



The National Anguilla Club

EEL ANGLING SPECIALISTS
established 1962

BULLETIN

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EDITORS PAGE

Due to a number of factors, I feel that I have to step down as Bulletin Editor. Firstly, my occupation as a solicitor and Principal of my own firm makes it very difficult to find sufficient time to spare to issue the Bulletin on a regular basis. Secondly, although the number of contributions have increased there is not sufficient for the Bulletin to be issued as I had hoped, say every six weeks. An additional factor is that my office staff do not have sufficient time to prepare the material for presentation in the Bulletin. As I indicated in previous Bulletins I must depend upon individual members providing me with material in a form which can be then included without alteration in the Bulletin. I have found it increasingly difficult, due to the form that the material takes, to find the time to carry out the necessary work. Practically every article I receive has had to be re-typed for one reason or another and this makes it impossible for me to get the Bulletins out regularly.

Having said the above I anticipate that I have sufficient material to issue another Bulletin in about six weeks time after you have received this one.

I am unable to attend the Club's AGM at Daventry but have indicated my intention to step down to the Club Committee and I hope that the issue will be discussed at the AGM and a volunteer will come forward to take over. If someone has sufficient time I am sure it could be a very rewarding job and a substantial contribution could be made to the Club's affairs. I am still firmly of the opinion that regular receipt of the Bulletin by members is an important part of a Club's affairs and the letters I have received from members indicate that much enjoyment is gained from reading the Bulletin.

Although my eel fishing activities have been very limited in recent years I would still wish to retain my membership with the Club and would do my up most to attend meetings and Club Trips whenever possible.

Could I end by thanking all those members who have written to me on a regular basis and provided me with material for the Bulletin. Could I wish the person who succeeds me every success. I will do everything possible to help him take over.

Mark Davies.

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Well I'm now reasonably settled into "Waters Edge" and am typing this from the comfort of my new study. However, things have been very busy as usual over the past month or so, as I had expected. I've only just found time to read the last edition of the Bulletin. I really am pleased to see so many members making a contributions - that's what the National Anguilla Club is all about. Congratulations to our Chairman on his new job, when he next attends a Club trip it will be "Hello! Hello! Hello!".

I would like to also use this opportunity to welcome another new member to our ranks, he is Danny Rose (membership number 155) of Flat 3, 61 Ellington Road, Ramsgate, Kent. CT11 9SX. Tel: 0843 586192. So you can all update your membership directories and perhaps drop Danny a line to welcome him. He is a builder and is 20 years old and a member of the Dartford and Canterbury angling associations.

Unfortunately, I could not attend the Spring Trip to the GUC. It is one of the few I have been unable to get to in my 19 years membership. I had all my gear ready to attend and right until the Thursday it was all on - then the bug struck. Perhaps it was due to overwork or the stress of moving house yet again - who knows? I was even more sad to hear from Phil that several new members had attended. I always look on our trips as a time for informal chats to new members. My schedule for the next couple of months is as full as ever with a week at Manchester University at the end of July for my Open University Technology Course, and I still have several assignments and an examination to prepare for. Anyway, despite all this, I will still try to attend the Summer Trip for a couple of sessions - I hope as many members as possible will also make the effort. This is mainly what membership is all about. We do have members who have never attended Club trip and this is not good enough. I realise that costs, family, travel, etc., have to be considered, but never to attend Club trips - !!!!!!! The main reason members give for joining the NAC is to fish with or talk to similar minded anglers, especially those who have been successful or have been around the scene a long time. I enjoy telling stories over a few pints, about the Club trips in the 60's and 70's when over 20 members attended and great times were had by all. The 80's have not been so good - not yet anyway - there's still 1988 and 1989 left. I am positive we can all make the effort for a session or two at least.

Back to my own eel fishing this Summer (what Summer?). I was lucky (?) to be able to obtain a permit for the new night syndicate at Lower Gailey Reservoir (BWB) where the A5 and M6 cross. I had been trying for 4 years to get night fishing there for the big eels. Several well known specialist anglers had poached there regularly and all had eels over 4 and 5 lbs with a few monster stories. As things developed, I felt that this season, I stood a good chance of contacting a good eel. The weekend before the season started saw me on the bank with Norman O'Neill who I fist with in Telford, who also obtained a permit from the small numbers available. The water is rectangular with stone block sloping banks and is about 64 acres. As it is about 200 years old and a canal make up reservoir I was

optimistic. Access/exit for eels is not easy although the sister reservoir - Calf Heath, which produced John Harrison's 8:10 eel a few years back, is connected via a culvert under the motorway.

Everyone I talked to mentioned the potential for big eels. Severn Trent carried out a trial netting in May to see what the stock mass was - in the shallow area near the yacht club they netted out two eels for a total weight of 11:7 - a fair sign that good eels are in the water. Walking round the lake it was obvious there was a large head of small fish present - and many pike. Separated by a 5 metre bank on the West side is Gailey Trout Reservoir - the warden there was not too pleased at the prospect of anglers night fishing within casting distance of this trout - and told me in no uncertain terms what his dog (a very large one - very, very large) would do to me if I was daft enough to try poaching. I told him politely that spotted carp did not interest me.... Anyway, in passing he said that almost all pike caught in the trout lake were transferred to the coarse lake. This amounted to over 600 in two or three years. I'm not sure if that is a good thing - but it could make my pike fishing interesting. He did say a 32lb pike had been returned to the trout lake - this was fishable during the winter by pike anglers.

Anyway, opening evening - June 16th, saw me on the bank again - this time loaded down with all sorts of tackle, for just an evening session until midnight, as I had to be in school the next day. I spent about half an hour plumbing along one bank to find out one third or so had 12 foot close in going down to 16 feet further out. Norman and I elected to fish the shallow end, me with worm and fish section, him with worm and sweetcorn as he was also trying for tench. At midnight we packed - not a twitch or any sign of a fish despite placing the baits in a variety of spots.

Friday evening saw me back on the water for a two day session. I had the water all to myself. I decided to fish the middle of the same side, where the deep water was. I baited up a swim close in with all sorts of goodies and wasted a couple of hours trying to catch small fish for bait without any success. Just before dark I cast out my worm and fish section baits to cover the margin and water further out. Despite frequent casting to all areas along this section, I again blanked - not a touch. Wandering along the bank a saw massive fry shoals, in the corner near the A5/M6 with pike striking all over the place. I thought if I could not catch eels at least I would get a bit of action with pike and so transferred all my gear. I caught half dozen small roach no problem and was into a pike a cast - the float hardly settling, then the shoals appeared to dissipate but I was well please - eleven pike with tow low doubles - and what a superb fight - the pike were in excellent condition.

After a long nap I caught a few more baits for the nights eeling. I decided to stay in the same area reasoning that if the fry and small roach were still around, feeding eels would be here also. Well they might have been but once more I had a total blank - despite bait changes and casting to a variety of areas. I think I was getting to be a bit frustrated. During the Sunday, a couple of other syndicate members arrived, one of them I was pleased to see, was Keith Lowe, one of our new members, so we had quite a useful chat before I had to

go home. During the day on the Sunday, I had caught a few more pike so my weekend had not been wasted.

The following weekend saw me fishing the opposite bank. Keith and a friend were fishing near where I had began the previous week. I plumbed all along the bank before deciding to fish an area 8 foot deep surrounded by extensive shallows. (I was on the bank next to the trout water...) During the night the wind changed right round and torrential rain started. Because it had started a pleasant evening, I had just layed down on a waterproof sheet on the sloping ground, under my umbrella. By 4 am, everything was saturated - and nothing at all on my rods. After packing away all my wet gear into my car, I squelched round to see how Keith had fared. He and his mate had been there for two nights. However, he had actually had a run!!!! The fact that he missed it was irrelevant - although from an eel or a pike he could not be sure.

The following Saturday, I was back again. I set up in the deepwater swim, as I felt that this should be the area... Norman was with me again and he went into the shallow pike swim as we had heard of tench of 5 and 6lbs coming from there. I cast out a whole fish bait - about 3" long hooked three times in the tail section plus a mass of worms on the other rod. About an hour after casting - about 10.30 pm I had a screaming run on the fish bait rod. However, despite being stunned by a "bite" at last - I was at the rod immediately but no line was now going out. I held the rod, twitched the line, gently reeled in a bit but felt nothing. On reeling it all in I found just about 1" of tail section left. I was convinced it was an eel by the clean way the fish's body had been severed. Much encouraged, I rebated and recast. Next morning - nothing - as usual. Norman had blanked also. I had managed a few more pike but the pike are no consolation. I had planned to go again last Saturday, 9th July but a stomach bug struck. Due to other commitments, I am unable to go back until the 2nd week of August - perhaps then the eels will be more co-operative. I certainly feel that the water can still produce the goods. I have a gut feeling and know it's not due to my last Indian meal - one of us will get something special this year. I know it's just a matter of time and persistence.

Just in conclusion, I've had a report of a 9:3 eel being found dead in an Oxfordshire water... reported by Paul Gustafson.

Tight lines.

Brian Crawford.

SPRING TRIP 1988

I arrived at the Queen's Head - meeting place for the Spring '88 trip, in bright sunshine. With the weather we were having I expected a good attendance, but looking around the beer garden it appeared that other things had taken priority for our members.

At long last I recognised a face and moved across to join the half dozen anglers sitting and drinking at the table.

Pete Stackland had arrived about Midday on the Saturday to meet the lads who had fished the previous night, I turned up 2.30 pm, in time to find who was there before spread over the canal system again.

Within sight of the beer garden we could see a small reservoir - I would guess perhaps 20 - 30 acres. It was decided we would gather there for the afternoon. Three minutes by road and we were at dam wall looking out over the water, wondering how many eels were lurking in its depths.

Over the next couple of hours we strolled around the bank looking at swims and wondering if we could get away with fishing there. In the end it was decided that we would fist the canal, hence Pete and myself went off to look around the local canal system.

The first bridge we arrived at looked promising. Numerous fry fish could be seen topping in both directions from the bridge, as well as the first signs of weedbeds along the canal path. An added bonus was a second bridge about 150 yards away, this giving access from the main road to some farm buildings on the opposite bank of the canal.

I say bonus, since my first choice on a canal would be to fish a bridge with a third rod as far away from the bridge as I could safely hear the Optonic sound. With two bridges this gave us both the opportunity to take advantage of the restrictions of canal width experienced at the bridges. Should the protective stonework leading away from the bridge be derelict, so much the better with hidey holes for resident eels to compliment the travelling eels one would hope to intercept.

Two other bridges were looked at, each with its own features, there included a wharf with its boat turn, also a canal tunnel of unknown length, either of these could be worth a nights fishing but for tonight the double bridge area we visited first would receive our attention.

We went back to the reservoir to get Peter's car and since it was still early just lay around sunbathing and generally wasting time.

About 6.00 pm we went off to find a pub for a quick drink to pass another couple of hours. Stopping off we found pubs don't open until 7.00 pm so we again sat around talking. Pete had said earlier that he was not feeling to well but he put it down to eel fishing the previous night (4lb 2oz eel caught). As the time went by Pete got worse, and about 7.30 pm he finished his orange cordial and told me he would have to go home - bad luck but these things happen - before

he went he let me have his fresh roach deadbaits along with fifty or so lobworms. I didn't know which area the others had gone to so I made my way to fish one of the two bridges in the chosen area.

The previous night had been clear with temperature going quite low making it feel chilly. Two of the lads had landed an eel each as well as other missed runs, so I was fairly hopeful of some action as I tackled up ready for the night.

Tonight was overcast, with the threat of rain later, the temperature looked to be holding well and by 8.15 pm I was tackled up and ready.

Two rods would be fished right in the entrance to the bridge, one on worm, the other on roach section. The rods were SS5's and the 10lb line went straight through to a size 1.0 for the fish and No 2 for the worm. No trace was used as previous experience of canal eels suggested poorly developed teeth. The third rod would be placed about 25 yards along the bank, fished mid-canal, the bait would be roach section for although I expected the worm to produce more eels I hoped the fish might produce a biggy!

Even this early in the year the canal fishers nightmare was on the loose, and at 8.30 pm a barge went through! At least the chap smiled and said "good evening", probably wondering what the hell I was up to.

I settled down to read a book while waiting for dark, but at 9.20 pm the rod with a worm bait gave a bleep, and I looked up to see the rod twitching as a fish tried to pull the line out of its dip. Jumping up, I closed the bail arm and gently swept the rod back into a fish which soon had the surface white with foam. It was a couple of minutes before I put the net under an eel of about 2½lb - that really put the dimples in and I soon had the rod back out although I wondered if that was my lot.

Half an hour later I had my answer as the same rod again caused the Optonic to sing out, the eel took the bait and went off under the bridge. This one was smaller at 1½lb but two eels before dark, I was more than pleased.

The night was dark with 100% cloud over. By midnight the first specks of rain had pattered down onto the umbrella. At regular intervals the Optonic would indicate the interest of another eel looking at the worms. I am sure I could have got more activity by changing off the fish baits on the other two rods but I was happy to see if they could produce an eel. There was a run on a fish section but I missed that with great accuracy.

My sixth eel came just on dawn, with two missed runs it had been a very interesting night. By now the rain had settled in, so I thought enoughts enough and I didn't cast the worm rod out again, rather I got my head down for a bit of kip.

So ended an interesting session - the first visit I made for canal eels for many years but obviously a pleasing result.

I will be interested to see if the other lads results improved with the cloud cover and improved temperatures, or if my results only came as a result of the area or swim. Another visit to the Area will give the answer another day.

Phil Smith.

"I'M A NUT CASE AND BLOODY PROUD OF IT"

I have read with great interest all of what Mark Davies has wrote about in the club Bulletins, but I cannot understand why Mark is advising members old and new not to put their efforts on the waters that matter, regardless of the blanks involved. I would agree to have an easy back up water to fish when the going gets hard, and you wish not to forget what an eel looks like or what to do when a run does develop on your hard waters, bur correct me if I am wrong, is it not the purpose of all the members present in the N.A.C. to better ones present eel record?

This I feel is the difference between me and Mark and other members of the Club, my aim is to keep or try to keep bettering my P/Best eel, my target in life to land an eel of ten pound or more I can only hope to achieve this target by eel fishing the venues that I know can produce the goods, if that means blanking for night after night, then I will accept that fact, I accept those blanks in the knowledge that my next run from an eel can be from a fish of over 8lb 3oz. I would be pleased if you members would answer my next statement in the Club Bulletin, so we can see club members views on their outlook into eel fishing. Most os us have had net-fulls of eels in the 1, 2, 3 pound bracket, and the pictures look good when skipping through the pages of ones Photo Book, but would you not rather have a single picture of a huge snake in your hands and the Avons Scales reading over the six pound mark, think about it? Really think about it and give an honest opinion a six or better, or a net-full of lower snakes?

Did Brian Crawford sit out on his lake a few weeks ago in bad weather and with water temperatures at 7°C, have I just finished, I think, seven night stints on a B,Ham lake with out a run using up to four rods for fun? No way did I, I sat there in the hope of catching a big snake, so did Brian, I could have fished the rivers and a couple of other lakes where I knew every night I would land an eel, and no doubt Brian could have, but like Brian I knew the lake I was fishing held the snakes I am after. Both our efforts where rewarded with Brain's 4lb 8oz and now my 4lb 9oz, if that, as Mark says, makes me a nut case for fishing so early in the season, and catching eels over 4lbs then I'm glad to be one of those nut cases (sorry about the ounce bigger Brian). I well remember fishing with Gerry on a water at Easter. We had the worst snow storm in a 100 years while fishing that night. Brum was under six inches of snow, Gerry and I were knee deep in eels after those stints the best going 5lb 11oz. Success in any type of fishing and big fish hunting depends, in my view, on what you are prepared to put into your angling, as I have said so many times before Mark, "you only get out of fishing what you are prepared to put into it".

Mark's comments on baits I found very interesting, for over the years I have known many eel anglers trying out new baits and rigs, yet those big snakes have come to bottom rigs and the humble lobworm or fish bait, a point I have been making in the Bulletins these past few months. I do believe there is room for research in the baits for eels, and my idea of looking through past records of N.A.C. Members

to what baits they took there snakes of say 5lb upwards where taken on, would I feel make good reading. (How about it Terry?)

Before certain members start writing in and say that I am lucky to eel fish in the close season and have waters near home, far from it lads, the water I am fishing now is a good two hours drive from my home, to me there is no excuse to get out and eel fish, even regardless of the weather, if you have the time then that time should be spent in search of the species of fish you are a member of this Club for.

I will end by wishing all the members that turn up at the Baston Fen Fish-in all the very best, I'm sorry to say that I can not make that one, but hope to be at the canal do, to fish Baston Fen at £10.00 a weekend I would have to get the dear wife down Mosley Village for an extra night, and at present she is booked up solid.

Tight lines lads.

John Sidley.

THE MARINE LAKE SOUTHPORT.

Venue - Marine Lake Southport.

I set three rods up. I plumbed the depth. It's 4ft and a 5ft gully runs out 50 - 70 yards from my peg. I'm fishing one rod 70 yards out at the end of the gully on dead bait and one 60 yards in the gully on lobworms. The third rod is 110 yards to the island. This is on worm also.

Time 8.30 rods are all out. 9.00 am run on right rod at long range. small eel about $\frac{1}{2}$ pound. I put rod back out and another instant run. This is 1lb 4oz. I put rod back out I have another 10 minutes later on close rod nothing on striking. I had runs all day and night but nothing on dead bait. I ended up with about 60 eels and about 7 were over a pound. There are loads of eels but a lot are small. I was talking to some other eel anglers who were there and they said dead baits are best (sprats). I'll try them next time. The water is a big place and it is salt and fresh water mixed. It's all sand on the bottom and the banks are flagged. It's a very comfortable place to fish. It's also free fishing and no rod limits or Bailiffs, and very little fished as there are only eels in and a few flounders and small crabs, shrimps, and very small fish. We call them Gobbies. They are what I used. These you can get by dipping the net along the bottom. The water fishes well in winter also one lad fished when it froze two years ago. He fished a part that was not frozen and had just as many runs as he did in summer. The best place is on the map.

The water is next to the beach so you can take the family. The fair is only ten minutes walk. You have to pay to park the car. It's 50 pence but just keep a low profile as you shouldn't park overnight. But they don't mind if you don't make it obvious. It's produced eels to 4lb this year on dead baits, but last year a 5lb eel was caught. It's easy to find. Just head for the beach and then the pier. Any way I don't know if it will interest anybody but I said I would do this piece, and I hope it will make some of the other members put pen to paper also. I've got another couple of new waters to try. One I know produced eels of 4lb, 5lb 4oz, and 8lb plus. I'm not sure of these first two fish but not the last as a bloke caught it on live bait when pike fishing. The other two one of my mates had while carp fishing on worm. He also lost one bigger than the 5lb 4oz one as it bit through the line. The was 6 years ago and they were both weighed on two sets of scales. So I may have some thing else for the members in time. Any way thanks to all the members who have done pieces for the Bulletin and thanks Mark for your help and interesting Bulletins.

Clive Ellison.

P.S. Have any members tried luncheon meat? I have, its excellent. Also sprats flavoured with strawberry, cream, butter, caramel, salmon and shrimp. The flavours I use are available from Rod Hutchinson.

SWEDISH THOUGHTS!

Here comes my first, and as I hope not last, contribution to the Bulletin. By the way I think it was (and is) excellent reading and I enjoyed reading it very much. Especially the piece about margin fishing by Dave Holman, which really gave me one or two things to think about for the coming season. But this is it was not about how much I enjoyed my first copy of the Bulletin. It is a little presentation of me and my addiction to the most powerful fish of them all, the eel.

It all started with the interest shown by me in some articles in a monthly Swedish fishing magazine back in 1977-78. The articles were about tench and tench angling, by then a quite new phenomenon in Sweden. Tench you say, wasn't it about eels? No, it was the tench angling that, indirectly, got me into eel angling. Let me tell you how.

The articles about tench angling got me and my fishing friends to wonder if not we too could find a water with tench and enjoy what seemed to be a very exciting fishing. But more about that in my forthcoming contributions (if you are interested in Swedish tench angling?)

My friends and I had heard about a lake about 9 km from my home which should contain tench up to seven pounds. We started fishing there in 1977 and caught tench in several places (up to about 4 - 5 pounds), but it was not until the next season when we tried a new place in the lake, the eel action started. It was close to the lakes outlet and as the place where we could fish contained small tench, two of us decided to fish there for eels.

That evening i caught eel and this first time when the line hissed from the spool and I raised my rod, pulled the lobloaded hook home and felt those strong pulls, it was not only the eel that got hooked. I was hooked, on eel angling. Maybe it was because the eel was big (over three pounds), but I don't think so. The big reason was that there is no other species that can put up this tremendous strength, like the eel.

Since then I have been an eel addict and there is no other species in which I put in half the effort as for Angullia. My aim has been to catch at least one eel over three pounds every season, and so far I have succeeded. It has cost me different efforts every season and the "hardest" so far was the last (1987), when it took me eleven blanks (except for two boot laces on the same trip) before I caught one. Guess I was happy when it finally happened! The best fish for me so far is one that nearly reached the five pound mark and was caught in 1984, the same year as we established ou fishing club: Specimen Group Fenomenal, where fenomenal is a play with words and means something like fenomenal on eel (al) angling.

My hope is that one time when I feel a big eel on the other end of my line it's the eel of my dreams, one that exceeds three kilograms and

I know that there is one out there somewhere waiting from me. Mind you, one of my fishing friends caught one last year!

Well, that's the story so far and I hope that you don't think I have bragged about too much, I didn't intend to. For the coming season I will, as I think you understand, try to catch that eel of my dreams, but don't think that I will feel unhappy if I don't. Every eel is an eel and even if they don't weigh more than two pounds they are superbly strong.

Any of you from N.A.C. is welcome to come over to Sweden and join me and my friends for some eel angling. I would be glad to show some of our favourite places.

I wish you all tight lines and wet and heavy landing nets.

Per-Ola Johannesson.

SORRY TO END ON A SAD NOTE.

For a number of years now I have flavoured my hook baits, dead-baits are injected with a solution of lake water, oils and emulsifiers. Lobs are dipped in the same solution.

When I first started 'treating' hook baits in this manner I was apprehensive at first to their use. Would they discourage eels? Would an 'alien' smell spook fish? Would eels find the taste of emulsifiers/oils offensive? All these doubts raced through my mind, so armed with a collection of various oils I travelled to an easy water to put my ideas into practise.

Air-injected pilchard flavoured lobs were first to hit the water. Three or four seconds later the bobbin was snatched from my fingers! The outcome being an eel. All thoughts of apprehension were gone! My diary shows fourteen eels caught that night. I would like to say I 'balanced' rods, that is, one fished without flavouring, the other 'standard' to give a fair assessment of the effectiveness of additives. Unfortunately in my excitement all three rods were fished with pilchard oil! That night gave me total confidence in treating my hook baits and I have 'doctored' baits ever since. I will go as far to say that if I was without additives I wouldn't fish! It really does give me confidence, and to me being happy with rigs, presentation and baits is half the battle in eel fishing.

Before I got into additives, I used to use perforated cat food tins which were thrown into my swim by hand and then my hook baits were fished nearby. The idea being 'smell' would escape from the tin attracting eels to the vicinity (without feeding them) and hopefully entice them to my hook-bait. Used on waters where I discovered eels fed regularly in the margins, the method was quite successful. I soon realised, however, that my actions over a prolonged period would turn the bottom of the swim into a rubbish tip, with the added risk of damaging the ecology of the water. During this period I thought of using cotton wool filled swimfeeders, soaked with oils, making a better alternative to perforated cat food tins. I knew this method had been used before but I had heard reports of Pike picking up such swimfeeders, mistaking them for food! What put me off the idea of using them was the resulting tangled mess lying on the bottom after a hefty cast! Using swimfeeders for snatching bait had always for me ended in tangle, no matter how much anti-tangle gear had been 'invented' to try and solve the problem!

I've since found less complicated tactics to acquire d.b's where thankfully swimfeeders (and rods) are no longer needed! Recently I saw the light or should say the light was shown to me by Bob Baldock in one of the monthly's. Bob's tip was flavour dispensers incorporated to the end rig, which allowed the angler to introduce 'neat' liquid additives into the immediate area of the hook-bait. Brilliant! Just what I was searching for, plenty of scent in the area being fished but no food for eels except the hook-bait. Exactly the same principal as the perforated cat food tin, but no junk left in the water. Easy distance casting and far more smell concentration than a slow releasing swimfeeder. The containers I made are smaller

then Bobs. I used old drill cases about two inches long and half an inch round. These are plastic and I perforated the tops like a pepper pot with a red-hot big bore syringe needle. If you look at the diagram it should be self explanatory to how they are made. Fig. A shows the container used in an off bottom rig with a poly-ball joined to the container via a biro-tube. Fig. B, is a standard J.S. bottom rig with the container running through the lead link, the containers have the added advantage of floating so in the case of the J.S. rig it keeps the lead swivel clear of silt, weeds, etc., and in the case of the off bottom rig increased buoyancy is gained in order to suspend the hook-bait.

After making them (a quick, simple task) I tested them at home in a water tank. The pilchard oil that I injected into the containers was dyed red so I could 'see' the dispersal rate, and I must say it was a glorious sight to 'see' lovely smelly oil escaping all around the containers area. The oil remember, is diluted with water and emulsifier and it diffuses beautifully in the baited hook area. It doesn't float to the surface in globules.

Containers made, tank tested and passed with flying colours, now for a field test! May 1st and I was fishing a small Lincolnshire pit with two other experienced eel anglers. We were all using three rods each. All of us were using two off bottom, one static rigs and we were all using the same baits (lobs and d.b's sections). I was the only one using flavour dispensers. My two friends had three eels between them with as many runs. I had four fish, lost a couple and missed so many runs it was quite embarrassing! All fish caught were boots with none going over two pounds (which could explain the missed runs). I know one nights result is nothing to go by, but remember my confidence in treated hook-baits.? Knowing even more flavour is being concentrated in the immediate area gives me even more confidence in my eel fishing and that night proved their worth. The flavours I used that night were 'Ace' worm extract and Cray-fish. I really don't think it matters what flavours are used. Eels will investigate the source of smell if not out of hunger, then out of curiosity, drawing them hopefully to your hook-bait. I have tried many flavours in the past but using pilchard and mussel in particular, gives me total confidence using them, where I could feel a bit dubious using 'exotics' such as amino acids etc. Why change a winning formula? I've just read yet another monthly and within its pages is an advert from the makers of Biotrak. What caught my eye was their method of introducing their product into your swim. They advocate the use of a toy balloon fixed to your end rig at one end, fill the balloon up with biotrak and tie the neck of the balloon with P.V.A. Once in the water the P.V.A. dissolves allowing biotrak to escape within your swim. I think it's an excellent idea, but I would be inclined to fill the balloon with good old pilchard oil! At this point I must say that it has just occurred to me that perhaps N.A.C. members were using flavours dispensers back in the 60's! If so could you inform me of the results?

Changing the subject now, I recently read the latest Pike-lines magazine, and I must say I was sickened to read an article on using eel sections as Pike bait. The piece in question was titled "Cut along the dotted line" and the opening statement took the piss, yes

PISS!, out of eel-anglers. I have never been a member of the P.A.C. (there is nothing to learn about those stupid fish) although, I thought that newcomers to the sport could benefit and so treat pike correctly, which should make the P.A.C. a worthy club, but after reading such crap I suggest most strongly that any N.A.C. member who is also a P.A.C. member to resign from the club. Failing that, a strongly worded letter to the P.A.C. wouldn't go amiss, maybe pointing out that while eel sections may be the 'in' pike bait, you could mention that pike make excellent eating or pike sections are a good bait for eels (after you have prebaited with a mashed up twenty).

We must stand firm on this issue. It's no joke when three pound eels are hacked up for bait (yes I have heard of three's being used). If certain parties want my support in banning any fish from our waters being removed, and it included eels then I would gladly actively support them! The P.A.C. have succeeded in doing as much harm as the bloody eel-trappers! I won't go on because I'm getting bloody angry, the eel has never needed us so much, don't let them down.

Sorry to end on a sad note.

Steve Markwell.

ARMCHAIR EELERS I THINK NOT?

After reading the latest Bulletin to drop through my letter box, the article by John Sidley, where he goes on about only a eel angler made me think about what he was saying to us, the time honoured saying of you only get out of your fishing what you put in, i.e. the angler. It's no good saying under your breath, that Sidleys at it again, with his big list of eels, for as someone who has finished with John for eels also pike, will know that he puts everything into his fishing.

I, like John says, don't go in for too much of this believing in right conditions for eels, as if they are hungry enough they will take your bait, or that's my way of looking at it. It's a bit like if you are superstitious or not, like having a lucky rabbits foot on a key ring. It wasn't lucky for the rabbit was it?

No I think if more time was spent on the side of the water the big eels would come. Always of course if they are in there in the first place. Far too much good eeling time is all most certainly lost just by working out if the conditions are OK, and when we've got that sorted out someone will come up with some more stuff for the eeler to think about. If one only went eeling when the so called conditions are right, it would only be a few times each year, and as where I live you don't have brill pike waters let alone eel waters, you have to go when you can and not when you think the conditions are right, otherwise I would always be sat at home and not by the side of the lake.

Take like last Saturday the 16th, one of my mates had been asking me to take him eeling. As I've known the bloke for some years, and he's bigger than me I said yes, he could come as long as he was at my house for 7 pm. Well bang on 7 pm the door bell rang and there he was stood waiting, like a load of blokes for the pub to open. We piled the gear in his car and set off. He said I should drive as I knew where we were going, so I said that I would and off we went. Now this new water that I'd found only by chance when I took the wife to her grans one weekend, and I took her dog for a walk over the fields at the back of her house, and there it was this lake. Now when I say lake to most members it would be a small puddle, but if you could see the waters one normally fishes in Blackpool, I think you would call it a lake too, as it's only about 1 hours drive out of Blackpool. As we were pulling into the wife's grans drive I nipped in to tell her it was me and would see her in the morning and off we went to the water.

When we arrived, I said to my mate Rob "where do you fancy fishing" and he said "next to me". I chose two swims where there was some weeds to one side and a small island to the other. Rods were soon set up and a quick check of my mates gear to make sure everything was how it should be. I had a carp head on one hook and the tail on the other, one was cast tight to the island the other some way short, my friend had a cruey head on one and lobs on the other. He cast one just short of the weeds, with the cruey head, and the lobs into them, sods law says if that had been me I would have lost the lot, not him a little pull (not like that), and it dropped clear right in front of

the weeds. As he pulled the monkey down his Optonic sounded, and the monkey shot to the top. I thought he had not let the line go slack. He stuck and I hadn't the heart to tell him just yet, when blow me his rod bends a bit and a nice roach of 1-8 comes to the bank.

Anyhow, to cut a long list of big roach short he was hammering out big roach. The best went 2-8, he also had two more over the 2 pound mark.

Now it was teachers turn at last, the pupil had his fun, now it was my turn. First run on cruey head. What a screamer, only it turned out to be a perch. I had just unhooked it when the tail went off this time no way the thumping of the eel, nicely lipped hooked. After this, I was to get a steady amount of runs though the night. Out of the five eels I got that night four fell to cruey head, one to cruey tail. They were big eels, with only two of them going over the 2lb mark, the other three under 2lb, the weights are as follows, 2-3, 2-2, 1-10, 1-6 and the smallest was 14 oz, no monsters, but caught on a night when conditions weren't right, but I was confident of catching. So my new season is off to a good start. Lets hope its this year that I catch a big eel. On second thoughts I will get amongst the big eels this year. Think positive, or what's the point in going, if you think you will blank.

I'll close for now by saying food eeling in the coming season, and may you all catch the eel you have been waiting for.

Keith Bradbury.

SWEVEN MEETS THE N.A.C.

Firstly, I wish to set a few minds at rest regarding my article in the last Bulletin. For those of you who may have thought after reading the Post Script.. "Conceited Bastard", it should have read **PERSONAL** record fish. Well I'm not sure how the omission happened. Probably an oversight on my part, but I'm just glad to put the record straight.

Anyway, to get to the point. I'd just put all the gear in the motor and was ready to drive up to the G.U. The pup was asleep in the kennel, but Sweven had seen what I had been doing and was sitting in the kitchen staring at her collar and lead, then looking at me with such big sad eyes, I didn't have the heart to refuse her.

So nestled in between the rods and the rest of the gear, she sat quietly while we went and called for my mate Bob.

Bob isn't a member of N.A.C. and is a complete novice angler, but he'd been badgering me to take him fishing since the end of last season and not knowing how far apart the bridges were on the G.U. I thought he would come in handy to help carry the gear and help pass the time on the 120 mile journey.

We left at 6 pm and for a change the miles slipped by on the M11 & M25 but what with road works on the M1, we got to Fexton locks at 9 pm. After a quick couple of pints and burgers we were fishing upstream of the nearest bridge to the locks. A few sloppy almost liquid balls of mixture of Meatimix, blood meal and maggots were scattered over the area.

I had the first run, a screamer, but as I wound down the line went slack. I'd been bitten off. This was on trout pellet and blood meat paste. As it was pitch black by now and I was knackered, I just could not be bothered to set up again. So we were both just fishing worms. Both of us had several 1/2 way ups and single bleeps but as the mist got thicker all action stopped.

About 1 am Sweven tried to get on the bedchair with me and woke me up. I couldn't see her. This mist ws so thick that I could just make out the dim green glow from the isotopes 3ft away! God it was cold!

The mist was clearing at 5.30 am as Bob had a belter. Even though he was 30 yards away, I could see the beaming smile hat said it all. His first ever eel at 11b 8oz. We just went through the motions until we decided to pack up at 8.30 am. We drove around to several near by bridges, but no one was there. I thought the rest must have either gone to the cafe, or must be doing the same thing as us.

We carried on looking for the elusive cafe until about 10 am. Eventually, we found a bakers that sold hot pasties.. that would have to do. We got to the meeting pub around 10.15 am expecting to find at least one other angler.

As it turned out Nick from Brum had had the same idea, but on finding out opening time he'd gone off to try and find the others.

The Publican turned out to be a bit of a misery, wouldn't even give us some boiling water to make our own coffee with. Sweven, Bob & me all crashed out in the motor waiting for 11.30 am when the pub opened (pubs in Essex open at 10.00 am).

Two Sussex lads (I forgot their names) arrived at 11.00 am. They'd had a couple about the same stamp as Bob's. They had also found a cafe, but that was in Leicester. (Sod that for a game of soldiers). Nick turned up at the pub soon after and the Landlord must have taken pity on us as he let us in 5 minutes early.

The summary of the nights fishing was soon under way. Everyone had experienced the same. The runs stopping as the mist grew thicker. Well, perhaps we'd glean some more info when the older members turned up, as they'd probably fished the area before. By 1.00 pm we were well into the discussions that most anglers have over a few beers and some food, i.e. the merits of women with false teeth and who had the best view of the scantily clad young women sitting several tables away. We decided that Sweven did, but as she was lying under the table and we were trying to improve our suntans we left her to it!

Two other members turned up who hadn't fished the G.U. Friday but came for the Saturdays fishing. Closing time came and the view of the reservoir from the pub garden became more and more tempting, so we all went off and had a look at it. There wasn't any swims on it that were under cover and when Nick said the publican had warned him off the night before with stories of bailiffs, shotguns etc, (he was also a member of the club that fished it!), I wasn't going to risk it especially with having a dog in tow.

Sweven however, enjoyed the walk round the "Ressie" nearly as much as all the fuss she was getting from the other members. The highlight of her day was when she found a pile of her favourite perfume! Now, anyone who has tried to throw an unwilling 10 stone Rottweiler into water will know what I mean when I say bathing her took ages. Eventually, though all the evidence (and the smell) was washed from her, much to the amusement of the others.

After an hour or so of studying maps and trying to suss where to fish that night the others fell asleep, except Nick, Bob and me, who decided to go for a drive and find a bridge to fish. After finding one that looked suitable, we then found a pub that would give us some hot water and then made our way back to the bridge.

On our arrival, we found that two Sussex lads had discovered the same one. They had woken up to find everyone had deserted them. They fished 30 yards upstream, Bob, Sweven and me fished next to the bridge downstream and Nick went 80 yards down from us. The Sussex lads had a boot lace apiece. Bob missed a screamer. I had several dropped runs on Roach head, and after a drastic tackle change from the night before substituting a 6 inch hook link (15lb slycast) from a 2 ft one and size 14 hook from a size 6. I got bitten off again, on paste.

I'm not sure how Nick got on, as once it got light and the rain hadn't eased off, we decided to call it a day and go home.

On the return journey I kept asking myself questions. Why out of a dedicated eel club was there only a turn out of only 20%? My directory lists 20 names and 6 went on what is supposed to be a club high point of the year! I know that organising trips and venues takes a lot of work etc, and I would have commiserated with the organiser on such a **PISS POOR** turn out. But **HE DIDN'T TURN UP EITHER!!!** I may get replies of "He didn't go to the S.G.M." etc, but I only had three weeks notice of that, and working shifts, my spare time was already allocated. Also if there is so much uncertainty over what is "legal close season fishing", why bother with venues such as G.U? Why not organise trips to places that have little or no restrictions, i.e. Lincs, Devon, Cornwall, Scotland, etc? Where at least you could Pike or something during the day and not waste hours such as we did!

Another point, I have phoned quite a few people from the directory trying to suss things out. No one has phoned me though and I know for a fact that at least one person LOCAL to me has an ex-directory number.

If a small community such as ours relies on an interchange and pooling of information and maybe spontaneous trips with just two or three people. Why do I feel there is such a silence? I know one guy hasn't got transport etc., but if he'd phoned me I could have squeezed him in. Maybe it's because new members feel uncertain of making the first move and old members feel they are dealing with an unknown quantity. If that's the case then although membership may be growing, you are effectively running **TWO PARALLEL CLUBS** one of old members who know each other and one of new members!

I mean after all the main objective is to catch EELS and the more people work together the better the results should get.

If I have stirred up a Hornets nest, so much the better. Apathy really bugs me. Heres hoping that my disappointment is short lived... Not my membership...

Jerry.

P.S. If Nick reads this before I get in touch, don't worry mate we'll have a stint together in late June....

AN EELTRIP

It's late night, or should I say early morning (2.00am)? I have just returned from my second seriously meant eel trip of this year. A trip that left me with those well recognised eel nerves shivering. But lets return to the beginning.

During a couple of my angling trips this spring I have met a guy who seems to be a bit crazy for angling as I am. He to, for example, gladly sacrifices some hours of sleep (in spite of an early morning work) in purpose to catch those big fish that lives in our dreams. The last time we met by the bank, we talked fishing (of course), and soon came into the topic that lies closest to my heart, eel angling. We exchanged phone numbers in the purpose to get out sometime and put some big eels on the bank.

Yesterday I read some articles in the Bulletin (vol 25 no. 3) and felt that I must give it a try. What I did was that I, after returning from the university, looked in my wallet for the phone number of his. Curiously enough I found it so phoned him and we decided were to go. A lake that in spite of that quite some efforts had been put into it, it hadn't produced more than two eels (1-2lb) for two weeks. Because I have the strong belief that the outlet area is the best place for big eels in most lakes, we decided to go there.

We arrived at approximately half past eight and after some bank walking we chose our swims. Half an hour later we had tackled up and started to fish. Dick (my friend) with two rods at the same place, one with whole bleak and the other with half rudd 1.30 metres away, one rod close to some weed with rudd as bait and the other directed to the outlet, with worm on the hook.

After one hour of nothing, except for two perch on my worm rod, Dick told me that his indicator on the bleak rod had twitched a couple of times. When nothing more happened he decided to give it a go. He reeled in the loose line and striked, into thin air. As he got the hook in he saw that it was empty. Well nothing else to do except put on another bait, this time the tail section of a bleak.

This time it only took ten minutes before I heard Dick once again, he had a bite on the same rod as before. The second time the line left the spool, it hissed away. A strike and once again nothing. Only half the bait had disappeared this time. Another half bleak on the hook and out it went again. As before it only lasted ten minutes and he had another bit, a few twitches and then nothing more, just like the first one. Wise of the two other missed bites, he this time waited for as long as five minutes before striking. Surprise, surprise, nothing. Not even a scale from the bleak was left on the hook, not to mention eel.

After these three inspiring occurrences (it could have been worse, couldn't it?), nothing happened for a couple of hours, except that I changed places on my two rods. Rudd to the outlet and worm where the other one had been. While we both had to get up early the next morning, we at one o'clock decided to give up. When I'm reeling in

my fish rod I get a bite on the other one (of course, how many of you haven't got a bit after deciding to quit?), a real screamer.

As fast as I can I put the other rod down, pick up the one with a bite, tighten up the line and strikes. For the first time of the season I feel those fast and strong thumps in the other end of the line. Not a big one but anyway I pump the fish in and there it is, the first anguilla of the year (maybe 1/2 lb).

After that we continued to pick over the things together, because of the aforementioned reason, and once in the car we agreed that it was not fully satisfactory, but on the other hand, not so bad either. One eel on the bank and three more bites. the season has started and there are a couple of lovely months ahead of us.

Tight lines and big eels to your waiting baits.

Per-Ola Johannesson.

MY MARGIN EELING

What a very good article by Dave Holman titled "Fishing the Margins" in Bulletin no. 2 volume 25. Reading Dave's piece brought back some happy memories of the days we used to eel fish Earlswood Lakes, Gerrys lake at Shobdon and at Kyer Pool near Tenbury Wells. I myself used to fish in the very same way, in fact most of our eels taken from the above waters came to margin type fishing.

Locating a eel swim in margins of your lake is very simple. I believe that the whole area in the margins of your water become eel haunts after dark, regardless of the features found. As Dave so rightly says if weedbeds, fallen trees and heavy silty mud are a feature of your margin swim then your half way home to success. But do not be put off if the margin swim you are fishing has none of the above. Say your venue is like a park pool just solid concrete. A bait fished in the margins is a winner. I have also found that a bait fished well over a 100 yards can also be classed as a margin fished bait. How simple if your lake holds islands say in the centre of your lake and a bait can be cast to the edge of that island then again your bait is being fished in the margins, if say space was permitting or access allowed to those islands for most are banned to anglers, sitting on those islands a bait would be fished in the margins. The above swims are to be found at Earlswood Lakes on the Private Lake, most of the big eels I took from the venue either came from a margin swim, from the bank or from a bait being fished that close to the banks of the island at times I would have to let my bait hit the overhanging trees on the island, then pull it free from the branches. To help me solve the problem of knowing when to slow down my ledger as I cast in the dark, a stop knot was tied onto my main line after casting to the spot I wanted to fish. It was a simple job then of holding my main line in my fingers and feeling for the stop knot as I cast, a method I used to help me cast my baits to weedbeds on the lake at night.

Like Dave says fishing in the above swims any thought of fishing with light lines was out of the question, for in most cases the eels body was in fact still inside any snags present. If they did come out of their safe areas to take your bait, one had to set the hook fast and give those rods and main line some stick to pull those eels away from those snags. There was many a time those rods were bent to their full test curve and the main line was singing in the breeze. Some of the above swims I fished had been pre-baited with chicken offal. Fishing these type of swims I found that I very rarely got a run we associate with eels, in fact most of the takes by the eels could easily of been mistaken as line bites, believe me line bites are very much away of life for the margin eel anglers for the amount of coarse fish other than eels swimming around in the margins has to be seen at night to be believed, so you must be very alert. If not deep hooking will be the end result. Even on un-prebaited swims the same above takes would be encountered. The bigger the eel hooked I found the very shy the bite, eels especially big ones are not the rod pulling in creatures some anglers make you to believe, they can give you a bite so gently that any carp, tench or bream would be hard done to copy.

On most margin swims you will be lucky to get away with fishing more than one rod, its no good spreading rods in different swims unless you can get to those rods within seconds.

Rods in different swims then have to run up the bank then down a path to your swim, by the time you get there the eel will either be in a snag, have dropped your bait, or worst still be gut hooked. the methods of fishing you baits in the margins would again be up to the swim you had choose. If fishing long range to islands, gravel bars, drop offs, or weedbeds and fallen trees then the J.S. Ledger Rig with a 1½ oz Arsley lead is fished. If fishing under you rod tip, again the J.S. Gedger rig with a 1½ oz ledger. Myself I do not like using small lead weights on my link line if fishing close range. I feel a taking eel could easily move that link line along the bottom, if the eel feels resistance he will drop the bait. But a 1½ oz A/lead will sink into any silt or mud and remain there as the eel takes your offering. I know the above does happen because I have had eels and other coarse fish drop my bait using a light lead on a link line. When fishing with an 1½ oz lead the problem does not arise. The other way of fishing the margins is by using a Beta light in a float, but again I have found problems. At long range its very difficult to get a float out there and a short range, especially when fishing in shallow water, I have had many an eel drop my bait as the float sails away. I feel that the eel may feel the main line running along its body or can see the Beta light under the surface shining.

If you have no long range margin swims on your venue then all of your fishing in the margins will be done from the bank you are fishing. A very important point must be made. While doing the above, all bright lights must be kept off the water, there will be no walking of the banks, you will have to sit in your swim acting like the living dead, only moving to rebait and cast or to strike a run. The same approach when fishing very small farm ponds or on canal systems. Those eels will not tolerate any bank noise, so if your fishing with any fellow anglers say your goodbyes before dark, start banging up and down the banks even to stretch your legs will put the kiss of death on your margin swim. Like I said you have to be like the living dead and say put. Once again I have found, like Dave has said, you will on most occasions only get one run from a rod fished in the margins, so the blanks can mount up and the boredom sets in, but the size of any eel hooked usually form a margin swim makes up for those blanks or one run a sitting, but again, as Dave has said, be alert for if fishing two rods when a run does develop you can bet your life another eel will follow on the other rod or you could well have a mad hour of run after run from each rod. The times I have found to be best while fishing the margins are just as dusk is falling to about the first hour into the dark, the next best time being as dawn cracks to a good two hours after dawn. At the above times be hovering over those rods and be ready to strike. Like Dave says give it a try. It may just produce that eel of your dreams on your water. I have yet to catch eel fish a water where fishing the margins has not produced to my rods some cracking eels.

JOHN SIDLEY.