

Really Wrecked SAC newsletter

Number 45, January 2015



Happy New Year to all you merry fisherfolk, and I suppose I could extend a grudging season's greetings to the rest of you miserable fuckers too. Obviously the "rest" in this case includes 100% of the club membership, and the first bit is more or less redundant, but you never know, an actual fisherman or fisherwoman might read this by accident. If you believe this refers to you, then please do not read on. What follows includes almost nothing of any interest to an actual angler, being as it is an account of the activities of the Really Wrecked Sea Angling Club in the last several months or so. For the avoidance of any doubt, the word "almost" at the beginning of the previous sentence is entirely redundant, and has no meaning beyond perhaps "absolutely".

I'd also like to issue an apology at this juncture. Contrary to received wisdom, which states that I am a self-satisfied narcissist who is incapable of expressing regret or saying sorry, I am constantly apologising for stuff, for the foul language I employ in newsletters, for my total incompetence with a fishing rod, my inability to organise things properly, or at all, the lateness of every newsletter I actually bother to send and so on and on. I'm always at it. The difference here is that I actually mean it and might even intend to try to improve in this regard in future. So what I'm sorry for is the following. I've let things drift a bit with regards to my fishing in the past couple of years. There have been a few relatively sound reasons for this which I won't bother you with, but this year, I honestly intend to get out fishing more than twice (which is all I managed last year), and for that reason, I fully expect most of the trips to remain unfilled as people conveniently find reasons not to join me at sea.

Traditional unpleasant intro done, we move on to the actual year we have just enjoyed. Let's not beat about the bush, we've had good years and we've had less good years and we've had Colin Pearce years. This was one of the latter. Obviously Colin, when reading this, will think, "Aha! It must have been an excellent year, perhaps I missed a couple of really good trips." No, Colin, everyone else uses your name as a handy replacement for various colourful and disparaging Anglo-Saxon terms for faecal matter and foolish people. If Jonathan's carer is reading

this out to him, I'd better explain a little further, yes, I mean it was a bad year, Jonathan.

It's really not worth dwelling on the actual fishing trips, as I know you only read this for the abuse, but the large and busy Really Wrecked legal team have told me that to qualify for the term "Newsletter" and hence provide a flimsy pretext for mounting a libel defence against the group action from club members which seems to follow inevitably from each new release of this stream of filthy lies and foul-mouthed mockery, it does have to include some actual news, or at least some fish-related falsehoods.

Bearing that in mind, I'll shortly bring the vast resources of the giant brains behind the club to bear on recalling and recounting the events of our various fishing trips this last summer and autumn in forensic detail, but before I do that, I'd like to give you some more or less accurate information with fishing dates and stuff in it.

Club Dinner

Yes, it's that time of year again; the time of year when you break with your self-enforced abstinence for January and come to the annual dinner to watch Beef get legless and turn in one of his now semi-mythical performances. Other things will also happen, you'll get good food, drink beer and/or wine, hear me prattle on about stuff and see our absolutely grotesquely vast array of trophies handed out to various unworthy recipients, but you'll barely remember any of that once Beef gets started. We ought to pay him. We won't, but we definitely ought to. I ought to say at this juncture that having got your hopes up, Beef won't actually be with us this year, as he is in Australia, and they won't give him any travel papers on the grounds that he may give people a bad impression of Australians.

Anyway, the important things to remember are the dinner is taking place on Saturday the 31st of January 2015 in the Dorset Arms, at 7.30 for 8. The cost will be £20 for the food, plus whatever you drink plus your £10 subs if you think you qualify as a fishing member. Book it in with your spouse now. Remember the more of you turn up, the less ghastly the whole thing is, as there's less Adam to share round, proportionally. The other thing to remember is that if you have any trophies, you need to get them back to Adam ASAP so we

can scratch the name of this year's winner on it with a rusty nail. The other other thing to kind of remember is that the dress code is whatever you can be bothered to wear, but that if you own a DJ, we'd like to see you in it, even if it is as filthy as the language in a typical fucking newsletter.

You also need to make your selections from the menu ASAP too. Let Adam know **now** before you see sense.

Starter

A - Grilled goats cheese salad on beetroot 'carpaccio' pickled vegetables with olive tapenade or

B - Ham hock and pea risotto, pea cream and truffle oil or

C - Cream of asparagus soup with truffle foam, herb oil and asparagus tips

Main

D - Rubbed and rolled saddle of lamb stuffed with black pudding, with buttered spring onion mashed potatoes, Salsa Verdi, red wine jus and seasonal vegetables or

E - Char-grilled, corn fed chicken supreme with gratin dauphinoise, wild mushrooms and a Madeira jus and seasonal vegetables or

F - Wild mushroom risotto with salsify and Jerusalem artichoke, truffle pieces, truffle oil, roquette and shaved parmesan

Dessert

G - Caramelised lemon tart with raspberry coulis or

H - Sticky toffee pudding with toffee sauce, clotted cream and toasted nuts or

I - Selection of local cheeses, with home-made chutney, quince jelly and biscuits

Club dates

Now look, this is important. If you want to fish this year, look at the dates below, select the ones you'd like to go on and let Adam or me know by emailing one or both on adam.frost@ukipme.com or ben@eveling.com. You can select as many or as few as you like, and Adam and I will try to ensure everyone gets as much as possible of what they ask for. If you ask to go on just a few trips, you'll probably get on all or most of them. If you ask to go on every trip, you're likely to miss out on a few, but overall you will get to go on most and certainly more than someone who asks to go on fewer than you. We do it like this to ensure that everyone who wants to gets to go on as many

trips as possible and we get a mix of crews. For that reason, please let us have your selections within a week to ensure that we can sort this out and let you all know in good time. All trips are from Newhaven unless otherwise noted. *The only variations from this are the trip on the 30th, which is **soon**, so we'll do that on a first come, first served basis, and the summer Weymouth trip where until you pay your dosh, you're not properly booked anyway.*

- Friday 30th January (pollack or cod)
- Monday 9th February (pollack)
- Monday 9th March (pollack)
- Monday 13th April (pollack and cod)
- Friday 15th May (cod and conger)
- Monday 8th June (conger and cod)
- Friday 27th July (conger and cod)
- Monday 10th August (conger, cod and bream)
- Friday August 21st-Saturday 22nd Weymouth Summer trip (everything is possible)
- Monday 7th September (conger and bream)
- Monday 5th October Weymouth (bream, rays, plaice)
- Monday 19th October (conger and bream)
- Friday 20th November (cod and whiting)
- Friday 27th November Weymouth (wrasse)
- Monday 7th December (cod and whiting)

Trip reports

Weymouth Summer Trip, 18th and 19th July

Strictly speaking this trip should actually be counted as starting on the 10th of July, as that was the day that Smed phoned me just after lunch to demand that I tell him the address of the new B&B we were staying at, as he wanted to leave early, and really, why the hell hadn't I already emailed all the details out this close to the off? I was somewhat puzzled by the urgent, not to say downright antsy, tone employed by the generally placid Smed, but didn't have to ponder this for very long as he proceeded to inform me that his van was packed and he was ready to go and would I just bloody give him the information required? I asked how early he intended to be, to which he replied, early enough to settle in and maybe have a crafty pint. I pointed out that 7 days is quite a long time to be nursing a single pint, at which point Smed actually checked his diary and found that he'd almost made a catastrophic error. Next year I'll just play along. You have been warned.

When the actual Thursday in question finally deigned to arrive, Kim very kindly offered to give me a lift down to Weymouth, as he often does. Those of you who know Kim may be justifiably surprised and puzzled by this most out of character display of apparent generosity from the

one man who can make his brother Clive seem kind-hearted, altruistic and even interesting by comparison. I too have considered this conundrum for many a long hour in the dark and lonely watches of the night, and I now believe I understand it. I suspect that Kim, not being as unintelligent as he appears to the casual observer, fully understands quite how appalling a human being he is, and that a long car journey with only his own miserable company is too much for him to bear, forced as he would be to consider his character defects in the unrelenting and harsh spotlight of his own mind. Therefore he would much rather enjoy some cheery and intelligent chat with a bright and breezy angler pal who, in addition to taking his mind off his shortcomings, can also give many a useful fishing hint to help him to slightly more success on the boat. Obviously Kim's account of the whys and wherefores of the lifts down might be somewhat different, but I think we all know whose account to trust, don't we?

This year we stayed at the B+B Weymouth, a fine establishment run by Emma Carter, who has the great misfortune to be married to our new(ish) regular Weymouth skipper, Clem. I've no idea whether she's being punished for some hideous misdemeanour in a past life, or whether Clem practices some kind of dark and twisted mind control, as she seemed perfectly normal, and nice even. Maybe Clem's different when he's at home. Anyway, it's a lovely place, clean and shiny and attractively done up in a contemporary style. The location does mean it's quite hard to find somewhere to pull over to drop stuff off, and the parking is a five minute walk away, but it's right by the beach, which turned out to be an advantage later in the trip, and I would definitely recommend it.

Okay, there was one other slight disadvantage in that the back of the establishment did look out on the a pub called *The Rock*, or *The Heavy Metal*, or *The Screamer* or something and which played appropriately loud rock music to its heavily tattooed and leathered clientele till well after midnight. However, I do have to point out to those of our members who noted this fact with slight displeasure, that this is Weymouth, and that this is absolutely the norm for pretty much any location, and considerably better than many, many, many of our evenings and nights at the Sailor's. Can I also just say to those same good folks the one word answer to sleep on every one of our overnight stays? Earplugs. They're cheap and essential.

So after a less than satisfactory night's sleep for some, we assembled at the boat for a 7:30am departure to catch the tope tide. Well, I say "we"... I was there on time, and another seven managed

to drift on to the boat in a more or less timely fashion. But where was Kim? The same question pertained some ten minutes later, and then lo and behold, five minutes after that, there was Kim, strolling up to the boat without a care in the world. Questioning him proved fruitless and all I can assume is that he hates fishing so much that he'll do anything to make the day as short as possible.

We headed out in a brisk South Westerly, which seemed deceptively gentle until we emerged from the lee of Portland Island, at which point Brooksie, who was still on deck bravely assembling the collection of old shit he calls fishing tackle, was soaked by a huge wave breaking over the bows of Wild Frontier, with the added bonus of filling his tackle box with salty water. Even those of us exhausted and jaded after a late night listening to heavy rock music managed to crack a smile at that.

A newish member had joined us for this trip, one Andy Barker. Oddly he was neither misshapen, hideously deformed nor, apparently, mentally deficient in any way. We were struggling to understand why he'd joined our club until he tackled up and not only managed to wrap his line around his rod between rings, but fished on with it like this, unable to understand why dropping down and retrieving was so difficult, until Clem's boat bitch, Luke, pointed it out to him. An excellent start from the lad, he'll fit in nicely.



Any ideas? No, them neither.

Scoop also made a bid to reprise the superb performance that led to the creation of the trophy that bears his name. Then, as you no doubt recall, and as he'll love me to death for reminding you, yet again, he forgot his rod butts on a trip down to Weymouth and was forced to turn back when half way there to retrieve them. This time he thought he'd brought his coarse gear rather than his sea fishing gear, which is stupid enough in itself, and a worthy contender for the cup, but then it turned

out he was just half blind and unable to tell his sea fishing gear from his coarse fishing gear and he'd actually brought the right stuff. In many ways, it was even better.

We quickly filled a fish box with mackerel close to the lighthouse on the corner of Portland Harbour and had the added bonus of seeing a sunfish amble by in the tide, with its big sickle-shaped dorsal flopping about out of the water. How cool is that? I had to step in to prevent Brooksie from attempting to foul-hook the poor thing in a feeble attempt to grab a club record. The man has no morals. But he does have an excellent collection of well-worn sex toys which he makes available via a specialist lending library.

We made it to the toping grounds with just about enough tide to fish, despite Kim's delaying tactics. Sadly, the tope hadn't made it there to join us, and instead we landed a magnificent collection of tiny, tiny, tiny conger. When I say tiny, I mean so small that even Adam managed to bring one to the side of the boat in less than twenty minutes and without huffing and puffing like Ivor the Engine. Yes. That small.

Then we did a bit of breaming and had some nice bream. I think everyone had a few, with an average size of around a pound and a half and one or two around three pounds. It was good fun. Then we voted to have a few drifts on the Shambles for the prolific turbot and brill that make such a nuisance of themselves when you're trying to catch proper fish such as pouting and doggies. Scoop was less than keen, even going so far as to suggest that in the 15 years he's been coming to Weymouth and drifting the Shambles, he'd never so much as seen a turbot or brill hooked and landed. It was therefore inevitable that the only suicidal juvenile turbot to hang itself that day should choose Scoop's hook to do it on. Given his inexperience with such fish, I offered to take it off his hands, telling him turbot flesh was an acquired taste, like conger, or dogshit, but sadly he didn't believe me and feasted on the delicious yumminess himself, the selfish pig!

Finally Clem inflicted some plaice fishing on us. As I'm sure you know, as avid devourers of these newsletters, I don't tend to do that well when we're plaice fishing. Certainly not as well as that jammy twat Frost, and for that reason alone I don't really like it. Actually for that reason alone I detest it, but what the hell, I just book and organise the trips at great personal cost to my health and happiness, why on earth should anyone do what I want?

Anyway, we drifted over some hideous tackle hungry mussel beds and of course we lost a fair bit of tackle but blow me sideways with a thrupenny whore (of either sex, I'm don't want to be accused of sexism here to go with all the other

charges of unpleasantness), who should catch the first plaice but that fucking brilliant plaice angler, me. I love plaicing, it's god's own sport. We had seven or eight in the end. Nothing massive, but I seem to remember I had two of them, so it was magnificent fishing. Scoop had one, which meant that he, of all the crew, was the only one to catch at least one of each target species. Now the quick-witted among you (i.e. none of you) will have spotted that according to that great fishing oracle (me), there were no tope taken, so how can it be true that Scoop caught all target species on the day? Well, that's what my notes recorded contemporaneously say, so how can they possibly be wrong? My theory is that either a) The fishing grounds we first fished were *conger* and tope grounds and Scoop's taking of a conger or two, of however small a size, therefore counts or b) Scoop did in fact catch a small tope, so minuscule that no-one really took note of it, apart from me in a roundabout way when I noted down that Scoop caught all target species that day. Now I could resolve this with a call or email to Scoop but he probably can't remember; I mean, he can't tell his coarse from his sea fishing gear, so what chance him knowing what species of fish he caught? Plus I just can't be bothered, so it'll have to remain one of those known unknowns. Unless you ask him at the dinner. If he comes. And can remember. So let's face it, we'll never know.

Day one ended, as it does, with a trip to the Gurkha, where, as always, several club members misread the "all you can eat buffet" sign as "Far more than you can eat buffet". This led to all the usual feelings of, "oh god, why do I feel like a huge overfilled bucket of lard (aka Robin Eyles, though more on this later)?" Will they never learn? No, they won't. This feeling was further enhanced when several members took advantage of a seasonal special offer for dessert. You see, the Gurkha was doing cut price rates for Christmas pudding. In July. Yummy. Definitely not a dodgy batch bought on a street corner which was past its use-by date. Oh no.

The sensible members of the crew, Kim, Scoop, Adam and myself went home to bed straight after, being upstanding members of society, with responsibilities and all that. The young, fancy-free members of the crew, led by the evergreen Steve Newham, went off in search of further refreshment to try and help the seventeenth serving of Asian Fusion Cuisine settle. They found it, and were all the perkier the following morning for it.

Second day

Day two saw us afloat on Ron Brown's boat *Amarylis*. This was our first time out with Ron, though all of us have been on his previous boat,

as he was the skipper of *Valerie Ann*, which used to tie up inside *Bonwey*, so we pretty much always had to cross her to get to Ken's boat. Clem had arranged for us to go out with Ron as, despite pretending to enjoy fishing with us, he was clearly much too busy and important to actually give us two days in a row on his boat this year, so we had a day with Ron and his crewman Keith instead. Ron, much like Ken, was a skipper who knew the inshore marks intimately, but unlike Ken, had eventually succumbed to the lure of a plastic boat and was thus able to whizz around from mark to mark in a way that *Bonwey*, for all its loveable features, was never able to do.

As with the day before, the plan was to start toping, but unlike the day before, we found mackerel hard to come by. Kim was particularly unhappy with how hard it was to find mackerel, which made it all the more amusing when Ron quietly asked to borrow Kim's rod for a second, did so, and proceeded to bring up two strings of mackerel one after another. Coincidence, of course. Eventually we scratched up enough mackerel to have a go for the tope, so we headed off to the rough ground where Ron said they'd be.

On the way there, Brooksie was being a bit of a doom-monger, announcing that the lack of mackerel was a harbinger of the poor day ahead. I laughed maniacally to prove him wrong, and to demonstrate that life and fishing could be fun. Brooksie is nothing if not mercurial and quick as a flash, his mood changed and he began chortling along, then laughing and then finally giving it his maniacal best too. Chris Grant, observing this, came to join us, and soon he was also laughing fit to burst. The rest of the crew remained po-faced, but we enjoyed it. Despite all this maniacal hilarity, I still failed to get Brooksie to pronounce the word correctly. He insisted it was pronounced Main-ee-ack-ul, with the emphasis on "main" i.e. like maniac with "al" stuck on the end. Clearly we all know it is pronounced Man-eye-i-cal with the emphasis on "eye". As pronunciation (note, not pro-nunciation), is very important, along with diction, I hope this lesson has been absorbed, digested and understood.

When we arrived at the tope grounds, Ron set the anchor and we set to toping. Big mackerel baits – flappers, and fillets mainly, though there were also squid and mackerel cocktails – with big leads, went down, and we were ready. The weather was better than the previous day, with less wind and swell, but the skies were ominous, with dark grey clouds, and flashes of lightning on the horizon. Despite this, it was quite warm and several of the crew were taking the opportunity to air a quite amazing and superb array of club T-shirts, old and new. What a gaily-coloured sight we must have made for any other passing boats.

Within minutes, we started to get bites from conger once more, but unlike the day before, these were decent reef eels, of between 20lb and almost 40lb. The tide slowly began to pick up, and the weather closed in. The more astute among us noticed this and donned anoraks or other wet weather gear. That left Brooksie nursing a conger bite in his shorts and T-shirt. Eventually he tired of giving line and wound down into the beast, with success, and battle commenced. As did the rain. And this was no light summer shower. This was the other kind of summer rain, the torrential stuff. The rest of us stood around dressed for wet weather, marvelling at Phil's resilience in carrying on with the battle while becoming increasingly bedraggled. His mouth was working, but assumed he was just encouraging himself under his breath to beat the leviathan. Once he'd defeated the eel, a nice 30-pounder, it turned out he'd been asking for someone to get his wet-weather gear from the cabin, but we were all much too busy laughing. Sorry, I mean were all unable to hear what he was saying over the tremendous drumming of the rain and hail on the deck. I'd like to thank Kim and his journal for that joke, which is an accurate summary of events. Credit where it is due.

Smed did well on this patch of rough ground managing to snare his share of eels, including the largest at 39lb, and also landing a nice undulate ray and a half decent huss. I myself did splendidly with eels and a couple of undulates including the best one of 13lb 8oz, but then you expect nothing less of me, I'm sure.



A fine 12lb undulate is photobombed by Chris, Andy and Smed.

The most fun moment came when Steve, Smed and I all wound into bites in a roaring tide with 2lb of lead on, only to find all our fish knitted together in a massively entertaining ball of line, end tackle, conger and ray. Obviously Steve did the decent thing and left the unwinding and untangling to me and Smed. Thanks Steve.



There's a magnificent specimen. The 13lb 8oz undulate is also lovely. No, I never shall tire of that particular "joke".

Actually everyone did well at this mark, especially Kim who delighted the assembled throng by reprising his world-renowned Weeble impersonation, including the much-loved finale where "Weebles wobble but they don't fall down... Oh, yes, actually, they do." Obviously we all rushed to Kim's assistance and would have plied him with sweet milky tea to treat the shock, had not Ron and Keith run out of water after our first cuppa of the day, earlier in the morning. This led to some tension between skipper and crewman, as blame was heaped fairly and squarely on Keith's broad shoulders. We didn't complain though, especially not the ever positive and upbeat duo of Brooksie and Stevie, aka the Misery Brothers, the even less amusing branch of the family that brought you the Chuckle Brothers.

Brooksie was in fact excelling himself in the doom and gloom stakes, maniacal laughter or not. In fact it would not be pushing it to far to say he

had become obsessed with death. He kept asking after dead skippers, ex-members of the club and delighting in informing all and sundry of the latest celebrity death or fishing-related casualty. "Remember old X, who used to fish on Electric Blue back in the 70s? He's dead you know," and "You know that mad bloke on the TV named after a fish?" "What, Magnus Pike?" "Yeah. He's dead too." And so it went on. I suppose he's got to have something to gloat about, and in the absence of much in the way of fish, all he's got is the fact that he's still alive. Well done you.

When our mackerel supplies finally gave out, Ron took us to some inshore wrecks off the back of the Shambles where apparently there'd been a few cod taken. We had no such luck, but we did manage a few smallish pollack to keep us interested. When we tired of this, despite our tremendous success on the Shambles the day before, I was outvoted (again) so we didn't have a few lovely drifts for turbot. Instead, we ended the day, with every other boat from Weymouth, Poole and the entire South coast, drifting the rough ground off the back of the Shambles for bream.



All part of the service, sir. Brooksie offers Scoop a relaxing massage as we steam between marks on Ron's boat Amarylis.

We didn't set the world of breaming alight with one bream falling to new boy Andy Barker, one small tub gurnard, five mackerel and a completely fluky, but nonetheless decent plaice of 3lb falling to the rod of Mr Plaice himself, Adam Frost, but with his bream, Andy Barker became the second Andy of the weekend to catch all target species on a day, which just goes to show that Andys are bastards. To cap a nice day off, Ron and Keith paid us the great compliment of saying what a nice day they'd had and how it made a nice change not to have to do everything for their crew.

They must get some right noddies going out with them if we seem good by comparison.

Back ashore, we got our glad rags on and hit the town. Or the Weymouth Balti House to be more precise. As we didn't have the exalted presence of Lord Selby of Weymouth Angling (another Andy, need I say more?), we weren't given our usual Platinum standard of service. In fact, several club members were moved to complain about it, which as you all know, is most out of character for our senior team. I myself was treated like a king and they even claimed to remember who I was (the Balti House staff, not our lot, they had no idea who the fuck I was), so I have no complaints whatsoever. Apart from about the company, obviously.

Fine dining out of the way, we decamped to the Boot and supped some ale, as tradition demands. In tune with tradition Steve offered to buy a round, which after a quick head count revealed that no-one had yet sneaked off to bed and which therefore involved paying for nine drinks, was quickly amended to an offer to share a round with someone else. As this was a traditional ale house and Steve was buying, I decided that it was time for that lovely, refreshing summer favourite, a Campari and orange. This, as expected, caused some difficulty and much embarrassment, but what can I say? I'm a tart. Anyway, for future reference, Campari and orange is made with fresh orange, not orange squash. I tried to make Steve send it back, but there's only so much amusement he can take in one sitting.

We then returned to our B&B, or at least Kim and Scoop did, while the rest of us went to add to the cacophony emanating from *The Two, Slightly Distorted, Guitars*, or *The Power Chord* or whatever the rock pub was called over the road from the B&B. There, an excellent assortment of pierced, tattooed and long haired folk made us feel very welcome. No, actually they really did, and we stayed for two or three drinks including sambucca and tequila, which was such a good idea, we repeated it. Clever boys.

The night was almost over, apart from for the brave group of Adam, Andy the new boy, Chris and me, who went for a moonlit stroll on the beach opposite the B&B at half one. This turned into a bit of paddling and then Chris and myself, being traditionalists at heart, and also Scottish and therefore hardy, stripped off and went for a lovely swim. It really was most refreshing and enjoyable, and not cold. No really, it wasn't. Adam and Andy, being soft Southerners, stayed on the beach and scoffed, but it was them what missed out. Ask Chris!

Our return to the B&B may have left something of a trail of sandy footprints on the carpet leading up the stairs towards our apartment. Luckily the

carpet from the landing onwards was sandy coloured, so the incriminating evidence didn't stop right outside our door, or at least, it wasn't so easy to see that it did. And that was it for another year. Decent fishing, and good company and I can't wait for the next instalment.

Newhaven turbot 16th September

Sadly I was unable to attend this trip having come down with a case of "I hate you all and wish you were all dead" itis, which is very common among club members and is highly infectious. The details, such as they are, of this trip are therefore courtesy of one A Frost. So don't blame me if every single item is inaccurate, exaggerated or just plain false.

The weather was okay, wind an Easterly three with a gently swell. Kim would have fallen over, repeatedly, had he been on this trip. This was to be Beef's last trip for a while as he returned to the sunnier climes of Australia where he's apparently just about as well-liked as he is here. Not all Australians are idiots. He was joined by new boy David Simpson, and three of Dave's regulars, along with Adam, Steve, Marvin and Mick "No Dogs" Deacon (the artist formerly known as Two Dogs, as Adam tactfully pointed out in an email, but then, what are these newsletters for if not to be insulting and hurtful wherever possible?)

This merry, or rather, mainly miserable, crew started fishing on a bank about three miles inshore from the one that had been so productive the year before. A few smallish turbot were taken, but nothing of note. Dave made the move to the banks further offshore, but according to him, these had been netted out the previous year by commercials. This proved to be likely to be true, as there wasn't the slightest sniff of a fish. If it is true, it is a total tragedy that such a hotspot can be turned into a fishless desert in just one year. How can that be good commercial sense? Maybe someone should dump thousands of tons of masonry around the bank to protect it from trawling in the way that the banks off Alderney seem to be.

Anyway, the crew returned to the original banks and this second stint proved more productive, with a good number of 4-7lb turbot being taken by everyone except Mick. David was seen to land a monster greater weever that would have smashed Adam's club record, only for him to boot it out of the scuppers. The committee pointed out that this was wilful refusal to record a new club best and buy a round of drinks for the crew. His "defence" was that he'd already returned a much larger one a few minutes earlier. For this gross double dereliction of duty, the penalty is to buy everyone a drink at the next available opportunity. In fact the penalty is to be compelled

to come to the annual dinner (which is a cruel and unusual punishment in itself) and to buy everyone there a drink.

Marvin also did exceptionally well on his welcome return to the club by scoring a magnificently large and utterly superb clump of line, weed and rubbish, a splendid catch by his standards and my congratulations to him. After countless rig changes, Mick finally settled on a massive homemade plastic spoon which appeared to be most of a fairly liquid bottle, made more appealing by the addition of some reflectolite tape. I'm fairly sure that it was a Christmas decoration from the Blue Peter Annual circa 1974, but I might be wrong. It might have been an earlier annual. Anyway, by craftily inserting himself between two of Dave's regulars who'd been catching all day, Mick did finally bag himself a turbot, and then it was time to go home. With 47 flatfish, several weevers and gurnard and a couple of cuttlefish, this was a pretty good day by anyone's standards.

26th September, Weymouth

Some ten days later we were in Weymouth. I say "we", but I was again absent owing to a surfeit of excuses. This meant that I was not there to organise things, in the seamless way that I do. Things got off on the wrong foot when Smed, having managed to leave for Weymouth and arrive on the right day, decided the meeting place must be the Rock, not the Boot, on the grounds that they both have four letters. The Rock is a rubbish pub, the Boot is lovely, but on the plus side, it did mean he had to spend less of the evening with Adam, Steve et al.

Nor was I there to undertake the hugely complex task of buying the bait, so this job was delegated to the apparently sensible ex-copper and reliable freelance naturalist, Philip Brooks. He was sent off to buy a couple of pounds of worms from the Weymouth Angling Centre, plus some prawns for tipping with when fishing for plaice, which was to form a small part of the day's activities. Now these were WAC ragworms, so 80% of them would be dead, non-viable or actually seaweed, but even so, a couple of pounds is quite a lot, so a sensible person might think that one expensive bag of frozen prawns might be enough for a couple of hours plaicing.

Phil erred somewhat on the side of safety, and when the entire staff of WAC appeared with wheelbarrows filled with bags of prawns, it began to dawn on the others that they might have been better, from a financial point of view, in sending that notorious careless spendthrift Steve Newham to buy the bait. Okay, so Steve would have submitted a parallel expenses claim alongside the cost of the bait, but even so, that would have

been cheaper than buying up the entire supply of prawns available on the South Coast of England. See? It's not all bad when I come on fishing trips.

The slight swell that greeted our crew turned into a scary rollercoaster out on the race. To give our boys a thrill, Clem decided this was the time to gun the engines and really give it some. This brilliant idea worked even better than expected when two cups of coffee leapt from the table to the ceiling and then deposited their contents in the inside of Smed's waterproofs, meaning he smelled of Starbucks all day, and given how often he washes his clothing, for ever more.

Sadly the trip improved thereafter. The first mark was a rough ground bream mark inshore of the Shambles. Lots of bream wanted to play ball including a few pushing three pounds, so that was all good fun. Next up was the mussel beds to drift for plaice. Again, things worked pretty well here with 12 plaice up to almost 4lb being spread fairly evenly among the undeserving swine making up the crew. Even better, with the swell making things a bit tricky underfoot, Chris Grant crashed to the deck like a mighty Scots Pine being felled, or a giant sack of porridge oats crashing down on top of an unsuspecting Englishman.

Once Clem had repaired the damage sustained by *Wild Frontier* from the falling porridge, it was time to move to another rough ground mark where huss to 6lb and small conger were on offer. The last mark offered a few more bream, some red gurnard and a pollack, along with the catch of the day, a magnificent specimen poor cod, weighing in at a splendid 5oz, which its captor, one A. Frost, claims makes it a record-equalling poor cod. But I think he'll find, if he checks the record list, that the actual record stands at an even more splendid 5oz 8dm. And those 8dm mean something, they're not just there for decoration. Despite this huge disappointment, it was, apparently, a splendid day's light tackle fishing, and another one I'm absolutely delighted to have missed out on.



A mighty, and almost record-equalling, 5oz poor cod.

Club Notices

Brooksie is offering a "Death by text message" service, where you simply text him the name of someone you are interested in, and he will reply with ALIVE or DEAD, depending on their current existential status. Alternatively, you can sign up for his "Death Updates" service whereby he will text you anytime anyone dies. Anyone. Anywhere. For an additional fee he can arrange for the answer to be DEAD for any individual using his contacts in the police and criminal underworld.

Robin Eyles would like it widely promulgated that thanks to a recent mid-life crisis he is no longer a vast, quivering blob of lard (see above) only just able to be shoehorned into the fishing space on a 40 foot catamaran, and then only when everything has been liberally smeared with some of Brooksie's Vaseline. Instead, having becoming a gym bunny and losing some 45 stone, then having his back shaved, losing another 3 stone, purchasing a Harley and a full set of leathers, he has now become an even more irritating, poncy and stupid fuckwit, but at least Dave will be able to get another 4 knots of speed for the same throttle settings on trips involving Robin. Well done we say, you cunt.

That's about it, except to wish you everything you wish yourselves in 2015, apart from the bit involving my slow and painful death. That bit will have to remain a pleasant dream. See you at the dinner I hope and then out on the briny. Don't forget to book those trips now.

Cheers and may all your tangles be small ones,
Ben



No newsletter is complete without at least one picture of the Hodges brothers gloating with fish, so here it is.