

1827  
1981

# NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB

## BULLETIN



BULLETIN

VOL:18 NO:7

CONTENTS



|  |                  | PAGE    |
|--|------------------|---------|
| OH WHAT A LOVELY PAIR                      | - Steve Enkel    | 1 - 3   |
| WILL THE PHOENIX RISE?                     | - Dave Walker    | 3 - 6   |
| ODDS AND SODS                              | - Dave Holman    | 6 - 7   |
| THE USE OF ADDITIVES                       | - Alan Mitchell  | 7 - 8   |
| WHIT TRIP 1981 (BRA LAKE,<br>PETERBOROUGH) | - Steve Enkel    | 9 - 12  |
| THE RETURN                                 | - Captain Beaky  | 12 - 13 |
| A NIGHT ON WHICH TO PLAN<br>DREAMS         | - Chris Lee      | 13 - 15 |
| LETTER TO THE MEMBERS                      | - Richard Baczyk | 16      |



## OH WHAT A LOVELY PAIR

All the groundwork for our sessions is done up the pub on a Sunday lunchtime. Bob, Geoff and myself regularly meet up every week, to decide on our venue and tactics for the following weekend. We decided that Bob would fish his lakes and Geoff and I would try out other lakes, trying to locate one that would turn up the goods, once found we would fish together to exploit the potential to its fullest.

The first week in July, we decided to try a lake I had fished in the past. I thought it looked a suitable lake for eels but had never fished it at night because night fishing has been banned. We decided that we would hide up our tackle during daylight and start to fish at eleven o'clock when it had got dark.

I knew from the start what type of swim I was looking for, and that was a pitch where I could cast out into water that would not have been fished before. This was easy to find as during the summer the margins grow extensive beds of lilies rendering large portions of the bank unfishable. By casting at an oblique angle to the bank over the tops of the lilies I was able to fish water that would not have been disturbed all season. I had a small break in the lilies to my front and decided to worry about netting any eels when and if I got one on the hook, the whole objective of the exercise was to try and get bites. I have found little use in finding a swim where the fishing is easy, as everybody fishes these swims and the fish they contain get hammered and bites soon become non-existent. The weather had looked very promising all day as there had been total cloud cover and it was warm. This was not to last however because at 19.00 hrs the cloud disappeared leaving a totally clear sky. The moon was in its first quarter, always a good sign, I do so hate fishing cloudless nights under a full moon. Another aspect of the weather to our advantage was the barometric pressure - this had been rising slowly from Wednesday to the highest it had been for a long time - another good sign. So all things considered, conditions for the session were better than normal. As the lake is surrounded by trees no wind ever reaches the water so the surface remained dead calm.

This was a very rushed session, I normally like to have a large supply of lob worms handy, for groundbaiting, but as I had started hay making I just did not have enough time during the week to get many. I had just enough for hookbait so I decided to use two lobs on each hook to try and get the maximum smell from them in the water. I dislike using any more than two worms - not for any practical reasons - I just feel more confident with that number on the hook.

I was using two rods as space did not allow for three. These were medium carp rods 10' in length. The line was 8lb sylcast black. I was using link ledgers on both - one with 1oz of weight, the other with 1½oz weight. A trace of 5lb single-strand elasticum wire with size 1 Lion d'Ors on both.

I did not have to wait long for the first run. At 23.45 the bobbin slammed into the butt. I struck immediately and missed it. I

## OH WHAT A LOVELY PAIR - Cont'd

wondered why I had missed it as I very rarely miss eel bites. The only thing I could put it down to was the fact that I was using two worms lightly hooked through their mid-sections. I normally break a lob in half and thread them on the hook - just leaving half an inch or so to wriggle. This I have found to be very successful when hitting eel twitches. I always try to hook the eel in the mouth, as I find it very distasteful to gut hook one.

At 01.45, I had my next run. They say old habits die hard and I struck immediately. Nothing again. Then my no.2 rod indicator went slowly to the butt. I thought I was seeing things - I normally have to wait all night for a run, to get two together well! I looked into the water to see if a duck or moorhen was tangled up in my line - no nothing there - must be a bite. I struck somewhat belatedly and to my surprise the rod bent over. The fight from the fish was very poor, and I didn't have to backwind once as I slowly brought it towards the bank. Danny a fishing friend of ours was going to net it, so I held the eel on the edge of the lilies while he got ready. I knew that my net would be totally inadequate to net the eel (I'm still working on my 45" armed net) but trusting to luck I pulled the eel straight through the lilies and Danny made a gallant attempt to net it - at about the tenth try he succeeded during which time I nearly laid a dozen brown eggs.

I knew that the eel was big but I judged it to be about 3lb 12ozs due to the poor fight. Geoff came round and proclaimed it a four so we weighed it in a polythene bag and low and behold a personal best by loz it weighted 4lb 13 ozs.

I was over the moon. The fish was placed in my large keepnet and staked out. Fags and coffee all round and profuse apologies to Danny for the obscenities I had shouted at him while he was trying to net the fish.

I retackled the rod up again with a new trace and cast out - not really expected any more action during the night. I made myself comfortable on my sit-up chair under the bush to the left of my swim next to the rods and started to doze - but half an hour later at 02.15 my no.2 rod registered a run - I struck and found myself into another eel, but straight away I could feel I was pulling line through a snag and sure enough the line was caught under a large lily stem to my left - no amount of pulling and jerking would free it so I decided to pull the eel underneath it. Danny had taken up position with the landing net and he told me it was about the same size as the last fish. I was snagged about twelve feet out, just as he said this the wire trace snapped, and all I was left with was a sickly feeling in my stomach.

I didn't waste any time re-tackling the rod and casting out again - I was feeling really confident, and thought that it would not be long before I had another bite. I started to get bites on both rods - these being lifts of about a foot, and then nothing. This went on

## OH WHAT A LOVELY PAIR - Cont'd

for some while - especially on my no.2 rod. I could hear Geoff asking another person what the time was - he replied "three o'clock" and just as he finished speaking the indicator on No.2 shot to the butt and a fast run developed. I bided my time and closed the bail arm, waited for the slack to be taken up and struck. The eel was on, I let her fight it out in open water, again a disappointing fight before I drew the eel through the lilies. Danny was waiting with the net and a repeat performance ensued just the same as the first eel. After what seemed like hours the eel tired of the fame and gave itself up. The eel was hooked right on the edge of the lower jaw much the same as the first. We decided to weigh it in the net and to my absolute amazement the scales read 5lb 6oz. I knew that the net would weigh several ounces but I had high hopes she would turn out to be my first five pounder and my No.1 target for this season.

I decided to put the eel in the keep net and weigh it accurately in the morning. Looking back I think this was a mistake as when we weighed the eels again the first eel went 4lb 12 oz - a loss of 1oz during the night - the second went 4lb 14ozs, perhaps if I had weighed her properly the first time she may have gone the magic 5lbs.

Still, I have no complaints - they were beautiful fish and I felt honoured to have caught them - I wonder how long it will be before I have the luck to land two 4lb+ eels in a session, not long I hope. I will catch a five pound eel this season although I shall probably die in the attempt, my poor heart just will not take the strain if I have to keep using that bloody landing net for much longer!

Steve Enkel

---

 WILL THE PHOENIX RISE?

Over the last two years I have not been able to devote any real effort to my eeling and this has saddened me, because it is the one form of fishing that I cherish more than any other. This is not to say that I have been idle, just that I have not been able to cast baits at my favourite species. Indeed, I believe this unfortunate break in my eel fishing has allowed me to possibly return this year (I really do hope to return to snake charming) with a fresh attitude and some new approaches. Let me explain my new thinking.

Recently I have read every word of NAC material that I have and it only strengthens my resolve to approach my eels totally differently from any of my previous sorties.

For a start most of the waters I have decided to fish have eel potential beyond the imagination of most eel anglers. I am talking of waters containing HUNDREDS of 4s and 5s, many 6s and 7s and

WILL THE PHOENIX RISE? - Cont'd

occasional fish to make Cornish wreck anglers feel proud. As an indication of the sort of quality I am going to be casting baits at, let me list the largest of a mind-boggling list of eels that have been captured or found dead at just one of these venues:-

11 lb 4oz, 11:00, 10:12, 10:08, 9:08(2), 9:00 (4 possibly more) at least 6 over 8:00 and a dozen over 7:00, ENOUGH SAID!!

These weights are not guessed nor are they fish that appeared 20 or 30 years ago. They are accurately weighed fish from the last seven years. The people who frequent this water can very accurately estimate the weight of eels up to six pounds and they are very rarely more than 4ozs out. This has been demonstrated to me and a few friends with eels to 5:13. I'll admit that two other waters are not quite as good as this but both have produced doubles.

OK so Walker has found a paradise....but here's the snag....NO NIGHT FISHING. I don't just mean NO night fishing, I mean NO night fishing. These waters are so tightly sewn up that even I wouldn't attempt to poach them at night. And herein lies my new approach for the coming seasons, daytime eeling, on a serious and (hopefully) prolonged basis.

I am in no doubt that eels of specimen size can be caught in the day time; what I am attempting to solve is the problems arising in trying to consistently catch them. To this end, I have drawn inspiration from Tony Hollerbach, Dave Holman and ex-member Kevin Richmond. Collectively, they have helped me (through their writings) to formulate a plan of attack for achieving consistent daytime results.

The basic approach is mental "to believe that big snakes can be caught with the sun shining", then to work very hard to catch them. The tackle is the same as I would use for night fishing, the big difference is in baits. I do not believe that deadbaits will be very effective, but I shall give them a try. My baits will be pastes and livebaits mainly fished in heavily groundbaited areas close to the bank, bloodworms may figure in my baiting up but the cost (even to me) may prove to be prohibitive. The pastes will, I am afraid, remain a secret, at least for a while, but I do intend heavy groundbaiting with fish meal and herring meal. I feel sure that maggots and worms (lobs or brandlings) will only result in unwanted species, although I can see a possible future in dead maggots. These do not crawl into the bottom mud or weed and can be obtained without the normal mess and smell associated with "death" (as dead maggots are called in the tackle trade) by simply boiling the little buggers, they go all long and thin and a much brighter white than normal. Something else has just occurred to me as I write, if large quantities of Squatts were dyed red they would look very similar to bloodworms and Squatts don't bury themselves either, but they are harder to obtain than normal maggots. Dyeing the boiled maggots may work but the usual attraction of bloodworms is that they wriggle violently and they can swim from place to place.

One of the paste baits has proved very successful for some carp fishing pals, so much so, that they have stopped using it on some waters, where

## WILL THE PHOENIX RISE? - Cont'd

the eels didn't give the carp a chance to get to the bait. Most of this accidental success was daytime fishing and about half a dozen eels a day was not uncommon. Although mainly small (1:00 to 2:08), some of the eels did reach 3:00 and several 4s and two 5s were taken. A very interesting point arose when I was discussing eels with these carp anglers, they captured the majority of the small eels at night and almost without exception the big snakes came in the early afternoon, regardless of weather or time of year.

This pattern held true for two different waters some 60 miles apart and as dissimilar as chalk and cheese. The only weather that seemed to put the eels off completely was very bright sunlight and brilliant moonlight. Alas my pals did not fish the eel-catching bait in floater form, otherwise the results could have been very, very interesting. The particular paste they were using was not something I would have tried, but obviously it worked for them, so why not for me.

One bait I have tried and have hopes for is Dried Blood, Potato Starch and Wheat Germ, the Potato Starch can be replaced by flour, I just prefer the starch.

My choice of livebaits is because of conversations with pike and perch anglers who have fished my chosen venues for many years (25 years in two cases). Most of these anglers have caught a few eels from all the waters and some of these fish have been rather large. The best I know of is 5:14 taken in July 1972. The better eels taken on livebaits (usually small gudgeon) came from areas that had been groundbaited with worms or fish guts to attract perch, the work hookbaits accounting for the perch and occasional bream, and the livebaits for the eels. Deadbaits usually picked up perch or pike, this is what I am told anyway. The impression I get is that the anglers who didn't mind catching the occasional eel (when perch) swore by ground bait, whilst the anti-eel men dismissed groundbait totally for big perch.

The pike anglers who have caught eels in these waters have invariably scored on livebaits fished close in on Paternoster gear well off bottom, and this in winter. The eels in the winter seem very much more localised, than in summer, indeed one friend of mine has proved this. In November 1975 he took four eels in two hours from a particular swim and proceeded to fish the adjacent swims trying to locate the pike. A swim some 100 yards from the first, produced two eels in 30 minutes in December 1975 and another some 250 yards from the original swim, four in two days, at the beginning of January 1976. No swims in between or beyond these three produced any eels at all, and by the close of the 1975/76 season a serious winter eel campaign was planned by my friend. 1976/77 produced 12 eels for him, all from the previous years swims and all between November and March. Since then the swims have been quiet, that is until this season, when a visiting pike angler fishing the middle swim landed an eel of 2:06 on float-fished spratt in February. Perhaps the winter of 1981/82 will see some interesting results from these particular swims. I shall certainly watch them carefully throughout the summer.

WILL THE PHOENIX RISE? - Cont'd

I personally feel that if more fishing was done in daylight then we would certainly see more worthwhile information about daytime eels being put into print in the Bulletin and the yearly Session Report Analysis. I feel we are all missing out on a great number of potential specimen eel waters because of the lack of effort, overall, in daylight. Ask Dave Holman how many big eels he has had in daylight, especially in the early afternoon. I believe Dave's very first ever 4 pounder came in the afternoon, I certainly hope mine will.....this season.

Dave Walker

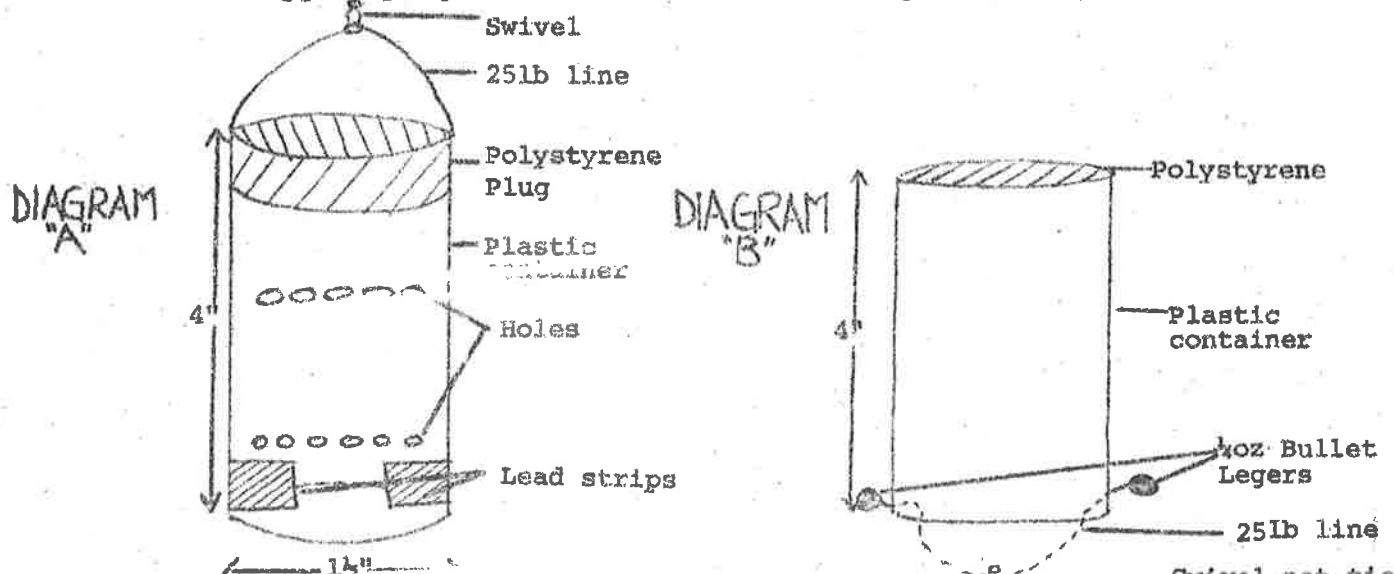
ODDS AND SODS

I'd like to add my comments to some of the articles which have appeared in recent bulletins, in particular, Mark Davies' excellent piece on long-range groundbaiting, in which he explained methods he uses when feeding at range.

As Mark (Petrocellie for short) suggested, groundbait has a key part to play in fishing for eels and in some instances more than others. Waters containing eels which feed predominantly on fish will respond well enough to an acceptable bait (ie a deadbait) presented in an area where the eels feed. In other waters it may be difficult to tempt the eels away from natural food on which they are feeding and, even if you are fishing the right place, unless you can turn them onto your worms, maggots or whatever then you will end up fishless. This is where a good groundbaiting technique can pay off.

An inflatable boat is a necessary part of my set up and is far and away the best method of baiting at range, but obviously there are many occasions when it can't be used and as Mark stated a catapult is not the answer.

Until recently my alternative was a large swimfeeder which works well enough but does not compare with a method I recently saw to groundbait particles at long range for carp. The equipment is simple and one I am sure you will be hearing a lot about in the future - a "Dopple ganger" - it looks something like this:-



## ODDS & SODS - Cont'd

Attach the unit to a carp rod and suitable heavy line (ie 10lb) fill with worms or whatever and with the "A" model seal with groundbait then cast to the desired spot, jiggle about the tackle until the bait is dislodged and the polystyrene floats back up to the surface. The "B" model simply fill with bait and cast, the unit flips over and tips the bait into the position cast to.

Dead simple but extremely effective and I am keen to use it following extensive field trials. Dopplegangers can be made to any size for your own requirement (ie big deadbaits) and its well worthwhile testing out a few for yourself, altering the plug and the shapes of holes, lead strips etc.

Dave Walker should write more for the bulletins, I enjoy his common sense approach and just wish he could do more eeling, then I think he would show us all how its done. Dave recently made a comment on an article by Richard Baczyk. Now Richard regularly uses spratt heads for eeling and Dave Suggested (quite nicely I thought) that he should try another bait, and here I must agree with Dave.

It's great having all the very best gear money can buy; rods, reels, bite alarms, extra large nets and all the other specialised tackle we use, but fished with a spratt head you have an inferior rig and to my mind you might as well not bother turning out to eel fish at all. Far better to spend your time getting hold of a supply of first class baits instead.

Spratt heads have caught occasional good eels in the past but Richard's reliance on this bait is perhaps the reason for his lack of success in waters known to contain plenty of big eels.

I realise that club rules prevent the use of freshwater fish in the normal close season but then again to quote from my dad "Rules were meant for bending". And there are always plenty of means round them. I believe that you can't take too much trouble in having available the very best bait. The old maxim of the order of precedence is "Start at the hook and work backwards".

Lastly may I say a big thank you to Brian Crawford and Arthur Sutton who have for so long battled with Water Authorities and the like so regularly. I am sure both Brian and Arthur would be only too pleased to spend all their spare time fishing (as I do) but they are prepared to have a crack at the establishment on our behalf. The latest work by Brian on eel netting deserves all our praise and support. Thanks again lads, we all owe you a lot, as indeed we do to all the Club's Committee work horses.

Dave Holman

---

## THE USE OF ADDITIVES

During the last couple of seasons I have tried to formulate a log on the uses of additives. The use of pilchard-oil is quite common in

## THE USE OF ADDITIVES - Cont'd

many anglers' fishing for pike or eels. Not many anglers are however prepared to write about their results and only a few pieces appear in print and these are vague.

I have enquired about amino acids. The details seem almost State secrets. I will this season be experimenting with a mixture of emulsified pilchard oil and lycien (amino acid).

What I have discovered is that the effectiveness of amino acids depends on the PH of the water it is to be used in. If fish are accepting acids at a certain percentage in a given mix ie 2.5 ppm - a high PH will in effect higher the discharge elements making it too strong to be palatable. It then becomes a deterrent rather than an attractor. If, however, the PH is on the low side this will depress the discharge so an increase in dosage will be needed.

We who fish for eels are on a slightly better footing than say carp anglers as the eel will tolerate higher concentrates than most cyprinids.

Most of us are in the dark as to what we should do with acids. I certainly am. But after a lot of discussions with carp anglers and using a little of my own imagination, perhaps we will come to a better understanding.

Henry Hansen and Steve Hope both did very well with emulsified pilchard oil. Henry told me in correspondence that when one bait was used with EPO and three others without, the treated bait produced four times as many runs. This was particularly evident when used in sub-surface baits (reflections of AJS). Although Henry was very biased in favour of EPO, the proof was unquestionable so his confidence was really born out.

The problem with me is that I am always wary about trying new methods. I intend this year to use two rods with dead-baits on the bottom. One rod sub-surface with EPO and Lycien and one rod bottom with EPO and Lycien. If the results are favourable with the additives I will concentrate with all rods on this method. If, however, the traditional method produces the goods I will change back.

I am at present working on getting permission to fish a large reservoir with a completely undisturbed eel population. It has a very large head of eels and some are enormous. My next-door-neighbour has skin-dived there and has confirmed my information as to quantities. I have personally seen one eel over 6lb which was pumped out.

The reason I mention this is that this will provide an idea test-bed for experimenting with additives. These eels don't know what anglers are. I only hope a fair few soon find out. I'll let you know.

Alan Mitchell

## WHIT TRIP 1981 - BRA LAKE, PETERBOROUGH.

The trip started for me at 17.30 on Friday night. Geoff Kent arrived at the farm to pick me up in his newly-acquired car, very nice of him considering we then had to drive back to Bob Layland's house to pick up the livebaits from his pond. Taking Geoff some thirty miles out of his way, it wouldn't have been so bad if there had been any bait to pick up, but Bob in his infinite wisdom had decided that he could squeeze them into his van, and had departed that morning without telling anyone (nice one Bob!).

Well after we had stocked up with supplies we finally set off for Peterborough, and after an arduous journey arrived at our destination at 21.30, just as it was getting dark. We had decided the week before not to fish the Friday night, so we went straight to the pub where we stayed until closing time.

When we actually arrived at Bra Lake it was pitch black, but we soon found Bob's van and pulled alongside. We didn't have to struggle to find him as the lazy sod was parked right next to his biv.

After a swift exchange of greetings with Bob and Tony Hollerbach we learnt that Brian Crawford, Richard Baczyk and David Taylor were also fishing - a total of seven members.

Tony had had a rough time journeying to the water as one of his bike panniers had come undone and he'd lost his cooking equipment; to make matters worse he'd also left his rod rests at home on the kitchen table - if you think that's forgetful, Geoff and I were going to live out of tins for the next few days and I forgot the tin opener.

We slept in the car that night and awoke at 8 o'clock to do the rounds and see what momentous captures had been made. Bob was the first to be roused where upon he related that he'd missed a run, much to our amusement and his displeasure. I then sauntered up to Tony's pitch, it was raining heavily, and I was toggged up in my waterproofs and thoroughly wet. Tony wouldn't hear of me staying outside so I struggled into his biv, and proceeded to drip copiously over the dry interior. Then Geoff came up and he too was ushered inside, remarkable bloke Tony didn't complain once, after a long chat we said farewell and went swim-hunting around the lake to Brian's fishing complex. Talk about organised he made my pitch look like a slum clearance area. After arranging to meet up at the pub later, Dick was the next to suffer our curiosity. We disturbed him slaving over a hot snackpot, so relieving him of a few fags we left him to his feast and proceeded to struggle over a bloody gi-normous heap of bricks back to the car.

After talking to Brian, I found out that Dave Holman had fished the swim I fancied the week before and had caught a small eel. More important he had baited with five hundred lobs, and as I planned to use worm myself I thought that this would increase my chances. The fact that the swim was a long way from the carp park right around the other side of the lake made me a little dubious but I considered it worth it. Geoff also decided on a swim that was even further away, so shouldering our tackle we puffed and panted around to our new home for the next two and a half days. Incidentally no-one caught anything during the first night apart from David Taylor and his friend who had caught some small eels and tench. Brian had missed a run, Dick missed a run in the morning, and Tony had snapped out - not a great start - but the weather looked ideal and all our spirits were high.

## WHIT TRIP 1981 - BRA LAKE, PETERBOROUGH. - Cont'd

After we had set up, we all met up in the pub, which is situated a short stroll down the road from the lake. It catered very well for us fishermen, a dart board, pool table, plenty of beer and a landlord that didn't mind me trampling about in wellies.

The focus of our attention was the pool table, at Emberton Park last year we had a bar billiards competition, this year we decided on a pool tournament. Needless to say I got hammered by everyone, although I did manage to come second a few times. Brian (Hustler) Crawford beat everyone in sight, but was finally beaten by a lad that could well have been one of his young pupils. The talk as usual centered around our favourite topic, fishing. I believe I learn more over a pint up the pub at lunchtime, than I could through several hours of fishing. Brian found out that a 7½lb chub had been taken from the lake that morning by a representative of the fishing club. It was dead and they planned to have it stuffed, this shows the potential at Bra Lake.

It contains many specimens including tench, pike, carp and rudd, not forgetting large eels. The conversation turned to tactics for the eels that night - Bob was using mashed-up herring, mackerel and minnows as an attractor these were introduced to the water via drennon feeders, as hook bait he was using worms, minnows and sea fish I believe. Geoff was using the same type of attractor, mashed herrings and spratts introduced to the water via a catapult in the margins. Brian was using a paste bait cadged off of rod Hutchinson plus worms and sea fish, Richard used spratts. Tony used worms and minnows. I myself decided to fish along the same lines as Dave Holman - mass baiting with worms in the margins. Brian had told us about the eels' habit of ejecting baits very quickly so I decided to try twitch hitting for eels sitting over my rods.

That night, just before dark, I introduced about 200 lobs fifteen feet out into about 20 feet of water, also twenty minnows. I fished freeline minnow on one rod and on the other two, worms with a swan shot pinched about two feet above the trace to give me enough weight to cast into the oncoming wind. After about ten minutes I got a two-inch lift on the rod nearest me with a worm on. I struck and was into a bloody pike, as I was unhooking it in the water the other rod went so I struck, another pike, in half an hour I had five pike all on worm on small twitches. I believed at the time that the pike had seen the worms being introduced and had followed them down through the gin clear water and started to mop them up. After this burst of activity the swim went dead. I waited until it was really dark and put in another load of worms. Apart from a few line bites nothing else happened until quarter to three when my alarm sounded. None of the indicators moved and I thought that one of the buzzer heads was faulty - I started to check them. When I got to the middle rod I saw the indicator move, I struck after the indicator had moved three inches. It was an eel which gave a poor fight. I landed it and thought that it might go three, so I put it into the keepnet. I had no more bites and as it started to get light at four o'clock I went to bed shortly afterwards. I had another pike then I went to sleep and had no further action. The eel weighed 2lb 12½ ozs and looked a short plump eel - it was 35" long with a 7" girth.

## WHIT TRIP 1981 - BRA LAKE, PETERBOROUGH - Cont'd

Sunday lunchtime we all gathered in the pub. Tony had departed in the morning leaving six members to fish that night. We held an informal discussion on the previous nights action, only two of us had bites, myself and David Taylor who had caught an eel of 2½ lbs. Geoff myself and Bob decided to use only worm that night. I do not know what the others planned to use.

The only changes I made to my set up that night was to use three swan shot links to combat a freshening wind. I also changed the time of my first ground baiting until it was dark, this I hoped would lessen the chances of the pike finding my worms. Again, I introduced 100 lobs and fed at varying intervals with another 100 worms.

I didn't have to wait long for my first bite at 00.15 - I had a slow run which I hit before it got to the butt ring, this resulted in the capture of a small eel lightly hooked in the mouth. The swim went dead so I decided to move the position of my bait on No.3 rod. This was a very tricky manoeuvre as I had my rods in a small cut out in the bank. The bottom of the bank was at an incline of about 30° and was very slippery. I had to edge past the butts of Nos 1 and 2 rods to get to the third without slipping and knocking my rods into the water. I placed the bait about ten feet from the bank fifteen yards away where I hoped the bait would fall in the apex of the steeply sloping bank and the bottom in twenty feet of water.

I shall give a more detailed account of the water directly in front of me, as it may help to explain the cock-up I made when the next bite came at 3 o'clock.

I was fishing at water level, behind me was a steep bank which I had to clamber up to reach my biv at the top. This was situated under a large hawthorn tree, the limbs of the tree were entwined with another about twenty feet away forming a canopy over my pitch, a very comfortable place to fish if its hadn't been for the bank in front of me.

There was a large snag in the water on my left as I faced the water, this was the remains of an old car, to my right was an extensive reedbed, full of old branches, brambles etc., I had an open bit of water in front of me about four feet across. If I was to land any eel I caught I would have to pull it between these two snags into the net, whilst trying to retain my balance in the cut out.

At three o'clock I had a line bite - this was on no.3 rod. I reached over my other two rods and picked it up and waited. The indicator started to move, I struck and was into a good eel. I heaved as hard as I dared and got it onto the surface, I was only using 8lb line with a five pound trace to a size 1 lion d'or hook. Once again not a spectacular fight even though it was a good fish. I got it to the entrance of the reeds and my troubles started my landing net was on top of the bank where I had put it after landing the small eel. I managed to get my free hand to the pole and swung the net over my head after sinking the net, I tried to pull the eel over the mesh, but rods one and two were in the way, so I knocked them off the rod rest and pulled the eel over the net. I had its head out of the water and pulled it up to the spreader block, lifted the net and the eel got its tail over the edge and wriggled off, twice more I did this and

## WHIT TRIP 1981 - BRA LAKE, PETERBOROUGH - Cont'd

do you think she'd go in - no way. By now I was scared the line would break - Geoff the lazy git was asleep and I had no assistance so I decided to wade out a bit so that I could sink my net a little deeper. I gave the eel line so that it would back off a little but did it hell, it charged straight into the reeds on my right. The water was only shallow so I slackened off, held the rod tip high and hoped she would swim out. The next thing I knew the line was slack so I reeled in only to find a perfectly straightened hook and large teeth indentations in the trace. Never before have I had any fish straighten a pattern 11 hook. The hook was not faulty as I have used hooks from the same box, after testing the first few, for some time with no cause for complaint.

If only I had a longer landing net and if only I had stronger hooks. That was the end of the trip for me and no more bites.

The next morning after we had packed up we met to say our good byes. I was not the only person who had fared badly that night. Geoff had snapped out on a run, Bob was broken four times on worms. At least David Taylor had caught a 2½lb eel. Good for him, he certainly showed us a thing or two.

As for my balls up, they say you live and learn. I certainly learnt a lot on this trip. The main lesson was that two items of my fishing tackle were inadequate for big eels. I intend to remedy this before my next session. I am going to start using low-water eyed partridge hooks and secondly I have started to build a landing net with 45" arms. I only hope I don't have to lose another fish to find out that some item of my fishing tackle isn't up to scratch before I replace it.

Steve Enkel

---

 THE RETURN

On reading your last Bulletin, I was shocked to hear of the return of Chris Lee of the famous Captain Beaky group.

It seems that the opinion is that Chris has fallen out with both eeling and the NAC over the past years or so.

Well, being a fellow member of the Captain Beaky group I think it is time that the truth was set down for all to read, so here goes.

Chris and the Captain first met 3 years ago, when Chris was fishing on a pit just north of Ely (Cambridgeshire). The following year Chris spent 90% of the time fishing this pit due to that one session, the story of which you all can read later. After that one immaculate session Chris never managed to take one eel over two pounds from the water, although he did start to become a bit of a Zander expert.

THE RETURN - Cont'd

It was also during this period that Chris started to become disillusioned with the NAC due to the trouble within the club and resignation of the members. His idea was to stay out of the back stabbing and arguments, let it settle and see if the club could find its feet again. Which I hear it seems to have done.

The following year Chris teamed up with one of our other members, the not-so-timid Toad. That year he spent a lot of time fishing a pit which has now become private. This water produced a number of reasonable eels of which Chris had but three, three pounders. He also mentioned that he spent four days at Bala with you lot during which he took a few boot laces, and had a good honk all along the bay he fished.

Anyhow to bring you up to date, Chris is, as Dave said, "alive" - he is also eel fishing. (Dave - that lake was the one that went private).

He started the season on a good note when on one quiet close season night just prior to the change over of the aforementioned lake he took a 3lb 5oz snake while Timid Toad took yet another blank. Anyhow, Chris is now residing in West London and fishing the William Boyer pits, with yet another of our members, Reckless Rat. His start has not been brilliant but things are now looking up, he has taken a couple of smalls, the Captain was not pleased. By the way, the buzzers Dave sold him certainly work, of recent they have been working overtime, Chris is just having problems hitting them.

Right now to sum up, Chris is still a member of the Captain's group but also wishes to stay a member of the NAC as surely it will prove to be one of the best specimen groups of all time. I will try to keep you informed of Chris' progress, but time is short due to the hours we have to put in to remain members, a mere 25 hours/day so think yourselves luck.

All the best to you all for the rest of the season.

Yours,

Artfool Owl

- PS 1 Who the hell is Angry Willum?  
2 Chris sent the following story of the night he met the Captain.

---

A NIGHT ON WHICH TO PLAN DREAMS

Thursday night saw me once again on the banks of a weir pool in the heart of Cambridge, once again knocking-out gudgeon, dace and roach. This weir pool was to act as a major source of bait fish for me during the 1978/79 season, yet that night only a few found their way into the bait bag.

A NIGHT ON WHICH TO PLAN DREAMS - Cont'd

Dusk was spent planning yet another assault on what had now become my favourite and most fished lake. The planning was now an essential part of my weekly build-up, due to the fact that the fish seemed to have vanished. The previous year the place was swarming with eels between 2-4lb with the odd larger ones, but this year they were gone.

The following night my planning paid off with two eels, one of 3lb and another of 2lb; these were the only two runs I had had for nearly a month. They were not the only dividends gained that night - during the calm of the night I laid the plans for an assault on a completely new as yet, unseen, water.

Previous information given to me by a friend told me that the pits were of vast size, 90 acres plus. They were swarming with eels and zander. The latter I was told, were considered pest, but until then I had never caught one and secretly hoped to land a few. I was given to understand that the place was devoid of small fish but this, I found, was due to a lack of thought on the part of that person.

Baits were put in about 7 o'clock, hoping for a few of the zander before dark and who knows, maybe an eel or two.

Ten o'clock came and went and still had not had a take of any description, and I was beginning to wonder what I was doing wrong. From previous reports I had heard you should have about a dozen takes a minute, so by then I was already pulling my hair out.

Suddenly from the top of the wooded cliff behind me I heard voices, and to my surprise calling my name. After a few vocal exchanges, the lad who first told me about the place slipped out of the undergrowth. The comments as to my sanity in fishing this swim was the major topic of conversation, closely followed by my obvious lack of success in catching anything at all.

It was at this point that things took a turn for the better, when my buzzer came to life, and a run developed - and what a run! Galvanised into life by the sudden change in the situation, my brain failed to work as, without thinking, I grabbed the rod and humped into the run. The result was obvious - sweet fanny adams. Oh well, we all feel like a pratt now and then.

Comments on my style were quick to follow, and these again were not too complimentary. Anyhow, I rebaited, put my brains back and belted the bait at the shadow of a nearby island. Almost as the bait hit the water, my other buzzer started into life, the run this time much slower and twitchy. This type of run was soon to become almost sickening. With a full house in my skull, I waited; it tightened, I let fly this time no mistake, the rod took up an unfamiliar bend, but lacked the tell-tale thump thump. Minutes later a quick flash of silver and my first zander slipped back. This required coffee and bickies. At last the background comments were changing. Obviously it was not a bad zander, just 5lb 10oz, so with a smile on my face I settled back down. My company returned to their wives for a quickie in the carpark and I returned to my lonely wait.

Suddenly it seemed the lake had come to life: in the lillies I could

## A NIGHT ON WHICH TO PLAN DREAMS - Cont'd

hear fish clapping, and in the open water the noise of large animals being dropped into the water from a great height. Why the change? Previously there was not a sound. My buzzer obviously did not like being left out and proceeded to indicate run after run.

Next came an eel of 14lb then two more zander about 14lb each, and then another of those runs just like the very first one. The line glowed as it sped with ever-increasing speed into the dark. After allowing it a few seconds, I leaned into it, there was that feeling you get when you think the thing on the other end is bigger than you. After about 10 minutes a swirl about five yards out told me it was over. I slid it over the net and lifted - it was a biggie. It was then I discovered what I now know to be the reason for the change in fish activity - the water had gone! As I stepped towards the water edge to lift the fish out, I noticed that the water level had dropped at least nine inches - was this the reason?

Anyhow back to the saga. The fish was netted and left till morning and I returned to my coffee and blankets. The night continued with a few half-hearted takes until dawn, when again the zander started feeding. This resulted into two more zander, but no eels. Due to a match that morning, I was forced to pack up early, so after weighing the biggie which seemed to have shrunk in daylight to a mere 3lb 6oz, I popped back to the car and drove round the lake to ask another angler if he would take a couple of photos.

It was then a 1/4 mile from my rods that my buzzers came to life, so with both of us in the car I drove as if in a rally around to my rods. Christ I was close! Less than 30 yards of line remained out of 200, but still moving, I ran through the undergrowth behind me, up the bank, and gained a good 10 feet before thumping into the run.

After about six minutes I think I turned it, mind you it may well have changed direction of its own accord, it seemed to have such power. It was then I first felt the thump thump which changed the zander into an eel. Ten minutes later I slid the net under what seemed to be a live log. I was paralysed with joy as the scales swung round to 5lb 6oz but it ebbed as the net dropped 8oz and the fish ended up at 4lb 14oz, but still my biggest. After a series of photos, the gear was yanked back up the 30 foot cliff and I set off back to Cambridge. Halfway there, I suddenly was overcome by the lack of sleep, and pulling into the nearest layby, I just blew out to the sounds of Puff the Magic Dragon on Junior Choice. Around 11 o'clock the Sex Pistols brought me back to life. As I sat there I wondered - was I drunk or had it been a dream? The smell coming from me told me it was no dream. The following season had to be a classic - there must be bigger eels and I was going to get them.

Chris Lee

Mr. R. Babzyk  
41, Ayres Drive,  
Stanground,  
Peterborough.

General Secretary  
National Anguilla Club.

21<sup>st</sup> June 81.

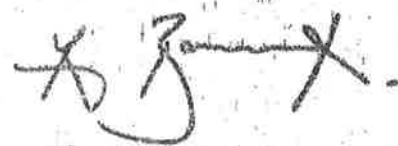
Dear Mr. Secretary and fellow members.

It is with deep regret that I tend my resignation as a member the of the Club.

My reason for resigning from the club is totally self explanitory, for I have lost my total interest in eel fishing. And after a long think, I have decided to discontinue my fishing altogether.

My thoughts of the club itself will always be good ones, and I wish you all a most succesful future. I would like to take this final opportunity in thanking all of you who made my membership a happy one.

Yours respectfully



Richard Babzyk.