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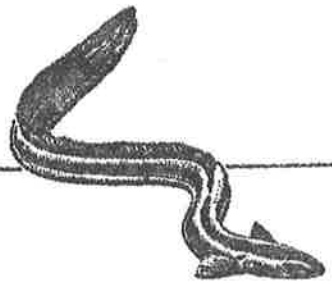

The National Anguilla Club

BULLETIN

Volume 21 No4

C O N T E N T S

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

I hope you all enjoyed reading the last Bulletin which I hope will be the first of many that you will receive this year. Since that time no doubt, all of you who are legally able to will have been eel fishing and hopefully caught fish.

I haven't heard from anybody how the Whit trip went but the weather was good and Westwood Park is a very productive water, so that would have been a good start as far as the fishing was concerned. It was unfortunate that the trip could not go ahead on Chasewater and that Bala wasn't suitable. After the discussions we had at the Spring Meeting, I had hoped that the Whit trip would go ahead without any difficulties, let's hope that we can improve things with the summer trip. For those of you who may be interested, Arthur Sutton and Michael will be fishing the Meres for one week commencing on the 21st July. I will be trying to get along for a night or two of fishing as will Ernie Orme, so if anybody else would like to come they would be more than welcome. For those of you who have not fished the Ellesmere Lakes, you are missing a rare treat. Although to say the least the fishing can be tempremental, the countryside is beautiful and fishing on the Meres is very relaxing. There are unending supplies of live bail in the Shropshire Union Canal which keeps one occupied during the day and the possibility of very large eels from any of the Meres. Add to this the fact that the little town of Ellesmere is within walking distance of all the Meres, you have perfection. Ellesmere has the finest cake shop I know of and A.J.S. and Ernie will vouch for the quality of the steaks provided by the local butcher, it's part of the tradition that when A.J.S. and Ernie fish at Ellesmere they consume great slabs of steak with mounds of chips. So why don't you make the effort and lets slot in an extra club trip.

I have managed to get out eel fishing three times so far with a limited amount of success. I fished twice with Mr. Orme on the Prees arm of the Shropshire Union Canal at the Blackprince Marina. This resulted in total three eels, the best going to Ernie at 2lbs 2ozs. Last Friday night, I spent an idyllic night on the River [illegible] at it's confluence with the River Banwy in Wales, I go to the river early in order to catch some live bait and managed to catch about twenty small trout and hundreds of minnows, both of which fish make ideal live bait. The difficulty on the river appears to be the amount of boot laces, although I did have one fish of 1lbs 13 ozs. However, the scenery is superb and I had a very enjoyable time, the only thing that was [illegible] The hilight of the trip was at dawn, seeing a dog otter which ran along the opposite bank. This is the first otter I have [illegible] I hope it's not the last.

I believe from Brian, that himself, David and Peter have been hammering the eels in the Peterborough area, catching many over 3lbs. I would like to congratulate David Taylor on his wonderful catch of an eel at 5lbs 15 ozs, I am sure all other members would wish to join me in recognising this wonderful achievement. I also hear from Brian that he has landed himself a new job in Telford, Shropshire, which means he should be settled in in time to do some chub fishing with us next winter, congratulations on the promotion Brian.

I have got nothing else to report, keep the articles for the Bulletin rolling in. Don't forget to send in the session reports and may I wish you tight lines.

Remember, it's not the end of the earth if you don't catch fish, it just makes life a little bit more enjoyable.

Mark Davies.

My Season 83-84

I started last years campaign back in May with an early attempt after the Eels at a gravel pit in Rochford called Doggits. This pit will be known to several members and has produced Eels for Chris Lee to just under four pounds. To say the session was a disaster would be an understatement, it poured with rain all night and with no bedchairs and only one leaky brolly between us we were forced to sleep on the ground with a river of water running down the almost sheer banks directly under us.

After that session it took until the first week in June before I mustered enough courage to venture out Eeling.again. This was only because I had a boat trip after Smooth Hounds cancelled, so substituting my sea tackle for Eel tackle I hopped into my (trusty) buggy and set off for Danbury Lakes, a venue that has been very kind to me in the past.

I should explain that fishing is only allowed at Danbury in the open season and then only on the top and botton lake, the middle lake being closed to fishing. This was implimented in 1972 by a Labour Counciller who had more than a passive dislike for country sports, it was only a petition which prevented all the lakes being closed to fishing

Needless to say I fish the middle lake at night which is also banned. With so many restrictions a change of approach was necessary, so I go up the pub until kicking out time at eleven, I then drive slowly (something beyond my control in my car) over to the lake. Park up at the campsite, walk down to the lake and start fishing at mid-night, when the park warden is asleep. Then fish through to 4.30 or 5.00 when I make a hasty retreat back to my car.

The night was warm and overcast, Danbury has always produced using a worm as bait. So I fished until 02.30 with big lobs, I didn't have a knock so I decided to change to deadbaits. I dont bother catching my baits now as a couple of trawls with my landing net has never failed to give me ample bait for a nights fishing. All you

do is find out where the fish congregate close to the bank. Cast your net out over your head, holding on to the extreme end of the handle. Then draw it along the bottom until you get the net right into the bank. I warn you, you could be in for some surprises as the method can catch large Bream and Crucians. These kick up quite a fuss when you take them out of the water. I can remember catching bait in this manner at Danbury one night, I scooped the net in, placed it on the bank, in the bottom were a couple of Crucians (I dont use a torch most nights and just rummage about in the net relying on feel to find the bait fish). On this occasion, I picked a Crucian up, placed it back in the water Put my hand back into the net to get what I thought was the other Crucian, only to have the thing bite hold of my thumb. It scared the life out of me, I withdrew my hand, with the thing still attached(were there Pirana in here). No it turned out to be a very wet and bedraggled Bat. The poor unfortunate thing must have flown into the net as I was throwing it out. Whereupon it was dragged along the bed of the lake, hauled onto the bank and manhandled by me, no small wonder it bit me. Another first to Dan, first person to net an 'Aquatic Bat'.

Once the Roach section deadbaits were out, I sat back on my sit up chair but did not have long to wait. At 03.00 the indicator on my left rod sailed slowly up to the butt, I struck into a good Eel but moments later the hook pulled out. I packed up at 04.00 with the first bite of the season under my belt.

The following Friday 10th June, I was once again at Danbury. The weather started off clear but soon turned overcast, although it was not as warm as the previous week. The lake had started to take on its summer appearence and once again I was enjoying the atmosphere of this delightful water.

I used deadbaits from the off on one rod and experimented with swan mussel on the other. I fished through the night without a knock. The false dawn was approaching and a few birds had started their early morning activity. The morning was cold with just a hint of ground mist, the coffee was welcome and a new cigarette was glowing warmly in my hand. I didn't expect to get a bite but as usual, I was wrong. The optonic sounded and once again a run was forthcoming on the ¾ deadbait section. A solid strike met with solid resistance as the hook went home, it was a good Eel. I was well prepared, my new rods, 2¾ pound test curve, compound taper Simpsons. Coupled with 10lb line, 15lb Pikestrand and size one Partridge specimen hooks. These would be more than a match for most siuations I come across Eel fishing, I was confident of landing the Eel.

The fish didn't fight well, a fact I put down to it starting its summer activity. She was soon swirling in a determined manner on the surface. It had been nearly two seasons ago that I had last seen an Eel in excess of four pounds and I knew that this one was larger than anything I had caught befofe, would it be my first five. I started to pull her into the jaws of my outsized landing net, just a little further and she would be mine. The rod tip sprung into the air, a desperate lunge with the net and my last glimpse of her as she writhed backwards and slipped off the drawstring of the net. The hook had pulled at the last moment. I was devastated, my largest Eel and I had lost it. I packed up and went home to bed.

That night in the pub I was talking with my angling companion and friend Andy or just plain Trotter to his mates, a compulsive fisherman who has given up work at the tender age of twenty two because it interfered with his piscatorial adiction.

After telling him about the previous night, his eyes lit up and he dragged me from the pub to get his gear. He informed me, we would fish Danbury that night and he was going to catch the Eel I'd lost the night before. My Eel, I couldn't have that. I would beat him to her, no-one else was going to catch her.

We set up, I put him in the swim where I had lost the fish. Thinking lightning never stikes twice in the same place and moved a little way down the bank. When we had cast

out we talked through the night, brewing up Coffee, mine boiled lakewater, his from a flask. Dont ask me why, he wont drink mine, Golly does!!!

Action started straight away with all the runs coming to my rods. I succeeded in missing four runs and was at a complete loss in explaining them to Trotter, who found each miss highly amusing. This went on until 0230. I had another run but instead of hitting it straight away as I normally do. I let the Eel run for a few seconds. The strike was successful and Trotter was by my side with the net. The fight was uneventful and I soon had her in the net. The fish was smaller than the one I had lost the night before and I gradly but somewhat sadly told Trotter it was a four. He agreed but when he went to get her out of the net he said "Bloody hell Dan, you should feel the girth of this thing, its got to be a five".

I was still unsure, so weighing her on two sets of Avons, the Eel went 5.5 on one set and 5.7 on the others. So at Trotters suggestion we called it 5.6. I was delighted, we had no more bites until dawn, when Trotter caught an Eel of 2.7,you could see the sadness in his face, because it was no bigger.

Bob Leyland, Trotter and myself were to get together for several sessions that season and we looked forward to some good catches. We had all joined Chelmsford AA. Some of the waters they lease are old established gravel pits, others are virgin pits but all of them had one thing going for them. Access from the river Chelmer would be possible for the majority of them.

We all fished one pit and blanked with honours, even after fishing it very hard.

It was decided to move onto another pit at Broads Green. It was rumoured that the pit contained large Perch, so our plan to attack was to fish during the day with Minnows and at night for the Eels.

Bob and I blanked without a run but Trotter kept coming up to me saying he was missing runs. This was during the day and the bites were coming to the livebait Minnows. He thought they were Perch, it wasn't long before we found out what was responcible, Eels. Trotter landed four good Eels during the day, all in bright sunshine. Now it may not be unusual to catch Eels during the day when you're fishing the Meres but around here in Essex its vertually unheard of. All the Eels were three pounds plus, with one an ounce under four pounds.

Although I fished hard all season, I was only to catch one more Eel. A bootlace at Emberton Park, while I was Tench fishing. This was the summer trip and Bob, Golly and myself fished a whole week.The weather was great, the Eel fishing was bad but the Bream and Tench were obliging. It was a pity no one else could make it.

So ended my Eel season, I had caught one Eel of 5.6 and lost another one. I have asked myself over and over again how big that Eel would have been. It dwarfed the five and I would put a coservative estimate at around the seven pound mark. She will still be there god willing and my target, this year is to catch her and four pound Eels from two other waters.

I live in hope.

Stephen Enkle.

<u>High in the Water</u>

This season (83) I have, for the first time been able to really confirm to myself the ability of surface fishing in catching Eels. Due to the unusual circumstances

that prevail at the Blue Lake in Kent, I am able to fish in almost permenant moonlight during darkness. Indeed when a full moon is also present, it is very bright and even possible to tie hooks easily without the aid of a torch or anything else.

This has given rise to my first real surface successes and the following is a review of my results, conclusions and ideas.

The depth of Blue Lake presented its own problems as the majority of the lake is around 20ft in the margins and my original thought was not to allow the baits to drift about. The bank transmits vibrations very easily and thus the baits would probably be ignored if they drifted in very close. The rig I came up with consisted of a 10ft lead link with a small pike float between the link and trace, on the main line. This resulted (when it didn't tangle) in the bait being tethered but still fishing itself at the depth of the trace, usually 15 inches. First experiments were very encoouraging as after only two hours fishing I captured an Eel. The successful bait was a head half of a Rudd and indeed , as the season progressed it was section baits that scored repeatedly. Whole baits, not accounting for a single run and tail sections only received minimal attention. Livebaits I have only tried once and expect they would work well but my rig needs some alteration for safe use.

All the runs experienced were very fast and all Eels well hooked inside the mouth, with no deep hooked fish and only one came off after a brief struggle. I did however miss a number of runs but on consulting my diary I found that most of these (all but two) had gone a considerable distance before I struck. I believe that acute angles formed by the link, float etc, could well have accounted for the strike not transporting enough force to set the hook. No dropped runs occured at all and this was very pleasing, as I consider that it points to the fact that any Eel (in this water) that is prepared to come up through 20ft of water to the surface, must be actively feeding and therefore,infinately more catchable. I have only experienced a very positive responce when fishing surface baits. One night when cold driving rain must have cooled the surface temperature by at least four or five degrees, being the only exception. It certainly cooled me down, dispite waterproof cloths and hot soup!

My references to surface fishing here may be somewhat ambiguous as I am really fishing between 12 and 18 inches deep. This is very important as I did try to catch Eels by presenting the baits, actually on the surface but without fail they were ignored completely. After quite a few trials pure surface fishing was abandoned. All efforts went back to fishing 12 to 18 inches deep. I feel it is very significant that this depth produced all the runs. Other experiments also failed when fishing around 4 feet deep,10 feet deep and about 3 feet off the bottom. I do not profess to understand why this happened. However I do feel that the'active zone'could change in the future. Perhaps, due to drastic long term climate changes or food availability but certainly this year from August to the end of october it did not.

This coming season, I will continue to fish for Eels on the surface and will keep you in touch with what happens. I have a sneaking suspicion that I may even take a few biggies "surfacing".

We shall see.....

David P Walker.

Editors Note:- The above article is a good example of the more informative pieces I would like to have for publication. Having said that, the following piece by Stuart Greene will give some idea of what could be in store for those of you intending to go to Ireland next year. Thankyou for typing it for me Stuart.

'Fourty Shades of Greene'

Recently I've been thinking about the waters that I know of that do or should hold big eels. While I don't know about the availability of information on such waters in England here in Ireland I am fortunate in having a good few sources for information. One of which is interested soley in the capture of big fish and the waters that hold them. On its own this information while helpful does not mean a whole lot but when looked at with a lot of other info then it starts to become very interesting. A long time ago I started to compile a list of worth while waters but because of the number, (over 70) it naturally became a bit of a job. I've now decided to take it in bits and pieces. In that way it may be good for a few pages in the Bulletin. So enough waffal and down to business. I've decided to deal with them in alphabetical order.

LOUGH ANNALLA: map ref;

This lake is off the Mullingar-Delvin road. Its about 50 miles from Dublin and the nearest town is Delvin - 4 miles. I've never fished it but I know that it has produced tench to over 6 pound and rudd to over 2¼ pound. It is part of the river Deel system and it has good access in dry weather. Its not the best eel water in the world but their in it. It has a fairly even bottom going down to a maximum of 4½ meters.

Annaghmore Lough: map ref; M90 83

This lake is noted for its excellent rudd fishing having had lots of rudd in excess of 2¼ lb. It covers 130 acres, depth is very variable going down to a maximum of 12 meters. Its on limestown with an alkilinity value of 3.0 .Extensive shallows with deep holes. Access is not bad but its fringed with rushes in the summer. I've fished it a few times and would be happy to spend a few more nights on it. The waters crystal clear. nearest town is Strokestown. (on the R. Shannon)

Ard Lough: map ref;

This is my pet water having taken two fours out of it.Its about 7 acres and 15 miles from Dublin. It is an old flooded limestone Quarry and like every gravel pit the depth goes up and down like the proverbial pair of knickers.It has a very heavy growth of bottom weed and max. depth is about 35ft. Other species include perch, pike, big rudd and the odd big trout.I wouldn'T be surprised to hear of a six or a seven from this water.

Atedaun lake: map ref; R30 88

Again a lake that I've not fished. This is 210 acres with an alkilinity of 3.5. Over the last few years its produced a few big rudd 2¾ plus, its also noted for some big pike which have been caught to near 30 lb. This lake is on the R. Fergus which is a good trout river. As regards fishing for eels, personally I wouldn't bother as within a few miles is a lake called Knockalough which I would rate as being one of the top in the country. Nearest town - Corrofin

Aughrisbeg lake: map ref;

Also called mecca or heaven for short. This lake has without doubt produced the best eels in the country so far. These include seven 3lbs, four 4lbs, and two over 5lb the best going 5:10. The nearest town is Cliften which is really only a shop, a hotel and about 10 pubs. Aughrisbeg also has the nicest trout that you are ever likely to see. These average about 1lb each. If you do come here make sure that you fish the rocky end of the lake and not the weedy muddy end. I fished here once during a heat wave and caught an eel 1:1. I reckon that its about 50 acres with a max. depth of about 30 feet. Bring your bait with you as theres nothing within miles except sea.

Ballinafid lake: map ref; N41 60

Funny lake this. Its produced some hugh bream three 10's twelve 9's the best going 10:10. Rudd to 2½lb, andthe odd eel over 3lb. Its a very muddy boggy lake with a few very big fish. There are some stands that will hold about 6 anglers. It is quite heavily fished by Irish standards in that during May or June when it fishes you will quite often see someone fishing. Unfortunately it's famed for its slow fishing so if you have a week or two and you want to catch a big bream then its all yours. Only expect one or two bites a week.

Ballyhill lake: map ref;

This little lake has produced eels to over 3lbs. I dont really know anything about the place except that its in Clifden. For fishing, why bother, if your in Clifden then dont waste your time, fish Aughrisbeg.

Ballykeeran lake: map ref; N7 44

100 acres with an alkilinity of 5.7 , the max. depth is 12.3m. This has produced bream to 9lbs. Much the same in character to coosan lough that Dave Holman fished and wrote about. Its got a very muddy bottom and is surrounded with rushes. To be honest, you can expect to catch about 50 bootlaces for every 2lb'er.

Black lake: map ref;

Has produced rudd bream hybrids to nearly 4lb. I wouldn't tell anyone to fish it for eels as its in Cavan and most of the lakes up there are longlined on a fairly regular basis.

Bracken Lough: map ref; N 87 88

Another lake with big hybrids. 20 acres average depth 6m. max. depth 10m. alkilinity 3.2. This lake is quite popular as it has a fair amount of small skimmers up to about 3lb. Even though its been a bit overfished I reckon that its still worth a try if your near.

Bunn lake: map ref; H 38 15

Big hybrids as above. 20 acres alkilinity 2.9 average depth only 1 meter, max. depth of 2.5meters. I've heard stories of decent eels but I've never even seen the lake. I hope to give it a go sometime next season.

Callaun lough: map ref;

Another big bream venue having produced fish to over 9lbs. The Callaun chain of lakes consists of one major lake with several smaller ponds. This lake is also noted for its rudd and pike. Its a limestone lake and so is remarkable clear. I've never heard of big eels from here but I don't see why they shouldnt be there. Personally I wouldnt bother fishing here as Knockalough is only a few miles further on the road. All the same you could do worse.

Camlough: map ref;

Bream to nearly 9lbs. I can find no info on this lake. Unfortunately all my sources stop at the border and this lake is on the wrong side so if anyone knows anything let me know.

Capragh Lake: map ref; H 87 6

Again bream to nearly 9lbs. 15-20 acres with an alkilinity of 4.9. This lake has a fair population of medium sized rudd and from the area I'd say that its got a fair number of small pike. This is a place that I fish to often AS THE NEAREST town is Carrickmacross. Bandit country.

Carton Est. Lake: map ref;

Home ground again. 20 miles from Dublin. This is a place that I've never really cracked. The lake is a typical serpintine thats gone to seed. Its feed by a chalk stream thats full of small trout. There was a localised fish kill here about 8 yrs. ago and hybrids to over 5lbs were taken out. Pike have been caught to over 20 lbs and recently (4 yrs.) the lake and river has become overun with roach. I dont fish here that much as to be bonest its very spooky and I've never got that much out of it. But their in it.

Carnadoe lake: map ref; N 51 93

From what I hear this lake is also called Cornagrow lake. In June '78 it produced for two English anglers three tench and an eel. they weighed 24:5 all told. the eel went 4:2 and the tench went 6:2, 6:5, and 7:12. Quite a bag for one nights fishing. Since then I've been digging for info and only recentely did I get it. The lake is not fished except by a few. A member of the Irish tench fishers told me. Its about 50 acres and I have a feeling that it could turn out to be very good indeed.

Castleferdus lake: map ref;

Big rudd bream hybrids. Another County Clare lake. The lake is over limestone so in all probability it will be very similar to callaun lake of any of the other Clare lakes.

Anyhow this is the type of thing that I reckon might help someone coming over to Ireland. As you see I've only included 17 so far in case the all powerful editors decrees that its total bullshi... and so I can save myself the work. If however someone thinks that it may come in handy then I'll continue by giving another 17 and so on untill I've covered most of the waters that I consider worthwhile. Please note that I'm not just limiting the list to eel waters only. Also if anyone wants any more info on any of the waters mentioned them let me know as what I've put down here is in most cases a brief summary of the information that I have. I'll finish off by emphasising the message that I got at the recent AGM. It concerns the growing sense of aphathy in the club. If its to be reversed then the members will have to become more involved in the club. The way to do this is through the bulletin so when you finish reading this take out a pad and jot down what you think of this copy and any ideas that you may have for your 84 season. Remember that its a club bullitin and not just for a few members. Tight lines for 1984 and good eeling

STUART GREENE

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Members,

May I take this opportunity of thanking all of you who were customers at my tackle shop in the past, it was a pleasure to serve you. I no longer own the shop shop and am now concentrating on the wholesale side of the fishing tackle trade. once again, thankyou all very much indeed.

Yours Sincerely,

David P Walker.

Editors Note:- I must apologise for the completely unwarranted delay in publishing Dave's letter. It was attached to the Article, appearing earlier in this issue. I filed it and am totally to blame. Sorry Dave, although its late the sentiment remains the same.

A Years Night Fishing (a seasons report '83)

My years night fishing was somewhat shorter than I had first hoped because I was only able to go out about 25 times (of which 12 were for Eels alone). My Eeling began in the middle of May when on a warm humid night, I decided that I would try my luck at Eye Pit (Bra Lake), this is one of the few waters we are allowed to night fish during the close season in the Peterborough area. The water was fairly warm and I hoped that a bit of early season success might come my way. All my efforts were to no avail as I blanked without a run. The next two sessions of the season were again at Eye Pit and these two sessions, produced two takes, which were both in the margins with a small whole Roach deadbait. These runs produced Eels of 3.1 and 2.8, which were both amazingly hooked in the top lip. Which I thought was fairly strange for free-lined baits. Unknown to me at the time but this was to be th the biggest Eel I was going to catch during the whole of the 1983 season.

After my early sessions at Eye Pit it was time for the Whit trip which had been arranged at Chase Water near Brownhills. A place which had produced Eels of over 3lb for both Dave and myself. We arrived on Friday evening and to our amazement we found the water had risen about 3 feet! This meant, that a lot of the swims we fancied were under water. After a lot of thought we decided that it would be better if we fished away from any other water users, which may have led to us being thrown off the water and therefore ruining our fishing trip. We fished from a bank which was about four feet from the waters edge, this being near to a dirt track thats used by farm vehicles during the day. We fished all night with Dave having the only run, a screamer on worm which he missed. In the morning our enthusiasm was a little low, so we decided on a change of swim for the next day. This time we decided to fish in a bay near to a Boat House which was only about 3 feet deep. We set up with more hope because the weather had become very humid and overcast, which to me looked, the perfect Eeling conditions. When the morning arrived I had caught two fish. The only problem being, they were a Roach and a Jack Pike both taking a large bunch of lobworms on a size 2 hook on a wire trace. On the way home , we reflected on what a bad trip it had been, not only for the lack of Eels but also the lack of other Eel anglers. We hoped the next Club trip would be better all round.

At the end of June, Dave Steve and myself decided that we would go to Sand Pit, the place where Dave had his 4.2 last year. When we arrived the sun was out and it was very warm, a perfect evening for Eeling! Just after we had set up, in the same area as where Dave had caught his four, the noise of a radio came from the far bank. Suddenly about twelve people came out from behind some bushes, carrying a radio and camping equipment and making one hell of a din. My heart sank, I thought our hopes of catching any Eels tonight were nil, as they were only about 50-70 yds away. As it got darker the music got louder and with the water only being about four feet deep our chances were getting slimmer, Dave was getting more and more eager to go and join the party. At about 1 o'clock there were shouts of "Let's go for a swim", and then suddenly 'SPLASH!!', after about five minutes there were about four of them in the water, Dave turned round to me and said "Let's go round and join them". Just as he finished saying this his optonic screamed, which in turn produced a fine Eel of 3.14. Unknown to us, this was to be the biggest Eel that any of us were to catch that season. Which was a little ironic, considering the situation. In the morning we met up with Steve, he had caught six nice Rudd to 2.4 all on floating crust. As we were talking the Warden of the water paid a visit with the bad news that we were fishing on private water. This put paid to my Eel fishing for that season!! This was a great shame as that water held great potential.

My last two sessions were fished at Baston Fen Fisheries with Brian, a water he had been fishing all season, catching a fair few Eels over 3.0. The water was fairly shallow and very weedy and held great potential with Eels to over six pounds having already been caught on sweetcorn and maggots. In my two sessions I found that I

could fish in 4 feet of water with my bait only 10-12 inches from the surface and still get cofident runs and still catch the Eels. I feel that when the water is warm it might be possible to try surface Eel fishing. If I fish this water this year, I will certainly experiment with this. The only drawback being the cost, £40 per season for the fishing.

The rest of my night fishing was done on two waters, one near my home for Bream and the other about 7 miles away for Carp. The water I fished for Bream is called Ferry Meadows, a water I had already fished for Eels and Pike but I had heard of Bream to 9lb, being caught by pleasure anglers. My plans were to fish with worms, maggots and sweetcorn over a feeder and a carpet of groundbait. I chose a swim near to where the river joins the lake, a place where I had seen large Bream caught before. I concentrated on this swim for about 5 sessions and every time, during the hours of darkness, I was getting plagued by Bream running through the lines. All the same, during this time I managed to catch plenty of Bream between 5-7lbs. The best going 7.6, a personal best. I was fishing there one morning with Dave, I hooked and played a Bream for about 5 minutes before it slipped the hook (this fish felt well over 8lb). Dave had bad luck after the Bream with fish to just 5.8 but he catch the best specimen, a 6 inch 'BAT', that caught up in his line.

My Carp fishing was done on a locally owned gravel pit called Maxey which is full of small common Carp in the 2-7lb range, however there were a few good fish mixed in. The bait I decided to use was Duncan Kays red and yellow slyme mixes which we bought locally at £2.75p per pound, it was easy to use a pound a night. When fishing for these Carp you coundn't afford to fall asleep, for if you did you would be liable to loose your rod. The takes were so fast and strong your rod could be in the water in a matter of seconds. During the six or seven times I fished the water Dave and I both were fortunate enough to catch Carp over 10lbs, of which I had two, a mirror of 11.02 and a common of 16.00, both of which took yellow slyme on a bolt rig.

Well, that was the end of my season, I now turned to Pike and hopefully catch a 20lb plus, something that has so far eluded me. Come April, I'll get down to Eel fishing and hopefully doing at least 20 sessions. Some of which will be on good waters.

Peter Stickland.

Odds and Sods!!!!!

I would just like to pass on some tips, I've picked up over the years from fishing with friends or talking to people. I am sure that you will not catch anymore fish after reading this but it will, perhaps make you more efficient or more comfortable.

In Jim Gibbonsons book-Modern Specimen Hunting, he mentions that a pair of Ski-Salopettes are exellent for keeping warm. I bought mine some time ago from C+A and I would go so far as to say they are ideal, to wear under a one-piece suit. To anyone who is not sure what they are, I will explain. Basically they look like nylon Dungerees with a 'Warm Fill' material between the outside and the lining. A little like a Sleeping Bag. The Bib with over the shoulder straps completely eliminates the annoying problem of the vest/shirt/jumper combination 'riding' up the back.

To make my bed chair both more comfortable and much more durable, I purchased an additional cover. Leaving on the original cover placing on top of that approx one inch of foam rubber. Then putting the new cover over the top of all that,

with a seperate set of elastics. It is fractionally heavier and slightly more bulky but well worth it.

For baiting up at night I used to use a 'Flexi Torch'. This had the habit of switching itself on while in my pocket, thus draining the batteries. I have now switched over to a small Torch made by Ever Ready, this can be held between the teeth, leaving both hands free.

I have recently had my Avon Scales checked by the Weights and Measures Department this was done free of charge because I did not want a certificate. All the weights at 4lb intervals were checked and written down on a slip of paper. I had the shock of my life when I picked my scales up twenty four hours later. At 4lb they only registered 3lb 6oz. They were weighing light right up to 32lb, although this weight only showed ½lb light. I have now sent the scales off to the manufacturer for service ect, costing approx £5 +P&P. I would recommend everyone to have scales checked regulally or have your own set of weights to check them against. This must be in your own interest.

The tough, ice cream, polythene type containers can be converted to suit all sorts of fishing tackle bits. I carry two whem I'm Eel fishing. In one I have my Camera with all the accesories, bulb release, flash, spare batteries, film etc. The other container, I have for dead-baits. I find the two litre rectangular size ideal. Inside this I cut polystyrene tiles down to the correct size, these line the sides and bottom. Then cover the tiles in 'Sticky Black' or another suitable wipe clean surface. It is important to find the correct adhesive to stick the polystyrene or else you will end up with a very sticky mess. A frozen ice pack will make sure your dead-baits will stay frozen all night.

Storage of traces and hook lengths can cause problems especially removing traces from your container after dark. I use a scaled down version of my Pike trace container for my Eel fishing. This consists of "Tupperware" type of juice container with a water tight lid. Inside this I have a cardboard or plastic tube covered in a non-water absorbant foam, called 'Etha Foam'. This is available in most Tackle Shops that sell Fly Fishing Equipment (it is used to line fly boxes). It costs around 50p per Sq ft. Map pins or drawing pins are ideal to hold the swivel or loop in position while the hook is dug into the foam, this keeps every thing tight.

Two points in which I would like help from you. Can any member advise me on long term Lobworm storage, especially in the long spells without rain in summer.

Finally, has anyone within the N.A.C used Braided Hook Lengths instead of Mono and experienced success or failure?

Kevin Stephenson.

The River Lea and its Eels.

On two occasions in the past I have written articles about the river Lea, that river so loved by Izaak Walton & E Enson. This writer loves the river no less, although it has gone through countless man made changes since Izaak fished it and I am sure that were he alive today he would find some changes hard to bear. Not that all of these changes are ghastly crimes, though some may be. Others are most beneficial to the general angler and some to the Eel angler in particular.

The River Lee has never been famed for its Eel fishing. Why this should be leaves me guessing but most probably it is entirely due to the ban on night fishing which used to apply to the whole river. In the past the river has been fished illegally at night by very few anglers, mostly criminal types, namely Sutton and friends. The art was in dodging the night raiding groups mounted by the London Anglers Association and at which we became very adept. All the same it was disconcerting trying to fish seriously and all the while listening for distant footsteps on the gravel towpath, perhaps having to leave ones gear and slip into a ditch of head high stinging nettles. But I certainly had my share of Eels with many sessions producing three or four 4lb Eels and some lesser ones. We hardly ever caught a small one-2lb being the smallest one would catch. They mostly went from 3 to 3½lbs and fought like Tigers.

During the late 40s there was a good annual run of Elvers, hardly any during the 1950 years and then a small influx during the60s. No more Eels seemed to enter until late in the seventies but since then there has been a continued improvement. Small Eels now figure in the many matches held on the river, something I have not known before and it bodes well for the future.

Most of the river is fished hard and is under continuous pressure from anglers. Yet there are certain stretches where peace and quiet is still the order of the day and even more so at night. With the lifting of the night ban the way is now open for some serious Eel angling and I now intend putting that into effect. Living as I do now in Hertfordshire, most of the venues I love are within 15 mins drive. A far cry from the 1½ hours bike ride, laden with gear, which I used to regularly undertake from Tottenham. I used to arrive home with my bag rather heavier than when I set out, collapse on the floor and mutter "never again" somewhat incohearently.

Much easier now, so why the hell not take advantage of it. True, access points are limited in some areas, usually the best ones but the going is easy and with a good tackle trolley 30 minutes walk is not to much, even for this old man.

But what of the Eels, are they there? They most certainly are, with quite a few whoppers still there from earlier years. During recent heavy maintenance work, Thames Water Authority workmen captured one at 7½lbs and saw others as large. This Eel is probably one of those from around 1950 and it cannot be the only one. The river has a remarkably clean bill of health for the past thirty odd years, so survival is assured.

I will during 1984 be fishing some of my old haunts of years ago, with St Margarets featuring very largely among them. Older members will know but newer members may like to know, that St Margarets has produced more 4lb Eels for me than any other venue. For some reason I could never better 5lbs from that venue but what it has produced will lure me back time after time. And if on occasion it doesn't produce an Eel for me, it more than makes up for it in the nostalgia it brings. One or two of you evil lot may recall the nude lady who asked if she could buy a cigarette and her equally nude friend who asked if I could give her a light. And how I turned up the flame on my lighter as I gave her a light. She was a 'BIG' girl. But, you lustful lot, I digress.

Above Ware Lock and upstream to Hertford itself is real specimen hunters water. Shunned by the ordinary angler because it is 'too hard', this stretch does produce some remarkable fish of serveral species. I tried it for Eels twice last season but after having my baits repeatedly torn to shreds by the hordes of Crayfish I gave it up, baffled. I will give it some attention this year, keeping my baits near to the surface. An aquaintence of mine lives in a farm cottage not three minutes walk from that part of the river. He fishes it continuously in the winter and was using worm last winter when he was repeatedly broken on what he assumed

were the huge Chub there. But late in the day he managed to hold one long enough to bring the fish to the surface and saw it was a 'very big'Eel. His valued estimate of its length was over four feet! If I succeed there I will bring a few Eels away to stock my local Gravel Pit.

Associated to the river itself are, of course, the numerous gravel pits. All of these are good fisheries but in the past they have been very mean where the Eels are concerned. From Stanstead Abbotts downstream all the pits on the east side of the river are now connected to each other via the Lea Valley Flood Relief Channel. At last there is a means of access for the Eels, while they are small and my son and I have seen tiny Elvers climbing the sluices. So within a matter of years I confidently predict that most of these pits, if not all, will be good Eel fisheries. In some, prospects are already much brighter.

At this point I can punctuate this article with the happy news that I have now made my first Eel trip to the river between Ware and St Margarets and got myself an Eel of 3lb 5½oz. Quite a useful start when one considers that it was an evening trip with hardly one hour of darkness. The Eel took a bait presented near the far bank just five minutes before I was due to pack up, at 23-15 hrs. The Eel took a four inch Roach which had been deep frozen. That in itself is something new for in the past, I used to avoid frozen baits like the plague in the sure knowledge that they 'just didn't work'.

The stretch I fished was chosen for covenience and no other reason. Even so it looks like becoming a regular venue. It is the start of a canalised stretch with no or little flow, connected at the upstream end to the river proper. In fact it is the most upstream end of the stretch known as St Margarets, only two miles from where I normally used to fish that venue.

I must admit to being pleasantly surprised by this early success for only two years ago the stretch was dewatered to allow pipe laying across the bed of the river. However, all is not now conjecture and I have the proof that Eels are present. Poor wife, she will see even less of me now. I feel pleased for my son for it is an easy water and one on which he should soon reap some success.

Of how we fare this summer and autumn and of other venues on the river largely unknown to me at the present time, I will write next winter.

FOOTNOTE:- Downstream from Ware in the suburban village of Gt Amwill I saw an Eel of 12¼lbs. He (or she) resides now in a glass case having been taken from the small weir by the weirkeeper using a grapnel to clear the weed from the sluice. That was in the year 1880. Since that time other large Eels have actually been caught, one on a wet fly and the other on worm meant for Trout. Both are set-up and both exceed 7lb!

Arthur J Sutton.

Note from the Editor.

This article by Arthur was sent to complete this issue. The stock of articles are all used up. If you wish me to keep the Bulletin coming out as it has this last few months, start writing. So far this year we have managed four editions comprising of 37 items. All but seven members have sent material for publication. This is much better than last year but we still need more from everyone including those who have already sent in their annual reports. There will be a Bulletin issued as soon as I have enough material to make up a useful sized edition, it is therefore up to you!

Alan Mitchell.