

INVICTA FFC

WWW.INVICTAFFC.ORG.UK

MAY 2015

NEWSLETTER 175

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

Editor's Notes

Invicta/Snowbee Floating Line

This national competition benefitted from a change of date from July to May. Catch rate was much improved and the day was rated a success for Invicta.

<u>Results</u>	<u>Fish</u>	<u>Weight</u>
<u>Tunbridge Wells</u>	11	22lbs 13ozs
<u>Rutland Nth Arm</u>	7	16lbs 11oz
<u>MNTFA</u>	6	16lbs 4ozs
<u>Invicta Variants</u>	6	16lbs 1ozs
<u>Bewl FF</u>	6	15lbs 8ozs
<u>Invicta Muddlers</u>	6	14lbs 3ozs
<u>Rutland Sth Arm</u>	6	13lbs 4ozs
<u>Bewl Bridge FF</u>	5	11lbs 5ozs
<u>Greewell Persuaders</u>	5	11lbs 0ozs
<u>Hanningfield Wavers</u>	5	10lbs 13ozs
<u>Silver Invicta</u>	4	9lbs 10ozs



Tunbridge Wells receiving their prizes from our Chairman, Andy Newman.

Annual Dinner 2015

Although attendance was down this year this event at the St.Neots Golf Club was the usual mix of good food, jokes and camaraderie.



A Fine Assembly of Trophy Winners.

The Pilgrimage

The Annual Llanilar, Leslie, Invicta Pilgrimage was blessed with good weather and good fishing this year. Due to a number of Invicta members fishing at Stocks Reservoir in the, so-called, Old Farts Match, Invicta were reduced to 4 anglers. All gave a good account of themselves but Llanilar won the Trophy back this year. The week was rounded off with an excellent dinner at the Racehorse in Catworth.

The Scots' would like to return to Chew Valley, not least because it is no special occasion for Invicta on their home waters. However everyone agreed that the quality and variety of venues on Anglian Waters precludes any change in the near future. It seems that our errant competitors may be returning next year. The Stocks event may have been put back a few weeks due to bad weather and iffy fishing at the present date.

Association of Major Flyfishing Clubs

Despite all efforts by our delegates to improve the management of the Association there remain the difficulties of obtaining positive responses from the hierarchy and in some cases a refusal to reply to queries, either by letter or email. Mutterings in the background like to suggest Invicta are attempting to take over but, in reality, we are suggesting the Officer and Committee positions should be

filled by representatives of as many member clubs as possible.

Invicta Fishing Dates 2015-02-24

Eyebrook, Friday June 5th

Grafham, Sunday July 5th

Draycote, Saturday August 15th

Ravensthorpe, Saturday Sept 5th

Grafham, Tuesday October 6th

All of the above may be fished as social events but for the competitive minded all 7 contribute points to the Carr Cup. In addition one venue carries the Hunter Bowl and one the President's Cup.

With just two venues fished Gary How leads the pack with 90 points closely followed by David Moore and Steve Ottridge on 80 and Chris McLeod on 75

Association of Major Clubs

davidmoore48@outlook.com or Alan Prevost.

Tues 26th May, Bewl, Group 2.

Fri 12th June, Hanningfield, Group 3.

Wed 24th June, Draycote, Group 2.

Fri 10th July, Eyebrook, Group 2.

Sat 11th July, Pitsford, Group 3.

Sat 22nd August, Eyebrook, Group 3.

Wed 2nd September, Rutland, Group 2.

Sat 26th September, Autumn Match, Draycote, Groups 1, 2 & 3.

David has had a positive response in respect of both of the Invicta teams this

year but there is still time to offer your services in case of last minute drop outs, illnesses etc.

Steve Cooper on Natural Flytying

Materials.

by David Jones with additional photo's by Paul Heavens.



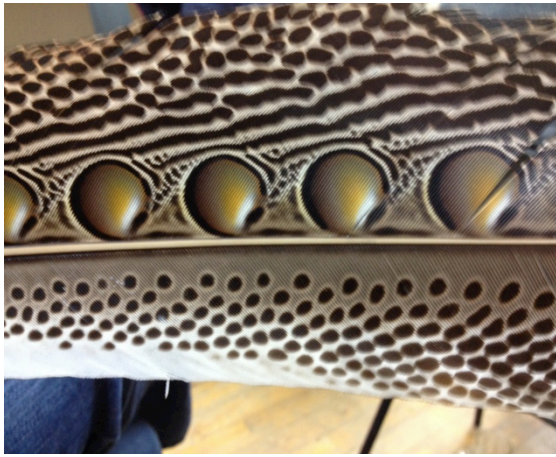
Steve travelled down from rural Staffs with a load of fur and feather with which to illustrate his talk. Steve has been fishing since he was 3 or 4 when he followed his dad into coarse fishing. At 15 he made the transition to fly-fishing and by 17 was tying traditional wet flies at the rate of 500 per week! Even then he came to realise that the quality of fly tying materials was not all that they could be but it was after a further 15 years of teaching biology before he set up his materials business full time. He is a one man band and stuff gets exported all over the world.

Steve explained his philosophy by quoting Skues from the opening lines of his book "Silk, Fur and Feather", to the effect that just that there is more to fishing to catching fish, there is more to fly-tying than producing the finished object – procuring the materials for example. Many of the traditional patterns date back a century or more when the materials were more readily available, see for example "North Country Flies" by T E Pritt was written in 1885. "Brook and River Trout" by Edmond and Lee was regarded as the north country fisherman's bible, came out in 1916. I think that both books (reprinted) are available through Coch-y-Bonduu books. Steve wondered if the trout could really distinguish between the authentic materials and modern substitutes.

Steve produced half a dozen cock pheasant tails all of which looked significantly different in length and colouration. The prime specimen was head and shoulders above the others: out of 150,000 tail feathers that has passed through his hands only 2 have met this standard. This bird was probably 3 or 4 years old, maybe left the traditional shooting area but was finally bagged late in the season. Bob Ayres wanted to know (tongue in cheek?) if you could get tail feathers ready knotted for patterns such as Hoppers. And lo! Steve produced a bundle of feathers just so tied! Hen pheasant tail feathers were equally variable but I don't think anyone expected to hear that some birds are hermaphrodites and had male characteristics at the head but female features at the rear end. The Reeves Pheasant has an exceptionally colourful and contrasty plumage. The tail feathers have been measured at up to 2.4 metres in length and features coarse transverse dark bands. Approach with care as they are known to be aggressive!

Steve had some Peacock wing quills which were handsomely barred. I was the lone voice at the back of the room who correctly identified them as I had used them extensively back in the 1970's for the wing on Hanningfield tandem lures (Dick Walker pattern) but nowadays I understand that they are likely to feature in traditional salmon flies tied for competition purposes. (Google "tying salmon flies for display"). Variations in quality were apparent when the feathers were held up to the room lights. The better feathers probably originate from India.





Truly spectacular feathers originate from the Argus pheasant. The wing feathers used for display purposes, feature numerous “eyes” along their length which could be over a metre (www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lrIBKv1sE0). Strongly barred feathers are also found on the Great Bustard (AKA Florican) which can be seen on Salisbury Plain. A pair of decent wing feathers may cost £130. Somewhat more costly are the tail feathers from a Red Tailed Black Cockatoo which may set you back £250 a pair. I cannot see the justification for this as the bird is widely distributed in Australia (It’s a pest Mate) and is easily hand reared (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red-tailed_black_cockatoo).



The Western Tragopan, a Himalayan pheasant, is (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_tragopan) a different matter, as it is reputedly close to extinction, and not readily amenable to captive breeding. Feathers are only likely to be found on stuffed birds but they are likely to be fragile given their age. The feature of the body feathers are ivory-like white spots on a black background. They are essential when tying the Treherne Black Argus salmon fly. Steve mentioned £1400 but I can’t recall if he meant each feather, a pair or just

looking! Whatever, it won’t be found on the end of my leader!

Back in the real world we got to talk about the Grey Partridge. Apparently these are getting increasingly rare and are only found in reasonable numbers on shooting estates where the land and predators are managed to encourage their conservation. The plumage varies considerably, the only common feature being the dark horseshoe shape on the breast of the males. Steve avoids genetic variants which have caused a chestnut bar to form on some skins.

Steve assembled some tools including a filleting knife, scissors, borax powder and acetone and proceeded to remove a cape from a partridge. The tricky bit was snipping around the beak region. Otherwise the skin readily peeled from the body of the bird. The skin was scraped to remove excess fat and wiped with acetone in order to remove any residual traces. Borax was packed into the region where the wings were removed, again to combine with fatty tissues. We were impressed with the speed he could remove the cape when not indulging in tuition.

Steve rounded off the evening by advising that materials could be kept free of bugs by storing in re-sealable polythene bags and if the worse should happen, storing the materials in a freezer for a few weeks. A catalogue of materials can be found on his web site <http://www.cookshill-flytying.co.uk/>



An Addendum to the above article. **by the Editor**

At last years Grayling Symposium Steve told a story of seeing a display cabinet of exotic birds in an auction. He recognised one as being highly sought after by obsessive American flytyers who aim to tie classic salmon flies to the original patterns and are prepared to pay exorbitant prices for the real thing. He bought the cabinet, extracted

the bird, reset the others and put the display back into an auction.
Having recouped his original outlay Steve sent the feathers to his contact in the US and made hundreds of pounds selling single feathers.

Fishing, Vietnamese Style. **Submitted by Peter Oldham**

The Cast.



The Retrieve



Stripping In



Bagged Up & Going Home



Any questions or suggestions on the running of our Club or ideas for speakers for our Winter Meetings should be sent to Paul Stevens for discussion at the next Committee Meeting. It should be noted that the programme needs to be finalised several months ahead.

Next Committee meeting scheduled for

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