

# Really Wrecked SAC newsletter

## Number 41, January 2012



Sometimes I'm inspired to write these newsletters by events or a desire to be sued (see the previous "Robin the fat, ugly poof catches a scallop" issue), and sometimes I have to because it's about bloody time, and Adam's nagging has reached levels that warp the very fabric of the universe (remember the faster-than-light neutrinos they detected in Gran Sasso recently? That was Adam's nagging). And I know you miss them really, despite what you tell me to my face. This one falls into the latter category. I am about as inspired as Mrs. Cook was when, on being informed that her newborn son was destined to spend his life on his knees (for all kinds of reasons), decided to name him "Neil". Or Cheryl when she looked at Stevie and thought, "This is as good as I'm going to get."

In fact, I'll go further, I am so uninspired I can't even think of a brilliant example of lack of inspiration to top the previous two and finish this extended metaphor/rhetorical flourish off in style, and given how feeble those examples were, I think we can all agree that's pretty uninspired. If any of you can think of something amusing to put in here, please give your paltry imaginations full rein, and replace everything that follows with something entertaining. Knowing you as I do, that's pretty unlikely, so let's just get on with it.

"So why bother?" I can sort of hear you asking. Well, surprisingly for you, that initially seems like a good question, though on reflection it's about as much a good question as the old favourite, "What are we going to catch today Ben?" (The answer always is: Fuck all – look at your tackle and consider how much we collectively know about fishing). The obvious answer is because I have recent trips to tell you about in my own seldom-copied, often-bettered style, and there are also some important things to relate, things without which your empty winkle shell of a life will never be complete.

### First of all

It's the annual dinner and awards ceremony on Saturday, and many of you haven't bitten off my hand in your eagerness to book a place, or filled in the "Reasons for Absence" form RFA3928C/RW/FOC in triplicate and filed it with a Justice of the Peace, our legal team and your local Hawk Conservancy. You therefore need to

do one of these things right now, preferably the former.

If you're undecided as to whether you've got nothing better to do on the evening of Saturday the 21st of January, 7.30 for 8, black tie/suit/whatever you like Les, then let me entice you further with the news that Jonathan Barrett will not be coming, as he apparently prefers holidaying in India, eating curry and swilling lager, to coming to the Dorset Arms with his only friends and spending a highly educational and entertaining four hours listening to me handing out the trophies. As many of you specifically quote his presence as your reason for not attending, I fully expect a turn out in the hundreds this year, so book now to ensure disappointment.

As a further inducement, here's the menu. Look it over. It has something for everyone.

### Starter

**A** Duet of Smoked Salmon and & Smoked Halibut with a Dill, Mustard & Horseradish Cream, & Fresh Watercress

**B** Soy & Ginger Battered Chicken Breast Strips served with Sweet Chilli Dressing

**C** Spicy Parsnip Soup with Sour Cream & Chives served with Crusty Bread

### Main Course

**D** Oven Roasted Salmon Supreme with Herb Roasted New Potatoes served with Dill Hollandaise Sauce, Glazed Carrots & Buttered French Beans

**E** Supreme of Chicken with Wild Mushroom & Cognac Cream, Dauphinoise Potatoes, Glazed Carrots & Buttered Green Beans

**F** Avocado, Mozzarella, Vine Tomato & Basil Filo Tart with Red Pesto & Sweet Balsamic Glaze served with a Rocket & Parmesan Salad

**G** Mint Glazed Leg of Lamb Steak served with Buttered Mash, Glazed Carrots & Buttered Green Beans

### Dessert

**H** Date & Fig Sticky Toffee Pudding with a Whisky Crème Anglaise

**I** Vanilla Cheesecake with Mixed Berry Compote & Cream

**J** Sussex Cheese Board with Grapes, Homemade Chutney & Selection of Bread

Make your selections and then phone Adam (01273 478886) or email him (adam.frost@ukipme.com) with your choices using the letters provided (BEJ for example, in case you've forgotten what letters are). We need to get these to the Dorset soon, so please confirm ASAP.

Remember too that we have literally hundreds of trophies to distribute now, so your attendance practically guarantees that you'll walk away with one of these coveted awards, which will give a massive boost to both your credibility and attractiveness with your partner, thus ensuring unlimited sex for the next year. This is a FACT.

Other facts include the cost of the dinner, which is £23 per head, and includes service, though you can always give more if so inclined (Stevie, I know you'll be your customary generous self). Drink, which is compulsory if you intend to remain sane and awake, is extra. There's also the small matter of your £10 annual subs, which we will be collecting in the club begging bowl at the same time. You can therefore expect change from £1000 for the evening, unless you drink very heavily or order extra pies.

## Secondly

The trips for the year are also being organised now. There's the usual horse trading of decent tides/Adam's social life/Olympics dates going on between me and our various lovely and talented skippers (and Richard, too), so I can't yet give you a full list. However, here are the next three to be going on with.

Some of you phoned and said "Put me down for everything". This has proved tricky in the past as people realise the week before a trip that they can't make it. So instead, can you please look at the next three trips and send Adam or I an email (or phone if you really hate the 21st Century) with the dates you'd like. Your name will then go on the list at <http://www.reallywrecked.com/news-and-dates/dates>. If your name is one of the eight, then you're booked up and liable for the cost if you pull out, unless you or we can get a replacement. If you're down as a sub, you aren't liable for anything unless we phone you to ask if you want to go and you say "yes".

I hope this is clear. Look at the list online and you'll know which trips you're booked on. These three are all Newhaven dates:

- **Friday 20th January** – offshore pollack or inshore cod
- **Monday 6th February** – offshore pollack and cod
- **Monday 5th March** – offshore pollack and cod

I will post the next set of dates online and in a newsletter early in February, so you won't have

too long to wait before you can plan your entire year around your fishing trips.

## Club trip news

We did manage a few trips among the hideous gales that lashed the South Coast of England for most of the summer and autumn. I suppose I might as well tell you about them.

### Weymouth Summer trip

Half of us were staying at the Warwick, and half at the Sailor's, which had just come under new management, after Helen and Steve finally saw sense and left. Both were good, mainly because no-one ended up in struggling to sleep in the Black Hole of Calcutta (a.k.a. Room 5), with the brass section of the London Philharmonic (you know who you are) playing their version of *Sweet Dreams (are not made of this)*.

We struggled to fill both boats again, resulting in us barely being able to cover the costs of the trip. Because of this, the coming year's trip will be restricted to one boat on each day with a maximum of ten anglers. If we get demand for more places, once we have the magic 16 confirmed, we will book another boat on each day. So phone or email Adam ASAP to book, otherwise you may not get a place, even if you are a summer trip stalwart. Yes, I know we don't have the actual dates confirmed, but I will let you know very early in February, and we'll take provisional bookings before then.

Both A and B Teams started day one drifting for plaice on the mussel beds. The A Team on Lone Shark were there bright and early, while the B Team, on Bonwey, enjoyed a more leisurely start and joined them around midday. Because of this, The A Team did best with a couple of plaice to around two and a half pounds, while the B Team had to make do with nothing whatsoever.

It was quite a spectacular nothing whatsoever though, and it was caught mostly by Tony. He was happily fishing for plaice when suddenly something, I wouldn't like to speculate what (but it was bluefin tuna – one was caught by a spear fisherman a couple of weeks before our trip and they were DEFINITELY still around), stripped 200m of braid from his reel in 15 seconds. Despite what Ken says, that was no plaice. Poor Tony was quite shaken, and his little D'Artagnon beard turned quite white.

With this early success in the bag, the B Team made the brave decision to leave all this excellent plaicing behind, and go and sniff out a few blondes on the Kidney Bank. When I say the tide was pulling hard, I would not be exaggerating if I were to say that only Adam in his womanising pomp has ever pulled harder. We did manage three rays, but the anchor kept dragging, which

made it very hard to keep in touch with bites, so several more fish were dropped or missed.

The A Team eventually turned up to join us, but not being of the same calibre of angler, or man, as those of the B Team, they couldn't hack fishing at anchor, so they drifted the bank for turbot, with the usual degree of success. They drifted perilously close to us on several occasions, prompting me to yell out that this was the fastest the boat had gone all year. Richard looked rather miffed and was extremely horrid to me for the rest of the trip. He's such a meanie.

The tide turned, and Ken reckoned we should go and try the Stensness Ledges for bream, huss, conger, undulates etc. etc. so we did. With the slackening of the tide, the A Team dropped anchor and decided they could just about cope with it, and so set about fishing for blondes. I'm delighted to report that they were as successful with this as they had been drifting for turbot, although apparently they did enjoy the dogfish.

Meanwhile on the Ledges there was no tide, and fewer fish. We stuck it out for half an hour, then Ken upped anchor and took us to a different mark a few hundred yards away. This proved a great move, as straight away Phil Brooks was into a record, with a beautiful 14oz three bearded rockling, and a few minutes later I trumped him with a spectacular 8oz cabbage coral.



*Phil's pretty rockling of just under a pound fitted in well with the Sussex crew, being bearded.*

We moved again, but this mark was much like the first one, so we moved again, and on this mark, with the first faint stirrings of the tide, the fish finally came on the feed. First up was a smallish reef conger, and then we started catching very big pouting in excellent condition. Some of these fish went well over two pounds. Though we all mock them, actually, in 30 foot of water and on light gear with 4oz of lead, they sort of fought a bit, and we did have a bit of a giggle catching them. The more worthwhile species would probably have followed had we been able to stay out an hour or two longer, but sadly the

day has only got so many hours in it, so we had to head back in.



*Cabbage coral tastes nothing like cabbage. It may not even be a brassica at all.*

The A Team eventually tired of dogfish and anchored the rough ground off the back of the race. There they managed a couple of bull huss, before they started to catch a few decent bream. However the tide was screaming through at this point, so they were catching them on 30lb class gear with one and a half pounds of lead, which for most people is not as sporting as they'd like, although Adam did say he was a bit anxious to be using such light gear.

And so day one drew to a close. Not our best day in Weymouth, especially as it was probably just about shaded by the A Team in terms of fish caught, though certainly not in terms of fun.

The second day for the A Team started with Smed and Steve both complaining of dodgy tummies, and pointing the finger at the venue for supper the night before – the Ghurka. For those who don't know it, this is an all-you-can-eat Asian Fusion buffet, and "all-you-can-eat" is not a challenge that certain club members take lightly. These same members seem to believe their stomachs share certain dimensional properties with the Tardis, and given what they managed to pack away, perhaps they're not wrong. Anyway, there is perhaps the tiniest possibility that maybe the consumption of the Asian equivalent of Greggs annual output might have had more to do with any slight tummy twinges than anything more bacterial in origin.

For the A Team the fishing with Ken began on the mussel beds for plaice. Scoop had a splendid 4lb 12oz fish, which pleased him no end. Then it

was on to the back of the Shambles to anchor up for all kinds of fish. A smattering of bream, huss and conger were taken, and Chris took a nice 5lb codling. But the highlight of the day was the unveiling of the Smedomatic Weigh-o-tron Mark 2. This one is smaller and lighter than the Mark 1, requiring only one medium-sized crane to lift it into position on the boat. With a Wi-Fi connection to an app on your smart phone, it allows the fish's weight to be recorded remotely, so you can concentrate on holding your huge specimen off the deck. It can weigh anything from a single quark up to a supermassive blackhole with an accuracy of  $\pm$ infinity. A 2lb test weight was confidently stated as definitively weighing between 2g and 3.5 metric tonnes, which, as any fool knows, is perfectly true. The scales may actually be slightly more accurate than that, but this newsletter isn't so you'll have to make your own mind up.



*Scoop and his splendid plaice of almost five pounds.*

The B Team meanwhile set off for a small inshore wreck where Richard was confident even a bunch of losers like us, skippered by a cretin like him, could catch a few eels, and how right he was. Almost from the off, the eels were in a feeding mood and we had 25 in the first hour. The tide then dropped and we swung away from the wreck and the bites dried up. We only had an hour before the slack because certain Phils, I won't say which, were so slow in loading up their gear that I think Bonwey beat us out fishing.

We had nothing over slack water, but when the tide picked up again, the eels began feeding, and though we didn't take anything like the same number, we also had a few tope to cheer us up. Also providing cheer to the majority of the crew was the moment when my favourite eeling rod, a lovely, light but powerful, meaty yet responsive Penn 50+, responded rather poorly to the unhooking of an eel, and snapped at the tip. For

me personally, this cast a slight shadow over this part of the day, but strangely, it didn't so much dent the jolly mood of my so-called friends, as cause a great upsurge of hilarity. Thanks a bunch, buddies.



*An idiot with a broken rod. The kelp is to help hide my tears.*

The A Team, tiring of catching the odd bream and huss, began a series of drifts of the Shambles that will go down in legend as perhaps the most fruitless and boring of any such drifts, ever. As those of you who have come turbot fishing will know, that's an accolade for which there is some very stiff competition.

On what seemed like the third week of gently blanking, Smed awoke from a pleasant slumber in the sun to find his fellow crewmates deep in earnest discussion of the various medications, creams and unguents, and aids, mechanical and electronic, that they now require to be able to get out of bed, walk to the shops or watch television. Like Proust with his madeleine, this conversation transported Smed back in time to his kitchen when he was but a slip of a lad; and his mother and her aged friends would discuss their mutual ailments at great length. This memory made him all nostalgic for the good old days when it wasn't us taking the medication. Him and me both. Now, where are my beta-blockers?

With the A Team locked in an episode of *Last of the Summer Wine*, it was up to the B Team to show them how to catch turbot on the Shambles. We did this by catching mackerel after mackerel on our mackerel-baited turbot rigs, followed by a gurnard, and then, interestingly, by a pollack, but no turbot. Finally, Phil Pepper caught one so small it wouldn't even have been a new dab record. Then Steve, Richard's new Dorothy, caught a three-pounder, which the rotten swine didn't give to me to compensate me for the loss of

my rod. I have a good mind to take my business elsewhere, except for the "good mind" bit.

And that was it really, the B Team had the best of day 2, but the fishing wasn't all that special, but that's just how it is sometimes. If only Tony hadn't lost that tuna....



*Tony managed not to lose this fish. But it's the wrong fish, Tony!*

The curry in the Balti House was followed by a visit to our new favourite boozier, the Boot, where the beer is good and they don't have Karaoke. The highlight of the evening came when a tiny beetle had the misfortune to land on our table and then to wander around aimlessly between the puddles of beer. This had the effect of silencing the entire table for hours, apart from cries of "Someone stop him!" and "Don't let him go that way, he'll drown!" I must confess that after 15 minutes of this high quality stuff, I could stand it no more and I gingerly scooped the little fellow into my hands and threw him out into the night air of the beer garden. I think Fred West would have got a warmer reception than me after this heinous act. I still don't think Adam has forgiven me, and for Stevie the wounds may never heal.

And so ends another chapter of summer Weymouth history. The fishing was so-so, and the company worse, but somehow we got through it with something approaching genuine enjoyment. I don't know how it happens, but it does.

### **Newhaven August 22nd**

My notes for this trip say "pretty shit", so it must have been well above average. Roughly speaking it went like this. We got up early. It rained. We motored about 15 miles offshore. We anchored. It rained. We caught nothing. We drifted a nearby wreck over the slack and caught nothing. It rained. We re-anchored the original wreck. It rained. We caught 8 eels, with a couple of the low

40s, and a pollack on a bait. It rained. We went home. It rained. The question that occurs on days like that is "Do skippers really hate us that much?"

### **Weymouth September 26th**

This trip on Lone Shark started with us all fishing for squid on some godforsaken mark in the middle of lumpy sea hell somewhere off the Bill. The journey there was one of those rubbish rollercoasters, which makes you extra glad to arrive somewhere to watch Adam catch two squid while everyone else blanks. Then it was on to some rough ground, where we caught a few eels and maybe 15 bream to about 3lb. Everyone took a bream or two, with Richard leading the way, but only because I was fishing for conger.

Marvin managed to take the world's smallest conger at under 2lb. It was definitely not a silver eel, small though it was. It's only lucky Adam didn't hook it, or he'd still be playing it manfully on his 80lb class gear. At least the sea was a bit calmer, which allowed me to land a record-equalling 8dm brittlestar, but as the record it equalled was already my own, it made absolutely not a jot of difference to anyone anywhere. Undeterred I dropped down and was further rewarded with the strangest-looking crab I've ever seen. Long, spindly and hairy with awkward limbs, but enough about me, the crab was also an oddity. It's a new entry in the non-fish records under "Crab, weird".



*You've got to admit, that is a weird crab.*

We then moved to the Shambles, where again we proved our metal in catching three turbot – one each for Adam and Steve, and one for me which was taken just as Richard was moving us elsewhere. This meant the poor fish bounced along the surface with Richard assuming that my piteous cries for him to stop the boat were just the melancholy screeching of seagulls on the wind. Either that or he was genuinely trying to knock the thing off the end of my line. Tosser.

We ended the day drifting for plaice, as there had apparently been some big ones around. It started slowly, then got slower. Then, just as we resigned ourselves to a disappointing end to the day, Steve had two fine fish of around 4lb, which only increased the general gloom. Then Adam got in on the act, before Marvin joined in with two of his own, the biggest a lovely fish of 5lb 2oz. Phil and Beef also had one apiece and then finally I managed one, so in the end, everyone had at least one plaice, and we all went home with a smile on our faces. All the fish were in great condition and weighed over 3lb.

### **Newhaven November 14th**

I don't want to seem down on winter cod fishing, as we have had some very good trips in recent years, but this was not one of them. In fact, see the introduction to the August 22nd trip for a general synopsis. It was cold and miserable, we tried wrecks and ground, inshore and offshore, and ended up on the Portobello, that's how desperate we were. We managed a splendid 6 whiting and 6 dogfish. None of the other boats did any better. All in all, one of those days that seems much more amusing when you're out the following summer bent into your third 45lb eel.

### **Weymouth Wrassing**

For the second year in a row, the gods smiled on our attempts to break the British boat-caught ballan wrasse record. Well, they smiled to the extent of ensuring it was just about calm enough to be fishable anyway.

We set off in high spirits with a vast stock of huge hardback crabs, supplemented by a number of hermit crabs, some of which seemed still to be clinging to life. Surely nothing could go wrong. Our numbers were swelled by the reduced bulk of Andy "Svelte" Selby and Richard from the shop, so along with Clive, that made three people on the boat with a rough idea of what they were doing. I'm including Richard English in the other camp.

Down we went with hooks loaded with half a hardback, Richard of the shop having been very zealous in preparing baits for everyone as we steamed out. Either he's a very nice man, or he really, really hates crabs. Given what wrasse fishing can be like, it was a slowish start, but then things picked up and wrasse started coming thick and fast. The stamp of fish wasn't huge – with two and three pounders being more common than fours, but everyone had a decent fish or two. Wrasse don't half pull back, so it was definitely good fun. Best wrasse of the day went to that skilful and modest wizard with a rod (me), weighing in at 5lb 4oz.



*Clive shows off a four pound wrasse of the green, splodgy variety*

When a million crabs had sacrificed themselves selflessly for our sport, we ran out of bait, so were forced to go bassing in the race. The word was "There are lots of really decent fish coming at the moment," and "There were two 15s caught yesterday." Given this endorsement, having to go bassing didn't seem like such a hardship.

As is often the case though, the reality didn't match our expectations, and it was three drifts before we found any fish at all. To be honest I'm not 100% convinced Richard managed to find the race (which is tricky for a man of his limited experience, as there are usually only about 10 other boats drifting it), as last year when fishing it, we lost loads of gear and snagged the bottom at least once per drift, whereas this time we hardly lost anything. I suspect Richard just plonked us down over some barren patch of sand and started texting his mates.

We did all right in the end. Everyone caught one or two fish, and some of us (not me though, sadly) caught a lot more. The biggest fish was only about 5lb, but it was still pretty good fishing.



*And this is a wrasse of the spotty red kind...*

We ended the day just outside the marina as the light faded, gently working plugs for squid.

Colin gave us all a masterclass in squid-catching and then proceeded to give us chapter and verse on squid unhooking. In particular he warned us to be extremely careful where you point the squid while unhooking it, or the consequences can be dire. He reinforced this safety message with a demonstration of what happens if you don't follow the correct procedure. The answer it seems is that you receive a faceful of water. Very well done indeed.

### **And finally Cyril...**

Due to the double-super-injunction being lifted I am at last able to inform you that I have been having an affair with a Welsh footballer, which thus far I had been barred from telling you by Judge Tugondecock's ruling that this might ruin my reputation for truthful fishing journalism of the highest quality. I can also pass on the news that Phil Brooks has not been having an affair with the UK beach volleyball team, despite everything he's been saying since the summer Weymouth trip. On the Sunday morning he actually appeared to have become paralysed by the sight of these fine athletes sporting gymnastically on the beach. We might have thought him dead if it hadn't been for the drool running down his chin.

That's all for now, except to remind you to book up for the next three trips, send in your dinner menu orders, and start polishing your bow ties. See you there!

Ben

### **Members' pictures from personal trips**



*Robin spent June catching huge tench. This one was 9lb 3oz. What a lovely fish.*



*Stevie caught and returned this beautiful eleven pound bass. Well done that man.*



*Not to be outdone, Kim caught this twelve pounder on the boat he owns with Clive. Fantastic!*



*Oh just fuck off Colin, you jammy bastard.*