

The National Anguilla Club



BULLETIN

BULLETIN

CONTENTS

V O L : 18 N O : 2

		<u>Page</u>
Editorial	A J Sutton	1 - 2
Chairman's Page	B Crawford	2 - 3
Letter to the	) B Crawford	4
Water Authorities		
Proposals to the	) B Crawford	5 - 8
Water Authorities		
Eel Stocking	M Davies	9 - 10
Hawkstone Park	D Holman	11 - 12
A Tale of the	) T Jefferson	12 - 16
Unexpected or		
The Steak Dinner	) M Davies	16 - 18
That Never Was		
Long Range Ground	) J Tester	18
Baiting		
Letter to the NAC		

c Copyright: The National Anguilla Club 1980

Cover Photograph: Lake Bala 1980

BULLETIN

EDITORIAL

Life for me, nowadays, is highlighted by several annual events. Not the least of these events is our own Annual General Meeting - possibly the most important event for this Club in any year.

This year's AGM was, I think, one of the very best we have had. That says a lot when one recalls past meetings and how good they all are. It is to the credit of all our members that we always enjoy a first rate attendance at our meetings and this year was no exception. The meeting was noteworthy for several things, but top of the list must be the amount of good constructive comment from the floor. Well done lads, I am proud of you! Before going further I must pay tribute to our secretary for preparing and sending out the various Officers Reports so very promptly. Of course, it is his pretty assistant who does all the grafting and I wish there were some way in which she could do so in an "official" capacity. Nevertheless, she earns our most sincere thanks.

In my Presidential Report at the AGM I am afraid that I did wade into you a little, but I did most sincerely because I thought that a little jog from me would be timely. After all, I did promise you that I would not be a silent President - and I am committed to speaking out, even banging and shouting, should I see the need.

In my report, I touched on our lack of effort regarding opposition to eel trapping. I did not know what our Chairman had up his sleeve and in that respect, Brian, I tender a very sincere apology. In this issue of the Bulletin you will find evidence of the work that Brian has been doing. Please do not just give it a passing glance but read it through and through and digest so that you are fully aware of what we are doing. Our full Committee will be meeting in January to discuss several aspects of Club work. No doubt we will advance plans to oppose eel trapping and of ways in which you, too, can do your bit.

I have made a start by contacting several London angling clubs with a view to speaking to them about eel trapping and our desire for conservation. To date, I have received an invitation from three clubs to address their members during December. I have also been offered support in whatever we do in opposition to eel trapping.

An Editorial should be about whatever publication it heads. In that respect my Editorial is a non-starter and for the most part is has become the President's platform from which to say his piece. I make no apologies. As this Editorial will be my last for 1980, I have gone back through all the Bulletins we have issued this year. I am certain that you would all benefit from doing similarly. However, what I find is that the quality of the material published during 1980 has been well up to standard and some of the work is truly excellent. You have my personal thanks for the articles you have submitted throughout the year, and I am optimistic enough to believe that you will respond in the New Year.

EDITORIAL - Cont'd

I take this opportunity to wish you all on behalf of your Committee a Happy, Prosperous and Peaceful New Year.

Have a Merry Christmas!

Arthur Sutton

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

If, as I anticipate, this will be reproduced in the December issue of the Bulletin, may I take the opportunity of wishing you all a most enjoyable Christmas and a successful New Year.

I have been fairly busy of late, tackling the eel netting issue. Now that Richard Baczyk has taken a considerable load of work off my shoulders with his assistance with session report analysis, I have more time to spend on wider issues.

I hope my document in response to the Anglian Water Authority proposals regarding eel trapping is also published, together with a copy of the letter sent to all 10 Water Authorities. I hope we can obtain useful information and ammunition as a result. Remember, this is only the first real but tentative steps that we can take as we are only countering proposals.

Nothing as yet has been submitted to the Ministry for ratification. When the Water Authorities publish their proposals in the press, we can offer serious and structured opposition.

I hope that by the next Conference, we will be in a position to offer full documented information for display to demonstrate our ability to take the initiative in this issue.

Incidentally, in the November 1980 issue of Coarse Fisherman, the NASG, in its NEWSLETTER page, lists a statement of its policies. Among these is the following policy: "To investigate and object to the increase in commercial eel fishing on waters where members fish".

Also, Alan Beat is the NASG Officer responsible for the co-ordination of all efforts concerning Water Authorities. He is a good friend of mine and assisted our efforts at the Boston Enquiry on the AWA proposal to ban eel fishing in the close season. He is working very usefully with us again on the trapping issue.

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE - Cont'd

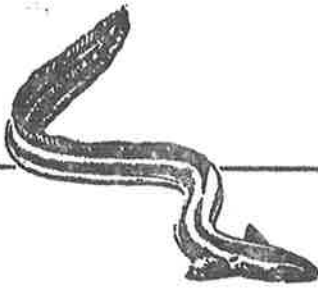
Onto other items, those of you who remember Sykes' Pits near Eye, Peterborough, may be interested to hear that old Tom died early this year and his pits and land, etc., were sold for £40,000. I have still to hear of the future rôle of the pits. A friend of mine almost bought it to turn the land into a riding school and fishery but was just not able to make the price. It was a pity as I was offered the role of fishery manager etc, unpaid of course, but very willing.

I hear from contacts on the East coast that there has been a massive migration of eels from freshwater this year and catches of eels up to 4lb have been phenominal. This may also account for a sudden glut of eels on the markets. Perhaps this may partially account for a poor year angling-wise?

This migration may also explain why, after a couple of years peaceful residence in my garden pond, an eel of 1 lb decided to go for a walk-about (or crawl-about) earlier this year, only to die of dehydration under some bushes. I replaced this eel with another of 2lb in July and thought that this one was content until this very morning, when I discovered it upside down in my flowerbed. I thought it dead, but mouth to mouth resusitation.....revealed a spark of life and it was carefully returned to the pond where it glided off to the sanctuary of the bottom.

As you should observe from the copy of the letter to the Water Authorities, I have had some new Club headed notepaper put together. I would be interested in your comments as I will have it available for distribution as soon as I know Terry and Arthur Sutton are settled into their new residences.

Brian Crawford



The National Anguilla Club

EEL ANGLING SPECIALISTS

Established 1962

General Secretary: Terry Jefferson 11 Middlemead West Hanningfield Nr. Chelmsford Essex CM2 8UT	Treasurer: Mark Davies 31 Manchester Rd Knutsford Cheshire	President: Arthur Sutton 15 Westoe Road Edmonton London N9 0SH	Chairman: Brian Crawford 129 Benland Bretton Peterborough PE3 8EE	Membership Sec.: Tony Hollerbach 10 Carter Close Bedford MK42 0JP
Tel. 0245 400025		01 803 2099	0733 269981	0234 60858

Communication from: **THE CHAIRMAN, BRIAN CRAWFORD**

Date: 25th November 1980

TO: The Fisheries Officers of;

The Anglian Water Authority,
The Northumbrian Water Authority,
The Yorkshire Water Authority,
The Welsh National Water Development Authority,
The North West Water Authority,
The Southern Water Authority,
The Wessex Water Authority,
The South West Water Authority,
The Severn - Trent Water Authority,
The Thames Water Authority,

Sirs,

I am in the process of updating my records on Water Authorities byelaws and attitudes regarding eel angling during the coarse fish close season, eel trapping, the maintenance, improvement and development of eel fisheries in your area in accordance with Section 18 of the Water Act, the cost of rod and trap licences and any projected proposals that involves any of these issues.

I would be very grateful if you could supply me with the relevent information, and your cooperation in my project.

I would also hope that you may study and give serious consideration to the enclosed document concerning the Anglian Water Authority Review of Fishing Licence Duties for the period 1982 - 1984.

If it is possible, I would like to be kept informed of any similar consultation that may involve your Authority in the future.

Please believe my actions are in the best interests of the conservation of eel stocks and in maintaining their correct balance in our fisheries.

Yours Faithfully,

Brian Crawford
Chairman

THE NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB

FROM THE CHAIRMAN:

The Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food,
(Fisheries 1B),
Great Westminster House,
Horseferry Road,
London.
SW1P 2A.

Brian Crawford
129 Benland
Bretton
Peterborough
PE3 8EE

Tel: 269981

November 9th 1980

Sir,

Anglian Water Authority Review of Fishing Licence Duties For The Period
1982 - 1984

On behalf of the National Anguilla Club, a group of specialist eel anglers, of which I am Chairman, and the National Association of Specimen Groups, representing the interests of specialist anglers of many species of freshwater fish, and of all other specialist eel anglers who fish in the Anglian Water Authority area, whom I hope to represent as a member of the Great Ouse Fisheries Consultative Committee, I would like to raise strong objections as outlined below, to the proposed Anglian Water Authority's biased increase in licence fees for the trapping of eels.

I will of course be presenting my case direct to my Consultative Association, together with the Anglian Water Authority, various angling bodies and the angling press in an attempt to ensure the widest and fullest hearing, and to inform all interested bodies of the deep concern of specialist eel anglers against the continued decimation of eel stocks in our freshwater fisheries by professional and semi-professional eel trappers.

SUMMARY OF THE ANGLIAN WATER AUTHORITY PROPOSALS

1. For rod licences: either-
 - a. A Regional Standard licence of £5.25 per rod only.
 - b. A Regional Standard licence of £6.00 with Divisional licences of £3.25.

These represent an increase in excess of 60%

2. For eel traps: either-
 - a. A licence of £2.00 per instrument.
 - b. A licence of £6.00 for the Norfolk and Suffolk River Division only with a licence of £2.00 for the rest of the Region.

These represent an increase of 40% (Neglecting the £6.00 licence which is proposed to cover extra bailiffing in that Division)

These proposals represent an obvious discrimination in favour of commercial interests and against recreational interests.

STATEMENT

The Anglian Water Authority states in Section 34 of the Report of the Fisheries Advisory Committee of the 3rd September 1980, "that views have been expressed to the effect that the licencing duty should reflect the high commercial value of eels and not the level of fisheries service provided by the Anglian Water Authority, to manage or protect the eel fisheries of the area, and to enforce licencing and byelaw requirements."

This Committee also supported the views of the 'Anglian Eel Fisherman's Protection Society', (commercial trappers) who said that there was no justification for increasing licence duties substantially unless an increased level of service was to be provided. Again representing discrimination in favour of commercial interests and contrary to Section 18 of the Water Act.

Commercial eel trappers serve no useful function and actually experience a substantial income for petty outgoings, like parasites on the fisheries of Anglia.

Why should the Anglian Water Authority, who's duty it is to provide fisheries, clean water, drainage and facilities for recreation, have to subsidise the incomes of at least 25 commercial fishermen out of the income from rod licences

It is a fact that the more conscientiously the Authority performs its duties, the better will be the crop of eels for these trappers.

It is as though a farmer spends a good deal of time, effort and money in establishing excellent cultivated land, only to allow others to reap his crops for a pitifully small fee.

The Authority expects an annual income of £755,000 from rod licences, part of which pays the salaries of 150 bailiffs, against an expected annual income of about £3000 from eel trapping, covering little or no bailiffing, as the majority of trappers operate at night. For efficient supervision and enforcement of commercial eel licences, clearly the fee of £2.00 per instrument needs to be substantially raised, for the 1464 licence fees collected from traps at the present time, giving under £3000 at the proposed new rate, will not be sufficient. To cover suitable bailiffing, a fee of £6.00 per instrument would be more appropriate.

As Section 18 of the Water Act states that Water Authorities have a duty to maintain, improve and develop salmon, trout, freshwater fish and eels in the fisheries in their area, even by allowing commercial eel trappers to operate in their area, the Authority must be acting contrary to this Section.

The Authority admits that about 25 persons purchase most of the eel trapping licences issued and thus must be considered to be obtaining a substantial income. Bearing in mind the high commercial value of eels, if we only assumed an average income of £2000 per person from trapping, this would give a figure in excess of £50,000 per year, and for a nominal outlay in equipment and fees.

I also wish to point out that there is no close season for eel trapping and therefore persons in possession of a trap licence are free to trap and net all through the coarse fish spawning season, damaging and killing many millions of immature fish of all species.

The Authority states that its aim of the Review of Duties for 1982 - 84 is to cover fisheries expenditure from fishing licence income. In view of an increase of over 60% for rod anglers and only 40% for commercial trappers, are we to expect a large increase of services to rod anglers and a decline in services to commercial interests - I fear not, commercial trappers already have the support of the Fisheries Liason Committee as outlined above, and of course as fisheries improve, also must the quality of fish and therefore more cash for the trappers.

There have been extensive complaints of a lack of coarse fish in the Great Ouse system, particularly where 340 trapping licences were issued in 1979. Can this system continue to support these many instruments, or is there a reasonable argument for a severe reduction, not only in the number of traps, but in the areas they can be set and in the time of year also.

The Fisheries Advisory Committee set a figure of £1500 to cover a reasonable level of enforcement of regulations of trapping in the Norfolk and Suffolk Division as a reason for the higher proposed rate for that Division. However, there can be no reason why this Division should be set above all others. If all the Region was covered to the same high standard, a sum of £7500 would be required, or a minimum fee of £6.00 per instrument. Indeed, also worthy of consideration is the setting of a much higher fee of at least £10.00 per instrument so that not only enforcement of regulations can be observed, but there will be an income available for the improvement of fisheries on a wider scale. This will help offset losses of coarse fish due to the killing of immature fish and the sale of marketable coarse fish from unscrupulous trappers.

SUMMARY

1. Eel trappers paid £2055 in 1979 to obtain upwards of £50,000 value of eels.
2. The cost of eel trapping licences should represent the cost of correct enforcement of regulations. This would represent a minimum fee of £6.00.
3. Proposed increase in rod licence is 60%, eel trapping licences 40%
4. Eel traps could be a substantial source of coarse fish mortalities, especially during the spawning season and the following few months, and from the sale of mature fish found in traps
5. Eel trapping must be against Section 18 of the Water Act as it is definitely detrimental to eel fisheries in the Region and a possible source of loss to other fish species.

ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

1. There should be a total ban on eel trapping in the AWA Region.
2. Introduce a close season for eel trapping, say from March 15th to July 1st.
3. Increase eel trap licences to at least £6.00.
4. All eel trapping in the AWA Region to be carried out by AWA staff only.
5. Restrict the numbers of traps in each Division.
6. Restrict the areas of Divisions where traps may be set.
7. A strict comparison needs to be made of trapping in other countries and here.
8. Frequent spot check must be made on the contents of eel traps during each season.

If proposals 1 and 4 are not possible then the others are.

Brian Crawford
Chairman
The National Anguilla Club

Copies of this document have been sent to:

The Anglian Water Authority
The Secretary of the Great Ouse Fisheries Consultative Association
The National Association of Specimen Groups
The National Anglers Council
The National Federation of Anglers
The British Eel Anglers Club
Essex Anglers Consultative Association
Lincolnshire Rivers Anglers Consultative Association
Norfolk & Suffolk Anglers Consultative Council
Nene & Welland Anglers Consultative Association

Angling Times
Anglers Mail
Coarse Angler
Coarse Fisherman

EEL STOCKING

I can recollect that recently Arthur Sutton put forward the idea that the National Anguilla Club should take some positive steps toward stocking certain waters with elvers. As Arthur stated, this would be a very long-term plan and bearing in mind the exceptionally slow growth rate of the eel we could not expect to start catching eels introduced in this way for at least twenty or thirty years or more. Regardless of that fact I think that the NAC should formulate a definite policy for stocking in co-ordination and in conjunction with the various Regional Water Authorities and the owners of the fisheries we contemplate introducing elvers to. It is an offence under the Salmon and Fresh Water Fisheries Act 1975, Section 30, to introduce any fish or spawn of fish into an inland water without firstly obtaining a written consent of the Water Authority within whose area any part of that water is situated. Fresh water eels of course come within the ambit of that Act. I am not sure what view a water authority would take if they were approached by the NAC with a view to elver stocking. One would hope that they would not place unnecessary difficulties in our way if a programme of stocking was decided upon. They may even be prepared to loan equipment to assist in the distribution of elvers.

To my knowledge the Severn-Trent Water Authority have been introducing elvers from the Severn Estuary to certain Shropshire Meres. One water which Dave Holman and I fished this year had had elvers introduced to it. However, I am quite convinced that the Water Authority's action had nothing to do with improving the lot of the eel angling fraternity but stems purely from their desire to exploit the commercial possibilities of maturing eels in enclosed water.

Although no-one is certain how elvers get into those waters, and waters with no direct connection with the sea, it must surely be a very wasteful process and the mortality rate amongst elvers must be high. We are well aware of the small numbers of elvers that grow into eels of a reasonable size.

How could the NAC go about obtaining elvers in bulk? I do not think there would be any trouble in this regard. If any members have been down to the Severn Estuary and seen the elver fishermen in action there they will soon realise that the amount of elvers caught each season must be many tons and bearing in mind that the elver weigh a fraction of an ounce, how many millions must be taken every year. These fisherman are not concerned whether the elvers they take are sold for eating or sold to stock other waters and a direct approach to elver fishermen on the Severn I am sure would secure a large supply of live elvers at a fairly reasonable price. It is well worth a visit on Easter Monday (I think this is the correct date) to Frampton-on-Severn where at a public house called The Bell the Annual Elver Eating Contest takes place. It would perhaps not be a pretty sight to an eel fisherman to see overweight men (and women) ramming huge quantities of crisply-fried elvers down their gullets at an incredible rate of knots. Tens of thousands of elvers must be consumed on the date of the contest. All prospective four pounders as far as the NAC is concerned - if they could get hold of them. It would be a simple task to rig up an oxygenated tank in the back of an estate car (ie mine) to distribute the elvers countrywide. Many thousands could be moved over large distances and a bucketful in each of the chosen waters would be all that would be needed.

One thing which should of course be considered before any elvers are moved is the likelihood of the introduction of such a large amount of

EEL STOCKING - Cont'd

fish doing irreparable harm to the fishery. For this reason locations would be chosen with care after being advised by the fresh water biologist attached to the various Water Authorities. I do not know if any other members have experienced the damage that can be done to a fishery by the introduction of carp (and the subsequent invasion of anglers - sorry Dave Walker). On waters that do not have an abundance of natural food other Cyprinae simply cannot compete for the available food and whilst the carp put on weight quickly the growth rate of other species is either reduced or the specimens of those species grow no more or in fact in certain instances begin to "go back".

With the increase of eel netting and trapping countrywide, surely efforts must be made to maintain the balance to preserve our sport. Not only for the benefit of eel fishermen but for all fishermen. I am convinced that the presence of eels in a water is an important link in the natural chain necessary to maintain a prime fishery. I personally do not think that the NAC or anglers as a collective body have got any change of either stopping or substantially reducing the take of eels for food despite our sincere intentions to do so. Although angling is Britain's largest participant sport, eel anglers are a very tiny minority with no muscle whatsoever. Having said this I do believe that gaining membership to the various fisheries consultative committees is a step in the right direction - but that is all. I do not think it is possible to criticise fishery owners who allow commercial netmen on their waters. The chance of making a fairly large amount of cash quickly is not one that can be easily refused. What the NAC's campaign should be specifically aimed at is making fishery owners and clubs that own fisheries aware of the lasting damage that could be done and not just to fresh water eels which I am sure very few would be interested in.

No doubt any response to this article will be voiced in the Newsletter or Bulletin.

PS Section 28 of the Salmon and Fresh Water Fisheries Act 1975 places on every Water Authority the duty to maintain, improve and develop the Salmon, Trout, Fresh Water and Eel Fisheries in their area. If any individual or organisation has the funds to finance a Court action I am sure this particular section could be used to stop Water Authorities taking certain action (ie the Anglian Water Authority's zander and pike cull) or alternatively make them carry out their duty ie to stock water with elvers and prevent the over-exploitation and reduction of eel stocks by commercial trappers and netmen.

HAWKSTONE PARK

Hawkstone Park is situated in Shropshire just 10 miles from Shrewsbury. It is approximately $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and varies from 20 to 60 yards wide.

Most of its length is on a day ticket (£1) and is approximately 6-8' deep at the car park end and 2-3' at the far end. The bottom is thick oozy mud all the way along.

Only one bank is fishable - the far bank is thick with rushes and marginal lillies and weed etc. There are 110 permanent pegs along the bank which is narrow and difficult to negotiate but nearly every spot can produce superb eels, roach, tench, rudd, crucian and common carp with plenty of smaller perch, pike and occasionally bream. I have known about the big eels Hawkstone contains for many years, there is even a 5:6:11 encased specimen in a Crewe clubhouse. Yet it was September before I gave it a try for eels.

Since 1964 I have fished it regularly and it is far and away my favourite water - it is sheer perfection with plenty of quality fish, especially tench and crucians.

On one visit in late August I talked to an angler who had caught quite a few big eels from Hawkstone including a magical 6lb job. What impressed me was the fact he was able to accurately judge the weight of a 2lb plus eel without putting it near the scales. It always surprises me how few anglers can do this.

He had caught many of his eels from the high numbered pegs and had little success fishing the deeper water nearer the car park. Perhaps now would be a good time to explain that these high pegs are some $1\frac{1}{4}$ - $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the parking area - a gruesome thought.

Despite this the following Friday night I laboured long and hard and eventually parked on peg no.83. Several cups of tea later I managed to set up four rods just before it went dark, baited each with a lob (or double lob) and groundbaited with about 200 worms and two pints of maggots.

Two baits were margin fished in 3' of water and the other two cast 20 yards out in less than 2'. During the night I caught only tench which just loved my worms although no big ones turned up, plenty of 3-4lb jobs were netted.

At first light the tench dropped off and perch moved in and again there was plenty of action before I got fed up with dragging in 1 lb+ fish and changed just two rods with sardine specials for the carp.

Now pike love my sardine specials and I kept hooking small fish which leaped about some chewing through the line. Eventually I landed an 11 lb mirror which livened things up somewhat! In the quiet of the afternoon the clouds cleared and the wind increased to strong NW but it was extremely pleasant in the warm sunshine as I lay on my bedchair.

With no further takes I decided to try for some more perch and tackled up a light Avon rod 5lb line and size 10 hook baited with a very

HAWKSTONE PARK - Cont'd

small lob on a link leger rig. I cast to the area three-quarters of the way across where I had groundbaited the previous night. Only 10 minutes later the line tightened slowly and I struck solid into something immovable.

Huge patches of bubbles exploded on the surface and I put on full pressure which eased the fish out of the mud and had him sprawling near the top. I could see he was a big eel but before I could draw him into the net he dived down into the mud and this time there was no shifting him.

Many times I have taken to the water to land a good eel and this time there was no question that if I did not go in I would lose this fish. I kicked off my wellies and waded into the water towards where he was buried. I worked my large landing net deep underneath where I suspected the fish was and eventually brought up half a cwt of pure mud rubbish and hopefully an eel.

Yes, he was in there and at 4:1 it was by far my best of the season. That night was cold and clear and it was back to carp again, come to think of it I have had a lot of carp this year and all on eel rods.

Perhaps next year I will not be daunted by that marathon tackle-lugging exercise and have a long-term crack at those high pegs. Maybe there is a six with my name on it and for one of those I'd walk it from home!

Dave Holman

A TALE OF THE UNEXPECTED OR THE STEAK DINNER THAT NEVER WAS

This little tale is by way of a stark reminder to those who cook by use of gas when on the bank that caution should be exercised at all times.

The story might also go a long way to explaining why AJS, Ernie and myself end up falling about in fits of laughter when huddled together in some dark corner at a Club Meeting or wherever. "WE LIVED TO TELL THE TALE".

This intrepid trio of gourmets were spending several days at a venue which is synonymous with weird and wonderful happenings: Whitemere in Shropshire.

We were rapidly approaching the end of our stay with some moderate eels and a few decent perch to our credit. It is almost a

tradition with us that we have at least one good waterside blowout when we get together, and this trip was to be no exception. "T" Bones were to be the order of the day with trimmings of each individual's choice. My preference was for boiled potatoes and peas with a general helping of fried onions. It escapes me for now what the others had, but suffice to say that they got to eat as planned.

It has always been my practice on prolonged trips to take a double burner camping stove and 10lb gas bottle. Although I enjoy unhealthy fried food as much as the next man, an occasional dose of boiled greens does add a bit of variety to the diet, and it helps to keep you in motion, you follow my drift.

To that end, a double burner does give you the chance to produce a half-tidy meal.

My normal double burner is a rather antiquated item, so I borrowed a fairly new lightweight model to use on this particular trip, having been assured that all the necessary bits were included. Like a fool, I took the kind donor at his word and didn't bother to check that everything was present. Instead, I gleefully packed it with my own gas bottle and shot off into the wild blue yonder. I did take the precaution of packing my "GAZ" burner as insurance, in case my gas ran out in the middle of the night or some such.

On arrival at Whitemere, I set to: organising my BIV and getting all my tackle set up. That job done, I proceeded to organise the catering facilities as a mug of tea was high on the list of priorities.

Problem No.1. Search as I might I could not find the adaptor for connecting the gas pipe from the stove to the gas bottle. Ah well, not to worry, I have managed with the single burner before, one more time won't hurt, so I soldered on using the single GAZ unit for most of the trip.

Until the thought of a steak meal reared its ugly head, there had been no real problems. The prospect of rapidly-cooling veg with a freshly fried "hot" steak was not appealing, so I resolved that when Arthur and I went to get the steaks, I could scour the town of Ellesmere in search of a suitable adaptor for the double burner.

What I did not realise at the time was that some burners run off direct bottle pressure, unlike my old one which has to be used with a "governor" on the bottle to regulate the gas pressure. I gleefully breezed in and out of a couple of shops before successfully tracking down a governor with the right connections.

"Boy, was I gonna feast tonight".

Back at the Mere, Arthur and Ernie busily set about preparing their feasts while I got my double burner organised. The governor fitted perfectly, and I prepared to put the kettle on and have a cup of tea whilst I prepared the previously mentioned onions.

Turn the gas on, strike the match, and offer it to the burner in one swift movement and.....NOTHING! OUCH!! Fingers burnt, I struck

A TALE OF THE UNEXPECTED OR THE STEAK DINNER THAT NEVER WAS - Cont'd

another match and offered it up thinking that the gas might be a bit slow getting through the pipe. A brief spluttering flame suggested that I, or rather the gas, was getting somewhere. "Perhaps there is a blockage in the pipe", I thought. I knew that there was plenty of gas in the bottle, but no harm in double-checking.

I disconnected the governor from the bottle and gently eased open the valve on the bottle. HISSS Plenty of gas.

Check the pipe. I disconnected the governor from the pipe and blew as hard as possible. I nearly blew the caps off the burners, such was the clear passage through the pipe.

OH, OH! PROBLEM NO: 2. It suddenly dawned on me that (I'm pretty quick on the uptake) the governor was the cause of my trouble, or worse still that I did not need a governor at all, but a simple adaptor.

By this time, the shops had long been shut. The other two were bound to have finished gorging themselves, and worse still, it was getting dark very suddenly as cloud was rapidly building up and it had started to rain quite steadily.

I heard the "Whoosing" of rods and "bleeping" of alarms as the "Dynamic duo" prepared themselves for the night - they must have noticed the unusual silence from my neck of the woods so to speak, and decided to come and investigate.

They arrived to find me wrestling with the double burner and contemplating dire deeds ("cause I ain't nice to know when I'm starving").

From here on in, things get a bit hairy, so if you've a weak stomach, get on to the next article!!

Ernie: (PEERING THROUGH DOOR OF BIV) "What's the matter Pal aren't you fishing yet?"

Terry: "No! I can't get this bleeding stove to work so I ain't eaten yet."

Arthur: "Lets squeeze in and have a look, its peeing down out here and we're getting wet."

Ernie: "What's the problem them?"

Terry: "It looks like the governor I bought is useless. The stove works off direct pressure and I need an adaptor. Still, now you two are here, you can help me try to see if the stove does work without the adaptor."

FROM HERE, THINGS GET RAPIDLY SILLIER!!

Arthur: "How are we going to do that then?"

Terry: "Well, the gas pipe fits snugly into the valve on the bottle. If I hold the bottle between my legs and keep the pipe firmly in place - you hold the stove as far away as possible and Ernie can turn it on and try it with a match."

A TALE OF THE UNEXPECTED OR THE STEAK DINNER THAT NEVER WAS - Cont'd

Ernie: "Do you think its safe?"

Terry: "If I ease the valve open gently, there won't be much gas about. At least I'll know if the stove works properly or not. Shall we try it?"

Ernie & Arthur: "Well, OK"

ARTHUR HOLDS THE STOVE AS FAR AWAY AS THE LENGTH OF PIPE WILL ALLOW. ERNIE PREPARES TO STRIKE A MATCH. I PREPARE TO EASE OPEN THE VALVE.

Terry: "When I say now, Arthur, turn the furthest gas ring on and you put the match to it Ernie."
"Ready.....GO."

WHOOSH: THERE WAS A SEARING BLUE FLASH AND A JET OF FLAME APPEARED FROM THE VALVE.

Terry: (EYEBROWS AND FOREHEAD NEATLY SINGED) "What are we gonna do?" (A HINT OF HYSTERIA IN MY VOICE)

Arthur: "Get it outside!!!"

KICK, I BELTED THE BOTTLE THROUGH THE DOOR OF THE BIV AND IT ROLLED TO A STANDSTILL ABOUT 15 FEET AWAY EXHUDING A FLAME LIKE A NORTH SEA GAS FLARE AND HISSING WILDLY AS THE RAIN POURED ON IT.

Terry: (DESPERATE) "Kick some sand on it."

ARTHUR LEAPT AT THE BOTTLE (THE GAS BOTTLE THAT IS) HE'S OLDER AND SILLIER THAN ME AND APPROACHING FROM THE UPWIND SIDE, HE SUCCESSFULLY TURNED THE BEAST OFF. THERE WAS TOTAL SILENCE, APART FROM THE RAIN FALLING.

Arthur: "Thank god for that."

Terry: "You mad fool. Well done."

Arthur: "Where's Ernie?"

Terry: "In the biv"

Arthur: "He's not you know, he was out of the biv like a flash."

Together: "ERNIEEEE"

FROM THE BUSHES OPPOSITE: UUUUGGGGHHHHHH

Again: "ERNIEEEE"

REPEAT: UUUUGGGGHHHHHH

THE BUSHES PARTED AND ERNIE STAGGED INTO THE OPEN AS WHITE AS A SHEET AND COVERED IN MUD STAINS

Arthur: "Where did you get to"

Ernie: "I wasn't going to stay for the finale. I ran straight out and straight into a tree and as soon as I hit the deck I started digging for all I was worth."

A TALE OF THE UNEXPECTED OR THE STEAK DINNER THAT NEVER WAS - Cont'd

WITH A MENTAL PICTURE OF ERNIE SCRAPING THE EARTH IN A FRENZY TO GET BELOW GROUND LEVEL, ARTHUR AND I BURST OUT LAUGHING, AND IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE ERNIE SAW THE FUNNY SIDE OF THINGS AS WELL.

Mercifully, no serious damage had been done. I finished up frying my steak on the "GAZ" burner and eating it on its own, and slowly, things began to return to normal.

The following morning, Dave Holman turned up. Ernie was the first he encountered, and naturally, the story was told to Dave who approached me with a very stern look and handed over a batch of leaflets giving hints on avoiding fire hazards in the home.

We all had a good laugh about the whole episode, and as you may now understand, we can't help but laugh about it when we get together.

Merry Jefferson

LONG RANGE GROUND BAITING

Although my current claim to fame is that it took me 103½ rod hours to catch each one of the 12 eels credited to me for 1980 it has been possible for me to pinpoint why my results were so poor or at least try to offer some excuse. One aspect of my technique (or lack of it) that was obviously sadly lacking was my inability to put out ground bait at the fairly long ranges which are necessary for fishing the Shropshire meres. I am in particular thinking of Whitemere rather than Blakemere (where eels can be caught in the margins at night - so I am told). From the roadside swims of Whitemere most of the productive areas are some thirty or forty yards from the bank and although one has no trouble in putting the bait out that distance, when it comes to laying down a ground baited area problems are encountered.

I have for the last two seasons used a powerful catapult to put out balls of crumb laced with worms and freshly chopped dead bait. This is easily and fairly accurately done at short range but with the distances necessary to fish on Whitemere, I have found to my cost that a catapult is totally inadequate. It is possible to achieve a reasonable distance by aiming the catapult high but it is then difficult to be accurate to concentrate the feed in a relatively small area. To layout a lot of ground bait takes a very long time even if the desired distance can be reached. I did early in the season try to use Feederlinks to put the ground bait out. This worked reasonably well when using maggots and finely minced up bait but was difficult

LONG RANGE GROUND BAITING - Cont'd

to get out the quantity of ground bait needed. Even with a separate rod set up simply to cast out the Feederlink it was very hard work.

Fishing with the well-known Cheshire Fireman brought to my notice the use of a small inflatable boat for accuracy and fairly easy placing of not only ground bait but also freeline bait which could not be cast very far. As far as I am concerned this is the most practical way to ground bait at long distance. I did intend to buy an inflatable boat ready to use when I fished with AJS and the well-known Cheshire Fireman in September but somehow I did not get round to it. This will now be top priority to purchase in readiness for the 1981 season. I believe for between £12 and £15 one can purchase a craft which is not only very buoyant but folds away and can be blown up easily (especially with a pump attached to a car cigarette lighter), which is small enough to be placed under your cover when not in use (especially where the use of inflatable boats is banned ie Whitemere). Regular baiting with a boat using a marker buoy enables the angler to keep the eels interested and feeding over a fairly long period. Dave Homan's superb catch of 16 big eels in September I think have something to do with accuracy and regular feeding via his inflatable boat. It was very frustrating to see Dave gently drafting across to his marker buoy just as it was getting dark when I was thrashing about with a catapult on the bank. However, as Dave instructed me it is not simply a question of acquiring a boat, jumping into it and ploughing out to the area to be ground baited. There is a technique in getting in and steering a craft which is very nearly round and then getting back to the bank safely. This fact was brought home to one of Dave's friends who using an inflatable for baiting up fell in and nearly met his end as firstly he could not swim and secondly was wearing waders which rapidly filled with water and dragged him under the surface. Mr Holman recommends bare feet when using the boat.

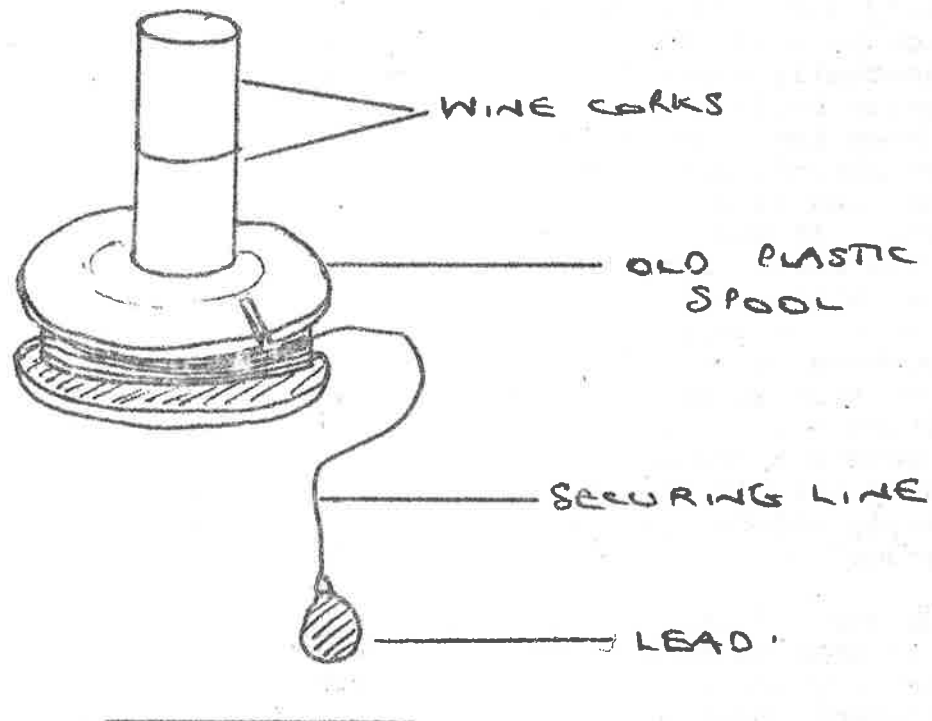
Although inflatable boats are fairly sturdy they puncture easily and it is wise to have a repair kit with you when fishing to carry out emergency work. In January this year I came across a very nice inflatable boat at a junk shop in Salford which I persuaded the owner to sell me for the princely sum of £0.25p a bargain so I thought. I got it home and pumped it up and repaired the obvious punctures. Did the same again and again and again until finally my rubber solution and my patience ran out and I set fire to it. Perhaps this was the reason why I did not get round to buying a new one in 1980. I have in the past seen for sale in Army Surplus Stores inflatable boats which are carried by fighter pilots. They are small and the great advantage about them is that they will stand a lot more wear and tear than the PVC models because they are made of fairly thick rubberised material. I have searched high and low for such a model but so far have been unsuccessful. If anybody knows of a shop selling such an inflatable boat perhaps they would let me know.

Finally, although a pike float makes an adequate marker buoy I have found that a very efficient model can be made from an old plastic line holder, (the standard size) and two wine corks. The wine corks are araldited together and then araldited to the line holder and then painted with a florescent paint. The line from the marker buoy to

LONG RANGE GROUND BAITING - Cont'd

the securing lead is wound round the spool and run out at the correct depth. It is then held at that depth by pushing it in the groove illustrated on the diagram. This marker buoy can be seen even when the water is fairly choppy and it is an easy matter to cast accurately to the ground baited area.

Mark Davies



LETTER TO THE NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB

To All Club Members,

As I have the dubious pleasure of reproducing all the club work I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for a happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Especially so to Arthur for being so nice about me (see page 1 para.2!).

I hope you all have better luck for your fishing for the New Year than this season. Please write some good articles I can learn quite a lot typing them!

Best wishes

Jan Tester
(Terry's fiancée)

○

○
