

BRITISH CONGER CLUB NEWSLETTER 2017

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CHAIRMAN:

Hello and welcome to the BCC newsletter for 2017. It has been a eventful year !

July saw a fabulous championship. We were blessed with wonderful weather, a great camaraderie between the competitors and plenty of eels. I think it's been a number of years since we staged an event that "came together" on all fronts.

The championship also saw the holding of our AGM, a emotional night for many people myself included. We saw Bryn Lavis and Ray Dower - two of the longest-ever serving committee members - decide to take a well-earned rest. I cannot thank them enough for their hard work and diligence to ensure the club has a successful future. They were replaced by Dave Ball as Vice Chairman and myself as Chairman. We were also able to confirm Paul Maris as our fish recorder and Alison Sweetman as our Membership Registrar. I have particularly big shoes to fill and intend to make sure they fit before I start taking clumsy steps !!

Despite being able to confirm these individuals in their new committee roles, we still need members to join us as there are committee members still performing two roles. If anyone wants to help please get in contact with us.

It has been refreshing to see interaction between club members on social media since the Championship and I believe that communication between members, committee and charter skippers can only be good news and is to be encouraged. It seems sea angling clubs and associations in general are receiving plenty of interest and media coverage. This bodes well for the future, with our friends at SACGB being a particularly good example. Long may this continue.

Included in the newsletter are the trophy tables for the year. Congratulations to all the winners. Please would all members make sure your catches are recorded and entered for our many awards.

During the past few months our Secretary Nigel McLoughlin has been hard at work amending the club rules. The changes have mostly been centred around the weighing of eels at sea for membership qualification and certain awards. They are clear and precise changes that your committee think will benefit us in the future. Please take a couple of minutes to read through them. Many thanks for your hard work, Nigel.

What will 2018 bring?.hopefully plenty of new members, more junior involvement and better weather ! The last 12 months have been a terrible year for cancelled trips and frustrated anglers !

Best Fishes

Paul Sweetman
Chairman

SECRETARY'S SCROLLS:

With another year past, I hope that the issue of this newsletter finds you well.

The British Conger Club experienced some mixed fortunes during 2017. Returns received by our Fish Recorder for specimen eels were once again disappointing. However - highlights of the year for me were the great atmosphere in our Personal Members' Festival and the lively discussions experienced at the AGM. The latter of these highlights shows that the most active of you care passionately about your Conger fishing. It would be great if this passion and enthusiasm could rub off on a few others to boost our membership numbers and rekindle the participation of some of our "currently less active" members.

Conger fishing in 2017 showed again that many wrecks now contain a big head of smaller eels and I managed to register 90 eels as my entry for the Geoff Flores Bronze trophy. Three of these were in excess of the 50lb mark, but failed to make the 55lb minimum weight for a Thompson medal. The main headline for 2017 was the increasingly difficult task of finding fresh mackerel for bait. I'm sure that many of us share the same views on the likely reasons for this - so it would be pointless of me to "bang on" about these, as I don't think I'd be saying anything new. It is suffice to say that the frozen bait suppliers are clearly among the main beneficiaries in this situation

The Internet and Social Media are having an ever-increasing effect on the angling world and the BCC is not immune to this. In 2017 our Facebook page saw some unpleasant exchanges that were eventually "moderated" by our webmaster. Facebook has good and bad points. Unfortunately one of the worst aspects is the wreckless sense of entitlement that some people seem to think they have nowadays, which ultimately results in hurtful comments, or thoughtless and destructive criticism. Those of you who I've spoken to on Facebook clearly do not fall into this category and I implore you to continue to post with grace and consideration. Don't forget to check the quality of any images you post - and remember - "Criticism destroys, but Contribution creates"

Still on the Internet - I would like to mention our website: www.britishcongerclub.org.uk
The site continues to be managed by our webmaster Tony Allen - thanks once more for your time and effort, Tony. During 2017 I spent time updating our rules and byelaws to ensure that they reflect our current "modus operandi" - especially with respect to club qualification and the fact that nearly all our trophies can now be won with fish that are weighed at sea. Please take the time to visit the website and look at these. At the same time, you might like to take a look around the rest of the website. All the forms you need are there, along with some interesting information about the club's history. Admittedly there are still some items that could do with updating and I intend to make it part of my mission to do this in the coming months and years.

To finish my "2017 Scroll", I would like to talk about our campaign to acquire length and girth data for Conger eels of known weight. This is a summary of the information we have to date:

<u>Weight (lbs)</u>	<u>Length (inches)</u>	<u>Girth behind pectoral fins (inches)</u>
5lb 6oz	41.0	11.0
10lb 3oz	49.0	11.0
27lb 12oz	61.0	14.5
31lb 4oz	63.0	20.0
36lb	70.0	18.75
36lb	67.0	17.0

38lb	70.5	17.5
48lb	76.5	19.5
55lb 14oz	80.0	21.0
47lb	73.5	19.0
43lb 6oz	75.0	18.5
90lb	86.0	26.5
70lb	81.0	26.0
52lb	74.0	22.0

Thanks to "Size Matters" skipper Kevin McKie and BCC member John Locker for their contributions. Thanks also to "Valkyrie" skipper Glen Cairns for helping me with my own efforts to contribute.

As you can see, the data is scant, which is disappointing. A number of you have asked for a convenient way to determine Conger eel weights while at sea. The acquisition of this data is aimed at providing you with either a reference table or formula to do exactly what you are asking for. In order to make this succeed we need more contributions. During 2018 it would therefore be much appreciated if you could find a way to help contribute toward this initiative. If this is something you want then it is unfair to rely solely on the efforts of other people.

Wishing you a successful angling year for 2018,

Nigel McLoughlin
Secretary



BCC Secretary Nigel McLoughlin with 52lb Conger taken on Glen Cairns' "Valkyrie" out of Langstone.
This eel was boated with a landing net for weighing and measuring, then released afterwards

RECORDS FROM OUR RECORDS OFFICER:

Please see the following tables for 2017 trophy and medal winners, with the exception of the "Geoff Flores Bronze". The result for this is yet to be decided. As indicated, there are a number of trophies for which no entry has been submitted.

British Conger Club 2017 Trophy Winners

Trophy	Angler	Weight or Number of Eels	Boat or Shore? (- where applicable)
Angling Magazine - heaviest by a member	Chris Goddard	73lb 0oz	Boat
Bill Shapland - Heaviest by a Lady	Kath Lavis	48lb 0oz	Boat
Our Unity - best achievement by a Lady	Kath Lavis	48lb 0oz	Boat
Solitaire - heaviest single handed	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Scampi Cup - heaviest from a reef	Kath Lavis	48lb 0oz	---
Shore Trophy - heaviest from shore	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Fuller Cup – heaviest from own boat	Kath Lavis	48lb 0oz	Boat
Saltwind Cup – heaviest by a Life Member	Miles Burden	70lb 0oz	Boat
Moore Rosebowl – heaviest by a Junior	Matthew Lavis	65lb 0oz	Boat
Associates Cup – heaviest by an Associate Member	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Ben Neville Cup – 50lb test line	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Clive Stone – 30lb test line	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Bob Bates – 20lb test line	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Eileen Hunkin Memorial Cup – heaviest qualifier - Boat	Rob Thomas	90lb 0oz	---
Ray Rush Memorial Cup – heaviest qualifier - Shore	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Sea Angler Trophy – heaviest by Affiliated Club Member	Chris Goddard (Guildford City SAC)	73lb 0oz	Boat
Top Boat – heaviest eel from a Member	Paul Whittall ("Offshore Rebel")	73lb 0oz	---
Skippers Wheel – most qualifiers	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Electric Blue – heaviest eel Weighed at Sea (WAS)	Chris Goddard	73lb 0oz	---
Nikaria Trophy – most returned eels by a Skipper	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Geoff Flores Trophy – most eels returned by a Member	Paul Maris	94 eels	
KD Trophy Best Junior catching most Species	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Millman Trophy Best qualifier by a Junior	<i>No entry submitted</i>	---	---
Maureen Trophy Heaviest Weighed at sea by a junior	Matthew Lavis	65lb 0oz	Boat

THOMPSON MEDAL WINNERS 2017

SILVER	
Chris Goddard	73-00 (*WAS/Wreck)
Miles Burden	70-00 (*WAS/Wreck)
BRONZE	
Peter Thatcher	55-14 (Wreck)
Michael Herron	57-00 (*WAS/Wreck)
SILVER JUNIOR	
Matthew Lavis	65lb (*WAS/Wreck)

2017 FISH OF THE MONTH AWARDS - Personal Members

Month	Angler	Weight	Boat/Shore
April	Miles Burden	70-00 (*WAS/Wreck)	Boat
July	Peter Thatcher	55-14 (Wreck)	Boat
August	Michael Herron	57-00 (*WAS/Wreck)	Boat
September	Chris Goddard	73-00 (*WAS/Wreck)	Boat

2017 FISH OF THE MONTH AWARDS - Affiliated Clubs

Month	Angler	Weight	Boat/Shore	Club
May	Dave Colclough	58-00	Boat (*WAS/Reef)	Poole Town Anglers
July	Peter Thatcher	55-14	Boat (Wreck)	Guildford City SAC
September	Chris Goddard	73-00	Boat(*WAS/Wreck)	Guildford City SAC

As a reminder to all members, The BCC is affiliated to the England branch of the European Federation of Sea Anglers (EFSA England). As a result of this affiliation, our members can submit their specimen fish for EFSA England awards. This includes all specimen fish captures - not just Conger eels. The BCC is pleased to announce that BCC members received the following awards from EFSA England for boat-captured fish:

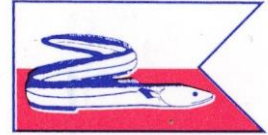
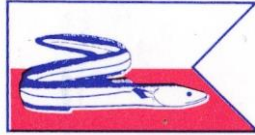
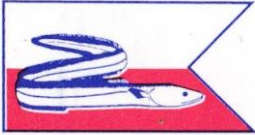
Bryn Lavis: Fish of the Year (other species): Spurdog: 22lb 9oz

Matthew Lavis: Fish of the Year: Pollack: 17lb 9oz

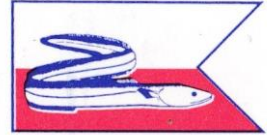
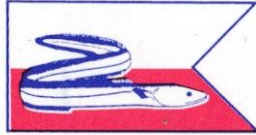
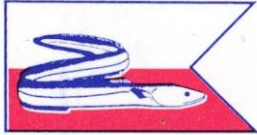
Matthew Lavis: Junior Fish of the Year: Ling: 28lb 3oz

Congratulations to Bryn, Matthew and all our club award winners. If you catch a specimen fish, whether it be Conger eel or other species, please contact our Records Officer Paul Maris if you would like it to be submitted for BCC or EFSA England awards.

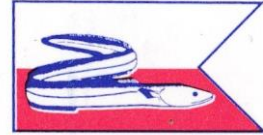
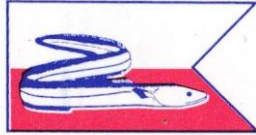
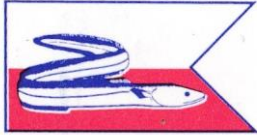
Paul Maris
Fish Recorder



BCC Member Chris Goddard with 73lb Conger taken on Paul Whittall's "Offshore Rebel" out of Weymouth. This eel, which was the heaviest taken by a BCC member in 2017, was boated with a landing net for weighing and was released after photographing.



Rob Thomas qualified for BCC membership in 2017 with this stonking 90lb Conger taken on Kev McKie's "Size Matters" out of Plymouth. The eel was weighed in a sling and released after measuring and photographing



REGISTRATIONS FROM OUR MEMBERSHIP REGISTRAR:

As of 31 December 2017, the BCC had 397 active members. The breakdown of our active members consists of the following categories:

322	Life members
52	Full members
4	Associate members
3	Juniors
16	Affiliated Clubs

If you have any enquiries about BCC membership, please address these to our Membership Registrar Ali Sweetman.

Alison Sweetman
Membership Registrar

TREASURES FROM OUR TREASURER:

Good News ! For 2017 I am expecting to report a positive year to our financial position which will be the first time in over 10 years that the BCC has been in profit !

It's not the object of the club to make a profit, but as I pointed out when I took over as Treasurer, the club would have run out of money in 13 years if its financial affairs had continued to be managed in the way that they were at that time.

The accounts still need finalising and checking, so I will give you a more detailed report at our AGM in June.

Kim Bowden
Treasurer

BCC MERCHANDISE:

If you would like to purchase an item of BCC branded merchandise, please visit our website. To get you directly to our "shop" you can copy and paste the link below in your web browser:

<http://www.britishcongerclub.org.uk/bccshop.htm>

Alternatively you can contact our Cup Custodian - Allan Mason. His contact details can either be found on our website, or in the table of Committee Members at the beginning of this newsletter.

JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT (STRAPS):

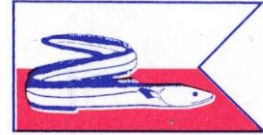
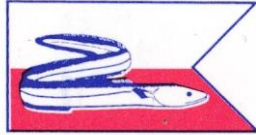
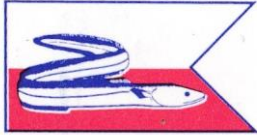
This aspect of the club has taken something of a "back seat" for a while now. There were inconsistencies in the rules as to the maximum age of a Junior Member. This has now been set at age 18. The club currently has only 3 Junior members. However - we still value their membership and participation - and celebrate their angling success with appropriate awards. Please contact Club Secretary Nigel McLoughlin if you would like to take an active role in this aspect of the club.



July 2017 AGM, Plymouth: Our latest Chairman Paul Sweetman (left) presents his predecessor Bryn Lavis with a few "tokens of our appreciation" for his service to the BCC



Cold beer in a BCC tankard



BCC EVENTS - 2018:

Personal Members' Boat Festival: This will take place in Plymouth on the weekend of Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 June. To date we have four boats booked, with all places on these taken (- eight anglers on each boat).

At the time of writing, a "waiting list" is in place for those who would like to fish this event but were too late getting their entry in. A fifth boat will be booked in the event that there are enough people on the waiting list.

Festivals Officer Dave Ball will keep those of you on the waiting list up-to-date. For those of you who have already have a confirmed entry, Dave will be in touch nearer the time with the competition rules and the daily boat draws.

As an advanced reminder - and in line with voting at our AGM - this year the competition is to be fished using hooks that are either barbless, or have pressed-flat barbs.

For those who have not seen them, the results of the 2017 Personal Members' Boat Festival may be found on the BCC website. The event was won by Peter Thatcher from Guildford, with an eel of 55lb 14oz. Your committee has since learned that sale of the four weighed-in eels from the festival raised a total of £147.09. This money was donated to the RNLI.

Annual General Meeting - 2018: This year the AGM will take place in Plymouth on the evening of Friday 22 June. The venue is yet to be decided, but it is to be one with significantly better lighting than the 2017 venue !! Provisionally we will be aiming to start at 8pm. Presentation of trophies and awards for 2017 will take place immediately afterwards.

This year will see our President Mike Millman stand down from his office for a well-deserved rest, so it would be good to see as many of you there as possible to honour this momentous occasion. Please contact Club Secretary Nigel McLoughlin with any nominations or suggestions for someone who might like to take on the role of BCC President.

We will supply more details about the AGM nearer the time. Please notify Club Secretary Nigel McLoughlin of any items you would liked raised and discussed at this event. Remember - this is YOUR CHANCE to have YOUR SAY

Affiliated Clubs' Boat Competition: This is a charter boat event for two-person teams from our Affiliated clubs. We are hoping to resurrect this competition this year. Our Festivals Officer Dave Ball is working on this at the moment. Plymouth skippers have been approached for their availability in late September/October and we are awaiting their response. More information to come at a later date

Interport Competition: This annual 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 our Records Officer Paul Maris or Club Secretary Nigel McLoughlin 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 retry 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.

Geoff Flores Bronze Trophy: This trophy is awarded annually to the BCC member who catches and releases the highest number of Conger Eels over the given year. To enter, download the appropriate form from the BCC's website and fill this in. Copy and paste the following link into your browser for a shortcut to the entry form:

<http://www.britishcongerclub.org.uk/geofffloresmostreturndeelsentryform2018.htm>

Complete this and send to Records Officer Paul Maris at the end of the year.

Thompson Medal Awards: These are awarded annually to paid up Full Members for capture of Conger Eels in the following weight categories:

Boat Captured

55lbs and over – Bronze
65lbs and over - Silver
75lbs and over – Gold

Shore Captured

25lbs and over – Bronze
35lbs and over – Silver
45lbs and over - Gold

You can win only one of these a year. If you are fortunate enough to catch more than one medal category fish, you will receive the appropriate medal for your best eel. You will need to supply capture details and photographic evidence to Records Officer Paul Maris to be eligible. To supply details you will need to complete one of the club's Specimen Fish Entry forms. Download this from the website. Copy and paste this link into your web browser for a short cut:

<http://www.britishcongerclub.org.uk/specimenfishentryform2018.htm>

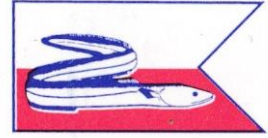
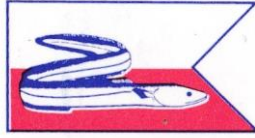
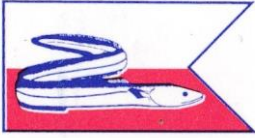
Other Awards: To see what other annual awards are available from the BCC please refer to the table of awards in the "Records Officer" section.

Other Events of interest: The following events are not organised by the British Conger Club, but may be of interest to our members:

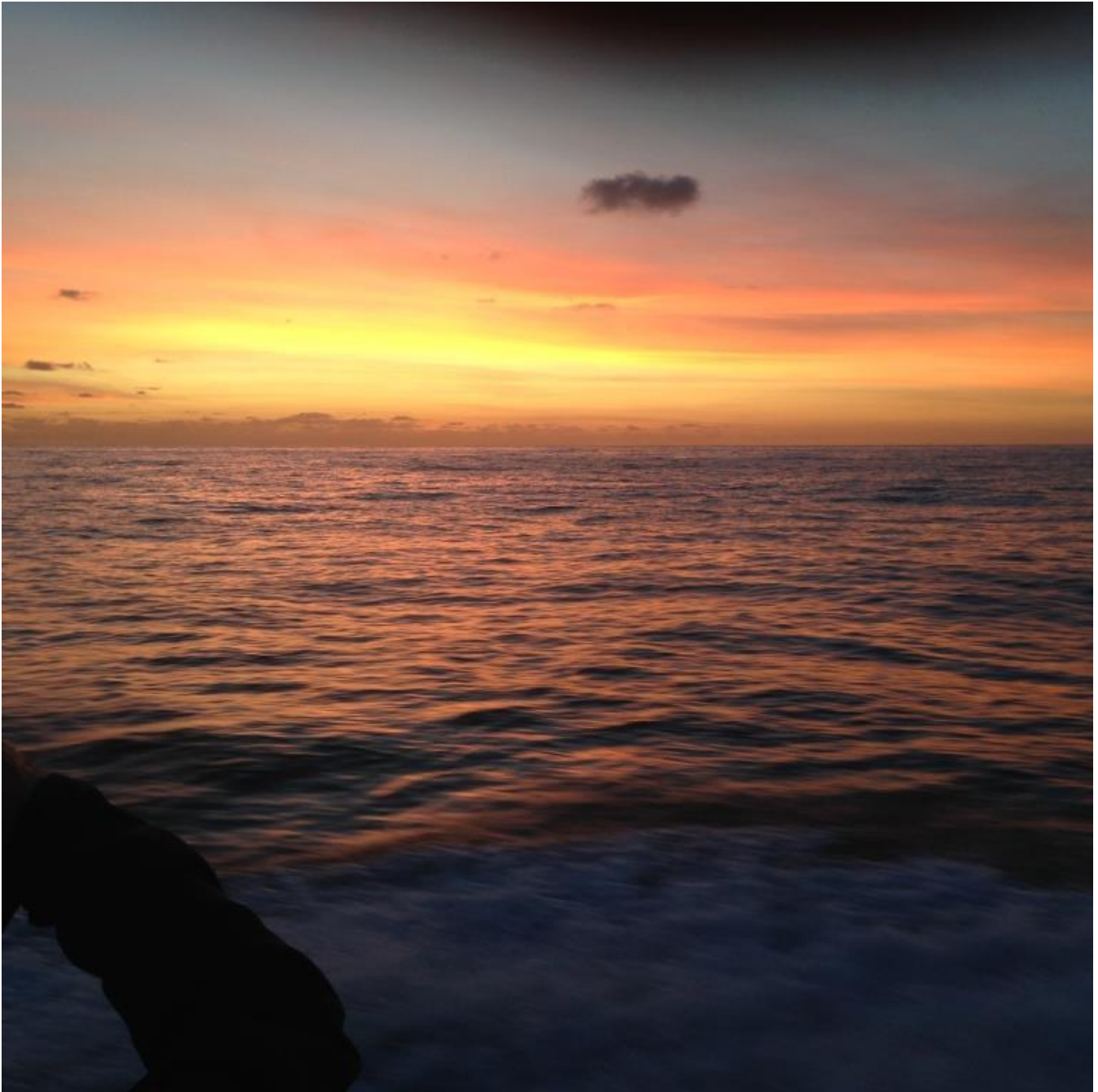
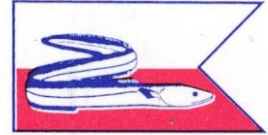
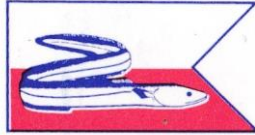
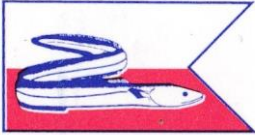
Weymouth Conger Festival 2018: 20, 21 & 22 August - contact Weymouth skippers for information

Northney Marina Conger Comp 2018 (Hayling Island) : 24 July - contact Bex Florence (bexflo02@gmail.com) for information





BCC member Steve Dawe produced this fantastic sand sculpture of a Conger Eel while on his hols. Would be good to get a "real one" this big in 2018 ... hey Steve ...?



"The Long Road Home" the last knockings of daylight viewed from "Valkyrie" while on the way back to Langstone after a great day's mid-Channel congering in October 2017.