

Really Wrecked SAC newsletter

Number 35, January 2009



Holy turbot! Is it that time already? Last time I checked it was only August and I had ages to write this thing. Well, I'd better get on with it then, hadn't I? Now where are all my notes? Ah, I don't appear to have made any... Ah well, it's lucky my mind is a steel trap and no detail ever escapes my razor sharp intellect. The other alternative is that every single thing you are about to read is entirely fabricated and that this is all a dream.

To test this out, I want you all to go out and sit in the middle of the nearest busy road, naked, apart from a light covering of honey. You may pleasure yourselves if you wish. If you get away with it, then this is definitely a dream and frankly I'm disappointed that me writing a rubbish newsletter is the best your subconscious could come up with. If, on the other hand, something bad happens, then perhaps, unfortunately, this is reality and you've got some explaining to do (probably to the police or local magistrate) about how "My fishing club newsletter told me to do it". We'll come and visit you in Broadmoor.

Now, there's something new and exciting about this newsletter, but I'm not going to tell you what it is. The first person to guess it wins a very special prize, but only if you're also the first person to tell me what it was you guessed. Keep your wits about you and your eyes peeled and that prize could be yours. Unless you're Tom or Stevie, because I'm quite frightened about what kind of special prize could possibly be "special" enough for either of you two. Sorry, only kidding, of course you can win.

Weymouth summer trip – July 25th and 26th

The Weymouth summer trip was the usual blend of high jinks, brilliant fishing and being too hungover to fish properly. Sadly this year we didn't have to pleasure of Andy and Charlotte's company, either on the boat or on shore, as they had better things to do. I think Charlie was washing her hair, or was it Andy's hair? Anyway, there will be no excuses next year, as we don't really know how to enjoy ourselves on our own. Another notable absentee was, no, you'll never guess. No really, you won't. You won't believe it, but it was Jari who cancelled at the last minute. How unlike last year, or the year before or the

year before that. Something about Microsoft, or Intel, or the US Government wanting his company's advanced thin film deposition systems for Molecular Beam Epitaxy (MBE), UHV Magnetron Sputtering and Pulsed Laser Deposition. A likely story. Pull the other one, it's got oxygen resistant substrate on.

So to the fishing. As per the usual routine, The A Team whizzed off in Richard's latest new wonderboat. This one is an Aquastar 32 and has a nice high gunwhale, and a spacious cockpit layout generally, though it is fairly narrow across the beam. The only real disadvantage is the skipper, who is a right git and somehow manages to know less about fishing than us. The boat will eventually be renamed Lone Shark II in an arcane and bloody ritual, known by Weymouth residents as "the night Adam finally gets what's coming to him", but for now it's still called "Cobra", presumably because Richard wears a hoodie and his blood runs cold when he catches site of a conger eel. Or possibly because after one snakebite, he's anyone's.

Meanwhile the B Team had the enormous privilege of fishing with Ken on board his new 38' bullet, Bonwey II, which conveyed us to the Seven Mile Ground at 24 knots in about ten minutes. Only kidding, we were in Bonwey, as usual, and as the Seven Mile Ground is seven miles away, we're still on our way there now, and we expect to be fishing by early 2012.

On the way there, it was, as usual, horribly rough inshore, and though we had a look at the Kidney Bank on the way out, the seas were too mountainous to make fishing for blondes a possibility. Instead we continued past to the infamous Seven Mile Ground, where we were hoping for some tope. Alas, the tope didn't show, but instead we had some excellent rough ground eeling, ending the day with 28 eels to 45lb, along with the usual pout, poor cod and dogs, plus a bonus huss of around 9lb.

On the way back, we drifted for bream on the mussel banks, but hit the wrasse instead with four ballans to over 4lb and a lovely big cuckoo of 1lb 10oz for Phil Pepper. The highlight of the day was provided by the same gorgeous, pouting Phil, who finally revealed the extent of his affection for Tom while they were dancing around the deck trying to

undo a perfectly simple tangle they'd got themselves into. As Tom raised his rod to pass it over Mr Pepper's, Phil smiled, shook his head and looking deep into Tom's eyes, said dreamily, "You need to come inside me, Tom." For further coverage of what took place later back at the Sailors' go to YouTube and search for "Phil, Tom, conger eel threesome". You won't be disappointed, well, not as disappointed as Tom.



A lovely cuckoo wrasse for Phil, which in any normal club would be a record but in ours, that swine Coster has caught an even bigger one.

The real action for the B Team started once we got back into port though. While waiting for the A Team to come back and lie to us about what a great day they'd had with the useless Mr English, someone, probably Robin, noticed that there were wrasse and blennies feeding on the harbour wall on the inside of the floating pontoon, and that if you threw them scraps of ragworm, they fought over them like the vicious brutes they are. Like any crack team of top class anglers, we needed no further invitation, and we set about trying to catch these tiny fish, with their tiny mouths, using entirely suitable tackle i.e. 4/0 hooks and some 50lb line we found discarded on the pontoon.

This proved totally hopeless, and it was only when Phil reached inside his gimp suit (or possibly his tackle box, I get confused easily), and produced some size 8 hooks that we got anywhere. A succession of specimen tompot

blennies followed, though the goldsinny wrasse proved maddeningly elusive. Just when we thought we couldn't get any more frustrated, Tom pointed out some mullet, which were feeding off the harbour wall slightly further along. Just to prove how easy this fishing lark is, or possibly to show the world what an optimistic fool I am, I wandered along with my tackle of a lead boom for a rod, a yard of 20lb line and a size 8 hook baited with a tiny chunk of ragworm.

Robin wandered along with me, but instead of sneaking in the approved cat-like fashion, or in any way trying to avoid being seen or refraining from clumping his feet like the clod-hopping oaf he is, he did his worst (something he's very good at), and the mullet spooked. Not to be deterred by a simple absence of fish, I "cast" my bait to where the mullet had been and waited. After possibly 30 seconds, Robin became bored and was about to leave to find some tuppenny whore to satisfy his baser passions, when lo and behold, up popped a mullet-shaped pair of lips and swallowed the ragworm. I struck to the full extent permitted by a six-inch lead boom and was amazed to find myself attached to an even-more astounded mullet. Before it had the chance to argue, I'd hauled it out of the water and was displaying it to my amazed team mates. If I live to be 90 (highly unlikely, given what an unpleasant man I am, and the number of enemies I have made), I don't think I'll have a prouder moment fishing.



My splendid boom-caught mullet. It may only have been a pound and a quarter-ish, but don't I look the smug git?

The A Team chose this precise moment to come ashore (no, not like that, we're not all Phil Peppers) so they too witnessed my triumph. There then followed the usual tosh about excellent fishing, records, feats of angling derring do, blah, blah, blah. I've managed to ascertain that there's a better than 50% chance that some of the following may be true.

It was a day for offshore wrecking, though too rough to go all the way to France. The selected wreck held a decent number of smallish cod and pollack, which eagerly took shads of all shapes and colours. Stevie managed a fantastic new record with one of the species I've always wanted to catch – a John Dory. This was a smallish one of 11lb 2oz, but was an amazing looking fish – much more mottled than I had thought it would be.

At anchor, the wreck produced loads of eels, but nothing of any size. The biggest was perhaps 40lb, though Richard, being unfamiliar with conger eels, estimated anything over 5lb at around the 50lb mark. There was some fishless Shambles-drifting at the end of the day, and then that was that for day one. With both boats safely in port, we ended the day at the Gurkha, though without Andy Selby's noble and selfless assistance, we left before they had run out of food this time.

Day two started with a minor disaster. Richard's fantastic new boat had been unable to cope with the strain of chugging out to wrecks distant while loaded down with Adam thinking about Beef, and a spurge on one of the engines had become unflanged. This meant that while, to the untrained eye everything was perfectly normal, except that the engine may have sounded slightly rougher than normal at more than 4000 revs (as if Richard ever uses more than 800 revs), Richard worried like the old woman he is, that if he took us offshore *like he promised*, the engine might blow up killing us all instantly and painfully while attracting large great whites to the area to feast on our remains and permitting Russian cyber criminals to hack into our bank accounts and steal our money while they rogered our wives, children, parents and, in Phil's case, Tom.

This didn't put the B Team off at all, so Richard was left to refuse flatly to go a long way offshore and instead we had to settle for one of his mickey mouse wrecks closer in. We began on the drift, where we had a few cod. I, having used my allocation of luck the previous day on the mullet, spent most the time snagged in the wreck, but apart from that it was fun. As the tide slackened, Richard dropped anchor and we set to eeling. Just as we began to catch, Richard announced that the anchor was dragging and he'd have to

reset it. So we retrieved our gear and waited while he had another go at it.

Except on this day, nothing was quite that simple. Richard found that the anchor was stuck fast on something and he couldn't get free or retrieve the hook. Being a sympathetic and helpful lot, we promptly dropped our tackle back in and resumed catching eels and ling, which Richard, for some reason, refused to unhook for us. He continued to fanny around with the anchor warp, swearing and being generally quite grumpy in response to our good-natured teasing and reasonable demands for tea.

Eventually he managed to manoeuvre the boat to a point where he could get the anchor all the way up, without a thought for the effect it was having on our fishing. As the anchor broke the surface, even the salty sea dogs of the B-Team were slightly surprised to see it attached to miles of eight inch steel hawser. Even then, the fun wasn't over as it took an age to get free, such was the enormous tension everything was under. To make things worse, by this time, we were miles away from the wreck so it wasn't even worth fishing! It's only lucky Stevie wasn't there or he'd have whipped out his British Airways-issue Beretta and demanded we retrieve the entire length of hawser for him to claim as salvage.



An extremely ugly specimen, and the ling isn't that handsome either.

After all the excitement, we gently reminded Richard that at some point we'd like to go fishing if he didn't mind, and where was our TEA?

Eventually we coaxed a few more eels and ling on to the feed, but we'd missed the best of the tide.

We drifted another wreck, where I must have kept catching that blasted hawser, as I don't think I got a single shad back. Then we tried another wreck, for bass this time, and Tom managed one of around five and a half pounds, before we ended the day pointlessly and fruitlessly drifting the Shambles.

The A Team decided to eschew the delights of the Seven Mile Ground and instead set off for the Tope Hole. Weirdly this did in fact hold tope, as well as eels, and everyone had fun taking both on 20lb class gear. Best fish was Marvin's 33lb tope. There then followed the obligatory blank drift over the Shambles, followed by a few drifts over the mussel beds, which produced a lot of bream and a lovely 4lb 6oz plaice – again for Marvin.

Our final night was characterised by an aching hole (no, not Phil's this time) where Andy and Charlotte should have been. Adam, Chris and I tried our best, wandering the fleshpots and bodega bars of Weymouth till the small hours, but it just wasn't the same. The highlight of the evening, in their absence, was failing to find the internationally famous 23 storey, 200 bedroom "Sand Hotel" which had been built on the Weymouth strand as part of the World Sandcastle Championships and which featured in every national newspaper for weeks before and after our visit. Despite wandering up and down the beach for hours looking for this thing, in which some people were apparently actually paying to sleep, we failed to spot it. It must have been camouflaged against all that sand, I guess. It certainly can't have been due to us being very drunk indeed and too busy talking nonsense to take any notice whatsoever of our surroundings.

The King Fisher – Monday 15th September

This trip started with the usual high hopes and excited banter, but we hadn't reached the marina entrance before the Smurfs slowed the boat right down and turned it around. It seemed that the impellor on one of the engine wasn't working so it wasn't getting any water to cool it. What is it with us and engines? Who is the Jonah? I volunteer my own name and hereby suggest I be banned from all future trips. You should be so lucky.

After a gladiatorial Pete had stripped the engine down, blindfold, in 48 seconds, it soon became apparent that it wasn't going to be fixed in a hurry and that we weren't going anywhere fast. Dave suggested he call one of the other, less full time, skippers and get them to take us out, so we were faced with a dilemma – to accept second best or go back home to bed. It was a tough decision, but eventually we decided that we'd give

the fishing lark a go, and Dave began ringing round.

The first skipper he tried couldn't be bothered to get out of bed. The second was keen until he heard it was the Really Wrecked SAC, and then he suddenly remembered it was his wife's funeral that day, and he thought he'd better go to that. The third skipper was having his wooden leg oiled, and the fourth was being deported to Poland that very day.

So it went on for hours until eventually Dave got to the last name in his little black book and managed to get hold of John, skipper of the Kingfisher. Never has a boat been less aptly named. If it had been called the "Dogfish catcher if you're lucky, with an engine that sounds rougher than Robin the morning after drinking two pints of lager shandy, and don't expect any tea, and there's be no reduction in cost just because we're leaving about three hours later than you would on a full day" we might have had a better idea of what was in store for us. In fact, I've just summed up the day, so let's say no more about it.

Actually, there is a little more to tell. As well as some of the best dogfish fishing since our trips with the late Larry Ryan, we also had three or four excellent bream, some of which may have gone 8oz, one 5lb huss, and Stevie had two school bass, of which the less said the better. Colin almost caught the only good fish of the day when he had a decent double-figure cod on the surface, only to see it vanish into the depths after John battered it with the net until it fell off, perhaps not realising that we actually wanted to see this fish landed.

Record breaking – 22nd of September

In theory this trip is another chance to tangle with Weymouth's mythical turbot, but we usually end up doing something else. This year was no different. Richard tried to interest us in some bass fishing, which had been very good indeed, but despite general approval, Adam vetoed this proposal by the simple expedient of sulking until we agreed to do something else. If you ever want to see the most amazing impersonation of a pout, just tell Adam we're going bassing. It drives him wild. I don't know why, he just doesn't get it, along with everything else related to fishing.

So instead we headed for the Kidney Bank and blonde ray fishing. Kim, my driver for the day, and I had spent the journey down, discussing his and Clive's amazing record with big blondes (must... resist... the... obvious... joke...), so it was no surprise that we battered everyone else aboard with two each, topped by a magnificent new club record of 20lb 13oz to that debonair and popular angler, me. What did surprise me was how much I enjoyed catching it, after so many dogfish and

snag-filled trips. It's almost as though I prefer catching large specimen fish to losing my gear drop after drop. Spooky. Mick Beach also came up with a record – this one a starry smoothhound of precisely the same size as Stevie's existing record specimen i.e. 3lb 8oz.



My beautiful blonde. So much better than dogfish, pouting and snags.

After that, we did have a couple of drifts on the Shambles, and despite going on and on and on about how we never catch anything when we do it, Stevie came up trumps with a nice turbot of around 4lb. Actually, it might have been Mick Beach who caught it, but I've never really been able to tell them apart. Chris Grant had a magnificent and record-equalling one and a half ounce lesser weever, but tragically he somehow managed to avoid the Selby unhooking technique which involves getting stabbed with the venomous dorsal spine. Then we had a *really* long drift over the mussel beds for bream. On the way there, we stopped to admire an angler playing, and then finally losing, a porbeagle, which had apparently been around for weeks, chomping captured bream being brought to the boat by anglers.

Obviously I couldn't resist this, and I spent the entire two hours on the drift with a large bream livebait attached to my 12/0 Seamaster, hoping

for some more of the above. To no avail, sadly, though amazingly the livebait was as lively at the end of the drift as at the beginning and swam away happily, none the worse for wear, and with a nice new lip piercing to show all his mates.

So no sharks, but we did catch a lot of bream to about three and a half pounds or so, and I had the pleasure of watching Richard try and try to catch a double header on my three hook paternoster bream gear, with no success. Eventually I could bear it no longer and had a single drop down and landed a full house of three bream. I tried to show him how it was done, but he won't be told, that boy. Adam made it four records for the trip when he smashed Colin's red gurnard record with a fine 1lb 14oz fish.

Inshore cod - October 27th

Strangely, this trip did not feature a single broken engine or impellor full of gravel. Then again, I wasn't on it, so no real surprise there. Adam tells me it was freezing cold and very choppy, so it was an inshore coddling trip, rather than a last attempt at beating Stevie's 70lb Really Eely contender.

There were the usual dogfish and whiting, though the Smurfs clearly don't have the numbers for Kingfisher John's dogfish hotspot, as we also managed nine cod. The best was an excellent rough ground fish of 17lb, taken by that big fish hog, Colin Pearce. I can't believe I've almost got to the end of a newsletter, and this is only the second time I've mentioned Colin. Just for the record, I'd like to state here and now how much I loathe and detest the man. Thank goodness he's so useless at fishing.

Club news

So now your whistles have been whetted by all this fishing talk, it's time to get down to the serious business of next year's dates, and your chance to have Tom come inside you.

There's one major difference this year. The Weymouth summer trip will be payable in advance. I'll get the cost of everything, boats, bait, accommodation, everything, plus my commission, and let you know. You then send me a cheque, at which point your booking is confirmed. That way, all the pain is over and done with by the time we go on the trip, and there's none of those endless trips to the cash machine to pay yet another unreasonable demand for cash. If you cancel, we return your cash as soon as we get a replacement. It'll be more fun and much easier. I'll let you know what the damage will be very soon.

All trips are Newhaven unless WEYMOUTH is specified.

Friday 23rd January – inshore cod and whiting or offshore pollack

Monday 16th February – offshore pollack
Monday 23rd February – offshore pollack
Monday 9th March – offshore pollack and cod or plaice, or possibly Kingmere bream
Friday 3rd April – offshore cod and pollack and possibly eels
Friday 17th April – WEYMOUTH Plaice
Monday 4th May – offshore cod and eels
Friday 15th May – WEYMOUTH Turbot
Friday 5th June – offshore cod and eels
Friday/Saturday July 10th-11th – WEYMOUTH SUMMER TRIP
Monday 20th July – offshore eels and cod
Monday 3rd August – eels, bream and cod
Monday 31st August – eels, bream and cod
Monday 28th September – WEYMOUTH rays, tope, turbot and bass
Monday 26th October – eels, bream and cod
Wednesday 18th November – WEYMOUTH record-breaking ballan wrasse and squid
Friday 27th November – offshore eels, and bream or inshore cod
Monday 14th December – inshore cod

Just as important and *much more urgent* is the date of the **annual dinner**. This year it'll take place **on Saturday the 24th of January**, which is now only 12 days away! Adam will be sending round the menu today, so book up NOW to ensure disappointment. The cost is £20 a head for a delicious three course meal, coffee, mints (we think they said "mints" though it could have been "mince"), half a bottle of wine, brilliant banter and the chance to win one of the club's exclusive and sought-after awards.

And if you have one of the club's exclusive and sought-after awards from last year, you **MUST** get it to Adam by this Friday (the 16th) at the very latest, so we can get it engraved. You know who you are, don't let us down. I suppose I ought to apologise for the lack of notice you're getting this year, but you've always known deep down what kind of a man I am, so don't pretend you're surprised when I tell you I'm not going to.

Finally if you're at all concerned that nearly all the tales in this newsletter concern me, and nearly all the pictures are of me, don't be. I'm much more handsome than you, hence the pictures, and a much better angler and more interesting person than you, hence the stories. If, for whatever unlikely reason, you don't believe either of these obvious and self-evident truths, then you might care to consider how many pictures you sent me (Phil Pepper – you are exempt from this criticism, as you did actually send me some pictures, though the video of you and Tom is unusable due to camera shake) of your mighty catches, and how few trips you came on (or inside). This club needs you to come fishing, if only to stop me printing more self-aggrandising propaganda. Oh, and did you notice what was different about this newsletter? Let me know and win, Win! WIN!!!

Tight Stevies,
Ben



This is what can happen when you ignore Adam and go bassing. Kim holds aloft a fantastic 10lb 9oz fish, taken on his and Clive's boat as part of a 10-bass haul.