

## JACK SHINE – A GENUINE SHORE ANGLING LEGEND

Over-use of words such as star, hero and legend with regard to people doing little if anything much out of the ordinary is a major modern problem as it devalues the impact of such words when a genuine candidate comes along. Having become 'battle hardened' by them, often these days they rarely if ever draw a second glance. So when I now ascribe deserved legendary status to Irish shore angler Jack Shine it now means very little. But what other words are there to describe a man who dreamed, planned, then repeatedly carried out arguably the greatest Irish (or British Isles) shore angling feat ever, which in the almost 50



years that have since elapsed has never once been repeated. I refer of course to the deliberate targeting and landing of big Porbeagle Sharks from the shore. A major feat by any standards, but one which, in this particular case, is made all the more creditable due to the tackle available at the time, which was the early 1960's, with his first wholly successful encounter taking place in the summer of 1962.

Much has been written over the years about Jack Shine, a great deal of which has been painstakingly gathered together as a comprehensive piece of angling history by Irish angler Michael White who very kindly copied his material to me for use on the Fishing Films and Facts website. The problem was that with so much of it, and with some particularly enormous file sizes, it has been difficult to select out what to present, and more worryingly, what to leave out. As I've already said, during his hey day, much was written about Jack's exploits. Unfortunately, when a magazine vacates its monthly slot on the rack, that information is very often lost or forgotten. But not by Michael White who has been meticulous in his self allotted task. So rather than me digesting and regurgitating what has already been written about the great man, those old magazine articles are reproduced here as historical documents. Sadly, as with Jack himself, some of those magazine titles are no longer with us. Only Sea Angler remains, and in all cases, copyright for these articles is held by the titles owners, making them custodians of what are crucial pieces of angling history.

Jack Shine died in 1997 but his legacy deservedly lives on.

# Porbeagle shark from the shore

*A new experience, a new dimension in fishing from the shore. Jack Shine tells his experience*

CREEL DIARY, IN THE FEBRUARY ISSUE, QUOTING FROM THE LIST of notable catches from Irish waters, issued by the Irish Specimen Fish Committee, reported four porbeagle shark taken from the shore near Lahinch. It was I who caught the fish. The figures given for their weights, and for the breaking-strain of line used, were accurate; the four fish, however, were not a one-day bag. They were, in fact, caught as follows—on August 28 one of 138 lb., on July 25 one of 130 lb., on July 11 one of 106 lb., on August 11 one of 101 lb. My total catch of porbeagles for the 1963 season was completed by another of 90 lb. on July 18. Such astonishing fishing from the shore has not as yet been equalled in European waters. Though this was not a one-day bag, such an event is not at all unlikely here, at Lahinch in County Clare, on the west coast of Ireland. To illustrate that, let me tell you of the experience that came to me in one day's fishing in August 1963.

It shows the luck, and the ill luck, that one day can bring. It was a day when a shore record to beat all shore records could have been set up, a day that should have yielded me three porbeagle, each over 100 lb., and a good tope. All this, too, in less than three hours' fishing.

Because this day was a holiday a greater than usual number of anglers were out, and good catches of mackerel and pollack were being taken. It was just as I arrived that a shoal of mackerel broke water less than fifty yards out, and at once every rod in sight was bending and excitement was high. This was mackerel fever, and the inclination was in me to put up my spinning tackle—indeed, it was hard not to; the past two weeks had been utterly blank of anything like big fish. There had been no sign at all of shark, and I had wasted unnumbered hours watching a float that never moved but for wind and current. Such a slack period dampens enthusiasm; but the old urge was there. I assembled my shark tackle.

Half a fresh mackerel was mounted and, once more, I cast it in quest of a shark. Though mackerel fever was now at its height, I was willingly given my favourite place on 'shark rock'—so-called because all the shark, so far, had been taken from it. The float stayed, without drifting, just where I had cast it.

So it stayed for only ten minutes, and then it began to move slowly for a few yards; my slack line was being quietly taken out by something so far unseen. Then, seconds after, the tail and dorsal fin of a porbeagle showed at the surface. There was quite a long distance between the two fins; a good-sized shark.

This, to me, is the most thrilling spectacle in all shore fishing. All thought of those blank disappointing days was gone. My reward at last for all the empty hours had come. I reminded myself to be patient, not to be premature in striking; that would, surely, result in the hook not finding its hold as it should well back, behind the teeth. In my experience the porbeagle is the gentlest taker of all among the heavyweights. I waited, patiently.

The shark stayed on the surface for fully two minutes, just cruising slowly, in a small circle. The float was still on the top, and the only indication that the fish had taken my bait was the ever-so-gentle pulling on the line. Then at last it went down a little, the float went, he headed out to sea, still going slowly. Still he did not realise he was in any trouble.

Now my angling friends had forgotten their fishing. The only line in the water now was mine. They were as elated as I was; some had seen it all before; some saw it now for the first time. The shark continued heading out, very slowly—but now, suddenly, it decided to leave; it quickened its pace. The ratchet was running merrily. As I always do, I gave a last-moment check to my reel, making sure that all was well. It was, and the shark now was 100 yards out. I stopped the spool with my hand, and I struck. Yes, yes, I had made contact.

The shark came to life; it accelerated, still going out. I lost eighty yards more of line quickly, and he ended his run away out—de, coming to the surface in a swirl of water and a powerful slash of his tail. Then he turned and, without pausing, came straight in for the rock—this is a quite usual thing in shore fishing for shark. I was forced to back away to keep a tight line on him. Only a bare ten yards out he stopped, and again lashed to the surface. There were gasps of awe from the spectators. Someone suggested pulling him into a little bay on my right and gaffing him there and then; and my two gaffs were already in willing capable hands. But I knew that this porbeagle was a long way from surrender; I wanted nothing like a tug-o'-war between him and me. With my light line he would surely be the winner. I left him where he was, waiting for his next move.

When it came it was a dangerous one, so close inshore; he just bored deep. Then, when, probably, he reached bottom, he headed out again, going very strongly, deep down. Then, about 150 yards out he came to the surface again, and after that did not go down again. He did indeed prove to be the most active porbeagle I have ever hooked. For the next twenty-five minutes he ran, in





*This is the 130 lb. porbeagle, and behind are the wild rocks of the Clare coast from which it was taken*

and out, back and forth, making fine, swift long runs. The continuous drag, the constant pressure, were at last too much for him, and, finally, after more than thirty minutes, he was coaxed in close to the rock. The gaffs went home and he was lifted on to the dry rock, 101 pounds of porbeagle shark.

Everyone admired him, and how fine a fish he was. How beautifully proportioned his body was, so closely resembling a tunny in his shape. A porbeagle lacks the speed of a tunny perhaps, but surely there is swimming power written all over his graceful form. I had taken heavier sharks than this one, but this one had put up the gamest fight of all so far. Perhaps that was why he appeared to me an extra beautifully powerful fish.

My friends resumed their fishing, and I made ready another trace and bait. I cast again.

Now there was a lapse of fifteen minutes or so, and then another porbeagle showed on the surface, close to my float. My reel line, again, was being drawn out, gently. So he, too, had taken the bait. After the usual delay for the mouthing of the bait, and with the shark again heading out, I struck and, so it seemed, had made firm contact. Here was another good fighter, not as fast as the

first one, but much stronger; he, I estimated, must be heavier. This one, too, after a battle of half an hour, came in to the rock. He was indeed thoroughly tired, almost completely exhausted. All that remained was to manoeuvre him into a close position for gaffing. I eased him up to the surface—and then saw that the hook was not in his mouth at all, but in the pectoral fin. The bait was still there, plainly to be seen in the clear sea.

Then, with the shark almost on the surface, scarcely eight feet out, the hook just lost its hold, came away. The porbeagle lay for several seconds, suspended. Then, very slowly, it moved out, going deeper and deeper. Then it was gone.

Examination of the bait showed that he had held it in his teeth, probably for all the pre-striking time. I thought I had allowed enough mouthing time; but, it seemed, a few seconds more would have produced sound hooking.

But I lost no time in mourning; another bait was mounted and launched—the tide was now filling strongly, and re-casting was necessary every five minutes or so to keep the float in its proper position. Half an hour passed. Then suddenly the float came to life, skidding fast across the water for twenty yards. Now it lay

*Continued overleaf*

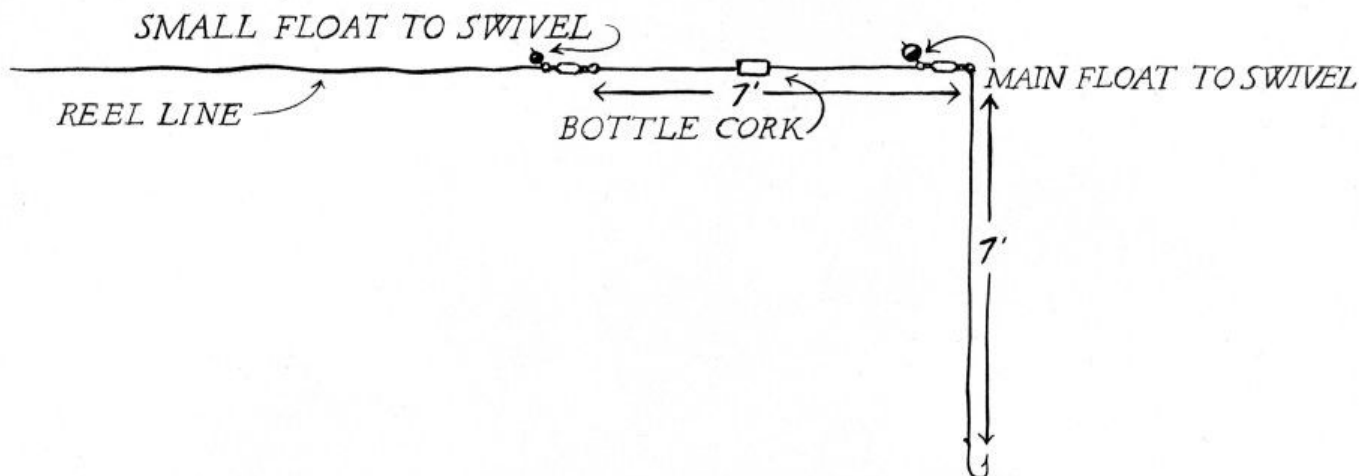
# Porbeagle from the shore continued

still for a few seconds, and then was away again for another twenty yards. Then it rested still on the water. I reeled in and found the bait just a little bit ragged. The antics of a tope, no doubt, and that I had realized before the second run had begun. If I had struck on the second run I would probably have hooked him; but I did not—maybe this was a porbeagle behaving differently from its kind. So I lost the tope.

My slightly damaged bait was again sent out; and, very soon, it was attacked. This time there was no doubt what species it was that was at it. The porbeagle, in the way of its kind, showed

beauty he was. With a little luck what could I have had? Perhaps such a chance may never come again; but I shall keep trying.

Now, perhaps, I should tell you something of the tackle and method I use for this fishing. The rod is solid fibre glass, eight feet long and of medium strength. The reel is an Alvey Side Cast of 5½ inches diameter. It has a star drag and holds 300 yards of 32-lb. b.s. monofilament with 60 yards of braided nylon as backing. The fourteen-foot trace is swung out by hand, with the reel held in the casting position. I use no weights—the bait, usually half a mackerel, gives weight enough for casts up to 60 yards. A small



itself on the surface, staying up for some time. But, the pity was, as he cruised, he became entangled in my monofilament line. Within five seconds of striking and making firm contact the line went slack. I retrieved just a bare line, frayed at its end, evidence of what had happened. The line had come into contact with the shark's rough skin. The 34-lb. line stood no chance. I was using a fourteen-foot trace of cable-laid wire, and the fact that a porbeagle of six feet or less got behind it and on to the monofilament makes me regard this as my most unlucky experience with shark from the shore.

And so ended that feverish fishing period, a day never to be forgotten, a day to show what you can occasionally expect from shore fishing. All I had, as it was, was one porbeagle, but what a

float is tied directly to a swivel of the trace, either at seven feet or at fourteen feet. The bait, mounted on a 10/0 hook, sinks slowly to the fishing depth. Close to the shore, here, the depth is six fathoms, and I like the bait to be only seven feet down, because I believe porbeagles, inshore, tend to stay near the surface. Since losing that third shark, as I have described, I now use a tackle as shown in the diagram when fishing at a depth of seven feet. This, at least, keeps the upper half of the trace afloat and reduces the risk of the shark fouling the reel line. It also makes the trace visible, and it can be pulled out of the shark's way if the need arises. This season I am going to use a 6½-inch Alvey reel with a 12-foot hollow glass rod. I think that this should be a better combination than my old one.

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# Jack Shine PORBEAGLE MAN

CLIVE GAMMON'S ARTICLE ON PORBEAGLES IN THE APRIL issue of *Angling* was of great interest to me because for the past six years now I have been taking them from rock-fishing centres here on the Clare coast. During those six years the waters in this area have been frequented by a truly vast number of porbeagles and although blue sharks are sometimes taken from boats they are rare in comparison with the porbeagle. I have never hooked a blue from the shore.

The first real invasion of inshore waters by the porbeagle took place in May 1962. Suddenly the sharks seemed to be everywhere; sometimes they showed their dorsals some way out; at other times they could be clearly seen chasing a trace of mackerel or pollack flies right in to the rock – and very often they smashed these traces.

At first we assumed that a lot of these breakages were due to the sharks being foulhooked by the light spinning traces; but later it became apparent that the porbeagles were actually mouthing the flies, and numbers of rubber eels and German sprats were also grabbed. The porbeagle's interest in small lures has not waned a bit over the years and last year in June I watched a fish over 80 lb. mouth a plastic fly of less than 1½ in.

In *Angling* of February 1964 I said "porbeagles surely feed on sprat shoals". A likely explanation for their unusual interest in small lures is that they mistake them for small fish like sprats. I also said that porbeagles could be taken using artificial spinning baits and described how I had deliberately hooked one on a goat-hair fly. The wire trace to the fly was only three feet long and the nylon line was broken after seven or eight minutes.

Looking back now I doubt if I would ever have landed that shark, even on a long wire trace. The hook was only about a 4/0 and was very probably anchored merely in the shark's teeth. I still have the companion of that fly. They were an American pattern with a weighted head, a liberal amount of white goat hair 2½ in. long with a light-blue feather in the centre. Incidentally, this fly has proved very deadly when jigging for pollack.

I now have several home-made shark flies. Actually I think there is no problem in devising a lure to attract a strike from a porbeagle – one from white goat hair or white plastic should be as good as anything. A lure of goat hair is used by professional tuna fishermen in some parts of the world.

*Two long-handled gaffs are in to haul the porbeagle eight feet up the rock face to Jack Shine's fishing spot. He uses sewerage rods.*



There is a problem, however, and a big one in hooking a shark firmly on an artificial. My experience of porbeagles is that they are very slow takers and even when using a perfectly fresh natural fish bait the strike has to be delayed for quite a long time in order that the shark may take the bait well back into the soft area of its mouth. There the hook will easily get a hold. But as soon as a porbeagle realizes that the artificial it has grabbed is not edible it will surely attempt to drop it. So if the fish is to be hooked at all it has to be at the moment it takes the lure – and the hook is probably going to be somewhere in the front of the mouth.

A small hook (under 5/0) is likely to be deflected by the shark's teeth and may find only a temporary anchorage. A big hook will require a lot of pressure to be applied if it is to be driven home through the gristly substance of which the shark's mouth is formed and the 31 lb. monofilament nylon which has become standard shore sharking line for me is hardly the right kind of line for spinning an artificial bait. This season I planned to experiment with a non-stretch line of about the same breaking strain.

It is quite possible of course that a porbeagle may take a small artificial through his open mouth right back without ever laying a tooth on it, intending to swallow it whole. I have heard it said often that a porbeagle swallows his fish whole. Perhaps he swallows very small fish whole, but I doubt very much if he does so with mackerel-size fish: from what I have seen here of baits which were attacked by porbeagles which dropped them after a while, or shed the hook during the struggle, and of baits taken from porbeagles that have been landed, it would be very hard to convince me that a porbeagle does anything other than chew a fish to shreds before swallowing it. Nature certainly seems to have equipped the fish with a set of razor-sharp teeth for such purposes.

I have taken many shore sharks by spinning the tail half of a small mackerel slowly and this would be on a par with trolling from a boat (*advocated by Gammon in his April Sea Column. Ed*). Back in August 1962 I one day caught two porbeagles of 91 lb. and 75 lb. with this technique. The tail bait I was then using weighed about six ounces and since the line was then only 19 lb. b.s. long casts were easily achieved.

When the porbeagles inshore are finicky about taking a bait the best hope of attracting a strike is by casting and retrieving the bait. When I feel a fish take I always stop

*The oily slick of the rubby-dubby shows clearly at Green Island, Clare. This rock yielded the first shore porbeagle, for Shine.*



retrieving and leave the bait on a slack line to the shark for some time before striking. Several porbeagles have been hooked on lasts of mackerel four or five inches long that were meant for pollack.

A fair number of anglers from boats and shore have gone after sharks for some time now and the number of sharks per rod has been generally very small. Enough attacks are made on anglers' baits to warrant far better catches. Tales of missed bites and smashed traces are heard of almost every day during the season. Boat anglers sometimes complain of being unable to locate the sharks on certain days and in my opinion some of the bigger boats after porbeagles go too far from shore.

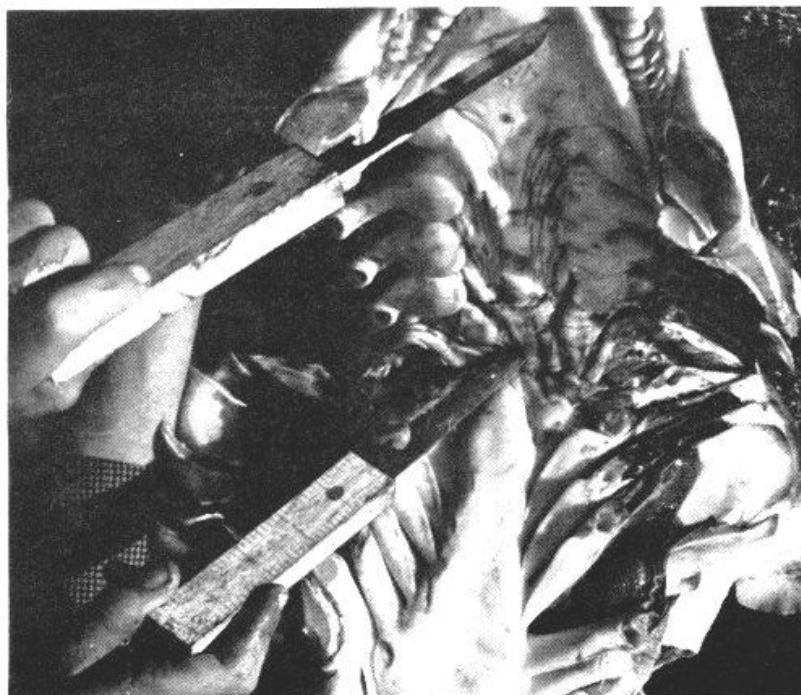
During the warmer summer months when the sprat and mackerel shoals are mostly quite close inshore the porbeagles should be close in attendance. I have had sizeable porbeagles from water only 20 feet deep and lost (broken trace) a very big fish from the same water.

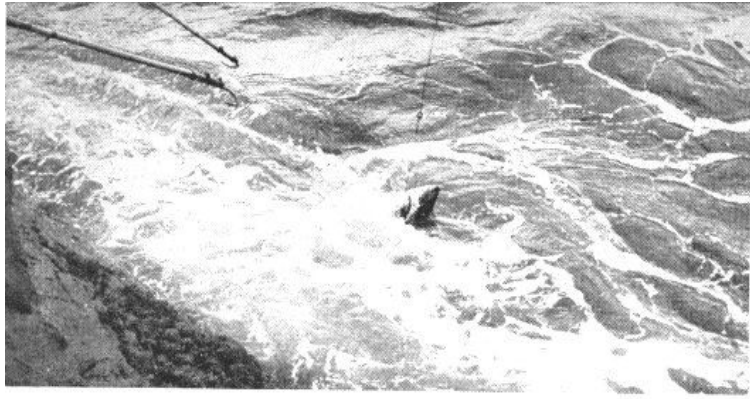
We use a bag of rubby-dubby here quite often but there are occasions when even a well-filled bag will fail to interest or delay the porbeagles. When mackerel are shoaling a short distance offshore the rubby-dubby must lose a lot of its appeal because there are so many real live fish about.

Finally, although the porbeagles have been around my home coast in strength for six years now, before that time they seemed to be about in lesser numbers. Basking sharks were then often seen close inshore but the now-familiar porbeagle dorsal was rarely seen. I can remember being truly amazed to see, some 15 years ago, a lone porbeagle swimming through the water close to the rocks at Green Island. At that time goat-hair flies were popular in the area for mackerel and pollack, yet in a season's fishing there would be no more than five or six smashing attacks on them from porbeagles from the whole of the Clare coast. And these were mainly attributed to big pollack.

Since 1962 I have often seen more than a half-dozen traces broken by porbeagles in a few hours fishing time at Green Island and it is the same story up and down the coast. It would be folly to venture an opinion as to what combination of factors brought them into our waters in such number. Perhaps they will leave again as abruptly as they arrived. Who knows?

*Mouth of porbeagle cut open: between the knives is a tough area where power is required to sink a big hook over the barb.*

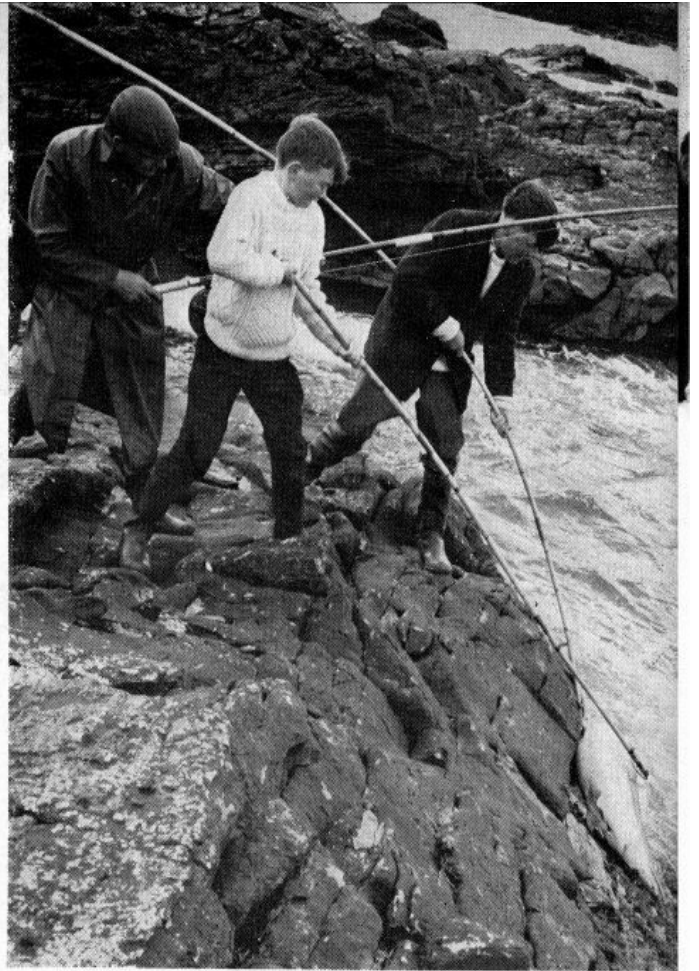




WE OFTEN COMPLAIN, WE SHORE FISHERS OF THE BRITISH Isles, that we cannot catch the calibre of sporting fish that the Americans, South Africans and Australians do from a stance on land.

Yet this attitude must stem from a failure by many to recognize the true potential of shore fishing. True, our main sporting quarry is the bass, which for sheer size cannot compare with the monster stripers and channel bass caught by the Americans, and must be fished with light tackle to give of its best, but tope are far more catchable from the shore than most people believe, and in shallow water they are formidable opponents – over 200 yards of 20 lb. line can be peeled from the reel by one of these sleek marauders – and few boat-caught fish, no matter the species – are able to do that!

Even in the South-East, where tope from the shore are not heard of so much as in Wales and the Wirral coast, I have had a few small ones, and one evening in the late summer of 1963, Leslie Moncrieff, fishing at Denge Marsh, Kent, when hordes of tiny silver whiting were in, took three tope scaling 27 lb., 34 lb. and 42 lb. using the bait-robbers for bait!



IN IRELAND THE SHORE FISHING POTENTIAL IS TREMENDOUS, though sadly overshadowed by the superb boat fishing. Surfcasting for bass, shore fishing for tope and, in some places where deep water and strong tidal current concentrations coincide, shore fishing for the fighting porbeagle shark.

The man who has pioneered this porbeagle fishing in Ireland is of course Jack Shine, who fishes the Clare Coast.

Kevin Linnane, Sea Angling Officer of the Inland Fisheries Trust and Des Brennan's right-hand man, himself a keen "porbeagle man" (see Sea Column, May issue) took these photographs of Jack's capture of a 140 lb. porbeagle from Green Island at the mouth of Liscannor Bay.

Jack used 60 lb. monofil and a wire trace only eight feet long. The bait: a whole mackerel.

The gaffs used to reach the beaten fish from the high rocks are made up with three-foot sewage rods which are screwed together. Jack's sons, Gerard, 16, and Noel, 13, are seen doing their stuff.

As you can see, Jack's rod is no "barge pole".







# SHARK FROM THE SHORE

THE words beneath the photograph in the window of the Ennistown tackle shop in County Clare, Ireland, were clear enough — 'Porbeagle shark, 145lb, caught by rod and line from the shore'. A bit of the blarney? A tale originating from a bellyfull of Guinness?

The tackle dealer, however, will soon put you on the path of the captor in this amazing piece of angling. The man in question is Jack Shine, a creamery manager whose sharking feats from the steep coastline of Lahinch have made headlines almost everywhere — and still continue to do so.

It all started when he climbed down the rocks to the Atlantic behind his house to fish once more for the predominant pollack, cod and that ilk. But he noticed three powerful fins cruising closer and closer to the shore. "They were porbeagles chasing mackerel — and I immediately made up my mind to fish for

them from the rocks," said Jack.

It took him a lot of experimenting with methods and tackle but, finally, in the summer of '62, he landed his first porbeagle. It weighed 77lb and fought for thirty minutes — something of a milestone in angling history as it must have been the first over 75lb ever caught from the shore in Europe, let alone Ireland.

Much to the astonishment of the locals, he has caught more than 200 sharks from the shore. Average weight is about 100lb.

Seven years ago on a sunny, calm day, Jack once more tried his favourite haunt on Green Island — and came up with that incredible fish of 145lb. This one took half a dozen attempts to be gaffed by his two sons but they finally managed to haul the thrashing fish up the steep rocks after 45 minutes of struggling to contain its surging runs.

Jack insists that several days' fishing in the right conditions will almost certainly





produce a porbeagle; there should be at least 10 fathoms of water, clear ground further out and the mackerel should be in abundance.

The best fishing time, says Jack, is when the sea goes flat. That means the porbeagle will press the mackerel closer and closer inshore.

"If the wind blows out to sea or if the tide is falling, I pour half a gallon of fish oil on the water. This attracts the mackerel and within minutes I can catch 30 or 40," said Jack. These are chopped up to make the rubby-dubby. The mackerel bait, attached to a 6/0 treble hook, is cast over 200 feet.

"You have to work fast with rod and reel, always trying to keep the dead bait moving like a live fish. I have often watched shark ignore a bait which hung without movement in the water," he recalled.

He uses a float only to keep the bait at the right depth. After casting out, he gently winds in. To cast such a distance, his 12-foot rod is of medium-sized glass fibre; his Alvey reel contains around 1,000 feet of 30lb line. He generally uses a 130lb wire trace of 10 to 12 feet.

Jack's diary makes incredible reading; some days he has had two or three shark and besides the big one, he has caught porbeagle of 140lb, 138lb, 134lb, 132lb, 130lb and three of 115lb.

"I lost the biggest one of all," he lamented. "I fought it for nearly an hour and it must have been over 200lb."

But Jack could easily improve on his European record. Fishing in the country's five-star porbeagle area, he is well aware that the Irish record fish of 365lb was boated off the West coast of Ireland and the professionals often bring porbeagle of over 400lb into local harbours.

**Above Left:** The 115 lb porbeagle is beaten and Jack Shine's sons, Noel and Gerald, heave the fish out of the water.

**Inset:** This is the rocky terrain near Jack's home in Lahinch where the porbeagle are caught.

**Above:** It took Jack Shine 40 minutes to quell the fury of this fine 140 lb porbeagle from the rocks at Green Island. No wonder he looks chuffed!

**Inset Left:** No problem over bait! Son Noel soon whipped out these mackerel from the rocks for father Jack.

**Inset Right:** A fresh mackerel on a 6/0 is the offering Jack uses to tempt his Irish shark from the shore.



# Shark from the Shore

by LIAM KANE

We had both fished the north beach Greystones, Co. Wicklow. I fished a club competition on Sunday, 28/4/85 and caught a flounder. He fished on Saturday, 31/5/86 and caught a flounder.

What's so important about catching a small 6 in. x 3 in. flounder you may ask. Well, it just happens to be one of thirteen fish caught, tagged and released on that Sunday, the 28th.

Now 508 days later, our "Flat tie" friend, tag number 2279, was ashore again thanks to the angling skills of John Finlay of 2 Cherrymount Crescent, Malahide Road, Dublin 3.

Had the flounder remained in the Greystones area for the 508 days or had it gone offshore to deeper water to spawn, and returned to the rich feeding ground between the two heads? It really adds a new dimension to angling. I have often spent many hours on windswept beaches with just a solitary fish caught for all my efforts. However, the fact that I have tagged and released the ocean traveller begins another chapter beneath the waves.

Talking about ocean travellers reminded me of the early Sixties when the Porbeagle and Blue Sharks began their northward migration away from the warm Atlantic waters of the Azorean Islands to the cooler waters off the south and west coasts of Cornwall and Clare. The Azores, which I had the

privilege to fish from in 1980, are a group of islands approximately 800 miles west of Portugal. My heaviest catch that year was a 286 lbs Blue Shark caught at 4 a.m. while boat fishing 8 miles south of the main island of San Miguel. However getting back to the mighty Porbeagle, the west coast of Clare is where the great Jack Shine pioneered Shark fishing from the shore.

Jack who did most of his fishing from Green Island, had on occasions witnessed anglers fishing for mackerel and pollock who had their lines smashed by sharks. It then became Jack's intention to try and capture one of these mighty fish. Using the right type of tackle would have to be carefully planned and tried out. In doing so Jack selected an 8 ft medium strength spinning rod and a large fixed spool reel packed with 400 yds of 19 lbs B/S line and a 7 ft wire trace to prevent the shark's teeth from biting through the line. This type of tackle would allow him



Jack Shine with a 145 lb shark on Green Island, August 1967.

to cast — without too much difficulty — his tail end of mackerel bait. Other anglers who were using similar tackle for ordinary rock fishing were beginning to look upon Jack as a half-wit.

After many blank days, Jack's luck was to change. A Porbeagle of 77 lbs — his first ever shore shark — was caught. Jack was now aiming for a three figure shark. In 1962 he was to record two more Porbeagle of 75 lbs and 91 lbs on the same day. However, he had to wait until May of '63 to try and land his first one hundred lbs plus shark.

The really big fish were beginning to prove to be a handful and after losing a good hundred pounder, Jack decided to upgrade the strength of his line. In fact his method proved to be a success with catches of 4 shark over the hundred pounds — the heaviest a fine fish of 138 lbs, which even from the

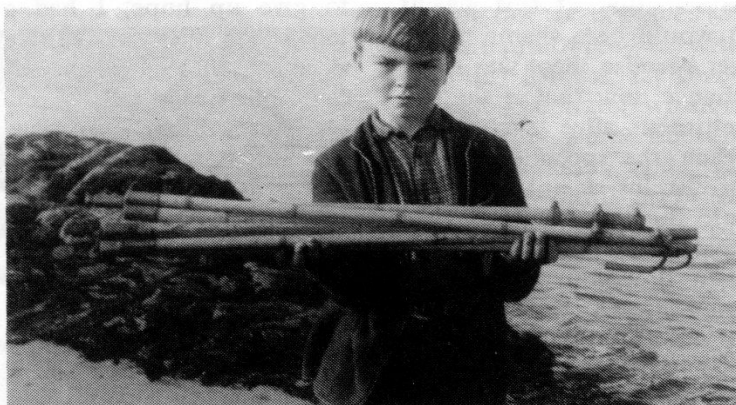
boat would be classified as a good catch. Jack has gone on to record Porbeagle to 140 lbs and 145 lbs on 31 lbs B/S line.

In August 1967 Jack lost the grand-daddy of all shore sharks when his reel was stripped of 400 yds of 60 lbs B/S line. To try and prevent a reoccurrence of losing such a big shark Jack's standard tackle is a 12ft beachcaster (test curve 6lbs), an Alvey 6½ in. diameter side cast reel fitted with star drag. He uses two spools. One has a capacity of 400 yds of 31 lbs line and the other 400 yds of 61 lbs line.

Jack tried two methods to attract the attention of these mighty predators. If a land breeze is blowing a balloon can be tied to the trace to allow the bait to float out. However for a higher rate of success, Jack prefers to cast and retrieve the bait slowly. And for the landing of his catch which can be very dangerous, he recommends using drain rods with screw on fittings which allows you to alter the size of the gaff when needed.

A high degree of patience and perseverance is required if one is hoping for success in fishing for shark from shore.

Jack Shine lives in Moy, Lahinch, Co. Clare where the memory of the Porbeagle can be relived with the mention of "Rubby-Dubby".



This bundle of sewer rods can be assembled to make two gaffs — one 12 ft. and one 9 ft.





# THE ULTIMATE SEA CATCH

*LIAM KANE on fishing for porbeagle shark*

**T**he recent catch of a 315lb six gilled shark from Nick Dent's boat from a deep water mark off the south west coast, brought back vivid memories of shark safaris off the Galway and Clare coast during the late sixties and early seventies. At that time club meetings buzzed with news of anglers who had encountered mighty porbeagle and blue sharks while jigging feathers to catch mackerel to use as bait for general fishing. Sea anglers considered shark to be the ultimate catch from the home seas; anglers would spend weeks planning and preparing tackle for the right tides and weather conditions, that allowed boats to venture out to the shark grounds in and around the Aran Islands.

Although the great Jack Shine encountered porbeagle, and landed several fine fish to 145lb from the shore, is a truly amazing feat. My own encounter with porbeagles made me realise the importance of both butt pad and shoulder harness to help take the strain off the arms that need rest, and back muscles that need to relax when the

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**"Jack Shine encountered porbeagle and landed several fine fish to 145lb from the shore; a truly amazing feat when I have seen big strong anglers just turn to jelly and buckle at the knees, while attempting to play a porbeagle close to the boat's gaff"**

**Above, the great 130lb porbeagle shark caught by Jack Shine off Green Island in August of 1966**

shark is staying deep. Your body aches and feels like you have done ten rounds with Mike Tyson.

Talk about throwing in the towel. I have seen men give their rod to fellow anglers to continue the fight with a big shark, because their energy was drained playing their big catch. In fact, the young angler, Stefano Martinaro on board his uncle Nick Dent's boat, lost his chance to claim what would have been a new Irish record for a six gilled shark (see page 17 for full report). Nick, who has boated, tagged and released many fine shark, soon had the big predator gaffed and on board to be photographed for a fishing trip that will long be remembered. In general it's the charter boats operating from Cork in the south west and right along the Clare and Galway coast that have encountered some of the biggest shark caught on rod and line.

In 1970, Murt Lucey caught a 302lb porbeagle on mackerel bait off Kinsale.



# Shark from

**Sea Angler's Scottish correspondent Jack McKinnel travels to Ireland and meets an angler who made a name for himself 30 years ago by catching big porbeagle from the shore**

**T**HE beautiful scenery of Ireland's west coast offers some excellent sport for sea anglers but nearly 30 years ago Jack Shine specialised in catching porbeagle shark from the County Clare shoreline.

Jack, now 70, suffers from indifferent health but the memories of his shark exploits are as vivid as the day they took place.

Although now unable to fish, he takes a great interest in sea angling and recently watched Alan Yates' video *Rock Fishing* that was filmed on the rocks at Ballyreen where the porbeagle were landed.

Jack arrived at County Clare to work as a creamery manager but soon found the sea around Lahinch was excellent for angling. Large numbers of bass, pollack, wrasse and mackerel were all caught from the rocks but it was the porbeagle that caught his attention.

On many occasions, he watched them chase mackerel between May and August as he fished with his young sons, Gerald and Noel.

It was these sightings which gave him the idea of trying to land a shark weighing over 100lb.

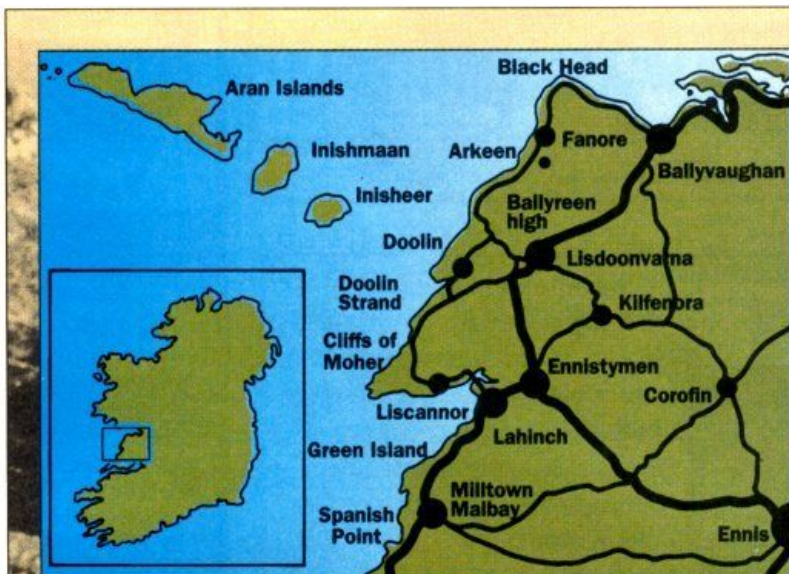
Jack also saw the tackle of other anglers demolished while spinning for mackerel at his favourite mark, just south of Lahinch, and he decided to try his luck in 1962.

His efforts amused many of his friends but he patiently waited for his first fish.

After many fruitless attempts his luck changed and he landed his first porbeagle weighing 77lb using a mackerel bait.

Although far short of his 100lb target, Jack was pleased to have proved the doubters wrong. Later that year, in August, he landed two shark on the same day weighing 75lb and 91lb.

It was not until the next year that he realised his ambition and landed four



porbeagle over 100lb, including two weighing 130lb and 138lb.

Jack continued hunting porbeagle for several years with his heaviest fish weighing 140lb and 145lb.

At first his tackle consisted of an 8ft, medium strength rod and large French Luxor reel with 19lb monofilament line.

His hook was attached to a 7ft wire trace and the first shark were taken about 60 yards from shore.

He later fished with a 12ft Auger beachcaster and Alvey 725 six-and-a-half inch reel fitted with a star drag. It originated in Australia where they were used to land very large fish from shore.

Two spools gave the option of having one loaded with 400 yards of 31lb nylon and the other with 400yds of 60lb line. His trace was made from 9ft of 7x7 strand, 49 strength, 150lb wire which was pliable and did not kink. The most



# the shore!



**Gotcha! Jack Shine proudly displays the 145lb porbeagle which was caught from rocks on Green Island**

successful hooks were Hardy's steel Misheer trebles which were thought to have been originally intended to catch Nile perch.

When Jack spotted the shark feeding inshore he cast a tail-half of mackerel among the fish, slowly reeled in and waited for a strike.

If the wind was suitable, he would use a balloon to take the bait further out.

Hooking the shark was difficult but

bringing them ashore was even harder and it often needed the help of his two sons.

Landing the fish was also a problem which Jack overcame by making a 12ft gaff built from 3ft sections of draining rods.

Jack says a great deal of patience and perseverance is essential to catch the shark. Often they would disappear, resulting in long periods when other

anglers would catch fish but Jack would land nothing.

Shark may still be found off Ballyreen and could be landed by an angler with the time and patience.

About six years ago Stranraer angler Raymond Smith hooked a large pollack from the low rocks at Ballyreen. As he reeled it in something large hit the fish biting clean through just behind the head ■



# REFLECTING ON JACK SHINE

...Ireland's greatest big-fish shore angler

Irishman Jack Shine was a rebel with a cause, a man who refused to follow the crowd. With the peak of his flat cap pulled down to shield his eyes he was totally focussed on pulling off one of the sport's greatest feats - catching a 100lb-plus fish from the shore

Story by Peter Foster

**J**ACK was an angler who threw convention to the winds, a man who wanted to test new ideas and theories and blaze a trail where no other fisherman had been before. The standard, as far as he could see, hadn't been set, and he wanted to make his mark in the world of sea angling.

The challenge of landing a 100lb-plus fish from the shore had been thrown down by the men of neighbouring County Kerry, who had taken a few random skate in excess of the magical ton from Fenit pier.

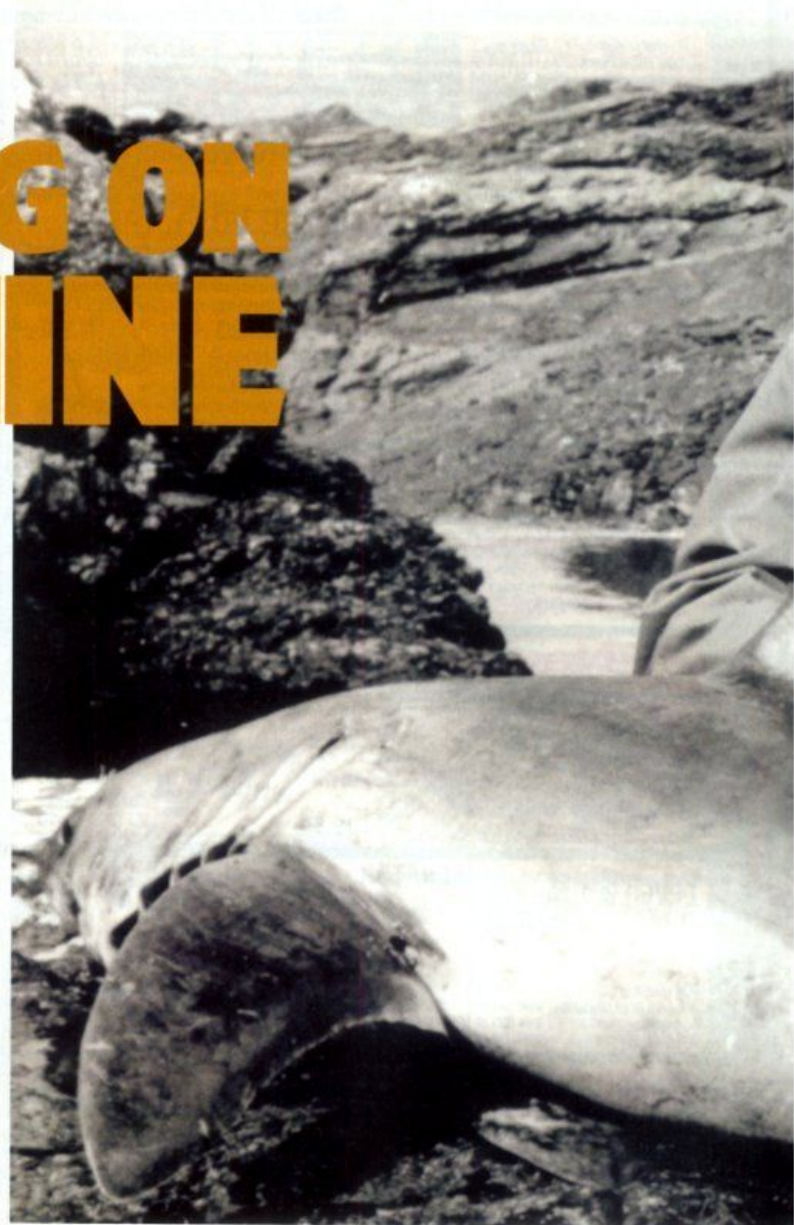
It was no secret that the deep-water Atlantic rock marks along the County Clare coastline were home to some pretty big fish. Jack had experienced at first hand the horrors of the pollack he was playing being ripped to shreds. It wasn't unusual for him to reel in just a pollack head with the rest of the body missing.

The accusing finger was pointed at the patrolling porbeagle shark, which had often been seen herding up and then smashing into the mackerel shoals which visited the coast from mid-May onwards. Everyone was in awe of the sharks, but nobody had set about nailing one. It was just the challenge that Jack was looking for.



**Main:** Irish angling legend Jack Shine with a shore-caught porbeagle shark

**Left:** Jack's choice of tackle was a 6lb test curve rod with Alvey 6.5in side-casting reel fitted with star drag



## EARLY SHARK TACTICS

The west coast of Ireland is famed worldwide for its outstanding bass and pollack fishing but Jack turned his back on this and focused all his attention on locating what he thought would produce his first shark from the shore.

Tackle in those days was 'over-engineered' and nothing like we use today, but there wasn't a lot around to choose from and Jack found himself using an 8ft medium-weight solid fibreglass rod and a massive fixed-spool reel loaded with 400 yards of 19lb mono.

End tackle comprised seven feet of 90lb wire and a 'large' hook. Bait was the tail end of a mackerel weighing about half a pound. Jack liked things nice and simple.

In the grand scheme of things, hooking the fish would be the easy part but landing the fish would be a whole ball of new problems. What was needed, Jack decided, was a long-handled gaff. The problem was nobody made them.

Jack overcame the problem by converting a set of drainage rods, each one 3ft long, that could be screwed together to form a handle long enough for the venue.

Accompanying him on his expeditions were his two sons, Gerald and

Noel, who proved invaluable in helping to land the fish. They were also handy anglers themselves, and during the quieter times showed their dad they could catch too, especially the bass.

Jack's tactics kicked off by spotting a shark, then casting towards it. He then slowly retrieved the bait hoping the shark would home in and take the bait.

Obviously there were frustrating times simply because Jack could see the cruising sharks but couldn't get a bait out to them as his tackle just wasn't good enough. On a good swing Jack could expect 50 yards at best.

This was all back in 1962 when he found himself the target for endless jokes and Mickey-taking from his fellow anglers, who continued to catch enormous amounts of fish while he sat for days just waiting - but the tables were about to be turned.

**"Jack continued years ticked by, best banging his round to no less**





Starting with the arrival of the first mackerel in May, Jack concentrated his efforts from the deep-water marks around Green Island near Lahinch.

For almost two months and with a lot of fishing hours under his belt, he was still to break his duck when he set out again towards the end of June. It was to be a day when shore fishing history would be made with the first-ever capture of a shore-caught shark from European waters.

At 77lb, it wasn't a monster as far as porbeagles go, but Jack was now fully vindicated and so the stage was set for the next ten years when he would go on to fulfil his dreams of a 100lb plus fish - and more.

That first flush of success was quickly followed in August with a pair in the same day at 75lb and 91lb. Shortly after this, the shark disappeared - and

the Mickey-taking stopped.

Out again the following May, Jack soon contacted and lost a shark estimated at over 120lb. This fish was to make the Irishman think hard about his choice of tackle. After a 45-minute battle, the shark was lost when the wire trace frayed and parted just yards from the gaff. Out went the old solid fibreglass kit and in came a 12-foot long 6lb test curve rod with an Australian Alvey 6.5 inch side casting reel fitted with a star-drag and two spools, one loaded with 400 yards of 31lb mono, the other with 60lb.

The trace went up to a 12ft length of 175lb wire, and the hook pattern was a Hardy's forged-steel Mahseer treble, which was originally designed to deal with Nile perch and mahseer.

The lighter line was to be used when fishing relatively clear water, the heavier stuff for the more snaggy spots.

The new set-up enabled casts to be almost doubled. Jack was now getting on average 75-80 yards which in turn was massively increased when he started to use balloons as a flotation device. When the wind coming from behind his back they would help take the bait further seawards.

## MACKEREL ARE THE KEY

During the following year, Jack set the shark-fishing world alight with not one but four fish over 100lb, including heavyweight specimens of 130lb and 138lb. The smiles suddenly disappeared from his critics' faces.

Jack continued to catch as the years ticked by with his all-time best banging the scales round to 145lb. He was also witnessing big shark strikes, which left him with his nerves jangling and his terminal tackle in tatters.

His most memorable hook-up came in August 1967 when he hit into a shark that set off on a run and just didn't stop. With 60lb line disappearing rapidly off his reel and the star-drag having problems coping with the situation, Jack could do nothing except brace himself for the inevitable bang when the reel finally emptied.

Finally, with 400 yards of mono stretching out to sea, the battle finally came to a juddering halt as the last turn of line left the spool. The rest is history - the knot parted on the spool and the fish carried on its searing run.

During the ten years that he fished exclusively for porbeagle, a time during which he bagged over 30 fish, Jack made several observations.

It became obvious that the sharks appeared at precisely the same time that the mackerel arrived in May. If the shoaling mackerel were seen close in, the chance of a hook-up was greatly improved and a moving bait would outscore a static one every time.

It became evident early on in his the sharking experience that patience was needed in abundance. The fish, although known to be around, would desert a mark for no reason for days and weeks on end.

At these times, Jack would move along the coast until he found the fish, with Ballyreen being one of the spots he caught sharks from. Jack hung up his rods in 1972 to give more time to his second love, amateur dramatics.

Jack Shine passed into angling history in early 1998 at the age of 75, closing a unique chapter in Irish shore angling. His exploits may never be repeated - but what is certain is that the mackerel still return every May and the sharks could be shadowing them.

As recently as the late '90s, an angler was playing a sizeable pollack from the rocks at Ballyreen when a big fish hit the pollack. When the angler reeled in, all he had was the head...

**to catch as the  
with his all-time  
trustworthy scales  
than 145lb"**