

John Gale



John was a member of Invicta for 15 years in total. He joined first in 1985 and was a member up to and including 1997, then again in 2016 and 2017- mainly as a social member. He did not renew his membership for 2018 due to ill health.

John had always been a keen coarse fisherman, following in the steps of his late father. He was a member of Cambridge Fish Preservation and Waterbeach Angling Clubs and remained so for much of his life. When the new trout-fishing scene began in the late 1960s and 1970s he began his trouting at Grafham Water and was immediately hooked.

Along with Norman Shippey, Mike Smith and John Rolph he became a member of the

Waterbeach Angling Club trout syndicate – fishing Dickerson’s Lake near Waterbeach.

He soon became a season–ticket holder at Grafham, fishing very regularly. In his best season there he caught 716 trout, all from the bank. On 27th June 1980 he caught an 8lb 2oz rainbow which was a record for the water at that time. The fish was mounted by Anglian Water and displayed on the wall in the lodge for many years.

He later fished Rutland Water and in 1988 he was invited to represent Rutland Water in the Bob Church Classic. An all-method trout fisherman he spent much of his later life fishing mainly nymphs.

He was an employee of Cambridge Company Phillips, and he fished and won their summer boat competition a total of 16 times, 14 times with his friend and former Invicta member Ian Baldock, plus once each with Peter Green and George Anderson. He also fished several Salmon and Trout Association boat matches with either Peter Green or Ian Baldock. He recalled that Ian once caught 31 fish to his own solitary stockie!

Along with fishing, plus his other sports like football, cricket and later golf, John enjoyed writing. His first efforts were writing up match reports for his local football and cricket teams from Lode in the Cambridge News.

In the late 1980s Invicta asked him to give a talk on trout fishing at one of their winter meetings. This was reproduced in a Club Newsletter and was spotted by the England International Peter Thomas. Peter was then an Invicta member and also involved with the ‘Trout Fisherman’ magazine. Peter sent a copy to the Editor who invited John to write monthly articles, which he did for two years.



In 1988 John was approached by Ruddle's Brewery at Oakham to write a guide to fishing Rutland Water. Thus in April 1989 John's first book the 'Ruddles Guide to Fishing Rutland Water' was published. The forward to the book was written by current Club member David Moore, who was with Anglian Water at the time. Following the success of this, he was approached by a Woodbridge Publisher to write a general book on trout fishing. So in 1990 his second book 'Catching Lake Trout',

written in collaboration with David Moore and photographer Peter Gathercole and with a forward by Peter Thomas, was published. Ultimately that book was so successful that the publishers asked him to write another, a library series, called simply, 'Trout', again with contributions from David & Peter; this was published in 1992.

John was also an Associate Member of the English Disabled Fly Fishers. He became involved when a disabled angler Ken Waters from St Helens, who had read John's book 'Catching Lake Trout' phoned and asked John if he would teach him how to fly-fish. They met at Rutland Water, fished together, and became firm friends. They fished together many times since. Ken joined the English Disabled Fly Fishers and qualified to fish for the English team in their annual matches around the world.

John continued to fish into his 80s, mainly with his friend Neville Silverston, until ill-health curtailed him in recent years.

He died on 29th January 2019 aged 87. He was one of life's 'larger than life' characters and a prolific angler, sportsman and writer.

Robert (Bob) Ayres