

# INVICTA FFC

[www.invictaffc.org.uk](http://www.invictaffc.org.uk)

December 2015

## Newsletter 176

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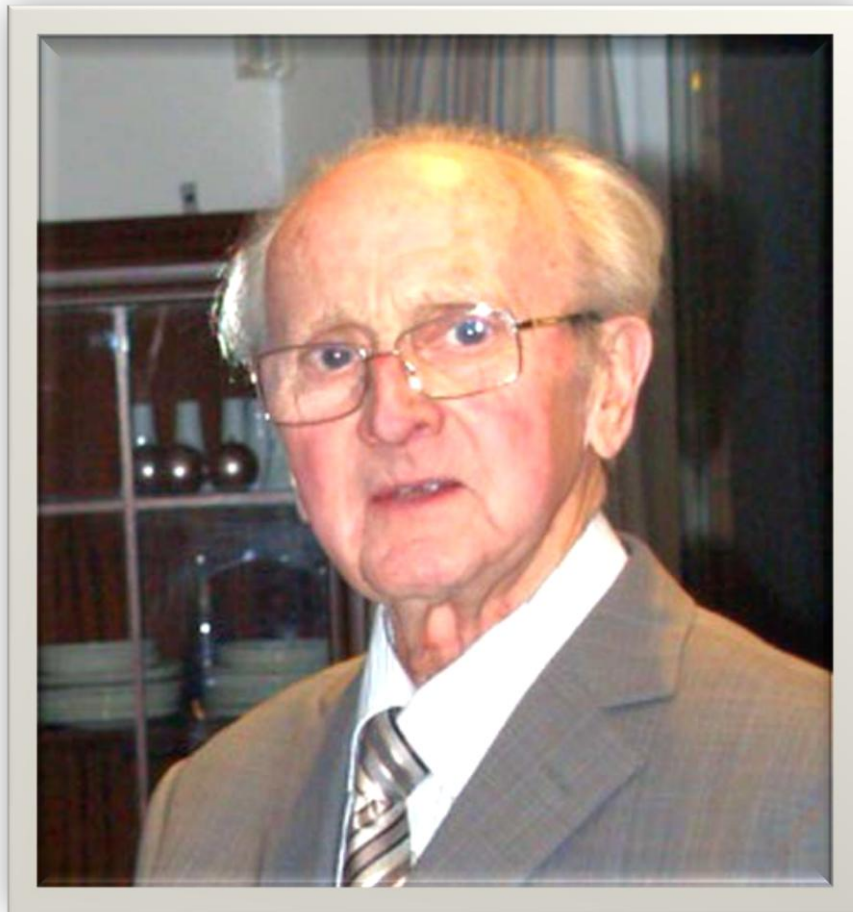
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Affiliated to the **Angling Trust** and the **Federation of Midland Fly Fishers (Anglia)**.

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**Norman Shippey 1934 - 2015**

### Invicta tribute ( Dec 2015)

Norman was born on 18 June 1934 near Wisbech in the Fens. He attended the local school, then Wisbech Grammar School. As a teenager aircraft *were his passion so he* joined the ATC and won his wings as a glider pilot. He left school at 18 and joined the RAF. He was posted to Horsham St Faith near Norwich, working as a fitter mainly on Meteor jets. Whilst socialising in Norwich he met Kay. They married in 1956 and moved over to the Cambridge area. A family, 2 children and 5 grandchildren, followed. He worked for many years at Marshalls, the large aircraft company in Cambridge, first as an aircraft fitter ( working mostly on C 130 Hercules transports) and later as an estimator. When he retired from full time work at 65 he joined Clare College as a porter – a job he really loved.

His earliest recollection of fishing is when an uncle took him fishing for sticklebacks in a local fen drain literally with a bent pin as a hook. He progressed further when the local postman gave him a set of coarse fishing tackle. In a recent Club Profile featuring Norman, he himself stated “I don’t remember catching much, so nothing changes”.

Norman, or frequently simply ‘Norm’, first started trout fishing in 1975 when he went to Block Fen Lake near Chatteris and caught his first fish on an Appetiser. He then joined Waterbeach AC, fishing Dickinson’s Lake, where he first met John Rolph & Mike Smith.

**Invicta FFC:** He joined the Invicta Club in spring 1976 , just after its inaugural meeting in April at Comberton Village college. He, and our current member David Jones, had been attending fly-tying classes there run by the infamous Les Beecroft, a local trout angler and tackle dealer. Norman became treasurer of Invicta in 1978, a position he held for 4 years.

In 1986 Norman helped organise the *first trip for Invicta anglers* to Chew Valley Lake to fish against a team of anglers from the Llanillar club in Aberystwyth. This annual event was later to be called the Pilgrimage. He carried on as organiser for Invicta at this event for many years and in that period became a good friend of George James from Llanilar. Later the Leslie Club from Scotland joined the Pilgrimage, which continues to this day.



In 1987 Norman took over as Secretary of the Club from David Jones, who'd held the post for just over 11 years. As secretary he produced the early Newsletters from 1987/88 – a task he continued until 1994. He recorded that he produced 41 editions in that time.

In 1990 Norman initiated our presence at the local Fenland Country Fair which continues to the present day. Our involvement has enhanced the image of the Club and introduced many new members over the years.

In his time as secretary he also got the Club involved with several charities.

In 1997 he helped to organise the Club's 21<sup>st</sup> celebration at Grafham.

He continued as secretary until the AGM in October 2000 – having completed over 13 years of dedicated service. During his term Norman administered the club almost single-handedly - organising at various times the Club fishing days, the winter programme, the Newsletter, the Annual Dinner, the Pilgrimage and our attendance at the Fenland Fair amongst others.

In 2001 he fittingly produced a document detailing the Club history 'The first 25 years', which can be found on the website. <http://invictaffc.org.uk/about-us/club-history/>

Norman began to suffer mildly from ill-health during the 1990s but continued to be involved. He fished regularly over the years and attended most Club events. He rarely featured amongst the prizes and did not win a Club fishing trophy until 2002.

In that year, after recovering somewhat from a rare and serious blood disorder, he had a tremendous season. Not only did he feature seven times in the Anglian Water's weekly updates but deservedly went on to win the prestigious Carr Cup for the best overall performance in that season's Club outings. A wonderful photo of Norman with a good fish featured on the front cover of Newsletter 112 in October 2002.



Norman and his 8lb 3oz Rainbow Trout caught at Grafham Water

He was also presented with a decanter and the Invicta Trophy at the following Club Dinner for that achievement and in further recognition of his service. The Club voted unanimously that Norman should also become a Life Member of Invicta.

He was voted Club President in 2006 and continued in that position until he died.



**River fishing in UK:** In the 1980s several anglers were becoming more interested in river fishing for grayling. In the winter of 1986 Norman invited Dr Ron Broughton of the Grayling Society from Salford in Lancashire to speak at a Club meeting. 'Dr Ron' invited interested members of the Club to a day's fishing on the River Hodder, a tributary of the Ribble in Lancashire, at Newton. About nine members, including Norman, *attended and* some grayling were caught, including fish of 2lb and 1lb 10oz, plus a few trout. In subsequent years *both Club and private trips were* organised to various venues including the Test in Hampshire, the Derwent & Dove in Derbyshire and the Dee in Wales. Norman loved his grayling fishing and pursued it as long as he was able to. Alan Taylor was a long-term friend of Norman and they often river-fished together. They became members of the Grayling Society *and* annually attended the AGM and dinner with their wives. Membership of the Society enabled them to fish rivers throughout the UK wherever the AGMs were being held. They continued to fish together, sometimes with other Club members such as Peter Oldham and Roger Featherstone, for many years.



Norman with Dave Jones of the Grayling Society

Norman's last trip on the river with Alan was in winter 2014 when they shared a beat on the River Dove where they began their outings with the Grayling Society many years previously. They chose fairly adjacent swims for safety's sake. The day progressed well with plenty of fish being caught. As the light began to fade Alan became aware of a female voice trying to catch his attention. Apparently Norm was stuck in mid-river with his feet wedged under a large rock. He had apparently been chatting happily, as he would, with the young lady for some time despite his predicament and did look a bit disappointed when Alan arrived to help. Norman was saved and his day was made when they bumped into Louis Noble of Trout and Salmon magazine who had only caught a couple of fish more than either Norman or Alan. Sadly that was to be Norman's finale. Alan, the Grayling Society and river anglers in Invicta will miss him greatly.

**Fishing abroad:** Other anglers had started to travel to exotic locations abroad to fish and In 2005 Norman decided to join in and organised a personal trip to the Yukon River in Canada to fish mainly for large trout, char and his beloved grayling. My how he loved that trip – his eyes would always light up as he regaled us with memories of it!

In summer 2008 Norman travelled with Peter Reeves to the San River in Poland to fish for both grayling and brown trout and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

**The River Mel Project:** In 2006 *Norman* went to the inaugural meeting of a team of volunteers who were to set about restoring the local River Mel at Meldreth & Melbourn. At that meeting the Mel Restoration Group was formed and practical work began early in 2007. Norman was an enthusiastic member (what else!) who is remembered by members not only for his hard work but as much for the loss in the river of his spectacles' lens and his mobile phone. *The phone* was found downstream by a group member about 2 years later, still working and identifiable by the fact that all the calls on it were about fishing! Norman also muttered regularly as he became less healthy, that he was unlikely to be able to use up the 15 year *guarantee period on a shovel* that he'd bought and regularly used.



Norman and his shovel at work



In 2009 the Mel Group was short-listed with 2 other groups to attend the *Awards Ceremony* of the Wild Trout Trust / Orvis association which sponsors conservation projects. To use Norman's words ' In spite of fielding no less than their Lady Mayor the River Chess group took 2<sup>nd</sup> place to the Mel Restoration Group who received the awards. Norman was chuffed to bits!

Norman has recently been presented with his own framed certificate by the Group and South Cambs District Council to honour his contribution to the project of which he was immensely proud.





The River Mel  
Restoration Group  
&  
South Cambridgeshire  
District Council



recognises the tireless effort that

*Norman Shippey*

has put in to conserving the River Mel  
and promoting protection of the  
water environment



Steve Hawkins  
Chairman of RMRG

Rob Mungovan  
Ecology Officer, SCDC

**Other interests:** Norman had many other interests. He loved gardening and was Secretary of the Pelargonium Society (not Geraniums he would remind us) for some years , plus a member of the Hardy Plant Society. He was also a member of the Duxford Aviation Society. He played golf when he was fit. He also liked photography, music and collecting – particularly fishing books, of which he had large collection.

**Norman the man:** Norman suffered from ill-health over much of his later years but persevered with his fishing and interests as long as he could. He continued to come to the Club winter meetings until he went into Addenbrookes Hospital in autumn 2015. He was later transferred to the Arthur Rank Hospice and sadly died there on 29 November aged 81.

Norman was a man of 'standards', enthusiastic, precise, determined, gregarious, sometimes a trifle argumentative – but also *humorous*, and very friendly with most people he met. He had an immense memory for detail and was a dedicated hoarder.

He loved and was very proud of Invicta Fly Fishing Club and was a member for over 39 years. He will be remembered for his love of fishing and its social side, his friendships and particularly for the devotion and care with which he administered the Club – a true 'legend'.



Norman enjoying the social side of fishing with other Invicta members (2004)

He will be greatly missed. We pass our sincere condolences on to Kay and the family.