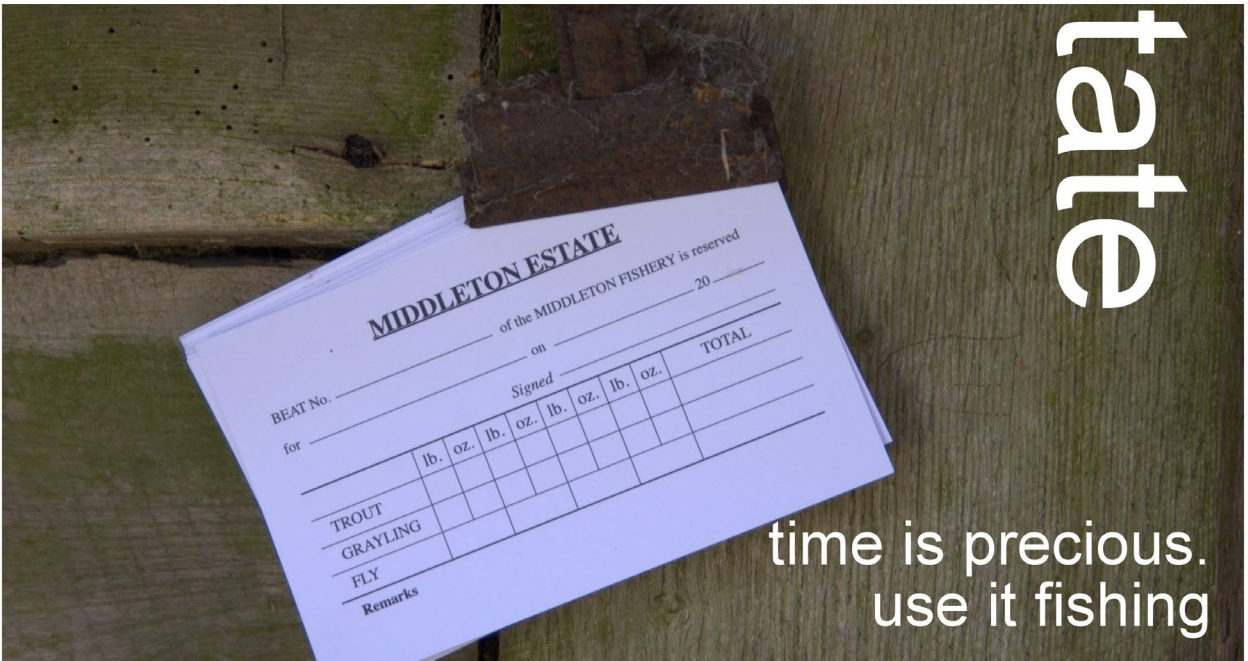




Middleton



on Es



state

time is precious.
use it fishing

WELCOME TO THE MIDDLETON ESTATE

Dear Angler,

Welcome to the Middleton Estate. By now I hope you are settled and are relaxing with a cup of coffee. Here is a summary of the fishing and what to expect; have a lovely day.

THE RIVER TEST

The River Test has a total length of 40 miles and flows through the Hampshire downlands from its source near Overton, 6 miles to the west of Basingstoke, to the sea at the head of Southampton Water.

The river rises in the village of Ashe, and flows west through the villages of Overton, Laverstoke, and the town of Whitchurch, before joining with the Bourne Rivulet at Testbourne and turning into a more southerly direction. It then flows through the villages of Longparish and Middleton to Wherwell and Chilbolton, where the Rivers Dever and Anton contribute to the flow.

From Chilbolton the river flows through the villages of Leckford, Longstock, Stockbridge and Houghton to Mottisfont and Kimbridge, where the River Dun joins the flow. From here the village of Timsbury is passed, then through the grounds of Roke Manor before reaching the town of Romsey. On the western edge of Romsey, Sadler's Mill, an 18th Century watermill, sits astride the River Test.

South of Romsey, the river flows past the country house of Broadlands, past Nursling that was once the site of a Roman bridge, and between Totton and Redbridge. Here the river is joined by the River Blackwater and soon becomes tidal, widening out into a considerable estuary that is lined on its northern bank by the container terminals and quays of the Port of Southampton. Finally the Test estuary meets that of the River Itchen and the two continue to the sea as Southampton Water.



THE FISHING

This is a brief synopsis that I will hope give you a better idea of what to expect, where to go, the best tactics and so on.

The Half Water

As you will know by now The Dog Leg Hut is located a short way from the top of the beat with the car parking adjacent. With one exception, all the fishing you will do today is downstream of the cabin. The Half Water is one of the longest single beats we have on the River Test, so be prepared for a bit of a walk.

Generally the beat is booked by a small group of two to three Rods who will have exclusive use for the day, or two 'solo' Rods who will share the Half Water. If you are a solo Rod and are not sure whether anyone else is fishing today, do feel free to call the Fishing Breaks office. The etiquette of sharing a beat with a stranger is that the first Rod to arrive starts at the bottom of the beat to begin fishing; the later arrival then does likewise fishing the water below the first Rod. Should the second Rod catch up with the first Rod it is customary to ask permission to pass on upstream and then recommence fishing some way further upstream. However, if you have both arrived together you may agree to do it differently and that is fine. If you want to split the beat into two I suggest that you make Eel Bridge the division point. NB Eel Bridge is now removed and out of use but the remnants are still visible.

If you wish you may cut across the meadows to reach the bottom of the beat to avoid walking along the riverbank.

Elm Stream Bridge - Bouncy Bridge



VIEW FROM ELM STREAM BRIDGE (removed)



BOUNCY BRIDGE

From the Elm Stream bridge to the next bridge the gradient of the river is noticeably steeper than the section that follows. The weed growth is usually heavy and the fish spread about. The area immediately above and below the ford is worth paying special attention to. The reeds grow right up to the bank as you approach Bouncy Bridge so you might have to push your way through them later in the year to get a shot at the pool below the bridge.

Jane's Stream

Jane's stream is one of the carriers dug as part of the water meadows system many centuries ago, which is why it looks so straight and uniform. It is only worth fishing in high water years when it is used as a relief channel for the main river. In general I would not pay it much attention.



Bouncy Bridge – Eel Bridge (removed)

The section from Bouncy Bridge to the hut looks flat and uninspiring, the current quite slow with a silted river bed and Mare's Tail weed. However, the fish seem to love it so I would spend a lot of time in this particular area. At the hut, on the bend, is a very deep pool with an undercut on the fishing bank side. The river speeds up after the bend and you will see more weed with the fish spreading across the river. There are some trees on the fishing bank; tricky to cast under but good fish holding spots. The pool below the former Eel Bridge has been considerably opened up in the past few years; a fantastic spot especially at dusk. Pay special attention to the nervous water 20-30 yards below the pool on your approach.



EEL BRIDGE POOL

Eel Bridge (removed) – Half Water Copse

Anyone who fished the Half Water prior to 2010 will recall the soggy banks along this section but after a brilliant restoration project by Brian Parsons the problem is no more. As you leave remnants of Eel Bridge behind you the trickiest thing about the first part is the relatively high bank, but the deep water caused by the impoundment of the bridge helps. However, once you reach the first bend the bank soon levels down and the water is shallower. There are not too many notable features up to the copse; it is really just a matter of scanning the entire width of the river to spot the fish.



VIEW FROM EEL BRIDGE (removed)



Half Water Copse - Dog Leg Hatch



The Copse up to the point where the river turns sharp left is a lovely section which always looks particularly amazing in the autumn where the leaves turn on the beech trees on the opposite bank. Again the current is fast and the fish hold indiscriminately over the width of the river. That said there are some deep cuts under the roots of the trees. Always worth a few speculative casts over these areas as the fish are nigh on impossible to see unless feeding on or close to the source.

As the river turns sharp left the beat becomes more of a stream as the water splits in two. The Willow Trees stream is usually good for some small wild fish and the stream will shortly bring you back to the Dog Leg Hut.



WILLOW TREE STREAM

Dog Leg Hut – Bathing Pool

This section is left to the devices of nature, but if you have some thigh waders in the car boot and fancy chancing your luck all the way to the road bridge, feel free to do so.



WADING SECTION

Places to Eat

- **The Plough Inn (½ mile)** The Plough Inn, Longparish, Andover SP11 6PB
Traditional village pub which is owned by the community. 01264 720069. www.ploughinn.org
Open all week but check times.
- **The Bourne Valley Inn (5 miles)** St Mary Bourne, Andover, SP11 6BT
Country pub with rooms. Open all day. 01264 738361.
- **Whitchurch (5 miles)** – plenty of choices with pubs, coffee shops and bakery.

Local stores

- **Village shop and Post Office (½ mile)** – Acre Stores, North Acre, SP11 6PG. Open 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday, 9.30am to 1pm Sunday.
- **Fishing & clothing shops** – Stockbridge (10 miles) has Robjents and Orvis.

Places to visit

- **Whitchurch Silk Mill** – a working silk mill powered by the River Test. 5 miles. Entry charge. Closed Mondays.
- **The Hawk Conservancy, Weyhill** – extensive collection of birds of prey. Admission charge. 5 miles.
- **Salisbury Cathedral** – magnificent spire, oldest working clock in the world, original Magna Carta and a beautiful cathedral close. Voluntary admission charge. 12 miles.
- **Mottisfont Abbey & rose gardens** – National Trust house and gardens with walk beside the River Test. Admission charge. 9 miles.

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

I hope that you have a great day with us at Middleton Estate and that we see you another day.

Tight Lines!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Simon Cooper
Fishing Breaks Founder & Managing Director

Emergency

The approximate postal address for the beat is:

Half Water: **Southside Road, Longparish, Andover SP11 6PN**

Doctors surgery

Whitchurch The Surgery, Bell St, Whitchurch RG28 7AE
Out of Hours 0844 477 2547

Local hospital

Andover War Memorial Hospital, Charlton Road, Andover SP10 3LB
01264 358811

NHS Direct 08 45 46 47

Chemist

Lloyds Pharmacy, 7 Newbury St, Whitchurch RG28 7DW.