

COUNTRY LIFE®

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EVERY WEEK

Collectors Issue

43 pages of arts and antiques

What makes summer

by Mary Berry, Jilly Cooper,
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The English, sport and why
everyone wants to beat us

Plus summer hats, the best of Chelsea
and the village where time never stood still



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Country Mouse

A fisherman's foray



BOOKING a day's fishing months in advance is like groping in the dark as you have no idea what the conditions are going to be like on your chosen day. The timeless adage of 'you should have been here last week' is the epitaph to many a fisherman's foray. Still, we'd plumped for the River Kennet (www.fishingbreaks.co.uk) at the beginning of June in the hope that the mayfly hatch would still be in full swing. It turned out that it had only just started, thanks to the coldest spring in decades.

The Benham estate in Berkshire is one of the most beautiful places in Britain. The chalk stream, with its many carriers, is as precious as any rain-forest and certainly a match for the famous Test in Hampshire. Slowly, the mayfly hatch began bringing screams of swifts and a lone black-headed gull to snap up the insects. A Canada goose moved her brood of 20 goslings from the main lake to join in the feast, but, for several hours, the trout ignored the bonanza. Bobby, Malcolm and I had each caught a few trout by teatime, but, suddenly, the trout switched on, especially in the little carriers to the main river, and the fishing became sensational. We drove home knowing that, if our fellow fishing friends asked, we could tell them they should have been there last week. **MH**