

**Start of the season: anticipation**

After three months away from the river due to closed season, I arrived at the river at three in the morning – full of anticipation for the day ahead.

There was the faint light in the sky of a pre-dawn on the first day of a new fishing season.

The river seemed an oasis of life: circles dotting the water’s surface as fish rose and insects buzzed. A gentle mist rose from silver surface to grey dawn. Heart and river full of the anticipation of a morning’s catch.

I walked from the Weir on the Ham, downstream fifty yards towards my spot: the one place that I’d had in mind all the previous evening as the ideal place for first cast of new season.

I had been baiting up the spot using bread-paste every night for a couple of weeks, to encourage fish to use the place.

The sky had looked promising as I arrived full of anticipation and excitement for the day ahead. As the dawn broke and the morning passed, the day clouded over and my anticipation turned downheartedly to disappointment.

The actual catch was rubbish! By eleven I had caught the dismal total of three small roach. It was a complete failure of actual fishing, an anti-climax.

I gave up, getting no more bites. A bad job – but I was back fishing again the following morning.

I was only 14, and should have been at school, but the joy of fishing is infectious and once hooked you have to go back again and again for that fix of anticipation.