

## Summary Notes taken from early Club Minutes

1. Earliest minutes are dated 4<sup>th</sup> January 1953 which is when the club was formed. The objectives of the club were listed as
  - a. To encourage the sport of Shark Angling in British Waters
  - b. To record catches of Sharks by anglers
2. The original headquarters of the club was at the Hannafore Point Hotel
3. The Chairman of the club was Brigadier J A L Caunter
4. The first General Meeting was held on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1953 at the Hannafore Point Hotel where the meeting was informed that a trophy had been presented by Mr Mitchell-Hedges for the Annual Competition. It was agreed this trophy would be called the "Mitchell-Hedges Shark Trophy".
5. On the 26<sup>th</sup> April 1953 the editors of the Field, Anglers News and the Fishing Gazette were all offered and all accepted Honorary Membership of the club
6. The proprietor of the Hannafore Point Hotel was given permission to fly a Burgee which would identify the hotel as the HQ of the SACGB.
7. It was decided that a bank account would be required and an overdraft was considered necessary for the first year. The Challenge Cup (the Mitchell-Hedges Trophy, then insured for £200) was offered to the bank for security for the overdraft.
8. It was decided that advertising space would be sold in the Rule Book. The rates were £5 per page, £2 and 10 shillings per half page and 30 shillings per quarter page
9. It was agreed that the club would present Tankards for the best shark of each species the following year.
10. The first shark recorded in club minutes was at the 19<sup>th</sup> July committee meeting when it noted a 104lb Blue Shark caught by Mrs D Case. The minute states that the fish "was caught in the true spirit of the Rules of the Club"
11. At the July meeting the Brigadier Caunter informed the committee that the BBC had requested the club to take a BBC commentator on a shark angling trip.
12. At July meeting it was resolved that a prize be awarded to the boat owner landing the best shark of the year
13. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> August committee meeting it was agreed to obtain and sell club ties. At a cost of 23 shillings they were not cheap even allowing for them being made of silk. Brigadier Caunter donated a challenge trophy to be competed for annually by lady members which would be called the Alan Caunter Trophy
14. At the 23<sup>rd</sup> August committee meeting, Brigadier Caunter had to relinquish the chair whilst the committee dealt with a complaint against him by Mr G Ransom of Looe who alleged the Brigadier had commented, "if you want to catch sharks go with Edgar Williams, the Butters family is no good at sharking". The committee agreed to seek clarification from Mr Ransom. There was a reply which was read at the next committee meeting which resulted in no further action being taken.
15. The first record of a membership claim failing is recorded in the 23<sup>rd</sup> August meeting. The committee had confidence in the claim but since the claim form hadn't been witnessed by two witnesses the decision was to defer the claim until the second witness completed the claim form.
16. At the September 27<sup>th</sup> committee meeting two prize Tankards were ordered. One was funded by the Looe Fisherman's Protection Association and was for the boat owner landing

the best Blue Shark and the other from club funds for the boat owner-member landing the heaviest shark.

17. At the General Meeting held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October and the following awards were approved:

- a. Mitchell-Hedges Trophy (Heaviest Shark) – JJ Holmes, Porbeagle Shark, 236 ½ lbs caught off Brighton
- b. Boat Owner Tankard (heaviest fish) – as above
- c. Best Blue Shark of the Year Tankard – JJ Holmes – Blue Shark, 115lbs, caught off Looe
- d. Trophy for best fish by a Lady – Mrs D Case, Blue Shark, 113 ½ lbs, caught off Looe
- e. Tankard for second best Blue Shark – as above
- f. Tankard for 2<sup>nd</sup> best Porbeagle Shark – Dr. N S Lorraine, Porbeagle Shark, 64lbs
- g. Tankard for the Skipper – Member landing best Blue Shark – J Butters (Mr Holmes Blue Shark)

#### Other noted events

1. At the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1954 committee meeting it was stated that Messrs Hardy Bros had requested to advertise in the club's pamphlet on Shark Fishing.
2. At the same meeting the following trophies were accepted:
  - a. The Daphne Case Trophy for the heaviest Blue Shark landed by a Member resident in Looe
  - b. The Pat Case Trophy for the heaviest Porbeagle Shark caught by a member
  - c. The R C Roberts Novices Cup to be awarded annually to the person landing the heaviest shark which subsequently qualifies that person for membership of the club
3. The Looe Fishermans Protection Association were asked to notify the secretary of any members who could provide boats for shark angling trips during the coming season. These would be listed and recommended by the club
4. First mention of unpaid subscriptions being followed up was in the minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1954 meeting. Messrs Ridge and Moncreiff were the offenders. At the same meeting the committee recognised they needed insurance to cover them against claims
5. At the March 1954 meeting the SACGB wrote to the President of the British Tunny Club offering him Honorary Membership of the SACGB
6. The 8<sup>th</sup> May 1954 was a busy day as there appears to have been a committee meeting and a General Meeting on the same day. At the committee meeting the Chairman and Secretary were instructed to speak to Mr Bray and Mr Aucott regarding the clubs view on harpooning sharks. This conversation must have happened quickly as at the General Meeting on the same day the club agreed to amend rule 9 to expressly forbid shooting of a fish. This rule remains in place today. The committee agreed that the qualifying weight for male members was 60lbs and for lady members it was 40lbs. It was further agreed that the Mitchell-Hedges Cup would now be awarded to for the best fish, based on the percentage in relation to the British Record and not for the heaviest fish as previous.
7. At the 13<sup>th</sup> June 1954 committee meeting it was reported that Messrs Auger wished to donate a trophy. The club suggested to the company that it should be for the best shark caught on their line. It was noted that outstanding subscription payments remained a problem.

8. At the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1954 committee meeting it was agreed that a committee member would report news of all new captures on a weekly basis to the Angling press. It was also agreed that a telegram conveying Loyal Greetings of Members be sent to Her Majesty by the Chairman on behalf of the club.
9. The minutes of the 22<sup>nd</sup> August meeting suggest that the BBC film crew arrived without much notice and a boat owner-member (un-named) took them out fishing without any prior discussion with the committee. It was agreed that any future similar events should be managed through the committee in order that, "full and proper use be made of the opportunity". The September committee meeting minutes suggest this issue rumbled on for a bit as the secretary was asked to write to the BBC to request that more notice be given prior to filming events taking place.
10. At the General Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1954 the previous qualifying weight for men was increased from 60 to 75lbs. The joining fee for the club was agreed at £3 and 3 shillings which together with the annual membership fee of £2 and 2 shillings meant it was £5 and 5 shillings to join the club once you had caught your qualifier. Messrs Grice and Young offered a Tatler V reel for the best shark caught during June the following year (1955)
11. The committee meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 1954 agreed that the Messrs Auger trophy be awarded to the first member in 1955 to land a shark of over 100lbs and that this competition should commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1955. The committee also introduced 5 individual monthly competitions commencing on the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1955 for the best shark caught each month.
12. At the February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1955 meeting it was noted that a group of Sussex Anglers had advised of their intention to form a club called the SACGB (Sussex Branch) but wanted the SACGB to agree to this. It is also noted that two other localities had similar intentions. The SACGB Committee view was that the SACGB was a national club and was recognised as this throughout Great Britain. It therefore felt it could not agree to the proposal for the formation of branches. The SACGB recognised the right of anglers to belong to local clubs and it was agreed that clubs could be affiliated to the SACGB provided they adhered to the club's rules. An extraordinary General Meeting was called to formally decide the clubs view on formation of sections of the SACGB. The resulting vote was 49 to 3 in favour of there being no branches of the SACGB allowed.
13. At the 24<sup>th</sup> April 1955 meeting it was noted that no further action was to be taken to obtain the Tatler V reel prize. Clearly Tatler had let them down. Mr Orcutt was thanked for presenting a trophy for the heaviest shark caught single handed. A new trophy was donated by the club to be awarded to the member who landed the most sharks over 100lbs in the season. Mr Oliver was thanked for providing a trophy for the Champion Shark Boat of the season
14. At the committee meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1955, the secretary is tasked with writing to the White Fish Authority reference the possible use for sharks. This is the earliest mention of the club's difficulties in disposing of the landed fish
15. The October 7<sup>th</sup> 1955 committee meeting was held at The Salutation Inn. The notes record that a conversation was had with the tenant of the pub and it was agreed that with the agreement of Watneys Breweries the club was happy to make the Salutation its new HQ ..... What happened at the Hannafore Point Hotel? There also appears to be an issue with landing and recording of sharks as the minutes state that the committee should meet with all boatmen and Messer's J Bray and T Eathorne to discuss this

16. October 15<sup>th</sup> 1955 General Meeting agreed that Mr Mitchell-Hedges offer off a new trophy and a boatman award be accepted. The trophy was to be awarded outright to the first member to land a Blue Shark of 250lbs or more and the boatman concerned would receive Mr Mitchell Hedges cheque for £25
17. The November 12<sup>th</sup> 1955 meeting notes record the secretary being asked to write to Mr Mitchell-Hedges reference H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh ... its not clear why? At the same meeting the ladies qualifying weight is increased from 40lbs to 75lbs.
18. The committee meeting of 29<sup>th</sup> December 1955 notes that Mrs H Eathorne's 352lb Porbeagle Shark has been recognised by the British Record Fish Committee as the new British Record
19. March 11<sup>th</sup> 1956 committee meeting recognise the Venning Trophy for the most outstanding or unusual capture. The secretary is asked to write to all boat owners advising them of their third party insurance risk.
20. 1<sup>st</sup> April 1956 meeting records that the 352lb Porbeagle has now been identified as a Mako Shark. Confirmation is awaited from New York so this can be taken up with the British Records Committee. Its agreed that a new Mako challenge trophy is required going forward
21. 16<sup>th</sup> June 1956 committee meeting records that Mr S Oliver has presented a silver cup trophy which is to be known as the Mako Shark Challenge Trophy. Its further agreed that the annual Cock O the Fleet Trophy will be fitted annually to the winning boat at the club's expense
22. November 24<sup>th</sup> 1956 committee meeting discussed the proposal for a Junior section of the SACGB. Decision to be placed before all members at a later date.
23. Committee meeting 11<sup>th</sup> January 1958 – secretary requested to write to British Railways to request that the weighing facilities at Looe station be made available to the club to weigh any fish which are considered to qualify for a world record when the machines available to the club are inadequate
24. Committee meeting 8<sup>th</sup> March 1958 – Weymouth Shark Angling Clubs request to be affiliated to the SACGB is accepted.
25. Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April 1958 – Messrs T Eathorne and J Bray are authorised to stock and sell the clubs emblems but only to club members at agreed club prices
26. Committee meeting 26<sup>th</sup> July 1958 – the Harbour Commissioners of Looe express concern regarding the congestion on the quay when sharks are being weighed. A commission of 10% on the sale of club emblems is agreed with J Bray and Messrs T Eathorne who were the club weighmasters at that time
27. The minutes around this time record committee discontent with skippers who were flying club burgees when they shouldn't.
28. Committee meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> September records a member's complaint about the quality of the service provided by a skipper. This is the first quality complaint recorded in minutes. It was also noted that there were no Thresher Sharks were caught this season and so the secretary was instructed to write to Martini Rossi to advise that, "this trophy has again found no winner"
29. At the 17<sup>th</sup> October 1958 Annual General Meeting it was agreed that annual membership cards would now be issued to all members. At the same meeting it was noted that the club's finances had reached "such proportions that it was unreasonable to ask the Treasurer to continue to hold full responsibility". Trustees were appointed to assist the Treasurer with future financial administration. It was also suggested and agreed that a celebration dinner be held in London in the spring of the following year

30. The committee meeting of the 8<sup>th</sup> November 1958 accepted evidence of a Porbeagle Shark weighing 114 lbs being caught by Mr John Holmes. His timing was perfect as the same meeting had received a letter from Mr D P Case, who had donated the Pat Case Porbeagle trophy, withdrawing it as the trophy had not been awarded to anyone since he donated it. The secretary was asked to write to Mr Case asking him to withdraw his letter now a claim had been made and confirmed. A new trophy was offered to the club by Mrs Pat Sutcliffe for juveniles but since the rules/conditions relating to the trophy were not clear, clarification was sought. It was also noted that with evidence of Thresher Sharks now being in the area, that Martin Rossi be asked not to change the terms of their trophy.
31. At the committee meeting of 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1959, it was agreed that the names of the eleven founder members be listed in the 1959 Year Book. They were
- a. Brigadier J. A. L. Caunter CBE MC
  - b. W. C. Butters
  - c. F. Lyde Caunter
  - d. J. Eathorne
  - e. Mrs H. Eathorne
  - f. Dr. N. S. R. Lorraine
  - g. T. S. Oliver
  - h. R. C. Robarts
  - i. S. J. Tee
  - j. E. Williams
  - k. C. Yard
32. At the same meeting it was noted that Mr D P Case had decided not to amend his decision to withdraw the trophy. The club asked the secretary to write to him "in very strong terms" expressing their "profound disapproval of his action as the trophy had been accepted as property of the club". The club decided to purchase a trophy to replace the Pat Case trophy and call it the Club Porbeagle Trophy.
33. At the same meeting the accounts were presented but they omitted the previous year's numbers for comparison purposes as it was believed, "their inclusion would provoke adverse comment by members, which would be difficult to answer in a satisfactory manner". The Café Royal had been provisionally booked for the previously agreed London dinner. It was noted that H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, "finds that his commitments in May are such that it is with regret that he cannot accept our invitation". There continued to be issues with the location to weigh sharks. The Harbour Commissioners were clearly unhappy that this activity continued to take place at Mr J Brays premises. Later in the month its reported that the weighing facility had moved to the end of the net drying structure.
34. At the committee meeting of 17<sup>th</sup> January 1959, the Café Royal dinner is discussed further. Dress was to be dinner jackets but the Boatmen were requested to wear their Boat Jerseys
35. On the 7<sup>th</sup> February 1959 a special meeting was convened to discuss the issue of the weighing site location. The club were concerned about loss of publicity by moving away from the present site. It was suggested that if shark landing dues were paid no objection could be raised by the Harbour Commissioners. The club were clearly very angry by the Commissioners action and its noted that an option to the situation would be to relocate the SACGB to Plymouth or Fowey. Mr Butters advised it was the original right of a fisherman to weigh his catch on a tripod on the edge of the quay within the white line.

Although the white line had now disappeared, the right, in his opinion, still existed. The matter was referred to the next meeting

36. At the 14<sup>th</sup> February 1959 meeting the committee read the Harbour Commissioners letter regarding the weighing location. It did not forbid weighing at the shop locations which gave them time to develop an alternative scheme. The Café Royal dinner guests to be invited were confirmed as, Mr Rex Stephens, Editor of The Field: Dr Denys Tucker, Head of the Fisheries Department of the British Museum of Natural History.
37. At the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1959 meeting the weighing discussion continued. Mr T Eathorne had now decided he would no longer conduct weighings at his premises. It was resolved that the club appoint an additional weighmaster with a remuneration of 50 shillings per week, to work two hours nightly to weigh sharks, issue certificates of weight and wash down the weighing position. Café Royal guests were confirmed as Mr and Mrs Rex Stephens and Miss Le Guillan. A cup was presented by Mr Mitchell-Hedges (President) to replace the one withdrawn by Mr Case. It was decided to call it the Sammy Trophy.
38. The 6<sup>th</sup> June 1959 meeting noted the forthcoming visit of Mr Mahoney of the International Game Fishing Association. It was agreed that part of the hospitality to be extended to him should include shark fishing trips. At this meeting the Chairman (Brigadier Caunter) read a letter from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries giving details of a scheme to tag sharks and notifying of the forthcoming visit of a ministry representative to "give instruction". This is the first mention of tagging in the minutes of the club. All skippers of shark angling boats were to be approached by the club to ascertain their interest in the scheme. There was also a letter from R & A Kohnstamm Ltd re the possibility of using shark skins in the manufacture of leather and one from Lambeth Johnston & Co Chartered Accountants reference the use of shark carcasses in fertiliser. The meeting agreed that these would be passed on to Mr Piggot of Cornish Canners as a possible interested party. The Anglers Encyclopaedia requested permission to include the Shark Angling in British Waters pamphlet in their next issue which was agreed. The Trelawne Club invited the SACGB to affiliate with them to enable their facilities to be available to SACGB members when in Looe
39. At the 4<sup>th</sup> July meeting the Chairman gave feedback on the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries visit re tagging of sharks. No details were minuted. It was noted that Mr Mitchell-Hedges (President) had passed away. Brigadier Caunter was unanimously nominated as the new President. It was reported that Mrs P Sutcliffe had offered a trophy in memory of her husband (Marsden Sutcliffe) for the best shark caught by an angler under 16 years of age, member or non-member, at Looe. This was accepted. The continued inappropriateness of flying club burgees by skippers was reported
40. At the 16<sup>th</sup> July 1959 meeting there was a discussion relating to a valuable silver and gold "centre piece" offered to the club by Miss Le Guillon on behalf of the late Mr Mitchell-Hedges. In view of the value of the item, and the uncertainty of the conditions attached to the gift, the club asked their solicitor to seek clarification from Miss Le Guillon. The result of this action was that the gift was withdrawn and Miss Le Guillon sent a letter to each member of the committee expressing her dissatisfaction with the action taken. The cup previously given by Mr Mitchell-Hedges for the first Blue Shark over 250lbs was in the custody of Mr Pat Case. Mr Case passed the cup to Miss Le Guillon who agreed to hold it until such times as it could be awarded. The IGFA sought the club's views on a) the catching of large fish on exceptionally light tackle by boat and chasing it into shallow waters and b) the use of electrical and other mechanical devices for winding lines. It was

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decided to vote according to the IGFA recommendations which were that such practises were contrary to the spirit of fair fishing.

41. Committee meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> August reported continued inappropriate flying of club Burgee and Pennants by boatmen
42. Annual General Meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> October 1959 reported that over 200 members and guests had attended the Café Royal dinner. It was resolved that this should become an annual event
43. The committee meeting of the 14<sup>th</sup> November 1959 reviewed a draft of a letter to be sent by the President to Rear Admiral Bonham-Carter inviting the Duke of Edinburgh to become a Patron of the club. At the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1960 meeting a reply had been received which stated that H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh was regretfully unable to accede to the club's request that he become a patron
44. The Committee meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1960 demonstrates the determination of Brigadier Caunter who is on record stating that he hoped to see General Sir Frederick Browning, the former Comptroller to H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh, and discuss with him the position regarding the Duke becoming a patron of the club.
45. The minutes of the 30<sup>th</sup> April 1960 committee meeting note that, Brigadier Caunter stated there would be an opportunity of contacting H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh through Captain Norton Bracy at the Angling Holidays Exhibition in New York. It was agreed that the Brigadier draft a letter to be handed to the Duke on this occasion. At this meeting Brigadier Caunter requested details of shark tagging programme. The secretary confirmed he was contacting Mr Holden of the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food for details
46. The committee meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> June 1960 noted a letter from Mr J J Holmes offering to donate a trophy to be awarded annually for the best shark caught by a Sussex member. It was also agreed that an assistant to the Weighmaster be appointed. It was noted that the local press had printed an article stating that a Mako Shark had been sighted in Talland Bay. It was thought by the club that this was most likely to be a Basking Shark and the secretary was asked to write to the paper pointing out the damage such inaccurate reporting could have on the holiday trade.
47. The minutes of 30<sup>th</sup> July 1960 reported that the current account balance was £788 and that £1000 was held in a building society account. New members to date in 1960 were 106, taking the total membership to 719
48. The minutes of the Annual General Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1961 note that 6386 sharks were caught and although a large proportion of that number were small, a reasonable number of large sharks had also been landed.
49. Minutes of the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October 1962 note that there was a drop, in sharks caught which Brigadier Caunter attributed to "cold spring weather and not to overfishing as some believed" This view was supported by the fact that anglers in other parts of the country also reported reduced catches. The 1962 season accounted for 2345 sharks compared to 6386 in the previous year. Interest in the sport continued to grow despite the smaller catches with 1747 trips taking place in 1962 compared to 1713 the previous year.
50. The minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1963 were uncharacteristically brief
51. At the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 1964 it was noted that the total number of sharks caught in Looe was 2729 and 628 had been reported caught in other ports. The 435 lb shark caught by Mr S G Miller for which a claim for a British

Record had been submitted was noted, as was the 157lb shark caught single handed by Mr R Ives. This year had not been as satisfactory financially when compared to previous years due to the low number of catches and a corresponding low intake of new members. Indeed, an excess of income over expenditure had only been possible due to the cancellation of the London dinner. The club assets amounted to £2541

52. The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> October 1965. It was reported that no shark records had been broken but that it had been a "fairly good year", with 2108 sharks being caught at Looe.