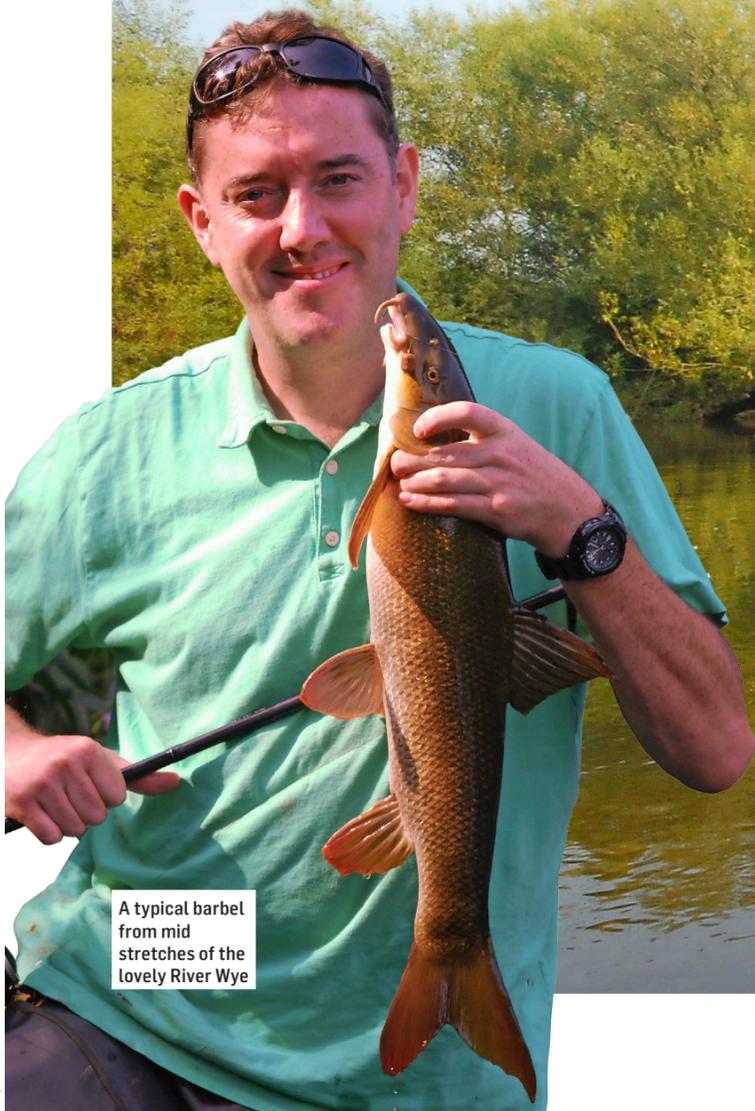


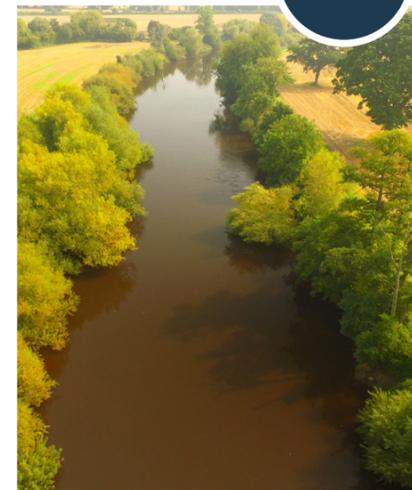
# Use a bomb for explosive action

When you're targeting shallower stretches, a bomb beats the feeder every time, says River Wye expert Adam Fisher

Words & Photography Mark Parker



A typical barbel from mid stretches of the lovely River Wye



A typically wild middle-stretch of the River Wye

**A**RE YOU guilty of falling into the 'feeder-only' trap?

If you're targeting shoals of barbel on rivers such as the Wye, looking for a big hit of fish between 4lb and 8lb, chances are that you will reach for a two-ounce feeder as your preferred rig choice.

This is just like the bloke that fished the same swim yesterday and the day before that and the day before that. You may then wonder why, after an hour to two, the swim is dead!

"The problem with the 'standardised' feeder approach for barbel is two-fold," says Adam Fisher, River Wye expert and owner of Angling Dreams fulfilment company.

"By using the feeder, you are presenting the fish with a baiting approach they saw yesterday, the day before and the day before that..."

"They have learned by association how feeders release their payload into the swim and, as a result, they shy away from this intense line of loosefeed very quickly. This is the reason you often have to use long hooklinks over 5ft to stay in contact with the fish.

"Swap your two-ounce feeder for a bomb, and you'll transform your barbel catches from a couple of fish to a dozen or more in a session. I guarantee it!"

To check out this sweeping assertion, we joined Adam at the Goodrich Castle stretch on the Wye where he demonstrated the perfect way to fish for barbel.

## The correct approach

All rivers are made up of 'riffle pools', lengths of shallow water (the riffle), followed by a deeper pool, before becoming shallow again.

Kepler's Law of Dynamics states that every riffle should be spaced five times the width of the river on average. It is the deep pockets in between the shallows where the fish lie up. They move into the shallows to spawn but that is

generally the only time.

To fish a 'riffle pool' correctly, you need to first introduce the loosefeed.

**TACTICS:**  
LEAD  
**SPECIES:**  
BARBEL  
**DIFFICULTY:**  
★★★★★



## USE A BOMB FOR EXPLOSIVE ACTION

"This is three or four handfuls of pellet combo and five or six handfuls of hemp, thrown in at the 12 o'clock position," explained Adam.

"This is left while you tackle up and get yourself prepared, about 30 minutes is perfect."

Adam's first cast will be between the 12 o'clock and one o'clock positions (flow left to right).

Ideally, he is looking to get a fish within the first 15 minutes. This will be a fish that has made the effort to swim upstream from its home in the deepest part of the pool and is prepared to feed confidently.

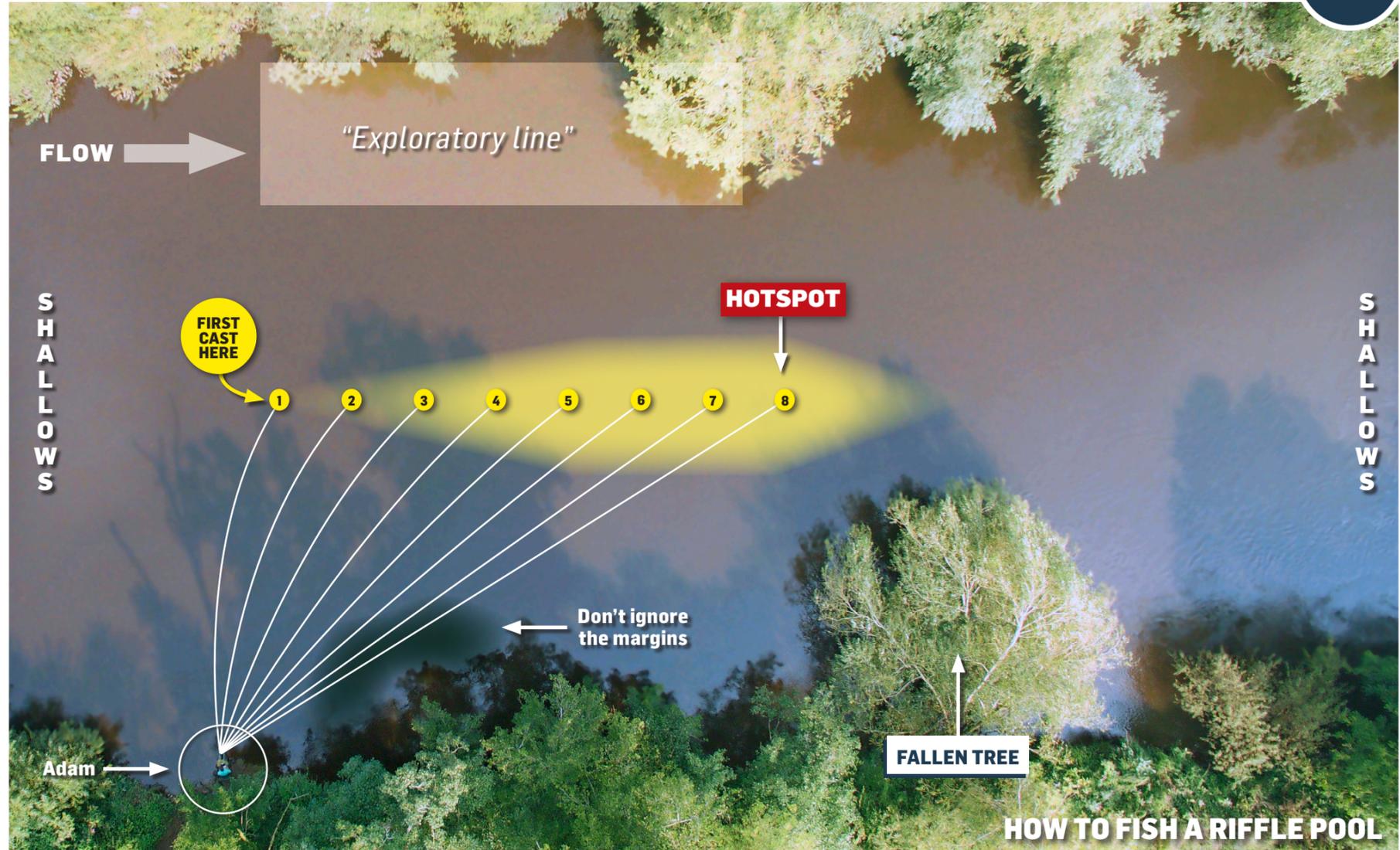
Thereafter, Adam will cast to this same spot and if there are no bites after a further 15 minutes, the next cast will be a metre further downstream, where the same process is repeated. A quick fish, recast to the same spot. No fish and the next cast will be another metre downstream.

You are looking to slowly creep your rig further and further down, until you are fishing in the deepest part of the pool, where the barbel spend their lives. As you do this, the chances of a bite will increase with every cast downstream, until you are fishing in the hotspot, when it should be a bite every chuck.

"The loosefeed you threw in will naturally wash down into this deeper area, and this is why it will become the session's hotspot," explained Adam.

"If your first cast of the session is into the hotspot, you might get a lucky fish or two, but you'll most probably spook the shoal. By creeping your hookbait towards them, you give the barbel longer to gorge on the loosefeed, building the swim and the fish's confidence to make a mistake."

By spacing your casts in 15-minute intervals, it



Drone photo courtesy of Adam Fisher www.fromanangle.co.uk

## HOW TO PREPARE LOOSEFEED



- Fill your PVA mesh with a generous handful of mixed-size pellets
- Cut off the PVA from its continuous length, leaving a longish tag
- Form an overhand knot tight to the packed contents of the mesh
- Cut the tag end into halves and use these to tie the bag to the lead

would take at least 150 minutes before you were casting your rig into the hotspot if, for example, the swim was 10 metres long.

Now, you should be getting regular bites, catching a number of fish very quickly.

When the fish start to 'wise up' and retreat back under their snag, or fallen tree in today's case, Adam will loosefeed a couple more handfuls of hemp at the starting position and allow the hotspot to rest.

"At this point, I will try a cast in the margins or right across the river," he said.

"These are areas where you can very often pick up a larger solitary barbel or even a big chub. This is another advantage of the lead over the feeder.

"I can explore the whole river because I'm only presenting the fish with a single hookbait. Unlike a feeder, I don't have to keep casting to the exact same spot to build a bed of loosefeed, which is what Wye barbel have seen for years."

After 30 to 60 minutes of making various 'exploratory' casts, you then start the original process all over again, casting at the 12 o'clock



## USE A BOMB FOR EXPLOSIVE ACTION

position and slowly working down to the hotspot, every 15 minutes or so.

By the time you reach the hotspot for a second time, you may have been fishing for eight hours.

For the last hour, Adam will cast past the hotspot, further downstream, to see if there are any bigger, wary fish sitting off the loosefeed.

“When fishing the Wye, or middle Severn, looking for shoals of barbel, you need to get out of the ‘feeder mentality,’” explained Adam.

“Barbel tend to feed by ‘kiting’ side to side, so they cover a wide section of riverbed. With feeder fishing, they have to swim upstream in a straight line, which takes more effort.

“When they are kiting, they get used to criss-crossing over each other, so when you do hook one, the others won’t be as easily spooked because they are used to the shoal moving rapidly. “Using a lead, rather than a feeder, I’d be confident of catching fish all day long on a single pellet hookbait, with pellet and hemp loosefeed. I can creep up without fish realising they are being targeted.”



Above: Hold the barbel in the flow to allow them to fully recover so they swim off strongly

Below: The Wye Valley around Goodrich Castle is a stunning venue to fish



### Adam's tackle:

**Rod:** Daiwa Infinity Barbel 12ft, 1.75lb

**Reel:** Shimano 5000 GTE

**Mainline:** Kryston Synde 9lb

**Leger:** Korda Running Rig kit, Korda 1oz Gripper lead

**Hooklink:** Korda IQ2

**Fluorocarbon (2ft)**

**Hook:** Korda Wide Gape size 8 barbless

**Hookbait:** Bankside pre-drilled pellets

**Loosefeed:** Bankside Pellet Combo, Bankside Hempseed

Drone photo courtesy of Adam Fisher www.fromanotherangle.co.uk

