

Really Wrecked SAC newsletter

Number 38, January 2011



Now, as you all know, I am extremely reluctant to blow my own trumpet, sometimes going for whole minutes without telling everyone about some aspect of my brilliance. However, on this occasion, I feel compelled to break my normally trappist disposition on the subject of my genius and yell from the rooftops. On the other hand, as I genuinely do have something of interest to tell you, rather than just some feeble and tiny fish I happen to have caught, perhaps I shouldn't tell you straight away. Perhaps I should keep you in suspense in order to encourage you to read on.

After all, this newsletter does contain all kinds of useful information – dates of fishing trips, details of the Annual Dinner, records of magnificent specimens and so on. In the old days, I wouldn't have needed to resort to such low tricks to keep you reading, my sparkling wit would have done the job, and failing that, my Tourette's approach to certain club members, such as that cunt Sean, never failed me.

But now, as a dried up stick of a pale, wasted shadow of a washed up version of a club President and newsletter writer, that is what I am reduced to. That, and ending my sentences with prepositions. Oh, and writing sentences without verbs. Will the ignominy never end? Now, where was I? Oh yes, blowing my own trumpet. Well, a minor triumph almost comes in the form of this newsletter itself. I was only 12 days off finishing it in time to make it the third piece of unwanted spam you received in 2010, making it the first "three newsletter" year since 2005, and a 300% increase on the previous year. However, I failed, so my New Year's resolution is to do at least FOUR this year. Bet you can't wait

In other exciting news, Adam and I have booked the Annual Dinner, so I am now at liberty to ask you to put the night of Saturday the 22nd of January into your diary for an evening of such entertainment and jollity as you are never likely to experience again in your drab lives. We will be returning to the Dorset Arms, after last year's triumph. Those of you who sampled the raspberry and meringue roulade are never likely to forget it, and in a good way, too, unusually for this newsletter. The cost will be £30 per head including half a bottle of wine and your annual subs. If you're bringing a non-fishing partner (and

no, Colin, Jonathan doesn't count), £50 between the two will cover it. Adam will be sending the menu out in the next day or so you can make your selections.

With all the usual cups and trophies to be fought over, it's bound to be a great night, so sign up now. And talking of trophies, this is your cue to take the huge, magnificent cup, which has proved such a talking point with your posh friends, down from the mantelpiece where you've been proudly displaying it all year, pack it up and return it to Adam, so we can get the next lucky winner's details engraved into club history.

Before the other club notices, there's the small matter of the remaining trips from last year to tell you about.

Trip reports

I've got lots of trips to tell you about, some good, some not so good, and a couple really great, starting with the summer Weymouth trip.

Weymouth Summer trip

This year's Weymouth was the kind of trip that organisers (and I use the word to mean "twat who couldn't organise his way out of a paper bag") everywhere have nightmares about. Every year since our very first trip back in 1999, we have booked two boats, and have never had any problems filling them both. Last year we implemented the "pay in advance and don't worry about it" system, which everyone agreed made things a lot smoother and less painful.

And yet this year, it was like some huge black cloud had descended on Weymouth, emanating anti-Really Wrecked vibes and driving all thoughts of excellent fishing and great company ("excellent" and "great" here standing for "poor" and "unpleasant and embarrassing" respectively) from our collective unconscious. Or maybe it was just the huge black cloud which had descended over the economy, driving all cash from our wallets. Whatever the reason, with just a couple of weeks to go before the trip, I still had seven places to fill. As all accommodation and both boats are booked in advance, this left a slight cash shortfall of the order of £2,000.

Luckily I don't have a proper job, and nor does Adam, and there's nothing we like more than spending days on the phone, chivvying 80% of

the population of the UK into signing up for the trip. Sadly, the 80% we tried were all too busy combing the lovely hair on their My Little Ponies to come on the trip, so we had no joy there. It was probably at this stage you received Adam's plaintive email threatening to kill me and make it look like suicide if you didn't come.

This prompted many very, very lovely members of the club to make extremely generous offers to help out. I won't embarrass you by mentioning you by name, but you know who you are, and thank you very much for the thought. True, an even larger number offered cash to help bankroll the assassination, but a high profile role like mine does not come without risks.

Eventually though, our tireless efforts in emotional blackmail and threats paid off, and the trip was just about full enough. Unfortunately, there was then a second round of pulling out for various entirely plausible reasons:

a) Jari "Er... I'm really busy, or something?"

b) Graham and David "Er... my car has er... lost its number plates and I can't get new ones till tomorrow at which time I intend to phone up and say I'm too tired (which he did)

However, as we had the money safely banked, which is all I ever cared about, that was just hunky dory. It left more deck space for the rest of us, and the fishing was pretty good and the weather excellent.

For those who made the trip, the first exciting new development of note was the brilliant new road system being built for the increased traffic expected over the Olympics. "Being built" is the operative phrase in the previous sentence, as at the moment, Weymouth is basically a HUGE line of single file traffic being diverted away from its destination, surrounded by men in hi-vis jackets sitting in diggers and holding signs saying "STOP". The work is expected to be completed by 2013, as it has been outsourced to the Indian Commonwealth Building Corporation.

On arrival we found ourselves once more in two different bases. Some of us were in the Sailor's as usual (though Adam and I were NOT in our usual base of room 3, which almost made Adam cancel and go home), while some were in the Warwick. For those who remember the failed "Victoria" experiment, codename "hellhole", the Warwick is nothing like it. Even Stevie was pleased. No, he was delighted, I'd say. So after a few gentle beers, it was time for bed, to dream of brew and bass.

The next day dawned bright and, praise be, flat calm. This meant that for the first time since the Pre-Cambrian era, the B-Team were able to head for the Kidney Bank to fish for blonde rays on Bonwey. The A-Team were also fishing inshore, and while they couldn't match the fierce

acceleration and impressive straight-line speed of Bonwey, they did nonetheless did manage to fish some of the same marks as we did.

First off we set to mackerel fishing for bait. After many more or less fruitless drifts Ken told us we should have been there yesterday, because "There were loads of mackerel here then". We've heard this often enough now for it to be added to the list of the sayings of Chairman Ken, alongside such gems as:

- 1) "You can't do it all in one day."
- 2) "You've got half an hour to make a name for yourselves"
- 3) "Give it some stick, but gently." and everyone's favourite
- 4) "If you think you've got a bite, you haven't." (More on number 4 later.)

After a number of days we did eventually have a few mackerel, among them a vast scad for Tom, which blotted out the sun and also broke Adam's record, tipping the scales at a huge 1lb 1oz. Buoyed by this success, we set off after blondes. Ken anchored up and we fished the last of the ebb. We started off fishing 2lb of lead, but we were soon able to hold bottom with 8-10oz, which made the fishing much more comfortable.

Meanwhile, The A Team had raced off to the Shambles for an hour's blanking, aka fishing for turbot, after which they joined us on the Kidney Bank. They anchored just uptide of us, meaning their scent trail was added to ours, for which we were very grateful. We'd already been fishing there for about half an hour when they arrived and after the obligatory few dogfish, we started catching rays.

Tom caught his first ever blonde, and a monster too. Its final official weight was 21lb 8oz - which beat my club record. This was after about 23 separate attempts to weigh it, mind. Ken's first weighing had it at 19-20lb, and Tom seemed satisfied. Some time later he demanded it be reweighed on the official club scales, which then put it at 24lb. These same scales then weighed a dogfish at 12lb before exploding in a shower of rust, at which point we decided to reweigh Tom's ray on Ken's scales, when it magically settled at 21lb 8oz, having lain in the fish box for an hour. It's only a shame Ken doesn't have CCTV so we could find the footage of Tom slipping lead weights down the poor thing's throat. However, he's bought the pints now, so it's too late to take the record from him. He also killed and ate his ray. Murderer.

Phil soon also caught a decent ray. This caused much hilarity when it showed its hugely extensible mouth. Phil remarked that "You wouldn't want to get your finger caught in that." Quick as a flash Tom came back with "Or your cock." Ken was right beside him as he said this,

and you could see Tom visibly falling in Ken's estimation, which given what he already thinks of us, is harder than you might imagine. However, we are a democratic lot in the B Team, and we couldn't let Tom take the rap for this alone, so "Things you wouldn't put your cock in" became the theme of the day and included highlights such as a box of velvet swimming crabs, a bucket of rubby dubby and Adam. For the record, despite his own wise advice, Phil did then manage to let a blonde ray grab hold of his finger, and he was right, it was a bad thing to do.



Tom's superb record blonde, and his first one to boot, at 21lb 8oz

We dropped a fish or two and missed a few bites, just to show the rays the kind of anglers they were dealing with. Then, as the flood tide really got going, the anchor started to drag, making it very hard to stay in contact with your lead. At the same time, the bites dried up. Maybe it was because we had moved off the fish, or maybe we just couldn't feel the bites with our lines slackening but whatever it was, we had no more fish until the anchor bit again.

The A-team's scent trail, including a vile smelling load of crap that Nick Coster had bagged up and tied to the anchor, was clearly helping us in the B-team catch fish, but it wasn't quite so effective for them. They did manage three or four small blondes, but eventually they gave up and went off to fish some rough ground.

For us, the bites started coming again. Phil and Tom had another one each. Phil's second was hooked in the nose as he was trotting his weight back, the lucky sod. Tom had a small tope and then Phil had another blonde, leaving RWSAC virgin Tim Ames, near virgin, Marc Dyne, and me, with nothing except bitterness to fall back on. Then, joy of joys, Marc had a ray, his first, followed by Tim, also his first. This left only me fishless. There was then much talk of leaving the spot, and trying something else. For some reason everyone else found this hilariously funny, but I struggled on bravely, and just as the jibes were beginning to get a little tedious, I finally hooked a decent fish of around 16lb.

The A Team were by this time fishing on the Three Mile Ground for huss, bream and anything else. The tide was screaming through, which made fishing quite difficult for our cack-handed heroes. End gear was trotted back, but the only thing caught was the bottom, leading to another good day in the Weymouth Angling Centre as a small container-lorry's worth of tackle ended up distributed on the sea bed.

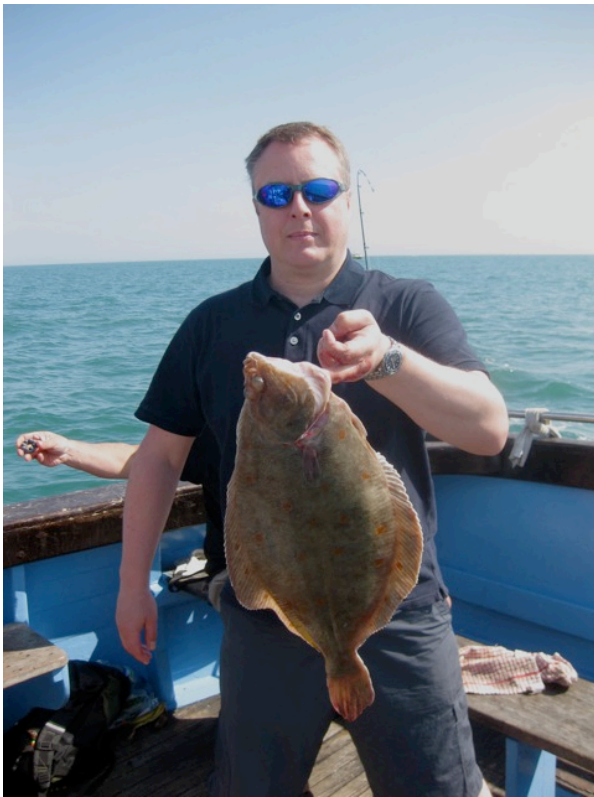
After period of nothing much, a few huss started to show to those anglers who managed to hang on to their end gear long enough. Then the odd small thornback was caught, and so, for the rest of the afternoon, huss, rays and the occasional bream provided reasonable sport.

The A Team may have had thin gruel, but the B Team were enjoying rich stew on the mussel beds. After a few small bream and pouting, Phil landed a lovely three-pound plaice in good condition. Actually, it may have been Tom who caught it, but they're quite hard to tell apart, and you certainly wouldn't want to put your cock in either of them. Shortly afterwards, our newest member, Tim, landed a beautiful, fat 4lb 5oz fish, which broke Stevie's old record by the odd ounce. Tim has a history of this kind of thing, despite not being a vastly experienced sea angler. On his first trip out of Weymouth (with another crew) he had a 17lb turbot on the Shambles and another double off Alderney, and then, on his next trip he had a 20lb cod. As he says, "A little incompetence goes a long way". That could be our club motto come to think of it, along with "A sorry bunch of wankers - and that's just Stevie".

With that fish, the unholy trinity of records by Adam, Ben and Stevie had been broken in one day, sparking high fives and celebrations that lasted long into the night. These celebrations started in the Ghurka where this year's champion "All-you-can-eater" came in the surprising and camouflaged form of Tony Holt. This svelte sophisticate packed away 12 separate courses and had the staff running around locking doors

and turning off lights whenever he was spotted walking past for the remainder of the trip.

The next day was also calm and sunny, and both crews set off full of good cheer and enthusiasm, with the obvious exception of Steve. The A Team set off to fish the rough ground off the back of the race. After the previous day, Ken was so relieved to have real anglers on his boat who didn't greet every fish, cup of tea, change of tackle or any object mentioned in passing with "Don't put your cock in it!", that he spent all day smiling and making cups of tea. Our brave boys didn't want to show what quality anglers they were too early, so refrained from catching much to start with.



Tim shows off his splendid record 4lb 5oz plaice.

The B Team had no such qualms, and after emptying the Shambles of sandeels, made their way to the mussel beds to fish for bream. To start we caught lots of lovely pouting, until Richard finally stopped texting his teenage friends, picked up a rod and showed us what to do. What he does is this...

- 1) Fish with a lead that is slightly too light for the tide.
- 2) Let it drift off the bottom.
- 3) Wait for bites.

- 4) If none are forthcoming after a minute or two, drop the lead back in the tide and down to the bottom again and repeat.

It really worked, and once we got the hang of it, we stopped catching pout and started catching bream. Sometimes it's almost like he knows what he's doing, but don't ever tell him I said so.

After some excellent bream fishing, the bigger fish moved in, and we started catching conger and huss. Nick had the biggest eel of around 25lb, which was then the Really Eely contender, but I had the prettiest fish with a lovely spotty huss of around 6lb.

The A Team finally moved up a gear, and they too started catching bream. Adam showed the way with the first one, and then Stevie joined in, with Scoop catching a very nice three and a half pounder. But just as the bites started to come at a decent rate, some bastard (the finger of blame points strongly to Chris) hooked a tiny strap, and from then on, most of the crew went into a strap catching frenzy, particularly Tony, who had not had the pleasure of catching conger before. All this Tony-inspired commotion, meant that the poor ickle bream were scared off, leaving Adam, who does not get out of bed for conger of less than 50lb, and won't go to bed with an eel of less than 70lb, muttering darkly in a corner and failing to catch any more of the silver battlers.

When they'd had enough of teasing these small eels, it was time for another go at the Shambles where this time, the villain of the previous piece, Chris, redeemed himself with a nice turbot. Not content with that triumph, when the crew moved on to the mussels beds, he repeated the trick, catching a nice plaice to go with it, thereby crowning himself flatfish champion for the trip.

We of the B Team had had our fill of rough ground fish by now and moved on to drift for bass with live sandeel off the back of the Shambles. I had the first, which turned out to be a mackerel, to general delight. But thereafter, we all got stuck into a fish or two of around the 2-3lb mark, with any smaller ones being returned.

There was just time for a traditional final drift on the Shambles of turbot. This featured the unusual novelty of us actually catching something. Nick it was who landed a nice five-pounder. The only problem was that no matter how I tried, I could not convince him what awful eating they make, so I fear he took it home and ate it himself. Don't say I didn't warn you...

Our final evening began, as is traditional, in the Weymouth Balti House, which we had had to book all by ourselves, as Andy Selby was on holiday and was therefore unable to do everything for us. From there we repaired to the Boot, a lovely old-fashioned boozer over the river, where

we lolled around outside smoking and making off-colour remarks. I say "we" but really I mean Adam, who had clearly had far too many Pro Plus.

The first indication that something was amiss came when he started relating some utterly incoherent narrative about cows having calving problems and which culminated with some advice that the innocent passers-by who heard it must have wished they hadn't. Things took a turn for the worse when he then made a few general enquiries of the poor barmaid concerning her opinion of grandmothers, the effect of the aging process on bodily hair, and patterns of hair colouration patterns for the melanin-deficient.

At this point we made a tactical withdrawal and went to enjoy the bright lights of central Weymouth. It was around midnight, so only early evening for those parts. We took a gentle stroll up the High Street, but about half way up decided enough was enough, and most of the party fled in terror. Tom and I are made of sterner stuff however, and we hung around to enjoy the show, and what a show it was. Within five minutes we had seen a large number of things we wouldn't put our cocks in, and some we probably would, had we not been married, drunk, charmless idiots. On top of that there were several fights, some bouncer-led ejections and the rather violent arrest of a gentle looking girl, whom the police periodically brought back out of the Black Maria in handcuffs so they could let her flail and kick out at them, before beating her and bundling her back into the van.

Once we'd had our fill of such fun, which is thoroughly recommended by the way, especially if you're not too drunk to make your phone video work, we headed back to the Sailor's where it all went a bit blurry and the next thing we knew it was morning and everything was a bit too loud and bright.

Conger fishing at last!

It took a while to recover from the summer trip, so we didn't get out again until late September. A full crew took advantage of some light winds to head about 20 miles South East after conger eels. We were joined for the day by a new member, Mark Anderson, a Zimbabwean fly fishing fanatic and friend of Two Dogs, though we don't hold that against him. It turned out he was more than able to hold his own in the filthy banter stakes, and could prove to be a very useful and unpleasant addition to our happy family.

We anchored up at a wreck just after high tide to fish the ebb all day, which is what Dave always prefers. He reckoned the wreck held cod as well as eels, which we all thought was just a ploy to keep Two Dogs from complaining. We didn't have

to wait too long for the eels to start feeding, and within fifteen minutes we'd had several fish to around 45lb.

Dave was kept busy unhooking fish and ignoring our polite requests for tea until eventually the clamour for refreshment grew so great that he said "No-one is getting any tea until you catch a 60-pounder." At that moment Colin leant into a fish and after a few moments gasping like a schoolgirl was moved to say "Here's one." We all waited eagerly to mock him as he brought up a 15lb strap, but we were disappointed to see a very respectable fish come to the surface. Dave netted it, and having managed to weigh it without letting it slip out of the scuppers, pronounced it to be a superb 65lb, which is Colin's largest and comes in at number 5 on the all-time Really Wrecked Eels list.

Mark also had his first ever eel, and apparently enjoyed the experience until he remembered that he had a terribly bad back and that he was actually in agony. Again, it's just a shame we're too old to work our camera phones cos it was excellent to watch.

As the tide slackened, Stevie picked up a nice double figure cod and then things went ominously quiet. Two Dogs was fishing for bream, not being much of a one for eels, or hard work, and was doing excellent work among the many pout of the wreck when he snagged something larger. We, being naturally supportive, were hopeful it might be a middling eel, and were therefore very saddened to see a large cod of well over 15lb. We were further disappointed when he repeated the feat with his small hooks and fine line a few minutes later.

As the tide picked up, Adam hooked something which fought back hard and which turned out to be a pollack in low double figures. I think this is the only time we've ever had one of these on a bait at anchor, so well done to Adam, your bait was clearly miles off the bottom. To quote Tim Ames, "A little incompetence goes a long way".

We had a few more eels, bringing our tally to about 25 for the day, with the smallest no less than 35lb, with a few cod and the pollack thrown in for fun. A nice day at sea.

Cod aplenty

Monday October 18th was the first inshore cod trip of the year. It was scheduled as the last eel trip, but it was a bit sloppy so we stayed inshore. Being the first coddling trip, on the short steam out to Seaford Head, the cockpit was a frenzy of fancy rig tying, with beads, spoons, pennell rigs and wishbones flying back and forth like it was Christmas in Andy Selby's tackle box. The frenzy

extended all over the boat, but stopped at the perimeter of Jonathan Barrett. He was in a frenzy of rig tying too, in that he had some LINE and on the end of it he put on a HOOK using a KNOT. This was sophisticated stuff from the Sussex-based tangler supreme.

Then with the rig tying complete, the crew set about preparing, trimming and primping their baits for maximum appeal. Hooks were filled with black lug, tipped with delicate fronds of squid, strips of cuttle bound with gossamer elastic like Hawaiian skirts round needle sharp Japanese hooks, making absolutely certain the hook point was free to maximise the chance of hooking that elusive, shy-biting cod. Not so Jonathan. He hewed a hunk of something from a bigger bit of stuff, and stuck it on a hook. If the hook point was masked, he cared not, it was bait, not a gourmet meal.

Then it was time to drop the baits over the side and wait for the cod to come and get it. And who do you think landed the first fish? And the second? And the third? Yep, you got it. Step forward our hero, cod-catcher extraordinaire, Jonathan "Fuck it, that'll do" Barrett.

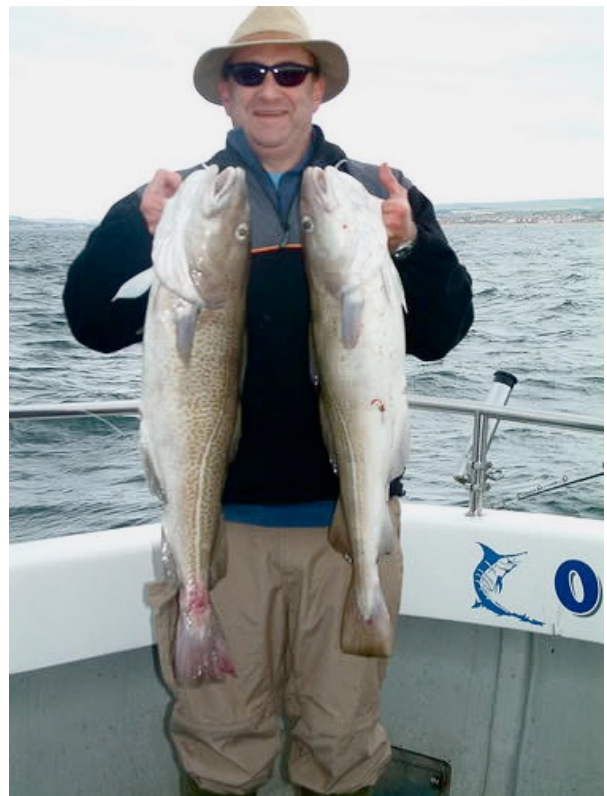


The cod catcher's cod catcher

Once he'd shown everyone how it was done, the rest of the crew settled down to emulate his feats and cod started to fill the fish boxes. I say "everyone" but there was one notable angler who remained steadfast in his fishlessness. Step forward Adam Frost. Adam is widely known for the sweet-natured way in which he takes a blank, especially when everyone else is catching, so the atmosphere aboard was not at all like seven people walking on eggshells and trying to look

desperately disappointed whenever they landed a fish.

There were, therefore, many crossed fingers when Frostie finally hooked a cod, and breath was held until the cod in question was nestling at the bottom of Dave's net, at which point the collective exhaling could be heard in Arundel. The mood lightened, and the temperature on board having risen by several degrees, the fish and jolly repartee flowed until the ebb tide disappeared and with it, the fish. In the end, the final tally was 14 cod to low double figures, so another good day inshore.



The less said about this pic, the better.

More cod, or maybe not...

After the previous trip, we took to the seas on Monday 1st November for another inshore cod-hunting trip in good spirits. But the fishing in many ways failed to live up to our high expectations, though in other ways, the day was excellent.

We started inshore close to Seaford Head, but this time failed to contact much in the way of anything, so after an hour or so, Dave moved us another couple of miles offshore into deeper water. This ground turned out to be heaving with whiting, including the odd decent fish of a pound and a half for anglers using small baits (me). For everyone else, the results were similar to the previous location, apart from Adam, who

managed a splendid battling dog whelk of 2oz, which added to our growing list of non-fish records.

Dave then took the radical step of moving West until we were fishing about four miles off Rodean, which motivated Adam to get his binoculars out, scouring the shoreline for signs of a girl's lacrosse match he could watch. With nothing doing there either, we moved further inshore, and it was here the action really kicked off, though sadly not in the form of a 6th form beach volleyball competition. After a long period of intense inactivity, Colin latched into a monster fish, which, when finally boated, was revealed to be a dab of over half a pound. The champagne corks were popping at that, I can tell you! Then, when he landed another one, the crew went into dab-catching overdrive. Kim and Clive in particular delighted in digging out their speciality dab rigs, baiting them with slivers of black lug and enthusiastically awaiting the tiny rattling that indicated another miniscule fish on the hook.

Both did show great expertise in dab catching (please note the absence of the obvious pun), and had at least three apiece, topped by a monster for Clive, which was just half an ounce shy of Stevie's finest angling achievement (despite repeated weighings) at eleven and a half ounces. But Clive's greatest moment came later, when he solitairied the club's first goby record with a fish later identified by the scientists back at Really Wrecked HQ as a black goby, which weighed in at one and a half ounces, a mere 12dm below the national best.

Flatfish fantasy

We had booked two trips with Richard for the autumn, one to target blondes, and one to go for turbot and sharks. But as one was cancelled, this trip on the 4th of October was a bit of a scramble to fit everything in. To start with we set off for the mussel beds to look for a bream or two.

The fish seemed reluctant feed for a while, but once the tide began to drop, the bites started to come. Most rigs seemed to work, both legers and paternosters, and after a while it wasn't even necessary to fish up off the bottom, as we had been on the summer trip. The fish were of a good stamp – the largest were touching three and a half pounds – and an excellent scrap they put up too.

One of the other boats fishing the same ground had several bream taken by a shark, so I set up my gear in expectation, but with the usual lack of end product. One of these years though...

Eventually the tide dropped away completely, and the bites dried up. We were then left with a dilemma. There would be tide enough to fish the Kidney Bank for blondes or the Shambles for

flatfish, or we could wait it out on the mussel beds until the tide returned. In the end, we did the foolish thing and opted for turbot and brill on the Shambles.

To start with nothing happened, which is par for the course. But then, the third drift, Richard tired of our constant complaining and set up a rod himself. He dropped it down and began to fish with the rest of us. To our almighty surprise, within two minutes, his rod bent double into a decent fish. He laughed triumphantly, announcing, "I reckon this is a double, Ben." Well he was laughing on the other side of his face when his "double" turned out to be a pathetic nine-and-a-half-pounder.

He baited up and dropped back over the side for the remainder of the drift, and this time had to wait all of five minutes before latching into a fish – this one a brill of around five pounds. Having shown us how to do, he smugly cast his rod aside, and said he'd leave the rest of the fish to us.



Clive, with one of many brill and turbot on this day of days.

Clive, who has been doing a bit of turbot and brill fishing in his own boat this year, had been observing Richard with a keen eye, unlike the rest of us, who had merely been working out whether we could push him overboard and make it look like an accident. He noticed that Richard had NOT just been waiting for the rod to double over under

the weight of a fish as per item number 4 on the Weymouth summer list ("If you think you've got a bite, you haven't"). Instead he had been reacting to anything that might have been a bite by feeding a yard or two of line.

Being no mug himself, Clive gave this a go, and was rewarded with a turbot of around three pounds. This was then followed by a brill, and by this point even the most dim-witted of us (Adam and I) were getting the point. If you think you've got a bite, you might have. Over the next couple of hours, we had another seven flatfish, taking our total for the day to 11, which almost trebles our best day's turboty-brill catch.

It's impossible to know whether it was just a day when the flatfish were on the Shambles and so were we, or whether our new, more careful approach to bites paid dividends, but one thing seems certain, it didn't do us any harm. I'll be paying those sandbank rod shakes a lot more attention in future.

Unbelievable in Weymouth

At last! For only the second time ever, the god of fishing smiled down on our ballan wrasse fishing enterprise and smoothed the seas enough for us to get out. However, most of those hardy club members who had signed up for the trip had assumed it would be cancelled and had arranged to do other things – washing their hair, a spot of gardening, a light luncheon with some chums – really essential stuff.

This left a huge crew consisting of me, Clive and Stevie to go on this trip, with Richard agreeing reluctantly to fish, to make up our quorum. We were also lucky to be joined by John, a bloke who turns up at the Weymouth dockside on the off chance there will be a space on a boat which he can fill. We were just about able to squeeze him in, and I suspect he's fairly glad we did.

The weather had been pretty snotty over the previous week, so the crabbers hadn't been able to get out much. This meant Richard was unable to get any hardback crabs for the trip. But he was able to secure a large bucket of hermits, which were a useful substitute.

With crabs at the ready, we set off for Portland Bill and the huge wrasse. John had never been wrassing (he wanted to go whiting fishing), but was pleasantly surprised by the speed with which we were among the fish, how many there were and how hard they fought.

We didn't have long to wait for bites, sure enough. Within a couple of minutes we'd had five or six fish. Or rather, everyone except me had had a fish or two. Normally not catching for a few minutes is no big deal, but on this trip it meant

something was seriously wrong. I noticed Clive was binding his hermits to the hook with elastic, so I followed suit, and on the next drop down, a bite turned into a fish of around three pounds.

Most of the fish were in the 2-3lb range, which Richard thought was on the small side, though they did put up a decent scrap. There was also the occasional four pounder to keep us interested. Richard showed us the way to better things, by landing a lovely five pounder, which really got us all going. We were also losing some tackle in the very snaggy bottom, but we were catching so well that it hardly seemed to matter.

The variety of colours was quite amazing, with Richard's big fish being one of the duller specimens in a mottled brown, but some were red, some yellowish, some had white spots and some had dark brown.

As we continued with our excellent sport, Clive pointed out that the end cap on my Abu 10,000C was on the deck, along with the little nuggety thing (that's the technical term) from inside which applies the pressure to the spindle. I was all for leaving it to rot, as it had shown such disloyalty in falling off my reel, but Clive helpfully pointed out it wasn't far from the scupper and that it might be inconvenient if it were to fall overboard, so to shut him up I bent over to retrieve the items.

It was at this point that I got a good bite. Not wishing to waste a second, I lifted into the fish and held the rod up to try and stop it getting into the bottom. With the fish apparently secured, I bent over again to pick up the pieces of my reel. The fish was still there when I straightened up and luckily the reel worked fine without the loose bits, so I was able to wind it a few turns up off the bottom, against some spirited attempts to dive into the rocks.

I wasted a few moments screwing the end cap back on, and then gave my full attention to the fish, which seemed a decent enough specimen. It wasn't until it broke the surface that we realised it was a bit better than that. Straight away it was clear that it was bigger than anything we'd had so far. Richard was so slow with the net, that eventually I risked everything and hand-lined it over the side, where it was clear it was a proper fish. It pulled the scales down to 6lb 10oz, making it only the fourth fish we've had on a club trip over 70% of the national record. It was also probably the prettiest fish of the day, with lovely red flanks and creamy white spots.

We continued to catch wrasse, but the bites slowed up and eventually we ran out of hermit crab bait, so the time had come to do something else. We had the option of blonde rays, but Richard said some very big bass had been taken in the race the day before, so we decided to have a look there first. We set up Portland rigs with

shads or sidewinders as bait, and dropped down into the snaggy, turbulent water.



Ben's brilliant ballan – all 6lb 10oz of her, er him?

I can't remember who had the first fish, but I do remember there were quite a few of them, though John had to wait quite a while for his first, which he did stoically and without complaint, something certain club members would do well to emulate. Most of the fish were in the 3-5lb bracket, and we'd probably had 15 within an hour, which is excellent fishing in anyone's book. We were also losing a LOT of tackle. The race is very snaggy and in the end, I think we probably consigned about 35 rigs to the sea bed between us, but the fishing was so good, that even losing three rigs on the trot, and having to tie on a new mono leader each time, didn't dent our enthusiasm.

After about an hour, Clive latched into a better fish, which weighed in at over 7lb. An experienced bass angler and committed member of BASS, Clive put this and most of his other fish back. He was rewarded moments later by another monster, this one a record-equalling 8lb 12oz fish. This was fishing that was up there with the best we'd experienced.

Stevie was next into a good fish, and this one fought like a demon. In fact when he first hooked it, his heart sank as he thought he'd snagged the bottom yet again, and it was only when the fish took off that he realised it was no snag. After a battle of at least five minutes, with Stevie refusing to predict the weight of the fish, for fear of "jinxing" it, it was finally in the net, and we could all admire it. It weighed a fantastic 9lb 8oz and was a

second superb record on what was a red letter day.

The fishing wasn't over though, and after a couple more bass in the race, we moved off the back of the Shambles, where some sea birds were working a shoal of something on the surface. Our drift took us right through the action, and for ten minutes we were hauling in small bass after small bass of around 2lb. We then chased the birds around a bit, and although we never quite managed to hit the same heights, we had still managed to add about another 30 fish to our tally, which stood at well over 70 bass and the same number of wrasse for the day between four of us, with Richard chipping in with the odd fish too. All in all, another one of our very best days fishing, and one I hope we manage to repeat with more of you in years to come.



Steve holds aloft a magnificent 9lb 8oz bass, a fitting fish to end the newsletter.

Goodbye to the old year

The last trip of the year on the 13th of December was something of a disappointment after that. It was another inshore cod fishing trip, but the cod wouldn't play ball, despite numerous moves. Those who fished small baits were rewarded with whiting, some of a decent size at around a pound, but in the end, it was a day of scratching for fish, rather than hauling them in.

All in all, it was another good year, with many highlights and some excellent trips. Our catches do seem to have picked up over the past three or

four years, so either we're doing something right, or the fish are becoming stupider. I think we all know which one of those is more likely. The only thing we've missed out on in recent years is sustained decent conger fishing, as for two years the weather over the summer has been pretty poor. Better luck next year, eh?

Club notices

There are a few club notices this year, mostly good, with the odd nag, so please read them ALL, as they affect you.

With the dinner only a couple of weeks away, you MUST return your trophies to Adam ASAP. His address is:
59c High Street
Lewes,
Sussex BN7 1XE

Adam would also like you to update the email address you have for him to a.frost@ukipme.com - effective immediately. He's also like you to leave messages for him on his home phone number 01273 478886, NOT on his mobile, as he never listens to those. Could you also leave your name? He can't tell who you are when you say "It's me" and then leave lots of dates for him to book. Indeed, it's better to send your booking by email so he has a record of them.

And this brings me to the best bit of club news. I have finally got round to revamping the club web site at www.reallywrecked.com, so it finally has some new content and some new pictures. There also a forum you can post to, as long as you sign up for the site. But not only that, it's on an exciting new platform which means that if you sign up, I can give you access to the galleries so you can upload your own images, without having to wait five years for me to do it for you. You can also add notices, which are displayed on the homepage for other club members to read. If you really get into it, you can even create your own area of the site, and add pages, galleries, news stories etc of your own.

That's not all, club dates are also listed on the site, along with those members who have booked up on them, so never again will you not know whether you are booked on a trip or not. I'm going to make this open so members can actually book up on here too, though this isn't in place yet. There are also the latest club records, information about the club, all the club newsletters ever published for you to download and more. To sign up, just send me an email to ben@reallywrecked.com and I'll create an account for you. It's easy to contribute and it wouldn't be hard to make this a really cracking web site, if we all chip in.

There's more good news on the web front too. I have also finally managed to build the discount mechanism for www.weymouthangling.com, and Andy is so pleased, he's given us a club discount of 10%. You can claim this on all and any purchases made through the site, just by typing the code RWSAC-111 into the checkout page in the appropriate box. Give it a go.

For those of you who like your dates in the newsletter, they're listed below. This is the complete confirmed list. There are a couple of changes from the list Dave circulated, so please use this one, or the one on the web site, and book now to ensure disappointment.

Friday 21st January inshore cod or offshore pollack

Monday 7th February offshore pollack

Monday 14th March offshore pollack

Friday 15th April Ken, plaice, Weymouth

Friday 29th April Wrecking, cod and conger

Monday 30th May Wrecking, cod and conger

Monday 13th June Wrecking, cod and conger

Fri/Sat 8th/9th July Summer trip, Weymouth

Monday 25th July Wrecking, cod and conger

Monday 22nd August Wrecking, cod, bream and conger

Monday 12th September Wrecking, cod, bream and conger

Monday 26th September Richard, blondes and bream, Weymouth

Monday 17th October Wrecking, cod, bream and conger

Monday 24th October Richard, bream, turbot and sharks

Monday 14th November inshore cod

Monday 21st November Richard big ballans and bass, Weymouth

Monday 5th December inshore cod

I have a number of club T-shirts for 2010 left over. If you ordered one and have not received it please send me an abusive email (ben@reallywrecked.com) and I will sort it out for you. If you would like one, let me know your size and send £10 to me by cheque (payable to the Really Wrecked SAC) or via BACS to the bank (sort code 832002, account number 00245798), and I'll stick one in the post. They're a delightful darkish grey and commemorate the strange political arrangement we have in this country.

One last and very important thing... Last year we had to cancel a perfectly good fishing trip because there were numerous cancellations and in the end, only two of us could make it, which ended up costing me £100. This is money I paid to Dave as a deposit many years ago, so it's neither here nor there, but we do need to send him a replacement deposit and we do need

people to be aware that if they book up, they are committing themselves to paying for the trip if they have to cancel and we can't fill the place. With the difficulties in filling the summer trip this year, it has highlighted issues around running the club and its finances. So with this in mind, we've decided to have a general meeting where we can discuss anything and everything to do with the club, including who does what, who we fish with, and how many trips we book in a year. This is going to take place at 2pm on the Saturday of the club dinner (22nd of January) at a venue to be arranged, depending on numbers. So if you are interested in getting involved or have an opinion, let us know in advance and come along.

See you all at the dinner, I hope, and then out on the briny where you can admire my lovely new flotation suit.

Cheers,
Ben



Kim + hat = we have a winner!



Phil does unspeakable things to a vast Florida tarpon. Filthy beast.



Ian wins trophies and promotes our club. Good man.