



Extoln Manor Farm

WELCOME TO EXTON MANOR FARM

Dear Fly Fisher,

Welcome to Exton Manor Farm By now I hope you are settled and are relaxed, ready to fish. Here is a summary of the fishing and what to expect; have a lovely day. If this is your first time here, I am sure you will enjoy this very special river.

THE RIVER MEON

The River Meon is a particular favourite of mine as I caught my first ever trout a few miles downstream of where you are currently sitting, so I am inevitably biased in all I write.

The Meon is entirely a Hampshire river that flows generally southwards from the South Downs to the Solent with a total length of 21 miles. It rises just outside of East Meon, then first flows north to West Meon and then southwest to Warnford before adopting its principal southwards flow. From Warnford the river flows through the villages of Exton, Corhampton and Meonstoke, Droxford, Wickham and Titchfield. From Titchfield the river flows some 2 miles through the marshes of the Titchfield Haven National Nature reserve before entering the Solent through the small harbour at Hill Head.



It is an almost entirely wild trout river, well known for a good run of sea trout and mullet on the fly at the estuary.

You would not expect to see sea trout as high up the Meon catchment as Exton, but as a child I vividly remember seeing them leap the weir at Wickham Mill.

THE FISHING

This is a brief synopsis that I will hope gives you a better idea of what to expect, where to go, the best tactics and so on. As you will have gathered this is a single beat, reserved for just one Rod so you will be in splendid isolation.



From the hut you need to wade across the river and make your way downstream via the meadow to the bottom of the beat at the hedge line. Get into the river opposite a white house. This first section is deeply shaded by the tree canopy; it does not look productive, but it usually is.

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View from the start of the beat

As with everything on the Meon, patience and stealth are always at a premium – two tactics stand out – wait for the fish to come to you or delicately prospect in best looking water. I tend to do the former first and when I have had enough of waiting turn to the latter.

In a way you have to forget the standard chalkstream practice of spotting your fish, identifying the hatch and then cast to that particular fish. Yes, that does happen sometimes, but I'll wager that mostly you will end up casting to the rise rather than the fish.



I know I am making myself a hostage to fortune but I have never found Meon fish fly fussy; presentation (no drag!) is far more important than the pattern. And they are very quick to take, so strike with speed but not too hard. These are mostly small, wild fish of 3/4lb or less. However, they are devils for getting off, burying themselves in the weed beds.

As you leave the canopy you will be on the section that runs in front of the hut; again, it is very much the case of prospecting the likely riffle water or waiting for a fish to show itself. Beyond the hut the river opens up on the right with a hedge on the left.

By the time you reach a steel gate on the left and cattle crossing you will be about two thirds of your way to the top of the beat that is ultimately shaded by a stand of trees. The road bridge marks the end of the beat. There are some deep pools below the bridge, but this is a tricky spot to fish, and you might have to revert to bow-and-arrow style casting.

To return to the start of the beat use the stile to get over the fence and walk down the meadow.

Fishing Hut

The fishing hut has comfortable chairs, a table and the catch record book. The key is kept in a key box on the lefthand end. Code in your confirmation letter. There is no water, stove or tea/coffee so take all your own provisions.

Places to Eat

- The Shoe Inn, Exton (1/4 mile) 01489 877526. Good beer and excellent food. Always a good idea to call ahead to check the times food is served and book a table, especially at the weekend.



- Bishops Waltham (5 miles) – quaint market town with plenty of pubs, shops and restaurants

Local stores

- Meonstoke Post Office & Village Stores, Warnford Road, SO32 3ND (1 mile)

Places to visit

- Beacon Hill – great walk and view. Free. 1 mile.
- Old Winchester Hill National Nature Reserve – ancient hill fort. English Heritage site. Free. 3 miles.
- Butser Ancient Farm – iron age settlement. 10 miles.

I will be sending you an email in a few days' time so if you have a spare few minutes to give us some feedback from your visit it would be really appreciated.

I hope that you have a great day with us at Exton Manor Farm and that we see you another time.

Tight Lines!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Simon Cooper
Fishing Breaks Founder & Managing Director

Emergency

The approximate postal address is:

Church Lane, Exton Hampshire SO32 3NU

Doctors' surgery

Bishops Waltham 01489 892288
Out of Hours 111 or 999

Local hospital

Royal Hampshire County Hospital, Romsey Road, Winchester, Hampshire SO22 5DG
01962 863535

Chemist

High Street, Bishops Waltham