

INVICTA MEETING 7th March 2024

Our proposed speaker, John Wadham, was unwell and unable to deliver his comments on Rutland: we wish him a speedy recovery. Alan Sefton took on the task of rearranging the meeting and came up with an open evening programme where topics of the moment could be discussed. He drew our attention to the updated Rutland booklet which was available FOC to members. A Grafham Boat Guide is on the stocks and rumour has it that Peter Hartley is producing a boat handling guide.

The latest news on Grafham is that it is now 70% full and following repairs to the pumps on the Ouse, and the level is likely to rise very rapidly: the dam will soon be out of bounds (9th March confirmed). Regular bird surveys over 15 years have shown that the fluctuating levels of the water level has the most significant effect on the population and is a good indicator of the state of the reservoir. Statistics allegedly show that the Goldeneye has really thrived over the past decade. *Interesting as the bird is*

predominantly a winter visitor and I could not find any reference to the species at Grafham on the web. It is also described as a diving sea duck meaning that it is a bottom feeder. I wonder what features in its diet? The numbers of a fellow sea bird, the Cormorant, on the other hand, have remained stable which may surprise the angling community! The reason for the lack of sedges during 2023 remains a mystery: I hope it was not the result of

remove caddis, contributed to Grafham. Buzzers it remains to be seen collections of red layers during the evidence has been shrimp has had a ecology of the was made of the



which are well established in Grafham. Each mussel is capable of filtering 1 litre of water a day which probably accounts for the exceptional clarity of the water at Grafham according to some of my predator friends. It has been reported that keeping the water treatment plants clear of these mussels costs Anglian Water half a million £ per annum! How does it affect the fishing?

water treatment to which along with snails, blocking the pumps at are starting to appear but if the peculiar isolated bloodworm in the surface 2023 season reoccurs. No found that the invasive detrimental effect on the reservoir. *No mention invasive Zebra mussels*

There was some discussion on joining Clubmate (www.clubmate.co.uk) which is a management platform that helps individual members securely sort out tickets and the like, with the minimum of effort and relieves the stress on elected officials. The feedback from the audience was very positive, especially the ability to make multiple bookings. Some members wished to maintain the old system of cash and/or cheques and it appears that this facility will be retained. I am not a user so I cannot make any useful comment but the system in the Invicta is masterminded by Neil Potts who will sort out any problems.

The passing of Ifor Jones and the demise of Fishery Management UK, leading to the closure of Draycote, Eyebrook and Thornton fisheries (Toft Newton has also closed), This has created chaos in the match fixtures for the season ahead. *Spare a thought for the severe effects to other businesses associated with these reservoirs.* There are

rumours that the fisheries may be “rescued” but it is early days. Fish farms may be amongst the casualties maybe? Boats have already been sold off at Toft Newton. Anyway, many of the events have been transferred to Anglian Water venues, notably Grafham and Rutland and any members intending entering competitions are advised not to delay. A vote of thanks to Neil Potts and David Moore who have reacted incredibly rapidly to ensure that matches are reallocated. However, other venues are being examined. Blithfield attracted some attention at the meeting although it is a fair distance, probably involving a 2-hour drive from Cambridge. Carsington is a further half an hour further on. *(Note that half of the members of the club live 50 miles from Cambridge!)* The possibility of a club away-day was considered. Farmoor received lukewarm interest although we did have a club visit many years ago. There are only a limited number of boats available. I vaguely recollect that all of these waters are subject to a deterioration in water quality in the summer months.

There was a suggestion that the club could even improve their excellent reputation for being a friendly club (very evident at this meeting) by appointing a meet and greet officer to ensure new members are fully introduced to others in the club. *I can recommend tuning into the Invicta WhatsApp chat group.*

How to fish dirty water? There was a consensus that brown algae blooms and silt were difficult. On the other hand, someone said that they had caught lots of fish at Rutland casting into the shore break where the wind was believed to disturb land-based critters. A dark lure was advised. Green algae was thought to be a less formidable opponent, not the least because it was believed to be stratified such that clear water was present beneath the visible surface layers. *In the early days at Grafham, it was recognised that algae moved up and down in the water table according to the intensity of the light: trout fed preferentially in these layers and led to the development of the Baby Doll with full white, lime green, or orange bodies. Does anyone still use them?*

At a recent meeting, Ian Barr claimed that he, using a conventional set up, could out-fish an angler using the bung. One of our top rods conceded this but he attributed the result to the skill of Ian in assessing the feeding depth and attacking the fishing with the appropriate line. However, for beginners, the bung may well be the best option. We did not investigate the best bung materials but someone suggested that there was a new assembly on the market best described as a float! I don't think this conforms with International Rules where recent changes have called for the bung to be a top dropper or a point fly.

8. Bungs / indicators.

Any bung or indicator must be capable of catching and hooking a fish, not have its gape obstructed and can only be attached on a dropper or the point. Droppers must not be free to move up and down the line. Threaded indicators are not permitted. If in doubt, show your indicator to the match official prior to the event. Bungs / indicators must conform to the recognised International fly sizes for loch-style competitions.

It was agreed that no retrieve was required and any motion was induced by wave action. *It seems to me that we are going back to the traditional style used on lochs and reservoirs prior to the widespread use of WF lines and shooting heads.*

The advent of underwater cameras has provided an insight into the behaviour of fish when presented with food. I recently watched some shots of pike addressing a dead

*bait presented under a large float. An extraordinary number approached the bait and sometimes grabbed it without any indication visible on the float. I wonder to what extent this applies to fish behaviour under a bung? Also, fishing a dead bait under a float does not require the fish to be horizontal and a vertical orientation seems just as successful. So, if you are wondering why a vertical snake is successful, then maybe the trout is unable to distinguish between orientation but is triggered only by vertical or horizontal movement. Finally, for those of you who are hooked on bungs, there is no comparison (in my opinion) with trotting a float down a stream or manoeuvring a dead bait under a float around a reed bed in the hope that *Esox* will make an appearance.*

A new car park is being constructed to facilitate access to The Seat. Anglers will need a key for the gate which means season ticket holders only. *I do not fish at Grafham but I am unimpressed that access to the reservoir for day ticket anglers is limited to the opening hours of the car parks.*

The Invicta Tuesday Evening League has proved very popular with typically 20+ anglers participating each week. This year the series will commence on 7th May and run for 14 weeks. The fishing commences at 5pm and finishes at 9 ish, depending on the available light. Boat partners are determined by a draw: anglers insisting on fishing together will not be awarded points. According to Paul H, on one occasion, 22 anglers fished and recorded 22 blanks!!! **A couple of volunteers are urgently needed to assist in running the event this season. (contact Paul Stevens on 07831 235069)**



David Moore gave us an insight as to why he seemed to catch a stream of large fish. Number 1 on his list had nothing to do with trout but was a Mekong Catfish estimated to weigh 70lbs. Successful bait was a tennis ball size of dough. 2nd was a blue shark caught off Cornwall over 60 years ago. (*Blimey, he doesn't look that old!*) Back to reality, the 5lbs 15oz fish caught on opening day was his largest from Grafham for which he was awarded The New Lodge Trophy (*if anyone can find it!!*). The fish succumbed to a black and green lure fished a few hundred yards off of the dam. A couple of seasons ago he

caught his largest RB at 7-13 from Rutland. He stressed the importance of fishing the hang which has accounted for as many as 50% of his trout in some seasons.

He does not set out to deliberately catch big fish but attributes his success to avoiding the “Armada”, using non-descript scruffy flies and retrieving slowly. He does fish a lot and last year made a total of 70 trips to Grafham and Rutland. Patience is key and big fish often come on difficult days.

Leader materials always excite a lot of discussion. David uses Grand Max and Super Soft 9.5-13.5 lbs bs but slightly thinner when fishing dries. Droppers were formed with a 4-turn water knot. He acknowledged that the line was expensive. Some Invicta members swear by XLine and liked it for its stiffness which minimises tangles (*stiffness is related to the 1st power of the modulus but the 4th power of the diameter – discuss!*). I am sure someone mentioned GigaFish which is a thin, high strength nylon but may be susceptible to failure when smash takes occur. *I recall a guest speaker recommending this line some years ago.*

Dropper knots generated some discussion. Most people seemed to use a 2, 3 or 4 turn water knot depending on the leader material they were using. The trick to success, apart from only attaching the fly on the strand pointing towards the end fly, was to lubricate the strands and carefully tighten the knot. Match the knot to the leader material and test before fishing. Someone uses the stand-off dropper loop which the coarse anglers amongst us will recognise its use in a paternoster rig. Rumour had it that Keith Gilchrist uses a figure of eight knot. I have not confirmed that this tutorial is “his” knot but seems worth considering [How to Tie a Dropper Tag With the Figure of 8 Knot \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...). No mention of rings which are an excellent way of maintaining the desired length of the dropper without having to cut the main leader: a significant saving in expensive leader material. Banned from competition fishing apparently because they represent extra weight!!! (*good grief – do the sums!*).

ADDENDUM

Regarding fishing in coloured water there have been several recent events which shows how Invicta members tackle the problem. There was an unofficial Invicta get together at Grafham on 13th March. Fish were said to be off The Stumps but only a few anglers were able to tolerate the wind and rough water. Alan Briggs drifted along the clear water outside the muddied band that had formed along the shore and nailed 7. The very next day Roger Swain reported really good action off Pylon Point, casting from the bank, beyond the muddy water. Roger caught 14, Andy T 12 and Jonny B 11, not to mention numerous follows, pulls and dropped fish! The club trip to Elinor on Saturday encountered very muddy water but fish were caught mainly in the surface layers. I was not there but my thoughts are that trout do not like dirty water especially as they had just left super clean stock ponds. I believe that silt was settling from the surface layers creating a relatively clear shallow window in which the trout may feed. The fish must have been hungry as the killing patterns varied quite a lot. *My opinion is that on small lakes such as Elinor, anglers have little option where to fish as all the water is likely to be affected with mud. However, in the large reservoirs, where the trout usually have the option of clean water, the evidence suggests that in most cases, anglers should avoid muddy water.*

A thought-provoking meeting: well done to all of the participants.