

## fly fishing club, cambridge.

President: Norman Shippey <normanshippey@btinternet.com>; Chairman Lawson Wight <lawson@camsweep.co.uk>; Treasurer Alan Prevost <alan@prevost.net>

Secretary: Matt Willatt <sales@mattwillatt.co.uk> tel: 07505 252648.

Newsletter Editor Peter Reeves <piscator2003@yahoo.co.uk> tel: 01223 511992.

Bookings officer John Caldwell <john.caldwell@mad.scientist.com> tel: 07956 275485.

Affiliated to the **Angling Trust**, and the Federation of Midlands Fly Fishers (Anglia)

**Website:** [www.invictaffc.blogspot.com/](http://www.invictaffc.blogspot.com/)



## INVICTA ANNUAL DINNER 2011 & AWARDS FOR 2010 CEREMONY



**Mark Searle 'bagging up' on Invicta trophies at the awards presentation in February.**



**One that 'got away.' Mark missed out on the Brown trout trophy to the ardent specimen hunter Andy Newman - for this year anyway!**

One does not expect an annual dinner and trophy presentation to be a particularly tiring experience but instead a relaxed and easy going situation. Well, for most of the members attending it was just that - a pleasant occasion with rather good food, excellent company and stimulating conversation.

However, for one of our members it must have been a somewhat tiring experience as Mark Searle was walking to and fro for most of the evening collecting all the trophies he had won during the course of the previous season. It is uncertain whether he had prepared an acceptance speech for each item as there was a not inconsiderable background noise sounding very much like grinding of teeth coming from the vicinity of Senior Grafham Warden, John Mees - whose unfulfilled ambition is to lift one of these

trophies himself. Hard luck John, maybe a word to Mark may be helpful to you.... No!,no! John - not that word!

There were one or two trophies that evaded Mark's receptive hands. Andy Newman gleefully lifted the Brown trout trophy this year... and lifting it is not easy as it is by far the heaviest trophy in the Invicta collection. John Krailing was awarded the Beecroft Shield for the heaviest Rainbow trout taken from a day ticket reservoir... or would have been awarded it if he were present and not off fishing with Mike Smith in the Argentine. The somewhat coruscating Carl Hunter Bowl also evaded Mark and Graham Williams thwarted him on this occasion. The Invicta trophy had no nominations this year and it is unlikely in any event that Mark would have comfortably qualified as 'Most Improved



**Lawson Wight delivering the after dinner speech**

Angler' or whatever, so not quite a clean sweep but close.

The dinner was followed by the customary entertaining speech given by our chairman Lawson Wight, who also gave rise to concerns on arriving, giving the impression of leaning towards cross-dressing but it transpires he was wearing traditional Highland dress. How 'traditional' this form of attire is in the lowlands of Rampton and Buckden is a trifle unclear (... well, to me at any rate.)



**...and working on it during the meal.**

Of course this occasion would not be complete without the stand-up comedy routines, given once again by life-time Bernard Manning fan, Bob (It's the way he tells them) Ayres, with his tribute performance to Max Miller and his accomplice in comedy, Brenda Prevost who appears to have been strongly influenced by Jo Brand at some stage. In all a very enjoyable evening and well done to all those who toiled long and hard to make this once again a great success.



**Brenda Prevost throwing the gauntlet down to Jo Brand , Joan Rivers ... and all comers.**



**Bob Ayres on the other hand suggesting floral tributes to the great man and rôle model - Bernard Manning.**



## Invicta calendar of forthcoming events 2011

Apr. 11th	PITSFORD Carr cup points apply. Choice of partners.	8.30 for 9 am
Apr. 23rd	RUTLAND WATER. AMFC Match groups 3 + 4	tba
May 29th	RUTLAND WATER Carr cup points apply. Choice of partners.	8.30 for 9 am
May 10th	TUESDAY EVENING LEAGUE STARTS Draw for partners.	5.30 for 6 pm
May 21st	BEWL WATER. AMFC Match group 3	tba
May 25th	RUTLAND WATER. AMFC Match group 4	tba
Jun. 17th	EYEBROOK Carr cup points apply. Choice of partners.	8.30 for 9 am
Jun. 25th	EYEBROOK. AMFC Match group 4	tba
Jun. 26th	HANNINGFIELD. AMFC Match group 3	tba
Jul. 10th	GRAFHAM (PRESIDENT'S CUP) Carr cup points apply. Draw for partners	8.30 for 9 am
Jul. 23rd	RUTLAND WATER. AMFC Match group 4	tba
Aug. 1st	INTER-CLUB FLOATING LINE COMPETITION Grafham Water	9.30 to 5 pm ?
Aug. 3rd	GRAFHAM WATER. AMFC Match groups 3 + 4	tba
Aug. 13th	PITSFORD (CARL HUNTER BOWL) Carr cup points apply. Draw for partners	8.30 for 9 am
Aug. 16th	TUESDAY EVENING LEAGUE FINISHES Draw for partners	5.30 for 6 pm
Sep. 3rd	RAVENSTHORPE Carr cup points apply. Choice of partners.	8.30 for 9 am
Sep. 7th	PITSFORD. AMFC Match group 3	tba
Sep. 30th	HANNINGFIELD Carr cup points apply. Choice of partners.	8.30 for 9 am
Oct. 1st	HANNINGFIELD. AMFC Match groups 3 + 4	tba
Oct 9th ?	PITSFORD. AMFC Fun day.	tba
Nov. tba	ELINOR 'Fur & Feather' Bank fishing event.	8.30 for 9 am

**\*\*\* Please ensure that John Cadwell (Bookings officer) is aware of your intention to fish in the Carr Cup events and that you keep him informed of any changes to your plans as early as possible. E-mail [john.caldwell@madscientist.com](mailto:john.caldwell@madscientist.com) or mobile 07956 275485.**

## HERE WE GO AGAIN - THE TUESDAY EVENING LEAGUE STARTS SOON.

For the benefit of those members who skipped gaily past the above calendar of events and for those who didn't but have yet to get into the regular pattern of things, the 'Invicta Tuesday Evening League' starts on Tuesday May 10th and concludes 15 weeks later on Tuesday August 16th.

Devotees of this event (and there are many of them) will know full well what is involved but we are constantly gaining new members who should know about these things. This very popular traditional event is a fun session from boats starting at 5.30 for 6.00 pm pontoon departure at Grafham Water until a designated finishing time dictated by Anglian Water and the level of daylight. Partners are allocated by a draw process which is nearly as democratic as an Ivory Coast election and ensures that participants fish with many other partners in the series, learning much about confusing differences in techniques etc. It is sometimes 'arranged' that novices are paired not by other novices but by experienced anglers who can be relied upon to blank on a regular basis. Youngsters and the infirm will also be allocated suitable boat partners in the interests of their personal safety. It is really an excellent opportunity

of introducing relative newcomers to the reservoirs to the sport and to competition.

Competition I hear you ask...? Well yes there is a trophy for the best performance over the series but do not focus on this too much as no doubt Mark Searle will win it again for the foreseeable future like he has done in the past. The fun part is in taking part and meeting new friends and potential new and interesting enemies.

At the conclusion of each Tuesday evening's endeavours participants adjourn to the adjacent 'Wheatsheaf' public house for included sandwiches and non-included drinks whilst shamelessly lying to each other about their fortunes and mis-fortunes on the evening on the water. It is all great fun and not to be missed. The boat costs for the evening are very reasonable but those not holding an AW season ticket will need to purchase the appropriate fishing permit. This event could not take place without the willing and generous support of the Anglian Water Wardens so please be nice to them. They are not a bad bunch (honestly) and to get known to them, offering to buy a pint is a good start. Go on, try it!



## WINTER MEETING REPORTS - BY DAVE JONES

### SIMON KIDD - SNOWBEE TACKLE



Simon Kidd came up from his West Country home to deliver a chat to a full house of Invicta members. The first half of his talk concerned the Commonwealth Championships held in Mid Wales last June. Unfortunately the talk was marred, not for the first time, by the temporary lack of a suitable projector being present.

Following on from the World Championships it has become traditional for one of the countries to host the Commonwealth Championships. There were 8 or 9 teams. Pakistan and India hope to get a team together in the future which offers the exciting prospect as the rivers in the mountains offer excellent fishing in truly spectacular scenery. (Rumours that sponsorship will be provided by OBL have yet to be confirmed) The next Commonwealth do is February of next year in Tasmania. Hope you have got some air miles!

The event was based at Rhayader and following tradition, the teams marched around the town accompanied by Griff the dragon and a lady drummer who impressed Simon by walking backwards for 2 miles. The welcome also featured a somewhat moving session from the Mid Wales male voice choir.

The fishing venues included Tal-y-llyn, a relatively small lake north of Machynlleth, which was allegedly a wild brown trout water. More lake fishing was planned at Clywedog

close to Llanidloes on the headwaters of the River Severn. In Simon's opinion the competition lakes offer some of the best brown trout fishing anywhere even in the hottest part of the summer and Clwydog is well worth a visit in its own right with both Browns and Rianbows present. The third lake was Craig Goch which is the top reservoir on the Elan Valley complex, just to the west of Rhayader and for wild Brown Trout fishing, these offer wonderful fishing at the right time of year. The river session was held on the upper Wye, downstream of the bridge at Builth Wells. Each bank angler had about an 80 metre stretch to themselves.

So the first session for Simon was at Craig Goch. The pebble shore was backed by a steep bank covered in bracken 2 or 3 feet high, which emitted a strong and almost sickly smell. Located on a steep bank, it proved adept at snagging the back cast. However, it was the home of a red/copper and black Bracken Chafer beetle too (locally referred to as the Coch y bonddu or 'Coch') which was just starting to make an appearance. The water was peaty and rapidly fell away to the depths of the reservoir. Practice was only possible on the 2<sup>nd</sup> lake where it was discovered that a red arsed hopper (14-16) waded through the surface fooled a couple of fish. Further experimentation with a foam suspender hopper and a beetle showed that success was only achieved when the angler failed to pay attention to the flies. Providing the fly was in the surface film and not moved the



**Dave Jones took a peek into Simon's rather interesting fly box... Look - no Blobs! Some red-arsed hoppers though.**

fish would shoot up from 6-8 feet of water and ferociously wack the fly. With fish up to 2.5 pounds, they were fat healthy, brilliantly coloured monsters by wild brown trout standards. If the fly sank or was retrieved then the fish tended to ignore it. The Coch-y-bondu variant featured a foam back and well cropped straggle legs. The foam back had a copper hue but the underside had to be black.

Simon was expecting the other countries to do well on Craig Goch especially the Scots and Welsh thanks to their familiarity with similar waters, the Aussies by past performances and the Kiwis who simply loved the water. In fact Simon stayed out of the water and crouched down out of the vision of the fish. The 1<sup>st</sup> cast raised a fish but failed to secure a hook hold. He ended up contacting 25 fish but only landed 8. Part of his success was attributed to the use of a new Snowbee short headed #7 WF line which overcome the problem of the restricted back cast. Secondly he played the fish with the rod tip held under the water or the fish escaped that much more easily. His was the first account I have heard complaining that barbless hooks were less effective than conventional hooks. All anglers were restricted to using a scoop net to land the fish which didn't help in avoiding the loss of fish. The angler alongside Simon caught just 1 fish using traditional methods. This was a hard session with the runner up catching just 4 fish and a further 3 out of 9 anglers blanking. At this stage Simon was in 4<sup>th</sup> position overall with Team England in the lead.

The next session was at Clywedog. A combination of an orange booby and blob on an intermediate line was not productive and replaced with hopper patterns. The fishing was hard but Simon persisted and ended up with 5 fish, 4 of which were caught in the last half hour including 1 in the last few minutes. Simon ended up as top rod for the session.

Next day the anglers were up and about at 4.30am in order to arrive at Tal-y-llyn in sufficient time to run 2 sessions. Unfortunately the Machynlleth bridge was the scene of a RTA and a 1 hour diversion was required to reach the lake. Simons boat partner was relatively inexperienced and misinterpreted where he was told to fish by his captain. Simon contacted 4 fish all of which shed the hook. Nil points and for once Simon was at the foot of the results table for this session. He was clearly miffed for this was the only water on which he had prior experience and should have done better.

He then returned to Clywedog for the final lake session. This was late in the day and he reflected on the fact that the water had been hammered for the previous 9 hours. He caught just one fish, the smallest of the day, on a 16 black hopper dry fly on a 3 lb tippet, hampered by the wind blowing into the shore.

On the last day he was delighted to be on the river, even though the water had been subjected to 12 hours of intense fishing by some of the best anglers in the world. Despite the river running low and the bright sun making sighting difficult, Simon was confident and with a light ripple at the tail of the pool he initially fished a single CDC fly, floated downstream but to no avail. He concluded that the fish had been driven out of the fast runs and settled in the quieter water. He decided to try French nymph methods, casting upstream with a tiny nymph on a long leader and a small CDC as an indicator. An induced take was the key to his success which led to 17 fish and joint 1<sup>st</sup> place for the 3 hour session. Simon had perfected the method on the Wiltshire Avon fishing for Grayling during a hatch of tiny pale watery olives. The nymph which did the damage was similar to the Rambo and featured a Coq de Leon tail, a 1mm gold head with a ruff of hares ear behind the bead. Most important was the stripped yellow quill body: nothing else would suffice. This was tied on a size 19 barbless 103BL Tiemco hook.

The overall result was that Australia won the team prize with England and Scotland on equal points but England receiving the silver award on the basis that they had caught 4 more fish. Simon was in 9<sup>th</sup> place overall.



### **Tackle from Snowbee.**

We were all supplied with an informative 2011 Snowbee catalogue. I particularly liked the visual display of fly line profiles. I wonder if anyone else noted the enormous size range of waders available which was hidden in a table on the inside of the back cover?

Snowbee source their rods from China and Korea with the latter country being preferred for the top of the range "Prestige" rods. At ~£160-£230 Simon reckoned they were as good as anything twice the price..... but he would say that!! He was using a 10' 4# rod on the Wye. I was most impressed how he lifted the rod off the ground by the top section (with care!!) in order to demonstrate how soft the tip was. This was essential if the fragile 2lb bs



tippets were not to break and the fish were not to throw the hook. Fine tippets were essential not so much for the lack of visibility but to achieve the correct fishing depth with tiny flies. This rod was described as ideal for Czech nymphing. Another rod which has attracted the attention of the Polish and the Czech anglers is the Prestige 9' 2# (yes, 2 weight) at a mere £179.

Back home on the small over grown West Country streams, Simon tended to use an 8' 6" 4# wt rod. If he goes any shorter he has found than the number of lost fish increases. However, when conditions demand he has been known to use only the top section to get under the trees.

Snowbee have introduced a series of Switch rods. These are two-handed rods typically 10' 8" in length and suited to Spey casting lines somewhat shorter than used on the traditional salmon rods. Some heads are as short as 27' but can be cast over 30 yards. It wasn't clear from the catalogue which line fitted this description. It is encouraging to see a British company promoting Switch rods and Spey casting. By all accounts in the USA it is regarded as a family activity quite separate from the angling aspects. The Echo web site ([www.rajeffsports.com](http://www.rajeffsports.com)) is well worth a gander. Simon passed around a 7# Switch rod. Russ Symmons reckoned that they were Spey casting off the rocks in the SW peninsular long before it was employed by salmon anglers. Perhaps I misheard this but that statement was complete b\*\*\*\*\* and I would direct the reader to this fascinating account [HYPERLINK "http://www.speycast.co.uk/history-of-speycasting-alexander-grant/3059.html"](http://www.speycast.co.uk/history-of-speycasting-alexander-grant/3059.html) <http://www.speycast.co.uk/history-of-speycasting-alexander-grant/3059.html>

Snowbee has introduced a new fluorocarbon line with a combination of high strength, elasticity and flexibility; these properties were regarded as essential for absorbing smash takes. Simon claimed that this line was not sensitive to the presence of wind knots, a claim which seemed to be vindicated by the sample passed around the audience. 100m of 10lb.bs (0.255mm) will set you back £17.

Snowbee also market a range of 6' and 7' rods with line ratings ranging from #2 - 6. These were originally aimed at junior anglers (Peter Hartley please note!) but are now best sellers for adults fishing small streams. At £50 a throw, who can complain? The sample sent around the audience was a proper wand and, according to

Simon, required the lightest possible reel to avoid impeding the action.

Simon concluded by thanking everyone for attending. He was really pleased to be amongst familiar faces - even Steve so he said! In return I could comment that we are extremely fortunate to have a company directed by someone such as Simon with the desire to introduce the best lightweight/lake/river equipment possible. I should also mention that Snowbee will be sponsoring the Invicta Floating Line Competition in the coming season. Simon and Snowbee UK, thank you very, very much indeed!

## HENRY LOWE ON FLY LINES

Henry volunteered to talk about fly lines after the recent AGM. I first noticed that Henry could do interesting things with fly lines on a trip to the River Dee about 20 years ago. I had never seriously fly fished on a river and was limited to reservoir tackle.

Henry on the other hand, was fully equipped in mind and kit to deal with running water. Fairly recently Henry has been promoting the use of double handed rods on still waters and has given several useful demos as a member of the Hardy Greys Academy. I wouldn't say that the idea has taken off but the more general introduction of switch casting rods in the UK by firms such as Snowbee may accelerate the change. An article by Henry appeared in the Invicta Newsletter No.133, March 2007. Casting aside, I see that the booklets co-written by Henry with various authors, on fishing specific AW reservoirs, are still available at the lodges and are well worth a read.



Henry wanted to tell the audience about concepts which he had learnt as an instructor and were not generally discussed in the literature. He remarked at the number of fly lines in the catalogues. When you make a fly cast you should be reasonably mechanically efficient. He produced a sheet of diagrams from one of his booklets showing tailing loops, wide loops rather than tight loops. The idea is to aim for a tight loop. If you can't do that get help. Professionals mentioned were Mark Huntsman at Hildersham, Peter Hartley, and Malcolm Marsh at Rutland. Our own John Reynolds is also a qualified instructor as is Stanislav Mankov and Allan Sefton. A more comprehensive list can be found on [HYPERLINK "http://www.gameanglin.com"](http://www.gameanglin.com) [www.gameanglin.com/instructors.co.uk](http://www.gameanglin.com/instructors.co.uk) The key is not to put too much effort into the cast – get the rod to do the work.

Henry, with the help of the audience, composed a list of things to think about when purchasing a line. This included the fishing situation (load to cast, presentation, distance required to cast, accuracy), rod parameters, line rating (profile, weight) floater, sinker – sink rate, colour, memory and cost.

The action of casting is an attempt to energise the line through movement of the hand/arm. If you throw a narrow loop then the transfer of effort from the hand is efficient. Wide or wavy loops are very inefficient. 1.26.27. Henry described how the energy is transferred around the loop from the rod tip to the end of the fly line and projects the lure. The best shape of a fly line for this to work efficiently is for the line to be tapered with the thicker belly feeding energy into thinner front taper which then speeds up and turns over. A correctly designed tapered leader is to be preferred. Long leaders with a heavy nymph don't work unless there is enough momentum in the nymph.

Profile – can have a weight forward or a DT. WF is dividing the energy transfer between that flowing around the loop and that required to pull the running line through the rod rings. This energy transfer is much less significant in DT lines (Mike Marshall thinks that DT lines are better for casting into the wind). With the WF profile there comes a point when the heavier head loses the loop, and it collapses in a heap (a line only stays aloft when it is moving in a horizontal plane). Achieving a long cast with a WF depends not only how far but how long it flies. A longer

head may well be able to fly further. So head length is important. 1.35. Heavy line for large flies simply to carry the energy put into the cast and transfer sufficient energy around the loop.

The longer the taper the more gentle will be the transfer of energy but this is only suitable for smaller flies. Mr Mees pointed out that Di 7 and Di 8 lines are level and the angler is not going to get the advantage of the taper. I don't think Henry was familiar with these beasts – the lines not Mr Mees!

Thinking about the rods and matching fly lines to the rods. The AFTM rating on the rod is more than a guide. What matters is the actual loading. The same loading on the rod can be achieved by adjusting the length of the head. The AFTM rating system depends on the 1<sup>st</sup> 10 yards of line. John Wadham was using 6-9 inch minkies for pike on the Fenland drains. He was employing a 7-8 reservoir rods with 6-7 yards of No 12 which turned over these flies without overloading the rod<sup>1</sup>. The weighting concept can work the other way. Lines longer and lighter than the 10yd rated weight can be made up and cast successfully. According to Henry, quite a lot of rods can cast considerably lighter lines (presumably at a head length of 10 yards) that they are rated for<sup>2</sup>. Henry likes to wander around the reservoir with his double handed rod. Should he encounter fish he would often change down to a 4# which in his experience lessens the chances of disturbing the fish<sup>3</sup>. If a rod is overloaded it loses the ability to punch the line out because the action slows down. If you use much lighter lines, some rods go rigid in your hand and will not cast. There are some rods which are capable of handling light lines – it would have been nice to hear which ones he had in mind.

Trying too hard is the downfall of most casters. Faster action rods can give a tighter loop. Progressively actioned rods might collapse when pushed. Get some instruction. Watch the line and see what is working for you. Watch what other people are doing<sup>4,5</sup>.

Suppleness is related to temperature. If the polymer is designed to work at the fishing temperature then the performance will be different in local and tropical waters<sup>6</sup>. Suppleness should be transferred to the fly via a tapered leader. Henry preferred a knotless taper but home tied monofil of progressively thinner gauges can be used. Heavy lures require a shorter leader.

Henry found that a Greyflex 9½' rod rated at 6/7# worked well using a long headed 6# from the bank. which generated longer loops and longer casts. Even a 6# is not good for flat calms. He used a Lee Wulff 3/4# triangular taper (triangular taper = continuous taper – no level belly). There was a limit as to what can be turned over by such a line. He reckoned on 1 size 12, or 2 size 14's or 3 size 16's.

This combination has now been replaced by a Hardy 13 ft 2-hander rated 8 wt but will cast a WF 7. I have seen him demonstrate this combination. The secret apparently is to *extract the performance from the line and not the rod* – whatever this means.

Henry likes to use a needle knot to join the line to the leader. This is not always possible, where, for example, a monocore is used to construct the line. A loop then may be the only option. Typical braided loops tend to be heavy and may cause the line to kick during the cast. The coating on solid core lines can be stripped and the core folded into a loop and whipped to form a small loop. The manufacturers put a lot of effort in to designing the taper according to Henry (but don't make it obvious in their advertising)<sup>7</sup>.

Surface treatment of fly lines was considered useful although wiping with soapy water was generally a good stating point. If a line requires plasticiser it is probably past its sell by date. Some treatments put a glaze on the surface which assists casting. John Mees reckoned that a car vinyl cleaner such as Black Chrome was as good as anything. Memory could be reduced by immersing the line in hot water (a temperature just above that which was bearable). According to Henry it will be seen to go straight. Do not wind it back on the reel whilst it is still hot! Twist could be removed by pulling the line through long grass. Alternatively drag it behind a moving boat making sure that the action could not be mistaken for trolling! Retrieving often imparts a twist so it could be useful to occasionally remove the spool and allow it to spin.

When asked what make of lines he used it was not surprising that as a Hardy affiliate, he said Hardy! Obviously Hardy do not manufacture their own lines and according to Henry use several different suppliers. Many years ago they were using Scientific Anglers some of which filled Dick Walkers car boot in payment for consultancy work! What lines do you use out of preference.

I hardly fish and certainly don't have Henry's expertise. I have refused to buy premium grade lines simply because you don't actually know what you are buying and that seems to make £30-40 pretty poor value. I do and will stick with mill ends. As Don Neish once told us you can only guarantee that there is something wrong with them. OK but at least it can be thrown away and another purchased for next to nothing. For what it is worth here are a few of my comments on some of the points made in this talk.

1. I would be surprised if 6 yards of line can be successfully cast. I reckon 8 yards is on the limit of achieving a reasonable turn-over.

2. Henry didn't mention which rods could handle lines lighter than their manufacturers rating. I would say that almost all rods are under-rated, a fact reinforced by the practical experience of many successful competition anglers who have said the same on club evenings. Also if you look at Tim Rajeff's site [HYPERLINK "http://www.rajeffsports.com/spey\\_chart.pdf"](http://www.rajeffsports.com/spey_chart.pdf) [http://www.rajeffsports.com/spey\\_chart.pdf](http://www.rajeffsports.com/spey_chart.pdf), according to him, salmon rods are always rated against a spey line and would require a standard line several weights above that quoted in order to get the rod to work.

3. A 4# line might be useful on the local lake but I don't think the average angler would find it useful for even 5% of their bank fishing on an exposed reservoir such as Grafham or Rutland.

4. There is a real danger from self-instruction that you are practicing and more importantly, instilling incorrect techniques. Nevertheless I can thoroughly recommend looking through U Tube for videos of experts in action.

5. I would say that the beginner is better off with a heavily loaded rod in order to acquire a taste for what should be happening and then work backwards to lighter lines. If the angler buys the next line up from that marked on the rod there is a good chance that it will actually match the rod due to errors in labelling of the lines and rods.

6. I don't really understand this. Surely if the idea is to project as narrow a loop as possible (for distance) then the suppleness should always be as great as possible. The width of the loop can then be controlled by the casting stroke.

7. Henry is quite correct to point to the number of different types of lines available. The adverts identify the general taper such as WF or DT, the sinking rate and the colour. It is not always clear



if the core is braided or mono. Rarely is the profile of the line revealed. The John Norris catalogue has made a good effort in this direction for many years and I note that Snowbee have followed in their tracks. Top marks to Cortland lines [HYPERLINK "http://www.cortlandline.com/"](http://www.cortlandline.com/) <http://www.cortlandline.com/> Zilch on the Airflo website although there is a lot of other interesting stuff including a section on line care. I was surprised to find that the Hardy web site [HYPERLINK "http://fly.hardyfishing.com/en-us/products/line-system/hardy-flylines/"](http://fly.hardyfishing.com/en-us/products/line-system/hardy-flylines/) <http://fly.hardyfishing.com/en-us/products/line-system/hardy-flylines/> makes a commendable effort at showing the tapers of their lines. I noticed that the prices were marked in \$; perhaps the American market is more discerning?

## LIFE JACKETS – USELESS UNLESS WORN – KIERAN CAULFIELD

Kieran Caulfield came along, appropriately at the start of the season, to talk about life jackets, and general water safety necessary if you have the misfortune to fall overboard.

He has lived in the Cambridge area for the past 3 years having previously been located in the Dublin area overlooking Dublin Bay. His activities in Ireland covered almost anything associated with the water including fishing, windsurfing and canoeing. Later in life he participated in competitive yacht racing. It was not surprising that he was very interested in the Royal National Lifeboat Institute but he could not become an active crew member because he worked some 20 miles from the water. Nevertheless he became a RNLi Sea Safety Advisor where he operated as an intermediary between the lifeboat station and water users. Recent training was undertaken at the RLNI College at Poole in Dorset where they have a tank which is capable of reproducing storm-like conditions. On top of that he holds a RYA Coastal Skipper Certificate (T) (800 miles to be logged within 10 years), the RYA Yachtmaster Offshore Certificate (T), a Level II Powerboat Certificate and many years working on a commercial charter boat. I think we can assume he knows what he is talking about.

He asked the audience “Who owns a life jacket?” Most responded in the affirmative. “How many have had their lifejackets serviced ready for the

new season?” Not many. “How many have had their life saved by a jacket?” Zilch.

Kieran then related a story describing how he owed his life to a life jacket because of an incident some 7 years ago. He was racing on a Sigma 33 in Dublin Bay. The boat was 9 miles offshore, with a Force 6 wind blasting the craft along at 13 knots. There was a big sea running and every wave was breaking. He was in the lead boat of a fleet of 24. He drew the short straw to stand on the coach roof and place his back side firmly against the boom in order to prevent it gibing (across the boat). Oh Dear! There was a slight change in the prevailing wind and Kieran’s posterior provided inadequate resistance against the boom moving and not only was he was duly thrown off the boat but carried down under the water He was wearing full foul weather kit. The life jacket did not fire until he hit the surface (he now knows it was improperly packed!). He was choking because his clothing had slipped up towards his head. He realised that the other 23 yachts were steaming along the same track, all flying spinnakers and therefore oblivious to anyone in the water. He tried to swim but waves were breaking over his head he was beginning to drown. Luckily the rescue boat, which reached him after 30 minutes, had a stern ladder and three strong helpers who dragged him into the vessel. He learnt, and so should rescuers, from that experience (to avoid getting thrown overboard again!). He had little or no peripheral vision and the cold water got to him so he could not grip anything.

What is the appropriate one to buy? Forget **buoyancy aids** which only offer assistance in floating. A **life jacket** will not only keep the angler afloat but maintain the body in a safe position and assist in keeping the airways clear. The jackets for fly-fishing were rated at 120 N (1N ~ 0.1kgf ~ 0.25lbf). A typical body in the water has a negative buoyancy of ~11 lbs which means that about 50N is required to achieve a neutral balance. In the opinion of Kieran, manufacturers underestimate the bulk of a fly fisher out on the reservoir. Hence the basic flotation of a life jacket supplied at Anglian Water (AW) Reservoirs is presently 150N, but they will be progressively replaced with units with a buoyancy rating of 175N. Crewsaver are introducing a jacket with a rating of 190N. A life jacket may be operated manually or automatically in contact with water. The latest AW suits will be manual with auto back-up. Mr John Mees of AW said that by the time you are aware that you are in the water the auto will have triggered.

Sea anglers were advised that a floatation suit in itself has limited buoyancy but keeps the limbs warm in the event of immersion. A life jacket with a rating of 275N is required to restore the imbalance introduced by a floatation suit. These suits often comprise a separate jacket and salopettes: do not remove the jacket and life jacket as the floatation balance would be catastrophic!

Automatic firing units may activate through the dissolution of a barrier – maybe a salt tablet or a paper disc. These may accidentally operate if subjected to excessive spray. In sea going activities he would prefer a pressure switch. It is always worthwhile carrying a spare cylinder which could well be one rejected through the presence of superficial corrosion. If a life jacket does not have a crutch strap then one can be fitted for about £6. Kieran has also fitted a light to his jacket. This pressure activated device cost about £18. Spray hoods cost about £7 but in his experience, they must be repacked into a larger pouch than that supplied so that they can be easily deployed. This is pointless if they are located on the jacket where they are not easily reached. Some jackets benefit from the addition of extra reflective material. It is vital to ensure that the adhesive doesn't attack the bladder material.

There was little point in wearing a life jacket unless it has been fitted properly or indeed that the design suited your physique. There is a good case for having life jackets ready inflated in order that the customer can make a sound choice. There was some argument as to whether the waist belt should be tight enough to just accommodate a fist or fingers. There was no doubt that the belt should be tight enough to stop the jacket from riding up the torso when activated. In the worse cases, drowned persons have been retrieved hanging below the life jacket. An ill fitting or poorly designed jacket might well create a channel on the chest, between the inflated panels, which funnels water over the face. Life jackets for children should not be purchased on the basis that they will grow into it – they might not have the opportunity..... The good news for your relatives at least, is that providing a body is retrieved within 7 years then the insurance company will pay out!

When entering cold water there will be a 3 minute period of cold water shock where the heart races, respiration is difficult and not surprisingly, panic sets in. The role of the life jacket is to ensure that you through this critical period. Cold UK waters demand that it is essential to conserve body heat by adopting a crouched foetal position. Should swimming be necessary then the arms were preferred for propulsion over leg movement.

Life jackets must be serviced at least annually even if it had not discharged. Inadvertent contact with flies such as Goldheads could easily inflict fatal damage to the integrity of the survive bladders.

Mr. Norman Shippey volunteered his life jacket for an inspection. Someone suggested that it had been retrieved from a Zeppelin, when in fact it was a mere 12 years of age! It had not been serviced apart for an annual check for leaks, which was accomplished by inflating it orally and leaving it for 24 hours to check that it did not soften. The gas cylinder had not discharged and it was essentially free from corrosion. This particular make had been recalled long-ago by the manufacturers, Crewsaver, to install an o-ring. Crewsaver, along with other manufacturers, had withdrawn this particular firing mechanism which was prone to embrittlement in cold weather, and Kieran determined the life jacket should be condemned. For some reason, the gas bottle discharged under Kieran's deft handling and it was evident that, because the bottle was not securely fitted, the bladders only partially filled and would require topping up in the event of an accident. Don't fret Norman as rearming kits are available from AW shops for around £15 plus £3 parking, and when you purchase your new lifejacket it will come with a new arming kit installed!

Kieran recommended wearing a life jacket for most fishing activities except perhaps when wading through shallow streams. He has worn one when fishing from slippery rocks, which might also apply to the dam walls on our local reservoirs. The Anglers Trust are about to encourage coarse anglers to do the same.

A sobering statistic was that 50% of drowning incidents occur within 3 metres of safety. No one should feel threatened with ridicule through wearing a life jacket – even when walking on the Grafham pontoons (much laughter).

Kieran concluded by stating that he was not on a fund raising visit but donations could be made through the RLNI web site. ([rnl.org.uk/How\\_To\\_Support\\_Us](http://rnl.org.uk/How_To_Support_Us)). A number of publications were available for perusal and I noticed that several other members were submitting their life jackets for examination.

Well that was an evening with a difference which was met with great appreciation by the audience.



## JOHN MEES, MARCH 2011



John Mees came along as a speaker rather than a member and found plenty to say. He had no notes but was prepared to answer any questions

concerning the plans Anglia Water may have for their reservoirs in the coming season

### *Q. Killer Shrimps are they good or bad?*

Ah ha! said John, I have made a rule! The first guy to ask me about killer shrimps has to buy me a pint! I am not sure if that was a ploy to suppress further questions. Although this shrimp has been described as one of the most dangerous invasive species in the UK (come off it – what about wolves and wild boar?), John thought that they might be a blessing in disguise as they tended to concentrate around the edge of Grafham and in his opinion contributed to the best bank fishing for many years. They frequented the rocky, gravely areas of the reservoir and in his experience were rarely present in more than 3 feet of water. The natural British shrimp has survived so far in the deep water. Experience in Holland suggests it could be as long as 5 – 10- even 20 years before the true effects are realised. The experts are watching Grafham with great interest.

### *Q. What is planned to combat bank erosion and building new jetties?*

£10.4 million has been allocated to deal with bank erosion. Half of this cash will be spent at Rutland. The remainder will be split 2:1 between Grafham and Pitsford. The Hedge End region of Grafham will receive 12-1500 lorry loads of 20 tonnes each. There is a possibility of a stone groin being built at Plummers but this was still being priced at the time of the talk. Special geo matting will be placed around the area in order to secure the growth of reeds and impart a more natural look to the reservoir. Contractors have it in hand. The lagoons man from Rutland will be in charge of the project. The work is proposed to extend over a three year period because it is impractical to lower the water level in all three reservoirs simultaneously. Ideally

the work would be undertaken towards the end of the seasons possibly from September – January.

### *Q. What is to be done about the west bank and Lymage?*

The West Bank and Lymage according to Colin were unfishable due to reed growth. John suggested that he should wade through the reeds but Colin pointed out that the water level may prevent the angler from wading out to the reed beds in the first place. John suggested that Colin acquire a pair of stilts!

### *Q. Is Grafham full?*

2.5 inches were pumped in overnight yesterday and the reservoir should be full by the 1<sup>st</sup> week in April. Pumping occurs all through the year depending on the availability of water of sufficient quality. The Grafham works have the ability to pump 35,000 m<sup>3</sup>/day which is roughly equal to the volume of a Land Rover per second. The electricity bill alone to pump water the 3 miles from the Ouse is around £12M a year. Main inlet is at I buoy: when the pumps are operating at full bore, the local surface of the reservoir may rise by up to 18 inches. The secondary pipe serving the water tower is large enough to allow the passage of an old style Mini. However, since the EU no longer require 2 inlets, it is rarely used. A demo exercise to activate the water tower (water fall) conducted about 8 years ago cost AW £60,000 per day.

### *Q. What is the latest on Draycote?*

Reports that it was to open on March 1<sup>st</sup> proved premature. A surveyors report on behalf of the potential lessee. Ifor Jones, showed that the pontoons were unsafe and an impasse developed because ST declined to replace them or reduce the rent. The previous restrictions to limit the fishing to natural banks and to ban anglers from driving around the reservoir were still in place. A new car park has been built where anglers would be expected to pay the £3 fee on top of that for the fishing permit. Whilst this situation can only benefit other waters by driving anglers away, John was disappointed as it was once his local water and happy hunting ground.

### *Q. What is the stocking policy at Grafham for this season?*

50,000 fish have been ordered of which 2500 are browns. There are three categories of fish 650mm, 750mm and 900mm which corresponded to weights of 11lb 5oz, 11lb 10oz and 2.0lbs. respectively. The suppliers reckon that because it was a mild winter (where do they live?) the fish will weigh in considerably more and the 900mm fish may well be 2lb 10oz. 1000 each of the 750 and 950 mm groups were stocked today.



In response to an enquiry as to why blue trout were not stocked, John said that they cost 50% more than rainbow trout. Browns are 2.5 times the cost of rainbows. The cost of fish food has increased 45% over the last 3 years. The fish farms used by AW are just coming out of contract so that fish prices will inevitably jump over the next few years. Nobody knows for sure how many trout survive each year but most fisheries work on a 70% mortality rate through the winter. AW was moving away from triploids in favour of slower maturing females (2-2 1/2 years rather than 8 months). AW experiments showed that these females fed on through the gill infestation period and continued to gain weight. There is little doubt that genetic strains are much better nowadays. Fish die through old age but also a lack of food, cormorants, ospreys, otters, pike, zander, over-fishing, poaching etc. also helped the fish on their way. Large rainbows are probably 4 years old. John identified another difficulty when the use of Malachite Blue for disease treatment was discontinued in favour of the less effective formalin.

*Q. What are the restrictions on fishing because of the shrimp problem?*

There is uncertainty concerning the reasons why the shrimps managed to get into Grafham. They originated from the Caspian Sea and spread through the Danube system to Holland in 10 years. The only other infested sites are Cardiff Bay and a near by reservoir Eglwys Nunydd. Arguably the shrimp arrived in Wales via the bilges of tankers. Some might think that it reached Grafham via Cormorants. However, this does not explain why there are no reports of the beastie in other reservoirs in the area. All reservoirs are monitored using breeze blocks drilled with suitable holes in which the shrimps love to make their home. The measures to contain the intruder are the same as last season. Sign in and sign out for bank anglers as per last season. AW are negotiating a strategy, which will relax some of the current restrictions. All anglers will be required to scrub their kit before leaving the reservoir. Wash stations are under consideration alongside the jetty and also on the Marlow Park site near to the Visitors

---

## **PETER HARTLEY**

If you wondered what Peter Hartley has done in a former life then you may be surprised to learn that he was a retailer specialising in English china and glass. His deep knowledge is now redundant as iconic names such as Royal Dalton and Wedgewood and Royal Worcester have gone. He partly put this down to a change in eating habits where families no longer sat around the table but preferred eating from a tray whilst watching the TV. In 1964 Royal Doulton had 14 factories in Stoke on Trent: there

Centre. In a recent survey, John only found 1 shrimp after upturning but this is probably due to the low water temperatures at the moment when the shrimps are probably hibernating..

*Q. Is poaching a significant problem?*

No. John has not been called out to deal with poaching for at least 4 years.

*Q. When is the close season for brown trout?*

Apparently confusion reigns in this area since EA removed any limitation yet AW decided to retain the status quo – meaning that the season extends from 1<sup>st</sup> April until 29<sup>th</sup> October.

*Q. Is Grafham introducing new boats?*

A bit more confusion here. Grafham have received a new Coulam Wheelyboat which features a deck which can be raised and lowered in order to facilitate loading of wheel chairs. Grafham have also acquired 6 boats on loan from Rutland. These will be the 16ft models with a slightly broader beam than the standard Grafham boat. There are 9 new boats due on the water in May/June. These are modified versions of the Mk 3 with features which will improve storage of fishing items in the boat. The Grafham fleet will then be 50 boats.

*Q. What new lines are due from Airflo?*

The 40+ series has been supplemented with a 40+ expert which seems to be similar except that the head has been extended from 35 to 45 feet., both on a non stretch core. A hover line is in the offing which is basically a slow sinker which stops sinking on the commencement of the retrieve. John reflected on the fact that his current stock of 36 lines will grow further.

*Q. What can be done to aid anglers getting into and out of the boats?*

Although there is no intention to widen the gang plank, Colin was pleased to hear that hand rails will be installed along the end “T” piece of the jetty.

are now zero. Wedgewood and Waterford merged some years ago but also went under 18 months ago. The Spode factory is now an empty shell. The glass business was centred on Stourbridge with the likes of Stuart Crystal and Thomas Webb but now all completely defunct. He owned 8 shops, including one in the Grafton Centre. He made sure that the audience was awake by bashing a pair Wedgewood bone china plates together as though they were cymbals without causing the slightest chip. Bone china actually contained animal bone. Other countries made porcelain which contained feldspar,

distinguished by its grey appearance whereas bone china is white and translucent. He is now selling second hand stuff for replacement items, mainly to the USA.

Peter has been a fisherman most of his life. He started to fish Grafham in 1968. AW approached GWFFA in order to find coaches – 2 members volunteered. The training course involved classroom work over a couple of months plus a casting requirement.

He passed the Level 2 exam despite being a bit nervous but that proved to be the easy bit. When you coach people complications start. Beginners definitely need tuition. £70 gets you a days instruction with AW. Who comes on the courses? A person with bits of kit who think they can master it themselves. Another type - the wife has bought him a ticket for the day - get out of my hair. A number who have never been fishing before. Father and son/ daughter seeking to ease permission to go fishing in future! There is a maximum of 6 anglers per course so there is a complete cross section of abilities. People who have the kit (often acquired from E-Bay) are particularly difficult as the tackle is invariably unsuitable! Some had wound the line on the reel the wrong way around - the thick end first! Lines not balancing the rod were common. The best fly fishers were invariably coarse fisherman probably because they have a basic understanding of how the line and rod worked together.

He gives the course members a boost by congratulating them for attending – but tells them that they must realise that it is going to be difficult – the course is only the start. Impress them with some photos of mighty fish that you have landed. Fishing can be a tiring activity to start with. Thought and practice are essential. But tell them that the still water fishing available on Grafham is as good as it gets almost anywhere in the world. This is generally confirmed by other visiting anglers (although I am always told that I should have been there the previous day in order to experience the best fishing!). Casting ability is often a limiting factor. The reservoir is rich with food. The fish are stocked because they can't breed in the absence of running water. 1st and foremost the reservoir is a public water supply. What is the difference between fly fishing compared with other forms of angling, asked Peter? Given a couple of minutes what would you say? Continuous activity compared with carp fishing? Catching something you can eat? Peter thought it lay in the big difference in the weight distribution: in fly fishing the weight is distributed along the line, in other pursuits the weight is concentrated in added weights (leads, floats). I am not sure that the audience agreed. Perhaps we were confused by the question - we were thinking

philosophically whereas Peter was considering the mechanics. What hooked me was the imitation of the food form with artificial materials (at home) which in turn needed an understanding of the ever changing ecology on the water. Some anglers find a great deal of pleasure in casting to and deceiving fish they can see rising, especially on rivers. Casting features in the course – knowledge of mechanics is important. Inability to cast reasonably well is a real handicap to continuing to the logical end of the course, namely to catch a fish.

Kids - don't start them to fish too young - even 12 too young. 14 is probably the minimum according to Peter and the APGAI. Better to take them to the local river to start with. It can be a bit of a nightmare when it comes to coaching kids in many peoples minds. Coaches need to have a C R Check and a child protection certificate. A distant past misdemeanour perhaps might put some people off? Our resident expert, David Moore, claimed that only relatively recent events were taken into account providing the offence was not directly related to children. The Angling Development Board issues the Level 2 certs ( [HYPERLINK "http://www.1st4sportqualifications.com/centre\\_information/centreinfo\\_our\\_qualifications/qualificationbin/L2CCA"](http://www.1st4sportqualifications.com/centre_information/centreinfo_our_qualifications/qualificationbin/L2CCA) ) but it is done through one person in a discrete manner. It costs £50 a year and has to be reissued every 3 years. When it comes to boatmen, juniors are not restricted to fishing with certified anglers as it is not usually a regular event with the same guy. Peter recognised that anglers are not always keen to subject themselves to this intrusion of certification – and it is not just in the field of angling. Children become adults at 16.

I have a few views on taking kids fishing. To start with, abandon any hope of spending most of your personal time fishing. Boredom shouldn't be a factor. Some kids will appreciate just zooming around the reservoir. Teach them a bit of etiquette regarding other water users. Do a bit of bird watching. Don't forget H&S! And then there is entomology. You are not out to prove that you are a better angler/caster or what have you. Try to use kit of a comparable quality although expecting a junior (depending on physique of course) to effectively handle a rod much longer than say 8.6 is a bit of an ask in my opinion. Try and employ similar techniques. If the easy casting range is say 10 metres then why not try the bung? If fish are showing, control the boat with the oars and allow the junior to retrieve say a muddler across wind lanes – sometimes very exciting fishing. Make sure your protégés kit is properly set up to minimise the disappointment of breakages when a fish takes - this

may require heavier leaders than normal. Pick a day or an evening when there is a reasonable chance of catching something.

The role of the coach is to sort out problems. The average angler might be able to recognise faults but not necessarily know the solution.

We had a short intermission with a film showing an accomplished lady fly fisher, Jeong Park, performing various casts. Peter made a point of her holding the rod high on the end of the shooting stroke to assist in achieving distance (not recommended when casting into the wind). That may well be so but she was missing one of the most important accessories namely a line tray which is vital to achieving maximum distance when wading. You might also consider ensuring that the line was clean and treated with a slicking agent such as cockpit shine. She made it look easy but it was difficult to tell if the film was slowed down. It struck me that she was *throwing* the line and that requires what is probably a heavier line than recommended which slows up the rod action. A quick look on U-Tube revealed a number of clips of Jeong in action and also a host of teach your self fly-casting videos. Beware - it can be addictive!! (look at HYPERLINK "<http://www.sexyloops.com/flycasting/contents.shtml>" <http://www.sexyloops.com/flycasting/contents.shtml> ) Some even mention the essential ingredient of successful casting namely a sharp stop at the termination of the back and forward strokes.

In his role as a coach Peter has only come across one lady who was a talented fly caster – Norman Shippey's granddaughter. Norman tells me that she is taking her exams a year early and is also involved in a Princes Trust project and hence is very busy girl. Norman lives in hope that he can lure her back to the water!!

What proportion of students take the sport up? AW have about 400 people through the course each year which seems very commendable to me. Apparently the tackle shop sells loads of properly balanced beginners kit. It was speculated that about 10% get really keen but lots of favourable feed back is also received. Sometimes students need a bit of a refresher and a further hour or two is generally adequate. Quite a proportion of course members take up the starter season ticket. David Moore said that AW were quite happy with these results.

Anglers in general, according to Peter, put far too much effort into casting, often bringing the rod too

far forward and back. They are adopting a tournament style which is probably inappropriate even on reservoirs. The skill comes in keeping the tip of the rod in a straight line to generate a tight loop. On the other hand the angler might need to create an open loop when using several flies in order to minimise tangles in the leader. This requires a more open power stroke than the recommended 11pm to 1am: distance is then sacrificed. Peter didn't recommend watching the line as it tended to make the body swing out of the plane of casting. One reason to look behind when casting from the bank is to make sure that there is nobody walking past. Champion caster Don Neish certainly watched the line waiting for the perfect back cast in order to deliver the perfect forward cast. Maybe he was only moving his head rather than his shoulders?

Some fly lines are very different. Get the pupil to feel the profile of the line and explain that the thicker section needs to be outside the tip ring in order to correctly balance the rod. This belly can vary between different lines: I am unaware of any lines with a belly of only 10 metres. Airflo seem to make the preferred sinking lines in the competition scene. The Sixth Sense versions are built on a high modulus core and do not exhibit much elasticity. Hence these lines are highly sensitive to the slightest pluck but lack shock absorption and may be susceptible to fatal smash-takes in inexperienced hands. Snowbee make nice floating lines – good dynamics and freedom from memory. Expensive rods like Loomis and Sage need a heavier line at least one up and 8 rather than a 7 according to Peter. I personally think that this applies to most rods but you must also bear in mind that the lines could equally be at the bottom end of their specified line weight. I also happen to think that if Steve Rajeff, who designs Loomis rods, specifies a certain line then he is almost certainly correct *for an angler of his casting ability* (multi-world champion). Greys were well matched according to Peter. If you recall Mark Haycock telling us last month that he used a 9 line on a 7 rod without problems. Peter Anderson, back in the 60's, effortlessly demonstrated holding the entire length of a double taper line in the air using a fibre glass Milbro *Trufly* rod – 9'6" I do believe and rated at #6. The whole line would be equivalent to something well in excess of a #9 and the rod didn't seem bothered. (I think his other hobby was tossing the caber!) With lines costing upwards of £30 pounds, finding the optimum line weight could be quite an expensive learning curve. Personally I don't fish often enough to justify spending loads of wonga on a floating line



especially when I find that it lays in a zig-zag coil on the water, defying all the BS you read in tackle reviews. I stick with mill ends from John Norris where you can afford to buy a few lines relatively inexpensively and discover which one suits your rod and style. I have heard good reports of an economy line known as the Pitsford Pirate. Is anyone in the club familiar with them? Expensive kit doesn't make you a good caster but obviously Peter must think it has some advantage as he has a Loomis on his shopping list for the coming season.

We were presented with a few photos of course pupils in action. Could we identify faults? Watching the line in the air – we could argue about this but it does help initially in relating how the effect of changing the casting action controls the flow of the line. The rod was twisted – should keep the reel in the same plane as the cast. The shoulder and arm provides the power not the relatively weak wrist. The arm should be close to the body. The instructor should be looking for a toy soldier motion. I recall Hywell Morgan teaching his young daughter to cast at a Game Fair

some years ago to the sound of a clock – Tick-Tock-Tick-Tock. Teach the basic rules that a good back cast makes a good forward cast and that the line follows the path of the rod tip.

Apart from his work with AW, Peter also contributes to teaching young students (tearaways?) seeking the B TECH award. There is general recognition that fishing can contribute to the rehabilitation of difficult kids and a significant amount of money has become available for tuition. He has found it difficult particularly when participants engage in fisty cuffs! Apparently most interest so far has been shown in fly tying rather than fishing. Other branches of B TECH courses include fishery management and construction in and around the waters. Plans are afoot to introduce levels up to 5.

We had a short question and answer session before setting out into the cold night air. I don't think I will go in for coaching but I will definitely try and modify my casting style in the light of what Peter described.

---

## FAREWELL

You have had me as newsletter editor now for quite a few years and have endured me with good grace for that period. However, I recognise that I cannot keep indulging myself at your expense and that the time has come to pass the mantle over to others more worthy and maybe less confrontational. Possibly, who knows, to someone with a greater regard to accuracy and less concern to tub thumping. I have really enjoyed myself

during my spell as editor and I hope I have not been too tedious to you. This is my last issue as editor and this duty now passes back to the 'old firm' of Chris McLeod and John Caldwell although doubt that I will be able to resist proffering the odd contribution from time to time.

This issue is you notice rather longer than before as I am using up all those items you neglected to send me and several which Dave Jones did. In future these should go to Chris or John. Goodbye.

---

## ANGLIAN WATER WIN INTER CLUB QUIZ... AGAIN.



**Chris McLeod (question master) awarding the captain of the winning team (John Mees) with the prize a (very small) bottle of Brandy.**

The Invicta winter season of meetings again closed with the very popular inter-club quiz night where the question master again faced an evening of insurrection and complaint. No change there then.

No change in the winning team though as the Anglian Wardens under John Mees leadership emerged triumphant once again - mind you it was a very close result as they only had a single pint advantage over the joint runners up. The Whittle Lakers must have started favourites with a distinct numerical advantage but it was not to be. One surprise was no team representing GWFFA this year. Can it be they have lost their competitive spirit or was it perhaps that I may have forgotten to invite them? Something perhaps for the current secretary to bear in mind for next year.

## A CHANCE TO BRUSH UP YOUR SKILLS

Invicta are fortunate to have as members a large number of qualified coaches. One of them, Allan Sefton makes the following offer of interest to groups of friends or family members.

“I am a licensed Level Two angling coach and I provide coaching etc. to EYFA, EMTFA juniors at Elinor Trout Fishery which I feel is a much more suitable venue for beginners than the Anglian Water reservoirs. Ed Foster and I are trying a new idea this season by offering three hours fly fishing courses on Friday evenings from May to August. These sessions will be limited to 3 or 4 participants and the idea is to encourage a family or group of friends to have a session together that is tailored to their needs. For example, perhaps a family group that are keen to encourage one of their youngsters or a wife to have a go. Or, a group of women who would prefer not to have their husbands there!

Perhaps a more experienced group of friends would wish to brush up their double-handed rod skills in advance of a trip north. I attach a programme specifically aimed at absolute beginners as an example.

The cost is £50 per person which includes some fishing time but I am offering absolute beginners a 33% discount. I am hoping to do one or two for schools groups for no charge in liaison with EMTFA. I am also happy to give the 33% discount to all Invicta members. I am sure the Invicta members are all too expert to need any coaching but they may have some family members who would want to take up this offer. Remember absolute beginners do not need an EA licence if they are with a licensed coach.” Allan can be contacted Tel: 01480 465723 Mobile 07850 759751 or e-mail on [allan.sefton@ntlworld.com](mailto:allan.sefton@ntlworld.com).

---

## PICTURE QUIZ - WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?



This bronze statue caused a lot of interest to visitors on I believe one of the many Croatian Islands on the side of the ferry arrival quay. I found the fact that it is directly overlooked by a working convent even more peculiar but visitors to Croatia will know of their great interest in strange statues.

Although not obvious, this does have an association with fishing if not angling. If you still did not get it (and I didn't) it depicts Croatian fishermen pulling in their (invisible) nets. Clearly Croatian fishermen do not go to work over-dressed.

---

## FLY TYING INSTRUCTION/GROUPS.

Can I remind members that I am available to give free help, advice and encouragement to all fly tyers needing a helping hand. Contact me on 01223 511992 for any assistance required. I will also be running a one day fly tying course at The Farmland Museum & Denny Abbey

Waterbeach on Sunday 24th July (£15 adults & £10 juniors (12 - 18) with all proceeds to go to support the Museum's activities.

Further details from the Museum on phone/fax 01223 860988.

## THE BASIS FOR MY COLOUR PREJUDICE - Peter Reeves



Most fly fishers wisely use sunglasses as essential eye protection. Principally from wayward hooks moving at close to the speed of sound on turnover, increasingly though they confer additional protection from the opening of fly boxes which seem generally to pulsate with radiant colours like boxed dazzling sunshine. I have wondered why this is as I doubt that modern stocked fish suffer from sight defects, unless of course they encounter too many Blobs, Fritz lures etc. etc.

I have no doubt that the monthly flyfishing comics dedicated to promoting anything new as wonderful and anyone successful as an instant 'expert' has to confess to much responsibility. Thomas Clegg who was a pioneer of fluorescent material, was always of the opinion that a little goes a long way. The aforesaid comics want to suggest, apparently, that a lot more goes a lot further! Yes, anxious not to be left behind in the ever-surging wave of essential brilliant hued super patterns I have been disillusioned like so many others in the past and examples may still lurk in some forgotten fly boxes somewhere. Of course, as following publication of 'never fail' newly designed flies in Sellarfield yellow and Chernobyl Orange etc., thousand of vices get loaded all round the Country and the latest pattern hits the waters in battalions everywhere, it follows that some are bound to catch. Following this tendency is an act of charity - to impoverished tackle shops everywhere! Do they work, well on fresh put stockies damn near anything will work but how many of us want those? Oh.... you do, do you?

As I get older (and despite all efforts I tend to) I feel it incumbent upon myself to become more selective. Stripping back lures is not only boring but tiring. Also I go fishing for pleasure, there may not be too much pleasure in no result but how the result is achieved does count for a lot and my own roots in traditional fly fishing was in small wet flies which gave me a taste for delicacy. For many years I kept a detailed fishing diary. Reference to this over several seasons showed that whilst bright coloured flies could be successful on isolated specific occasions, overwhelmingly the majority of fish were taken on more sombre, natural coloured patterns. Indeed for black I even tend to avoid dyed materials, which are virtually dark blue, and choose natural items where possible which when held to the light, suggest very dark brown. I therefore have reason to be more confident with natural colours, which may have just a touch of something brighter, and resent the arrogance of the monthly comics which would have me scampering on their say so to the tackle shop in search of the latest and brightest synthetic to lash up their 'flies of the month' which have no pedigree whatsoever.

I do freely admit that for some these very bright offerings bring success and even I have caught on an orange Blob fished with little conviction out of curiosity but its success rate against nymphs or tweaked tadpoles was very much less than impressive.... I am not going to strip like crazy anymore, I am past that - let the young do it and good luck to them if it keeps them fishing. They may yet come to learn the



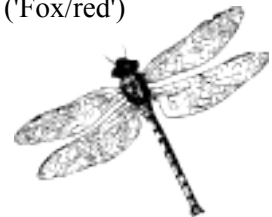
full range of joys of fishing and appreciate that a good day is not always measured by the weight of the bag or the speed in filling it. Some of the 'newer' patterns do work well and actually have some pedigree. The Booby for instance is a better floating version of the Muddler, giving out vibrations in the water to attract attention of predators and pulled on a sinking line in sparkler garb must be very suggestive of fish fry. Tweaked slowly across the surface its wake pulls in fish to investigate and seen against the sky the colours are possibly of little consequence, in fact black will stand out as the most visible in silhouette. The problem is however that Boobies do tend to be taken well down and for those that like to see their fish swim away it is an inadvisable choice as survival rate is compromised. Strange as I do not recall that as a problem with the more traditional Muddler, but then I am getting older and my memory may not be what it was.

I did mention keeping a fishing diary for many years and I commend this practice as much pleasure can be gleaned by a winter fireside - or more commonly now, radiator - glass in hand, re-living more summery days of pleasure. There are not only happy memories but seasonal patterns within these pages, which may or may not be useful for the future - why not try it yourselves? For instance back in the earlier days when I was not prejudiced and looked to emulate the successes of those such as Dave Barker, Arthur Cove or John Wadham without putting in all the time and effort in systematic research and testing, I was

of a mind to try anything that gave better results in terms of catch rates. I recorded the dates, patterns, sizes, colours, weather & wind conditions/directions, waters and areas fished etc. From this period I made an analysis of basic colours which were most successful in catch rates and the result surprised me, maybe you too but remember that in nature survival can depend upon escaping notice, most food forms are helpfully coloured to blend into their background. the colours that I found most useful then are probably similar to those used today but I recognise that some fishermen opt for other colour ranges and with selection, time and dedication can produce very differing results.

#### PERCENTAGES OF TROUT TAKEN BY COLOUR

Black based  
31.2%  
Brown based (Inc. natural ('Fox/red'))  
30.5%  
White based  
22.0%  
Orange based  
5.4%  
Claret based  
4.5%  
Green/Olive based  
1.6%  
Lime Green based  
1.3%  
Pink based  
0.6%



---

## FISHING QUOTATIONS



"There is certainly something in fishing that tends to produce a gentleness of spirit, a pure serenity of mind." -Washington Irving  
(..and maybe an unsteadiness from the pub? - unattributed)

"If fishing is interfering with your business, give up your business." -Alfred W. Miller

"Calling Fly Fishing a hobby is like calling Brain Surgery a job." -Paul Schullery

No matter where practiced, when, or by whom, no other form of fishing offers the challenge, frustration, stimulation, intoxication, tranquility - and base rewards - of fly fishing. Author Tom McNally writes: "Fly fishing is the only fishing that completely captures the souls and brains of intelligent people, and imprisons them for their lifetimes. ..."



**The retiring editor muses on random aspects of fly fishing.**



Members may have noticed that I have been conspicuous by my absence in recent time from the Invicta (and other) sociable fishing events.

This has nothing to do with any predisposition towards unsociability - although I am not naturally gregarious - rather though from advancing years and the tendency to have most events based from boats. I recognise the extra advantages of a floating fishing platform but whereas I have no trouble walking round the banks I do have issues with long periods spent in cramped boats with thwarts placed at levels suitable for smaller stature pygmies. This issue has become more pronounced with advancing age - and it is not the only symptom signifying that I should adapt my fishing to suit my changed physical conditions. Over the years I have opted for progressively lighter and shorter rods with lighter lines which indicate smaller flies.

Whereas most reservoir boat anglers would view a size 14 hook as being too small with a tendency to straighten or having an eye too small to accommodate their usual tippet material, I on the other hand find that I view size 14 as being the upper end of my usual size range - damselfly and mayflies calling usually for slightly longer shanks. I also tend to fish smaller waters where adverse winds are less of a problem and whereas the size of the stocked rainbows is in a similar size range of 2 - 5 lbs, even so do not use anything heavier than #6 line

weights or 14 hooks (admittedly heavyweight hooks normally to avoid straightening.

Additionally like many Invicta members I also like variety and enjoy river fishing for trout and grayling where #3, 4 & 5 line weights are normal with tippets down to 2 lbs b.s. or less. This season I have been fortunate enough to have access to a Hertfordshire chalk stream, the River Mimram (see above photo) with wild brown trout and grayling as well as stocked brown trout later in May. To allow members to fish for wild fish only, stocking is deferred until May (what an enlightened policy) and I spent two very happy hours fishing there this morning in the glorious spring sunshine, knowing I would not be bothered by naive stocked fish, plying a 7'6" #3 weight rod loaded with a #4 weigh line and a single size 18 pheasant tail nymph. It was truly absolutely magical, contacting wild or feral brownies up to 11" on tackle so light I hardly knew it was in my hand.

No doubt the causes of my adopting lighter gear will come to many other members in the fullness of time but why wait? I earnestly suggest that you start to try out lighter gear now and, where sensibly appropriate, scale down now and enjoy the pleasure of fishing "With a handful of nothing" as it is so much more pleasurable than the heavier gear as well as taking less effort and being less tiring. Thankfully the tackle trade is moving in this direction and some of the new rods (Snowbee etc) are an absolute delight to handle and offer surprising power and control - even on larger still waters although the actions from the reservoir environment will rarely fit the river requirement and vice versa. Horses for courses I guess but the principle of lightness and responsiveness is great - embrace it now!