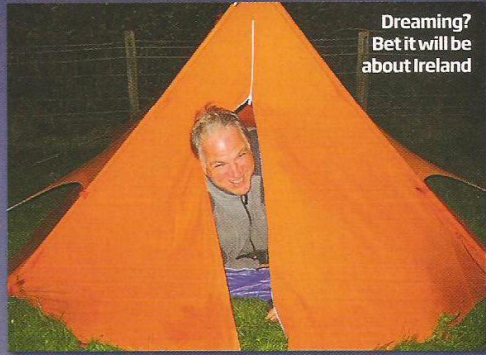


# Ever the optimist

B.A.S.S chairman **Ian Misselbrook** remembers how he got hooked on bass fishing and why he remains optimistic about the future



Dreaming? Bet it will be about Ireland

**W**ith the advent of another year, my 61st to be exact, I have never lost that fantastic feeling of anticipation and optimism for the future. Perhaps it's just a fishing thing.

I remember my early years being spent like many other young anglers, living, eating and breathing anything to do with fishing; poring over articles by the likes of Clive Gammon, John Darling and Brian Harris, names synonymous with my childhood fishing ambitions.

Bass in particular had always been my fish, and I would spend an inordinate amount of time in pursuit of this wonderful quarry, sometimes successfully, sometimes not. While travelling to my favourite local spots, I would dream of the day I would be able to venture to Ireland to fish where these reports and stories were born.

The pictures they painted of seeing shoals of large bass cavorting in the surf, along the beaches of Inch and Brandon made me determined to experience it for myself.

In those idealistic, youth-driven years subjects like stock levels, poor returns or general lack of success were not even considered. It wasn't until the later years, when realism raised its ugly head and I became aware just how tough it was going to be to if we were ever to emulate those early catches.

Why is it now, some 50 years later, I

still dream of my trips to Ireland. What has changed? Not a great deal here, but in Ireland they have at least managed to hold back commercial netting for bass for the last 20 years, and my goodness how it shows. The opportunity to have a better than even chance of catching a big bass keeps that magic alive and that's why I keep returning.

### Management plan

Despite the many problems caused by the increasing commercial value in our seas, the start of each year still fills me with the hope and expectation of catching that double-figure bass, although deep down I am aware that with no proper management this event is becoming less likely. Still my optimism does not diminish.

My greater involvement with B.A.S.S. and its members and friends has encouraged me in believing, even more fervently, that we can and must raise the profile of the recreational sea angler's true value. We must make sure we have a voice at national level and do everything in our power to achieve a realistic management plan for the future. These are aims that have been

### Want to join?

For more information on B.A.S.S go to [www.ukbass.com](http://www.ukbass.com)

the backbone of BASS since its inception in 1973. This should ensure more and bigger bass. Optimistic I hear? Damn right.

I look back over the past year at the photographs of individual highlights and cannot fail to recognise that look in the eye that only another angler can understand. What is it about those big bass? This fish is really something else and has that ability to inspire.

What a fantastic legacy it would be if we could introduce more young people to such incredible emotions. It could be the most important thing we do, but we've got to have those big bass.

I would love people to join B.A.S.S. but not just to add numbers but to experience the passion and excitement generated in pursuit of this wonderfully individual fish. I would cherish the thought that in another 50 years those young anglers could reminisce about having been inspired in the way I was at their age. Now that's what I call optimism. **SA**



Brandon and Inch still offer a brand of magic