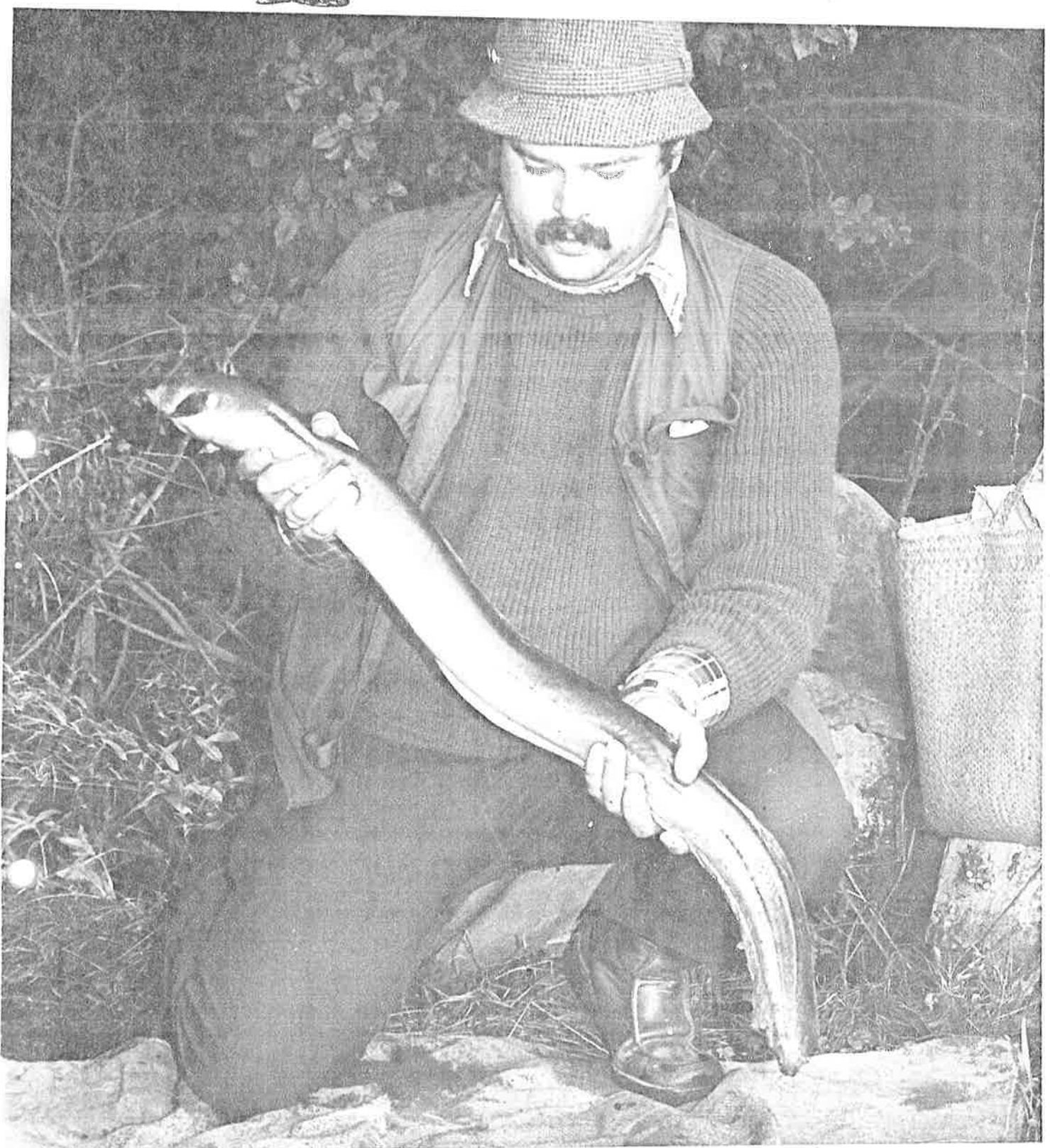


The National Anguilla Club



BULLETIN



C O N T E N T S

Volume 21

No 5.

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COVER:- Terry Jefferson with a superb fish of 5lb loz.



THE SEASON'S FIRST (THE PINK PANTHER STRIKES AGAIN!)

It is difficult to know where to start this particular story. Thinking back, if any one thing had been different, I might never have caught the eel that resulted, and it could have been so very different. However, if I lay some of the details out leading up to this particular trip, it might give you some idea of how it might never have happened.

The first thing which happened was way back in late March, when Melvyn Russ of Anglers Mail came to Hanningfield Reservoir to get some photographs and background material for an article on the reservoir and its trout fishing, as this was to be the first year that the reservoir had been day ticket.

Melvyn already knew of my involvement with the Anguilla Club and at the end of the day he asked if I would be interested in doing some sort of an instructional article with step-by-step photographs of the basics of eel fishing, and hopefully provide an eel or two to back up the article. I said that I would be quite happy to do this, but warned him that the water I would be fishing was not the most productive; but if an eel did turn up, the chances were that it would be a reasonable size. He seemed quite happy with that and so final details were left until a later date.

The next step in the saga came when Jan and I moved from the flat to one of the houses on the estate where we live. That meant a lot of work for both of us, but the urgent need to get the donkey work done before the fishing season started. So with the home habitable and the move completed there was only one real problem for yours truly. The "wormery" I had used for some years, a shallow fibreglass trough, capable of holding several hundred worms had disappeared. It had been spirited away along with a load of rubbish from neighbours in the flats who had moved out a week or two before us. So until I could produce another suitable container, I would have to collect and keep a bait supply as best I could. Unlike other parts of the country, we have had plenty of rain on and off in recent weeks so collecting worms wasn't too difficult a job.

I couldn't get away from work until the third and fourth days of the season, though I hadn't missed much, as on the evening of 16 June, the carp in the pit had started spawning and many of the tench were in the throws of spawning and continued to be so for the first few days of the season. The eels were also occupied doing something else because I didn't catch any!

However, returning from the first two days, I did get stuck in and built a new wormery, from wood this time, but plenty big enough to hold a good number of worms. I was rather lazy though, and instead of getting a supply of well-rotted leaf mould such as I used in the previous wormery, I made do with grass cuttings and some other junk to keep the worms happy. This later proved to be a major contributory factor to going fishing when I did. More of that later.

Jan had had her two holiday weeks in the middle of July booked for some time, but our plans for this year were not particularly firm until about two weeks before the holiday was due to begin. Our original plans were to go fishing for the first four or five days of the holiday. The middle weekend would be spent in Cornwall with some friends and the last week would be spent at my mum's caravan on the east coast.

Melvyn Russ had been through to me again to try and sort something definite out for the article. He informed me that John Holden would be coming along to do the photographic work, and it would be best if I arranged things with him direct. This I agreed to and informed him that it may well happen in the near future with the holiday looming nearer.

About two weeks before the holiday we cried off from the trip to Cornwall, for various reasons, but mainly because our friends, though insistent on our presence, were expecting their second child in a very short while and we had no wish to be a burden on them. With the holiday just a couple of days away, we had a couple of very hot still days and when I checked the wormery, I was greeted by a festering gooey mass and a stench that only rotten worms can produce. I therefore informed Jan that if we didn't get any rain in the very near future, there would be no worms and we wouldn't be going just yet. Bright girl that she is, she then suggested that we turn things around and spend the first few days at the caravan, and go fishing later in the two weeks. Hopefully, we would have had some rain and would be able to get some more worms.

Fortune was smiling at last. On our return from the caravan we were greeted with some rain and coupled with the fact that there had been some rain on and off since our departure, collecting worms that night was a relatively easy task, and I got together about two hundred in a reasonably short time. At last the trip was on.

The venue of the trip, as most of you will probably have realised was to be "Whittles", the syndicate water I have been fishing for about five years now. As I had already pointed out to Mel Russ, it is not the most productive water by a long way, but the eels in it are good ones. In fact of the few taken from the water, I was the first to land one under 3:08, in fact so adept am I at lowering averages, I had three eels below that weight in my first two seasons at the water. The water provides some excellent tench fishing and the carp fishing is as good as you could wish for so it is all too easy to become sidetracked, particularly with the eel fishing as slow as it has been. In the three seasons that I have done any amount of eel fishing there, I have only taken five eels:

1980 - 2:07
 1981 - 3:10, 3:04, 2:13
 1982 - 5:01 - a personal best

The best part of the summer of 1983 was lost to me as a result of Jan's unfortunate accident. So I contented myself with some later

summer carp fishing which happily produced my first 20:00+ carp at 20:06. A very pleasing fish, and one which went a long way towards easing the frustrations of not being able to night fish for some three months.

During the season prior to my joining the syndicate, each of the other members had taken at least one eel in excess of 4:00 whilst tenching in daylight. This is what caused them to enquire if I would like to join them. Having gladly done so, I then set about putting an end to all these daylight captures by tench fishing with worm, as they had all done, from dawn until dusk without a sign of *Anguilla Anguilla*. That didn't stop one or two of the others taking good eels occasionally though and on maggot. It just goes to show what an astute and selective angler I can be when I really put my mind to it!! That's my excuse anyway.

In all this time, no particular swim appeared to be any better than the others, they all appear to have produced eels at some time.

Having already mentioned my first two inglorious sessions of the season, we come to the long-awaited holiday trip of five nights.

Jan and I arrived at the pit in mid-afternoon and proceeded to haul the entire contents of a well-stocked fishing tackle and camping shop round to my swim, "The Hump". A bit of a misnomer of late. The swim started life as a gravel hump or island close to the main bank of the pit. Formerly a jungle, the island's tree and shrub growth had been cleared for the first season's fishing to leave a gravel mound roughly circular, about 10' in diameter, and looking not unlike a miniature volcano. Several close seasons and a lot of hard work have seen the swim become very comfortable. In fact I have heard rumours that it may be considered as a venue for a future test match providing they can get enough seats in!

In an effort to capitalise on the time available, and don't tell anyone else, I fished five rods.

Having tried deadbaits in the past, including my earlier session this season without a run, I decided to carry on my normal practice of fishing all worm baits. Three rods were rigged with conventional link legers: two more rods, lighter outfits, were rigged with the suspended bait set-ups that I have previously described in the Bulletin. My policy whenever possible these days is to fish in an alert fashion all night and morning and sleep during the afternoons. This works particularly well when Jan is with me, as she can fish my swim during the day and I get wonderful meals when they are most appreciated.

With the conditions seemingly favourable except for a near full moon, the first session passed with one very promising run on the bouyant rig missed completely, another run on the buoyant rig aborting and one tench on one of the bottom baits. (If the other lads can catch eels in daylight, then why shouldn't I catch tench at night!)

The second session started with the barometer showing a slight fall, and frequent heavy showers. End result - one abortive run on a suspended bait, another good run missed on a bottom bait and two more tench. Following all this activity and the heavy showers, I had spent the entire night slipping and sliding from one rod to another, back to my chair and occasionally to the back of the swim to answer the call of nature. My worst fears were realised when dawn broke and the swim looked like the bottom of a trench on the Somme!! If I was not to break a leg or my neck, I would have to change swims, which was at the back of my mind anyway. (I would also have to tell the MCC that the wicket would need a good rolling!!)

Later that morning Jan and I again moved the mountain of gear round the corner to a point between the next two swims I was proposing to fish. The first of these swims, known as Charlies, is very seldom fished, though it looks ideal, with a couple of small islands ten yards to the front, and offering a lot of possible patrol routes for foraging eels.

The swim is much less open than my own, which meant that less rods could realistically be used, though I still contrived to fish four, the three previously mentioned bottom rods, and I changed one of the other rods to fish a bunch of maggots under a betalight float right under the rod top in relatively deep water - about 7'. I fed in about half a pint of maggots through the session and a couple of dozen chopped lobs, but all to no avail.

Following one or two light showers early in the night, the skies had cleared, and by 2.00 am it was bloody cold. In fact I was frozen, and dog tired after staring at the float for five hours. I swear my eyes crossed behind my nose on at least three occasions! Not feeling the least bit like continuing, I reeled the baits in and rather than disturb Jan, I retired to the car and endured two of the most wretched hours sleep that I think I have ever experienced.

Later that morning, I again moved my rods etc to the next intended swim know as Teds - a swim I have fished several times before, but one I have yet to take an eel from, though it has produced eels for one or two of the other lads. Having got the tackle organised, I retired to get some sleep in the bivvy while Jan fished.

My slumbers were brought to an end when John Holden arrived to take the photographs for the promised article. I firstly apologised to John for not having succeeded in providing an eel, but assured him that I had one or two very good photographs of the 5:01 if they were needed. This seemed perfectly acceptable, so we proceeded to go through the various items of my gear both conventional and some slightly unusual. John proved to be a very pleasant and knowledgeable bloke and was very interested to hear my explanations of the various items, and particularly interested in the previously-mentioned suspended outfit. We spent a couple of hours chatting over the gear, photographing same, and discussing the recent history of the eel fishing in the pit and eel fishing in general, all the while drinking plenty of tea provided by Jan.

Having sorted out all the photographs, I decided to start the session a little earlier than usual at 20.00. Partly for John's benefit, and partly because the normally very active tench and roach had gone quiet, which meant that my baits might go relatively unmolested while it remained light.

My tactics were to be a carbon copy of the previous night except that when my concentration started to waver and fatigue set in, I would pack the float rod away and rely on the three other rods to provide the action.

John stayed on 'till about 22.00 in the hope of seeing an eel landed. In this he was to be disappointed, though he did take several photographs of me successfully hooking and landing a couple of moderate but very lively tench. With John's departure, I was able to settle down and concentrate on the job in hand. The weather was perfect. One hundred percent cloud cover obscuring that horrible moon, a light NW wind, the air temperature at a very comfortable 66 F and the water at a fairly constant 64 F. Better still, the small pocket barometer I always carry, had climbed quite sharply during the day.

I concentrated hard on the float for several hours but only succeeded in catching a couple of small roach. However, I did see the bites quite clearly, but by 01.00 I had had enough of that. I felt sure that the float was starting to climb up the bank of the small island I was fishing next to!

I had experienced one or two slight twitches on the bottom baits following the arrival of darkness, but nothing positive. Having put the float rod away, I settled back on my chair with a well-earned cup of tea to await some action. I contemplated checking and recasting the baits, but I am always loathe to do this unless I have had fairly positive indication of a take and suspect that the baits might have been messed about, so instead I sat tight.

Feeling a bit peckish, I decided that a chicken curry snack pot would go down well so on went the kettle. I had just added the boiling water to the snack pot when it happened. One short sharp bleep on the alarm. I only just avoided the inevitable hot flush in the naughty bits, and watched the isotope indicator as it hovered about three inches higher than its neighbours. Putting the tasty snack to one side to brew, I moved over to the rod in question just as the alarm sounded again and the indicator rose another couple of inches before sliding back an inch, then up again and down again, all the while, the alarm sounding a stuttering protest. "Bloody tench" I thought to myself, but resolved to strike if there was a firm lift of the indicator. The alarm continued to chatter as the indicator see-sawed up and down for what seemed an age, when suddenly it made a little more progress toward the butt-ring. I snapped the bale arm shut and struck hard over my right shouldernothing! I wound down and gave another half-hearted strike and Christmas!! The rod wrenched hard over, and in an instant I felt the characteristic zigzag as a good eel went hard astern. Apart from one short spell with me pumping like crazy, the eel spent nearly the whole time crashing around on the surface kicking up a

hell of a fuss. I pushed the landing net well out in front of me so that the entire frame was submerged with just the spreader above the surface, and at the fourth attempt, sweating profusely, I was able to get enough lead on the eel to bring its head right up to the spreader and holding hard I swung the net up until the eel was securely engulfed. Taking a moment to draw breath, I reckoned the eel to be a good 4:00+ from the scrap it had just provided and the odd glimpse I had seen of it close to on the surface.

Having put the rod down, I reached for my pocket torch, raised the landing net onto the bank and shone the torch into the bottom of the deep net. It certainly looked like it should go "four" though its length was difficult to judge being doubled up in the net. I knelt down to check for the hook but found that despite the finicky take the fish was deep hooked. As is my regular habit these days, I cut the line clear of the fish's head to see if the hook was removable later during daylight.

I hooked the weighing net on to the "Avons" and zeroed the scales, then transferred the eel to the weighing net, taking note of the fish's very respectable girth while doing so. With the eel securely in, I hooked the net back on the scales and lifted. The needle swung round to about 4:08 and glancing down, I could see that the net was partially resting on the ground. Christ - this is a good 'un I thought - and raised my arm even higher. The needle crept past the 5:00 mark and then started rattling all over the place as the eel came to life. I lowered the net back down, stood up and took a couple of deep breaths, and when the eel had settled down I lifted the scales again to eye level and with the torch gripped in my teeth, I read the weight as the needle settled.....5:06!!

Elation taking over, I let out a cry that would not have disgraced a "bronco rider" and my torch crashed to the ground and promptly went out. Groping around, I eventually found the torch and carefully double checked the weight of the eel. Spot on - 5:06. Another personal best and my second five from the water. It's amazing how you can forget about all those blanks when a fish like that turns up. I placed my large micromesh keepnet in the water and slipped the eel in.

I sat back in the chair and proceeded to devour one rapidly-cooling snack pot, feeling quite definitely that all was very well with the rest of the world.

The rest of the night passed quickly and with the arrival of dawn, I reeled the baits in and returned to the car to get my camera. I also decided that at a more suitable hour, I would try and phone John Holden again to see if he could come back for more photographs. I dragged Jan from her slumbers having previously woken her to tell her what had already transpired.

With the early morning sun peeping through the thinning cloud, we took plenty of photographs of a marvellous eel before returning it to the keepnet to await the arrival of John who was delighted to hear the news of the eel when I popped down the road to phone him at

07.30. He promised to get down as soon as possible, though a busy schedule meant that he couldn't be sure when he would arrive.

With sleep once more high on my list of priorities I retired to the biv and slept the sleep of the innocent. Jan woke me in mid-afternoon when John arrived and having regaled him with the details of the capture more photographs were taken of the eel.

There were no signs whatsoever of the hook, just a short length of nylon hanging from the corner of the fish's mouth. The eel however was showing no signs of distress at all so I simply cut the line tight to the eel's mouth and with great reverence, returned it gently to the water where it swam strongly away.

With things returning rapidly to normal, Jan and I ate a hearty evening meal and then I made ready for the next session which was to be the last of this particular trip.

The night passed extremely quietly save for one 6" lift on the rod furthest from me and that was that.

We spent the morning trying to extricate a couple more tench, all to no avail though, as they had become increasingly finicky, despite fishing "18" hooks and single maggots. So as lunchtime approached, we packed all the gear away and made ready for the journey home.

As a matter of interest, Jan took more tench than me with a personal best of 4:06, though I did succeed in taking the biggest at 4:15. So honours were even on that score.

Full details of the eels capture were as follows:

WATER TEMP:	64 F	CLOUD:	100%
AIR TEMP:	65 F	MOON:	3/4 WANING
BAROMETER:	30.7 RISING	TIME:	01.45 HRS 17.7.84
WIND:	LIGHT NW	BAIT:	SINGLE LARGE LOBWORM

FOOTNOTE:

The Essex Water Company's fisheries department have been doing extensive eel netting at both Abberton and Hanningfield reservoirs. The average size of the Abberton eels is considerably less than when I used to fish the place several years ago; less than 2:00 when it used to be in excess of 3:00. However, so far the average at Hanningfield is very high at about 3:04 with some very good individual fish.

The Fisheries Officer is well aware of my feelings on the matter, though I realise that without the opportunity to fish the place there is not a lot to be done. However, by way of appeasement, he does allow me to occasionally spirit away one or two of the larger specimens. To this end, I did get one eel of 5:00 for the pit some four years ago, and during the recent close season I was able to "relocate" three more good eels: 4:08, 5:04 and 5:08.

I had no way of positively identifying the fish, but it is obviously a possibility that my 5:06 was one of these fish. I am not certain that I want to know because that element of the unknown is one of the great appeals in eel fishing. Food for thought though isn't it??

Terry Jefferson

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

I was pleased to receive through the post yesterday my latest Bulletin. As Alan Mitchell indicated in his postscript, the Club has managed to get out 4 Bulletins this year, which as you will all realise is a vast improvement on 1983.

The discussions we had at the Spring Meeting seems to have had the desired effect, and I hope that all members will make every effort to keep Alan supplied with articles so that we can continue to issue Bulletins at regular intervals. It is still disappointing to see that a good proportion of the membership cannot be bothered to write anything for the Bulletin and without naming names they know who they are. As far as I can gather no member considers that the effort put into the Bulletin is wasted so please put pen to paper and get your articles to Alan as soon as possible. If you are one of those members who cannot remember when you last wrote a piece for the Bulletin then I feel that you should make an effort to produce an article for the next available issue.

It was unfortunate that the reference I made to A.J.S.'s trip to Ellesmere Lakes was only included in the Chairman's Page of the latest Bulletin, as this would have been received by members the week after Arthur had finished his week's holiday on the Meres. I am afraid that this is my fault, as I sent my Chairman's Page to Alan on the day that I received number 3 of volume 21, which as you all noticed I am sure contained Alan's Editorial, but not the Chairman's Page.

I am pleased to report that A.J.S. and his son Michael and Ernie Orme (who joined them for two nights) had an enjoyable stay on the Meres. I went over to Ellesmere to visit them on the Monday and Tuesday, by which stage Arthur fishing on Whitemere had caught two good fish of $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 4lbs. To see Ernie sunbathing in his underpants is enough to keep any self-respecting person away and consequently the only visitors that had strong enough stomachs to visit the intrepid trio (this included A.J.S.'s son Michael) was myself and a few members of the local Ellesmere Angling Club. On the Monday evening that I visited A.J.S. and Ernie, I popped into the Ellesmere Town first, the scene was reminiscent of a western cowboy town. The streets were deserted and on entering the fish and chip shop I was told by the proprietors that "Arthur Sutton was in town with some of his friends from the National Anguilla Club". Had I been told that Billy the Kid and his Gang were in the vicinity I wouldn't have been surprised. To say that Arthur Sutton and the National Anguilla Club are held in high esteem in Ellesmere would be a complete understatement. The friendliness that is shown to N.A.C. members from people in the town, especially the shop-keepers, is tremendous, and as A.J.S. can vouch he is never alone for long because he is regularly visited by members of the Ellesmere Angling Club especially Steve Hatton, who has the local tackle shop. I realise that it has all been said before and the Club has had properly organised trips to the Meres, but I cannot help thinking that we should organise another Club trip especially to Ellesmere Lakes. Out of preference the month of September seems to be the most productive period as far as fishing is concerned. Such pleasure did Arthur Sutton get from his week's stay at Ellesmere in July he is returning for another week in September. I know that Ernie Orme will be joining him for a few days and I will do my utmost to attend, so I hope that this will reach you in plenty of time if you want to join Arthur to fish the Meres. I am sure that he would have no objection and providing the weather is fine (and even if you didn't catch any fish) you will enjoy yourself.

It is the same old story so far as the Club trip at Johnson's Lakes was concerned. Although the length of journey necessary to reach Johnson's from my home made it difficult for me to attend, this was not insurmountable but other commitments made it impossible. My record of attending trips with a club must be the worst of all as I never seem to be able to get there. If I was given about one years notice I would have a better chance although I couldn't make any promises.

I presume like other members my fishing has been severely limited due to the unavailability of bait, and by this I mean principally lobworms. I had intended to go fishing earlier this week, but simply could not do so as I had no worms and there was no possibility of getting any. I had been out on three or four nights with a torch looking for a supply, but there has been no dew and consequently no lobworms. I realise there are many other baits one can use when fishing for eels, but somehow I never feel very confident unless I have got lobworms on at least one rod, and preferably two if I am fishing with four rods.

I had been getting along using worms I had collected about two months ago and kept in moss in my fridge, but even with keeping them in these ideal circumstances they will not last forever.

I would like to reiterate what Alan Mitchell said in a recent Newsletter, concerning publicity for fish caught by members of the National Anguilla Club. If you are ashamed to mention that you are a member of the National Anguilla Club when you put a photograph in the Angling Press, then I can see little point in you being, and continuing to be, a member of the Club. Having said that, I fully accept, as I have had an opportunity to discuss this situation with David Taylor, that this unfortunate oversight was not of his doing. We have often had discussions at Club Meetings about publicity, and the Club has never restricted the individuals freedom by saying that all releases to the Press should be through an officer of the Club. At one stage Alan Mitchell had the job of Press Release Officer but was made redundant as no-one sent him anything for release. All members of the Club should try to promote the Club's interest, and publicity is part of this. I hope I have made my point. If anyone doesn't agree with what I have said, then no doubt we could discuss the situation through the pages of the Bulletin or the next Club meeting.

I am sure that ex-member Arthur Smith is finding things more than a little tough with the miners strike, and as I know that he receives the Bulletin, could I through the channels of these pages wish him well and hope that the miners strike is resolved as soon as possible to the satisfaction of both sides.

If any member doesn't agree with what I have written above or feels that he has some suggestion as to how we can improve the Club's activities, no doubt he will put something into the Bulletin setting out these ideas or write to me directly.

I hope to see you soon.

Mark Davies

A PROBLEM FOR ALL TO HELP SOLVE

Once in a while we all come up against a problem to which there seems to be no answer, although we may often feel that there has to be one and that it may be staring us in the face without our realization. So it is with myself at the present time. Let me explain, and I refer you to the sketch on a separate page.

Since moving to Hoddesdon I have looked long and hard at various sketches of the River Lea which I could tackle for eels. Some stretches are canalised and present few problems other than the intense angling pressure on them. Some are well known to me and, over the years, have brought me a fair measure of success with large eels. One stretch, however, immediately fired my imagination. I refer to the stretch

upstream of Ware Lock and the weir. Before going further I must tell you that this reach of the river really does hold some big fish. Big roach of 2lb +, huge chub, excellent dace and the occasional large trout. Also present are large bream in clearly definable shoals and carp into double figures.

Not that any of these are often taken, and most anglers avoid the stretch as being 'too hard'. I can vouch for that, and a successful day would be one when I have taken just one fish. But that fish could be a 2lb roach or a 1lb dace. The stretch almost immediately downstream is my beloved St Margarets, from where I have taken countless 4lb eels in the past. Now St Margarets is a lean almost lifeless piece of water by comparison, and by that same comparison the eels in the Ware stretch should be far bigger and possibly far more numerous. I have told in the past of the glass eyed monsters which stare from glass cases inside the Club House at Amwell. Such eels surely do exist and live out their life span in the Ware to Hertford stretch of the River Lea. All one need do is to go and fish for them. But there are problems.

Crayfish - millions of 'em and all existing solely in order to tear an anglers bait to shreds in a matter of seconds. Undoubtedly they are the barometer of pure water but, to me, they are the enemy. My son and I fished there starting at 2100 hrs with a dozen or more lovely little baits - only to pack up at 2230 completely baitless. The little perishers pounce as soon as the bait gets to within inches of the bottom. Twitch twitch, twitch twitch, and when the twitching stops you know that your bait has gone. Seemingly, it might be a good idea to use small soft crayfish as bait, but the only ones we have manager to catch are big black beasties.

I had the idea that if we kept our baits well off the bottom we would avoid the 'enemy'. This was illustrated by dangling a small roach in mid water from a pole on the towpath side of the river. It went untouched. The moment we lowered it to the bottom it was attacked by the clawed monsters. This appeared as a solution but when put into practice other problems arose.

If the stretch were a still one we could easily put a bait near to the overhanging trees on the far bank and at the same time keep the bait well off bottom. Well, the water is far from still. At all times there is a healthy flow and the plant growth bears no description. To say it is luxuriant would be an understatement. Its a jungle. At times, especially in the Autumn, great masses of floating weed decaying and lifted from the bottom, floats downstream where it keeps the weir keeper busy both day and night. Posing its own special problems for the angler. Were we able to fish from the bank opposite the towpath side we would be home and dry. But we cannot. No way. Those of you who know the G.U. canal will know that fishing from a rather bare towpath, one has to cast to the opposite bank, to where the overhanging trees and roots afford some seclusion for Anguilla. Exactly the same applies, I would think, to the stretch in question. The towpath side is devoid of growth while the opposite bank is thickly wooded with many of the trees coming right down into the water.

The water averages four feet six to five feet with some shallower areas near the trees and is mostly crystal clear in summer and slightly coloured during winter. The plant population has all the varieties I could name and many that I cannot.

These, then, are my problems. I must admit defeat at the present time. If any member could supply small crayfish I would gladly repay all costs and be delighted to give them a thorough trial as bait using normal methods. I invite all members to submit ideas for solving any or all of the problems associated with this reach of the River Lea and I would gladly put anyone up for the weekend if they cared to try out their ideas on the spot. Any of the problems solved would surely benefit all of our members. I guarantee a feedback of results, be they positive or negative.

Your prize may well be a picture of yourself - standing next to a gleeful President holding a ten pound eel.

A J Sutton.

WHAT A MONTH

The beginning of May saw the start of my eeling for another year, with the prospects being good because of a mild spell of weather that had just passed. The water that I intended to concentrate on was the water that Brian fished last season called Fenland Fisheries which is situated at Baston Fen about 15 miles out from Peterborough. Brian had a fair degree of success last year with some good eels to 3-9 but I felt better results could be achieved if the water was fished heavily with worm, this was something that Brian did not do properly, because he fished only with deadbaits and the occasional worm. I was able to fish the water at the very end of the season for just two sessions managing four eels to just under 3 pounds all of which fell to a bundle of lobworms fished either in midwater or on the bottom.

When the day arrived to start my eeling at Baston I was very excited at what the future may hold and I could not wait to get down to the water and get my lines in and hopefully get an early eel on to the bank. Dave arrived at my door at about 7.30, we loaded up the car and waited for Brian to arrive, when he arrived we all set off for Baston. All the tackle was set up by about 9.30 and we all waited for darkness to fall and hoping that a good night of eeling was in store for us. In the morning we have achieved some great results, they were as follows:-

Pete - 7 eels to 3 pounds

Dave - 6 eels to 2-8 plus a 3 pound Rudd (fluke)

Brian - 2 eels to 3 pounds.

In the first 5 sessions, some spent with Dave and some with Brian, I managed to fish several of the waters in the Baston Fen complex with some good results and some not so good, this being due to the vast difference in some of the waters. From these sessions I managed to catch:-

1 - 2 pound	11 eels
2 - 3 pound	4 eels
3 - 4 pound	5 eels
Best fish	3-14

On the day of the 24th of May Dave and I decided to give Birch Lake a go (this being the lake I had caught 4 three's from including my largest to date the 3-14. In fact I decided to fish a swim where I was able to fish in two separate lakes (two rods in each lake). Dave decided to fish about 50 yards to my left where he was fishing the same sort of area as I was inbetween two lakes and again fishing two rods in each lake. Just as we had finished setting up the sky which was clear suddenly became very cloudy and humid (a perfect eel night), as it was getting dark we baited up with the killer bait WORM, somewhere between 2 and 4 lobworms per size 2 hook. When all the rods were cast out into their correct positions I sat down for a cup of tea and a rest, no sooner than I had sat down a run progressed which in turn immediately halted, unknown to both Dave and I we were to get plenty of these finicky bites all night long. These bites produced 6 tench to 4-8 (something that we did not want!), but the eels were also due to feed as well. At around 2330 hours I received a good run which produced a fine hard fighting eel of 3-09 which had big eyes and was very short and fat and hooked perfectly in the top lip. About an hour later I got a run on a bunch of worms fished in mid water, which produced an eel of 3-01 and again hooked in the lip, this eel was very strange in colour because it was a totally bronze-brown colour. At about 1 o'clock in the morning my Optonic screamed as my 3 lobworms were snatched and line started to peel off the reel, I struck immediately and the rod bent over as the eel swam backwards trying to escape. After a short struggle I netted a fine eel of 4-04, which was very long and perfectly hooked in the side of the mouth. In the morning the eel was weighed and measured, the length was 40 inches and the girth was 7.5 inches. After photographing all three eels were returned to the water to be caught another day. Dave had a bad night by not catching an eel, he did manage 4 tench.

My total eels caught in first month of fishing:-

1 - 2	12 eels
2 - 3	6 eels
3 - 4	9 eels
4 - 5	1 eel

The only drawback with this water is that it costs £2.00 a night or £40.00 a season and to me this is far too much to spend on a water that I only intend to fish for eels and possibly pike that is why I have

been fishing there during the close season but a fee still has to be paid to the owner of the water. As the season progresses I will still fish the water but not as frequently as I have been.

I look forward to catching more eels from this water because now we have discovered whereabouts the larger eels are, and who knows possibly a 5 pounder or even bigger because there have been reports of eels over 6 pounds caught.

Peter Stickland.

PRESIDENTS PAGE

Fellow Members,

Shirt sleeve nights I call them - those magic nights when one need not be clad in thermal wear and when the conditions and everything else seem perfect. We have had one or two to date and, hopefully, there will be more as the summer progresses into Autumn.

My son Michael and I have just enjoyed such nights on the Shropshire meres. We took eels to 3-13½, the best going to Michael, and some good fish from the Shropshire Union canal. A wonderful week during which we were visited by Mark Davies, Ernie Orme and Dave Holman. Steve Hatton of Steves Tackle Shop was a regular visitor. Once again we were made most welcome by everyone. That kindness will never be forgotten and I am certain that the memory will help my son through life.

Social awareness - the above illustrates the theme of this piece by yours truly. We ought, as a Club, to be always aware of opportunities to get together with other members. They need not be major affairs, but something like the 'mini trips' already suggested by our Chairman. I am sure that I can find a host of witnesses to bear out the fact that such occasions are thoroughly enjoyable. Indeed, the benefit does not stop there but is carried through to the whole Club ensuring its well being to a large extent.

As a means of implementing such 'mini trips' perhaps you might bear in mind the fact that our secretary ought to be informed as early as possible when you contemplate visiting a suitable venue for a given period. He will then ensure, via the Newsletter, that other members know that you will be at a particular place on a certain date. Perhaps, too, those who wish to join you will contact you directly. And by way of recording the trip how nice if you put your heads together to write a piece on the trip for the Bulletin. Those of us who were not able to come along and take part would then be able to enjoy your pleasurable trip with you.

To illustrate what I mean I refer you back to Alan Hawkins article

'Whitemere Revisited'. The memory of that trip is so vivid in my memory that it is difficult to remind myself that I was not actually there! In that sense I enjoyed that trip as surely as did Alan Hawkins and Ernie Orme.

Of course, there will always be those members who are 'loners'. That is their right and their privilege. Equally, there are those like myself who, by nature, are rather more gregarious. So don't run down those who have no wish to join in on such trips, but do bid a hearty welcome to those that do in the sure knowledge that they are there with you because they want to me.

And good luck to you all, whether alone or on 'mini trips'.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Alan

I did so enjoy the material in the last Bulletin. It would seem unfair to name any one writer in particular, so I'll name them all. Steve Enkel, David Walker, Stuart Greene, Peter Stickland and Kevin Stephenson. They were all good. While we have such people writing for the Bulletin we will not go far wrong on the editorial side. Indeed, the quality of material published in the Bulletin this year is excellent in every way (my poems excepted) and will surely generate interest among those who are a little shy of writing.

I enclose a piece for the Bulletin which, more than anything else, is a cry for help. I sincerely hope that members respond and come up with their own ideas for a solution to my problems. All replies I receive directly will be sent to you for publication in the Bulletin although I would hope that members reply by way of the Bulletin in the first instance.

Fundamental to the existence of our Club is the idea that by the exchange of views and suggestions we can help each other. That message has been echoed by Stuart Greene in his good article on Irish Waters, and I thank him for it and hope that he continues. My piece illustrates that in practical terms, for while I 'might' come up with a solution given plenty of time, any response from our members could be a short cut to success. Naturally this letter and my piece require to be published in the same issue.

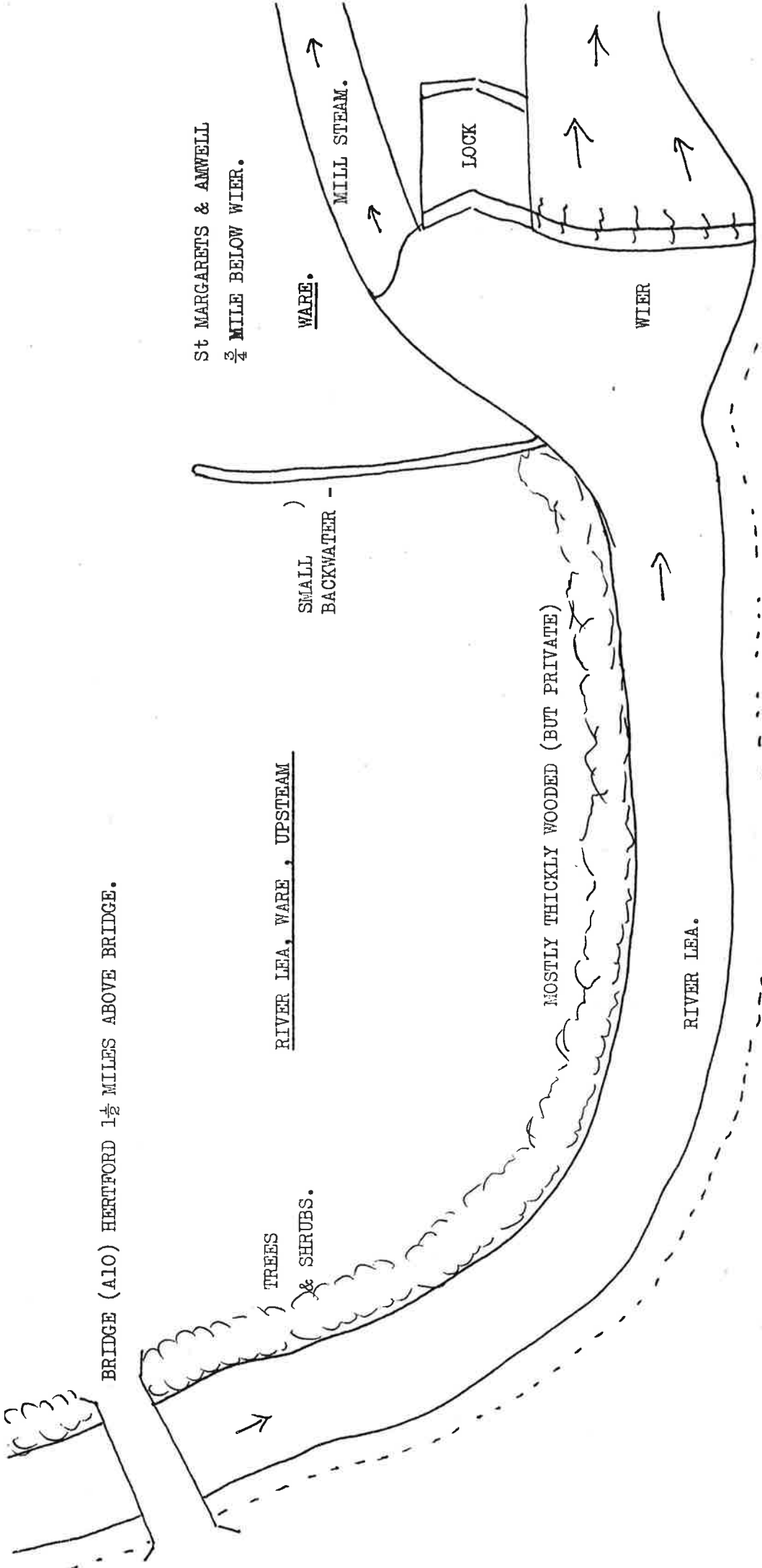
Now, to Kevin Stephenson's query regarding braided material for hook lengths. Some years ago, the Anguilla Club did quite a bit of work investigating all kinds of material for hook lengths. Everything on the market at that time was tested and tried out in actual angling for eels. Monel metal, wire of all kinds, braided material including those with a spun glass core and, of course, mono filament nylon.

Suffice to say that monel metal and certain wire was the first to be discarded. Some braided stuff survived extended trial before going the same way. I was the one who was absolutely certain that braided nylon with a spun glass core, such as is used in certain radios as the drive cord, would come up trumps. However, in the company of Bob Church and Jim Gibbinson I lost a really big eel on the G.U. canal. I played that fish for some ten minutes and would surely have beaten it had the material not let me down. It was frayed beyond belief. So, goodbye braided stuff. Of the materials which survived to the end, we were left with gut music strings (or gut substitute) solid wire and mono filament nylon. Solid wire is a little impractical and gut music strings a lot too expensive. So, if you believe all I have said you will stick to mono nylon. But, do choose a good hard wearing nylon such as MAXIMA. As a 'general rule', use a length which is rather stronger than the reel line to which it is attached. Only very occasionally will you lose an eel because of breakage. It will not have been bitten through - abrasion will have weakened it to the point of parting. And if an eel does that to good stout nylon, it will certainly have done the same to wire, perhaps faster.

If I can find it among my roomful of Club material, I will send Kevin the relevant work and the results of our testing of the various materials.

Arthur J. Sutton

P.S. Lobworm storage was a subject treated earlier by Dave Holman. Perhaps Dave may care to remind us all of the important factors.



BRIDGE (ALO) HERTFORD 1 1/2 MILES ABOVE BRIDGE.

St MARGARETS & AMWELL
 3/4 MILE BELOW WIER.

RIVER LEA, WARE, UPSTEAM

SMALL
 BACKWATER -

WARE.

MILL STEAM.

LOCK

WIER

MOSTLY THICKLY WOODED (BUT PRIVATE)

RIVER LEA.

- WIER CONSTRUCTED
 IN RECENT TIMES.

ANGLING FROM TOWPATH ONLY.

GOOD FLOW AT ALL TIMES
 CRAYFISH EVERYWHERE!

A PROBLEM FOR ALL TO HELP SOLVE

A. J. SUTTON.

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FISH: 5:06 of immaculate eel LENGTH: 42 1/4" GIRTH: 8 3/4"

TACKLE: 11' Simpsons, 2 3/4 T.C. Rod. 10lb Black sylvast straight through to size two stiletto 1/s hook. Single large lobworm bait (legered).

BIT IN THE MIDDLE: One very happy angler!!