



Sportfishing Club of the British Isles

Newsletter - August 2018



Introduction. Hopefully in this newsletter I'll finally be able to bring you up to-date with a range of members' catches over the last few months, coupled with a number from earlier.

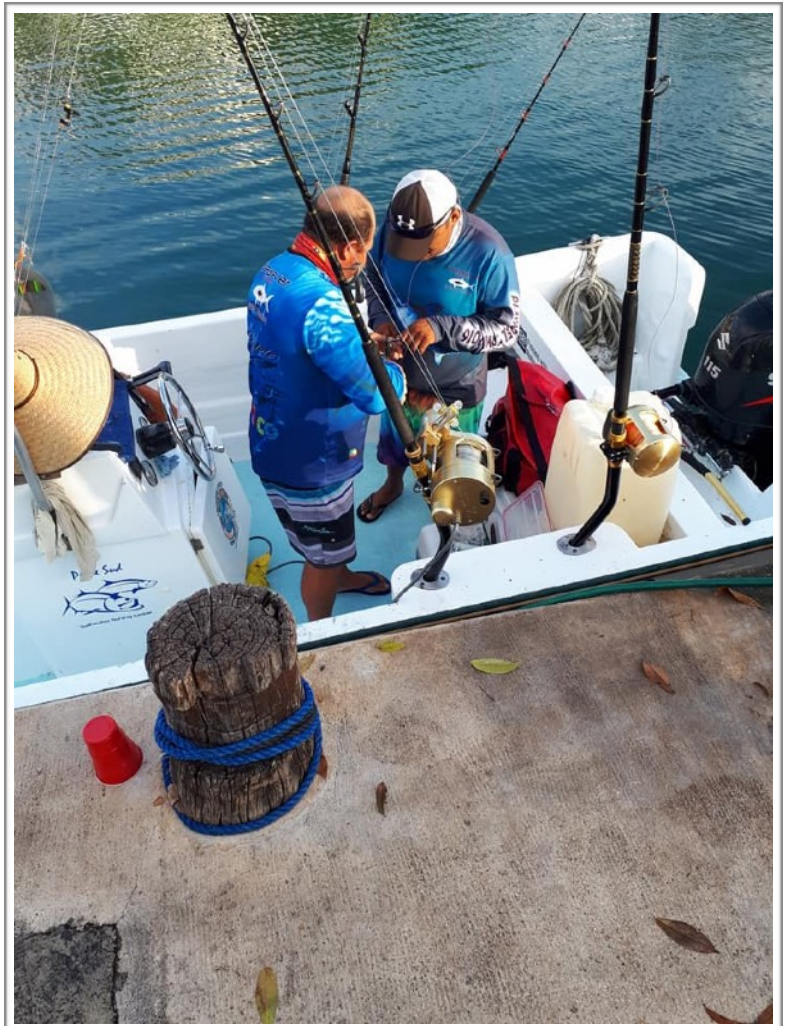
Before starting though if I could highlight a change. You will have noticed in previous newsletter that I've included full web site addresses - URLs commencing with either 'http:' or 'https' - that, when you click on them, direct you from the newsletter to more detailed information or a video on the Internet. In future I will 'hide' these URLs behind [an underlined piece of text in blue](#). It will have exactly the same effect - hover your cursor over it and it turns into the familiar 'hand', click on it and it will direct you to the information source on the Internet. Why the change? No other reason than it looks tidier.

Mexican Broadbill. This is very much a case of one (or two) that might have been. For Jon Patten it was more of a family holiday in early April to Playa da Carmen on Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, but Jon being Jon he couldn't resist fitting in a couple of days fishing. Only two though! And on the first day, fishing with skipper Roberto Navarro, Jon lost a Blue Marlin. On the next they determined to target Broadbill - deep dropping - in the channel between Isla de Cozumel and the mainland.

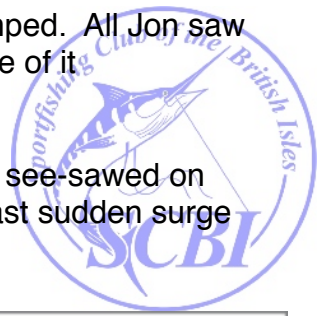
Here, unlike those 'day time' captains I've fished with, Roberto uses two rods. The first is fished on a float, close to the bottom, and deployed several hundred yards back. Then drifting, having turned broadside, the second is the classic one fished again close to the bottom, some 1500' down. But unlike other skippers Roberto is constantly working this bait, up and down through the bottom 100' or so.

After an hour at the first location they got their first bite - several hits with the 'deep' rod, loading a little then NADA. A further move brought nothing.

It was at their third location, just ten minutes after deploying the baits Roberto announced they had interest on the float rod; the float - and it was big - was starting to 'bury'. Jon cranked in fast. The crewman unclipped the float and, after several hundred yards more, Jon felt the weight of what appeared to be a small fish load the rod. It was possibly only a 100' down. Then it 'grew' and took off at least 700' of line with Roberto manoeuvring the boat to keep up with it, swimming as it was now at 4 to 5 knots.



With Roberto obscuring Jon's view it then rocketed to the surface and jumped. All Jon saw was that massive bill appear over Roberto's shoulder and a partial glimpse of its magnificent purple colouration. It was far from a 'small' fish!



For the next two hours in the 100 degree heat the battle - dive after dive - see-sawed on until, with the Swordfish just under the boat and apparently beaten, that last sudden surge and the hook pulled.

Jon has caught 30 Broadbill over the years from both Florida and Tanzania, including - and there's an article regarding it in the Club's Journal - six in one day, losing a seventh, out from Islamorada in the 'Keys. But he's still to capture a really BIG one, and this one was BIG!

If there was ever an incentive for Jon to return this encounter was it. The difficulty for Jon - finding enough time, work aside of course, to fit it into his busy angling schedule!



Albeit using an electric reel on the 'deep' rod here's a short [video clip](#) (the first of those embedded links to click on) of a 530 pounder Roberto's clients subsequently caught.

Panama. Karl Bird and Mike Wallis recently fished on hosted trips - separate weeks - organised by Jason Heenan's company - SFC Travel - to the French run, Panafishing Adventures' lodge on Panama's Azuero peninsula, the appropriately named 'Tuna' coast.



Panama continued.

Mike's observations? It's summed up in his report:

"Wow! Fantastic trip!

I went as a single angler and came back with a bunch of good friends. Months before Jason set up a Messenger group chat where we all got acquainted and shared in our excitement & anticipation of our planned trip. Tackle recommendations and tips were shared all around to ensure we were all prepared. Jason helping us along the way.

Most of our group of eight met at Heathrow where we excitedly chatted, and it's seemed in no time we were touching down in Panama City. A quick stopover at a lovely hotel in Panama City before our leisurely minibus ride over the Canal down to the lodge. More laughs, and lunch on the way.

The lodge itself is what I would call a fisherman's paradise! Pool, bar, air-con, laundry, massage service, WiFi and clean. Wonderfully friendly hosts Pierre and his family, not to mention lovely Emma and Mynor serving beers and tasty meals.



As for the fishing we hit it real lucky! CUBERA City! Everyone in our group managed a fish of a lifetime.

My first encounter with a Cubera is a bit of a blur ... before we started chucking the big Hybridas around our captain Eduardo set my drag. I tried to pull some line off to check it myself. Locked solid or so I thought, so I backed it off a couple of clicks...to save my arms being pulled off. Big mistake! There I was admiring the wildlife, feeling lucky working the lure and feeling the buzz. Then WHAM! A big Cubera inhaled my lure and dived for the rocks! Next thing I can remember was the sound of the drag singing 'soprano', and I'm on my back with my feet on the gunwale trying not to get dragged overboard! Jason and Eduardo did all they

could to help me, but to no avail. A lesson learned. The sheer power of these fish is unbelievable!

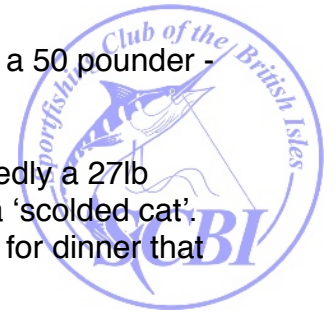
Luckily the next one I hooked was (only) 20kg. After a short but spirited fight - this time Jason giving me tips was helpfully holding onto my belt - it was on the boat. Amazing fish.





I managed a bigger one of 23kg - a 50 pounder - later in the week.

My highlight though was undoubtedly a 27lb Rainbow Runner. It shot off like a 'scolded cat'. Tasted lovely though as we had it for dinner that night!



Every day was different - jigging for Snappers, Amberjack and Groupers, light lure fishing for Yellowtails, Big-eyed Jacks, Trevallies, etc. That was coupled with the heavy popping and stick baits for the bigger fish. A real good mix!



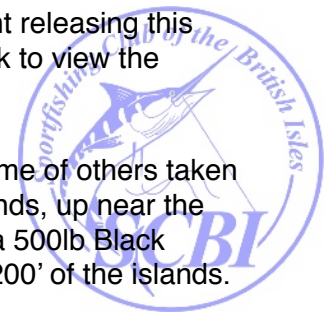
Cannot recommend this trip highly enough. Great location, tackle, fishing & lodge, and Pierre & his lovely family and staff. Big shout out to Jason always a laugh 'n' joke, and a pleasure to be around.

See you next year!"

Karl was on the first of the weeks' trips and similarly had a great time with a wider variety of fish including - what the area's colloquially referred to as - Tuna, Yellowfin Tuna. In addition to the Cuberas - frustratingly he lost an enormous fish that looked to be in the 90lb range - and Jacks he had Dorado, Sierra Mackerel and those iconic Roosterfish. There was an image of one of Karl's Roosters on the front page of the June newsletter, and here's another together with a Yellowfin.



Jason though, there for both weeks, went 'slightly better' on the Roosterfish front releasing this [estimated 70 pounder](#) on a popper! (You'll need to click on that highlighted link to view the image.)



Costa Rican Roosters. Posting that image of Jason's fish then reminded me of others taken last year by Colin Joy and Jon Pattern slow trolling livebaits around the Bat Islands, up near the Nicaraguan border. Colin also whilst after the Roosters successfully released a 500lb Black Marlin. Literally anything can turn up in that area, I've even had Sailfish within 200' of the islands.



And now a change of oceans to the Indo/Pacific starting with Stephan Kreupl's trip to -

Southern Oman - and here it is definitely a case of tenacity paying off! Or, paraphrasing the [travelogue's title](#) - 'cast, cast and cast AGAIN!'

But from his and other members' past experiences of the venue you do need that weather window. However when it all comes together the results can be phenomenal as Stephan and his friend demonstrate; GTs to 55 kilos - over 120lbs!

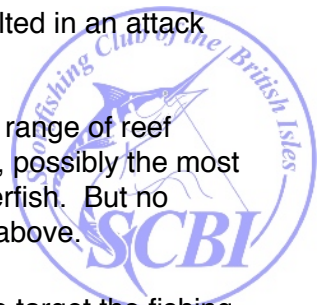
An image of that big fish's release is on this newsletter's title page, but the travelogue - click on that link above - is illustrated with a whole range of impressive images.

Seychelles. Before travelling to Oman though Stephan had holidayed with his wife on Denis Island in the Seychelles. Again there is a well illustrated [travelogue here](#).

How should I summarise the trip though? I guess most graphically in the words of Tim Howe - for Tim it's a case of 'been there, done that' on the [Ashmore Reef](#) complex, a remote area some 200 miles off the northwest coast of Australia - **the Taxman Cometh!** And how Stephan also commented "Our luggage was 8 kilos lighter by the end of the trip. We 'fed' over 50 jigs to the sharks in the course of our stay." The drop-off areas of the reef were literally teeming with Blacktip

Reef Sharks, and any fight lasting longer than 10 minutes almost invariably resulted in an attack and a mutilated fish.

On one day though - less sharks - Stephan did manage to bring to the surface a range of reef species and, whilst wading the flats with a fly rod, had some mid-sized GTs and, possibly the most colourful of all quarries - a 'Titian' (no, it's not really that BIG) - Moustache Triggerfish. But no Bonefish, not even a sighting of one! All the images are on that highlighted link above.

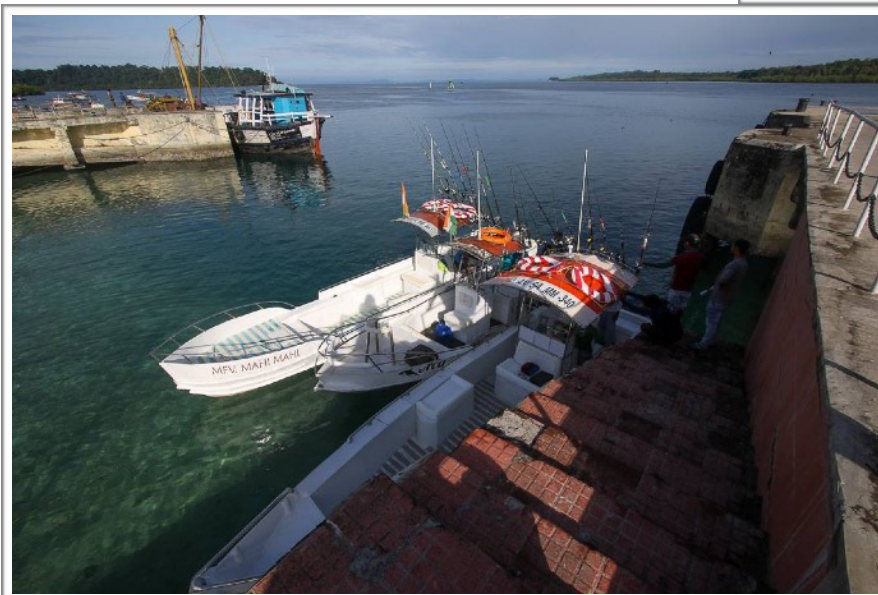


Andaman Islands. Earlier in the year Ian Gould was part of a group of six to target the fishing around the islands; there're 562 of them in total in the remote archipelago! They are situated in the Gulf of Bengal but geographically closer to Thailand and Myanmar than India who, politically, administer the islands.

They were based on the main island - Haverlock - and fished, two to a boat, with the [Captain Hook's Sport Fishing](#) operation. It was mostly popper fishing, and the craft are suitably designed for that style of fishing, but they trolled as well catching a range of species - GTs, Sailfish, Wahoo, Barracuda, Grouper, Big Eyed Trevally, Bluefin Trevally, Queenfish, Spanish Mackerel, Bohar Snapper (and a couple of other they were not sure of the names).

Ian commented that they "had booked three boats two boats of which were fine, but the one boat only had a 60hp engine so was very slow and struggled to reach some of the marks, so they swapped boat every two days to be fair to everyone".

And, "We booked an extra day on Calipso a much bigger boat powered by a 250hp engine this was as we wanted to go to Barren Island with a live volcano which is a 2 and half hour trip even with this boat. It was an impressive place unfortunately on the day it was surrounded by mist so poor for the photography.



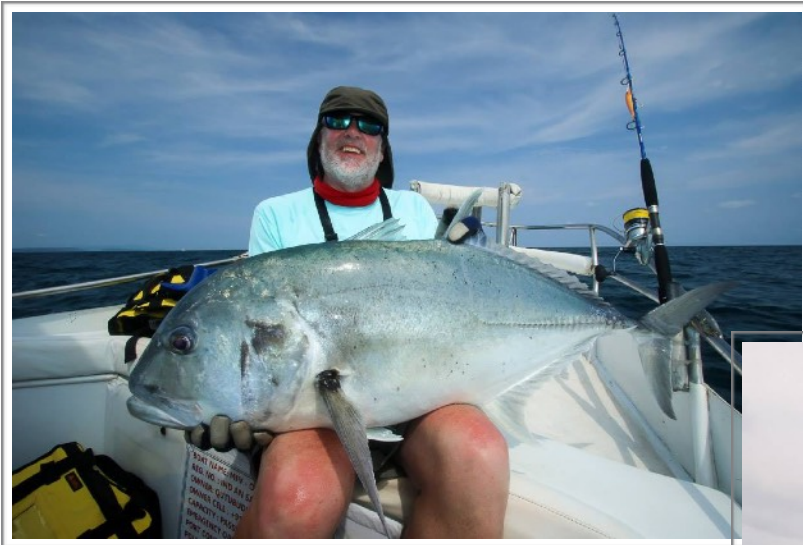
Would we go back? Yes I think we would as there is some unfinished business there as we saw some very big fish that were only hooked for a short time. My mate lost a beast on the last day after playing it for quite while and winning the battle only for it to dive as it neared the boat and reef him!

We will return!"

There is Ian's [much fuller, illustrated report on the Club's private Facebook page](#) - you are registered as a user to view it.

Alternatively Ian did add a copy of his report on the World Sea Fishing

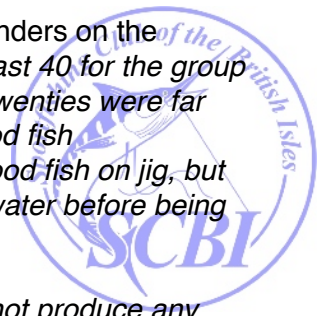
forum - [here](#) and [here](#); parts one and two respectively.



New Zealand. The primary element of Marc Tower's trip to the Antipodes actually wasn't targeting Barramundi, as reported in the June newsletter, but a multi day trip to that iconic venue, the Three Kings - a group of uninhabited islands, reefs and sea mounts off the north tip of New Zealand's North Island. It's where the Pacific Ocean and Tasman Sea converge and, at times, sea conditions can at best be described as 'sporty'! But conditions for Marc's trip proved surprisingly benign.

So, the Three Kings? Well the area's renowned for its Striped Marlin and Broadbill, but also for the monster Mako Sharks that have ended up mutilating more than one potential record Swordfish over the years. But for Marc the challenge was to be jigging for its large Yellowtail Kingfish, and here the results are best described in his own words.

New Zealand continued - "We had a 'silly number' of 30 plus kilo fish (70 pounders on the imperial scale.) - conservatively and without exaggeration, doing the tallies at least 40 for the group (The skipper still swears he was keeping tabs and it was closer to 60!). In fact, twenties were far rarer than thirties and there must have been only a couple of 'rats' (probably good fish elsewhere..LOL!). We took three fish on the 39 kilo mark (86lbs). We did take good fish on jig, but a lot were also taken on squid - they literally hardly lasted a few minutes in the water before being hit.



Deep-dropping did not produce any monster Bass, but some respectable Hapuka and Bluenose were taken. Definitely a new experience jigging in up to 320 meters of water with 800+ grams of lead. We spent a limited time on this so as not to overfish the resource, which makes perfect sense, so there is an element of 'luck' involved in terms of taking a bigger specimen.

Billfish-wise - we raised two Stripies but neither stuck. Luckily our 'night-time antics' were better received. The 'tale of the tape' with the sword; six of us took three hour sessions each - Beto and I would be first 'shift'. Beto struggled to stay awake with all the

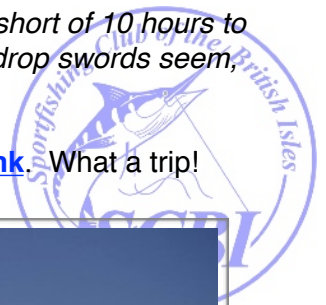
'excitement' of the night-time drifting..we can't blame the booze I think..LOL..! Anyways, you did have to watch the rods as line/angle drift was a bit of an issue, and re-positioning was necessary. Fifteen minutes before midnight and the end of our shift, the 'down-bait' had two fairly short runs, then nothing. I did not commit to the strike as I was hoping for more commitment from the fish, but it never came. After a minute or two I noticed the line angle change - slowly rising up in the water column, and I thought I could see the strobe. Odd I thought - so I gently grabbed the line to see if there was 'additional weight' at the end. It definitely felt like a fish was 'present', so I decided to wind down on it - Beto ran to wake up Nate and the boat. **Fish On..!**

I fought the 'fish' - we were not sure it was a sword at this stage but suspected as much, for the first three hours. Then we made a decision to share the fight - others on the boat had not caught a sword before and I had been fortunate to have caught them in Florida and Tanzania before. Everyone took an hour in the 'hot seat' or



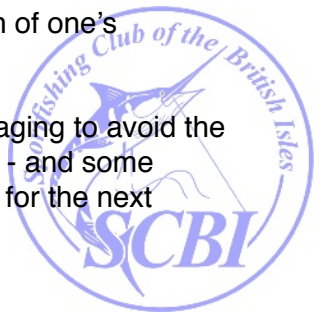
Black Magic harness(es) and, despite a good effort by all, it took us 20 minutes short of 10 hours to boat the fish!! A 200 kilo - 440lbs - Sword was a good reward - it's strange, day-drop swords seem, in my limited experience to be 'so much easier' in terms of the fight...

There is a slightly fuller report illustrated by a wealth of further images on [this link](#). What a trip!



Before finally leaving the Pacific I guess this freshwater capture can - at a stretch of one's imagination - also constitute the 'Pacific'.

Clive Williamson returned to Alaska for his annual trip and fly fishing, whilst managing to avoid the Grizzlies, released some superb Chinook (King) Salmon - the best a 42 pounder - and some Silvers. (And Clive's currently - as of writing - in Norway, but that will be a report for the next newsletter.)



Do I detect a slight camera 'shake' on this image?





And finally in terms of fish captures the Atlantic and home waters.

Cape Verde Islands. Several members have re-visited the islands over the past several months with average results, although nothing spectacular on the Marlin front. I have noted though recent reports of one weighed 'grander' and a released 'nine' by Zyg Gregorek, the owner of Anglers Paradise in Devon.

However deep water jigging, in a break from Marlin fishing, Stephan Kreupl racked up some impressive specimens including this 'monster' Oilfish taken at night. I don't have an estimate of its size but commercial catches suggest that they 'max out' around 140lbs. Um not something you'd necessarily want to eat - the high oil content in its flesh acts as a particularly effective laxative! And beware if you catch one as, between its scales, it has some nasty, sharp backward pointing tubercles - akin to fish hooks. He also from the North West Bank off Santo Antão, recorded this decent Amberjack. It looks to be in the 90lb range.



La Gomera, Canary Islands. Terry Smith fished six days in the first week of June, including the La Gomera Marlin tournament on the Friday and Saturday.



The boat owner - Louis Signone - had started his season the previous Saturday with a 'double header' - Blue Marlin of 500 & 700lbs. Terry found the fishing very slow and water temperatures low at 19.5, up to 20.5 later in the week. However he did manage to release a 700 pounder on the Thursday.

The tournament itself also proved very slow for the 25 boats taking part. Just one released fish and reports of four pulled hooks. We blanked along with all the others! Still a great dinner reception on the Saturday night with good company.

Terry noted that the boat had had a great Bluefin Tuna season earlier in the year, with all fish released up to 850lbs, and averaging out at 600lbs. Louis told me they broke off a fish estimated at 950lbs. Not surprisingly Terry has already booked for next March!

Then, in the last week of August, Terry's booked seven days fishing at Faial in the Azores, fishing with Les Gallagher. (A number of us will of course know him.) In a conversation Les noted that the commercials were having a good season on

Tuna, having already caught 1400

tons of BigEye out of Ponta Delgada on the main island of São Miguel.

And the **UK**, and here shark captures dominate, with of course numbers of Blues and Porbeagles being reported by members fishing with Andrew Alsop in the Celtic Deeps off Pembrokeshire. Peter Finnis also had both Blues and a Porbeagle on a fly rod, albeit with the fly 'sweetened' with bait.

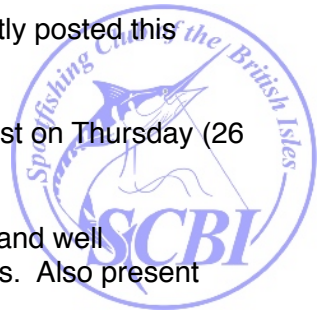
The Blues have also been encountered off the West Country with other members taking fish - in numbers - from Penzance and Plymouth.

Probably most though are the numbers of Threshers currently being encountered off the Isle of Wight. Bob Cowley, as well as adding to his personal tally, has been on board twice in recent weeks when they released **THREES!** And heading those 'threes' were fish of an estimated 350 and 400lbs respectively. In addition there have been a couple of small Porbeagles reported.

On the next page you'll also see a picture of a free-jumping Thresher; a superb image captured recently off Lyme Bay.



UK Bluefin update. For those not accessing facebook Steve Murphy recently posted this update in our 'closed' group:



"I met with the Marine Conservation and Access Group (CAG) of the Angling Trust on Thursday (26 July).

This group are not all AT Board members, but instead a variety of well informed and well connected guys who advise the Angling Trust on a range of Marine fishery issues. Also present were Representatives from the AT.

I presented the background and arguments for a UK, recreationally focused BFT quota and it was well received.

I have received offers of help and support from a number of members of the Group, from Websites, running Campaigns, media exposure etc... The AT for their part offered support to create professional looking Briefing documents for us to use, and help in getting access to the key politicians we need to convince. I know the AT are a bit "Marmite", but they have a strong PR operation and lots of contacts we need, so I see no alternative but to engaging with them. The non AT guys they gave me access to last week are an example....

I've several calls and meetings following on from that in coming weeks. We'll have an article in one of the national sea fishing magazines in Sept/October about the Campaign as well.

I'll be using my (non fishing) time over the next 3/4 weeks to pull together our arguments and plan of attack. By early September, about when the various Parliaments, local Councils etc return from their summer break, (nice job....!), we'll have what we need to move forward. I'll share more on that with you in coming weeks.

Some of you will be aware of Dave West's efforts to bring our Website into the 21st Century, and if that comes to fruition the SCBI should be taking the headlining role in this Campaign. If so we are going to need the help of many of you to spread the word and provide feedback on possible allies you think could help us. It will also require agreement on exactly what kind of fishery we are arguing for. Again, I'll share my thoughts on that with you in the next few weeks.

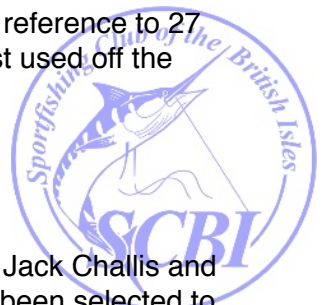
Apart from the opportunity to get a legal BFT fishery, we are working on further Tagging program opportunities that might be feasible, and could possibly precede a Quota and fishery (that will likely take 2-3 years to set up anyhow). The Exeter program isn't really going to plan and the arguments for a different model, involving recreational anglers is growing, (just as Sweden, Denmark and now Norway have done/are doing with their own tagging programs)".

I have also appended, [against this link](#), ICCAT's short interim report of the 2017 research program undertaken - referred to by Steve above - of the tagging of 18 Bluefin Tuna in the Skagerrak - Kattegat, the entry to the Baltic; the Straits between Denmark and Sweden.

Bits and Pieces. Oh dear, what a terrible title! Unfortunately this is me showing my advancing years - '[Bits and Pieces](#)' was a '60s song recorded by the Dave Clark Five!

Firstly here you may recollect a [recent report](#) of a Great White Shark sighted off the Balearic Islands in the Mediterranean. But was it a Great White? Certainly the consensus expressed on the Club's 'closed' Facebook group was that, in all probability, it was a Short Fin Mako. Five metres is close to their upper size range, but characteristics like the very widespread, pointed pecs, its sharp snout, the short dorsal and thick 'Swordfish-like' wide lateral keel/tail root and agitated swimming motion certainly point to it being a Mako.

Historically though Great Whites have been recorded in the Med, and I've found reference to 27 being taken between 1920 and 1976, when the fixed Bluefin Tuna traps were last used off the Balearics.



Three Club members - Andy Atkins, captain, Jack Challis and Jon Patten - three of the team of four - have been selected to represent England in October's Big Game Championship off the Mediterranean coast of France. Many congratulation gentlemen!

As part of the 'round robin' of e-mails between members' fishing together on our Plymouth sharking trip the topic of spooling braided lines on new reels. The view expressed was that wet braid has a reputation for being as bad as dacron if not worse. There have been some horrible pictures on various websites of alloy spool corrosion. Therefore the suggestion was it's worth running a block of paraffin or car wax against the spool before line goes anywhere near it.

Additionally, as part of that exchange, it was mentioned that [Alan Tani's web site](#) is a great resource for reel 'stuff' - assessments, repair and service information on all brands.

Then, on a sadder note, I'd just like to share with you a [short video clip](#) showing stills of Denis Froud, one of our former Secretaries and Club stalwart. RIP Denis, fondly remembered.

Finally, just in case you're suffering from 'withdrawal symptoms', a couple of videos, [a very BIG Black Marlin](#) 'performing' off Australia's Great Barrier Reef during the 2017 season - the language is somewhat 'excitable' so you may wish to mute the sound track in the presence of ladies and children - and [a Blue Marlin in Guatemala](#). Just 'one or two' jumps!

All the Very Best

Dave West