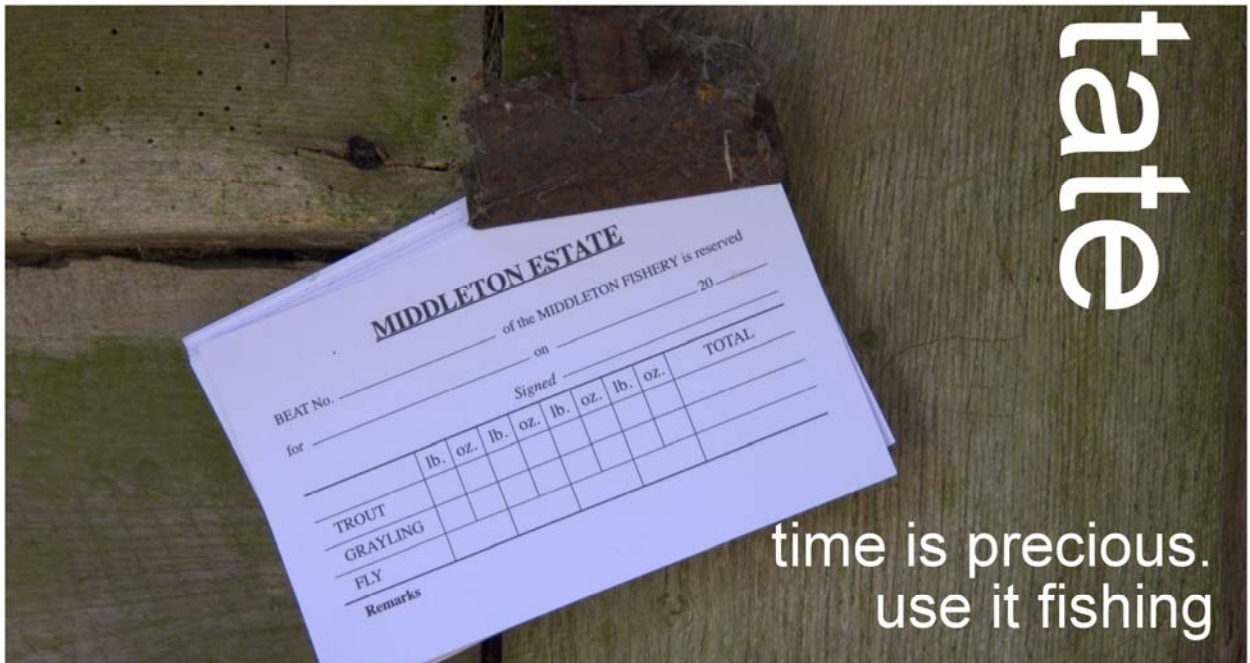




Middleton



on



estate

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. As you will have gathered there are two beats; the Home beat and the Half Water which run adjacent to each other, about quarter of a mile apart.

If you have booked just one of the beats there is no likelihood that you will see the fishermen on the other beat. If you have booked both beats you may switch between each as you wish but please keep an equal number of Rods on each beat at all times.

## The Home Beat



You'll be reading this is one of the finest fishing cabins in England. The story goes that at one time there was a flag pole mounted to the side which could be seen from the main house. The river keeper was under strict instructions to raise a flag when the fish began to rise to inform the house guests that a journey to the river would not be wasted!

Two quick notes: if you have arrived in more than two cars there is additional parking on the drive of Fishery Lodge. Secondly, the lavatory is downstairs under the stairs. The Home beat divides into two sections, with the thatched Turbine Barn the division point.

## Turbine Fishing Hut – Bucksclose Bridge

You may fish from either bank but for the purposes of this description I'll be talking as if on the left bank as you look upstream. Inevitably they are a couple of fish that lurk under the bridge and where water runs under the Turbine Barn; you'll have probably spooked them on arrival but they will be back on station by the time you have completed the beat ....



For the first section where the water is fast the fish tend to spread themselves evenly across the entire river. Pay special attention to the water just above where the channel offshoots are on the opposite bank leading into the Bog Garden. As you move beyond the trees the water slows and the river widens. Without the benefit of the fast current and the shade of the woods I find the fish are now more wary. They will be more to the side than the middle. The river turns away to your right and then to the left with the beat ending at the Bucksclose Bridge.

## Sheepwash Bridge – The Turbine Hut

The starting point for the bottom section is reached down the path alongside the river bank. The path is wide enough to do this without disturbing the river. When you reach Sheepwash Bridge you are at the starting point. No choice of which bank to fish this



time; you will be on the right as you look upstream. The houses on the opposite bank have no fishing rights.



This section is really fairly straightforward; where the fish lie will greatly depend on the weed growth which is hard to predict. Some years you will find great rafts, other years, especially if we have some resident swans, there will be less.



The deep swirling pool immediately below the Turbine Barn race is very heavily fished; my advice is to concentrate on the tail water below it. The fish will lie below the pool, even in the skinny water, so take great care to fish the fifty yards or so that runs up to the pool. It might look less productive than the pool, but I promise you it is not.

## **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 The Eel Bridge the division point. It is not marked on the map but if you set off across the field following the Home beat path but veer off left at the gate you will save walking the river to reach Eel Bridge.

### **Elm Stream Bridge - Bouncy Bridge**



**VIEW FROM ELM STREAM BRIDGE**



**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**

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 bed, 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 Eel Bridge has been considerably opened up in the past two 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 – 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 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**

## **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**

### **Booked both beats?**

If you are going to make The Home Beat cabin your base for the day there are a few options for reaching the Half Water. The most logical option is to walk down the Home beat to Sheepwash Bridge then cut across the field to Elm Stream Bridge. When you have completed the Half Water there is a route back from the Dog Leg Hut that brings you back to the top of the Home beat.

### **Places to Eat**

The Plough Inn, Longparish (1/2 mile) 01264 720358

A smart village pub. Always a good idea to call ahead to check the times food is served and book a table, especially at the weekend.

The Cricketers, Longparish (1/2 mile) – 01264 720335

Steve and Elaine run a traditional local village pub with home cooked food. Again just a quick call to check times is a good idea.



The Bourne Valley Inn (5 miles) – 01264 738361  
Smart country pub with excellent rooms.

Stockbridge (8 miles) – plenty of choices with one hotel, five pubs, tea shop and plenty more.

#### **Local stores**

Village shop and Post Office – Acre Stores, North Acre, SP11 6PG.

Open 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-1pm Sunday.

Fishing & clothing shops – Stockbridge (10 miles) has Robjents and Orvis.

Beer, wine and food – again Stockbridge. Thyme & Tide is good for take away sandwiches. Stokes is a lovely coffee shop and lunch place. The Co-op is a newsagent, general store and off-licence, open 7am-10pm. There is also a chemist.

#### **Places to visit**

Danebury Hill – ancient hill fort. Great walk and view. Free. 5 miles.

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!

**Simon Cooper**  
**Fishing Breaks Founder & Managing Director**



## Emergency

The approximate postal address for each beat is:

**Home Beat:**           **The Mount, Forton, Longparish, Andover SP11 6NU**

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

### **Doctors surgery**

Stockbridge           01264 810524

Out of Hours         0844 811 3060

### **Local hospital**

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

01264 358811

NHS Direct 08 45 46 47

### **Chemist**

High Street, Stockbridge (opposite Orvis)