

Really Wrecked SAC newsletter

Number 53, January 2018



You see, this is the problem with life in general and newsletters specifically. You take your eye off the ball for one second and suddenly, instead of it being pre-Christmas, with you just waiting for responses to your call for photos before sending out a timely club communication packed with next year's dates, trip reports, annual dinner date etc. etc., no, suddenly it's the new year and my joke about and Santa and the three prostitutes ("Ho! Ho! Ho!"), or the one about Brooksie, a red suit, a big sack and Operation Conifer, is sadly pointless and even less amusing than it had been when it was still vaguely relevant.

So how can I provide a much-needed second-week-of-January fillip, change the mood music from the most depressing day of the year (a week on Monday) to something altogether more upbeat and encouraging? The answer is simple. I can't. Of course I can't. I'm a January the 15th kind of guy myself, much more at ease with a bad back, the rain and a scowl, than chestnuts roasting on an open fire, or relaxing in the sun on holiday. And a Happy New Year to you all too!

In some regards, of course, it's a perfectly normal time of the year. Normal in that every single time we book a trip, it blows a gale. I'm running out of amusing ways to put this, but basically the weather gods must really hate our guts. Not that I blame them, we are a pretty loathsome bunch and we have a substantial, and growing, collection of guts. Actually, as you all know only too well, I ran out of amusing ways to say anything at all about 30 years ago, and have cut an increasingly unpleasant and mean-spirited figure both on the few trips we do manage to get out on, and on the pages of these newsletters. Which is pretty much what you deserve.

But enough of such misery! Woe, begone! Despondency, depart! Foreboding, fuck off! I have glad tidings of great joy, to you and all mankind (club membership really took off in 2017). Yes, I have a string of exciting new fishing dates for next year, including one on Blue Friday (the Friday after Monday the 15th), which is guaranteed to chase the blues away, as we battle

huge pollack off Weymouth for the first time in club history. The thought of it is giving me goosebumps already. Or is that a semi? It's hard to tell the difference these days.

Before we go all-out smiley and enthusiastic about all the opportunities awaiting us in 2018, there is one final bit of sad news, for those who haven't heard it already. Dave is taking a break from fishing for a while, and has suggested we book up with other skippers while he takes stock. We've had many brilliant days out with Dave over the many years we've fished with him, especially for eels, but also for pollack, cod and flatfish, and we'll miss him. If he ever does decide to start taking out boatloads of complete wankers again, you can rest assured that we'll be among the first boatloads to book up.

In mean time we have filled in with more trips with Neil French from Littlehampton, Jon Himpfen from Eastbourne and Clem Carter from Weymouth. All the details are below, and are also on the web site, so please check your diaries and send Adam your preferred dates by the end of the week, so we can feed your requests into our brand new Commodore 64, and run our incredibly complex algorithms to determine who gets to go on which trips.

1. January 19, First pollack trip of the year – Weymouth

The pollack move in earlier further West, so we'll see what Clem can find for us out of Weymouth. Prepare for some screaming runs and boxes of big fish.

2. January 26, Pollack or cod – Eastbourne

It's the day before the dinner, and we're going fishing. It's either inshore cod or offshore pollack on the agenda, depending on what's about.

3. February 19, Spring pollack – Weymouth

A chance to target some huge, sleek, hard-fighting spring pollack on the drift over offshore wrecks. This time, we're doing it on *Wild Frontier* out of Weymouth!

4. March 5, Pollacks to the lot of you – Eastbourne

We're heading out from Eastbourne on *Misty Blue* for a day on the pollack. Fit, hard-fighting, double-figure pollack, if you must know. But you probably don't want any of that, do you?

5. March 19, Bass, plaice or rays – Littlehampton

A chance to get some welcome spring flatties, as well as pick up a big ray or two from the banks off Littlehampton

6. April 23, Spring bream on the Kingmere Reef – Littlehampton

This is what Littlehampton is famous for, big, fat bream, mad for your bait. Get stuck in.

7. May 11, Wrecking - time for big eels – Weymouth

It's an early summer trip targeting big conger. Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough. No, Brooksie, not that kind of hard.

8. June 11, Wrecking, tope and rays – Littlehampton

You can't do it all in one day, so we'll probably have a choice of anchoring a wreck hunting big eels, or taking on tope and rays from some rough ground and bank marks.

9. July 06, Summer wrecking – Eastbourne

We'll be heading to distant wrecks on *Misty Blue* to have a go for huge conger, with cod and pollack on the drift. And the weather has promised to be warm and sunny, as well as flat calm.

10. July 27, Bass and tope on Spirit of Arun – Littlehampton

Neil plans to take us after some hard-fighting tope off Littlehampton, with the chance of a big bass thrown in.

11. August 3-4, Summer Trip – Weymouth

It's back, after a year off due to illness and bad weather (mainly bad weather), and it's bigger and better than ever before. Rays! Tope! Bream! Turbot! Conger! Bass! And Many Many More! Free tadpole fish for first five to sign up.

12. August 20, Late summer wrecking – Eastbourne

More fun at anchor and possibly on the drift too with Jon Himpfen. As we didn't get any of this

whatsoever last year, we've got make up for it this time round. Time for a 90lb eel, I feel.

13. September 10, Autumn bream and bass – Littlehampton

The bass should be about in numbers and there are plenty of bream to keep you interested too.

14. September 21, Autumn Trip – Weymouth

This is the year when we finally bag a porbeagle. In fact, I predict three of them, plus lots of bream and some rays.

15. October 08, Autumn bream action – Littlehampton

Littlehampton is famous for its bream fishing, and Neil French is considered one of the best in the business. Come and find out why.

16. November 12, Inshore bass and bream – Littlehampton

The bass will have started to shoal up, and the bream haven't gone anywhere, so expect plenty of amazing light tackle sport.

17. November 23, Wrasse trip - Weymouth

Catch huge numbers of enormous ballans, with the added bonus of winning the 2018 Weymouth specimen competition with the biggest wrasse, just like Stevie did last year.

18. December 10, Inshore cod or bass – Littlehampton

Depending on conditions, we'll either be after big cod or big bass just a mile or two from port.

Please note the two January dates most especially. We have to fill these ASAP, so we'll be operating more of the old "first come first served" routine for these.

Annual Dinner

And here's another date for your endless entertainment and delight, because it's time for the annual dinner. This is taking place on Saturday, January the 27th in the Dorset Arms in Lewes from 7:30pm. For anyone planning on coming for the first time, the dress code is informal black tie, which means that we don't actually care what you wear, but most people will be wearing a dinner jacket that *ever so slightly* smells of fish.

The dinner promises to be especially entertaining this year, as you'll get to see Adam and I flail around trying to allocate all 437 club

trophies on the basis of the tiny number of fishing trips we managed last year. Expect us to be even funnier than usual, if you can imagine such a thing, as we award the Spotty Fish Award to Barks for showcasing a splendid dose of acne on the trip in early April.

The cost will be the usual £20, plus tip, for the food. Wives, husbands, partners, concubines, sex slaves and dogging parties are all welcome, as usual. Please let Adam know ASAP if you're coming. We'll send out menu choices shortly.

If you have a club trophy in your possession, please get it back to Adam this week, so we can get it engraved with the name of this year's lucky winner. And, at the risk of repeating myself, if you have a club trophy in your possession, please get it back to Adam this week, so we can get it engraved with the name of this year's lucky winner.

Trip reports

This is normally the point at which I regale you with amusing (sic) tales of the many fishing trips we have been on since the last newsletter. But now, as I look back over the club archive, since I sent you the last incoherent string of foul language and lies (newsletter 52), I find there are just two trips to report on. Number 52, if you can remember that far back, came out in May, and contained reports from the only two trips we'd managed up till then. So that means, for any ladies who may be reading this, that last year we managed a grand total of four club trips.

Four. That is literally twice Colin's IQ or, in the metric system of centimetres, eight of Brooksie's little todger stacked end to end. And this is not, I would like to stress, for lack of effort. Both your conscientious and hard-working committee and you, the talented and keen anglers that you are, have worked tirelessly, booking up and signing up for re-arranged trip after re-arranged trip without so much as a word of complaint. No, it was more of a barrage of complaint, but the point still stands.

If I were to count up the number of trips we booked and had cancelled last year, it would come to a staggering 28! Twenty bloody eight trips blown off because of the stupid bloody wind. Yes, that's what it probably would add up to, if I could be bothered to do anything as pointless as go through the web site, all my emails and texts and phone records looking for trip bookings, which I clearly can't, being a lazy, as well as miserable and mean-spirited, cunt. It was a lot of trips though.

I'd just like to point out to posterity and the Internet, that the remark about addition and ladies above is intended as an ironic and satirical comment to highlight the problems of the post-Weinstein/Harris/Etc era we live in and is NOT serious. It should therefore carefully be taken out of context, misquoted on Twitter and generally used to destroy this club, which would be for the best in any case.

Talking of which, why on earth couldn't that worm Weinstein have been outed sooner? Just a couple of months earlier and think of the fun we could have had with the club T-shirt. As it is, this year's apocalyptic and topical top is available from me by post or at the dinner (all popular sizes still available) for a tenner. If you're owed one from the summer trip that never was, let me know and I'll make sure you get it. We also have a whole new line of dark blue waterproof baseball caps for £11. So why not buy yourself a little late Christmas present to make up for whatever disappointing item your spouse or partner thought you wanted instead?

And now, there's no getting away from it, I might as well run through the two trips we've been on, as much for their rarity value as anything else.

August 8th Littlehampton

This was our second trip out of Littlehampton with Neil French and his wife Mick, after our successful go for the bream back in April. We booked two trips with Neil last year, and both of them went ahead. So if he manages to repeat this 100% record this year, we'll get out on a record-breaking 8 trips. Won't that be something?

Anyway, back in reality, the day dawned a bit overcast, but more or less calm, with the wind forecast to drop away to almost nothing through the day, and so it did. The sun also shone a bit, and at times it felt warm and pleasant, so clearly the god of fishing was having a day off from his relentless campaign of inflicting misery on all Really Wrecked anglers.

The mark we were to fish was a patch of rough ground only a few miles out, to the east of the Kingmere in about 40 foot of water where we could expect to see smoothhounds and various rays. On the short journey out, Andy Barker found yet another way to entertain us all. Having exhausted the possibilities inherent in threading a rod i.e. wrapping the line around the rod/missing out several rod rings/putting the reel on backwards/all of the above on many previous trips, he now upped his game by attempting to detach a rod butt from the top section to which it

had been glued by many years of salty water and neglect.

First he applied WD40, then he wiggled, then he pulled. Then he borrowed pliers and tried again. The out came somebody's universal pipe wrench, which was then combined with the pliers, all with the same result - grand amusement for one and all. Eventually Martin tired of the entertainment, seized the rod and disdainfully tugged in apart, handing it back to the stunned Barks. Our hero then tried the reel seat, only to discover, surprise, surprise, that it, too, was solid with the accumulated brine of ages.

By now the crew had tired of Barks-baiting and turned their attention to secondary matters, such as fish-baiting. Barks, however, struggled on alone. History does not record whether the reel seat was ever returned to working order, but as the rod was of the build-quality that has Euroboat enthusiasts everywhere licking their lips, and Ugly Stik owners believing they might be about to join the upper echelons of the club's tackle-owning elite, really the only proper place to sort out its various shortcomings would be in the nearest dustbin.

Throughout all of this, and indeed, the rest of the day, Brooksie kept a paternal eye on the lad, providing advice and assistance in a very generous manner. Those of us who are familiar with Brooksie's paternal eye were inclined to suggest that Andy demand CRC checks, and possibly take out an injunction, but then Barks started asking awkward questions ("Is 'and' or 'then' an injunction?") so we left them to it.

Neil promised we would definitely break the club smoothie record, which stood at a mighty 3lb 6oz, and this was accomplished on the first drop by Robin, who bested a six-pound monster. Those who still recall his titanic struggle with the scallop a few years back will appreciate the work Robin has put in at the gym since then, the lonely hours on the treadmill, the endless reps and bench-presses, with weights sometimes in excess of 4 ounces, to get him to the sort of condition to allow him to take on such beasts of the deep without breaking into more than a gentle sweat and needing nothing more than a 40 minute sit-down afterwards before he was ready to rebait and start again.

By the way, I'm sure there's a joke here somewhere about the amount of effort Robin expended to land a blended fruit drink, but I can't think of it. If anyone works out what the joke should be, please email it to me for inclusion in the next newsletter.



Robin displays his, then, record-smashing 6lb starry smoothhound. It was the first of about a dozen taken on the trip.

The fishing in general was excellent, with smoothhounds dashing off like Billy Whizz in the shallow water, which was especially fun on the appropriate light tackle, or slightly less fun if, like Adam, you used your 30lb class gear on the off-chance you'd hook a new British-record blonde ray. Or perhaps two records at once. On the other hand, 30lb class gear is Adam's idea of light tackle, and is his general roach and skimmer set-up for summer coarse fishing.

The biggest of the 30 or so smoothies taken was a nice 9lb 5oz fish taken by Scoop, while Brooksie caught the most, and also had the largest of the six or so undulate rays taken, at 11lb 6oz. There were a few smallish bream taken, and lots of doggies, so all in all it was another

lovely day's sport, and we look forward to many more on *Spirit of Arun* next year.

Phil Pepper and another couple of occasional club members (whose names he didn't bother to give me) took advantage of spaces on Dave's boat a few days later to enjoy a lovely day on the banks, taking lots of turbot and brill. Phil himself landed the best fish of the day, a low double-figure blonde ray.

Weymouth Wrassing

This was our first go at the wrasse for a couple of years, as 2016's trip had fallen foul of the weather. As usual Ivan greeted us with a cheery wave, a cup of tea and a massive bucket of huge hardback crabs for us to dismember. Unlike previous years though, two innovative and intelligent anglers, Clive and myself, had thought to provide themselves with some protection against the spines and pincers of outrageous hardbacks, and to take arms against a sea of shore crabs, and by opposing, end them. Sorry, got a bit carried away there, where was I? Oh yes, dealing with crabs... Clive had brought along a single reinforced builders/gardening glove, while I had a pike unhooking glove made of a sort of rubberised chainmail. Wearing these on one hand while handling the crabs and preparing them for the hook, I can vouch for the fact that while they did make things *very slightly* trickier, perhaps, in terms of baiting up, they did result in our hands not requiring the usual three weeks to recover and regrow the skin lost on the shells, fish spines, hooks and filleting knives. It is definitely worth your consideration for next year.

With the tide too fast for anchoring the Bill first thing, we started the day bassing with lures in the tide run. We weren't in the Race, so we didn't lose masses of tackle, though we did have to be a bit careful to avoid snags while fishing the lures hard on the bottom, where the fish were. Phil Pepper was quickly into his stride, and caught the first, and the most bass, and probably the biggest, which, sadly, scaled only about two and a half pounds. Adam would not sully his tackle fishing for such vermin, and steadfastly refused to wet a line. Everyone else was most enthusiastic, hoping for a big double, though it's doubtful whether even a fish of that size would have turned Adam's head, so pig-headed and stubborn is he about bass. Most of the fish came on rubber lures, of the Fiish Minnow type, though I also managed to bag a couple on a slow jig. Happily, Rab, on his first ever Weymouth wrassing trip, managed to miss out on the bass entirely, largely owing to the sheer incompetence

of the man. I mean, when even Robin outfishes you, you know you must be a useless cunt.

Eventually though, we tired of schoolies, and of Adam's relentless complaining, so Ivan moved to the Bill where he anchored up for the last of the flood tide. We had a few fish in the first couple of hours, but not the number nor size of wrasse we'd been hoping for. Then, when the ebb tide picked up, the fish finally started feeding hard, and it was solid wrasse action all the way.



Robin displays the largest of about a dozen ballans he caught that day, from a total club catch of about a dozen.

The other advantage of fishing at anchor before the tide is going properly is that the boat swings around with the wind. As a result, I managed to find pretty much every rocky crevice off Portland Bill with my gear over the first two hours, thereby losing all my leads. And yes, I was

using a rotten bottom! In the end, I was reduced to scrounging leads from generous folk like Andy Selby and Clive. As a result of their generosity I've had to sell my house and car to pay for the three leads of theirs I lost. Thanks boys! I wasn't the only person to suffer like this, but I like to think I do suffering better than anyone else.

When the tide was running most fiercely, the size of the fish we caught picked up, and over about half an hour at mid-tide, we had many more four-pounders than at any other time, plus three fives, including the biggest of the day, at 5lb 7oz, to Stevie. This splendid fish was the best ballan entered in the 2017 Weymouth Specimen competition and will win Steve some kind of magnificent prize. Given that we've had several sixes and a couple of sevens on club trips, I think we might have more chances for prizes next year too. Talking of which, check out Phill Hill's churlish comments under the photo of Steve's fish on the Top Cat page on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/TopCatCharters/> - scroll down to December 4th), and my uncharacteristically restrained reply.

The bites continued to come thick and fast until we ran out of tide, and even Rab managed to snare a few, although his comrade Robin seemed to have a little trouble with complex mathematical constructs, such as counting, and continued to state he'd had "about a dozen" fish all afternoon, despite the fact he was catching at the same rate as everyone else, and they were reckoning their scores to be in the 30-50 fish sort of range. In fact, when pressed, Robin obliged us by counting his fingers and toes like this:

"1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 2, 7, 7, er 2 I think, 7, 7, 7, about a dozen, about a dozen, about a dozen, about a dozen, about a dozen, about a dozen, about a dozen, about a dozen, about a dozen, about a dozen, oh fuck off."

We decided to have another go for bass, mainly to piss Adam off, in which regard the plan worked perfectly, though it was less successful in terms of actual bass caught. Then, to end the day, we did some fishing for squid just off the breakwater. It was slow going to start, with just one squid taken, when Steve, or perhaps Clive, or maybe even Phil, (I can never tell those three apart) took his squid lure off the usual paternoster set-up, and tied it direct to his mainline, with a small, additional in-line weight down by the lure's nose, to help get it down. This produced a couple of squid quite quickly, so others followed suit and we ended up with a good haul of 17 squid to about a pound and a half. Sorry, Robin tells me it was about a dozen squid.

All in all, it was another good trip with Ivan, with lots of ballans (about a dozen, all told), and some decent specimens among them, a few bass and plenty of squid. The wrasse weren't quite as numerous or large as they had been last time, but it was still great fishing, and I can report that as a result of our glove-wearing genius, both Clive's and my hands were perfectly usable and fairly pain-free on the day after the trip.



Here's Steve with the largest ballan caught out of Weymouth in 2017, all 5lb 7oz of her. Worth her weight in gold. Or Mint Matchmakers, at the very least.

And so to the future...

So that's it for 2017. A very good year for wind, and very little else. However, I have it on excellent authority that THIS YEAR IS GOING TO BE MUCH BETTER. Oh yes it is! It is, I tell you. My magic seaweed tells me it's going to be the best year ever, with records galore, good company, flat seas and sunshine, just like it used to be before Stevie started worshipping Tempestua, goddess of *Sturm und Drang*. So come fishing, because this year is going to be unstoppable!

Before I go, there is one final memory from last year I'd like to share. I've heard some pretty crap excuses for not coming fishing in my time, but this one presented by a Mr B. Eveling for a congering trip (subsequently cancelled, obviously), organised specially by Mr B. Eveling, has got to be top 5. I wasn't able to go fishing because my boss said (on the Friday before the trip), very gently paraphrased: "Hi Ben, we've got a new person starting on Monday, and neither I, nor any of the other senior people can be bothered to turn up to do the welcome and orientation bollocks, so even though you're just a contractor, you've been around a while, so can you take care of them and show them the kitchen and loos? If that means you can't go fishing on Monday, then so much the better, you cunt."

But that kind of thing is all in the past. From now on, there will only be fish, fun and laughter all the way through till next New Year. See you at sea and at the dinner.

Love,
Ben

P.S. I asked for it, so here are about a dozen pictures of cunts with fish.



Proof that Sean Geer still lives and fishes. This is a 6lb bloody 14oz chub! Bloody fucking hell. All I can say is, thank fuck it's not a seven.



What a weird-looking, big-headed brute. And Kim's new PB 9lb 12oz bull huss looks a bit odd in this pic too.



What a splendid way to end the newsletter. A man with a fish of some sort.