

INVICTA FFC

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NEWSLETTER 172

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

Editor's Notes

Sackcloth and ashes time!

Several apologies I'm afraid.

- 1) Although newsletter 171 included a report on the Invicta/Snowbee match I neglected to include photo's for that event. Please see below.
- 2) In the introduction to the Pilgrimage I referred the Llanilar organiser as Glyn Williams. It was, of course, Glyn Jones.
- 3) Last one (I hope) my apologies for the lateness of Newsletter 172

Invicta/Snowbee Floating Line 2014



Runers up. Invicta B. John Mees, Chris McLeod, Mark Haycock and Mark Searle



3rd team, Invicta C. Gary How, Kieran Bonas, Graham Bodsworth and Mick Facey.

Winter Programme 2014/15

November 20th. Steve Peterson. Steve, of Fly Fish Europe (distributors of Simms, Scott, Scientific Anglers, Lamson and others) will talk about his knowledge of the tackle trade and his fishing experiences.

December 11th. Allan Sefton. On the last meeting before Christmas, what else but Allan's recent fishing adventures on Christmas Island.

2015

January 8th. Invicta Social, Arundel House Hotel.

For this event please be aware the cut-off point for booking your place is Friday 2nd January. All members, ex-members and potential members welcome. It is unfair on the organiser and the caterer not to pre-book so consideration please.

January 22nd. Stuart Illsley. Eyebrook Tackle. Stuart will tell us of the latest fly tying products and tackle for the forthcoming season.

February 5th. “My Favourite Flies. Graham Williams will demonstrate Canadian patterns for Steelhead, Cutthroat and Salmon flies. Also, members will reveal their most successful flies over the last couple of seasons.

This will also include an introduction by **Oscar Boatfield** on his new Coaching and Guiding business. Oscar is also intending to include rod production at some stage.

February 19th. Invicta AGM.
Your chance to advise, suggest or criticise the Committee. If you think you have something to offer why not get yourself nominated.

February 21st. Invicta Club Dinner.
Will be held at St. Neots Golf Club and the cost will be £27.00pp. Details in due course
Please note this event is our social occasion of the year. You are welcome to invite Wives, Partners and Girlfriends (it's better if you don't bring all three!) and your friends.

March 5th
Steve Cooper of Cookshill Flytying will talk on natural materials: the history of some of our favourite fly dressing materials, examining some of the folklore behind their origins and use. What determines the quality of specific materials and why some are in such short supply.

March 19th The traditional pre-season quiz with **Chris McLeod** in the chair.

John Emmerson

By David Jones

Our opening meeting of the year featured John Emerson who has over 40 years fly fishing experience. Living in the Corby area it was not surprising that the first 20 years concentrated on the Northampton reservoirs. In the last 20 years he has focussed on rivers specialising in grayling, initially honing his skills on the Welsh Dee. It must have been around the time that the Invicta had a regular annual trip to Bala. He has been a very successful competition angler on both stillwaters and numerous rivers both in the UK and Europe. Following the revelation of the Czech style of fishing for grayling he started up “Unique Flies” which supplies all the latest pieces of kit required to adopt this method. His company is the prime UK distributor of Hanak products.



Copper Mary

He had a display of various items. I particularly liked the Hanak 9'6” superlight rod which had a super-fine tip which suggested that the No.3 rating was probably accurate. John reckoned it could handle a large reservoir rainbow if necessary. Hanak also market a range of lightweight reels which felt nice to handle. There were hundreds of flies most of which had coloured tungsten bead heads. A full range of barbless hooks were available along with various tapered leaders and bite indicators. The fluorocarbon line, offering 150 metres for around £20 attracted a lot of interest. John demonstrated how to make a leader. When fishing typical streamy water no deeper than 3 feet, his fly line would already be fitted with a tapered nylon leader no more than 9 feet in length with the parallel tippet section cut off and replaced with a micro-ring. Apparently the rules banning micro-rings has been relaxed for competition angling. Typically a dry fly would be used as an indicator with a further one or two nymphs each set 15” apart down the leader. When visiting a heavily fished water such as Wherwell on the Test, the leader strength might be of the order of 2-2.5 lbs b.s. He would never go less than 9 lbs on stillwaters. 2.5mm – 3mm tungsten beads would be used on jig (barbless) hooks when fishing the Test, the size being changed according to the need to avoid snagging.



Red tag

John explained that grayling swam about 3-4 inches above the river bed and flies could be presented too deep. Nevertheless, in order to get decent presentation, it is essential to tie the heaviest fly on the point. Long distance casting was unnecessary as grayling are not shy. They could be feeding under your feet! However, they are readily spooked by shadows: kneel or fish from the opposite bank if necessary. John demonstrated how it was easily possible to lob a line out several rods lengths of line even in the confines of the hall. It was important to keep the fly-line off of the water, and fish the flies up to the angler and avoid whipping the water into a foam! (he doesn't like braided leaders for their tendency to shed water during casting) . In the event of grayling starting to rise he had a number of preloaded leaders which he could readily transfer to the micro-ring on the end of the leader. In that way only a single rod is necessary for a day out. A grayling rise was characterised by a local bubble as the fish sticks its nose above the surface: trout on the other hand cause a series of ring-like ripples.



Soldarini's special

You might think that the Czech method has been superseded by the use of French leaders which may be as long as 10 metres. A previous speaker, I think it may have been Simon Kidd, said that the French method was devised to address the specific problem of spooking fish in super clear streams found in parts of France and is not necessarily an alternative to Czech nymphing and indeed, where used inappropriately, could put the angler at a distinct disadvantage. The 10 metre leader avoids all contact of the fly line with the river. A recent rule change me restricted the length of the leader to twice the length of the rod. Resourceful fly-line manufacturers then introduced a triple zero rated line which only had a gauge of .055" which was not much larger than the butt of the leader. Although with an appropriate soft actioned rod,

experts can cast 10 metres. John advised to aim for a more modest target of say 2-3 metres upstream. Bite indication is provided by either using a coloured insert in the leader set-up. John recommended a spring like insert made from a spiral of coloured nylon as a bite detector. John claimed that he had not tied a fly for at least a year but made a pretty good job of demonstrating how to tie some of his favourites. These included a Red Tag and a Soldarini's Special. He also rated the Copper Mary. The images were lifted from the Uniqueflies website as my efforts to photograph the originals were miserable failures. Full details of these flies (and other specialised kit) can be found on www.uniqueflies.co.uk. He had a liking for ribbing with very fine coloured wire from Flybox (www.flybox.co.uk) who also supply Liquid Glass for finishing heads. These products are available from the shop at Grafham.

Although these flies are tied on barbless hooks, they are heavily weighted. John emphasised the need for care in casting if nasty accidents are to be

avoided. Eyes are particularly vulnerable and he recommended wrap around polarizing optics from Costa which are also helpful when studying underwater activity. Careful how you order of you may end up with coffee cups!!

Finally John remarked on the high cost of fishing for Grayling considering that it was once regarded as a pest to be culled in order to preserve the trout. Current charges at Wherwell on the Test are £40 per day but it is quite possible to get into 3 figures on other stretches. Fishing on the Dee can be had for around £12.50 a day but the cost of fuel has to be factored in. Given the relatively high cost, I am surprised that novice anglers do not practice on local streams (or even the back garden) until they are proficient at assembling tackle and casting, even though they may not catch a Grayling. This note has been written by somebody with near to zilch experience of river fishing. There are a number of folk who are members of the Grayling Society, including Norman Shippey, Allan Taylor and Roger Featherstone; I noticed that our programme manager, Peter Oldham had a good rapport with John. Ray Storer (Grafham) organises occasional group trips to Wherwell I believe.

Chris Reeves on Fly-dressing **October 2014**

By David Jones

Chris has been involved with fly-tying and fly-fishing for 25 years during which time he has become a GAIA fly-tying instructor and a Level 2 instructor for Game angling. His reputation clearly

preceded his visit for he managed to attract Henry Lowe to a meeting. Good to see you Henry!
 Chris is the General Secretary of the Fly Dressers Guild. This was formed by 4 keen fly-dressers back in 1967 and although there have been hiccups in its history it now boasts 1500 members in the UK and 40 overseas. The structure of the Guild is based on local groups of which there are ~40 in the UK. Just this month an East Anglia group was formed based in Mildenhall. The objective of the Guild is to promote fly-tying which is done through attending shows and running competitions. Members receive 4 copies per year of the house magazine "Flydresser". In addition there is free insurance and discounts at certain outlets. Details of membership can be found on www.flydressersguild.com. Flies for demonstration purposes on the night were mostly tied on Kamazan 400's and met International size requirements. He preferred using a monocord 8/0 thread. He is sponsored by Whiting feathers so has a reduced cost source of genetic capes. They are superb but expensive: Chris suggested club members got together to buy a cape and divide it up. He likes a vice with a side lever as the jaws will hold any size of fly securely without the need to be readjusted. His preferred model is the "Regal" although I believe he was using a similar but much cheaper "Regent" on the night. A UK source of highly recommended side lever vices is the Weaver range currently made by Pete Waterhouse at GWFFA. First of all he ran through the tying of 5 different sedges. No.1 was Walker's sedge although it deviated slightly from the original pattern in that the ostrich herl body was not clipped.



Chris is not keen on the use of synthetic materials but the 2nd sedge incorporated a folded wing made from the kind of fibre paper wrapping used by florists. Apparently tea bags have a similar texture.



In constructing No.3, Chris demonstrated his skill in producing a very tight dubbing. The secret is to use baby seals fur and to moisten the finger tips, allowing them to dry to tackiness, prior to spinning. The hackle was a grizzle dyed olive. The wing was made from naturally buoyant elk hair (Fly Tying Boutique) leaving an upturned lip in front of the eye to act as a vane during a retrieve.



No.4 was a first as far as I was concerned as it used fibres from a genuine Coq de Leon cape as the winging material. These feathers are stiff, bright and shiny and feature a fine mottled pattern in the fibres.



Finally he demonstrated tying a Hedgehog which is made up of 3 or more wings successively tied along the hook shank. The body was composed of Hare's Ice Dub which introduced a sparkle into an otherwise drab fly. The head was made of a few turns black bear dubbing.



After the break, during which Chris managed to win a raffle prize, he dealt with some general purpose patterns. The photo of the shiny cruncher doesn't show how the base layer of a red holographic tinsel shows through the top layer of pearl mirage when the fly is in the water.



The "normal" cruncher featured a segmented body. The hackle was taken from a jungle cock cape dyed olive (after the removal of the important feathers!).



The Rutland buzzer was tied short and incorporated so little material (4 layers of 8/0 thread!) that one wonders how the fish could recognise it amongst the general debris present in the surface layers of the reservoir.



The Klinkhammer pattern excited interest. The construction was fairly straightforward using a length of fluorescent floss to construct the wing post and to act as a sight when fishing. Chris did point out that it was a large fly and required a feather with longer fibres than indicated by the size of the hook. The hackle must be tied in with the glossy side down in order to achieve the best curvature to impart maximum floatability. Most important is to use a water absorbent fibre for the body dubbing so that the body quickly sinks below the surface film.



The competition hare's ear was a bit flimsy made up mainly of pink thread with open turns of guard hairs removed from the face and ears of a mask.



Finally we were shown a Bawl pinfry. The wing was made from the grey fibres from feathers removed from the base of a natural Jungle Cock cape. Obviously these are more mobile than indicated in the photo but by all accounts this particular version is best fished stat

Mick O'Farrell, November 2014

By David Jones

This is the second trip Mick has made to Invicta so we were well aware of his preference and prowess with the dry fly. On this occasion Mick presented a slide show entitled **“A look back over the past two seasons”**

Mick, along with some fellow members of the Mid Northants club, enjoy a cold start in mid-February on the Test searching out grayling at Wherwell. The river is often near to bursting its banks but there are plenty of fish to 2lbs. According to Mick they appreciate a tungsten bead nymph tied on a size 12 jig style hook and incorporating pink or red materials.

His still-water season started off at Elinor in early March. He and his partner took 80 trout (catch and release) once they had discovered that it was necessary to copy tiny grey midges. A parachute style Hares Ear tied on a 12 did the business.

Mid-March found him at Pitsford. He showed us his variant of the Pitsford Pea which incorporated chain beads ahead of the green thorax. The tail was black marabou but the important variant, in Mick's opinion, was the red flash-attack holographic tinsel tied over the top of the body. I think that this was as near to a lure as we got that evening!

By mid-April the water is warming and he focussed on Ravensthorpe. I thought that the big red midge had vanished several years ago but I was mistaken. Slides showed us how to tie the Crippled Red Midge. The breathers at either end of the body were made from white poly yarn. The body was reddish seals fur dubbing overwound with a few turns of gold rib. The thorax appeared to be rabbit fur. The furnace hen hackle was wound parachute style around the top of the thorax using the breather as the post. The design enables the fly to sit well into the surface film without having to trim a

conventional hackle on the underside. It can be difficult to see so the technique is to fish it at short range on a long leader. The fall-back body colour was claret where the body was made from Mosaic dubbing sourced from Angus Angling. Mick was clearly a fan of mosaic dubbing which uses small amounts of shredded holographic tinsel to add a bit of glitter to the fly; blue flashes were particularly favoured.

After trips to Grafham and Draycote, he was off to Ireland usually to fish in the Munster Championship. Lough Leane at 4000 acres is the largest of the Killarney group of lakes. Situated in a mountainous valley, the depth of the water off of some shores is precipitous and in order to fish productive regions it is essential to drift no further than a couple of boat lengths. The lough contains a good head of brownies typically around 3/4lb; however, their light weight belies the ferocity with which they hit the fly. Hence leader strengths of 6lbs.bs + are the norm. Flies are usually black, fished wet rather than dry, and again the mosaic dubbing featured in several of Mick's patterns. The lakes are situated close to the Atlantic coast and extremely rough conditions can develop within 10 minutes: care is required. Then off up to Lough Owel which is a limestone water located in the middle of Ireland. I think he said that this lake was stocked, presumably with rainbows, although there was a good head of brownies. I also think I caught sight of an olive minkie, a pink booby and a sparkler but these could have been attached to his partners leader!

Back to Grafham for June with a size 12 Silver Sedge favoured for use on the top dropper. This was more or less a standard dressing other than including a couple of strips of red holographic tinsel.

A pattern that particularly interested me was a blue damselfly dabbler: the proper name escaped me. It featured a golden olive palmered hackle with a significant quantity of blue jay (could have been dyed partridge) around the head and finished with a red patch at the thorax and red fibres for the tail. It reminded me of the Red Tailed Invicta recommended by Dick Walker in the early days of Grafham.

I could go on and document his fishing activities week by week which seemed to cover most of the British Isles. More trips to Ireland for example, local reservoirs and finishing on the Test. In between he managed to run an event matching 50 novices with 50 experts at Grafham in a successful attempt to attract new anglers to the sport. At the same time the event raised £6000 for charity. Another mission in life is to convert every angler to fishing the dry fly. Indeed, his most recent competition success was a team win in the Airflo

International Final at Rutland which was attributed to the members using dry flies where appropriate.



He does not fish lures because he dislikes the fact that the trout are aroused through aggression and attack the offering whereas trout taking a dry fly have the time and option to reject it. That is a controversial point in my opinion (on reflection maybe he was referring to blobs?) as it attributes the ability of trout to think when in fact they are driven by instinct. An exact imitation, even if it were possible, would often be rejected in favour of a pattern containing only key recognition points (maybe exaggerated) and/or was acting in an appropriate manner. Mick was clearly a great believer in target spots on the fly be it at the thorax or the tail. In some examples, particularly where the insect was very small, a black imitation carrying a tiny trigger spot of colour representing the natural, has proved very effective.

Dry flies fish best in a gentle ripple and cloud cover according to Mick. He would seek out the edge of any ripple and in bright conditions keep an eye open for the odd cloud which might provide sufficient shade to provoke a rise – hopefully a frenzy! It was also a fact that fish rise best at certain times of the day – as often as not in the evening. This not only applied in Ireland such as Carra but also the AW waters, Pitsford and Ravensthorpe in particular.



So having arrived on a decent day weatherwise with a plan of action, Mick would normally cast out a team of three or four favourite dries, the top dropper at 8ft from the line and the others at 3ft intervals. If these do not work fairly quickly then all 3/4 flies were changed and the process repeated until a successful combination was found. It is this challenge of finding the correct combination of flies, and knowing that it probably would change within a few days, which drives Mick on. It is not for nothing that his acclaimed book is called “A Passion for Trout”! This is a really good read and shows hundreds of patterns and advice for fishing specific waters. I have even taken the liberty of reproducing a couple in this article as my efforts to find appropriate flies amongst the vast collection he bought along failed miserably! Another book is on the stocks dealing with the fly tying aspects of his creations. I am sure we are all looking forward to getting a copy.

Association of Major Clubs

This competition was founded in 1989 and was fished through one Group of 5 or 6 teams.

Through the years we have seen teams come and go, an impressive number ranging from various Army, Royal Marine, RAF units, the Metropolitan Police together with fishing clubs from all over the country.

This past year we have had 17 teams divided into three Groups. Some clubs, Invicta included, have 2 teams competing. However Invicta B suffered badly this year inasmuch as they have not fielded a full team and, on one occasion failed to find a team at all.

Group 2

Final placings find Invicta A in 3rd spot behind Bewl Bridge A and Tunbridge Wells

Group 3

Invicta B came last of 6 teams due, to a large extent, the inability to find sufficient anglers.

This will be the subject of much discussion prior to next season.

It is anticipated that the AMC will comprise 3 Groups next year.

Group 1 Group 2

Rutland	Tunbridge Wells
Fish Hawks	Invicta A
Soldier Palmer A	Engand Police
Grafham A	Bristol Reservoirs
Queen Mother FA	Navy/R/Marines
Bewl A	Bewl B

Group 3

Greylags
Soldier palmer B
Hanningfield
Grafham B
Invicta B

Our Committee would be pleased to hear from anyone seeking a low level introduction to competition experience. This is a friendly, not so serious series with experience on a variety of fishing venues.

The AMC Fun Day, Sunday 12th October, Pitsford.

A disappointing turn-out of only 6 teams saw Invicta take all three top places, Appropriately in order Invicta 1 , 2, and 3 with laurels of the day going to Mark Searle with 7 fish for 13lbs 4ozs.

Any questions or suggestions on the running of our Club or ideas for subjects or speakers for our Winter Meetings should be sent to Paul Stevens for inclusion in a future Committee meeting. It should be noted that the programme needs to be finalised several months ahead.

Disclaimer

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