

## Mark the fish December

As I walked along the boulevard to meet with Mark, I past the revamped restaurant of what was formally known as “La Barca”. There was Mark leaning on the railings, oblivious to the wider world, gazing hopefully to catch a splash in the rising tide indicating some remaining bass to be caught.

Life is a roller coaster of emotions, sometimes we are up while at other times it just does not turn out the way we had hoped. Today there was no splash! no fish! only disappointment!

Mark had been busy during those few, but long, days when the weather had prevented all but the most hardy to venture out and brave the elements. He had occupied himself with casting lead weights and making up traces. Sore fingertips and the pain from the occasional splash burn would have vanished at even the glimpse of a four or five pound bass in the water.

In an effort to lift his spirits, I spoke gently and said, “I don’t suppose anybody is rod fishing today”. Mark lifted his gaze and looked me straight in eye. With an envious response he simply said, “they are at Rozel”. Apparently, squid is the catch to be had from the north-coast harbours.

The opportunity to fill up the freezer with squid for next season is now. Plentiful bait, available at no cost, to be frozen in preparation for the BIG bream season during May and June is a real incentive for many anglers to get out there. For others the willpower to switch off the television on a Saturday evening may be too much. The dream of how well they would be able to dance should they have the opportunity to be coached by Anton Du Beke or Ola Jordon is all too alluring. Putting on their wellington boots, heavy weather gear and letting their light shine in the dark damp environment of the pier-head does not fire the imagination to the same extent.

For my own part my thoughts gravitated to sweet memories of many an enjoyable meal of squid (calamari) for starters and carbonara for main when La Barca was La Barca. However, that was about as distant a memory as the last time I was keen enough to sit in the cold in the hope of catching anything large enough to make a wholesome meal.

Anyway, it is the time for happy thoughts and a little generosity. So if you catch a glimpse of Mark when he is raising funds for charity over the Christmas period, put your hand in your pocket and help others, unable to enjoy the simple pleasures we take for granted, a helping hand.