

The National Anguilla Club

BULLETIN

NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB BULLETIN

VOLUME 23

NUMBER 5

NOVEMBER 1986

<u>CONTENTS</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
EDITORIAL	1
PRESIDENTS PAGE	2
CHAIRMAN'S PAGE	3
AN APPRAISAL OF ITEMS IN ISSUE NO 4 VOL 23 by Arthur J Sutton	4-6
A REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH ON FRESHWATER EELS by Brian Crawford	7
SEVERN TRENT WATER AUTHORITY-PRESS RELEASES supplied by Brian Crawford	8-11
SUMMER TRIP 86 - (WELL A WEEKEND AWAY) by Pete Stickland	12-14
EDS COMMENT	14
STOP PRESS	14

(Copyright NAC 1986 c)

David P. Walker

EDITOR

EDITORIAL

I've spent the last five seasons fishing almost exclusively for eels and rightly or wrongly I think I have wasted my time, not completely but in general. An awful lot of this fishing has been purely mechanical and quite honestly bloody boring. This situation has arisen out of my own mis-guided belief that as a member I had to go eel fishing as often as possible regardless of the results, and this I intend to change from now on.

I had seriously considered leaving the Anguilla Club, believing that it was holding me back from expanding my fishing, but I have come to the sensible conclusion that I need a central focus for my fishing and anyway I actually enjoy being a Club member. (Or to put it another way, better the devil you know than the one you don't) So at least for the foreseeable future you will all have to put up with me as I'm staying and still going eeling.....BUT.....My eeling is going to change, I'm going to fish completely different waters to those that I have fished recently and as often as the fancy takes me. NOT because I feel I have to fish them but when and how I feel the bug to go and wet a line there. Another change to my fishing is hopefully the addition of some company in the form of my two pals John and Tom both of whom are keen to get a few eels (and other things) under their belts. I hope that this basis for a three way attack on the fish will get my enthusiasm going again, as at the present moment my enthusiasm for fishing, and eel fishing in particular, is at an all time low and I certainly intend to change this situation if nothing else!!!!

I must apologise to any one who has written to me recently and heard nothing in reply but my mood of late has meant that I have had no interest in fishing at all and I am now changing that drastically. As some of you can appreciate this is a very dangerous attitude for me to have as my living depends on angling and thus I have had to snap out of it in no uncertain manner.

So here I come again lads, hold on to your hats, hide your tea bags, 'cause Mouth of the South is back and raring to go!!!!!!!!

The flow of material for the Bulletin has dried up completely so please get the old biro's out and wriet something for me to dechipher for the next edition. I've got a few peices in mind for the future but surely you don't want to read my drivel every time, that is of course if you read the Bulletin at all? Prove you do and write to me saying so and commenting on some of the contents.

One last point for this time, as present custodian of the Club's photo display boards I get a bit dismayed at the lack of present members faces on them. Believe me when I say that some of the people on those boards are old enough to have been half the present memberships grandfathers. So lets try and prove that you don't have to be over 50 years old to have your photo on the Club's public face.

Cheers for now and good fishing during the winter months lads.

DPW EDITOR

THE PRESIDENTS PAGE.

Seems quite a while now since I last wrote under the Presidents banner. A lot has happened to me and a lot of water has flowed under the bridge since then.

I will not delve too deeply into detail, but I was dreadfully ill for some time and, just when I thought the bad times were past, down I went again. All this on top of losing the job I had had for thirty six years, and the situation was not helped by my son going sick and losing his job. We are both now part of the three million or so on the dole. Of course, you cannot put this old sod down quite that easily, and I am now enjoying my fishing again albeit taking things very easily. But my fishing IS affected by the fact that we cannot tank up the car as often as we did, and are thus confined to our local waters - not the best eel waters in the land by any means.

Having to miss the N.A.S.A. Conference was quite a blow to me, although I was too ill to give it much thought at the time. I had looked forward to old Sutton going out in a blaze of glory, for although I'm by no means finished yet, it would probably be the last big thing I did in angling. But it all turned out very sour, too sour for me. After feeling so very proud to be the President of the Anguilla Club, I now feel that I am just a burden. So much so that I intend to relieve you of that burden. These few words, and those in the article which I hope will appear in the same issue as this page, will be the last to stem from this machine. I will resign at the end of this summer.

The wrench will come hard as for almost twenty five years now the Club has always come first. The Club has had its trials and tribulations in the past, but has always come through it O.K. And I know that my leaving will not matter one iota for we have some competent officers to run the Club and look after its interests. I would have wished my son to remain a member and, in that way, to remain in touch with what was going on. But I now know that he too will leave at the same time as myself.

So will end an era which for me has been most enjoyable. Not always an easy ride, but enjoyable all the same. I shall continue to fish for eels for as long as I am able, and that means a few more years yet. In fact I have plans which I want to put into effect in the next couple of years and will almost certainly do even more fishing than before. I can now go about my eel fishing during the week, and not be confined to weekends with all the hustle and bustle that weekends bring. I shall try to visit those waters, like the Shropshire meres, where I have done well in the past - but always with an open mind and an eagerness to approach them differently.

Thus I come to the Bulletin issue in front of me as I write. It's a splendid issue, this one, and if you don't feel that way then you have not digested what is written therein. Read it again, I beg you. Many thanks to Messrs Walker and Co who have really done their stuff. But thanks, mostly, to the writers. There is wisdom and a great deal of foresight in this issue before me now. It has prompted me to write one last article which, as I said, I hope will appear in the same issue as this page.

Do spare a thought for your Editor. Typing these pages and the subsequent production of the Bulletin may only take a few hours of actual time, but to actually get the Bulletin in a form where it can be put through your letter box is, believe me a full time job and one worthy of the fullest recognition by all members. Forget not the Secretary or the Chairman. Their jobs may not carry the same king of glory, but are of equal value to you all.

Almost lastly. DO NOT let the National Anguilla Club die, for it will not easily be replaced, if indeed it can be replaced at all. It's YOUR Club. Look after it.

My son and I will be attending the last weekend of the Summer Trip to the canal and we look forward to meeting many of you there.

Best Wishes,

Arthur J. Sutton

CHAIRMANS PAGE

I hope to keep this collection of ramblings as brief as possible. Not because of a shortage of things to comment on, but to ensure that Bulletin publication is not delayed by me. (You write as much as you like Terry old mate, a ten page Chairmans spot would not be unwelcome, ED.)

Unfortunately the Summer Trip was one of those occasions that turned out to be very disappointing. Several members and guests made considerable efforts to attend the trip, only to find that most of the canal was almost completely unfishable due to dense weed growth that extended from bank to bank, save for the very occasional hole.

Bob and I were more fortunate, in that we found a stretch where the weed had been recently cut. In fact we caught several eels, I'm sure Bob had the best at 2:12, although Dave Walker did get a pike of 13:03 which must be a record for the canal.

I know that Pete Stickland and John Mitchell and friends were not best pleased when we caught up with them, but if it's any consolation lads, I well remember one particular Summer Trip to the Southern Angling Centre at Chichester, a very promising venue and known to produce good eels. I had managed to drag myself from my sickbed dosed up with all manner of medication to combat the flu and drove to the South Coast amid the usually terrible bank holiday traffic. Having arrived safely, I spent several hours looking round for a vacant swim! I eventually found a bailiff/warden, and he had never heard of the Anguilla Club. So I got back in the car and came home!!

Since June I have recieved Session Reports regularly from only two members. So, HERE ENDETH THE SESSION REPORTING SCHEME!

I'm not going to waste my time or the time of those few prepared to make the effort. 25th year. Whats that then? My letter box is getting rusty from lack of use. We've had one or two ideas put forward. So for Gods sake lets have comments on them.

Most of you will recall the suggestion that we hold just one General Meeting each year and that should be in the Spring, so that as many as possible can attend what will then become the AGM.

If the majority are in favour of the suggestion then we can set the wheels in motion at the next AGM. As it will mean a major constitutional change, and a re-write of the Rules and Constitution of the Club. Give it some thought.

Some very good eels have been caught this year, unfortunately none of them by me, but thats not unusual. However, I have been trying when ever possible. The impression at the moment at this end is that 75% of you have not.

Terry Jefferson CHAIRMAN

How I enjoyed issue No 4 of Volume 23 received just prior to the middle of August. It was a skin to coming out of a dark dank cellar and breathing lovely fresh air.

There, as always, was John Sidley. True, John is a pain in the neck to some of you, but I've come to believe that he is a pain in the neck we can ill afford to lose. He keeps on plugging away at certain topics which, in the end, you must all surely take notice of and do something about. There are enough subjects in issue No 4 alone to keep The National Anguilla Club busy for years. If taken notice of, they will certainly lead to some important modifications in the Reporting Scheme.

But though he and Walker managed to hog a good part of the issue, mostly due to the lack of articles from the rest of you, the pieces by Phil Smith and Dave Taylor are also worthy of note. Phil Smith we surely all know, and he has illustrated that he can write as well as he fishes. Dave Taylor, having served a good apprenticeship, will without doubt become one of the leading lights within the Club if he stays with it.

Now I come to one or two points in particular and I would like first to deal with a matter raised in Terry's excellent Chairmans Page. The subject is eel netting. This is, surely, a matter for us all and one which we should not ignore. The problem is there and will not go away however much we hide our heads in the sand. We must as Terry says be extremely vigilant and it could come to the point where we never actually write of a particular water yielding large eels except under cover of a code name. It does seem to me that this eel netting by illegal netsmen could actually strengthen our argument when it comes to seeking permission to night fish a water. I don't think, for instance, that the netsmen could get away with it on the waters where I fish. There are during the months when eel netting would be worthwhile a good many anglers on the water fishing through the night. Leisure Sport, for whom I am now a midweek bailiff, is well aware of the problem and have openly stated that they will encourage night fishing in order to deter the netsmen. They know that these netsmen catch other fish as well as eels in the fyke nets, and there is a bloody good market for all kinds of live fish. Leisure Sport recently prosecuted several netsmen caught in the act of taking carp up to thirty pounds. Such fish were stated in court to be worth several times their weight in pounds, in pounds sterling. The Big EELS are surely worth as much to us.

Before I leave the Chairmans Page, for Gods sake DO WRITE SOMETHING every once in a while. I recall the time when I used to produce a Bulletin EVERY month. I expected to have to keep on at the members in order to get the necessary material. But it should not be necessary now that the issues are less frequent. I also recall the articles written by Tony Hollerbach. They were, as written, utter rubbish. I mean no disrespect, and Tony knew it was so. But with the magic that every Editor seems to possess, we used to be able to knock the pieces into shape and they came out quite well in the Bulletin. The point is, it is NOT beyond any member of this Club to write for the Bulletin.

Now to Phil Smith or, rather, to points raised in his excellent article. Yes Phil, I would agree that many larger waters have 'nursery areas' where the eels caught will invariably be smaller than those caught in other areas. Smallish eels will tend to stay together possibly until they reach the size where they are able to eat their own kind. This is equally true of other fish and has been mentioned in Chub articles many times. When this happens the big eel will choose, or perhaps is left to, an area which he alone commands. I am sure that this is true in rivers as well as in lakes. I have experienced this many times in rivers where one may take a large eel from among the roots of an overhanging tree. You return the eel and he may stay at exactly the same spot, never again to be taken by an angler. Or he may bolt to another stretch of the river, but in any case that swim is to all extent barren for some time to come. The smaller eels will still avoid it even though you may go on catching them frequently from other areas, sometimes close by.

Another point of great interest raised by Phil was that of varying resistance to the 'take'. I admire Phil's way of overcoming the problem and note that, by doing so, he learned that a 'taking' eel does not seem to mind steady resistance as long as it remains there and is not suddenly reduced. When I fished the River Thames a lot, I used to laugh with unholy glee at those anglers fishing around me for eels. Many would fish with a large fixed spool reel - with the bale closed but with the clutch set very light. Such was their bite alarm, for the clutch screaming out could easily be heard.

Yes, I laughed, and continued totally engrossed in making things as easy for the taking eel as possible. But now I know, and no longer laugh. The eel will continue the take, even bending the rod tip round in the process, as long as the resistance to the take remains the same. If it either decreases OR increases suddenly the chances are that the eel will drop the bait. One thing which I don't think has been mentioned is that a 'dropped' bait is a useless bait and will only rarely receive attention from ANY eel. It is as though they all know that something is wrong, and yet a fresh bait cast to exactly the same position might well do the trick. Thanks, Phil.

Now to John Sidley and the most interesting points he raised. Firstly, I became totally engrossed in his fishing worms really close to the bank and the fact that the dead baits had received no attention from the eels whatsoever. I note with interest the fact that John and Co were committed to using dead baits on this water because they knew, from experience, that it WAS a dead bait water. If so, why were the dead baits being ignored at that time. I note also that John says that the frogs and toads were very active, as they inevitably would be at that time of year (May 9th).

The frog spawn would almost certainly have turned into tadpoles by that date but as the toads spawn several weeks later there may well have been toad spawn present. Most fish will have nothing to do with either toad spawn or toad tadpoles, but eels do not appear to be so fussy and will consume large amounts of frog and toad spawn as well as wading into the clouds of tadpoles. I wonder, John, if that had a lot to do with your worms, being close to the bank, as the tadpoles and/or spawn would be, being so successful? Perhaps I can quote a similar experience, and one where the game keeper put us on the right track.

I used to fish a lot with our members from Grantham, Lincs, and one of the waters we occasionally got permission to fish was Knipton Reservoir. Now, Knipton is a natural reservoir with a large dam and deep water at one end. The other end of the water becomes increasingly shallow, finally finishing up as just plain swamp. We had a fair return from that water, always using dead baits in the deeper water near to the dam and an often from the dam itself. One year we actually got permission, via Jack Bellamy and his effort, to fish in the close season. We all thought we were on a winner, but despite a lot of effort it was early in June before we had our first 'run'. We fished the water on several occasions during that year until the summer ended and nearly always scored. When fishing came to an end (it had to give way to the shooting) we got chatting to the head game keeper. He asked us if we desired to fish the water next close season and was surprised when we said that it was not worth while. To cut a long story short, he suggested that we did fish the water for eels in the next close season and further suggested that we fish right at the shallow end in only inches of water. "You will" said he, "be falling over frogs and toads, but they are the reason the eels are at that end and a worm or two placed right where the frogs and toads are spawning will do the trick". He could not have been more right! That next close season saw us getting eel after eel and although we never overcame the LINE BITES from the very active frogs and toads, it was very worthwhile. Could your circumstances be very similar, John? I would be very interested to learn if, after the end of May, the dead baits again became the No 1 bait.

Right, John, I now know that the dead baits remained a non starter. I think you have it right when you reckoned the eels had changed their feeding habits. You recall the piece I wrote where I quoted Lake Helen in Lincs? Well, exactly the same thing happened there. You may remember that so bad did it get that we concluded there were no eels in the lake. Until the owner proved otherwise to us. Then we changed to live baits and enjoyed many good nights before that, too, started to fizzle out. Then we lost permission to fish the water at all, so we could not experiment with any other bait. I remain convinced that worms would have rung the changes. We never used them.

I would mention here, because both David and John raise the subject, of the work done by Terry Coulson, myself and others on the study of stomach contents of eels. This was done during the time when we were killing eels quite deliberately in order to study the otoliths and study the stomachs and ovaries. Only rarely would we open an eel and find NO FISH at all inside. Mostly they would be stuffed with fish of all sizes and in various states of digestion. Even on the G.U. canal where a lot of our big eels came from, worm was undoubtedly the bait to use but the eels would be found to be

stuffed full of fish - some fairly large but mostly small. A particular eel which I recall and which is mentioned in the reports had thirty nine bullheads, three small roach and one perch inside it as well as a lot of other matter which was almost completely digested. It was interesting work and I don't regret having killed any of those eels, for through them we learnt a lot. The work is all recorded, and it is up to someone in the Club to retrieve it and possibly republish it.

One thing which we noticed and which became a hobby horse with Dr Coulson, was a thing we came to call tricyclic feeding pattern. Of the fish inside a large eel there would be three very distinctly separate levels of digestion. It was obvious that the eel would feed then lay up for a period and then feed again - well before the first meal was completely digested. Then apparently after three such meals the eel would rest up for a much longer period. From his wide knowledge and his association with others used to working in this field, Dr Coulson was able to estimate that the resting time between each meal was in the order of seventy hours (or three days) although this would be modified by prevailing conditions in terms of temperature of course.

Also of interest at that time, and I think even more so now, was the fact that where one had been baiting a swim with worms the eels taken at that time would contain several worms immediately on top of a number of freshly swallowed fish. It was obvious that the eels had taken the worms well before its next proper meal was 'due'. I should also mention that the G.U. eels invariably contained crayfish of all sizes as well as fish and other matter.

This would tend to suggest that worms have the lead in the worms/deadbait battle, although no one in their right mind would suggest that the worm is capable of sorting out the larger eels.

I think that John is right in insisting that more be done in order to find other baits for eels, and surely this is something the Club could really get its teeth into at some time in the future. Might I suggest that the sooner the better. In John Sidley, we have a member who is at least really thinking about his fishing all the time. It is not enough, nowadays, to just carry on doing the same as before, merely because a certain method has been successful in the past. In every other sphere of angling that I know of it pays to ring the changes every so often as far as bait is concerned. Even in fly fishing, the pattern must be changed to something quite different if one is to continue having good sport.

I tend now to fish whole dead baits when the water temperature is high, preferring smaller or section baits (or even worms) when the temperature is lower. But that is a purely personal fad and I can at this point in time find nothing substantial to explain why I do it.

We are increasingly using pork luncheon meat as the bait for eels. It is in itself a good food item readily taken by fish, and lends itself to be readily injected with any of the various flavourings available. Anyone recall reading that Jack Bellamy, one of the finest eel anglers I ever knew, put a small slip of anchovy inside his dead bait in order to attract the eels? It sure did work a treat and Jack and I enjoyed some super sport when using the method.

Lastly, I read 'Paradise Found' by Dave Taylor. I only wish I had had that piece to read when I was laying very ill in hospital. I'm sure I would have recovered a lot sooner. Before finishing, let me tell you that I have just started the enormous task of reading through every copy of the Bulletin since issue No 1. This time round I hope to learn a hell of a lot more provided this old brain can take it all in, and to approach my eel fishing with some different concepts in mind.

Tight Lines.

Arthur J. Sutton.

A REVIEW OF RECENT RESEARCH CARRIED OUT ON FRESHWATER EELS

During the summer of 1986, I had to attend a Heads of Science course at Keele University for five weeks. During that time I was able to use the vast library resources there to study relevant research publications. A summary of several interesting papers is given below.

1. BOETIUS, INGE and JAN BOETIUS. (Danish Institute Fisheries Marine Research. Denmark. 1985.)

This study was based on chemical analysis made on whole eels, *Anguilla anguilla*. The idea was to see how much energy could be stored in a growing eel ready for its eventual migration. It was found that the average eel stored enough to last several years without feeding. The researchers kept single eels in special containers for over four years without any food of any kind being introduced.

2. DOLLEROP, JENS and C.M. GRAYER. (as above - 1985)

The study of these researchers was based on investigations on an eels ability to become sexually mature (by injecting them with hormones) and observing the degeneration of their digestive system so that they are not able to absorb food, and the fact that if they are prevented from migrating, the reverse occurred and feeding recommenced. Some eels were allowed to reach a point of passing sperm, after which they recommenced feeding themselves and the digestive system regenerated. They reached the conclusion that male eels do not die after spawning and are able to live through several cycles of migration.

3. HARDING, E.F. (Statistical Laboratory, Cambridge University - 1985)

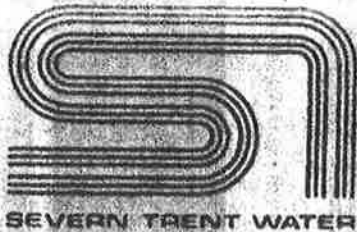
This researcher investigated the work of Johs. Schmidt of 1912 and 1913 on the determination of the spawning ground of the European eel, *Anguilla anguilla*. Analysing unpublished data of Schmidt's and comparing it with recent data from research in Denmark, gave doubt to there being just one spawning ground for *Anguilla anguilla* and that there may be two or possibly three varieties of European eel, *Anguilla anguilla* with up to three or more separate spawning grounds.

4. KLECKNER, ROBERT C. and JAMES D. McCLEAVE (Migratory Fish Research Institute, University of Maine, Orono. Maine. USA. - 1985)

This study was concerned with the migration of American freshwater eels, *Anguilla rostrata* from their spawning grounds to the American continent. Their results showed that the main spawning ground was east of the Bahamas and north of Hispaniola with limited spawning in the Caribbean Sea. *Anguilla rostrata* spawning peak occurs in February and within a year the larvae have changed to tiny eels (compared to three years for *Anguilla anguilla*) It was interesting to note that a significant number of *Anguilla anguilla* larvae were collected during the collection of the *Anguilla rostrata* larvae.

5. LECOMTE-FINIGER, R. and J. BRUSLE. (Universite de Perpignan - 1985)

The *Anguilla anguilla* population of the lagoons of the south-west section of France on the Mediterranean coast (Langudoc-Roussillon) was investigated. It was found that the eel is present in all waters but the accessible lagoons are extensively trapped for eels and the population is decreasing. However, because of the high temperatures of the lagoons, the eels grow very quickly.



SEVERN TRENT WATER

Severn-Trent Water Authority
Abelson House
2297 Coventry Road
Sheldon
Birmingham 26
B26 3PU.
Telephone: 021-743 4222
Telex: 339333

My Reference:

MLP-BLG

July 1986

Your Reference:

Dear Sir,

Pesticide Levels in Eels

I enclose a Press Release which is going out today of which your organisation would wish to be aware. It may be that some of your members fish the river Avon or Frome for eels and are in the practice of eating their catch. The chance of their doing this on a scale sufficiently frequent to build up levels of pesticide so as to be dangerous to health is very remote indeed, but clearly if there is any chance at all then it is right to seek to eliminate it.

The health aspect is clearly the first one to tackle but it is not the only one. The effects on fish populations in the rivers Avon and Frome and on all those animals and birds which could also accumulate significant levels of pesticides will also be of concern.

Fish and other animals absorb and accumulate dieldrin over the whole period that they are exposed to it and, although they can break it down and eliminate it, this latter process is very slow. Animals also retain dieldrin which has been accumulated by the species which they eat and so predatory animals tend to build up pesticide levels faster than other species. Eels were selected for the first investigation because they are both predatory and, since their flesh contains much fat in which dieldrin is particularly soluble, they usually accumulate it faster. Other fish have also been examined and, as might be expected, they have much lower levels present.

Information about harmful levels in fish does not suggest that the amounts in those few fish which we have looked at are anywhere near danger level. Further surveys are being commissioned to establish this point better because obviously we are probably faced with levels of toxicity which are insufficient to kill fish but which nonetheless might affect breeding success or the vigour and health of the fish themselves.

1

Angling Club Secretary

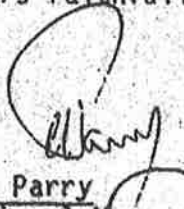
When telephoning or writing please contact

8

MP7AGF

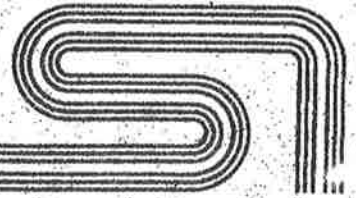
So far as it goes, our information is reassuring. Despite their higher dieldrin levels, the eels in the Avon are otherwise in good health and indeed are active enough to figure quite prominently in anglers' catches. Fish fry are abundant this year, suggesting that there is no need to suspect any reduced breeding success. Reports which we have in fact received of below-normal fishing success in the river Avon have related to the stretches downstream of Pershore and these are the most distant from the source of the problem which is in Coventry. Reports of fishing results in the stretches of the river Avon nearer to Coventry and especially upstream of Stratford indicate that it is at present fishing very well. Although these few pointers would seem to suggest that there is no indication of harm to fish stocks, we intend to pursue further investigations to gain sufficient knowledge to be quite sure.

Yours faithfully,



M L Parry
Regional Manager, Leisure Services

NEWS RELEASE



SEVERN TRENT WATER

Abelson House, 2297 Coventry Road, Sheldon, Birmingham, B26 3PU.

Telephone 021-743 4222

NEWS: for immediate release.

AK/DH/NR872

July 30, 1986

Eels.....1

WARNING ON EELS

Government experts are advising that people should not eat eels caught on stretches of two Midland rivers.

The rivers concerned are the Avon below Coventry and the Frome downstream of Stroud.

This advice follows an investigation by Severn-Trent scientists into levels of the pesticide dieldrin in eels taken from the rivers.

Severn-Trent pollution control detectives have, after much hard work, tracked down two sources and informed those responsible. One, affecting the Avon, was from the Coventry area and has already been stopped.

The mean residue level of dieldrin detected was approximately 690 microgrammes per kilogramme of eel.

Although there are no mandatory limits on dieldrin levels in the UK, Severn-Trent were sufficiently concerned to inform the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

The Ministry consulted medical experts in the Department of Health and Social Security who have given this advice: "This level of contamination could mean that people who are regular and frequent consumers of eels are exceeding the daily intake of dieldrin set by the World Health Organisation - about 10 microgrammes per day for an adult."

"This figure incorporates a large safety margin, so toxic effects would not be expected and it is highly unlikely that adverse health effects would have resulted from consumption of these eels.

"However, it would be prudent to avoid consumption of eels in the affected area until levels of contamination have fallen to acceptable values."

There is no danger to other users of the rivers or their waters. Nor are eels from any other Severn-Trent rivers affected.

"There is no risk to anglers who catch and handle eels for sport," said head of technical services at Severn-Trent, David Young.

Contamination in both affected rivers will start dropping immediately but it will be several years before all eels involved have returned to the sea.

-ends-

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION please contact Adrian Kibbler, Press and Information Officer, tel: 021-743 4222, ext. 2013.

Any enquiries concerning food aspects of the eel contamination should be made to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, tel. 01-233 8226.

Thanks to Brian Crawford for the previous five pages and the information contained there-in. Some time ago we had a few of this type of article and personally I would'nt mind a few more. ED.

SUMMER TRIP 86 → (WELL A WEEKEND AWAY)

On the 11th August John Mitchell called round to see me to find out if I was going on the Summer Trip to the Montgomery Canal over the August Bank Holiday weekend. I agreed as long as we could arrange to get some suitable transport because I knew that Dave Taylor was away on holiday at the time and being as my car is an MG it is not suitable for long fishing trips. John had arranged to bring a friend Andy someone I had known for many years, so I approached Steve, also a keen eel angler who attended the Baston weekend, and he agreed to go.

The following day Steve and I took the chance to find out just how much it would cost to hire a van or mini-bus between the four of us. After looking around a lot of hire firms, the cheapest we could find to hire from Friday afternoon to the Monday night was about £100 all in, and we certainly couldn't afford that, plus the petrol. John had the opportunity of using his bosses metro van for the cost of £30 and luckily Dave Taylor has two cars and he offered us the use of his capri, so we were in business. We had it all arranged and we intended to leave at about 3:00pm on the Friday with a view to fishing Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights and returning home Monday afternoon.

When the day arrived I got home from work at 2:30pm got all my food and bait together and was ready for John and Andy to arrive. After four lots of gear and food were all packed into the two small cars we set under way. Having already arranged to meet Dave Walker in the pub at about 7:30pm we were all looking forward to getting in some fishing and catching some eels. Well after a pig of a journey we arrived some 5hrs 30mins later at about 8:30pm, having been stuck in the traffic on the M6 for some 3hrs, and as we drove up to the pub Dave Walker was driving in at the same time. On talking to Dave he said that what he had seen of the canal so far was absolutely terrible and by more luck than judgement he had found a fair swim in which he caught a small eel and a double figure pike the night before. Being as though it was nearly dark Dave showed us a swim near the road which was just about fishable, so Andy and John decided to fish there. But on asking Dave where Steve and I ought to fish he said he didn't know as after searching all day long the only other fishable swim he could find was the one he already occupied. Dave suggested that we all fish out of his swim for that night and try and search for something else in the morning. We took him up on his offer and all three of us blanked.

In the morning we had a super fry up and after a long chat between us all we decided to go and see the local tackle dealer to try and find the best place to fish, having already come to the conclusion that we were actually fishing the area that we had been told in the Bulletin and maps supplied. On arrival at the tackle shop we found that the canal was all as we had found unless you could find a place that the weed cutter had recently been. So we ventured off to see what we could find. We walked

at least 3 miles each way from Wern Country Park, which incidently none of the locals had ever heard of, and all we could find was weed and more weed and even in some places the water dried up completely to leave only rushes from bank to bank!

If this is what is called fishing and a Club trip venue then I don't know what I've been doing for the past 12 years!

We came to the conclusion that we would all wait in the pub that evening to see if Bob and Terry arrived as expected, and inform them of what we had found, or NOT found as the case was. In the end they did not show and as none of us wanted to go back and fish the waste of a water that we had seen so far we all got pissed and didn't even bother to fish that night. Not that we had found anywhere suitable even if we had felt like fishing.

On the sunday morning we decided, after fighting over every bean and slice of bread, to phone Brian because we knew he was due down on the sunday night and we thought we would save him the trip and wasted effort. Very generously Brian offered to take us to one of his local waters, so perhaps the weekend was not going to be a complete failure. We hung around in the pub during dinner time to see if Bob and Terry had turned up late on saturday night and just got straight down to fishing; this turned out to be the case and they turned up like magnets just as our steak and chips were served and we had a few pints with them. To our utter amazement they said that they had found a decent peice of water. We had to go and see this for ourselves and after showing them what we had suffered we set off for their stretch. We couldn't believe that we had been told to fish where we had when some 8 miles to the south was a long area that the weed cutter had recently been through and made fishable at least! Although we could have probably all have squeezed onto this section of the canal our minds were made up and all of us had had enough of this particular water, so we bade Bob and Terry well and set off to Brians in the hope of at least one nights decent fishing.

On arrival at Brians we were greeted with the sight of Brian repairing his car, after his holiday, for our trip. A short discussion about the local waters settled us on one that Brian fancied a lot but had not yet tried. After an absolutely super meal cooked for us by Brians fantastic wife Jill we were more than set for a good hights sport. We set off for the mere at about 7:30pm and on arrival we were greeted by lots of speed boats and water skiers; but Brian had warned us of this, and also a large deep water of about 40 acres (More like 60 acres. ED.) We went into the waterside club house and had a quick pint and there we met the water manager who told us a bit about the place. It ranged from about 12 to 90 feet deep and had a very silty bottom at the end of deeply shelving margins. We set about finding swims with our information and spread ourselves out all along one bank covering about 400yds all getting very comfortable swims on the sandy shoreline. I decided to fish two rods in about 35ft of water, one worm and the other deadbait, and another two rods in the margins in about

15ft of water, but this time the fish bait was suspended some 5ft from the bottom. At about 10:30pm I got a steady run on my 3 lob worms and this resulted in a 2lb snotty hooked with a size 2 in the bottom lip. During the middle of the night i was woken by a screaming run on my deep fished worms and for an unknown reason i completely missed it and was rather pissed off. (Thats the understatement of the season, as all of us knew Pete had missed this run!!! ED.) At about 7:00am I got a steady run on deep fished roach and it turned out to be an 11 lb pike and really full of fight. Soon after we all packed up and had one final pint before the four of us set off for home, leaving Brian and Dave in the bar of the clubhouse.

Reflecting on the weekend, all four of us came to the same conclusion that apart from the final night the summer trip had been a complete and utter waste of time and money that we could all have done without. Being as though we travelled some 500 miles for the pleasure of fishing the club trip we did not ever expect to be put on a joke of a water like the Montgomery Canal.

PETE STICKLAND

EDS COMMENT

My own feelings on the summer trip are basically unprintable and I thank my lucky stars that the Peterborough lads are such great company, as I would have gone strat home if not for them. As for Brian and Jill, well there isn't much wrong with the world if people like that still exist and I count myself very lucky indeed to know them.

The only thing to have come from the trip is my total conviction that unless a member has intimate knowledge of a water he must never put it up as a possible venue for a trip. You must know that the water is still there for people fo fish before you go getting people to travel hundereds of miles to find the complete oposite to what they have been told to expect.

STOP PRESS!!!!

NEXT BULLETIN OUT EARLY DECEMBER (or december, if you prefer!)

JOHN SIDLEY'S HAD ANOTHER SIX POUNDER) - Wednesday the 6th of NOVEMBER I think, great stuff John, keep it going old mate.

Thats it for now folks, hope you all don't go getting cold feet this winter waiting for a run. If you do you might like to go to the Montgomery Canal and walk 6 or 7 miles trying to find a fishable swim!!!!!!!!!!