

# Really Wrecked SAC newsletter

Number 54, April 2018



**H**ello, merry anglers one and all. As I write this newsletter, it seems as though I have very little to complain about. This illusion of contentment and satisfaction has only come about because I don't feel especially inclined to complain about any of the usual stuff that makes all our lives that little bit more miserable - cancelled trips, high winds, Rab's face, Adam's bad temper on boats, Chris' habit of turning up in a nicer car than I'll ever own, Colin's... well, Colin's everything. You know... The sorts of things I usually complain about.

No, perhaps it's the fact that spring may finally have decided it's about time it put in an appearance (or at least, there's a prospect that it might at some point before I finish and send out this newsletter; at the moment, the most I can claim is that it is not actually raining or snowing \*right now\*), or perhaps it's the fact that I've cheered myself up with a new reel from *Ebay* (new to me, at least), but for whatever reason, I don't currently feel like ranting on about what a total waste of time this all is, before snapping all my rods, asking Kim to body slam my reels, and throwing the lot into a skip.

Whatever it is, I'm feeling vaguely optimistic about the year, despite the usual round of trip cancellations and other disasters that have befallen the club and its members since the last time I sent you one of these things. It could be that it's because, between us, Adam and I have finally managed to work out who is going on which trips. This black cloud has been hanging over us for months, but finally the sun has broken through and there is joy unbounded, especially here <http://www.reallywrecked.com/news-and-dates/dates> where you'll find all the future trips listed and here <http://www.reallywrecked.com/news-and-dates/your-trips-this-year> where you'll find all the trips you have been allocated (including as a reserve). Please check and, if you have subsequently arranged your summer holidays over your only trip of the year, let us know as soon as possible. Obviously none of us would actually be so stupid as to do something like that... hang on a sec... just got to make a

couple of adjustments to the bookings... as I was saying, obviously none of us could possibly be so idiotic, but please do check just to make sure.

You will notice, at the top of the "Your bookings" page I just mentioned, that there's also a list of dates that still have spaces available. Have a look through those, and if you fancy a bit more rod-bending action, with excellent company and amusing banter thrown in, then steer well clear of them.

So, this is to be the year when we finally shuck off the bad luck that has dogged us, and we emerge, blinking, into the warm, clear light of summer fishing, with eels and rays and bream and bass and tope and smoothies and turbot and cod and pollack aplenty. You read it here first, and when have I ever led you astray? Yes, yes, but \*apart\* from all those times?

If you're not interested in my upbeat assessment of the year ahead, there's a trip report below with all the action from an early season pollack trip on board *Wild Frontier*, and at the end, there's a tribute to Brooksie, our much missed, departed member. I thought I'd put it at the end, because, by then, all this vile positivity is bound to have leached away, and I'll be able to give him the eulogy he truly deserves. You know what I'm talking about.

## **Weymouth pollack, February 19th**

This was our first ever trip out of Weymouth drifting wrecks for pollack, if you ignore all those other trips out of Weymouth drifting wrecks for pollack and cod that we used to do many summers ago with Richard. More accurately, this was the first time we'd fished out of Weymouth targeting big spring pollack. We'd already had one trip cancelled on us, so our hopes were not high. But then XCWeather took a turn for the more pleasant a few days ahead of the trip, and, wonders will never cease, Clem decided he couldn't think of a good reason to call it off.

Obviously, being this club, we couldn't do anything sensible like actually turn up with a full crew, so there were only seven of us aboard the boat, plus two of Clem's regular occasionals,

Surfer Simon and Roger, to make up the numbers. I don't know why Simon is known as Surfer Simon, but according to Clem he is (which means it's probably bollocks), and there are worse things you can be called, by me, in this newsletter. Yes, Beef, I'm talking to you, you cunt.

Actually, Beef was one of the seven stalwarts who had bothered to turn up for this trip, coming all the way over from Australia to plunder the wrecks off Weymouth, which certainly puts the rest of your feeble efforts in not bothering to make the trip from Sussex to shame, you lazy good-for-nothing bastards. We were also joined on this trip by the unpleasant half of the Hodges family (that's both Clive and Kim – I'm assuming that other members of their families can't possibly be as awful as those two), Two Dogs and Tom, with Adam and I tagging along to bump up the number of members to near-respectability.

Clem took us quite a long way off for this trip, with the steam out taking the best part of two hours. As you know, time flies when you're in good company, so for the majority of us, it felt more like a 12 hour journey to hell. When we finally arrived, the seas were perfectly reasonable for the time of year, not perfectly flat, but not so lumpy as to make fishing uncomfortable. This was helped by the fact that *Wild Frontier* is a \*very\* nice boat to fish from, stable and very big, with plenty of room, even for Beef. It's only a shame it's not run by a nicer bloke, but I think a club gets the skippers it deserves, and we deserve Clem.

Once we were over the first wreck, we let fly with a barrage of rubber lures that would have done Anne Summers proud. Beef's 14" Penetrex Chartreuse and chocolate "Milt-teaser" looked particularly resplendent as it went down on the fish, while Clive's "Big Pink Worm (TM)" was also a picture of concupiscent pleasure as it thrust its way deep inside the waiting, glistening sea. I can't be certain without checking (something I never do), but I think that might be the first time smut has reared its ugly pink head in this newsletter. I don't know what came over me. Oh yes, I do, it was Adam's Beddystone Feel 8" "All Nite Roebuster Special". Hmmm... not so good second time round, is it? Much like the real thing.

Anyway, it wasn't long before we were all pumping away, covered in thick slime and smelling of fish. God help me, I can't stop.

What I'm trying to say is that first drop down, we hit pollack and by the end of the first drift there were four fat fish to about 8lb in the fish box. Most of us were using standard 6"

Sidewinder type lures, although I'm sure a couple of us were using Fiish Black minnows, while I was using the smaller 4" size. All seemed equally effective, taking fish in the first 15 turns off the bottom.

Clive was doing something completely different, bless him. He was fishing with a heavyish spinning rod, and fixed spool reel, with a large pink Fiish lure on a heavy jig head. With nothing else on the line, he was casting as far uptide as he could manage so as to give his 6oz of lead-head a chance to reach the bottom by the time the boat caught up with his lure on the drift. The rest of us were using 12oz to reach the bottom, so just dropping straight down would not have worked for the lad. To start with he struggled to get his lure into the killing zone for long enough, but he stuck with it, tweaking his casting distance and rate of retrieve, and he started to catch well.

Adam was also doing something a bit different. Where the rest of us were catching fish, he was quietly and efficiently going about the business of not catching fish. This technique worked very well for him throughout the day, of which, more later.



***Good fish there, Clive. See? I can write nice things. I just might not mean them.***

Clem and his crewman, Richard, were kept very busy with the net by the rest of us though. Almost too busy to give his paying customers a mouthful of dog's abuse at the drop of a hat.

Almost, but not quite. I like to feel this special service is reserved for Clem's favourite crews, and is not because we are, in fact, the appalling bunch of wankers I suspect we might be.

As the tide slackened off, our lead sizes decreased and with them, the bites. By the time 6-8oz were enough to get down, we hadn't had a fish for two or three drifts. With some tide still running, I decided it was time to give my slow jigs a go. As the heaviest jig I own weighs little more than 8oz, I too was trying the Clive technique of casting it uptide so that I could fish it vertically for a period just after it hit the sea bed. For two drifts this worked very well, and I had two double-figure fish while no-one else managed a bite. The largest was a lovely fish, so I weighed it. With the boat heaving on the swell, it was difficult to get an accurate weight, so I took the usual kind of average and gave myself 14lb 8oz, only realising shortly after that this exactly matched my PB. Is it too late to say that it weighed 14lb 12oz?

Whatever it weighed though, it did put up a hell of a scrap. I'd forgotten how much fun a proper pollack can be, head down, ripping yards of line off your reel as it heads for the wreck, and then fighting you all the way up. I was relieved when it hit the net, I can tell you.

By now, the tide had really dropped away, and the bites stopped altogether. However we had another trick up our Ultrabite-covered sleeve. In the tackle shop before we set off, Tom had bought half a pound of half-dead rag, and with the bites non-existent, he replaced his lure with a couple of rag and tried that. To our surprise, he quickly hooked into a beautiful pouting. And then another. People openly scoffed.

Well they were scoffing on the other side of their scoffy faces a few minutes later when Tom landed a fat pollack, followed by another. Surfer Simon and I joined in the rag-fest and soon another four pollack joined the first two. Despite being on long flowing traces, you wouldn't really say we were fishing the rag in the approved flying-collar-style. The technique that worked as well as any other was just to drop the lead to the bottom, wind up 6-10 turns (to try and get above the pouting) and then leave the bait suspended there as we slowly drifted about on the wind and what little tide there was left. Very strange, but quite effective, and we'll definitely have to try it again next time.

Eventually through, the tide dropped away almost to nothing, the pouting kept climbing in the water column and it proved impossible to catch anything but. After enjoying watching us battle the pop-eyed beasts for a few more drifts

than was strictly necessary, Clem set off for a new wreck he hoped would fish well on the ebb.



*Proper angler, proper fish. Proper git.*

By the time we reached our destination at speeds that had us pining for *Bonwey*, the ebb had started properly, and once again, we were into fish almost straight away. The fishing wasn't perhaps quite as all-action as on the first wreck, but it wasn't bad. The main difference was probably that the fish were a little smaller than before. Still, an eight-pounder puts a decent bend in your rod and is always welcome.

At the back of the boat, unbeknownst to me (as I was fishing right at the front in an enclave of good fishing and good company comprising me, Tom and Surfer Simon), Clive was thrashing away among the Beefs, the Kims and the Adams of this world, poor sod. He was also deploying a bit of kit called the *Seaqualizer*. This is a kind of clamp that you attach to a weighted line on a spare rod, which grasps a fish's jaw. You then lower the fish down to a depth of about 20', where its swimbladder can re-pressurise, allowing the fish's stomach to return to its rightful place inside the fish instead of sticking out of its mouth. After a short while to let it get its breath back, Clive then lowered it to 50' where a pressure-sensitive mechanism tripped the clamp and *voila!* the pollack was safely returned to the depths. Tagging and tracking studies have shown that this bit of kit does actually work, and I wish I had



known it was in action, because nobody needs as many fish as I caught, and indeed catch on an ongoing basis.



*This is what the pollack were eating...*

At the other end of the spectrum of fish-catching success there lies an altogether different species of duffer. Known and feared among all his fishing companions for the damage he can do, both through the medium of contemporary dance (or tangling as it is also known) and with his vicious tongue as it unleashes a tirade of sulky bad temper and morale-sapping misery that would make any teenager proud, Adam was having one of those days. In fact he was having three of those days all stuck together with superglue that had exploded out of the tube in all directions and especially over your fingers and expensive Blacks anorak on the application of the slightest and most feather-like pressure.

No matter what he tried (and actually Superglue was one of the few things he didn't try), nothing worked. While fools and incompetents on all sides were hauling in fish after fish, Adam was left rueing a dropped fish on the third drift of the day and trying to admire the fighting pluck of pouting and the feel of the wreck as it claimed yet another of his lures.

To be fair to the poor fellow, which I am doing through gritted teeth, we have all been there, suffering a bafflingly bad day for no reason whatsoever, when we're actually fishing well, and speaking for myself, I have not always, in every single case, responded as well as Adam did on this occasion. There were no temper tantrums (nothing out of the ordinary, anyway), no moaning, no black looks, none of that stuff. In fact, throughout the day, Adam managed to maintain a cheery mein and to keep up his usual

lack of a sense of humour that he passes off as a sense of humour.

It is therefore with genuine pleasure that I can report that at the end of a most trying day, Adam was finally, on the last drop down, rewarded with a pollack. Not a monster, but a decent fish of around eight pounds, which put a bend in his rod and a smile on his face. God, I hope that such a day never happens to me (again), but if it does, I hope I can face it with the same equanimity.

I take much less pleasure in reporting that well after Clem had given the final "That's it lads, bring them up", Clive was still working his pink obscenity across the sea bed, bamboozling poor, innocent pollack with its vile sexual wiles. While other, honest, decent anglers had wound up and begun the task of de-tackling, Clive was still hard at his evil task of delaying the trip home. But worse, much worse, he was rewarded in his foul endeavour with a pollack, which was not just a good fish, but which at over 16lb snatched the title of best fish of the day from yours truly. Obviously I was delighted for Clive, and my grudging reaction to his outrageous and undeserved luck merely comes from my regard to my fellow anglers' comfort and punctuality, and my deep-seated sense of fair play.



*At last! And what a beaming smile!*

Still, there was no time to dwell on injustice and the murky depths of some people's souls, as

there were pollack to be filleted, and plenty of them. But wait, what's this? Richard, Clem's crewman, is picking up the filleting knife... Oh my good god! Like the saint of all goodness, he is actually going to fillet our fish for us. It's almost as though Clem \*wants\* us to have a good time. I mean, obviously he doesn't want that, but he does seem willing to pretend he does sometimes.

All in all, it was a good day's pollack fishing with about 60 fish retained, and about 15 returned courtesy of Clive's *Seaqualizer*. Of those, there were about ten doubles and about five over 12lb. That's top sport by any standards. I'm looking forward to round 2.

For a slightly different, much less accurate, take on the day's fishing, I recommend you rush out and buy a copy of the magnificent *Saltwater Boat Angling*, issue 23, April Edition. This splendid publication, which has the good sense to employ our own Mick Deacon as a designer and contributor, has a 4-page spread on our trip which, despite having too many pictures of Clive, yet again serves to remind the world what a gorgeous load of anglers we really are. If you're not already a subscriber, go to [www.saltwaterboatangling.co.uk](http://www.saltwaterboatangling.co.uk) and sign up.

### **Philip Brooks RIP**

Brooksie. What a cunt. How I will miss writing those words... There are plenty of other cunts in the club, but in some regards Brooksie was in a league of his own. Whether he was offering to lend you his anal beads, even the ones he was currently using, or was almost crashing his car as he strained to catch a fleeting glimpse of some girl athletically jogging past, there was something endearingly, threateningly lecherous about our Phil. Who can forget his reaction to discovering, after a superb day's sport, catching rays, bream and big conger, that a women's beach volleyball team was practising on the beach opposite the B&B? "What a fucking disaster! I could have been sat here all day instead of wasting my time on a boat with you bunch of arseholes." I honestly believe if they'd been there to practise for the week, Brooksie would have sold up and moved to Weymouth the next day.

But there was more to Phil than his anal beads and his indiscriminate eye for the female form. He was also immensely annoying, more than capable of catching your eye just after you'd lost your tenth rig to the wreck, having failed to land a fish while all around were hauling them up (q.v. Adam's performance on *Wild Frontier* above) and offering a helpful, "You really are a useless cunt,

Eveling, aren't you?" Obviously I don't mean he would use my name as a general insult, in this particular case he was actually talking to me, but thinking about it, he'd almost certainly do that too.



***Brooksie, half man, half turbot and half fish-catching machine, all wrapped up in one foul but lovable package.***

It wasn't always like this. He used to be such a quiet, unassuming fellow. I remember his first trip out with us. One of Dave's regulars, he was looking for a new crew having been expelled from his previous lot for the inappropriate touching of a gurnard. He seemed a quiet, dedicated type, albeit one blessed with a face which, like a twisted Helen of Troy, would sink a thousand ships. This impression lasted a blissful 30 minutes before, having left the marina and therefore having us all trapped on board *Ocean Warrior* with him, he morphed into the Brooksie we came to know and love, a foul-mouthed, snarling brute of a man, who'd found his spiritual home in our club.

Adam, Chris and I attended his funeral and were struck, in among the tales of his legendary thriftiness (for example, having spotted a discarded flip-flop from his car one day, on

seeing what was possibly the other half of the pair a mile or so further down the road, he turned the car round to collect both of them, and proudly wore his new-found footwear, once he'd cut them down to fit his tiny feet, until they fell apart) by just how loved he was by his friends, family and colleagues, and how every single one of them talked about what an amusing and good-natured bloke he was.

Because that's ultimately how we will remember him. Whether he was taking the piss out of Barker, while helping him tackle up in some marginally less ineffective way, regaling us with tales of tazering innocent witnesses to some crime, or just mulling over the myriad uses to which he could put his beloved anal beads, he was always funny, and often hilarious. Sure, he was also an excellent angler, who finished in the top five of the conger competition at Weymouth on two, or possibly three, occasions (I like to think my lack of effort in checking the facts here is my own personal tribute to the man), who would often quietly offer his intelligent thoughts on how you could fish a little bit better, was generous at the bar and with his tackle, and uncomplaining in the face of all the utter shite that came his way from other members of the club. But what I, and I suspect all of us, will miss most of all is his unflinching, stupid, irritating good humour and eye for a laugh. *Bon voyage*, Brooksie, you legend, we will miss you lots.



*At the end of a long day, Richard wields a filleting knife in a way that we just can't match and, even better, so that we don't have to bother.*

### **So it's goodbye from me...**

Right, that's quite enough sentiment, time for more fishing. Don't forget to check your dates on the web site, and to book up your final places on the trips with spaces remaining, and then let's get out there and catch some fish. It's what he would have wanted.

Cheers,  
Ben

*P.S. If you'd like Ben to write one of his moving and lyrical eulogies for a loved one, he's available at special rates for club members, so hurry and book your tribute today, before he runs out of swear words.*