

WELCOME TO THE PARSONAGE

Dear Angler,

Welcome to The Parsonage and your fishing on the River Test. By now I hope you are relaxed, reading this with a cup of coffee and preparing for a great fishing day.

Here is a summary of the fishing and what to expect; have a lovely day.

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



Ron Broomfield
River Keeper

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 in 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 Leckford, Longstock, Stockbridge and Houghton,

to Mottisfont and Kimbridge, where the River Dun joins the flow. From here the village of Timsbury is passed and then you are on The Parsonage beat. Below us are the grounds of Roke



Manor, Greatbridge and the town of Romsey. On the western edge of Romsey, is 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.

Between Chilbolton and Redbridge, the river was once paralleled by the abandoned Andover Canal. Much of the length of this canal was converted to a railway in 1865,



and much of this railway has since also been abandoned. As a result, most traces of the canal have completely disappeared, although the remains of a stretch of the canal can still be seen between Timsbury and Romsey.

About the fishing

This brief overview of the fishing broadly divides the fishing into the two obvious sections - Main River and carrier. Starting with the Main river: standing with the Cabin to your back look downstream to your right. The end of the beat is about 150yds away – there is a fence to mark the bottom boundary.



The main river is single bank only; the left hand side as you look upstream.

Main river:

The first section is from the bottom of the beat to the carrier outflow: It is hard to pinpoint any particular area, but I often have success fishing a weighted nymph hard against the left bank. Around the roots of the large tree are a prime location and where the main river and carrier currents collide.

Immediately opposite the Cabin is a great holding area; difficult to cast all the way across or mend the line, but great fun. You will miss many more fish than you will hook. From here to the bend is an excellent section where fish hold and rise across the entire river. After the bend shift your focus to the far side, under the trees and around the deflector boards. You won't get much interference from anglers on the other side that rarely realise how very productive these areas beneath the trees are!



The sharp bend comes on and off depending on the day; generally, look for the slack water below where the carrier stream on the far side comes in. From here on up to the grayling shallows the fish move and rise all over the river, but no set places except for around the small deflector on the far bank.

Grayling shallows are where the river is at its widest; there is a small, elevated fishing platform. Many years ago this used to be a cattle crossing, so the river is at its shallowest and grayling hang over this, pecking away. From the shallows on up, treat the river as you find it – the elevated bank makes spotting fish easier.

As the river starts a long turn towards the west, past the cabin on the opposite bank the food line is predominately in the middle or far side. However, don't disregard our bank as fish like to hold in tight, especially when you reach the line of alders down this bank. Tricky to cast, but productive.

SHARED RIVER ETIQUETTE

It is common on larger rivers for the different banks to be in different ownership, which brings into play how to cope with fishermen on the opposite side. There are no hard and fast rules, but generally the person fishing upstream has the 'right of way', so when you reach him or her, pause your fishing and restart a little way further upstream, leaving a decent gap between you. In theory the legal boundary is the mid-point of the river, but in practice this is ignored. If you wish to cast across the river, don't do it in such a manner that will interfere with other anglers or 'poach' rising fish that are obviously better placed for someone else. I apologise in advance if others fishing on the other bank don't observe the etiquette...



When you reach the carrier entrance, you will cross over a footbridge which affords a great view up river. It is very wide and a bit intimidating, but what you cannot see is that there is a gravel bar down the middle of the river.

Effectively this is two rivers, our side and their side, with the water only a few inches deep in the middle. Fortunately, the bank is very open with few obstructions behind so it is possible to get a long cast well across the river.

I would treat all the water as having fish holding potential and do keep on right to the top.

A huge, evergreen laurel bush beyond the quaint thatched shelter marks the top of the beat. Our biggest fish have been caught when casting upstream from beside the bush. You will see where I mean, where the water tails from behind the island.



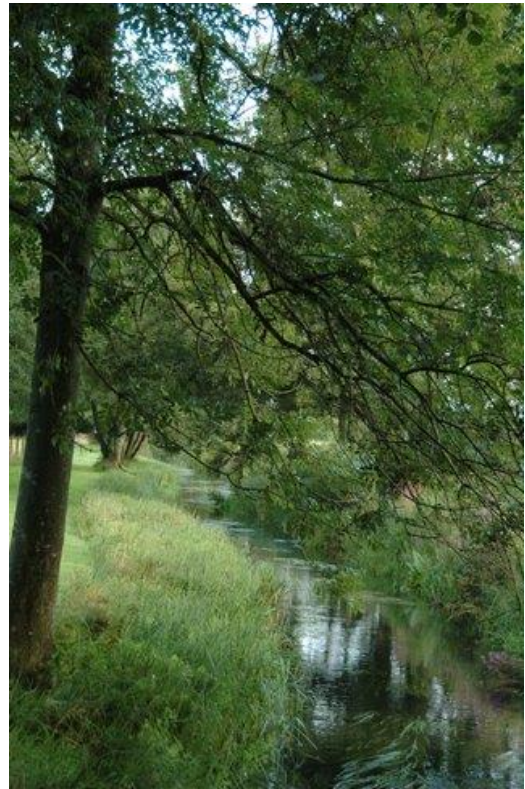
The carrier:

The carrier starts right beside the Fishing Cabin and is about third of a mile in length. You will be on the left-hand side as you progress upstream.

It is generally much easier to spot the fish in the carrier than on the main river, especially in the early months of the season. However, the banks are mostly peaty, so springy with a tendency to radiate heavy footfalls into the water thus spooking the fish long before you see them, or they see you. I generally like to move really slowly waiting for a fish to show itself.

The best holding spots are fairly evident with all the bridges that cross the carrier seemingly fish magnets. Directly above and below the gravel groynes are popular with fish and fishermen.

I won't give you too much detail of the fishing, beyond saying it is pretty well a straight shot until it re-joins the main river.



The Cabin

The Cabin is inspected most days but if anything is out of place or needs attention, please mention it to Ron or call the Fishing Breaks office.

There is a BBQ to the rear; there



WC

The WC is in the wooded area behind the Cabin. Follow the path and sign.

Places to Eat & Stay

- **Mill Arms (½ mile)** Barley Hill, Dunbridge, SO51 0LF
Open lunchtime and evenings Monday to Friday, all day at weekends, Food, rooms and local beer. 01794 340401.
- **Bear and Ragged Staff (1½ miles)** Stoneymarsh, Michelmarsh, SO51 0LB
Open all day. 01794 368 602.
- **Kimbridge Barn (1 mile)** Kimbridge Lane, Kimbridge, SO51 0LE
Open 8am to 5pm. 01794 339444
- **Romsey (3 miles)** – plenty of choices with hotels, pubs, coffee shops and plenty more.

Local shops

- **Esso Petrol Station and Subway (1½ mile)** Greatbridge Road, Romsey, SO51 0HB
Open 24 hours. 01794 513483.
- Fishing and clothing shops – Stockbridge (9 miles) has Robjents and Orvis.
- Beer, wine and food – again Romsey. There is a Waitrose in Alma Road, SO51 8AS

Places to Visit

- **Romsey Abbey** – Kings of England were crowned here in ancient times. Free. 3 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 and Rose Gardens** – National Trust house and gardens with walk beside the River Test. Admission charge. 2 miles.

I will be sending you an email in a few days time. If you have a 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 The Parsonage.

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 and Managing Director

Emergency

The address here is:

The Parsonage, Awbridge, Romsey, Hampshire SO51 0HE

Doctors surgery

Alma Road Surgery, Alma Rd, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8ED
01794 513422

Local hospital

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

NHS Direct 08 45 46 47

Chemist

Lloyds Pharmacy 123 The Hundred Romsey, SO51 8BZ. 01794 522716