





It's been a few years since we've heard from **Russ 'Crazy Horse' Tetlow**, so we were somewhat surprised to have the peace and quiet shattered by this article, which arrived via our office window attached to a brick (email would be better next time, Russ). As with everything he sends us, we struggled to pigeonhole this piece. Location report? *A Reader Writes?* *Tales From the Road?* *The Ravings of a Lunatic?* It's a little bit of all of them, so rather than add to the detritus on our editor's desk with more head-scratching, we took the path of least resistance and decided to let it roam free...

Photos: [stinknp.co.uk](http://stinknp.co.uk)

# ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST COUNTRY

**N**ow, some of you are going to think I'm being lazy and feckless, and as I have a touch of the man flu, you may well be forgiven for thinking so. I'm definitely overweight and flatulent, but I don't like to brag. I have a story to tell, and it's nothing to do with classic Ford rally cars, but everything to do with a wee trip, albeit a short-lived one to the break known as Mexico in Cornwall, on Saturday 5 February 2011.

It's been a while since I last put pen to paper, and no doubt some of you will have missed me. 2009 saw a dip in my windsurfing exploits, with 2010 not fairsing much better, but one small taste of the wonders of Cornwall has reignited the flame, and some experiences are kinda like an itch that needs scratching. My scratching is the metaphorical pen scratching across the page, and the story is one I'm itching to tell you.

Most people are familiar with the location of St Ives in Cornwall. In the bay of St Ives, just to the right of the Hayle Estuary, you'll find The Bluff Inn. Blessed with a large car-park, easy rigging and access to the beach, the break in front of the Inn is known as The Bluff, which stands to reason. If you stand on the beach at The Bluff and look to your right, the break starts to get bigger and a little nastier.

Fed by a deeply rutted but driveable entranceway, there's parking and a beautiful elevated car-park which leads to sand dunes and a very steep sandy track that takes you down to the beach and the break known as Mexico (or Mexico Towans, as it's officially called). I have no idea where they get the names for some of these breaks, I really don't. The feel there is cool and laid-back, but there ain't a cactus in sight. Plenty of hawthorn, but no cacti, and I didn't see one guy under a sombrero, other than the three of us, of course...

We stood in the car-park, looking down at the breakwater and the beautiful – if potentially intimidating – lines of waves with spray blowing off the top. Dreamy... Two or three kites were out making the place look untidy, but by the end of the experience you had to take your wide-brimmed hat off to 'em, as they were making a hardcore wave look like a walk in the park. The bastards!

The posse for this trip was Richard Jayes, 'Dangerous' Dave, and yours truly. More on the others soon, but to kick off here's a little about me...



## RUSSELL TETLOW

AKA 'Crazy Horse'. Currently 15th of sponsored amateur sailor, which means I get a percentage off the retail price of stuff. Tricks in the bag include forwards, backies, pushies, tabletops(ish) and pretty much one-handed varieties of 'em all. In the trickery attempted arena are monkey gybes, reverse monkeys, ducks, heli-tacks, fast tacks and a few others. I'd class myself as a very confident sailor who likes it big and gnarly, but where I let myself down is floundering in fast tacks / gybes on the outside on a wobbly board when I have to get out of serious harm's way. This inability leads to a knowledge that I'm left wanting when there's a wave the size of a house bearing down on me, and it's something I haven't quite figured out how best to avoid.

This is my second attempt at sailing Mexico, the first being back in November 2008. On that day, I stood and watched all the great and the good of the UK circuit ripping what I considered at the time to be a rather small wave at The Bluff. There are loads of pictures on my website ([stinknp.co.uk](http://stinknp.co.uk)) dated 9.11.2008 – and having looked at the pictures again I don't know what the hell is wrong with me sometimes. They're really nice with some incredible action. What was I thinking?

As I recall, Richard Jayes was there on that day as well. He'd been out at The Bluff, but wasn't having a time of it, so I told him where I was off to and he followed. I'm not 100% sure but I don't think he sailed Mexico that day, but I'll let him tell you about it shortly. I only know that I did manage to sail it, and here's what I found.

## MEXICO

Like most of that whole bay you tend to get a stinkload of wind down at the water's edge. At Mexico in particular you notice a very strong rip running left to right as you launch. Rig a half-size bigger than what your brain tells you you're going to need, and if you're lucky enough to have one, go with a bigger board size

too. All the top guys do this, so if like me you're a tad overweight and you've reduced your board quiver down to the minimum, walk a little further upwind and only go when you have the right gust!

As you get on the water you have to be very quick getting into your straps and lines in order to get boardspeed up. The walls of white water have to be skipped over with very little loss of momentum, otherwise you're better off heading straight back in, taking a walk back up the beach and starting again. If you get air off the white stuff, scissor the legs and bear off downwind a little so that when you land you're still on the plane.

Get out the back, and if you're lucky and you still have planing speed, let the first one or two waves pass under you and turn early to allow for any readjustments so that you're ready to pick up that nice big beauty. It won't be too difficult to make out – it'll be the line of dark shadow heading towards you.

I once read about how to get out of the way of incoming waves, and I'm pretty sure I picked up the comment that if all else fails, dive the tip of your mast into the oncoming wave! I've tried this at Gwithian on smaller sets, and once those waves go vertical and ready to dump, the power in them is too much – even for your RDMs. (Talking of kit, back in 2008 I used my 75L RRD Wave Cult Hardcore Wave, which for my fat arse is small, but I was a half stone or more lighter on that occasion. On this trip I used my 82 Wave Twin Ltd 2009 and a 5.2 Ezzy Panther III.)

Fact is you have to be just a little bit bonkers to sail Mexico. When you're on the way out and if your timing is not just right, the size and density of the wave there is brutal, and that's **brutal** with a serious kick-arse attitude. If and when I sail Mexico I'm prepared for a lot of walking and a lot of swimming.

I started my attempts at getting out too far downwind, but it didn't take me long to figure out I needed to get further upwind. I found the ideal place to launch, and

off I went, followed almost instantaneously by Dave. However, while I hit the last wave and soared into a high, floaty jump, Dave, only seconds behind me, got mullered and ripped his sail. Dave's quiver is ridiculously small, so consequently that was his trip to Mexico at an end. Richard, on the other hand, being older and wiser than his compadres, decided that although he'd rigged up and was ready to go, this break just wasn't for him.

I was left with two more runs to complete. I think each one resulted in a swim – but not, although I say so myself, without a little styling. For me the lure of the place is unquenchable: just thinking about it creates an indelible picture in the head of yourself snapping off the top of a really nice meaty wave. It's part of the reason I like to take the camera out on these trips, to bring back some of that awesome feeling you get every time you look at the pictures.

Mexico is a wonderful break, but not an overly easy one. Part of the reason I wanted to tell this story is because I was interested in seeing how the other two found their experiences, so that I could then pass this on to you.

After our questionable efforts at Mexico, we went back to Daymer Bay, where Dave managed very well on his 4.0, and we sailed until it got dark, doing back loops and front loops and some rewarding albeit small waveriding. Daymer Bay is a good place, and attracts a wide range of windsurfers. The following day I spoke to a young lady who'd been out on her 3.7m. She told me that her session had been awesome, and that was when it was flat, but very windy. She then handed over the reins to her hubby so that he could go sail while she took over looking after the baby. Isn't that great?

Anyway, that's all from me until next time, but if you fancy a little Daymer or Mexico action I'll see you out on the water. ☺

**Russ is sponsored by  
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“Mexico is cool and laid back, but there ain’t a cactus in sight and no-one was wearing sombreros – other than the three of us, of course”



Russ 'Crazy Horse' Tetlow

'Dangerous' Dave

Richard Jayes

## DAVE ELLISON

Formerly known as 'Dangerous Dave' and now just 'Dangerous', this name has more to do with my driving than my windsurfing style, and after a brief trip to Mexico I feel more of a danger to myself than others! I currently weigh in at around 13st naked and after a good wee.

My windsurfing skill level goes up and down through the year(s), but presently I'd say I have the following in the bag: forwards, back loops (although I often don't land them), tabletops, upwind 360s, planing 360s, smelly tacks, bodydrags, tandem bodydrags (which was a rush), and the odd 'more fluke than skill' freestyle trick landed. Oh, and I love to smack a few waves around when I get a chance. *[They like smacking you as well, Dave! Crazy Horse.]*

I'd say my main problem is to do with consistency of sailing and windsurfing fitness, which I find hard to digest because I run a lot (10 miles a week) and do a lot of mountain biking as part of a club. I guess the problem lies with being able to catch conditions and not being at work when they come along.

Anyway, after driving 2hrs 40min to Daymer Bay I arrived at 9:30-ish to find slalom conditions, which wasn't what I was looking for. So I spoke to Russ and Rich, and we decided to meet at the Gwithian area, which was another hour's drive away. I arrived at The Bluff before the other two and had a look around, but decided to move down the coast a little. I saw some vans going down a road and, unbeknown to me, I arrived at Mexico Towans. *(Never heard of it before!)*

I proceeded to copy another nameless sailor and rig a nice 5.0m. I then wasted 40 minutes mincing around waiting for Russ and Rich's arrival, as I was a little twitchy about tackling the conditions alone. This is where it all went wrong! The trouble with waiting for mates is that they give you confidence in your ability and get you psyched up, even if you're a little rusty. The waves were BIG – I guess a good mast-high, and breaking quite close to the beach, and the gap between each one of them was small at best.

To cut a long story short, I was on my third attempt to get out when I got totally mullered by a monster. The thing just appeared and completely landed on me full force. I attempted to dive into it but it was too late; I felt like I was under for a day, and I completely lost my kit.

When I finally surfaced I was totally knackered, and that was just the start of it. Then the next wave got me. And the next. Each wave was too

big to swim with, so I had to dive through it, turn around and attempt to cover some ground to make it back to shore. I even managed to breathe a little water in – **not nice** – and all the time I thought I was just drifting further out to sea. Believe me, it's the worst feeling there is!

Eventually my feet hit the seabed and it felt so good. I was so tired that I just dragged myself to the beach, not even giving a shit about my kit. I took a minute to catch my breath and then went to collect my board and sail from further down the shore.

I was greeted by a lovely rip in my sail running about a foot from the clew top to bottom and only stopping when it hit the edging strip. Nice! This was the end of Mexico for me that day, and then we all packed up and hightailed it back to Daymer, which had got loads better throughout the day. We spent the rest of the day and 45 minutes of the night having a great time.

There were about 40 sailors all in one little spot just off the beach. I can only compare it to a skate-park. It was loads of fun, with big stunts on the way out and a couple of smacks on a lip or two on the way in! If I'd only just stayed at Daymer from the off I'd have saved myself 300 quid for a new sail and 20 quid in fuel.

Why do we do it? Because we can.

## RICHARD JAYES

Ageing recreational sailor (61+ according to Russ) of okay ability, and can sail in high winds and waves. At just over 11st I'm much happier using a 4.4 than a 3.4m. Carve gybes on the outside are touch and go, and by no means perfect on the inside.

I was in no hurry to rig up and sail Mexico – I preferred to let Russ and Dave be guinea pigs. There was only one other sailor out, and this was telling me something.

When I arrived at the water's edge I found Dave swimming – minus his kit – on what I thought was his first run out. What's more, his sail was trashed. Now I was down on the beach I could see that the waves were well over mast-high, and closing out with no escape route. I knew that if I launched I'd be quickly swimming (or worse). I couldn't see any point in knackered myself out so early in the day, and probably damaging my kit to boot. With both me (unwilling) and Dave (unable) to sail at Mexico, Russ had little choice but to reluctantly consider going somewhere else. We decided on Daymer Bay, which proved to be an excellent choice.

