

2016 NEWSLETTER

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN, BRYN LAVIS

Again the year passes so quickly, it seems only a short time since the last December newsletter went out, and again on behalf of your committee I thank all who took part in the organised events throughout this past year.

I am delighted to report that having voted in a fairly new committee at our AGM in July, our club has again gained members to serve for us all and early evidence indicates that we certainly have a very strong and willing committee to take us forward, as hoped new ideas are being brought forward for discussion which will I am sure bring benefits to the club.

The idea of us as a committee conducting our meeting via SKYPE thus saving people travelling great distances for meetings has worked very well, and is a great step forward in ensuring that business can be conducted safely.

All positions were not filled, these will be announced further within this newsletter, I sincerely hope that members amongst us will step forward to fill the vacancies.

At our AGM in 2015 it was decided that the weighing of Conger Eels at sea would be permitted from January 2016. I am amazed that there has not been more entries each month for trophies. The reporting of catches I believe is paramount to our club, in spreading the news and encouraging other to try and beat the catches already entered.

I, as advised last December and reiterated at the AGM will not be seeking re-election as your Honorary Chairman, for no other reason than I have been involved within the committee for more years than I like to remember, and believe that the suggested leadership in Paul Sweetman as recommended by your committee will serve as an excellent step forward.

In finishing my message I sincerely trust that you have all had a good Christmas. May each and everyone enjoy a very fruitful 2017. I hope to meet up with many of you over the coming year(s).

**Bryn Lavis
Hon Chairman**

MEMBERSHIP REGISTRAR - PAUL SWEETMAN

Hello fellow BCC members

I've been fortunate during my some 40 years' Conger fishing to have made some fabulous friends and unrepeatable memories. The early 90s saw a period for Conger fishing that may never be repeated. The BCC personal members championship was a massive event and we had not just good fishing, but a fabulous social event also. During these days of record eels being brought to the Sea Angling Centre on a weekly or even daily basis, friendships were forged and memories created.

As your registrar I like to be kept busy the only way I can keep busy is with lots of lovely new members and renewals. This year we have welcomed new members and affiliated clubs from across the UK and to these guys I wish you welcome to our "Happy Band".

I am asking that as members of the BCC, whilst you are out fishing and making your own friends and memories if a fellow angler catches a Conger please mention that there is club for the species. This is your club and I'm sure we all want to ensure its future for years to come.

SECRETARY - NIGEL McLOUGHLIN

Happy New Year to all members. As your new secretary, I'd briefly like to introduce myself. I'm a retired chemist, having spent the majority of my 37 year career working in the lubricants industry for Castrol and BP, where I specialised in the development of lubricants for large marine diesel engines.

As an angler, I first picked up a rod at the age of 6. This led to an addiction that is still going 52 years later. In the UK my first preference is to fish for big Conger eels in the English Channel, although I'm almost equally happy fishing for Tope and big Blonde Rays, along with light tackle fishing for Black Bream. Closer to my home, in Reading, I've enjoyed fishing for the small population of big Barbel and Chub that inhabit my local river - the Loddon. Abroad I've fished the Skeleton Coast in Namibia for Bronze Whaler sharks, the Fraser River in Canada for giant White Sturgeon and Norway for Halibut. I've met some great people and made some good friends along the way. I hope to continue with my "addiction" for a good few more years yet

Having been a member of this great club for 24 years now, I am proud to step into the role of Secretary. I hope that I can continue the great work of my predecessor Di Byrne. If you have any constructive ideas or suggestions for improving our club then please get in touch with me. My contact details are on the BCC website.

My request to you as members is that you do your best to report your best eel catches to us and support the club by entering these for the trophies and medals we have on offer to commemorate your catches. Wishing you all the best for 2017 - see you "out there" sometime

**54th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
HELD ON SATURDAY 11 JUNE 2016
AT THE THREE CROWNS PRIVATE FUNCTION ROOM, PLYMOUTH**

1. Welcome to Members – Mike Millman, President welcomed members to the 54TH Annual General Meeting. He thanked the Championships competitors for attending the competition and the AGM and for continuing to support the club.

2. Apologies for Absence – Apologies had been received from Andy Gibbs, Jason, George & Mary Weller, Robert Johnson and Kevin Lavis.

3. Tributes to Deceased Members – The club had not been notified of any members who had passed away since the last AGM.

4. Matters Arising – There were no matters arising that would not be covered by the Agenda. Paul Sweetman proposed and Alex Clough seconded that they were a true record of the 2015 AGM. This was unanimously agreed.

5. Chairman's Report - Bryn thanked everyone who had attended both this year's AGM and also those that have entered into the members championships. He went on to thank the sterling work carried out by the committee on a yearly basis. A special mention of thanks to Dave Ball who has set up this years championships, not an easy task especially when recovering from surgery. He also extended thanks to Ray and Kath for organising the local parts of the competition re venues and fish removal for charity.

Thanks were also mentioned to Tony Allen who is maintaining our website & facebook page, a task that is thankless especially when members do not send off their captures of fish when photographed on their mobile phones.

He asked that everyone join in by showing their appreciation to two stalwart members of our committee in Di Byrne who joined the committee in 1994 and Kath Lavis who joined the committee in 2001. During their time in the committee they have taken on multiple roles and also for their outstanding efforts to all events that they have been involved in.

Sadly for this great club of ours they have both done what they have been promising to do for many a year in stepping down from the committee and taking a well-deserved break, they will surely be missed.

As we will see further into this AGM their posts will be required to fill, this unfortunately leads me into advising that as advertised by hard copy letters, the Website and Facebook these posts must be filled to allow the club to carry on under our rules and constitution.

Bryn went on to say that he had been requesting, for many years for new 'blood' to join the committee, it is now imperative as if the committee is not filled in full this fantastic club of ours will not be able to run, it will be forced to close.

Bryn pointed out that over the past couple of years we have successfully been able to utilise Skype to conduct our meetings as it is not always possible for all committee members to get together as we did in the past.

He believed that this system works as we can see as well as speak to each other so that we can in effect sit around a table for the meetings. He felt there was no reason whatsoever why this method cannot be used for the future.

To conclude Bryn went back to a previous AGM when he had said “My personal involvement having had the trust of the membership for so many years, and belief in upholding our fantastic history, does lead me to sometimes err on the side of caution and not want to take a chance on radically making changes to competitions etc. This could in effect stunt progress into new pastures”.

Bryn advised that his term of office would be up for renewal next year. He had joined the committee in 2004 as festivals officer and subsequently took on the role as Chairman. He went on to advise the meeting that he would not wish to be re-elected as Chairman in 2017 and he added that it was for no other reason than for personal reasons as he wanted and indeed needed a rest from all jobs.

He went on to say that he had thoroughly enjoyed his involvement in what he regarded as the best club in our sport. He had met some brilliant people and it had been a great privilege and honour to be part of this club.

To close his address he reminded members that it was not the committee that made this club the great organisation that it is, it is the members, and his plea was for all of us to address the need for participation within the committee, encourage those who would like to put new ideas forward, support them look forward to a new era and take the club into the future.

6. Secretary's Report – Di thanked the committee for putting up with her for 20 years and how much she had enjoyed being a member of that committee. She re-iterated Bryn's point that the club needed a different committee with new ideas. She thanked all members present who had continued to support the club.

Di went on to say that dealing with emails from a Japanese film group wanting to make a film about conger eels to a request for a recipe to cook conger eel has been part of her daily life for 20 years.

She went on to thank the members who had come forward to take on some of the vacant posts but we were still in need of a Cup Custodian.

7. Financial Report – Compared with previous years, 2015 was a good year in that, compared with average loss for last 10 years which was £1000 a year the 2015 loss was £540.

Annual membership numbers are dropping each year and considering the total membership, including Life members, runs to the hundreds, there are only maybe 50 to 60 active members that fish the competitions or enter fish into the monthly and yearly awards. We need to see what it costs to service those members who seem to have lost interest in fishing for conger. One thing we need to look at is the printing and distribution of the newsletters to non active members, and it may be a case of they receive it by email, look on the web or, if a paper one is requested, then a fee be introduced to cover cost of postage.

In light of the changes to the committee Kim thanked those that put their hand up to join the committee and welcomed them. He also thanked Di and Kath who were leaving the committee this AGM for their many years of support in holding the conger club together, he was sure they will be missed but also sure we will see them at future events.

With the changes to the committee there will hopefully be some new thinking to ensure the future of the British Conger Club. As long as there are active members who still enjoy the challenge of catching conger, who knows the next one may be that ton up eel.

8. Acceptance of the Financial Accounts – Proposed: Paul Sweetman, seconded Jim Grant . Unanimous approval

9. Festivals Officer – Dave firstly confirmed that the weather forecast was improving and that competitors should meet at 8am. Skippers would review forecast at 6.30am and would contact Dave to confirm.

He advised that the 2017 Champs would also run from Plymouth on 1st & 2nd July 2017. He would book the same boats so would recommend that entries came in early.

Discussion took place on the possibility of increasing the number of boats for 2017. A suggestion was made to ask the 2016 competitors whether they intended fishing in 2017 to gauge whether a 4th boat would be required.

Dave asked members to note that if they have not been given a competitor number it means they have not been entered so they should get back in contact with him.

He finished by advising that all boats would be in by 5pm and the presentation would take place as soon after that as possible.

10. Records Officer Report – Kath reported that she had received the grand total of 9 eels in 2015 and the majority of them were ones she had put in from the Members Champs.

She had received six fish from Juniors who have a quarterly competition for any specie which wins a trophy and a prize. The Moore Rosebowl which was the Junior annual trophy had been won this year for the first time for several years.

11. Election of Officers –

Secretary	Nigel McLoughlin	Unanimous
Records Officer	Ken Johnson	Unanimous
Accessories	Allan Mason	Unanimous
Registrar	Paul Sweetman	Unanimous

The Cup Custodian post is still to be filled. Really this job is only busy at this time of the year. Bryn was grateful for those who had come forward. He advised that the club could continue with these members but if no-one came forward to do the Cup Custodian job then trophies would not be engraved.

12. Proposals - There were no proposals.

13. Further Discussion at Chairman's Discretion - Paul Maris asked about the suggestion to combine the Affiliated Champs with the Members Champs. Alec Clough suggested a separate competition in September for 2 man teams.

Dave Ball felt that the two should be combined in one competition but that some thought would have to be put into how this would work.

Kim Bowden suggested that a vote should be taken on Sunday when all competitors are there to see if they are interested in fishing 2 man team event.

It was agreed to have a show of hands for those interested in a 2 man team event in Sept/Oct. 8 members were interested.

Paul Maris suggested that rather than have a certain duration of time for fishing there should be set times to leave and set times to get back. Committee agreed that this was frustrating and that this would be dealt with.

Dave confirmed he picked the best tides rather than a particular date.

A suggestion was made that if you booked early you could get a discount.

14. Affiliations – Di reported that subscriptions had been paid to EFSA and IGFA for 2016. Meeting agreed to continue with these affiliations.

Kath reminded members that they could send in any good fish of any specie for the EFSA Fish of The Year Trophy. This is open to any personal members of the Conger Club.

15. Presidents Address – Mike Millman said that there had been some difficult discussions at recent committee meetings about the club having to fold if new committee members were not found. Mike said how difficult this was for him to hear as he was the oldest member of the committee and had joined the club 3 weeks following its inception.

He gave his congratulations to Kath and Di and his sincere thanks. He also offered his sincere thanks to those who had come forward to take over and had saved the club from extinction. He felt it was wonderful that it was going to be able to continue and he wished everyone success for the future.

16. Bryn closed the AGM: by thanking members for attending and their participation.

INFORMATION REGARDING AGM AND PRESENTATION 2017

The 2017 AGM will again take place at the same time as the Members Championships and will be held at the "Three Crowns" pub in Plymouth on Saturday 1 July. This will be in the private function room upstairs. The presentation of awards for 2016 will follow the AGM. Please try to attend if you are an award winner.

Any items for the AGM needs a proposer and seconder and then should be sent to the Secretary before 31 March 2017.

The following committee posts are vacant without nominees and if anyone would be interested in taking on one of them please let the Secretary know. We will need a proposer and seconder and of course the nominee needs to have agreed to be put up for election:

- **Social Secretary**
- **Cup Custodian**
- **Volunteer Committee member(s) "without portfolio"**

- **Paul Sweetman** will replace Bryn Lavis as **Chairman**
- **Dave Ball** will replace Ray Dower as **Vice Chairman**
- **Ali Sweetman** will replace Paul Sweetman as **Membership Registrar**

MEMBERS CHAMPIONSHIP 2016

1st	Andy Gourriet	45lb 5oz
2nd	Dave Hawkeswood	44lb 6oz

MEMBERS CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017 - DAVE BALL - FESTIVALS OFFICER

Four boats have been booked for this year's championships and numbers have been limited to 8 on each boat. At last count there was technically only one remaining place in the competition. However this is based on the proviso that 13 of the places will be taken up by members who currently only have a £65 deposit paid for their place based on a "roll-over" from the cancelled second day of the 2016 Championships.

These 13 members need to contact me and arrange payment of the remaining balance to be assured of their places in the 2017 Championships. The deadline for payment is 28 February. Please pay promptly to avoid loss of your place.

Members who have a confirmed place should already have a competition number. Please contact the Festivals Officer if you have not entered this competition but are interested in doing so.

The rules have been changed this year to specify start and finish times for fishing, along with a "return-to-port" time for boats. Competitors should also read and understand the rules regarding rotation of fishing positions within the boat - which are non-optional.

INTERPORT COMPETITION

This competition for teams of two runs from 1 June to 30 September and is very simple to enter. All you need to do is inform the Records Officer before your day of fishing and provide the following details:

- Names of both anglers
- Fishing date
- Boat name and port to be fished from

After the trip all you need to do is let the Records Officer know the weights of your individual best eels.

Only one entry per year is allowed for this competition, but if your trip is cancelled you can let the Records Officer know and re-try another time.

SHORE COMPETITION

This competition runs from 1 October to 30 November. You can fish anywhere from the shore at any time during this period and send in your entry in the usual way but make sure you ask for the fish to be entered into the Shore Competition.

TROPHY/MEDAL/ ANNUAL COMPETITION WINNERS

If you think there are any omissions or errors below please contact the Secretary to advise.

THOMPSON MEDAL WINNERS

GOLD	
Nigel McLoughlin	80-00 (WAS/Wreck)
BRONZE	
Simon Gavey	25-08 (Shore)
Paul Maris	58-00 (WAS/Wreck)

FISH OF THE MONTH AWARDS - Personal Members

Month	Angler	Weight	Boat/Shore
July	Nigel McLoughlin	66-00 (WAS/Wreck))	Boat
August	Paul Maris	58-00 (WAS/Wreck))	Boat
October	Nigel McLoughlin	80-00 (WAS/Wreck)	Boat
November	Simon Gavey	25-08	Shore

FISH OF THE MONTH AWARDS - Affiliated Clubs

Month	Angler	Weight	Boat/ Shore	Club
October	Dave Colclough	57-00	Boat (WAS/Reef)	Poole Town Anglers
November	Kim White	58-00	Boat (WAS/Reef)	Poole Town Anglers

INTERPORT COMPETITION

No Entries

SHORE COMPETITION

This was won by Simon Gavey from the Channel Island of Jersey with an eel of 25lb 8oz.

PROVISIONAL RESULTS FOR TROPHY WINNERS

If you think there are any omissions or errors below please contact the Secretary to advise.

ANGLER	WEIGHT	BOAT/SHORE
Angling Magazine – Heaviest Eel by a Member		
Nigel McLoughlin	80-00 (WAS/Wreck)	Boat
Bill Shapland – Heaviest Eel by a Lady		
Kath Lavis	41-00 (WAS/Reef)	Boat
Our Unity – Best Achievement by a Lady		
Not won		
Solitaire Cup – Heaviest Single Handed		
Bryn Lavis	48-00(WAS/Reef)	Boat
Scampi Cup – Heaviest from Reef		
Bryn Lavis	48-00 (WAS/Reef)	Boat
Shore Trophy – Heaviest from Shore		
Simon Gavey	25-08	Shore
Fuller Cup – Heaviest from Own Boat		
Bryn Lavis	48-00 (WAS/Reef)	
Saltwind Cup – Heaviest by Life Member		
Paul Maris	58-00 (WAS/Wreck)	Boat
Moore Rosebowl – Heaviest by a Junior		
Not won		
Associates Cup – Heaviest by an Associate Member		
Not won		
Ben Neville Cup – 50lb Test Line		

Not won		
Clive Stone – 30lb Test Line		
Not won		
Bob Bates – 20lb Test Line		
Not won		
Eileen Hunkin Memorial Cup – Heaviest Qualifier - Boat		
Olly Walters	65-00 (WAS/Wreck)	
Ray Rush Memorial Cup – Heaviest Qualifier - Shore		
Not won		
Sea Angler Trophy – Heaviest by Affiliated Club Member		
Kim White	58-00 (WAS/Reef)	Boat (Poole Town Anglers)
Top Boat – Heaviest Eel from a Member		
Meerkat (Ryan Casey)	80-00	
Skippers Wheel – Most Qualifiers		
Not won		
Electric Blue – Heaviest Eel Weighed At Sea		
Nigel McLoughlin	80-00 (wreck)	
Nikaria Trophy – Most Returned Eels by Skipper		
Not won		
Geoff Flores Trophy – Most Eels Returned by a Member		
Paul Maris	120 eels	

EFSA Entries/Awards

Nigel McLoughlin: Conger Eel 80-00

Congratulations to 10 year old Seth James, who has won EFSA England's "Junior Fish-of-the-Year" award for 2016 with a Ling of 24lb 15oz.

JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT

A quick reminder to all Straps about their quarterly competition. Any specie of fish can be entered and there is a prize for each quarterly winner. All you need to do is catch a fish, get it weighed and send details to the Records Officer.

REMINDER TO ALL STRAPS
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR ONLY £2 PER YEAR
SEE MEMBERSHIP FORM IN BACK OF NEWSLETTER

CLUB RULES

Rules of the British Conger Club can be found on our website at www.britishcongerclub.org.uk

The Byelaws, which relate to qualifying for the club and eligibility for club competitions/trophies, are due for review in 2017. In summary, since the beginning of 2016, eels weighed at sea are eligible for all club trophies with the following exceptions:

- Potential winners of the Members Championship
- Potential record fish

Submissions for club trophies or medals should be supported with appropriate photographic evidence and witnessing. Please consult a member of the committee if further clarity is required.

Minimum qualifying weights for membership are as follows:

Shore:	25lb
Reef/Open Ground:	30lb
Wreck:	40lb

Minimum qualifying weights for Thompson Medals are as follows:

Boat Captured	Shore Captured
55lbs and over – Bronze	25lbs and over – Bronze
65lbs and over - Silver	35lbs and over – Silver
75lbs and over – Gold	45lbs and over - Gold

Remember – if you have had a good day's angling and would like to share it with club members, send a note and any photos to the webmaster and get it included on our website. Please include as much information (ie: where caught, wreck or reef, name(s) of anglers etc) as you can.