

## A tribute to Club member David Jones

**Bob Ayres (Invicta President). 5th April 2021**

David Jones is a unique Invicta Club member. He instigated the Club, has been a major contributor over the years, is our only current inaugural member and today, like the Club itself, celebrates his 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary. It is a privilege for me to tell his story.

Before Grafham Water opened in 1966, reservoir trout fishing was largely centred on the Northamptonshire reservoirs Ravensthorpe, Hollowell, Eyebrook and Pitsford. Fishing 'legends' like Cyril Inwood, Tom Ivens, Arthur Cove, Dick Shrive, Bob Church and Cambridge local Les Beecroft were frequenting these venues and developing methods to catch reservoir trout, mainly from the bank. Les remembers that Eyebrook became inundated with Scottish anglers who had come down to build the reservoir and man the steelworks.

Fishing tackle shops, that had initially been either coarse or mainly game fishing specialists began to stock more trout fishing gear. Press coverage of reservoir trout fishing however was limited to an odd column in Trout & Salmon, or in coarse fishing magazines (e.g. Brian Harris' column in *Angling* magazine or the *Angling Times* paper).

With the opening of Grafham, the number of anglers trout fishing increased enormously, particularly in the Cambridgeshire area. A new generation of excellent anglers were coming to the fore. These included Gordon Fraser, Dave Barker, Bob Worts, Brian Leadbetter, Bob Morey, John Moore and Colin Brett. In Cambridge itself in 1967 Gallyons, the well known shooting and game fishing tackle shop, took on the afore mentioned Les Beecroft to improve their expertise on reservoir trout fishing in particular. By the early 1970s there was an even larger number of anglers with a thirst for knowledge in all aspects of reservoir fishing, plus associated fly-tying.

So it was that in 1975 the adult tutor of Comberton Village College, a few miles west of Cambridge, was receiving requests from budding trout fishermen to introduce a trout fly-tying group into their Evening Class programme. The tutor contacted Les Beecroft, who was by then very well-known locally, and he agreed to run a fly-tying group during the winter of 1975/76. I should point out at this juncture that, in terms of trout fishing clubs, although the East Midlands TFA and the Mid Northants TFA both existed, along with the Ouse Valley Salmon & Trout Association, there was, at that time, no dedicated reservoir trout fishing club operating in the Cambridgeshire area. Surprisingly Grafham Water FFA (GWFFA) was not formed until about 1981, with inaugural members Dave Barker, Mike Ball, Colin Brett, Dave Shipman and with, guess who, David Jones as its first secretary.

As the Invicta website History document records, *'one member of the fly-tying group, a Mr David Jones (also known as Davey) called a meeting on the 5th April at the College for any members who would be interested in starting a new local trout-fishing Club. Thirteen anglers attended the meeting and Invicta FFC was formed, with David volunteering to be its first secretary.'*

### **So how did David Jones get to be at that eventful fly tying class?**

David was born on 22 February 1941 in Islington, North London. As a youngster he fished the local Hampstead Heath pond for roach and perch. Mr Crabtree was his mentor. Later, when the family moved out to Barnet, he acquired a bicycle and gave his mother nightmares as he travelled throughout the area, often on major roads, trying many different fishing venues.

When he was 11 years old the family took a holiday in Somerset and David saw his first trout. He bought a greenheart rod, a silk fly line and a few flies, caught a few trout and was hooked.

At some point the family moved to Hampshire and he was able to fish the River Avon and loved it. He enjoyed barbel fishing and eventually caught a 7 pounder. He also



**David Jones at a recent meeting**

**Aged 5 on holiday at Morecambe**



**1972 Two nice Grafham fish**



branched out into carp fishing, where his best fish was a 14lb mirror carp. His memories of the 1950s are of pristine waters, with wonderful fish and fishing. In 1959 he went to Birmingham Technical College for four years but did not fish while there. In 1963 he got a job as a metallurgist at Tube Investments at Hinxtton Hall, near Cambridge. He married in 1969.

When Grafham Water opened David was one many anglers who enjoyed superb fishing, mainly from the bank. Dick Walker, the legendary carp (and later trout fisher of Polystickle lure fame), was his hero. He recalls catching his first trout on a black buzzer from the bank near G buoy.

David fished regularly in the early years of the Club. In 1976 he and his wife had a very interesting and memorable weekend. On the Saturday he caught a 6lb 4oz brownie at Grafham and the very next day his wife produced twins weighing a few ounces either side of that weight.

From that first day in 1976 David has been a major contributor to Invicta. He has held the following positions. Secretary eleven years, Newsletter editor ten years, Winter speakers' organiser 10 years and last but not least our note taker for our speakers at winter meetings for a massive thirty six years - right up to our last pre-covid meeting.

He produced the first Club newsletter on 2nd June 1976 which included immaculate hand-drawn diagrams of fishing spots on Grafham and the dressing of a fly called the Red-tailed Invicta. In all, he produced about twenty eight newsletters in the era of typewriters and photocopiers.

In 1979 he won the Presidents Cup in its first year.

In 1988 he was made an Honorary Member for his services to the Club.

In 1997 he was awarded Life Membership of Invicta in recognition of his continued services over the years.

Between 1995 and 2005 he did not fish, although he still attended some Club meetings. In 2005 his interest in fishing was rekindled when he was taken back to Pitsford and caught his first trout for ten years.

In 2015, after forty seasons with the Club, he was awarded the Invicta Trophy in recognition of his membership and contribution.

On 22nd February this year David celebrated his 80th birthday.

**Thank you, David, for your unique contribution to Invicta Fly Fishing Club.**

**David receiving the Invicta Trophy for 2015, from President Bob Ayres and Chairman Andy Newman at the 2016 dinner**



**Receiving a prize from Norman Shippey at the Invicta Dinner 1978**

**2005 Pitsford - David's first fish after a ten year break**

