get caught was on active-8 cast tight to the island. The second was that, whilst not a completely new product, pva mesh was becoming very popular. Over enthusiastic bag making, combined with the limitations of the tackle of the time, meant that parcels of pellets were being catapulted all over the place as anglers over compressed their rods, firing casts in all directions. The third was that although the fish did spend time around the island, they also would hide up in the pads at the far end by the cattle grid, and by watching them, I began to map the routes that they took as they traversed the lake. All of this helped form a plan. Even if I had no control over what I was saying, I could at least have a little control over how I fished!

Eventually September came around and I made my way to the lake. There was only one other person fishing, somewhat predictably up by the island, but I already knew where I needed to be and headed down to the last swim on the road bank.

I had begged, borrowed, or acquired, enough tackle to look like a ‘proper’ carp angler when compared to my more usual single rod, stalking approach. A pair of Nash Hooligun 2.25lb rods paired with Shimano 5010

aero reels. A Fox quattro pod, complete with captive backleads, Solar bobbins, and mx alarms (with blue leds). All sat in front of a Giant bivvy.

All the gear, no idea... Just an overwhelming feeling that this was where I needed to be. End tackle was straight forward enough. A 1.5oz inline lead with a six inch hooklink, tied with Kryston silkworm, attached to a fox series 2b, size 8 hook. On the hair was a single drilled 11mm pellet, with a pva mesh bag containing five pellets of the same size.

With everything ready to go, it was time to get it in the water. The left hand rod went out about two thirds across the lake, into open water. No features, no margins, just no-mans land. Even to the trained eye it would have looked like a missed cast, but I knew that it was on the line that the carp took from the lillies on my right, towards the island further up the lake to my left.

The right-hand rod was there more because I could, rather than I should, and was simply swung along the margin about a rod length out.

I attached the backleads to both rods and sat back. By now it was dark, and with nothing to be gained from staying up, I got my head down.

At around 2:30am I jolted awake. All around was still, and a light mist hung in the cool night air. My carp kit didn't extend to a kettle or stove, so I settled for some slightly stale doughnuts and a swig of Pepsi. There was a reason why I had woken up, I just didn't know what it was yet. About 15mins had passed, when I received a lightening fast drop back on the left-hand rod. My hook-up rate with drop backs was, and still is, pretty poor, but pumped up on sugar, I jumped up, grabbed the rod and reeled as fast as I could. Fully expecting to bend into thin air, it almost caught me unawares when the tip arched over as a heavy weight lunged on the end of the line. One of the reasons that I'm not a particular fan of night fishing is that it is difficult to gauge the fight. Made worse when you're not overly familiar with the lake. I knew that there were pads on the far bank, and this is where the fish headed. I managed to clamp down and stop the fish from reaching them, although whether the fish was 10 feet, or 10 inches from danger, I couldn't tell. With its initial run thwarted, the fish changed tack. Running first towards the pads to the right before making a break up towards the island further up the lake to my left. Eventually we reached a stalemate, almost where we had started. I felt that I was getting the upper hand, but the fish still had a trick or two up its sleeve. Without warning, it suddenly surged into the near margin to my left. So fast that I struggled to reel quickly enough to maintain contact, before powering across the front of the swim almost underneath my feet. Before I had time to react, the fish was past me and I felt that horrible grating sensation on the line as it made the sanctuary of the lillies to my right.

The swim was surrounded by tall reeds, and there was no easy way to keep direct contact with the fish. Still in darkness I backed out of the swim, and keeping the rod as high as possible, moved along the bank until I was in line with the pads. Not really knowing where the bank ended and the water began, I gingerly pushed my way into the reeds until I could feel the rod tip bouncing directly over the pads. What happened next I have no real explanation for, other than to say that any luck that I was due was paid out in full over the next couple of minutes. Somehow, and I still don't know how, in the darkness with no idea of where the line lay was in relation to the fish, no idea how far into the pads the fish had made it, and not a single advantage in my direction, I managed to get the fish free. By now I think it knew the game was up. It had tried every trick in

the book and come up second best. It plodded back out into open water. I backed out of the reeds, and still keeping the rod as high as possible, wound my way back along the bank. We almost arrived at the front of the swim at the same time. There was just enough moonlight to make out a large carp wallowing on the surface, and with a swift scoop of the net the prize was mine. Without hesitation I dropped to my knees and thrust my hands into the mesh, either side of the fish. With my right hand I could feel a large pectoral fin. With the left, nothing more than a stump.

No-Pec. I'd done it!

It is difficult to explain the feeling. It was almost an out of body experience. The weighing and photographs were a blur. In many ways the least important part of the journey. I know that she weighed over 29lb, although I barely paused long enough to read the ounces. It was catching the fish that was important, nothing else really mattered.

Before opening the fishery gates, Steve came bouncing down the track in his little Daihatsu. I was still in a daze at the back of the swim.

"Morning" he said, with his normal cheery demeanor, "What ya had?"

I looked up, grinning. "Just remind me what month we're in"

Steve smiled and slowly shook his head...



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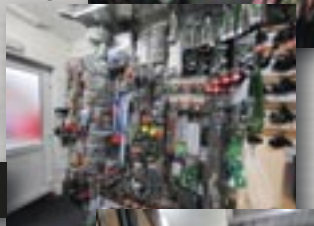


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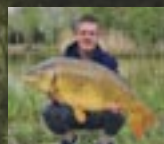
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Hever Charity Match

A Great Day for a Great Cause



The annual Hever Charity Match was once again held at the stunning Hever Castle Lake, bringing together 40 anglers for a fantastic day of fishing, friendship and, most importantly, raising money for some very worthwhile local charities.

Before the draw, the talk amongst the anglers was all about the big bream and tench weights that could be expected from the lake. There was plenty of speculation that you would need to draw an A or B section if you wanted to be in with a chance of putting together one of the bigger weights – and as the day unfolded, that proved to be exactly the case.

Taking the overall victory was Kent angling legend **Charlie Lovell**, who drew B3 and made the most of his peg, putting together an impressive 85lb of bream to take the top spot.

Just a fish behind in second place was **Andy Gouldthorpe**, who also enjoyed a fantastic day's fishing, weighing in 77lb 12oz of bream and tench.

Third place went to **Jerry Morgan**, with another excellent performance producing 61lb 4oz of bream.

With some excellent weights coming from the better areas of the lake, it was certainly a match that lived up to expectations. But while the fishing is always an important part of the event, the Hever Charity Match is about much more than who ends the day holding the trophy.

Following the fishing, everyone headed over to the fantastic Hever Golf Course, where a breakfast was enjoyed before the trophy presentations and prize-giving. Thanks to the incredible generosity of the event's supporters, every competitor went home with a prize, making it a brilliant day for everyone involved.

A special thank you must also go to **Van Den Eynde**, who generously sponsored this year's event and helped make the match such a success. The fundraising continued with the raffle, which raised an incredible **£1,400-plus**. This money will be split between a couple of fantastic local charities, including the local hospice, helping to support organisations that provide vital services within the community.

A huge well done to everyone who took part, supported the event, donated prizes or helped organise the day. The Hever Charity Match once again showed what angling can achieve when everyone comes together for a great cause.

Congratulations to Charlie, Andy and Jerry on some fantastic weights – and a massive well done to everyone who helped make this year's event such a success.





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Stewart Allum

“What a wonderful pastime we’re privileged to enjoy”

When Glen invited contributions for this very special issue I soon realised that to condense thirty years of angling experience into a few short paragraphs would be no mean feat but here goes.

When the ‘Informer’ first appeared in 1996 I already knew Roger Standen as a respected Sussex angler who wrote occasionally for the angling press. Back then I was a regular columnist for Stuart Dexter’s ‘Coarse Fisherman’ magazine and during one of our many discussions Roger suggested I accompany him for a day’s small river fishing, in order to provide some extra material for the Informer. We duly met up on the banks of the Upper Medway one morning in February 2004 where he put me to the test.

Catching fish to order is always a challenge and on this day I’d decided to rove with trotted maggots during the daytime then maybe try for a chub with quivertip gear as the light faded. As the day progressed we moved from swim to swim without much to show for it until we came to a nice looking ‘S’ bend where the river flowed deep and steady beneath steep, shaded banks.

First trot through, down went the float and a strong little fish put up a good scrap before coming to the net; A grayling of all things, an unexpected bonus weighing perhaps half a pound. I was ‘off the mark’ and feeling quite pleased with myself. A short while later, down went the float again only this time I was into a proper ‘zoo creature’ which, as it twisted and turned in the clear water, revealed itself as another grayling, a big one too. I played that fish ever soooooo carefully and was hugely relieved when it slid over the net.

A colourful male fish with a huge sail-like dorsal, it weighed just over a pound and a half and won me

the club’s grayling trophy for that year - and as daylight faded I got my chub too, job done!

That same year Roger’s book ‘All Ways Fishing’ was published and I felt honoured when he asked me to contribute the Introduction for him. Sadly, just three years later we lost Roger following a short, unexpected illness and our angling world was all the poorer.

One of Roger’s closest friends was that fine Sussex angler, Dave Park who also wrote for the ‘Informer’ occasionally. Dave was an expert rod builder who constructed many fine examples out of split cane; he was also a well-travelled man who, together with his wife Norma caught specimens of many species from all around the globe. Dave sadly passed away two years ago and I became the proud owner of two of his lovely cane rods, which are still in regular service.

Another great contributor to this magazine was of course my good friend and legendary Sussex river Keeper Jim Smith. Jim sadly passed away in December 2019 but I’m pleased to announce that the articles which he wrote for this and other periodicals during the last twenty years of his life will form the basis of my forthcoming book ‘Jim’s River’; details of which will appear in the Informer nearer the publication date.

Throughout the past thirty years angling has, and continues to face many challenges. In 1996 cormorant predation was fast becoming the main issue. Whereas now it’s perhaps been overtaken by the appalling spectre of over-abstraction and pollution; made worse by climate change, over-population and unrestricted housebuilding in areas which are already water starved, with shrinking rivers and still not a single functioning desalination plant on an island surrounded by

rising sea levels (Spain had over 760 at the last count, by the way). Which is why, in recent times I find myself becoming ever more involved in angling politics.

As for my own fishing, there've been a few more highlights in recent times. In May 2010, after losing several during my initial attempts with the method, I finally caught my first salmon on a fly and what a fish too! At 32lb 12oz it proved to be the biggest from the Hampshire Avon in around 26 years and even got me a mention in 'Country Life' magazine.



Some years earlier, in 2005, I'd also caught my biggest ever pike to the same method, a 32lb 4oz specimen from Blithfield Reservoir. But if you think I must be some kind of expert I'd hasten to add I've caught relatively few fish of either species on fly tackle since then; none of which have ever come close to those two. We all need a bit of luck from time to time.

Another significant milestone was a huge river



Thames chub in January 2015. I'd fished keenly for chub since my schooldays and in 1973 I became the Chub Study Group's youngest ever recruit when aged just nineteen. In the years since I'd caught my share of five, six and eventually a

couple of seven-pounders, a number of these fish coming from the beautiful Lower Thames which I was lucky enough to work alongside for many years.



By 2016 though I'd long since retired, moved down to Sussex and visits to the river became far less frequent. That day, conditions were perfect with the rivers fining down beautifully after weeks of heavy rain. However, following a disappointing morning's roach fishing on a nearby tributary I was close to giving up when I decided to try and salvage what remained of the day by going after chub on a stretch of the Thames I'd always fancied; but had never got around to fishing. The result was just two bites; the first produced a chub of 6lb 10oz which was ample reward in itself. Then the second, just as the light began to fade found me playing a dour, heavy fish which almost had my eyes popping when I first saw it. At 8lb 0.5oz it won me a Drennan award from 'Angling Times' but its significance to me personally was far greater and a lesson, if ever one was needed, that it's always worth one last cast....

Other memorable catches have included some good shore-caught bass, fabulous scraps with hard-fighting mullet, Norwegian salmon and Spanish barbel (the latter on fly); many fine Sussex seatrout and earlier this year, at the ripe old age of 72, a personal best roach scaling 2lb 13oz. It's never over till the fat lady sings and right now I'm considering a trip West in search of gilt-head bream.

What a wonderful pastime we're privileged to enjoy and thank you Roger for enabling us all to share it through the pages of your much cherished legacy, the Freshwater Informer.

Stewart Allum



Riley Taylor - 27lb PB - Baldwins Lake



Arlo Emly - 25lb 9oz Canal Caught Mirror



Findlay & Dad Russell - 28lb
Fly Caught Mirror - Elphicks



Natalie Jackman - New PB 61lb Catfish -
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Julian Cundiff

"Act two"





As someone who started fishing in 1976 the year 2026 marks fifty years since I first discovered this marvelous pastime, obsession and everything in between. God willing I'll be fishing for another twenty five years which means I've already had two thirds of my allocated fishing time or as I prefer to think of it as Acts One and Two with Three to come. When I was asked to contribute a piece for this special issue I immediately thought of the changes I've seen in the last twenty five years, or as I call that period my 'Act Two'. Whilst the first twenty five '76 to '01 were mighty significant for me the last twenty five have had the most impact both good and bad. So as I look back (we all survived the Millenium and planes didn't fall out of the sky as we entered year 2000) here are what I consider the big ten changes in angling for ME that continue to affect and resonate in my world. Not the only ten, definitely not in any order but the ten that always come to mind when I sit and smile, sigh or sometimes genuinely think "what the ****". I'm sure you won't agree with them all but believe me if you were there from 2001 onwards with twenty five angling years under your belt it will make sense.

The end of true innovation - I guess it's fair to say that even in the nineties there was more 'adapted' ideas and tackle in carp fishing than genuinely NEW ones but the last twenty five years have seen innovation decline and fine tuning and dare I say it blatant copying rule the roost. Not that that's a bad thing but other than the Spomb, wrapping sticks, Korda's Helisafe and lifted technology I can't think of anything that I've thought "

Holy **** that's incredible" ?? . That said some of the fine tuning has had a massive effect (hand sharpened hooks, ready rolled bait, Powerbarrows etc)



The decline of print (and not just in angling) - Although the nineties saw carp fishing explode it was also the era where news stand print exploded too. Whatever tickled your fancy was catered for (nudge nudge, wink wink...) and carp fishing was no exception. It peaked in the noughties with titles like Carpworld, Crafty Carper, Catchmore Carp, Advanced Carp Fishing, CARPology, Maximum Carp, Big Carp, Carp Addict, Carp Talk all filling the shelves (never mind the dozens of other angling magazines).



Nowadays you've 'Ology and Total Carp on a monthly basis which says more about the state of print than the popularity of carp fishing .

Mobile phones killed print not the internet

Loss of transition - whilst there undoubtedly were anglers in the nineties who started their angling by carp fishing it seemed far and few between with the majority progressing (some would say regressing) from coarse to specialist to carp . The noughties saw this start to change and most anglers I see now under the age of twenty five have never fished for anything but carp . In a kind of weird reversal they start with carp then try perch , pike etc .

Reliable gear - let's be honest even in the nineties equipment was still being developed and with less competition , new (ish) ideas and nothing like the technology we have now it could let you down . Nowadays I don't even think about it ; pretty similar to the modern cars where they do start , don't break down and last forever . With a degree of care most items last years and from what I see anglers change gear for ' fashion ' not because it's worn out .

Genuinely we've never had it so good !



Turnover of anglers - once an angler always an angler used to be fairly true as a saying but the last twenty five years have seen a massive influx of anglers fishing for carp and many of them will come and go (sadly) . There are many reasons for this but so many other competing

interests , cost and it perhaps not being all they thought it was must play a part in it . I guess it's the Netflix era of carp fishing (ala Drive to Survive etc) where visibility makes it look appealing but longevity is a whole different matter .

Technology is king - without a doubt (to me) technology is the biggest recent thing to impact angling but not without it's downsides too . From drones to bait boats , winch cams to on - line booking of swims , underwater films to tagging of carp . With today's society and technology it was inevitably going to be incorporated into carp fishing good or bad . In ' my day ' the hair rig , buzzers , chemically sharpened hooks , crude bait boats were all seen as a threat to the noble art of angling so nothing changes . My only fear is that if that advanced technology becomes the norm newer anglers will think without it you cannot catch so will give up .

Availability of carp - once again we've never had it so good . By and large the bulk of anglers who want to catch carp can catch them locally . Be it average day tickets , runs waters , quality day tickets like Norton Disney / Linear etc , club waters or syndicates it's harder to find waters without carp than with carp and big carp too . Yes they can be busy but so is life nowadays .

Anglers are generally better (quicker) - carp angling (I guess angling full stop) was a gradual curve of experience leading to success . Factors such as limited availability of

knowledge , quality of gear , lack of waters all contributed (and maybe even pace of life) but nowadays the quality and success of anglers who've maybe only been fishing a few years is incredible . For everything I've just said my

progression was pretty gradual but it allowed me to learn on my own terms and see the bigger picture . Early success may well feel good but can lead to " is this all it is ? " and formulated approaches . You cannot buy or teach

experience but crickey these young carp anglers ain't half efficient.



A tribal culture - more than ever I see less ' general coarse anglers ' and more anglers devoted to a single discipline from day one . As I said at the start angling used to be a steady curve of transition through disciplines whereas today you are this or that . And it's even more pointed with brands and anglers being ' Team X , Y or Z ' never mind coarse , match , specialist or carp . Woe betide anyone who is multi disciplined , multi branded etc . Good or bad ? I guess a reflection of modern society where you are not just a football fan but it's one club and nothing else matters . Or F1 where you're Team Hamilton , Verstappen , Norris etc .

Efficiency over enjoyment - whilst I've tried to be open minded with my ' Top Ten ' and not slip into a Victor Meldrew role this final one does worry me . I see , hear and view less and less people talking about the joy of ' going fishing ' and more and more simply equating catching with enjoyment . ' I caught it was great , I blanked it was c**p ' . Becoming better as an angler and taking advantage of modern

developments is great but where the important desire to be efficient is all consuming that can be an impossible dream . The last twenty five years have certainly had an emphasis on catching carp over the joy of simply being a carp angler and going carp fishing .

So those are the ten things that stand out for me as major changes in the last twenty five years . The great joy of fishing for me is escaping from the real world and the magic of a world beneath the surface that in all honesty I don't truly want to fully understand . The magic is there , it can be found you just need to work at it and do it for you . Act three is upon us (me) and I can't wait .

Jules





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James Ridley - CDAA - Farm pond 13lb Mirror

TONBRIDGE & DISTRICT ANGLING & FISH PRESERVATION SOCIETY.

Match Results:

Padley Bowl - (20 fished) -Hartlake Down

1st - Phil Edwards 8lb 2oz
2nd - Steve Parker 6lb 8oz
3rd - Mick Orum 5lb 3oz

Chairman & Committee (11 fished) - Barden Park

1st - Colin Fowler 6lb 12oz
2nd - Dave Lee 6lb 3oz
3rd - Martyn Hill 3lb 4oz

Abrey & Tibetts (17 fished) - Six Arches

1st - Phil Edwards 6lb 10oz
2nd - John Copper 6lb 3oz
3rd - Nick Reeves 4lb 4oz

Restocking Cup (7 fished)

1st - Mick Smith 10lb 8oz
2nd - Dave Lee 10lb 6oz
3rd - Jim Sene 10lb 0oz

Match Recorder Shield (18 fished)

1st - Mick Smith 9lb 0oz
2nd - Chris King 6lb 7oz
3rd - Mick Orum 5lb 5oz

ACA Cup (16 fished) - Hartlake Down

1st - Steve Parker 8lb 0oz
2nd - Jim Sene 6lb 12oz
3rd - Ray Berry 5lb 13oz

CATCH REPORT

Alex Stokes enjoyed a great session recently, targeting some surface feeding Carp on the river. Alex was rewarded with a cracking fish weighing 28lb 3oz. Other notable Carp catches recently were Sam Cosens with a 23lb+ fish from the Old Ballast Pit and George Eldred with his first fish from Barden Lake at 23lb 14oz.

Steve Clark had a nice clean 7lb Tench from Longfield Lake and young Eric Papazan has enjoyed some great sport with the small Carp on the New Lagoon.

Nigel Humphrey has had some good catches on the Medway, targeting the many Tench that seem to be present.

On a sad note, the Society has recently lost one of its long standing members Gordon Angiers, who recently passed away. Gordon was a well liked character amongst the match group and attended work parties into his nineties. Many members will remember the fantastic wooden bowls Gordon used to make from the old trees on the Old Ballast Pit.



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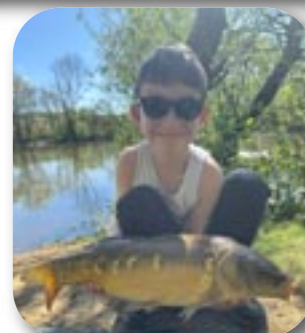
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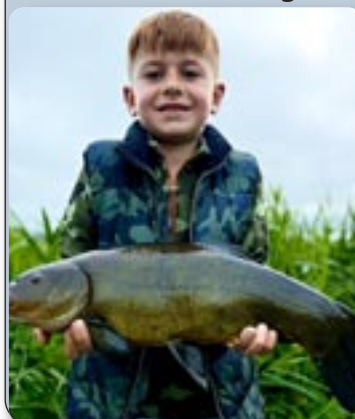
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Young Guns on the Bank**George Bennett – Tench Mission**

George Bennett has been on a real tench mission over the last few weeks, and his efforts have certainly paid off!

Fishing the river with worm, George has landed some cracking tench, including these two fine fish weighing 6lb 6oz and 6lb 8oz. Two excellent river tench and a great reward for the time and effort put in.

Well done, George – keep the tench coming!





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The Freshwater Informer

30 years Anniversary October 1996 - 2026

by Russ Evans

Sixty years of fishing is a lifetime packed full of great memories, but when editor Glen Relf made contact for a very special 30 year anniversary edition for FWI concentrating on the past 30 years of angling to cover the lifespan of this great magazine, I gladly reset the memory banks for the past three decades so here goes.

Thirty years on the bank is more than a milestone, it is a front-row seat to a revolution. Over the past quarter of a century, our beloved sport of angling has evolved at a dizzying, unprecedented pace. For those of us who have spent decades tracking the rhythm of the seasons through a float tip or a quivertip, looking back across the last 25 to 30 years reveals a landscape that has changed beyond recognition. We have transitioned from an era of printed match sheets, local high street gossip, and close-knit bankside communities into a hyper-connected, digital age dominated by algorithms, online megastores, and global social media feeds.

As a writer who has shared my bankside thoughts, highs, and lows on and off within the pages of The Freshwater Informer for the past twenty years, this retrospective is deeply personal. This magazine has always been a free, accessible beacon for the South East angling community. It has chronicled our collective history in real-time, surviving the shifting tides of the publishing world just as we have survived the shifting tides of our waters. When the editor asked me to put together a detailed piece exploring the monumental transformations our sport has undergone over the last generation, I jumped at the chance. It is an opportunity to look back, take stock, and understand exactly how we arrived at where we are today.

My own journey through this sport reflects the broader evolution of modern angling. For four decades, my life was dictated by the clock, the draw bag, and the fierce, fast-paced world of the match circuit. I lived for the weekend buzz, the tactical battles on the pole and feeder, and the pursuit of every single ounce that could secure a section win or a frame placing. Then, roughly 14 years ago, something inside me shifted. I decided to step away from the relentless pressure of competitive match fishing and return to my angling roots. I went back to what initially ignited my passion for the sport: the patient,



immersive pursuit of individual species.

Today, my heart belongs to the traditional favourites of our British waters, the golden-scaled crucian, the pristine roach, the fierce, striped perch, the majestic green tench, and the slab-sided bream. While I still fish for all species using an expansive arsenal of modern and traditional tackle, this return to pleasure and specimen targeting has given me a unique perspective. I have seen the sport from both sides: the high-octane intensity of top-tier competition and the quiet, contemplative magic of traditional pleasure angling. From these distinct vantage points, let us pull back the curtain on the last thirty years of angling history, examining the losses, the gains, and the profound changes that have reshaped the banks we call home.

The Evolution of the Angler: From the Match Circuit to Specialised Species

To understand how much angling has changed, we must look at how the average angler spends their time on the bank. Thirty years ago, match fishing was the absolute lifeblood of the UK coarse angling scene. Local club matches regularly drew dozens of anglers every single Sunday, lining the banks of our major rivers, canals, and emerging commercial fisheries. The match angler was the trendsetter of the industry. The techniques developed on the competitive circuit, from fine-line pole fishing and bloodworm tactics to the early iterations of the method feeder, swiftly trickled down to the everyday pleasure angler.

During my 40-year match career, the discipline required to compete at a high level was consuming. It was an era of intense camaraderie, cut-throat strategic adjustments, and a constant quest for efficiency. We thought in terms of total weight, catch rate per hour, and outwitting the angler in the next peg. But as the late 2000s approached, the landscape of competitive angling began to fragment. The meteoric rise of commercial carp fisheries shifted the focus of match fishing away from natural rivers and mixed silverfish waters toward high-weight carp hauling. For many, including myself, the charm of the sport began to get lost in the pursuit of repetitive, heavy-weight nets.

When I ended my match career 14 years ago, returning to target specific species felt less like a retirement and more like a spiritual homecoming. I re-entered a world where success wasn't measured by a clanging scales bag at the end of five hours, but by the quiet satisfaction of a hard-earned, specimen-sized fish. Turning my attention back to crucians, roach, perch, tench, and bream allowed me to slow down and truly appreciate the intricate nuances of watercraft that are easily overlooked in the heat of competition.

This shift in my personal focus mirrored a massive national trend. Over the past 25 years, the UK has witnessed a phenomenal surge in specialised species hunting and high-end pleasure angling. Anglers who once defined themselves solely as match men or carp anglers have increasingly diversified their approach. There is a renewed, widespread appreciation for the artistry of catching a 2lb river roach, a pristine 3lb crucian, or a big, red-eyed tench from a misty estate lake. The modern angler is highly adaptable. Armed with a wide variety of tackle, ranging from ultra-light modern lure rods for perch to specialised specimen float rods, today's angler balances a deep respect for traditional watercraft with an openness to cutting-edge technology.

The Digital Revolution: From Bankside Rumours to YouTube and Social Media

Perhaps no single factor has altered the DNA of angling more drastically than the explosion of the internet, social media, and online video platforms. Cast your mind back thirty years. If you wanted to find out what baits were working at a local venue, or where the big fish were being caught, your options were severely limited. You had to visit your local high street tackle shop, talk to the owner, chat with fellow anglers on the bank, or wait for the weekly angling newspapers and monthly magazines to hit the shelves. Information moved slowly, filtered through word-of-mouth and localised networks. There was an air of mystery to our waters; secret baits and hidden tactics remained well-kept secrets for years.

Enter the digital age. The arrival of the internet dismantled these traditional information networks almost overnight. Fishing Forums became the new virtual clubrooms where anglers from across the country could exchange tactical advice, share venue reports, and debate rules in real-time.

Then came the second wave of the digital revolution: Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. These platforms

completely democratised and magnified angling knowledge. Today, a teenager picking up a rod for the very first time can access thousands of hours of high-definition, step-by-step video tutorials on YouTube. They can watch master anglers tie complex rigs, explain the exact science of bait mechanics, and demonstrate precise casting techniques, all for free, from the comfort of their living room.

This hyper-accessibility of information has fundamentally changed how people learn to fish, speeding up the learning curve faster and bigger. Rigs and methods that took our generation decades of trial, error, and bankside observation to perfect are now mastered by newcomers in a matter of afternoons.

However, this digital transformation is a double-edged sword. The relentless rise of social media has fundamentally altered the culture of our sport, introducing an element of instant gratification and intense pressure. The modern bankside can sometimes feel less like a sanctuary and more like a content studio. The race for "likes," shares, and online validation has led to an era of hyper-exposure.

A single Facebook post showing a heavy catch of specimen tench or a historic river roach can instantly trigger a massive influx of anglers to a previously quiet, pristine venue by the following morning. The mystery and closely guarded secrets that once formed the romantic core of traditional angling have largely been eroded by smartphone cameras and geotags. Furthermore, the constant stream of carefully edited, trophy-fish photos on Instagram can foster an unrealistic expectation of what a real day on the bank looks like, overshadowing the simple, invaluable joys of peace, quiet, and a beautiful blank.



The Changing Face of Retail: The Loss of the High Street Tackle Shop

The retail landscape of angling has undergone an equally dramatic and painful transformation over the last quarter of a century. For generations of anglers, the local high street tackle shop was far more than a mere commercial business where you bought your maggots, hooks, and floats. It was the undisputed community hub of the local angling scene. It was the place where you bought your club book, found out who was catching what on the local canal, received a vital tip on how the river was running, and shared a steaming mug of tea with like-minded friends on a Saturday morning.

Over the past 25 to 30 years, these independent, brick-and-mortar pillars of our community have steadily

vanished from high streets across the country, systematically replaced by massive online retailers and multi-branch megastores. The convenience of the internet changed consumer habits entirely. With just a few clicks on a smartphone, an angler can browse tens of thousands of items, compare prices globally, and have a brand-new pole, seatbox, or terminal tackle order delivered directly to their doorstep by the very next morning.

For major tackle manufacturers, this direct digital pipeline to the consumer offered unmatched logistical scale and efficiency. However, this shift came at a massive, heartbreaking cost to the social fabric of the sport.

When an independent tackle shop closes its doors for the final time, an irreplaceable friendly data hub of localised angling knowledge and heritage is lost forever. The faceless, automated algorithm of a massive online checkout page cannot tell you which peg on the local stream is holding a shoal of quality roach after a heavy frost. It cannot guide a young child through the delicate process of shotting a float correctly, nor can it offer the warm, human camaraderie that has bound generations of anglers together.

While online shopping has undeniably made high-quality tackle more affordable, diverse, and accessible than ever before, it has simultaneously left the sport structurally fragmented, leaving a profound social void where vibrant local angling communities used to thrive.

Eulogy for a Lost Paradise: Bury Hill Fishery and the Old Estate Lake

Nowhere is the profound sense of loss in modern angling felt more acutely than in the physical closure of our historic fishing venues. Over the past three decades, the South East has lost an alarming number of established day-ticket waters, club stretches, and historic estates to housing developments, soaring land values, environmental pressures, and changes in private ownership. Among all these losses, there is one venue whose closure stands out as a monumentally heartbreaking tragedy for the entire angling community: the legendary Bury Hill Fisheries in Dorking, Surrey.

Nestled deep within a picturesque valley in the Surrey Hills, Bury Hill was not just another commercial fishery; it was an iconic jewel in the crown of British angling. At the absolute heart of the complex lay the magnificent, 200-year-old Old Estate Lake, a breathtaking, mature expanse of water framed by ancient trees, grand beds of traditional water lilies, and a rich history that lived in every ripple on its surface.

Bury Hill was an absolute paradise for the mixed-species angler. Long before the modern industry became completely obsessed with monoculture carp puddles, the Old Estate Lake stood as a proud testament to the joys of traditional diversity. It was a venue where a single day's fishing could produce historic bags of massive, slab-sided bream, beautiful tench patrolling the margins, specimen zander, and hard-fighting carp, all coexisting in a balanced ecosystem.

This incredible venue holds a deeply personal place in my heart. For six wonderful, unforgettable years of my life, I had the immense privilege of managing the onsite tackle shop at Bury Hill. This wasn't just any tackle shop; it was uniquely and spectacularly situated directly over the water of the iconic Old Estate Lake itself.

Every single morning, I would unlock the doors to the shop, look out across the mist rising off the water, watch the carp rolling among the lily pads, and listen to the unmistakable, melodic morning chorus of the Surrey Hills. It was an angling dream come true.



The shop over the lake became a buzzing, vibrant crossroads for the entire angling world. Whether you were a high-profile specimen hunter, a seasoned match angler, or a parent introducing your child to the

sport, everyone passed through our doors.

From my counter, I had a literal front-row seat to the changing face of angling. I saw the pure, unadulterated joy on an angler's face when they came in to report a personal best tench or a historic bag of bream caught from the famous long bank. I helped untangle lines, recommended the exact depth to set a float next to the islands, and watched the seasons gracefully turn across that magnificent sheet of water. It was a vibrant, living community where real human connections were forged every day over a shared love of the sport.

The news of Bury Hill's closure to the general public shattered the angling community. To see an iconic, historic venue, a place that had provided generations of anglers with unforgettable memories, peace, and solace, cease its day-ticket operations felt like an absolute tragedy.

The closure of the Old Estate Lake did not just mean losing access to a premium fishing water; it meant the death of a historic angling community hub. It serves as a stark, sobering warning of just how fragile our fishing heritage truly is. When places like Bury Hill vanish, they leave behind a massive, permanent void that can never be filled by modern, artificial commercial lakes.

Innovation vs. Tradition: The Evolution of Tackle, Bait, and Tactics

While the loss of physical tackle shops and historic venues like Bury Hill brings deep nostalgia, we must also acknowledge that the last 30 years have brought an astonishing golden age of technical innovation. The tackle and bait available to the modern angler are vastly superior to anything we could have dreamed of in the mid-1990s. The material science underlying our gear has advanced above all else, making modern fishing equipment lighter, stronger, more responsive, and incredibly accessible to all.

Consider the evolution of the carbon pole. Thirty years ago, a 16-metre pole was a heavy, unwieldy beast that required brute strength, iron determination, and a strong tailwind to hold steady at full length for a five-hour match. Today, through the use of ultra-high-modulus aerospace carbon fibres and advanced resin technologies, modern poles are feather-light, incredibly stiff, and balanced beautifully, allowing for pinpoint bait presentation with absolute ease.

Similarly, the evolution of specialised rods, such as ultra-light feeder rods and sensitive solid-tip lure rods, has completely redefined our tactile connection to the fish, turning the capture of even modest silverfish into an exhilarating experience.

The evolution of terminal tackle and reels has seen an equal focus on precision engineering. Modern reels feature silky-smooth front drags, incredibly precise line lay, and specialised dual-line clips that allow anglers to feed and fish at long distances with absolute, pinpoint accuracy.

The development of line technology, including ultra-low-diameter fluorocarbons that are virtually invisible underwater and incredibly thin, high-strength braided mainlines, has opened up a world of presentation options that were technically impossible a generation ago.

The bait industry has undergone a parallel scientific revolution. Thirty years ago, our bait choices revolved around simple staples: maggots, casters, worms, sweetcorn, bread, and basic crushed-biscuit groundbaits. Today, bait manufacturing is a highly sophisticated, multi-million pound science rooted in fish nutrition and marine biology.



The introduction of low-oil coarse pellets, expandable expander pellets, high-attract krill and fishmeal groundbaits, and complex liquid amino stimulants has completely transformed catch rates across all

species. We no longer just throw bait into the water; we feed scientifically formulated attractors tailored specifically to the dietary preferences and digestive systems of individual species.

Crucially, the last 25 years have also brought an invaluable, long-overdue transformation in our collective approach to fish care and conservation. The standards of fish safety on the bank today are light years ahead of where they were in the 1990s. The introduction of thick, padded unhooking mats, specialised fish cradles, fish-safe weigh slings, and mandatory antiseptic fish care treatments for hook wounds has become standard practice across the sport.

“As anglers, we must remember that we must be the proactive custodians of a fragile aquatic environment beneath where our fishing boots tread”

The Enduring Spirit of Angling: A Journey Forward

When we weigh up the massive changes of the past 25 to 30 years, it is easy to fall into the trap of pure nostalgia and assume that the golden age of angling has slipped away. We mourn the loss of independent high street tackle shops, the vibrant Sunday morning match fields, and the heartbreaking closure of legendary venues up and down the country. We look at the digital world of social media and YouTube with a critical eye, sometimes longing for the quiet mystery, simplicity, and hard-earned bankside secrets of our youth.

But if forty years on the match circuit and 14 years of dedicated specimen hunting have taught me anything, it is that the true, essential spirit of angling is incredibly resilient. It is an enduring passion that cannot be destroyed by online sales, social media algorithms, or changing commercial landscapes. The core magic of the sport remains exactly the same today as it was when I first picked up a rod back in the 60s.

The magic lives in the timeless anticipation of the next bite. It lives in the quiet stillness of dawn when the mist rises slowly off a winter river, in the electric, unforgettable bob and slide of a quill float next to a lily pad, and in the sudden, wild heartbeat of a hooked fish matching yourself against nature. Whether you are fishing with a vintage split-cane rod or a state-of-the-art carbon pole, using a mobile phone to film a video or sitting quietly without a screen in sight, these core emotional experiences remain entirely unchanged.

Angling has always been about adaptation. Just as we adapt our rigs, baits, and tactics to match the changing weather, water levels, and seasons, we must continue to adapt as a community to the changing world around us. We must embrace the undeniable benefits of modern innovation, the incredible tackle, the advanced bait science, the hyper-accessibility of educational content, and the elevated fish care standards, while fighting fiercely to preserve the traditional values, human connections, and precious natural habitats that form the soul of our sport.

As we look forward to the next thirty years, let us make a collective promise to keep the true spirit of angling alive. Support your remaining local tackle shops whenever you can, welcome newcomers to the bank with open arms and patient guidance, practice impeccable fish care, and cherish every single moment spent by the water.

Venues will come and go, technology will continue its relentless march forward, and the pages of The Freshwater Informer will continue to chronicle our journeys. But as long as there are fish to be caught and anglers with the passion to pursue them, our magnificent sport will continue, casting its timeless spell over generations of anglers yet to come.

Tight lines to another 30 years

Russ Evans

Fishing Tail Films YouTube channel



30 YEARS ON THE BANK – WHATS CHANGED



Thirty years is a long time in fishing.

When the first edition of The Freshwater Informer landed in tackle shops back in 1996, the angling world looked rather different. Tackle has become more sophisticated, technology has found its way onto the bank and information that once passed between anglers, clubs and tackle shops can now be found on a phone within seconds

Perhaps one of the biggest changes has been the rise of carp fishing. As one of our Wylands anglers put it: "Angling has definitely become more carp focused over the years, but I still enjoy fishing for different species and using different methods." And that raises an interesting question. Have we become a little too focused on the size of the catch?



Another angler told us: "All that seems to matter is the biggest fish, when it is just the art of catching anything. I get the same buzz from a small fish as I do a big fish."

Looking to the Future

It's a sentiment we love at Wylands. A PB is worth celebrating – of course it is – but so is a child's first fish, mastering a new method, discovering a different species or simply spending a few peaceful hours beside the water.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the next 30 years isn't what we catch, but who we encourage to join us. Today's newcomers have access to more advice than any generation before them, but our anglers also highlighted a less welcome side of modern fishing – how quickly beginners can be judged.

"I'd like to see all the negativity towards new anglers disappear. People are too quick to call someone a 'nuddy'... We should all be in it together." We couldn't agree more.



Every experienced angler once made their first cast. If our sport is going to thrive for another 30 years, those first casts matter. Young anglers, families and people discovering fishing later in life should find a community ready to share its knowledge and enthusiasm.

The anticipation as the float disappears. The first run. The fish you nearly landed. The one you did. The stories exchanged on the bank afterwards. One of our anglers summed it up rather nicely:

"Everyone's fishing journey is different."

Congratulations to The Freshwater Informer on 350 issues and 30 years of championing angling across the South East. From everyone at Wylands Farm, here's to the next 30 – and many more stories!

Here's to more memories, more first catches and more days on the bank.

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Dan O'Brian 30lb.4oz
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Graham Head 31lb Kettles
Lake



Graham Head 33lb.12oz
Prairie Lake



IbJoe Simona 23.5oz
Kettles lake



Lee Goldsmith 25lb.12oz
Plantation Lake



Grant Marchant 13lb.6oz
Kettles Lake



Harry Johnson Kettles lake
13lb.7oz



Fish of the Month Prize Winner



Tobie Wells - Private Lake - 30lb 1oz Common



Callum Ireland - Hartley Lands Fishery 31lb 5oz



Ellie - Hartley Lands Fishery
20lb 4oz Mirror



Ashley Bennet - South
London Park Lake Common



Stephen - Cackle Hill
72lb 9oz Cat



New Lake Tricklebrook



Joshua Spencer - Aldington
- 24lb Common



Dean - Elphicks Fishery
20lb



Adam Skinner - Old Lake
Tricklebrook - 26lb 2oz



Dan Cranfield - Tricklebrook -
23lb 5oz



Ryan Hemsley - Cackle Hill
Speci 2 56lb Catfish



Mark Day - Sandwich Lakes
- 15lb 5oz - Grass Carp

FRESHWATER INFORMER

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info@freshwaterinformer.com or our Facebook Page, Winners will receive a:

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👤 Winner's Spotlight 👤 A huge congratulations to Tobie Wells on landing a stunning 30lb 1oz Common — 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!

Carl Milton

Instagram:- @carlmilton4

The magnificent 'Grey'

Chase your dreams...

Huge congratulations to the Freshwater Informer on their 30 year anniversary, it's an honour to be asked to write an article for this edition. It got me thinking about my fishing and the magazine over the last 3 decades. Being in my mid 40's I'm old enough to remember the days before social media, when print was the only way of getting information. I remember the Freshwater Informer starting when I was a teenager, and hurrying to my local tackle shop to get a copy, along with as much tackle as I could afford. The buzz of reading about what fish had been caught that month, and checking if my picture featured was immense. I'd spend hours reading all the angling publications I could get my hands on, and dreaming of one day catching some of the huge fish, and angling on the venues I was reading about.

My early angling was with my Dad taking me to a farm pond on one of our family member's land, and then some other local farm pond day tickets around East Sussex. The thrill of watching the float go under and catching my first fish



A carp from my teenage years

(a perch), I still remember vividly. This fuelled the angling bug.



Towards the end of primary school I made a good friend through Scouts (Stuart). There was a fishing match in Heathfield park that our group leader arranged, and we both went along with some basic Argos gear. We absolutely loved it. This cemented a lifelong passion, which involved fishing as much as we could. Weekends and school holidays were spent angling, and school days were spent doodling fishing rigs, and day dreaming about huge fish.

We started off fishing a farm pond near Dallington in East Sussex, that we could cycle to from my house. Many of the local people will know the lake in question,

as it was free to fish, and was a mecca for local anglers. Strapping our rods to our bikes was the order of the day. We spent numerous sessions there catching roach and perch on the float. Then one memorable day, there was an older chap opposite us, he had bite alarms and carp rods. We saw him catch a carp on luncheon meat. It was the biggest fish we had ever seen (about 6lb!). We reeled in and went round. He was kind enough to show us the fish, and took some time to chat to us about carp fishing. As soon as we got home, out came our Bennett's of Sheffield and Tackle Box catalogues, and we drooled over the carp gear. We began to save our pocket money, and write our birthday and Christmas lists to get our gear upgraded.

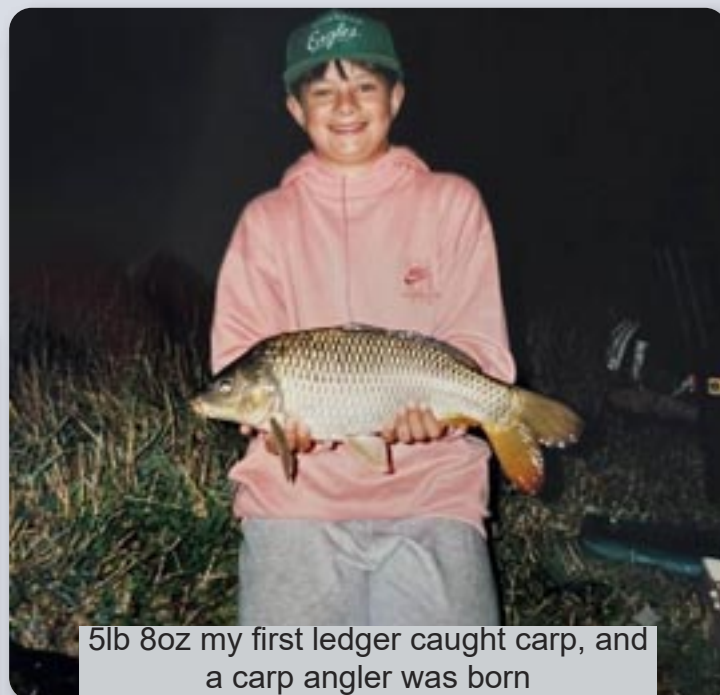


Stuart and I with a carp from the early 1990's

Around this time we joined Crowborough and District Angling club. We were extremely lucky that our parents would run us about. We fished most of their venues, and some of their matches. Continuing to mostly catch silver fish, but as time went by, and funds allowed we started to put out a ledger rod for carp. As it happens though, my first carp was caught on a float at one of Crowborough's lakes near Tunbridge Wells. I remember the carp fighting so much more than the usual roach, if it was only 8oz! But it gave me a colossal buzz.

Later that year one of my Dad's friends took me with him to a venue on the Hailsham club ticket. Once again I caught a few small carp on the float. It was summer's day, and at dusk we were starting to pack up. One of the things he taught me was always put your rods out first, and pack them up last (along with the net). This teaching bore fruit, when one of the rods rattled off just before we left. I remember the fight being like nothing

else I'd ever experienced, and thinking I was attached to a shark! As the 5lb 8oz mirror went into the net I was on cloud 9. This was the point when the carp bug fully took over. I doubled down my efforts to save every bit of money I had, to get better caprgear.



5lb 8oz my first ledger caught carp, and a carp angler was born

The next season Stu and I continued to fish Crowborough's lakes (with the help of our parents' lifts and them coming with us). But now we were armed with bite alarms, bait runners and carp rods. I still have my old set of Optonic Super XL's and Daiwa bite and run reels now. Alas the rods were sold on to upgrade. But these were wonderful carefree days, where all that mattered was when the next fishing session was.

As we got a bit older, we started to fish a bit further afield, and we were lucky that even family holidays often incorporated angling. One memorable session our Dad's took Stu and I to Iden wood fishery near Rye in East Sussex, for a night session. It was freezing with a heavy frost. I remember wearing every item of clothing I'd brought with me to keep warm. I must have looked like the Michelin man! The gas bottle even froze. But somehow the following morning one of the rods roared off, and I caught my first double at around 12lb, and Stu also got his first double around then too, possibly from Wylands.



As sixth form and university came along, other interests kicked in, such as football and

dating. Stu left school and went out to work, so we didn't see each other as much. Although I didn't fish quite as often, I still tried to get out once a month or so. In this period I joined Isfield and district angling club, and fished a lot of their waters, catching some lovely fish to upper doubles.



A pretty old carp from an Isfield water, it's fair to say I'm better at photography now. The clutter in this shot makes me twitch! But we didn't know any better back then).

Another secondary school friend managed to get me membership to a small pit run by a private club. This was set in beautiful countryside, and this was to prove the venue that I fished for the next few years. I was allowed to take guests, and many of my friends including Stu, and several of my family fished there with me too. I got another of my friends (Simon) into angling after a few sessions there, and we fished several Sussex venues together around this time. One summer day I was on holiday from university. On arrival at the club lake I spotted a big fish near some marginal pads. That was enough for me. I dropped a rig on a nice clear spot in front of the lilies. I sat back and started some revision for an upcoming uni exam. Thinking back conditions were bang on for big carp, with a drop in air pressure and overcast conditions, as well as a favourable moon phase. I didn't really know about such things at the time, and just fished when I could. After about 45 minutes the rod bent round, and an epic battle ensued, with the fish chugging up and down the deep margin. Then a huge old head popped up, and with my first swoop was engulfed in my net. It was BIG! I got it out and weighed it, and was blown away to have my first 20 at 22lb 2oz. This one was too good for a mat shot. So a call to mum was made. Mum swiftly arrived, and did the honours with the pictures. This was 2001.



I continued to fish this venue for a few more years. If I'm honest I should have moved on sooner, but it was such a lovely and convenient place. I continued to read about other places in the angling literature though. Dad and I would continue to have a few sessions each year together. I read stories about Yateley, Wraysbury, and Horton but they seemed way out of my league. But I saw an advert in one of the magazines that Yateley South lake was becoming a day ticket. I spoke to Dad and we booked a trip. Stepping foot on that complex was both daunting and exhilarating. But we managed to catch a few. This flicked a switch in my head making me realise that I could catch fish elsewhere, and I needed to move on. The decision was made to spread my wings, and give up my ticket on the private club pit.



A Yateley Carp

My fishing then took me away from the farm ponds and estate lakes of East Sussex, into Kent. The new challenge was exactly what I needed. The carp bug was back with a vengeance, and has never left since. I fished several day ticket and membership waters in Kent. I was lucky enough to catch my first 30, 40 and 50lb carp. Stu and I used to send each other the occasional message still. But one day I was out for a run and a van pulled over and I heard a familiar voice.

Stu and I stood chatting for about an hour and half about all things fishing. We vowed to keep in touch more, and arrange a fishing session. We messaged most weeks about our fishing after that. Sharing the buzz and encouraging each other on our angling campaigns.



(My first 30, 40, and 50lb UK carp)



Sadly a year or two later I got a call from Stuart saying he had been diagnosed with cancer, which was terrible news. We continued to speak most weeks. I hope the chats about fishing took his mind off things. Once he'd completed his treatment we arranged a social fishing session at a central point for us all, Hawkhurst fish farm, along with another old school friend. It was like old times, we had great fun, Stu royally beat us in terms of numbers of carp, and also caught the biggest fish in the lake. I was really pleased for him. I continued to fish a venue in Kent and Stu fished the Powdermills syndicate. But our angling chats were frequent. A year or so later Stu called me saying his cancer was back and now incurable. I couldn't believe what I was hearing. He was only 38. He passed away during the Covid 19 pandemic. This was a really tough time for all of his family and friends. It still seems so unfair. It took me a long time to get my head around things. But it made me realise more than ever, the importance of making the most of every minute. I always remind myself that Stu wouldn't have wanted us to be too sad, and would have wanted us to push on and pursue our dreams. I always think of him when I'm bankside and his memory is always an inspiration.



Sleep easy Stu, save me a swim at the carp lake in the sky mate

Another old mutual school friend Matt and I decided to do the BCAC that year in Stu's honour. I'd thought about doing it for a while. But now figured Stu would have wanted us to live life to the max, so took the plunge. We got an awful draw, but caught early and were going through with an hour to go. But another pair caught a good fish right at the end to knock us out. It's definitely something we'll have another go at though.



BCAC carp from Brooklands in Dartford

I was lucky enough to get another really rare club ticket in mid Sussex at this point, and then a night ticket on a big Tonbridge and District Angling pit. These were venues very much out of my comfort zone, but I decided the time was right to push myself. Both proved steep learning curves.

Especially the Tonbridge pit. This was my first experience of big pit fishing, heavy weed, and longer range angling. Not to mention it being in the middle of a busy public country park. I had also now spent several years mixing with some very good anglers. Wow I learnt a lot, and caught a few lovely carp along the way. The icing on the cake was catching one of the old originals called 'The Grey'. It went 43lb 12oz. This was one of the best remaining carp in the lake, and it

meant even more as it was on what would have been Stu's 39th birthday. I'm sure he was looking down and bringing me luck. A very moving day. My wife Ellie came down to do the photos and share the moment. (Title Picture)

For a short while I was at a loose end after finishing on the Tonbridge park lake. I'd put my name down for RK leisure's legendary Wraysbury lake, and a few other venues. But all had waiting lists. One of the places I'd read and watched tv programmes about in my youth, was Wintons in West Sussex. I thought I'd try my luck there. I had a fantastic season there, catching some special carp. I'm pretty sure I lost one of the big commons too.

However my mood was soon lifted when I received a text from RK leisure. I'd only got a ticket on Wraysbury! The place I'd read everything I could about over the years. It's where many of my hero's have angled, and where Mary the British record carp for many years was caught from. My mind was racing. It was a fair way to travel, being in Berkshire, and was I good enough? But I was so excited, and knew I must push myself. I'm so glad I did. My first step on the venue was magical. It was like a footballer playing at Wembley. There was a palpable historic atmosphere. Stepping into famous swims like 'The Rocky Barge' where Terry Hearn caught Mary at the British record weight from, and Springates named after the legendary Pete Springate, was almost surreal at first.

Then there was the small measure of catching a carp from there. The snags, weed, and sheer size of the place were not like anything I'd seen before, and all took a bit of getting my head round. But once the first carp went over the net cord, I knew in my mind all carp are catchable if I set my mind to it. That moment was even more special as Matt Hart the boss of Halo Baits (who kindly sponsor me for bait), was there to net and photograph the fish. My present angling continues there, and I'm loving it. I've got my sights set on some other well known venues in the future too



Something a bit different from Wintons



Wraysbury carp, and a 30lb plus specimen which made it even more special



One of the famous Redmere strain Wraysbury commons

I also still love fishing with my family. I'm lucky that they all fish, and we have great fun angling at many of the local day tickets including places like Hartley Lands in Kent, Wylands in East Sussex and going on fishing holidays. Another bucket list thing ticked off recently, was to fish Angler's paradise in Devon, which we did recently. It is such a great hobby to share with other people. Time in nature, with the peace and tranquility, is so good for the soul. We've created so many memories together on the bank, and hopefully there will be more to come.

My wife Ellie with at 36lb plus from Angler's paradise



Fin with one he caught on his own from Wylands and Niamh with a 30lb plus common also from Wylands



I've been lucky enough to do some work in the industry, and become sponsored. As part of this I've met some of my hero's, and also got to know a few of

them from fishing venues alongside them. As a child I recall seeing big carp caught by these people, from famous venues, in publications like The Freshwater Informer. But that young boy never thought I'd meet them, or fish those places. But by following my dreams and pushing myself, I've achieved many of my ambitions. That said, the big carp buzz is stronger than ever, and there are many things I still want to achieve. So watch this space.



Working at the Big One Show earlier this year

But the key message I'd give any young angler is always chase your dreams, push yourself out of your comfort zone, and make those dreams a reality. (A big Wraysbury mirror from earlier this year, a little boys dream come true)



I'm hugely grateful to my parents, friend's parents, and family friends for encouraging and helping me in the early days, and everyone who has helped me since. A big thank you to Halo baits who supply me with fantastic quality bait, meaning I can focus my efforts on rigs and location. Angling is a wonderful pastime that has

so many benefits. I would urge everyone to encourage



the next generation wherever you can. The buzz now of getting the Freshwater Informer each month is still as strong as ever. I love reading about what's been caught, and seeing people I know featured, and even now I still learn new things from some of the articles. But not only that, it's great that my wife and children now have that same buzz too reading it. I've known Glen since childhood, and I'm certain he will continue to take this tremendous magazine forwards. Here's to another 30 years.

Tight lines and chase those dreams.

Carl

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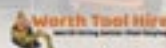


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Andy Lush - The Friendly Fisherman

30 years on, 350 issues later.

I remember the impact 'The Freshwater Informer' had when the first issue appeared. At that time, the mainstream angling press focused on what was being caught nationally. With 'The Freshwater Informer', Roger Standen aimed to bring local angling news to local fishermen.

Roger's concept was to provide a FREE publication so there would be no resistance to anglers reading it. This ensured advertisers could reach large numbers of anglers within the catchment area of Kent, Sussex, Surrey and Hampshire.

Being distributed by tackle shops and fisheries had two advantages. Roger had persuaded Andy Ashdown and Neil "Nelly" Waite to deliver the papers to the shops. This meant shops felt connected to the paper personally and kept costs down. It also proved to be a rich source of information that led to future features in the paper.

Roger wasn't a professional journalist but he was a keen angler, an all-rounder who enjoyed catching fish from his local patch. He wrote angling columns in a few papers along the Sussex coast, and in doing so, was well connected to the local angling grapevine.

I used to read each edition from cover to cover; in fact, I still do. However, back then, the paper was trying to be a magazine. Roger would press-gang his friends and acquaintances into doing features for the paper; being "a jack of all trades", Roger would take the pictures and write the articles, while his guest would provide an insight into the venue, the tactics being used, and hopefully catch some fish.

It was not always an easy task; I did several of these features on local trout reservoirs. We never had a plan, we just treated it as a day out with a friend, which Roger very quickly became. He was a very knowledgeable angler; we shared a passion for our angling, in particular for pike and perch, so it's no surprise that we should do some lure features too. On one of these occasions, we were perch fishing on Darwell Reservoir, as we readied the boat, Roger asked if I'd seen his new book, 'All Ways Fishing'. I hadn't, so he went to his car, grabbed a copy, handed it to me, then held out his hand for payment, Lol. I'd been hooked better than any lure in my box could have done!

I remember fondly our last fishing trip together; we shared a day's mayfly fishing on Powdermill Reservoir.

Throughout the day we chatted about this and that and all our plans for the future. The following week I was in France carp and catfishing, when I

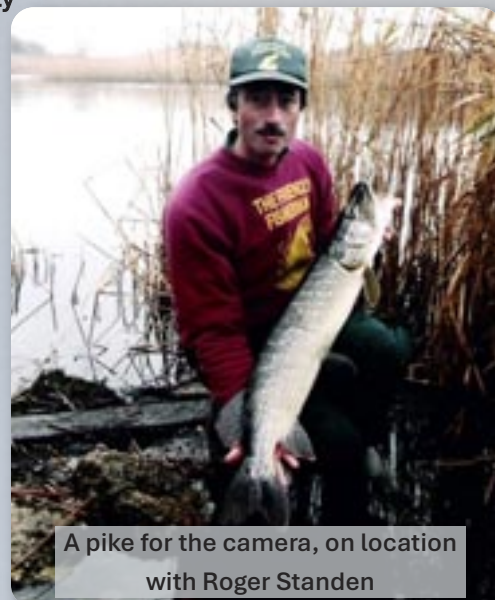
returned I heard the shocking news that Roger had passed away suddenly. The Informer's future was uncertain at this point as Roger was The Freshwater Informer. The Wealden Press stepped in to continue the publication and several of his friends rallied around to ensure there was enough editorial content.

A few years later, when Barry Reed took over as editor, I offered to write regular articles on lure angling and fly fishing. Overtime, my subject matter has increased, especially since I retired, which has seen me explore methods and waters that were new to me. Over the past twelve years I have now submitted 135 articles. How did that happen?

Evolution

The passing years have seen The Freshwater Informer evolve; it's no longer a paper covering all species and disciplines within freshwater fishing. Freshwater anglers are fewer in number, older and more focused on catching specimen fish. Carp are now the most popular species, followed by barbel, catfish, tench and pike. Big fish matter more than at any other time. Specimen hunting dominates most anglers' thinking and determines where and when they'll fish.

Possibly the biggest change in the past 30 years is where and how we fish. The growth of commercial fisheries and the availability of large carp have seen carp fishing boom. Without carp it's hard to imagine where the tackle



A pike for the camera, on location with Roger Standen

industry would be now. In the early years of the paper a twenty-pound carp was considered a large fish with thirty-pounders being national news. Now many anglers wouldn't consider fishing a water that doesn't contain thirty or forty pound fish; a carp has to be over fifty pounds now to be regarded as a specimen!

Most other species and disciplines are regarded as niche. Match fishing is still popular, but its participants are getting older, as fewer young anglers join their ranks. Matches on natural venues have declined as commercial venues offer better facilities and large bags of quality fish, again mainly carp. As carp have grown in these waters, the strength of the tackle has had to increase. Who would have thought 30 years ago it would be possible to land a 20lb carp on a pole! Pole fishing is now a dominant approach in matches. Other tactics have evolved; method feeder and pellet waggler are two that have reached pleasure anglers like myself.



Any method tactics introduced at Bewl Water

Trout fly fishing, although something I still enjoy, is on the verge of becoming extinct. The abolition of the close season some twenty-five years ago had a devastating and immediate effect on numbers taking to the waters each spring. Nowadays very few anglers pick up a fly rod in order to fish for trout. Bewl Water opened its doors to "any method" trout fishing, a huge change which now sees the majority of anglers using lures and bait to catch fish.

Climate change is having a big impact too. Hot weather in the summer results in low oxygen levels, which sees trout suffering from heat stress, and catches decline when anglers want to be outdoors enjoying their hobby. However, as one door closes another opens. Fly fishing for pike has grown in popularity. Why? Large pike exist in many trout fisheries, such as Chew Valley and Blagdon, so fly fishing these waters allows anglers to target them, while adhering to the fisheries rules. Another growth area and one I engage in almost exclusively throughout the summer months is carp on the fly.



Andy's new obsession: carp on the fly

Lure fishing has grown in popularity in recent years mainly due to the perch recovering from the dreadful perch disease. Being a shoal predator perch unlike pike can be caught in large numbers. Smaller lures and new techniques while using lighter tackle make catching these feisty predators fun. Where signal crayfish are present perch grow to weights unheard of until recently.



Dreams can come true, Andy's 6lb Dutch perch

What's next?

Well I foresee more anglers travelling abroad in search of carp, not just in Europe but further afield in America, Canada and Africa. Destination fly and lure fishing holidays are nothing new, both techniques suit the travelling angler perfectly. More remote locations are being discovered all the time. Exciting new species to catch often require new techniques, which could be used on your return. Travelling within the UK is an option I've started to enjoy recently. Closer to home, many commercial fisheries now offer cabins and lodges so you can combine a family holiday with some fishing.

Til' next month, tight lines.

Andy Lush



**Junior
Competition
Winners**

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& Fish With Carl



See Page 23 for
more details for
MFC



Fish With Carl

 MFC Store Prize Winner – Millie Bowles 



Millie Bowles – New PB!

A massive congratulations to Millie Bowles, who has landed a fantastic new personal best from Darenth Big Lake.

Millie's stunning 41lb mirror carp was caught using a pop-up fished over a Spombed area of pellet and boilie. What a fantastic result and a brilliant new PB – well done, Millie! 🎣

Keep the catch reports coming and let us know about your own fishing adventures for a chance to feature in The Freshwater Informer.

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: Teddy Laycock 

 Fish With Carl Winner in The Freshwater Informer 



Teddy's New Perch PB!

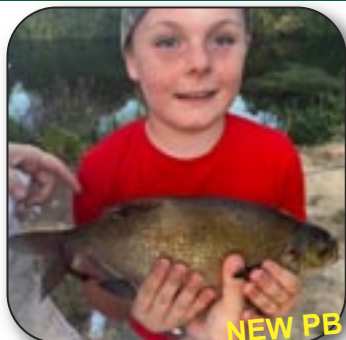
Six-year-old Teddy Laycock is already showing a serious passion for fishing, and during a recent local pond session with Dad, that passion paid off with a fantastic new personal best!

Fishing with a whip and double red maggot, Teddy hooked into this fine perch and successfully landed it himself.

A brilliant capture and a very proud moment for any young angler. Well done, Teddy — keep enjoying your fishing and hopefully there are plenty more PBs to come! 🎣

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





Daniel Riches - PB 3lb Bream
- River Medway



Hudson - Sandwich Lakes -
Elphicks



Sonny - Sandwich Lakes -
Elphicks



Fynlee - Hendre lake park
- 22lb 14oz



Tom - Kettles - 13lb 5oz -
Elphicks



James - Kettles - 19lb.5oz -
Elphicks



George Anning - North
Point Lake - 11lb Common



Lucy - 17lb 4oz Gedges
Lakes



Jack Taylor - 23lb 2oz -
Tricklebrook Fishery



Archie Humphries PB - 15lb
Mirror - Martello Lakes



Ronnie - Smooth Hound -
14lb



Fred Jaquet - Orchid
Lakes - 31lb



Alpha - New PB 14lb Cottingham
Lakes - Trail Blazers



Frankie - 27lb 5oz Gedges
Lakes



Louie-Joe - Coombwood Fishery



Oliver and Emilia Burtons - Orchard Place Farm

Junior Catch Report



Jacob Murray - Private
Lake - 24lb Common



Ralph Stone - Sandwich
Lakes Elphicks - 18lb Mirror



Archie Haynes - Linear
Complex - 32lb 2oz Mirror



Morgan Kirby Gray -
Catfish Local Fishery



Archie collado - 24lb 8oz
Common Iden Wood



Albie - 38lb Common - Prairie
Lake Elphicks Fishery



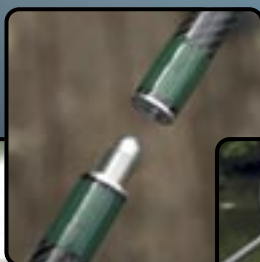
Finley Milton - Hartley Lands Fishery
21lb 8oz

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THE FRESHWATER TEAM

THE LAKE THAT MEANS SO MUCH.

My fishing started around 40 years ago, when I would spend as much time as I could on the bank with my friends, fishing various ponds that were all within a bike ride of home. Warbleton Pond, Chapmans Town Pond, Kelleys, Little Kelley's and another lake that was known for its big carp and ghosts — Battens.

Battens was a very special place for me because my Grandad was the gardener for the estate, which meant I was lucky enough to be able to fish the lake during the school holidays and at weekends. Grandad would take me on a Saturday morning and we would have to make sure we left at exactly 11:45, because The Swan opened at 12 o'clock for his couple of Harvey's and my coke and crisps!

I would spend as much time as I possibly could fishing, and quite often we were actually on the other lake because nobody else was allowed to fish there. That changed when I eventually became old enough to take a friend with me.

Of all the places I have fished over the years, this lake probably means the most to me. There is something about it that makes me feel like I need to be there. Even now, although I am no longer able to fish it, I still occasionally go and visit. Sometimes I just need to be there.

It is difficult to explain, but when I stand in one of those swims and look out across the water, I feel different. I suppose it is because so many of my best fishing memories are tied up in that place. I would love to wet a line there once more, but simply standing in the swim can take me straight back to being that young lad again. In those early days I caught Rudd, Perch, Tench, Carp and Pike, all with very basic tackle. A red glass-fibre rod and limited equipment was all I needed. It certainly wasn't sophisticated by today's standards, but it caught fish, and more importantly, it gave me some fantastic days by the water.

I was probably around 12 or 13 when I caught my first carp.

I was lucky to have a friend called Lee. His dad (Tom) was a very capable angler and Lee had already been shown plenty of tricks and tips that we would eventually put into practice ourselves. But I will take a little bit of credit for our first carp because I came up with a bait we hadn't used before — a peanut.

We boiled the peanuts within an inch of their lives, getting them as soft as possible without them falling apart. That bait accounted for many captures for both of us, including my first carp.

The rig was crude by today's standards, but it was all we knew. A peanut carefully side-hooked, cast out on a half- or three-quarter-ounce Ainsley bomb running rig, with a leger stop about 20 inches up the line.

We had cast a couple of baits around the area and the hookbait had landed in a channel between two sets of lily pads, probably about 15 yards out. The rods were sitting in the rests and we were simply watching and waiting. Then something happened. The swim suddenly erupted with tiny bubbles. There were fish in the swim. Then, with the spool set loose, line started pouring from the reel.

We had only gone and done it!! What happened next was very much a two-man operation. This fish was bigger than anything I had ever had to deal with, and with poor equipment, thick pads and a channel barely half a yard wide, we were certainly up against it.

Somehow, the fish actually made our lives easier. Slowly tightening the drag, we managed to get it back under control and eventually into the net.

We couldn't stop looking at it. A carp. A big carp. We were carp anglers. Specimen fishermen. And we were only 13 or 14 years old.

Then came the next problem.

What do we do now?

I had to ride my bike home while Lee kept the fish alive and in the net. It was a six-mile round trip, and I can honestly say I cycled those three miles home and back at a speed that would probably have qualified me for the Tour de France that year!

Back at the lake, armed with the Kodak 110 camera, we took **ONE** photograph. **One**. More than likely, we knew that if we took too many pictures, Mum and Dad would consider it a waste of film. I remember it being ages before the rest of the film was eventually used and developed.



The ONE

But that **ONE** photograph means so much to me.

When I look back at it now, I think about what that picture actually represents. I was carefree. I was fishing. I was enjoying life with my very first friend from primary school. Between us, we had caught the fish we had dreamed about and somehow managed to document it with a single photograph.

We had worked it all out for ourselves.

We caught many more fish from that lake, but I don't have any more photographs from those early years.

It was much later that I was given permission to fish it again.

By then there were five of us with permission to fish the lake. We had gained more knowledge from fishing other lakes and fisheries, we had cars, better equipment and plenty more experience.

We arrived armed with boilies, maize and all the other methods we had been using elsewhere.

But it soon became apparent that Battens wasn't going to be that easy.

I spent over 20 nights fishing without a fish, and everyone else was experiencing exactly the same thing.

So I went back to something I knew.

I started feeding Vitalin onto a few spots during the week before fishing at the weekends. I also prepared the bait that had caught my first carp all those years earlier.

The peanuts were boiled until the liquid became thick and gloopy. The nuts became incredibly soft and, after about 20 attempts, you could eventually get one to stay on a hair.

I didn't use many. A little loose feed mixed into a ball of Vitalin went onto the spot.

The result was almost instant.

The take came and I was into a fish — a good fish.

My account on the lake was open again.

This time I managed to get photographs of the fish. They aren't the best photographs in the world, but I have them, and they are incredibly important to me. Over the next few seasons, I caught a lot of the lake's stock.

I was learning all the time, and I was able to enjoy fishing a place that had already played such a massive part in my childhood and I managed to keep my bait to myself until I have written this piece only Lee and I knew about the Peanuts!!

But, as with everything, things change.

The estate was sold again and the new owners didn't want anyone fishing the lake. Our permission was lost, and once again Battens became somewhere I could only remember rather than fish.

But I have so many good memories from that place.

I still return occasionally. Not to fish, but sometimes I can sit in the swim where I caught that very first carp and spend a few hours simply being there.

And it feels like nothing else.

Standing there, I can almost hear the laughter, see the sights and hear the sounds of the past. For a few moments it brings everything back — the fishing, the friendships, the excitement and the feeling of being young and having the whole day ahead of you.

We have some wonderful times in our lives without even realising how important they will become.

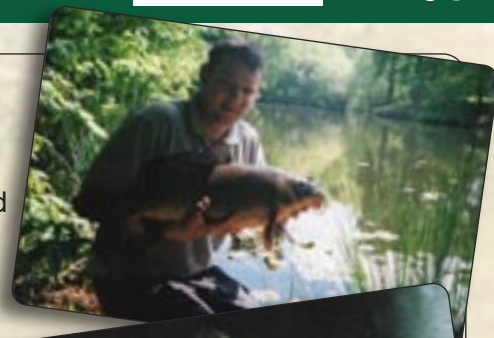
Would I change anything? No, I wouldn't.

I have asked for permission to fish the lake again, and of course I would love to wet a line there once more. But perhaps I already have something more valuable than another fish.

I have the memories, I have the photographs, I have the stories. And I have a massive, incredibly strong memory of a place, the people I shared it with and a time in my life when I was simply enjoying myself.

Sometimes, you don't realise you're making memories until years later.

Battens will always be one of those places for me **"SPECIAL"**



Tales From

The Tackle Box

Part 1

When telling these stories, you must remember that I am telling them how I remember them. Many times, over the years when we get to recount various past happenings, my brother Gary and Lee Jackson who were both always around experiencing the same things, have differing memories of the same stories, but the important thing is that the outcome is the same, hope you enjoy my recollections. KP.

“IF YOU DON’T MEAN WHAT IT SAYS ON THE DOOR DON’T PUT IT ON THERE!!!!”



we were on the right-hand side

It was on the way to the shop that Saturday morning that the temptation to return to my trade for a living, as a motor mechanic, was really beginning to appeal, after nine months of no money, sitting

behind the counter, reading the daily newspaper several times, and shifting what little stock we had around (We even put our own personal fishing tackle on display to make up for lack of stock), so as to make it look interesting to the next person who walked through the door, I was getting a bit disheartened. It wasn't that nobody was coming in; they just were not coming often enough, up until then I might see on average between 10 and 20 people a week. We sold the odd pint of maggots a few hooks and floats but not enough of it to convince me that I had made the correct decision to start a fishing tackle business with my brother.

The situation back then was that Gary (Bruv) had a “proper” job with guaranteed money as a car salesman and I was a self-employed mobile mechanic with aspirations of owning my own garage, but at the time my workload was erratic, one minute busier than I could handle and the next struggling to fill my days. So, it was decided that I was to be the one looking after the shop in the week and Gary would come in on days off and Sundays. I invested what little money I had into starting up, and the majority of Gary's earnings were put in as he was earning it, add a small loan from Barclays, which we only got because Gary's then girlfriend Jackie was working there, and we had, after the lease, rent and shop fittings the princely sum of £700 pounds to spend on stock, to us a lot of money but to the companies we wanted to trade with....., well I can tell you it wasn't fun having the phone put down on us when applying for accounts and being told by one major wholesaler that with only that

amount available for stock, in his opinion we would be out of business within 3 months and that it wasn't enough to buy the hooks we needed, let alone other stock, plus he said we had set up in the wrong place, the village of Sutton-at-Hone didn't have enough "chimney pots", a sales term for population around the business. We were in the heart of the Darent Valley which had Dartford Lakes, Darent Leisure Sport, Sutton DDAPS, Sutton Leisure Sport and Horton Kirby, then a day ticket water, now members only, run by DDAPS (Dartford and District Preservation Society), all multiple lake complexes, not to mention a huge fishable stretch of the River Darent. Our logic was, set up where the anglers are, seemed like common sense to us!!

(Just a footnote, although Gary and I had spent nearly twenty years fishing the Darent Valley, at the time of setting up the business, we had no idea of the significant part it had played, and went on to play, in the history of Carp Fishing).

Not to be put off by all this negativity, we approached other smaller suppliers and were reasonably successful in getting the odd account, but it was all money up front due to our lack of funds, so we had to sell what we had before we could buy more stock. We had accumulated some money after a few months but not enough, when we heard of two localish South London tackle dealers were selling up, retiring. After enquiring about how much was required to buy their stock we still didn't have enough, so we approached a friend who lent us some money (and charged us interest over the month we had it). The way we saw it was that the stock in these two shops would give us the variety we needed to push on to becoming self-sufficient. The loan was accepted, and stock bought and rehomed into our small retail unit, making it look a lot more like a shop should do. The following weeks and months did produce a few more customers but we needed more. To me the days dragged, being in the shop on my own from 7.30am till late every day (Gary did come in after work every day but by then I had just about had enough), from the start we decide that our opening hours would make us different. The odd angler would come in out of curiosity more than anything, sea anglers were the majority and we only had freshwater tackle, we did react to the demand when we were able too financially, but for me it was all happening too slowly.

As I approached the shop that morning, I noticed what looked like a lot of people waiting at the bus stop, which was situated directly outside our entrance, it was 7.00am, this was unusual. I turned

into the alley leading up to the rear of the premises and saw that the line of people came from our entrance. My first thought was, we've been broken into and this lot were looting us, there must have been twenty of them or more. I parked in our allotted space at the rear of the shop, and proceeded to the back door, anticipating trouble in the shape of Ali Baba and his forty thieves. As I walked into the shop, I was pleasantly surprised to find it empty but dark because the queue outside was blocking the front window. It then struck me that these guys were customers and they wanted what we sold. Blimey, where did they all come from? I quickly realised that I was going to need help, so I rang Gary, who had appointments that morning and couldn't get out of them at short notice, Saturday was also "handover" day, all the customers that had completed payment and their cars were ready, came in to collect them, and Gary would have lost half his commission if another salesman had to do the handover paperwork, money we desperately needed.

He suggested calling Mum and Dad, which I did, they were on their way. I looked at my watch it was 7.10am still enough time before we opened to organise the Maggots.



We stored them in an old meat fridge which we had picked up from Todds Tackle in Leigh, one of the shops that had packed up due to retirement, but we displayed them in a refrigerated delicatessen counter which we had converted to receive 4 metal bowls for different colour maggots, pinkies and Squats (Yes peeps, we used to sell Match bait!!!).

By the time I had got myself sorted, Mum & Dad had arrived from home which was in the next village along the A225 towards Dartford, called Hawley. It was now 7.25am which meant I had enough time to

give the parents a price lesson in bait and I was going to man the tackle counter. Time to open the door!

The customers were calm and civilised, why should they be anything else? perhaps I was expecting mayhem because of the panic going on in my head, after all this was a months' worth of customers all in one hit! The next half an hour went reasonably smoothly, bait being served by Ma & Pa and me selling what at the time was loads of tackle accessories, and on a few occasions, I can remember thinking 'thank heavens we bought that stuff from the other shops.



As the last two customers browsed around, well more like rotated on the spot, the first shop was no bigger than an average front room, one of them said, "That was a bit of a rush wasn't it", "Yes" I replied, "I've no idea where you all came from". The guy went on to explain that most of the blokes that had been in that morning were from the London area, he was from north London and they all fished at Horton Kirby, only a 15 minute walk from us, every weekend, they travelled by train to Farningham Road station, which was about a 5 minute walk from the shop, he went on, most of the shops in their areas didn't stay open late on a Friday night, so if he couldn't get there to get his stuff he had to wait until Saturday morning, which wouldn't be such a problem if the said shop opened when the sign on the door said it should, which was 9 O'clock, more often than not it would be nearer 10 O'clock before the owner turned up, typical of the tackle shops of this era, which meant by the time he caught the train and got to Horton Kirby it would be 1 O'clock before he cast out, he then told me that word had got around that there was a new tackle shop in Sutton-at-Hone, that actually opened when they say they will and the bonus was that it was 7.30am. It turns out that we had enabled these lads to over double their time fishing at the venue.

On reflection this was probably the point that thoughts of not carrying on ceased, and although tough times were ahead, that half hour that morning taught me that reliability and hard graft would see us through, but if it didn't it wouldn't be because we didn't try. In recent years when I have had occasion to turn up at other retailers who have opening times on their doors and are not open when stated, it takes me back to that day, I once put a note through a Dry Cleaners door, who had, Open 8.30am on the door, who still wasn't open at 8.50, the note said "IF YOU DON'T MEAN WHAT IT SAYS ON THE DOOR DON'T PUT IT ON-THERE!!!!".

Monday	8.30am to 6pm
Tuesday	8.30am to 6pm
Wednesday	8.30am to 6pm
Thursday	9.30am to 6pm
Friday	8.30am to 6pm
Saturday	8.30am to 6pm
Sunday	CLOSED
Bank Holidays	9am to 1pm

Consistent reliability is what convinced those guys to take a chance on the early train, all because, even though my days were long and mostly lacking in customers, I always opened dead on time, and it took just nine months for people to notice.

What you need is "Albion"

Over the following months the flow of customers increased, and the Saturday morning rush became a regular thing, but spread out over a longer early morning period, and more of them came, but not only were the Horton Kirby anglers from London coming in, we had match, sea and game orientated anglers asking us for stuff. Of course we always reacted to demand but in these still early days, financially we had to be careful, for instance if a sea angler wanted a particular hook or fly angler wanted a type of fly, we had to buy in trade packs of ten and had to gamble that we would sell the rest to other customers, which inevitably we did, because when you think about it, if you react to a demand it is usually a common one, but the financial risk still felt uneasy, however, things became a little less stressful on the business with regards to buying stock, and some of the suppliers by now were giving us credit terms albeit small limits, it made things easier. We still couldn't get any of the top suppliers to supply us, they were still very wary of our financial credibility. At this time and for the next few years we did not take any money for ourselves, it all went back into the business, I was surviving on money from the odd car repair, and I played in a gigging band which brought in the odd "shilling" (5p to anyone born after 1971).



One type of “creature” that we started to see on a very regular basis was the carp angler, who when approached whilst fishing could be quite abrupt and rude, (yes I know you are a very loveable bunch now, but we are still in the early eighties here), however in the environment of a tackle shop cut a very frustrated downtrodden figure and this was partly due to being misunderstood, for example, I once thought that “F*!#k Off” was the name of the best bait for catching carp, because whenever I noticed a Mothers Pride bread bag with, what I now know was the early homemade boilies in it, at Darenth, I asked “what’s that bait you’re using mate” “F*!#k Off!” or worse was more often the reply, but what they really meant by this was, “Please don’t ask me questions about my secret edge in the pursuit of catching carp or the answer might offend ones ears”. Their main frustration though was the lack of bespoke carp tackle available (Yep! lack of carp tackle, hardly seems possible now but back then nobody was making dedicated equipment for pursuing and catching carp, and for you younger Carpers who have never known any different this is not a fairy story).

We were just coming out of a period in carp fishing history, emerging from the 50’s, 60’s and 70’s when the general opinion was that carp were generally uncatchable, they were too clever to be caught and that if you tried, your whole mentality was questioned, and you were regarded as a raving looney in angling terms, and that was if you tried to catch them in the summer, if you continued to try in the winter, you were definitely in danger of having the men in white coats come and carry you to the relative safety of the local institution, and in the Dartford area we had at least two of those, probably full of potential carp anglers. So anyway, manufacturers didn’t believe the demand for carp fishing was high enough to develop tackle for. We were beginning to see different. Carp equipment, apart from a few rods, and they were usually light sea rods, was non-existent at this time, and at this

point it might be worth noting that the likes of Kevin Nash, Cliff Fox and Richard Gardner were starting to make stuff for their own and close friends use, but not commercially (Early eighties). Kevin had been making sacks and then slings for mates and local anglers since late seventies, but Nash Tackle was not established as a business until 1984. Fox International was a shopfitting manufacturer, and Richard Gardner was in the early stages of starting Gardner Tackle, he was travelling around in a van selling, very solid Aluminium banksticks as I remember.



So, armed with a various collection of adapted tackle, the carp angler was developing bait as his edge. Anyway, one Carp angler that started coming in on a very regular basis was a guy called Alan Southall, and probably the first carp fanatic that I had the pleasure in getting to know well. He later became a friend of the family, and to this day, is still in touch with my sister. I had many discussions with Alan, but in the early days he used to talk about carp bait and aspects of it, things I didn’t understand. One day he started putting into the conversation that what you need is “Albion”, and so to not let on that I had no idea what he was talking about, I agreed with him, but was thinking what the heck is he on about, sounds like a bloody football team. This went on for days and weeks “I need to find Albion”, “Albion” this and “Albion” that, I was getting to the stage where I might have to own up and admit that I had no idea

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days later Alan was sitting at the counter when a



Alan "Albion" Southall aka
"Bearded Al"

customer came into the shop and started a

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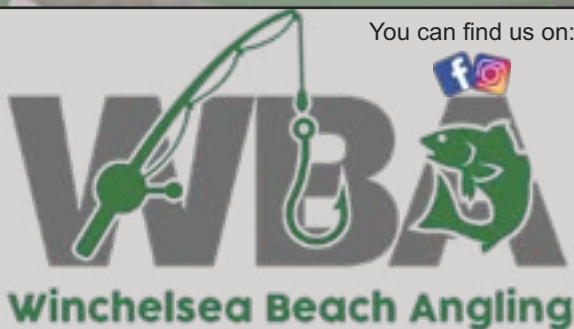
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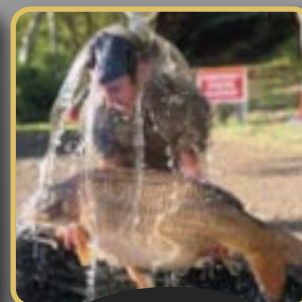
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Pike Fishing in the South East 30 Years Ago vs Now.

Warrick Francis

In the winter of 1996, we were still blessed with some of the best trout waters in the UK. The ones I concentrated on were Weirwood, Darwell, and Bewl reservoirs. In the 1980s, there were a few more to go at, but the trout were no longer being stocked, and the pike had started to shrink. Not only did we have trout waters, but most of our bigger rivers were throwing up the occasional 30lb pike. There was a huge pike reported at over 41lb from a tiny Romney marsh drain, plus another stream fish that made it into Neville's book at over 35lb, not far from Eastbourne. We also had gravel pits stuffed with silver fish around Maidstone that were throwing up the occasional pike over 35lb. It was an amazing time to be fishing for pike. The likes of Neville Fickling, Nigel Williams, and Eddie Turner would travel for hours to get to our Sussex trout waters. I can remember one day when I was afloat on Weirwood in 1997. To my right, a pair of bank anglers caught several pike over 20lb, up to 31lb. To make things worse, another pair to my left caught three very large pike, to 28lb. I sat between them watching the fish fest — and blanked! On another Trout Water Darwell, my boat partner landed a 24lb pike, while a boat nearby landed a fat trout-water 30lb fish.



On Weirwood, a friend, the late Barry Benyon, and I ventured out in boats in thick fog. Straight away, I

found myself into a pike just shy of 20lb, only to hear Barry calling for me as he had caught a huge pike. I weighed it for him and it was as close to 30lb as you can get. The next day he went on to land a 28lb pike. Barry was a keen member of the Sussex PAC and went on to run Darwell when they stopped stocking trout.



Fast-forward 30 years

So, we scroll forward 30 years to 2026. What's pike fishing like in the South East now? Lots will say it's a shadow of its former self. This would certainly be true when it comes to pike over 30lb. Sadly, the trout waters are all but gone in this area. Lots of mixed fisheries have changed to cater for carp, with silver fish removed. That said, we have exceptional carp fishing in 2026, with countless fish over 30lb, 40lb and 50lb. We also have another predator, the huge catfish, that will test your tackle. If you're prepared to pay top dollar, there are huge fish to be caught. Just look through the pages of the Freshwater Informer to see how many huge carp get caught each month.

We also have avian predation in the form of cormorants, which are very capable of destroying shallow waters, and I really think the EA should do something about it. The trout waters that are left have to stock trout a lot bigger than they did 30 years ago, so it's harder for a pike to reach the size required to feed on them.

The Pike is a true adversary. You can't buy a load of huge pike, drop them into a small pond and charge people £1,000 to catch a 30lb.

Interestingly, there are still plenty of 20lb pike on our doorstep if you're prepared to explore. On my first trip of last season, I got lucky and landed three over 20lb. On my last two trips, I managed to catch pike over 20lb from shallow bays. In fact, I had a great season, with numbers of 20lb pike far greater than I would have caught in the 1990s.



These days, we all want to catch that magical fish over 30lb, so we need to travel further to Bristol, Anglian waters, or further afield. In February, I did just this. There are a couple of waters in the West capable of producing huge Pike. I was lucky enough to see the new British record caught in 2024 and bag one myself the next day, over 33lb. Time is not on my side these days with work, but I managed to procure a couple of days. One of my older fishing friends was keen to catch a 30lb pike to add to his impressive list of big fish, so we set off armed with deadbaits and lures. The fishing on these waters can be super-hard, contrary to common belief. Most people blank, but we managed to find a few fish on the first day.

Day two, we headed to one of my hotspots, where I'd spotted some large fish on my new fish finder. We were soon into a good pike. Shortly after my fish, my boat partner's float slid away. When the fish surfaced, I was more shaken than he was. It was huge — the biggest pike I'd ever seen in my net. She was immense. I've heard it said by others that pike don't look really impressive until they are over 35lb. This one went 40lb 8oz.

My dream pike. Sadly, not caught by me, but it was an honour to see and net such an incredible fish!

The plan for this season

My two favourite methods these days for catching



pike are searching our local rivers in the winter and fly fishing. On the rivers, travel light, with a few deadbaits plus a lure rod. Don't spend more than an hour in each swim — this is hunting, not trapping. I love tidal rivers, but if you hear of a pike upstream, don't ignore it. I often fish two rivers in a day when I'm feeling keen. The chances of catching a 30lb pike are almost impossible, but I believe most of our rivers hold a fish just over 25lb. If you look hard enough, you will find pike over 20lb if you work for them.

The events that produced those two marsh pike over 35lb might even happen again. If the EA decides to clear a lake of silver fish and dump them in a local ditch, who knows what might happen? A similar thing happened to ET with his chalk-pit monster from Lakeside.

Never say never regarding that ring 30lb!

If you really want that 30lb Fish, try the fly.

If you really want that 30lb pike, join the circus, travel, and look at the trout waters. The rewards are there if you can put the effort in. These fish are pressured and are not easy to catch. Brushing up on your boat and lure skills will help. The trout stocked these days are bigger to avoid cormorants, and so are the Pike that get onto them.

If you want to put the odds in your favour, learn to fly fish for Pike. It might be the hardest skill to learn, but it is probably the most rewarding way to catch a pike — or carp, for that matter. Not so many pike anglers will go to this effort, and it will open lots of doors to waters you weren't previously able to fish. It will also enable you to choose the days you fish on the famous waters. It can also halve the cost on some waters.



bucket of livebaits and four rods each!

If you're interested in how to make the rigs and fish them, I have a channel on YouTube called **The Bass Racer**. Take a look — it's free. I plan to cover more methods and go fishing with some of the best pike anglers in the UK and quiz them.

Narrick Franc

The fly tackle used is designed for tropical saltwater, and if it can land a 250lb tarpon, it will cope with any Pike that swims with ease. Be careful not to go completely mad and start tying your own flies. This is a dark art, can be very expensive but very rewarding.

In 2025, I caught my last 30lb-plus pike on a fly I'd tied the night before, on a water that is strictly fly-only. I would say this was one of my ultimate piscatorial experiences.

Not so long ago, I experienced some of the best pike fishing locally using my flies. I located some very big fish on a TW water and, in two trips, a friend and I landed four pike over 20lb. Only one was under 24lb, with plenty of big doubles to 19lb as well. That would have been epic fishing in 1996 with a



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The Medway Man

Bob Morris

In days of old, when we were **bold**.

October 2026

In days of old, when we were bold. I believe that this is some sort of well-known saying/proverb or even poem, but I can't remember how the rest of it goes, it sounds like the sort of opener that invites you to contribute your own version – "there was an old lady from..." etc, printable or otherwise. Although I am tempted to compose a few here, the idea was to introduce the subject of my recollections of past angling activities and a current analysis of it all.

So, where to start?

Were we ever bold?

This of course is subjective, but I would answer Yes, when considering the experimenting with various new types of tackle, rods, bait and methods and comparing this to the generally accepted ways of conducting the fishing game at this stage. For this piece the phrase 'WE' refers to me and my pals and fishing companions at the time. Basically, this consisted of my brother and I, along with a small group of youngsters (some still at School) during the mid-sixties and all keen to progress in the Angling world. None of us were obsessed with carp at this early

stage and if anything felt that the pursuit of these mythical monsters was a bit above our pay grade. As you can imagine this period did not last for long!

I started fishing,

during the early sixties, as a continuation of my pursuit of frogs, toads, newts etc, which was very much part of my childhood activity. Both my brother Kevin and I were keen on exploring the open marshes and woodlands around our home and particularly when we visited our grandparents house in north Wales, where we were given a free hand to wander at will for much of the time. Nature study and ornithology were very much part of our MO at this time, and I suppose that it was inevitable that fishing would become one of our interests as not only did it intrigue us but provided the opportunity /excuse to spend much more time outdoors in the world of wildlife. I guess that like all new recruits to the hobby we read whatever we found on the subject to improve our catch rate and could perhaps be forgiven for following the standard procedures and believing the often-dogmatic advice about the best methods. Some of the first experiments and inventions, I seem to recall, started for financial reasons and the use of homemade (stair rods) rod rests, old guitar strings for pike traces and poly balls /wine bottle corks with biro tubes pushed through, as cheap pike floats etc, was a necessity. It was however, when our focus turned to the all-encompassing pursuit of carp fishing that these ideas and substitutes really started to take off and eventually went into overdrive. Part of this was because the items of gear that we wanted were either beyond our meagre budget or frequently did not even exist.

I left School at the age of fifteen and went to work in a local engineering works as a trainee – which as an extremely sensitive youngster, I found to be a totally overpowering experience, with the heavy milling machinery/lathes whining and huge power presses thumping etc. I really could not wait for the weekend to arrive and allow my escape to the lakeside.

One upside' to working there however was the access to various types of material (usually metals) which was useful in my quest for new items of tackle. I was frequently involved in the production of items made from sheet metal -Ali,



Brass, Steel etc, and soon found out how to make rod rest heads, shafts, landing net poles and arms – all from offcuts destined for the bin (or usually :-) of the required shape and size needed for our angling needs.

I even constructed buzzer heads and boxes from various pieces of waste Ali sheet, which although crude worked fine and of course saved on the 'Piscatorial budget'



My early interest in rod building started back then when I was forced to convert a couple of general/float rods into crude leger/carp or pike rods. I found that I really enjoyed doing this and to one extent or another have continued it to this day.

Little did I know that I would eventually, end up doing this as part of my way of making a living.

Making rods and landing nets soon progressed into buzzers and bite indicators, bivies, nylon sacks/slugs even certain items of clothing. We even made items of terminal tackle lead weights, feeders, floats etc. There was a great satisfaction in designing all these bits of kit, some of which ended up on



the market – usually by the basic ideas being pirated and the originators receiving nothing for the concept, as acquiring patents was not something most of us ever considered or had the knowhow or finances to achieve.

As an example of this: my long-standing angling pal Cliff Webb constructed the first ever nylon Carp bag which was a huge advance in fish care from the old hessian sacks that anglers were using at the time.

These rough textured old sacks were responsible for much damage to carp in the way of lost scales and broken fins. These nylon versions soon became the universally accepted method for retaining large fish – and were copied by various angling companies!



It is probably in the field of bait development that the most memorable advances occurred and I can honestly say that although we had experimented with most of the generally accepted baits at the time (mid to late sixties) it was not until the appearance of Fred Wilton on our local waters (66/67) that we were forced to severely 'up our game' and start trying new ingredients and pastes which quickly boosted our number of takes and catches. It was immediately obvious to us that as Fred was getting so many more chances than us it must be the case that for every carp that picked up our baits about twenty were ignoring them on their way over to his patch of strange brown golf ball sized offerings.

It wasn't just the fish that Fred and his mates were landing, it was the amount of takes that they were missing or losing. The other strange thing was that he was not getting pestered by the vast shoals of bream that often gave us grief. I remember my brother being told (not by Fred himself) that a bream deterrent was being included in the recipe, and we were so fascinated by this whole saga that it did seem indeed possible. It did not occur to us that it was just the size and texture of these balls that



excluded bream roach etc.

It should have been obvious and easy for us to reason that we had never caught a single bream on the potatoes that we sometimes used - it must be said though that this also often applied to the carp. It was a real kick up the bottom 'wake up call' and we had no choice but to respond however we could. I seem to recall that we did very well when we used cheese, but it was relatively expensive, and this aspect completely ruled out pre-baiting or putting out any freebies at all which seemed to be a strong part of Fred's approach. It was not until I started making up pastes, usually based on sausage, meat that we appeared to make any real progress and the whole idea of experimenting with different bait ideas became our main approach. The sausage base was a good bait but by stiffening it up initially with crushed cornflakes it allowed a longer cast to be made and the stiffer the paste the longer it lasted, and the attacks of bream and roach were not defeated but certainly reduced. The next thing was to start introducing other ingredients such as cat food, pilchards, sardines, Oxo cubes etc. I remember ordering various flavours, including fruity ones and aniseed which we had heard were very attractive to fish. I also recall raiding my mother's kitchen cupboards for food dye to disguise the balls of bait. Of course, it was very difficult to tell whether it made any difference to the catches, and our experiments were certainly not very scientific, but we went with the theory that if it did not put the fish off then we left it in. We soon realised that this ended up with an unnecessarily expensive bait. It was also the trend to use large baits. This was for two reasons.

Firstly, it was the norm to free line the baits, so you needed the weight to get the distance and secondly, they lasted longer in the water and as mentioned helped to avoid the smaller fish. Bearing in mind that the average size of the carp that we were after at his stage was only about - 8lb it was amazing that golf ball sized baits were

so popular. The fact that we hooked as many of the takes as we did was down to the relative softish texture of the balls and showed that Fred's incredible number of missed takes was also down to bait size and texture - which basically was rock-hard comparatively. I recall watching Fred once play a carp for several minutes only to have it gob the bait back at him totally intact with the hook still firmly in its original position, having forced it into its mouth it must have been unable to blow it out!! As you can imagine Fred's explanation was that it wanted it so much that it was reluctant to let go until it had too. 😊

I now believe that the amazing number of carp that Fred and his mates were landing in those early days could have been at least doubled by just side-hooking the baits, although such tactics were, at this point, years in the future. The move to special baits as I believe they were referred to at this stage was one of the most positive actions that we ever took, and it was not long before we were catching about five times the number of fish and the amount of takes we were getting was off the scale compared to our previous efforts - although not quite up to Fred's incredible tally. However, I was soon to find out more about his bait and theories which I must say added a whole new dimension to my fishing altogether.

Although it was a couple of years before I ended up fishing with Fred and learning of his bait recipes and theories, his arrival on the scene had already given our fishing a real boost and confirmed for me that experimenting and achieving success by your own efforts was certainly the most rewarding way to progress in the angling and other worlds.

Fred's progress on developing his baits and ideas were interrupted several times, over the years,



A Larkfield mirror of 22lb 4oz, October 1972

when various individuals sort to capitalise on his theories by publicising or marketing specials, some of which claimed to be of the same ilk or from the same source, often falsely. This was probably, with human nature being what it is, inevitable as Fred himself never wanted to profit from his ideas. However, his huge success with this sort of bait generally, created a massive demand for this type of product (Basically boilies) and he really should be credited with Inspiring/starting the whole 'massive' world-wide boilie-based industry.

There has been a fair amount of skulduggery in the field of bait production over the years, but the world is full of 'Arseholes' as we all know and I won't go off on a tangent here, otherwise we will end up discussing the unfortunate side of human nature.

I think that Dr R Morris BCSG CAA PAC CS & BAAAAAH!! should save that for another book.

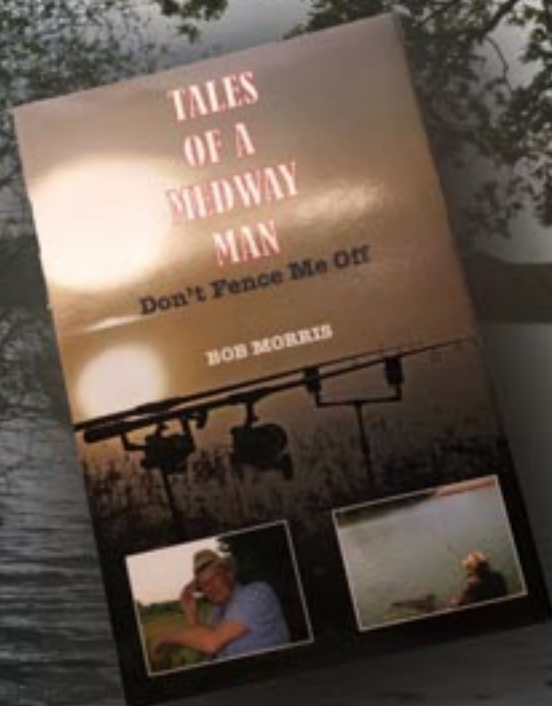


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The Lakes at Beachborough Beachborough Park Newington, Near Folkestone CT18 8BW 07469 809877			South London Angling Centre 286 Lee High Road, London SE13 5PJ 0208 852 4451		
Tricklebrook Fishery Colts Hill, Five Oak Green TN12 6SH 07743 955812			Sussex Bait Developments Falkenvil Fishery, Saltmarsh Lane, Hailsham BN27 2RJ 07971 303949		
Willows Angling Centre Bax Farm, Lower Road, Teynham ME9 9BU 01795 520887			The Tackle Box 251 Watling Street, Dartford DA2 6EG 01322 292400		
Wylands Farm Wylands Farm, Powdermill Lane, Battle TN33 0SU 01424 893394			Winchelsea Beech Angling Unit 5 Sutton Industrial Park Winchelsea Beach TN36 4LZ 07738 261541		
Trout Fisheries			Angling Clubs & Societies		
Brick Farm Lakes Windmill Hill, Herstmonceux BN27 4RS 01323 832615			Hastings Bexhill & District Ruth Anderson 07803 816668 info@hastingsandbexhillangling.co.uk		
Ouse Valley (Sussex) Flyfishers Contact us via our web site www.ovsf.co.uk			Tonbridge & District A & FPS For all enquiries please email: info@tonbridge-angling.co.uk		
Coltsford Mill Trout Fishery & Fly Tackle Shop Mill Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 9DG 01883 715666 / 07798 605867			Bromley (Kent) & District AS PO Box 895, East Grinstead RH19 9ND Email: bdas-kent-enquiry@bdaskent.co.uk		
Spring Hill Trout Waters Albans Farm, Romford Road, Pembury TN2 4BB 07951 304515			Linton Angling Society Jason Tuckey on 07983 56922 or email lassecretary@lintonangling.co.uk		
Tenterden Trout Waters Coombe Farm, Chennell Park Road, Tenterden TN30 6XA www.tenterden-trout-waters.co.uk 07880 722868			Wantsum Angling Association 07570 505934 or contact via website www.wantsumaa.co.uk		
Lakedown Trout Fishery email lakedowntroutfishery@gmail.com 01435 883449					

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Freshwater Informer



The **FREE** Publication for Freshwater Anglers in the South-East

First Edition

October 1996

RECORDS BROKEN AS LOCAL WATERS PRODUCE THE GOODS

Never before have so many big fish been caught from waters in Sussex and Kent than those hooked in the last couple of years.

On the River Medway on the Tunbridge wells stretch, Peter Woodhouse landed the British record barbel of 16lb 2oz and that was followed by a number of huge fish into double figures, including a 15lb 7oz by Bob Morris, a 15lb 12oz by Andy Harman, a 15lb 15oz by Kevin Colston-Hiles and a 15lb 6oz by Sam Fox.

At Hawkhurst Fish Farm earlier this year, an angler from Berkshire caught the biggest ever common carp landed in this country at 51lb 4oz. It came from the fisheries specimen lake where among the recent captures have been at least three more common carp over 40lb.

Winton's at Burgess Hill has produced dozens of carp over 20lb and at the time of writing, three fish over 30lb, the biggest to 15 year old Dustin Sussex at 31lb 2oz. Most of the fish have come from Mallard Lake and catches have included catfish to 42lb 8oz. To date over 100 catfish have been landed since 1st April.

From the fisheries Kingfisher Lake, bread flake lured the biggest crucian carp caught this year in the country which fell to Will Herbert at 31lb 12oz. Along with the mirror carp and catfish, it is a fishery record.



The 42lb 8oz record catfish from Mallard lake.

Freshwater Informer is a unique publication for freshwater anglers and advertisers in the South East. We will be publishing regular features on equipment, new products and reporting on rivers and lakes. In addition we will be carrying match reports and pictures and bringing you some of those fishermen's tales of super catches. We are looking for your support in this exciting and informative venture. We aim to cover the bulk of the South East area from West Sussex to Kent.

Brown trout record smashed at Bewl

Richard Robinson fished with a white and silver lure from a boat in the South East Regional Police Competition to cop the biggest brown trout ever taken from the water at 12lb 11oz.

The rainbow record at Bewl which has held since 1986 is 13lb 6oz 8dr.

Bewl Water Pike Fishing

Bewl Water will again be allowing pike fishing throughout most of November and the dates are: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 9th, 10th, 13th, 16th and 17th. Fishing will be from boats only at a cost of £13-50 with two anglers to a boat. Any angler wanting a boat for him, or herself will have to pay £27. Book in advance and for more information ring 01892 890661.



The 28lb carp (above left) and John Hammond (right) with his 22lb 8oz mirror carp, both caught at Winton.

Fastest Ever Growth Rate

The fastest ever growth rate recorded for carp was set at Wingham Fisheries near Canterbury where fish are said to be growing at an alarming rate. Already a carp no more than five years old has been caught at the staggering weight of 21lb 14oz.

Just 75 carp have been stocked in the 15 acre carp lake and are now growing at a pound a month and anglers are asking "Could this water produce the next British Record?"

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