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, a15lb 15oz by Kevin Colston-Illes 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 3 lb 12oz. Along with the mirror carp and catfish, it is a fishery record.





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?"



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.

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PREDATOR GUIDE

Pike Fishing by Roger Standen



Andrew Standen with a 23lb pike from the Kentland Fleet on the Pevensey Marsh. (Inset right) Barry Baynon with a 30lb pike from Ardingly Reservoir.

Now that autumn is upon us many anglers will now be turning to pike fishing and most will be hoping for a twenty pounder. Indeed some anglers will expect to catch several fish of this weight and a bit bigger during the winter months.

However, very few have landed a thirty, but fish of this size have been caught in local waters and although it wasn't fairly hooked there was once predator landed from the White Kemp on the Romney Marsh that weighed over 40lb.

Most waters that hold pike have at least one twenty within it's depths, so there is plenty of scope for the would-be specimen hunting pike angler.

On the Pevensey Marsh the Wallers Haven, Pevensey Haven and Kentland Fleet have all produced fish over 20lb and the latter has yielded at least two fish over 30lb. There are also other dykes on the marsh which could produce a twenty and one of these is the Hurst Haven.

Apart from the White Kemp there are a number of waters on the Romney marsh which hold very big pike. Fivewaterings is one of them and the Military Canal is another, while the gravel pits around Dungeness are always worth a try for an extra large fish. And, it wouldn't be the first time that an angler fishing for pike in this area has hooked into an eel of 7lb plus.

The trout reservoirs are always good waters to try and in the past Bewl Water, Ardingly, Darwell, Barcombe, Weir Wood and Bough Beech have all produced thirty pounders.

I believe I am correct in writing that Bewl Water has produced forty pounders in the nets and at Darwell a fish of 37lb was found dead in Apple Tree Bay.

Below Barcombe Mills on the River Ouse a pike of over 30lb was caught and of a similar size were hooked in the Adur. There have also been 30lb fish from the Rother and even tiny Brede has produced several twenties.



Alan Carter with a 27lb pike taken from the Rother.

On the Rother in particular twenty pound pike are caught every year, and one year not so long ago dozens of fish over this weight were taken including at least six over 27lb. Unfortunately it was the same fish and it couldn't be found the following season. Itis quite probable that it died during spawning along with one or two other large pike.

Since that time the fishing on the Rother hasn't been the same but, the Adur apart, it is still one's best chance of a twenty.



Never the less when searching for big pike it always pays to keep an open mind and keep an eye open for waters that are not heavily fished, for if there is one thing that pike thrive on it is neglect.

Pike waters soon become overfished and once the fishing starts to go off, anglers leave and look for another where pike are being caught, but if that same water is left alone for three or four years it often starts to fish well again as new fish grow quickly. The first anglers on the scene usually reap the benefits.

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ANGLING AUCTION



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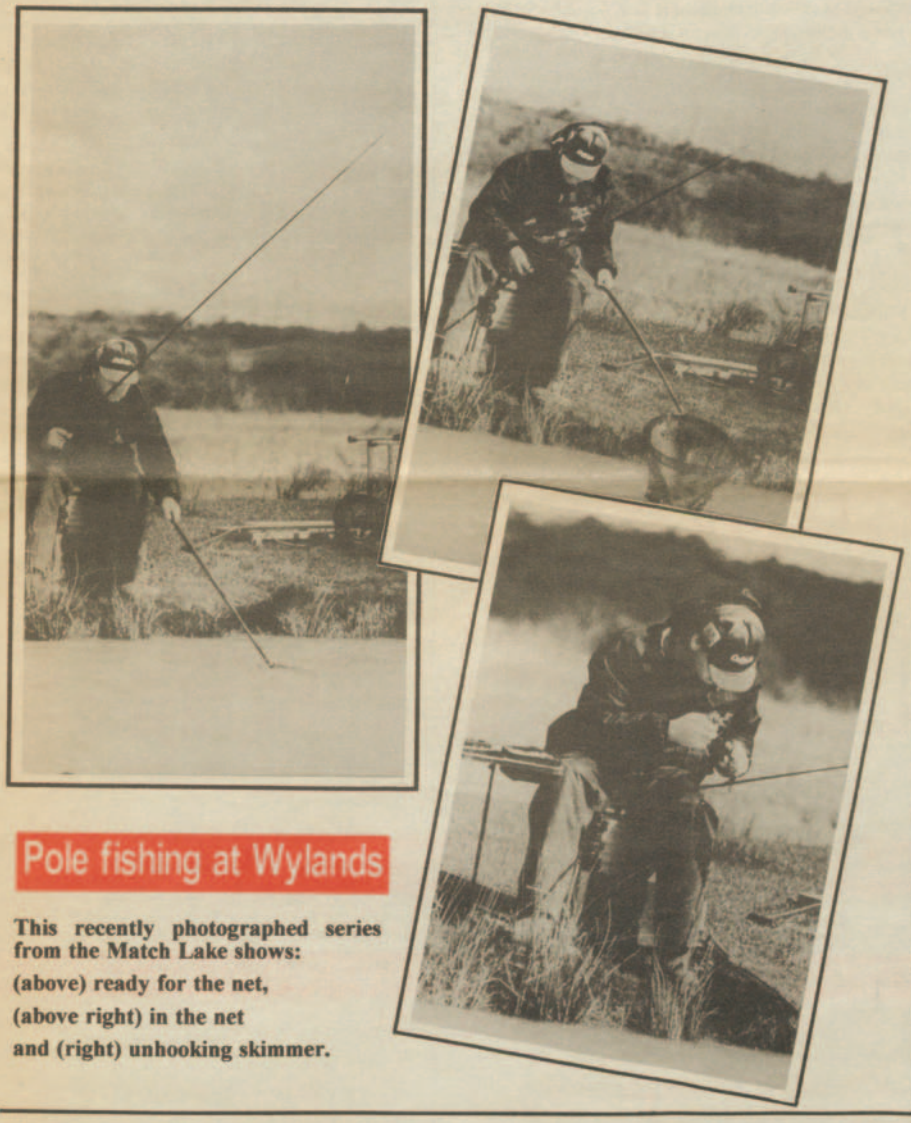
Wylands want more matches

"We have a 200 peg match canal that is two miles long with 15 metre pegs and it is not being fully utilized" said Colin Bourner, one of the owners of Wylands Angling Centre near Battle. "What we need are secretaries to ring us and book the water for next year".

The match water has a lot going for it. The banks are flat and comfortable and even after heavy rain it is never in spate. In fact, commercial fisheries are generally a safer place for children since there are always plenty of adults on hand should anything happen and the anti-fishing brigade do tend to pick on individuals.As well as the match canal there are another seven lakes at Wylands which include Field Lake and Old Specimen Lake where, with a little knowledge, the average angler can bag up. Bags of up to 70lb are not uncommon and some anglers have topped the ton.

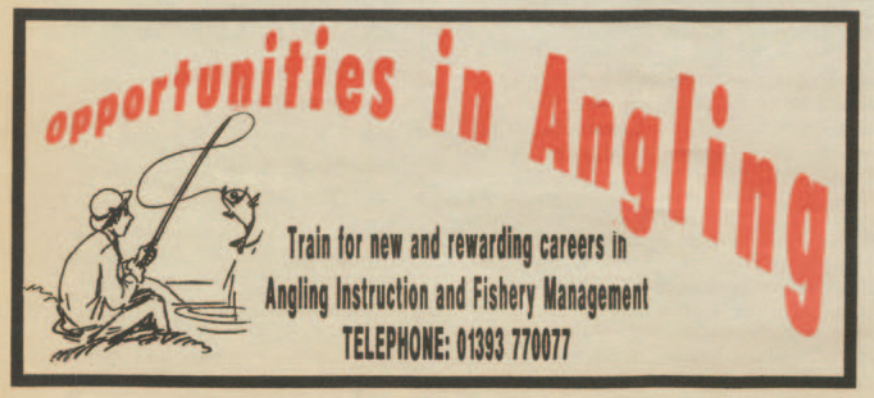
A little harder is House Lake where carp over 20lb have been caught, but again large bags of bream, roach, rudd, perch and carp can be taken. On New Specimen Lake there are always plenty of doubles caught and as an added bonus the odd barbel is sometimes taken. Kell Lake is the real specimen lake where the carp are really difficult to catch, but most of them are doubles and the best of them scale over 20lb. The water also holds big perch, bream, tench, rudd and roach.

Middle Lake can also be very productive water for smaller fish, but it also has it's specimens. Perch certainly grow to at least 3lb and could well top the 4lb mark. A 6lb bream was caught there just the other week and, along with the many carp between 5lb and 10lb, is the odd bigger fish which reach 20lb.



Pole fishing at Wylands

This recently photographed series from the Match Lake shows:
(above) ready for the net,
(above right) in the net
and (right) unhooking skimmer.



TROUT ROUND UP



Chalk Springs, Arundel

The four spring fed lakes covering a total of 5 acres at Chalk Springs all fished well throughout the summer with the cool water keeping the temperature down during the very hot weather.

The crystal clear water makes the lakes ideal for stalking and since the minimum weight of the trout stocked is 2lb and the largest is well up into double figures, the fish are likely to give a good account of themselves. All of the lakes are stocked with both browns and rainbows.

In the last couple of weeks two big rainbows have been caught. The biggest was Clive Griffin of Essex who fished the East Lake for a fish of 15lb 6oz which was taken on a Hair's Ear and floating line. The other big rainbow of 14lb 12oz was taken on a yellow wobble worm by 12 year old Richard Beridge of Worthing, while Arundel man Paddy Hill fished a leaded bug for a brown of 5lb 10oz.

Day tickets are £26 for four fish, five hour ticket £17 for two fish, afternoon ticket 2pm until dusk, £21 for three fish, evening ticket £16 for two fish. The fishery is open from 8.30 a.m. to dusk.

Corporate and Club days are catered for with exclusive use of all the lakes and lunch in the fishing lodge. Breakfast can also be arranged. Season tickets and block tickets can be arranged. For more information ring Jonathan Glover on 01903-883742.

Spring Wood Trout Fishery, Flimwell

The two trout fishing lakes are fishing well and the biggest rainbow recently scaled 9lb. It was hooked on a black minkie fished on a floating line.

Lakedown Trout Fishery, Burwash Common

The fishing at Lakedown has been a bit difficult recently, though some excellent catches have been made and the best bag has weighed 30lb. Two large doubles were also caught scaling 13lb 8oz and 12lb 12oz.

Blackwall Farm, Petworth

There are two lakes at Blackwall Farm, both two and a half acres and ranging in depth from 3ft to 17ft. The fishing has picked up on both lakes in September with three big rainbows coming to the bank in the last couple of weeks. The largest taken by S.Turner weighed 17lb 8oz, while London angler A.Bingley landed a fish of 15lb 2oz and D.C.Perkins a rainbow of 14lb 10oz.

Favourite flies are gold head daddy long-legs sunken, damsel nymphs and cat's whisker. Anglers mainly fish with floating lines.

The two lakes are stocked with different sized fish, and on the lake where rainbows are stocked from 3lb to 20lb the ticket is £45 for 4 fish, half day is £36 and evening £25, while on the lake where trout are stocked from one and a half to ten pound day tickets are 22lb for 4 fish, half day tickets £18 and evening tickets £14. Group bookings with lunch are a speciality.

Yew Tree Farm, Rotherfield

The fishing has improved since the cooler weather and is now good with numbers of anglers catching their limit of four trout. Dry fly fishing has been exceptionally good as rainbows were hooked on daddy long-legs and dry mayflies. The biggest fish weighed over 6lb, but the average stocking size is 1lb 12oz.

Day tickets are £18 for 4 fish or £10-50 plus the cost of fish, with fishing from 8a.m. to one hour after sunset. a morning ticket from 8a.m. to 2p.m. is £12-50 for 2 fish, or £7-50 plus cost of fish. Evening ticket from 5p.m. to one hour after sunset £11 for 2 fish, or £7 plus cost of fish.

There are three lakes to choose from with the largest at four acres and the other two covering two acres between them. Toilets are on site and there are facilities for making tea and coffee.

Barcombe Reservoir

Boats are now available at Barcombe where the best bag so far this season was taken from a boat when Pat Fulker of Brighton fished an orange muddler for four fish scaling 10lb 8oz. His best scaled 3lb 4oz. Also in the boat, his son Neil caught rainbows to 3lb 8oz. Buzzer are still hatching and the average limit weighs 6lb, the rod average taken from four fish limits and two fish limits is 2.6 per rod.

Perch have made a comeback ...but are they here to stay?

Report by Roger Standen



Most waters now hold perch and it is not unusual for matchmen to catch them among other fish during a competition. Pleasure anglers are also used to catching small perch while fishing with maggots or worms and although big perch are not easy to locate or catch, there are enough around for specialists to spend many hours in their pursuit.

This was not always the case. In the early seventies the species was struck by a disease which swept the country and all but a few isolated pockets of them were wiped out. The perch of the Romney and Pevensey marshes which were once numerous vanished almost overnight and it was the same story throughout the entire country. Huge perch along with many smaller ones were found washed into the margins on many of our lakes and reservoirs, but a decade later in the early eighties the fish were showing signs of a recovery. Specimens were cropping up throughout Kent and at Bewl Water numbers of these fish were caught over 3lb during a pike cull.

Two groups of anglers, unbeknown to each other, had deliberately and simultaneously set about catching them during the culls. Eventually the two groups got together and the Perchfishers Club was formed. Around the same time and not so far away in the village of Horsmonden a couple of anglers had discovered that Furness Pond held an unusually large head of very big perch and set about catching them. Pete Garvin was one of these anglers and his list of very big perch is legendary. It includes six four pounders up to 4lb 13oz, but when the British record was finally broken it was John Shayler who caught the monster from the same lake weighing 5lb 9oz. Meanwhile, back at Bewl, the perch disease had struck again and all but a few survivors died before anyone could top the 4lb mark. Shortly after John Shayler broke the record things started to go wrong at Furness Pond, but it wasn't the perch disease that caused the trouble. The water had been heavily fished for perch and at one time there were 500 names on the waiting list of the club that fished the water, but because the lake also held pike many anglers fished for perch with wire traces and treble hooks. It is also the case that the water holds lots of carp between 2lb and 6lb with a sprinkling of larger fish. The problem was that it was almost impossible to fish exclusively for the bigger fish. Boilies, luncheon meat, paste, peanuts, tiger nuts and many other baits produced plenty of runs, but from smaller carp. However, because the lake was overstocked, the carp had found an unusual form of protein not generally recognized as carp food. It was dead fish and once anglers realised they could catch bigger carp on deadbaits, they would fish accordingly. All of this would have been all right, except some of the anglers would hedge their bets and fish with a deadbait large enough to catch pike but small enough to give themselves a chance with perch and carp. This meant fishing with treble hooks and wire traces. Now even if a pike is deeply hooked an angler who knows what he is doing can remove them, but that is not the case with perch and many died as a result. Carp can also be damaged by treble hooks and it is possible that if more than one point sticks in the mouth it can be completely sealed. What happens then if the fish is lost with the hooks still in it? Perch are voracious predators and appear robust and strong but in fact they, more than any other fish, suffer from bad handling and although they often swim away after deep hooks are removed, ten or fifteen minutes later they often turn belly up and die.

At Furness Pond as more and more anglers became aware of it's specimens it was fished heavily and badly until most of the perch died. Certainly they were not caught much after 1988 and although the odd big fish is still reported from Furness, not a single photograph has been published. I will leave readers to make up their own mind as to whether the water still holds big perch, but I know what I think and my views are much the same as the rest of the Perchfishers Club.

Never the less, Furness Pond apart, now in the nineties there are big perch in many waters and they have even made a comeback on the Pevensey Marsh, though sadly there are no such signs on the Romney Marsh drains and dykes. This though is not surprising since the water authorities have run the water levels low and many dykes have been piped.

Some of the best perch waters are commercial fisheries, usually those that are heavily stocked with carp. Carp always take the bulk of the food in a mixed fishery with the inevitable consequence of the roach, rudd and bream becoming stunted. This makes ideal conditions for perch which grow big and fat on the small fish. Purposely dug commercial fisheries are comparatively new and were not around when the perch disease struck in the early seventies. There were not many when it hit again in the eighties, so while areas like the Romney Marsh are unlikely to produce all those 2lb and 3lb perch which it used to in the sixties, there are now lots of new waters where perch grow big and it is not beyond the realms of possibility that a new British perch record will come from such a water.

Often, because most of the anglers who fish these waters do so for carp, perch can remain undetected



A young Tony Fuller with a bag of perch which were numerous during the sixties on the Romney Marsh.

for years and, like pike, perch thrive on neglect. It seems to me that one of the many commercial waters where nobody has fished for perch will one day produce a real monster. The only problem for the future is the possibility that the perch disease will return. Having witnessed the disease twice in my life it seems almost inevitable that it will appear for a third time. I hate to sound pessimistic but one has to be realistic. Even so, the last time it struck some waters remained untouched. The Crumbles gravel pits at Eastbourne for example remained free of the disease as did Normanhurst Lake at Catsfield. With these extra fisheries now holding big perch, perhaps, even if the disease does return, it will leave enough for us to continue catching them.

Four locals join England squad

Sponsored by Fulling Mill Ltd. and Southern Water Services, this years final of the English Loch Style Fly Fishing Championship was held at Kent's Bewl Water where among the twenty two anglers selected for the England squad were four locals. Fished from boats, the event was fished by 102 anglers from all over the country.

The four local men, all Bewl Water regulars, are: David Fleming (Sheppy), Len Childs (Swancombe), John White (Hurst Green) and Keith Nicholson (Tunbridge Wells). Fleming is in the squad for the first time.

Two hundred and ninety four trout were caught averaging 1lb 7oz and the most successful flies were: Pearly Wickham's, Hare's Ear Nymph, Soldier Muddler and Cat's Whisker with a fritz body. The biggest trout of the day was a rainbow of 2lb 5oz taken by Dave Currie of Northampton.

The trout were well spread, but the most productive areas were: The Dam, Ferry Point, The Nose, The Cages and Hook Straight which all produced qualifying bags.

This year nearly 650 anglers entered club and regional competitions with ambitions to join England's squad for 1997's Home Internationals and 102 competed for a place in the top 22.

The successful ones were:

Mike Tinnion (Keswick, Cumbria)

Paul Miller (Peterborough)

John Ielden (Haynes Beds)

Nick Long (Welton Bath)

David Fleming (Sheppy, Kent)

Julian Hubbard (Beauchamp, Leics)

Iain Colelough (Great Hayward, Staffs)

Mick Massingham (Rushden, Northants)

Len Childs (Swanscombe, Kent)

Jeremy Clarke (Saltford, Bristol)

Ron Neil (Taunton, Somerset)

John White (Hurst Green, Sussex)

Andrew Ramsden (Kewick, Cumbria)

Keith Nicholson (Tunbridge Wells)

Ronnie Duke (Newcastle-on-Tyne)

Bob Huggett (Aylestone, Leics)

Alan Williams (Gloucester)

Mike Perrin (Tewksbury, Glos)

Paul Weiss (Reading)

Robert Dadd (Bovey Tracy, Devon)

John Lindsey (Grafham, Cambs)

Half of these will compete at Bewl again in the Spring International in June 1997 and half at Loch Leven in September.

The local mens catches were: David Fleming 7 trout for 9lb 14oz, Len Childs 5 trout for 8lb 8dr, John White 5 trout for 7lb 10oz, Keith Nicholson 5 trout for 7lb 8dr.



MATCH RESULTS

• **Crowborough AC** won the match against Isfield and District and Horsted Keynes at Wilderness Lake near East Grinstead where catches were made up of mainly carp.

Crowborough 275lb 6oz, Isfield 171lb 6oz, Horsted Keynes 126lb.

1st Bob Sutherland (Isfield) 45lb 11oz, 2nd Graham Colvin (Crowborough) 39lb 9oz, 3rd Ray Funnell (Crowborough) 37lb 13oz.

• **Heron Angling Club** beat Hastings and Bexhill FAA on the White Kemp 37lb 12oz to 35lb 15oz.

1st R.D.Trask (Heron) 7lb 6oz, 2nd Derek Stanbridge (Hastings) 7lb, 3rd Cyril Gamlin (Heron) 6lb 5oz, 4th Lee Martell (Hastings) 6lb, 5th Chris Hitchens (Hastings) 5lb 13oz.

• **Compleat Angler** fished at Faulkenvil Fishery where carp were the main species.

1st Stephen Kemp 38lb 6oz, 2nd Paul Hamper 25lb 12oz, 3rd Andy Knight 21lb 4oz, 4th Roger Weston 16lb 1oz.

• **Clive Vale Angling Club** were at the Clive Vale Reservoirs.

1st Trevor Finch 15lb 5oz, 2nd John Plumbridge 12lb 7oz 8dr, 3rd Peter White 12lb, 4th Kevin Brunton 7lb 7oz 8dr, 5th Brian Christopher 6lb 14oz.

• **Seaford Angling Club** fished their club match on the Kentland Fleet.

1st Andy Cumming 7lb 15oz, 2nd Trevor White 4lb 15oz, 3rd K.Bibby 2lb 1oz 8dr.

• **The Kent Summer League**

The third round was fished on the Wallers Haven at Ironbridge and Middlebridge.

Top four on the day were: Cardinal Black 74 1/2 pts, Hornchurch 69 1/2 pts, Ryders 69pts and Polegate Blue 66pts. Teams overall after three rounds: Cardinal Black 205 1/2 , Ryders 200 1/2, Polegate Blue 200, Medway Match Group 197 , Cardinal Red 187, Hornchurch 175, Anchor Holland Red 174, Polegate Pink 171 1/2, Hailsham Red 163, Snodland Strikers 141, Hailsham Blue 135 1/2, Catheram AC 121 1/2, Anchor Holland Blue 111 1/2, Polegate Green 96, Nomads 72 1/2, Rookery 56.

• **Sussex Summer League**

The third round was fished at Gold Valley, Hampshire.

Overall results, Top four after three rounds: Delcac 207, Passies Gold 207, Banstead 187, Polegate 185.

• **The East Sussex Winter League** starts on the 6th October at Cannon Bridge and Hartlake Bridge on the Medway at Tonbridge.

• **The Kent and South East Winter League** also starts on the Wallers Haven at Middlebridge on 6th October.

Glynde Reach Restored

The Glynde, Beddingham and Firle Angling Club control just one water, Glynde Reach, and when it was polluted the club were struggling to survive after many members left because they had nowhere to fish.

That was eight years ago and today, after much restocking by those who remained within the club including National Rivers Authority bailiff Mick Bradford, the water is almost back to where it was. The two hundred and fifty peg water is now producing good bags of mixed fish and some good specimens. Carp have now been taken to 22lb, bream to 3lb 14oz, tench to 5lb 1oz, pike to 24lb, roach to 1lb, chub to 12oz, small perch and gudgeon.

On the sea side of the pumping station there were plenty of mullet, more than have been spotted for many years. According to competition secretary Roger Briarley, there were thousands including some very big fish weighing to 6lb.



Frank Harrigan with 'Percy' at 32lb 5oz from Buckshole Reservoir.

Big mirrors at Buckshole Reservoir

Only the dedicated carp anglers fish Buckshole Reservoir in Alexandra Park in the centre of Hastings for any length of time, for although the water holds plenty of big carp including at least one fish over 30lb, they are very difficult to catch.

However, Frank Harrigan from Icklesham will always remember his first ever carp fishing trip to the water for he landed the biggest fish in it. Fishing with boilies, Frank hooked and landed the mirror carp known as Percy when it weighed 32lb 5oz. Earlier Frank had landed another mirror which wasn't weighed, but was thought to scale 20lb plus.

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Roses Lake a carp free zone

With carp being stocked in just about every water one can think of, sometimes to the detriment of other species, it is nice to find a water which has been especially dug for other species.

At Wylands Angling Centre all their waters contain carp and some of them run to 20lb plus, but their most recently dug Roses Lake is a carp free zone. It has been stocked with bream to 5lb, roach, rudd and perch, but no carp.

The water is a hit with many pleasure anglers who just want a days fishing without the hassle of the high -tech angling that is sometimes required for carp fishing.

Agency under attack

Colin Bourner, Secretary of the Commercial Fisheries Association, has written a letter of complaint to Ed Gallager of the new Environment Agency. He is complaining that the Chief Fisheries Officer, Tony Owen, has no control over the actions of the Regional Fisheries officers. At the time of writing he is still awaiting a reply.



10 year old Sam Carter at the Wishing Tree Junior Fish-In with a carp. Sam was last years winner.



A young angler bends into a carp.

Junior Fish-In at Wishing Tree

The Junior Fish-In at the Wishing Tree Reservoir near Crowhurst, organized by Hastings and Bexhill F.A.A., was a great success with 17 of the 24 young anglers who took part catching fish. All told 130lb of carp were caught. John Fellows landed the biggest which weighed 10lb 9oz and he also had the heaviest bag of 23lb 8oz.

Results: 1st John Fellows 23lb 8oz

2nd Peter Clarke 14lb 12oz

3rd Sam Allen 12lb

4th Oliver Foster 10lb 2oz

5th Shaun Smith 10lb.

Prizes were donated by: Environment Agency, S and H Tackle, Freebies, Terry Hayden, Tight Lines, Sidley Pets, Tesco Stores, Battle Angling, Hastings and Bexhill F.A.A., Kevin Nash and Steve's Tackle.



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Days Gone By



Roger Standen reflects on his earliest fishing memories

Sometimes when I am waiting for those tench to come on to feed and there is nothing to do but to sit in the sun, my mind starts to wander. I reflect on those early years in my angling career when the only way of reaching a venue was to push bike. I am thinking now of the fifties and early sixties, before most of us had cars and before optonics, carbon fibre rods, boilies and before commercial fisheries. Most of my fishing in those days was done either in local ponds or on the Pevensey Marsh.

The Wallers Haven was called the Pevensey Sluice and the river ran right alongside the Star Inn where the cut off channel still remains. It was deep and my first ever eel which tied my line into snotty knots came opposite the pubs garden. It is still fresh in my memory even though it was 45 years ago. I had fished the red tipped quill float over depth and it was laying on the surface, resulting in the eel swallowing the hook before it registered a bite. A reminder that you should always plumb the depth. Other trips were made to Middlebridge where we would see other experienced anglers catch roach over a pound and bream over 3lb. But things were already starting to change and it wasn't long before the Sussex River Board embarked on one of it's biggest projects ever undertaken. They widened the river to twice it's size and dug it much deeper, eventually cutting a new channel through to the sea to the west of the Star Inn where it remains today. The huge bream and roach which inhabited the river were scattered far and wide and many anglers thought that they would never make contact with them again.

They were wrong, for it must have been 1952 or 53 when I walked downstream from Middlebridge to an area known as Pike's Hole, a series of bends between Middlebridge and the Star Inn. As I rounded the bend with my treasured three piece rod, which had a built cane tip and two whole cane sections that replaced my 8 shillings and six pence two piece whole cane rod, I came across an old man playing a large fish. He was precariously perched on the side of the slippery bank which had recently been dredged. When he spotted me he waved his free hand and told me to stand well back. The fish splashed on the surface, but the fight was soon over as the old man gradually drew the huge bream towards him where, with the skill of the old master he undoubtedly was, he guided it over the net. Once on the bank he allowed me to come closer and look. I was amazed at it's size and even more taken aback when he cracked it on the head and laid it with several others that I had failed to see laying on the bank, a move that would not be tolerated today. In those days, just after the war, many anglers took their catch home to eat or to give to the cat. This fish was taken to the Compleat Angler Club headquarters where it was weighed at 6lb 12oz, a new club record which held until just a few years ago. His second biggest was 5lb 15oz and while I am sure there were six all told I cannot remember the weights of them all, even if I was told at the time.

I often fished next to the old man after that and he taught me a great deal about fishing which eventually paid off. He showed me how to lay on with float tackle and how to flavour my bread paste with aniseed, but when I finally captured a large bream from the water it was on a lobworm, not paste.

Friends and I were fishing the second bridge at Middlebridge where the water was narrower since it was too close to the bridge to be dredged and because of this a large bed of broad leaved pond weed had escaped the jaws of the dredger. I was laying on with float tackle when it rose up from it's half cracked position to upright and then slowly disappeared. I struck into a solid resistance that didn't last long, for bream are not the greatest fighters in the world, but when it broke the surface I could hardly believe my eyes. This lovely bronze bream lay flat on the surface just waiting to be netted. A friend did the honours and after it was on the bank I breathed a sigh of relief but couldn't stop shaking, the fear of losing it had been so great. It weighed 3lb 11oz and remained my biggest fish until I started pike fishing.

Those early days of fishing were perhaps the best, always full of mystery and expectation. We knew only too well that the Wallers Haven held 20lb plus pike and I remember once being allowed in the Star Inn with a friend and his father which confirmed it beyond doubt. In a glass case hanging from the wall was a stuffed pike, not really very big, perhaps 5lb, but more interestingly there was a photograph. In the picture were I believe three anglers all holding up pike which ranged from about 24lb down to 15lb. There were several about 20lb, if my memory serves me correctly, and they were all caught from Pike's Hole. The Star Inn was much smaller in those days and was enlarged to it's present size in the seventies. I once contacted the landlord of the pub who ran it in the seventies and asked him what happened to the photograph, but he had no recollection of it.

Never the less, it was that photograph which I had seen in those early years that gave me the inspiration to fish for pike on the marshes and we soon made trips from Sidley, where I lived, to the Chilly Stream, Pevensey Haven and Rickney. From the Chilly Stream we caught a few pike to 5lb and lost bigger, but it was the perch that were more numerous and easier to catch. They were everywhere, near every bed of weed, against the reed beds and at every junction of a side dyke of which there were many. Brightly coloured with their black stripes, green bodies and orange fins, and they were of a good size. Many were in the 8oz to 10oz range and we even caught them over the pound despite our crude tackle. It was the upper reaches of the Chilly Stream at Popes Farm that we fished, where the water was 5ft deep and gin clear, it is now a mere shadow of what it was.

I have fished many dykes and drains since, but none of them are what they were. Land drainage by the river authorities have seen to that. The water meadows are all gone, but should the farmers return to sheep farming instead of cereal crop growing, then some of the fishing we used to experience in our youth could return. I just hope it's not too late.

Revival of the Old River

There can be little more devastating for an angler than to see his favourite water polluted, and when that water is the local clubs major fishery then words cannot describe the emotions of it's members. For some it is like losing a member of the family.

The feeling is of helplessness. Fish, some of which are ten or more years old, are laying dead on the surface and there is nothing you can do about it other than clean up and restock. It will then take years for the fishery to return to what it was, in fact few ever come back to what they were.

This is what happened to the Seaford Angling Club when salt water broke through to the Old River near Newhaven for four tides and killed every fish in the lake.

The Old River is actually a lake, but is called the Old River because it once was an oxbow off the River Ouse before it was straightened.

With every fish dead the club set about restocking the four acre lake and they also spent £5,000 on digging it deeper from 5ft to 8ft. The National Rivers Authority helped with the restocking and now, six years on, the carp top 20lb, tench go to 2lb 8oz, perch to 1lb 8oz, grass carp to 5lb, while rudd and roach make up the match weights.

The water may not be what it once was, a lovely tench water, but at least it is now worth fishing again and Seaford Angling Club and it's members look to the future with high hopes.

River Reports



Arun Fishing well in the lower reaches where bream to 5lb and roach to 1lb 8oz are making up the weights at Bury and below.

Adur Large pike to 30lb are expected to feed as the temperature drops. Bream to 4lb and roach.

Ouse Chub to 3lb, bream to 4lb, carp to mid double figures below Barcombe Mills. Pike to 12lb on seafish deadbaits.

Cuckmere Chub above Arlington, bream and roach below. The odd carp to 10lb below Shermans Bridge. Sweetcorn working well.

Wallers Haven Tench catches which were prolific early season have now dropped off, but the odd fish is still showing along with skimmer bream and roach. Odd perch to 2lb at Ironbridge.

Brede Roach, rudd, bream, dace, perch and gudgeon mostly small at Winchelsea. Bigger chub higher up.

Rother Big pike should start feeding from Blackwall to Bodium. Meantime small roach, bream, to 2lb, ruff, small chub, gudgeon and the odd tench are feeding on quiver tipped maggots and caster.

Medway Chub to 4lb and barbel to 13lb in the upper reaches. Lower down skimmer bream to 2lb, roach to 1lb and the odd big carp.

Beult Big tench and the odd big chub above Yalding. Also small roach and bleak near the Medway.

Teise The odd chub to 3lb and roach to 1lb with most areas fishing the same.

Sussex Farmer fined £1,000 for polluting stream with cattle slurry

A Sussex farmer was fined £1,000 with £606 costs by Haywards Heath magistrates for polluting the Herrings Stream at Twineham with cattle slurry in a case brought by the Environment Agency on September 18th.

Robert Davies of New House Farm, New house, Twineham pleaded guilty at the court to allowing farm slurry to enter the Herrings Stream. Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Ray Peskett, told the court that in February this year an Agency Officer was on routine patrol in the Twineham area when he noticed foam in the Herrings Stream at Herrings bridge. The water in the stream was dark brown and there was a smell of slurry in the air.

The officer traced the pollution to the defendants farm. When questioned Mr. Charles Davies confirmed that he was the joint owner of the farm with his father. He admitted he had been pumping slurry from a lagoon. He said the ground had been frozen at the time. The frozen soil meant the slurry had not soaked into the ground around the discharge point but instead had escaped into a ditch and had ended up in the stream.

Subsequent analysis of the slurry revealed the effluent contained three times the strength of ammonia needed to kill fish. Dead and dying roach and perch had been found for a distance of about 500m downstream from Herrings Bridge.

"The defendant company operated a pump regardless of the consequences of pumping farm waste at an unsuitable time and in an unsuitable location," said Mr. Peskett. "Any run-off was inevitably bound to get into the stream. The weather was such that run-off from frozen ground should have been expected."

In his defence Mr. Robert Davies stressed it was the first time operations at his farm had resulted in a prosecution. It was a complete accident which had been compounded by a lack of rain which had led to lower than normal levels in the stream. He said he was extremely sorry for what had happened. He added the farm is a relatively small family run concern with a dairy herd of 120 cows.

After the case Sussex Area Water Quality Manager, Richard Hammond said, "There are no short cuts when dealing with farm effluent or any other polluting liquor. Proper management and disposal is required at all times. The consequences of risking anything else jeopardises the environment and will produce a strong response from this Agency."

Two new lakes at Faulkenvil

Faulkenvil Fishery near Hailsham is expanding with two more lakes planned. The fishery is already a popular match and pleasure fishing venue and after Barry Payne caught a 25lb carp from the water, it is likely to attract the specimen hunter, but there is not always enough room to cater for everybody. Soon that problem will be solved when the four acre reservoir that is nearly completed is open for fishing in just over a year's time.

It is hoped that the new lake will give anglers more choice. It has been designed with an island running through the middle so that anglers who are fishing opposite cannot see each other. It also gives the fish a feature to swim near and anglers a target to fish to.

Also planned is a specimen lake, though this has yet to be dug.

On the same complex is a fish farm where among the fish that are being brought on are barbel, a species which are few and far between in this area. So far they have been grown to 16 inches and already one hundred fish of this size have been stocked in their main lake. Many have already been caught on luncheon meat and maggots.

The main lake is four and a half acres and can accomodate 58 anglers. Although a perch of 4lb 8oz was once taken the owners have no idea where this came from, but the main species are: carp, bream, roach and rudd along with the odd big tench.

Phil Tichbon of the Compleat Angler Club holds the match record for the water at 89lb 14oz.

Marshland Tench

By Roger Standen



It was back in 1961 when I caught my first tench from the Wallers Haven on the Pevensey Marsh which weighed 3lb 3oz 8dr and took the cup in the Hastings and Bexhill Freshwater Angling Association for the best specimen fish of the year. These days I probably wouldn't bother to weigh it since my biggest, all bar 1oz, is double that weight and some anglers have now captured fish into double figures.

In those days tench over 3lb were very rare indeed and even rarer on the Wallers, but it is a different story today. At the beginning of the season some anglers caught as many as 12 in a session and it is not uncommon for a match to be won with a bag of tench.

The fish are all of sizes ranging from around the pound mark to 5lb and there is no doubt in my mind that fish over 6lb exist, though none were caught this season.

Sweetcorn appears to be the favourite bait, though maggots have accounted for a number and so have caster, but all the usual tench baits work fished either on the float or the swim feeder. More important is where you fish and it does seem that most fish are taken from the margins.

As for location on the river, they do seem to be in all areas from the Star Inn to Boreham Bridge, but if I were restricted to one spot I would pick Ironbridge for this is the place where some years ago a number were stocked.

Back in the early fifties when I first started fishing the Wallers Haven, which in those days was named the Pevensey Sluice, I never saw a tench and indeed the first one I knew to be captured was that fish I caught myself back in 1961.

So, where have all these tench come from? Well, we know that there was a small stocking at the Ironbridge back in the early eighties and I believe some were introduced by the Sussex River Authority at the Star Inn in the sixties. Of course, some were just released by anglers who brought them from other waters, a move that would be illegal today. I must confess that when we were kids in the fifties, we used to fish a pond in Ninfield and all the tench we caught we would take down to the hill and release at Boreham Bridge.

The point is wherever they have come from, the Wallers has suited them, they have successfully spawned and they are growing big, in some cases they are replacing the bream in match weights which now seem to be on the decline.

What difference this will make to the pike is difficult to say, for wherever there are plenty of bream, pike grow big and the Wallers has produced a few big ones in it's time. Will they now feed on tench which are more powerful than bream and have a better chance of getting away? Only time will tell. But one thing is for certain, the tench seem set to swim the Wallers Haven for many years to come and as far as I am concerned that is good news.

Fish rescue

Fisheries officers from the Environment agency launched a major fish rescue at Aylesford Friary in Kent.

The pond at the Friary is being drained as part of a restoration project. Fisheries staff have been called in and are removing thousands of goldfish and carp from the lake to enable work to take place.

Framfield Open's

Open's will take place at Framfield on Spring Lake on 5th October and Brookhouse Lake on 6th October. Both will be 36 pegs.

Tickets £15 with optional super pools at £5. tickets paying first 3 and 3 sections, super pools paying 2 only.