

INVICTA FFC

[WWW.INVICTAFFC.ORG.UK](http://www.invictaffc.org.uk)

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NEWSLETTER 165

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Affiliated to the **Angling Trust** and the **Federation of Midland Fly Fishers (Anglia)**.

Editor's Notes

Please note that Club Subscriptions are now overdue. To maintain the many benefits of membership please contact Alan Prevost now. Annual fees are still only £17.00, that's the price of a Day Ticket, and covers an attractive programme of Winter and Summer events.

The Annual General Meeting was well attended and passed off peacefully. Andy Newman accepted the nomination as our new Chairman in place of Graham Williams who has gone to Canada. Lawson Wight stood down as General Secretary due to pressure of work and that post remains vacant. Our thanks to both Graham and Lawson for their passed work and their assurance of their continued support of the Club.

Paul Stevens has kindly taken on the duties of General Secretary until a nomination is put forward and Craig Foggo has been elected to the Committee in accordance with the terms of the Extraordinary General Meeting immediately prior to the AGM in 2012.

Winter Programme Thursday 7th March

David Moore makes a welcome return to talk about the work of the Angling Trust and John Mees on the prospects for the coming season.

Thursday 21st March Quiz Evening

A not-so-serious affair this!!!! At least by some. Come as a team or be prepared to make

up an ad hoc team on the night. Questions are of a general knowledge nature, not all to do with fly or any other kind of fishing.

From the Annual Dinner



Bob Ayres, Mike Smith and Steve Middleton receiving the Invicta AMC B team trophy at the Dinner



Dave Hardick ensuring his colleagues stay off the hardstuff

Our Annual Dinner attracted 47 attendees to the St. Neots Golf Club on Saturday 23rd February. Our thanks to Andy Newman for bringing this venue to our attention. The early positive responses on the evening have prompted our organiser, Alan Prevost, to make a provisional booking for Saturday 22nd February 2014. Put it in your diaries now and enjoy the ambience and quality of the venue and its attentive staff.

The Manager of the St. Neots Club made it clear we would be welcome back.



Alan Prevost received this thumbstick for his organisation of the Dinner. It was built and presented by Craig Foggo.

Alan can now be seen any Sunday morning in the village of Over wearing green wellies, Barbour waxed jacket and deerstalker proudly displaying his stick and directing the traffic.

Invicta on Facebook

Craig Foggo, our new techno wizard, offered to create an Invicta slot on Facebook and this is now in operation. Thank you Craig, the initial impression is good and, hopefully, will present the Club to a wider audience.

Summer Fishing Programme 2013

Club Days

Please note that although there is an element of competition in these events Members are permitted to opt out and fish socially. Inexperienced anglers may opt to fish with friends or ask to be placed with an experience angler.

It is important to register your wish to take part in these days with our Bookings Officer, John Caldwell as soon as possible.

**Monday 8th April
Pitsford**

**Saturday 4th May
Rutland**

**Friday 14th June
Eyebrook**

**Sunday 14th July
Grafham (Presidents Cup)**

**Saturday 17th August
Draycote**

**Saturday 7th September
Ravensthorpe**

**Tuesday 1st October
Hanningfield**

Please note that all seven of these events qualify for the Carr Cup.

10 points are awarded for attendance at each venue and 5 points for each fish up to the fishery limit. One venue may be discarded at the end of the season to allow for holidays, work commitments etc.

John Caldwell requires a quick response for Pitsford please.

**Saturday 9th November
Elinor**

This is a Fur & Feather match fished from the bank. Please bring a suitable prize in order that as many as possible depart with something.

Tuesday Evening Boat Event

Commences 14th May to 13th August

Draw for partners and allocation of boats at 17.00 hours, start time 18.00 hours.

Again this can be treated as a purely social occasion not counting to the awards.

Non-member guests may also take part but will not qualify in the competition.

Refreshments are taken afterwards.

Association of Major Clubs

Spring Association Match

Bowl Water	Saturday	27 th April
Grafham	Tuesday	14 th May
Chew	Wednesday	29 th May
Pitsford	Saturday	8 th June
Draycote	Saturday	29 th June
Grafham	Wednesday	31 st July
Rutland	Saturday	10 th August

Grafham Saturday 7th September
Pitsford Monday 9th September
Autumn Association Match
Rutland Saturday 5th October

This is the complete list for all Groups. Invicta have two team A & B. If you are interested in fishing in either team please contact Mark Searle, Gary Howe or Alan Prevost for more information

Pilgrimage 23rd/24th May

Please contact Steve Middleton ASAP

There will be a social get-together for a meal and prize giving on Friday 24th. If you are not Fishing why not come to the dinner at the Racehorse in Catworth?

Other Events

Grafham Saturday 27th July.

Invicta/Snowbee Floating Line Match

This is a National team event sponsored by Snowbee organised by Invicta.

GWFFA Floating Line Grafham 12th May

Grand Max 18th September

East Mids FF events

Grafham 2nd & 5th June

Pitsford 1st & 18th September (Pairs)

Stuart Crofts on Sex, Insects & Flyfishing

David Jones

Stuart, from Penistone in the Peak District, has specialised in flyfishing for 35 years. He became a guide in 1998, in 2007 became an Orvis-Endorsed Guide and in 2010 became an Angling Trust level one coach. In between he has represented England in 6 European and World Championships and captained the gold winning England Rivers Home International Team in 2000.

The mention of sex produced a large audience but any hope that we may have been in for a soft porn show was dispelled by the first slide of a couple of bugs mating.

Anglers with a basic knowledge of the habitat will have a grasp of what is required to tempt their quarry. The Upper Tees for example is a rocky river, mostly shallow and exposed to the elements. Stoneflies are an important source of

food although, alas for the angler, the nymphs crawl out onto the bank, usually at night, before hatching. Terrestrials may be in abundance providing the weather is warm and breezy. The lowland chalkstreams by contrast are full of weed growth in which all manner of aquatic bugs thrive: the mayfly is probably the most sought after. In between these extremes there are small streams,(I think he had Thornton Beck in mind) which are crystal clear, and full of easily spooked fish. Food is generally supplied by insects dropping into the streams from heavily wooded banks. He did mention in passing, lakes and reservoirs which he assumed we had a good basic knowledge of. However, he did describe a notable experience when wilderness fishing in the far north of Norway where grayling in excess of 50cm are found. I recollect he was using a float tube, seeking out the drop-offs rather like we would fish a reservoir.

If you thought you knew all about sex then consider the poor old shrimp. The male cannot mate until the female sheds her armoured skin. This is preceded by the emission of a pheromone whereupon the male will seize the female often for several days waiting for the magic moment. As far as Stuart knows, there is no imitation for this coupling stage! A well-known shrimp imitation incorporates an orange ball in the middle of the abdomen. This is not an accumulation of eggs as I thought but a parasite called a spiny headed worm. Its presence drives the shrimp mad and causes it to swim above the weed beds where it is much more likely to be eaten by trout.

Reservoir anglers are all too familiar with daphnia which follow its food, plankton, up and down the water table according to the light intensity and temperature.

Fish, according to Stuart, gorge on signal crayfish. Unfortunately, this species of crayfish also eats anything and everything. The resultant demise of various creatures such as caddis larva and bullheads (they feast on their eggs) affects the rest of the food chain and has caused, in his opinion, a decline in the numbers of kingfishers and dippers. I don't think Stuart mentioned a pattern but given the fact that the SCF often exceeds 10cm in

length, I do not think that exact imitation applies!

The importance of stoneflies on northern rivers has already been mentioned. Their size might vary from 2" on the Tweed to 0.5" on

the Wharfe. He found the Yellow Sally, roughly a hare's Ear with a gold head, was a reasonable imitation for the nymph. The hatched stonefly is generically known as the willow fly. It is noted for its clumsy flight and collapsing noisily onto the water surface where upon it releases an egg ball. His favoured imitation here was a F-Fly with a green tag and a detached body.

There are more varieties of chironomids than all other species put together. Fish often feed selectively according to the body colour and it is a good idea to spoon the first fish to the net. I was surprised to learn that the larva have been observed to hatch under icy conditions, mainly in the latter part of the day. Furthermore patterns are sometimes tied on hooks as small as #30!! Stuart recommended that these were tied on short lengths of leader at home, kept on a line winder, and joined loop-to-loop to the main line as required. Some in the audience wondered what gauge of nylon would pass through the eye of such small hooks?

Flocks of tiny flies often appear both over land and water especially on warm summer evenings. Although there may be over 400 species, collectively they are known as Dancer Flies for obvious reasons. They may be recognised by wings set flat on their back rather like a house fly and a proboscis for feeding, sometimes on human blood. Mating is going on in these groups according to Stuart. The bad news is for the male of the species is that he may well be eaten by the female after the act: the good news is that the female then falls to the surface of the water where she is most likely to be consumed by Mr Trout. Stuart likes to use a Grey Duster type of fly but with the hackle tied parachute style.

Stuart, as the Co-ordinator of the Adult Caddis Fly Occurrence Scheme, is a bit of an authority in the field. In 2011 he actually discovered a new species. Most of us think of the larva covered in various bits and pieces of debris as a means of camouflage. However, it seems that some species (*hydropsyche*) found in rivers do not have a shuck. Moreover they are cunning in so far that they spin a web in the stream in order to catch prey. I don't think

that Stuart specifically recommended flies but reservoir anglers will be familiar with the Stick Fly and the Deer Hair Sedge created by John Goddard. The Grannom is a large

member of the caddis family. It has a habit of migrating downstream and is sometimes found in large numbers sitting on a rock looking for somewhere to drop their eggs. They are at their most vulnerable² when penetrating the surface film of the water. A yellow bodied emerger pattern with a poly-yarn wing was recommended.

The upwing flies are probably the most iconic species of fly for the angler. The nymph patterns are well known and feature 3 tails. Whilst the nymph of the Blue Winged Olive has barred legs, the pheasant tail nymph is a more general representation which succeeds in both running and still water. Reservoir anglers will be aware that the fish are sometimes taking emergers. Mayflies are unique in that they first emerge as a dull dun which sits under a leaf or something before moulting into a dazzling spinner. They mate on the wing and eventually fall into the water as a spent spinner.

Fish are excited by the appearance of the mayfly because all the larva seem to transform simultaneously although not necessarily in May. Stuart likes a pattern with a loop wing and a hackle tied parachute style half way down the hook shank.

Sometimes the weather or location is unsuited to sexual reproduction. Quite a few aquatic flies, including mayflies, the blue winged olive, the pale watery and the iron blue are capable of parthenogenesis – that is to say reproduction from unfertilised female eggs. The eggs are laid and sink to the bottom of the stream and hatch out without any assistance from the male of the species.

Terrestrial bugs form an important part of a trout's diet. Hawthorn flies appear early in the season. We would only encounter the Heather fly if we visited the upland waters: it is distinguished by bright red legs. Crane flies are often tied with legs of different colours. Apparently there are 300 species which can appear from Spring through to Autumn. Some species can be 4" wide! Beetles are very common. Stuart ties these with black ethafoam with a tuft of fluorescent floss to act as a spotter point. Other body colours could be used, green for example, to represent aphids.

I was interested to see that Stuart, obviously a purist at heart, was not shy of using synthetics especially where floatability was required.

Some of the patterns can be found on www.flyforums.co.uk providing you register: otherwise there are some patterns on www.boltonflytyers.blogspot.co.uk/2011_02_01 . I think he owes the flyfishing community a book although there is some info on www.pennineflyfishingguides.co.uk .

In a question and answer session Tenkara was mentioned. Stuart's eyes lit up for it appears he is addicted to the recently introduced Japanese technique in which the line is attached directly to the rod tip with no reel. For more on the subject take a look at www.yorkshiredalesflyfishing.blogspot.co.uk/2012.7/tenkara-fun-or-fad.html . I have an image of Stuart stalking the bank with a quiver of Tenkara rods on his back making selection according to the conditions. I am not sure it would be suited to Grafham but who would have thought that big carp could be landed on a pole?

Ifor Jones on Fishery Management

By David Jones

Ifor has been Fishery Manager at Thornton for the past 30 years. When it became apparent that some water companies were disposing of their responsibilities for trout fishing he set up Fishery Management (UK) Ltd in order that discussion on privatisation could proceed in a professional manner. Consequently Ifor acquired 15 year leases for the fishing on Thornton (750 acres) in 2009, Foremark (230 acres in 2010 and, most recently, Draycote (600 acres).

He is Chairman of the Still Waters Trout Fisheries Association, composed of ~ 100 high quality venues in England and Wales, dedicated to protecting and promoting Stillwater game fisheries. It was gratifying to learn that the SWTFA is often consulted on fishing matters without first having to lobby. John Mees is on the committee which also includes a fish farmer, Darren Butterworth.

It goes without saying that Ifor is also an angler and understands the needs of competition and leisure anglers alike. Thornton is one of the few reservoirs where it is possible to use a float tube.

Many years of fishery management has taught him that customer service is of paramount importance in running a successful fishery:

boats are expected to be clean and the staff polite and informative. The 3 fisheries, located

in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Warwickshire are run as a group. They are sufficiently close together that anglers can be redirected if the fishing, for whatever reason, is "off" at one venue.

The main issues facing managers at the moment are the increasing permit prices and the decline in rod numbers. Regarding the cost, since 2010 there were sometimes quarterly rises in the cost of trout amounting to 40% overall which stemmed from the fact that fish food is traded as a commodity in \$. Moreover, the food is mostly derived from anchovies, 68% of which comes from Peru where the government enforces strict quotas in order to sustain their fishery. China is a major player where the fish meal is converted into cattle cake. So 50 – 70% of the fisheries outgoings are the cost of trout. Two pound rainbows cost £3.30 – 4.00 per kilo. There was little doubt that the quality of feed has improved significantly so that whereas at one time 3 pounds of feed (vegetable based protein?) were necessary for the fish to gain just 1 pound, the ratio is now much closer to 1 : 1.

Costs can only be controlled by:-

- *maintaining the stocking policy and passing costs onto the angler.

- *Stocking less with fish of the same size but accept the consequences of a likely decline in catch returns.

- *Stocking the same density but with smaller fish.

The stocking policy at Draycote in 2013 will be to reduce the size down to 1lb12oz. Ifor did not agree that smaller fish were more susceptible to cormorant predation.

Ifor's view is that the quality of fishing should not be judged just on the size of fish. Fully fished 2 pounders are an excellent start.

The decline in rod numbers was put down to several factors:

- *The recession – not much cash around – 2012 was a bad year.

- *Travel costs (fuel) especially affecting competitions.

Weather – last year was exceptionally bad. Ifor estimated that his waters lost 500 rods during just 3 weeks in April last year.

- *Lack of youngsters taking up fishing possibly because parents lack fishing skills. Note that

juniors may share an adult's permit on Ifor's waters.

Moves to reduce costs include a choice of tickets matched to the catch. The best value ticket on his waters allow taking 2 fish followed by catch and release which cost £16.00 last season (£17.50 2013). 4 and 8 fish options will cost £22.50 and £28.00 respectively, in 2013. There is a very informative guide to the preferred practise of C & R on the STWF web site www.troutfisheries.co.uk

Any method is not allowed on Ifor's waters. However, he acknowledges that it may be a preferred option on some fisheries and may be the only way for them to remain profitable. Hanningfield has allowed spinning and almost any bait, but not ground baiting, for several seasons. The manager, Don Coe, reports that he has since sold thousands of pounds worth of PowerBait (excited voice from the back of the hall – "What is PowerBait???? See www.berkley-fishing.com. The reservoir is now said to be profitable. In fact any method is quite common in Ireland, Wales and the NE of England. Some claim that more young anglers (and families) are visiting the reservoirs and it is hoped that a few, just like many senior anglers today, will be attracted into the fly side of the sport. Draycote is likely to remain fly only because of the prolific hatches to be found there.

Up to date info on his waters can be found on:

www.flyfishthornton.co.uk

www.flyfishforemark.co.uk

www.flyfishdraycote.co.uk

Ifor Jones on Steelhead fishing on Kodiak Island. By David Jones

Kodiak Island is tucked away under the SW corner of Alaska at the end of the Aleutian Islands: the 6500 inhabitants display a strong Russian influence of heavy drinking. Getting to the venue is something of a problem requiring 4 flights followed by a 2 hour hike to the tented accommodation which, incidentally, provides near hotel standards of comfort. Midges can be a problem in July but disappear by the autumn. Don't be put off as the fishing in wilderness conditions is truly world class. Mind you a measure of self-awareness is required as a rescue mission could prove very expensive. Refrain from feeding the bears! Only 36 anglers are allowed into this National Wildlife Refuge during the September/October

period. The scenery is rugged and spectacular. The most renowned river in the area is the Kanektok. Ifor was talking about the River Sturgeon which is a mere 20 miles in length but drops from the mountains creating a very strong flow. Ifor visited at the end of September when the cold weather was settling in. Be prepared! The river contains a mixed head of all 5 species of salmon along with rainbows, arctic char and grayling. There is no shortage of species! The steelheads had a torpedo-like fin perfect profile and apparently responded as you might expect when hooked. A typical fish weighs in at 5 pounds but Ifor witnessed fish to 15 pounds. Guides look after just 2 anglers each. The tackle consisted of an 8 weight rod with floating line and a relatively short leaser. The lure is cast across the current and allowed to sweep across the flow. Ifor's first fish came to a yellow egg fly! Split shot added until the terminal tackle can be felt tripping the bottom. A reel with a top notch clutch is an essential part of the kit. No problem with running out of flies as the accommodation carries a comprehensive fly tying suite. Fishing is completely catch & release with the threat of serious penalties if you misbehave. The fishing was described as "difficult" during his stay because of excessive water in the river. Nevertheless he managed a couple of days when his tally reached double figures. Ifor endorsed Dave Duncan and Sons as excellent service providers, a week fishing (allow 13 days including travel) is likely to cost around £5,000.00.

www.alaskflyfishingcamps.com

The next Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 14th March.

Any questions or comments to Paul Stevens ASAP please.

Fisheries are not impressed when we cancel booked boats at short notice or ask for extras. So it is important to inform us well in advance of your wish to take part.

Suggestions for subjects and guest speakers are welcome. We need to book the more popular ones well in advance.

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