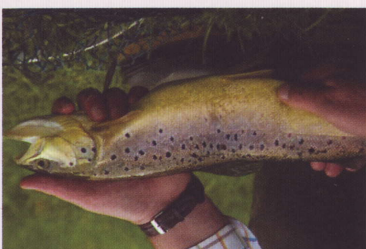
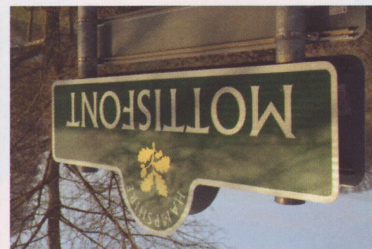


River Test for fly fishing

The most famous trout river in the world, the River Test is certainly a test for fly fishing. It is also a privilege to fish there and Fishing Breaks can give you the big break that is needed to enjoy the clear waters



A brief guide to the river Test

Hampshire is very fortunate to have the River Test, one of the world's most famous trout rivers, flowing through the county. Anglers from every corner of the globe flock to its banks from April to October to fish for the wily native brown trout in the gin clear waters.

Eminent people from every walk of life, with a passion for fly fishing, have fished the Test. General Eisenhower famously took time out from the D-Day landing preparations in May 1944 to fish, George Bush Snr had visited for the past three years and Prince Charles, president of the Houghton Club, owner of many miles of the river around Stockbridge, is a regular visitor.

The Test, along with the Avon, Itchen, Frome, Kennet, Piddle, Wylye and many other rivers in the region are known as chalk streams. This makes them ideal for brown trout to breed and thrive, fed as they are by crystal clear water that springs from deep down in the chalk layer that runs beneath Hampshire, Berkshire, Wiltshire and Dorset. In every respect, the River Test is the pre-eminent chalk stream. Physically, it is the longest; 39 miles from source to estuary. Historically, it is generally regarded as the birthplace of modern fly fishing.

The Test rises in north Hampshire in the hamlet of Ashe, not Overton as is generally supposed. It then travels on a south-west curve, growing in width and flow as first the Bournemouth, and then the Dever and the Anton join the main river.

At no point in its first 35 miles can the Test be regarded as one river. For it is an amalgam of the main channel, tributaries, carriers man-made for water meadow irrigation, side streams, mill channels and feeders. At some points two, three or even four streams run parallel, all fishable and such is the nature of the river that it is often hard to deduce which is main river and which is carrier.

On through the sheep-grazed valley the river flows, seemingly every sleepy, thatched village on its journey having some part of fly fishing history. Below Stockbridge, the river becomes appreciably bigger, in places too wide to cast across.

About Fishing Breaks

Fishing Breaks organises fishing by the day or short breaks for individuals, small groups and families. Fishing Breaks offers fishing on the River Test by the day on private beats starting at £150/per person from April to October.

• For further information contact Fishing Breaks on 01264-781988, or see www.fishingbreaks.co.uk.

returned, and there are kingfishers on every beat. only predators to benefit: herons are common, otters have wild fish – it is a virtuous circle, and fly-fishers are not the graying – need for spawning. More habitat, more food, more the clean gravel which all wild salmonids – trout, salmon and growth at the margins of wider sections of the beats narrows the channel, speeds the flow and reduces silt, so providing nymphs and stations for the fish that feed on them. Reed and ranunculus beds in the river serve both as habitat for large and growing populations of wild trout. Woody debris provides vital habitat for the invertebrates that sustain the The thick bankside vegetation is ideal for stalking, but also chalkstream fishing for the discerning fly fisher.

philosophy is a simple one: what is best for the native flora and fauna in and around the river also provides the best Abbey Estate are managed by the National Trust. The guiding waters of the River Test and the River Dun on the Mottisfont But it is not just the location that makes this so special; the six miles of trout water anywhere in the world.

the confluence with the Dun – probably the most exclusive 'Middle Test' – that is the river below Stockbridge and above neighbourhood the renowned Houghton Club, is situated on the Normandy to New Zealand. The Mottisfont water, like its pulse of fly fishers from Colorado to the Kola Peninsula, from The words 'Mottisfont Abbey' are guaranteed to quicken the

Mottisfont Abbey

Then the Wallop Brook and the Dun join the main river and it is only south of Romsey, a few miles from the sea, that the River Test finally becomes one single channel.