



The National Anguilla Club

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# BULLETIN

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Editorial.

By now everyone will be preparing for the coming season. At the S.G.M I was pleased to see your enthusiasm beginning to return. As editor of the Bulletin I have a first hand knowledge of the general feelings within the Club. If things do improve as all the committee members know they can, this season could be our salvation. If however the fence sitters continue their apathetic attitudes they may force an issue we as a Club can surely do without. When I joined the Club we were in the middle of a major upheaval. This is where your attitudes are leading once again. As a committee we only have your best interests at heart but we cannot function without your co operation.

After the spring meeting, quite a few attended the N.A.S.A. Conference. This was once again a great success. Dave Walker more than held up our end, he was helping on the N.A.S.A stand for long periods persuading people to join. Brian of course was superb as residing Chairman. He maintained a nice steady flow of speakers and stood in for Dr Barrie Rickards who was to have given the opening address. Well done both of you.

One thing, did you have to put the Anguilla Club photo display right in front of the South East Specimen Groups Brian!

There isn't much more I can say now without duplicateing what Mark has put in his Chairmans Page.

Steve Hollobone has asked if he can join as an associate member and may rejoin our ranks shortly. Anglers of his calibre are thin on the ground and I feel we need these members in either full or associate capacities.

ALAN MITCHELL.

End of Seasons Report.

Bob Layland.

Sitting looking back at my fishing season before Christmas, I realised I made a lot of mistakes. From June until the end of September I went Eel Fishing, come what may at every opportunity. Bigger the weather I'm off Eel fishing. Fishing all the time for Eels and not having a lot of success and the weather not being all that kind I was 'fed up'. Next season the weather will have to be right before I venture out Eel fishing. This I think will give me more enthusiasm for my Eel fishing.

You could say I have been wearing blinkers since joining the Club. I don't think there is any reason to do the twenty sessions if say ten of them are done on clear nights or nights when your confidence is 100%.

I did catch Eels last year, not very many or any big ones, but I did catch. A lot of my time was wasted, firstly fishing one gravel pit which did not yeild one Eel. Then on the summer trip which produced one Eel for me, one Eel of less than one pound.

My whole year was not wasted entirely, I got married in May and since Christmas Dan and myself have been Pike fishing. So far Dan has had them up to 14.1 and myself 10. Dons fish was a wonderful looking river fish, plump with outstanding markings. Mine was an anemic looking, thin fish with split fins and scars.

I have also been fishing the Tidal Thames at Chiswick Bridge, and upstream from the tidal part at Richmond. Good sport can be had if you catch the river right.

I have bought myself a fish tank, which, when I get a pump, I will introduce some small freshwater fish. Roach, Gudgeon, Minnows, Stone Loach etc. Then when I can get some I will put in one or two Elvers.

Hope you all have a good season in 1984 and hope to see you all soon.

## The Summer of '79

Let me say firstly, that this piece was written almost 3 years ago, and although styles of writing and attitudes may change, if I was to chop and change or re-write this piece 100 times, I could never convey the thrill and excitement of that summer night in '79. So, I have left it in its original form, in the hope I can, in my own small way, transmit what I felt when I first put pen to paper.....

It's always customary for us to make plans for the coming season during those, all too frequent, days when the pike just don't seem interested. The winter of '78/'79 was no exception, except for the fact that I had at long last, persuaded my mate Keith to join me for a spot of eeling. Any water would do, as long as it contained a few eels, as Keith doesn't mind blanking while after carp, but while fishing for eels....never....

Keith had fish a lake ten years previous, which was to become known to me as Shipton Lake, and contained quite a few eels in the 2lb. plus bracket. He had taken most of them by accident whilst tench fishing, but when he had fished for them seriously, had taken the odd one on deadbait.

This was a good start, we had a water, we knew it contained eels, and, barring any drastic changes that might have occurred over the years, it still did. So, bearing in mind we didn't really know anything about eels' growth rates, we set ourselves a target of an eel of 3lb., which we thought would be a reasonable target anyway, as a 3lb. eel is still a big fish.

The close season came round again all too soon, but as the Yorkshire season starts the first week in June, we were quick to take the opportunity of an early season session.

It wasn't Keith who joined me for that first-of-the-season session, but Gordon another mate, who, I hasten to add is another carp fanatic.

Now you all know the excitement of that first-of-the-season fishing trip, and that first one of '79 was no exception.....

On arrival at the water, I was surprised at its size - the mental picture I had made not exactly matching what I was confronted with. It was small, surrounded by trees and with an abundance of water lilies. A beautiful little water, but as I say, not as big as I had envisaged. I mused at the fact that no part of the lake was beyond casting range. A dozen trips would maybe see me fishing every available swim to try and formulate any pattern that might emerge.

That first trip was a real let-down. Nights up Yorkshire can get pretty cold, and that first night was just that - not the sort of night you would expect eels to be on the move, and as the area I was fishing was pretty shallow, I feared the worst. I had baited my swim with an attractor of cat food and chopped worms, but that night no runs were forthcoming. Gordon being plagued all night by small bream.

The following weekend Keith and I made the long trip up Yorkshire, determined to put an eel on the bank. We fished the other side of the lake, which was deeper as it happened, but again nothing but small bream took a fancy to our double lobworm baits.

The Saturday after saw Keith and myself once more at the lake, and again nothing.

I was beginning to doubt the validity of using groundbait, I even wondered if there were any eels in at all...the conditions we had fished in were ideal, text book in fact - warm, overcast nights. I remember thinking to myself at the time that it was far too early to make any rash judgments.

Seven days later we were back, and don't those journeys when you're catching now't seem to get longer and longer? Anyway, I went through the same tackling-up ritual as before, pretty standard set-up really - 11ft. F/T rods, pair of 300's loaded with 10lb. Maxima, straight through to two size 6's, double lob on both. I was using my old Heron's then...there's nostalgia for you....

Keith had brought along a few frozen baits with him, as well as the inevitable double lob he baited one rod with a small, whole gudgeon.

It was a lovely night, quite warm in fact, and as it drew on we sat there ..... waiting. Then at about 2a.m. Keith's buzzer burst into life, shattering the silence.

By the time I had made my way to his pitch, he was into a fish. I immediately sunk his landing net in readiness. Keith remarked that it felt like a pike, and with our excitement deflated, he played the fish to the net. It wasn't until I switched on the torch as the fish neared the net that we realised what it was, and then we were confronted by the unmistakable writhing of an eel.

Panic ensued and in an attempt to get the eel netted quickly the hook hold gave on its last attempt to gain freedom. I had put the eel around the 3lb. mark, so disappointed, of course, but it was overshadowed by the fact that we had at last made contact with an eel.

A quick tackle-change then found gudgeon half-bait in my swim.....

Just before dawn I had a screamer of a run and, hands shaking, not from the pre-dawn cold, but with excitement, went for the rod ..... the run stopped..... I struck, nothing. A recast with the same bait produced another fast run which was dropped, and later another run ended the same way. By now dawn was upon us and the runs ceased, so we packed, ready for the trip home, the conversation on the journey being obvious.

The following Tuesday couldn't come quick enough. It was my night off from work, and once more I was back at the lake, confident that deadbaits seemed to be the answer. I took no baits with me as the lake had an abundance of fry so they would be easy enough to catch. Ten minutes with the float rod saw me with a dozen baits all around the 3in. mark. These were ideal, for I had made the decision to strike as soon as possible on the first run, preferring to lose eels rather than have them swallow the bait - a decision I would adhere to, no matter how great the urge to put a fish on the bank.

The evening was perfect - warm, cloudy, with just a fine drizzle. I fished to the left of the swim I had fish previously, the weed not being as thick. I sunk the landing net ready, so as to have little to worry about if I got any eel near the bank.

I settled down under the broolly, baits already cast out - half-bait on one rod, whole bait on the other. I lit a cigarette, poured out a coffee and just sat there, at peace with the world.

At about 2a.m. I got a streaker of a run which ended with an eel of 3lb. 8oz. to say I was excited would be an understatement. I then went on to take what was then a personal best of 3lb. 14oz.

I was curious at the number of dropped runs I was getting, especially on half-bait. The runs on whole baits being far more productive. If I remember right, I had maybe a dozen runs that night.

When I unhooked the eels the hooks were well inside the mouth, a delayed strike could well have seen the hook out of sight, so I was glad I had stuck to my policy of hitting the runs straight away. Both eels were placed in a large sack until morning, when with the aid of my tripod took some photographs.

Dawn came all too soon, and recording the captures over, I headed for home. Two eels over 3 in the same session and one a personal best. I was well pleased, knowing also my success would be welcomed by Keith.

Four days later, June the 30th to be precise, found us once again at the lake, charged with enthusiasm for a repeat, maybe of the midweek session. I had ceased using groundbait in any swim I fished, relying on the pierced fresh baits to attract any feeding eels.

By now we were getting to know a little more about the lake, and extensive plumbing showed that we were in fact fishing the deepest part of the lake. Keith had made some special weed cutters and they proved a boon in disposing of the thick marginal weed. We found that our swims needed clearing from week to week.

The day had been very sunny, not a cloud in the sky, and inevitably the night had that chill to it. A pitch black backcloth with every star visible. The dusk feed had come and gone by now, so had the reliable one at 2a.m., but not a twitch.

Then, out of the blue, after what seemed an eternity, the silver paper on my nearest rod jumped an inch and then made its way slowly but steadily to the butt ring. I struck and immediately knew I was into a good fish.

During the ensuing fight the fish tail-walked twice, but I still couldn't see how big she was in the inky blackness. After a brief but very powerful fight, I got the upper hand and Keith put the net under what I knew was going to be a personal best, an eel well over 4lbs.

Upon landing I immediately cut the trace, and in the torchlight saw the head of what seemed a very large eel. It wasn't until I started feeling for the other end that I realised how long she was. I knew then it was a big fish, but how big? I lifted her up and placed her in the weighing bag, keeping her well away from the water's edge. I squinted at the needle on the scales, and in the torchlight it went over 4. I asked Keith to check it for me. To my amazement he said I must have misread it, and it had in fact recorded a weight, not over 4, but over 5..... I couldn't believe it.

I checked again, 5lb. 7oz. We then weighed her on Keith's Avons, again a weight over 5, 5lb. 7oz. exactly. I was elated. We then laid her on the wet grass and shone the torch full on her, she was truly a magnificent fish - perfect. The biggest eel I had ever seen in my life.

My elation was short-lived, however, turning to dismay on discover that the hook was nowhere to be seen. It appeared she had gorged the bait on the spot and then then decided to move off. I made no attempt to unhook her, hoping and praying the hook could still be attainable in the daylight. I placed her gently in my sack and slid her into the margins.

I could not fish after that, four hours she was inspected constantly, every hour she got worse, turning on her side in the sack and laying limp, showing no signs of recovery from her ordeal.

I was devastated -- my biggest eel ever and she was going to die on me.

The sun broke, and under normal circumstances it would have been welcome, but not today. It seemed her life was almost over. A fish no doubt older than me, ending her life prematurely. I felt totally responsible.

I now had to make a decision. Should I return her to suffer what seemed the inevitable fate, turning a blind eye to the fact that, after inspection later, the hook was well down the throat, or should I retain her to be set up. A decision I hope I never have to make again.

Keith tried to console me by saying that it was just one of those things, but no amount of consolation could repair the damage. How I wished I could have seen her swim away, back to her environment...an environment I had encroached upon, for one brief moment.

I pondered what to do for hours, then decided -- I had to take her home -- she would be set up, regardless of cost. It was the least I could do -- a fitting end it seemed to a fish of such beauty.

She was taken home in wet towels, and thanks to Keith, was stored in his freezer while I made arrangements on where best to take her.

I eventually took her all the way to London, on the train, and fetched back six weeks later. I had a cast made of her and the cast was then mounted on an oak veneer board. It was a perfect job and worth all the effort, time and money.

She is now a constant reminder of those happy hours I spent at the lake, an ambition I achieved, and the elations and disappointments that are a permanent part of angling.

FOOTNOTE: I later found out that the lake had suffered a fish-kill some years previous, and I believed then, as I do now, that the eels actually changed their feeding habits because of it. The heads of most of the eels in the lake were more equipped to deal with small food items, worms, maggots, etc., but these were ignored in favour of fish baits.

I also believe that was the reason they attained such a good average size, for it was very rare to catch one under 3lb. Another thing that was struck home to me was the fact that, if a swim received some considerable attention, then that swim went dead very quickly and it was wiser to move to another one. I proved that by fishing the 5 swim half a dozen times after and never had any runs at all.....

One last thing -- the lake had a huge population of the Ringed Mosquito -- and believe you me they were right evil little buggers. Keith will certainly bear me out on that one and so can I. They bit me so bad one night, I ended up in hospital -- but that's another story.....

STEWART McCOWAN

FRUSTRATION - PART 2

My Season 1983 by Brian Crawford

This is part two of the account of my season in 1983. Part one saw me fishing 13 sessions on a variety of waters including the new fishery at Boston called Fenland Fisheries.

I left part one during the early part of August as I was then taking my wife and teenage daughters off to North Cornwall for a couple of weeks camping - no fishing gear allowed.

The 20th August saw me settling in for my 14th session of the year, again at Boston, but this time on the 50 acre Pike Lake. Before fishing I had to spend about an hour dragging an opening in the dense weed. My swim faced the small island about 50 yards away. My intention was to put bolts in the margin either side of me, one in the channel to the island and one out to my right in open water about 75 yards away. Because of the dense weed I chose to fish my bolts suspended with a running float rig. All rods used deadbait sections. It was very hot, nil wind and cloud. For the bolts close in I added groundbait with all kinds of attractor and stimulator added to it. There was a full moon and it was a very pleasant night - unfortunately - no runs at all.

I returned to Boston again on the evening of 23rd August with Peter Stickland. This time we fished the water called Promentary Lake - so called because of several long fingers of land jutting out into the water. It looked very interesting, full of weedbeds and channels. There were also many small islands and sunken trees. The previous session I baited up a couple of swims as I left Pike Lake. This evening I fished one of them, peg 147. Pete fished peg 156. My swim was in a channel formed by the main bank and a small island and the end of a promentary. The water looked dark and promising. Pete fished from where a corner of the bank jutted out into the main lake. I added groundbait to the prebaited area. Pete's swim was full of small fish and he caught quite a few so we had fresh bolts. The wind was again very light to nil but now we had 100% cloud and it was very humid. Because my swim was narrow and overgrown I could only fish two rods with bolts in the channel. Pete had found a gravel bar amongst the weedbeds and put out a couple of bolts onto there. During the night the cloud cleared to reveal once more a full moon. As in my previous session I was fishing in about 5 feet of water, and once more no runs. Peter however, struck lucky, he had quite a few runs at regular intervals from the gravel bar, he missed a few but still finished with two eels at 1lb plus, one of 2:9 and one of 2:14.

Following this success, Peter, Dave Taylor and myself set up our stall on Promentary Lake again on the 25th August at 2000. They both fished from pegs 156 and 154, I moved opposite them to peg 85. After settling up my rods etc., as I tried to set my bank sticks into the water I found my peg was 1" soil on top of a massive piece of solid rock so I had to make do with a Heath Robinson type arrangement for my rods, one run and the whole thing looked like it would collapse. Once more, nil wind, very warm and a full moon. I fished with four rods, two with bolts on the bottom and two sub-surface covering most areas of a large bay, 5 foot deep and which was full of small fish. I had prebaited the area the season before. This session we all blanked. Life was getting more frustrating.

My session 17 saw me setting up my swim on peg 90 on Promentary Lake - I was convinced it held good eels. My companion this time on August 27th was Dave but he fished on Long Lake, peg 63, in a new area for us.

I again fished four rods spread out to cover much of the water, both sub-surface and the bottom. The weather continued as before and I expected we may be fishless again. This time however, it was Dave's turn to hit paydirt with regular runs in his swim, although fishing with several rods, most runs came to one rod where the bait was in a clear gravel area. He had eels of 1:13, 3:5, 2:6 and 1:0. Once more I had no runs at all until 0505, in daylight, the bait near a small island was taken by a 2:5 eel. I hoped my run of blanks was over but it demonstrated how useful changing swims or lakes could be.

My next session at Baston was on August 31st by myself. I changed lakes to peg 63, where Dave last fished. I spent quite a bit of time trying to find the successful area, frequently re-casting but it was no good. The weather was the same - so was my result - a blank.

Determined to succeed in peg 63, I returned again the next night, September 1st, the weather still continuing without change but this time I had more luck with an eel of 2:8 at 0455 on Lobworm.

My 20th session once more was on Long Lake but now I fancied peg 69 - anyway up. It was on a section of bank jutting out into Long Lake between a long side bank and Long Island itself and provided many areas to offer a bait. I cast one rod to my right, very close to the side bank, the other three rods spread out to my left, towards the island. All were ledgered using roach tails. At last the weather had changed. It was very windy, cloudy and cold. It was my best night for action on the lakes. I had 7 runs in all and missed 5 due to dense weed, either the eel dropped the bait after moving off or I snagged up in weed. The two eels I did manage to land were in a tangle of weed and the eels weighed 2:7 and 2:9. The runs occurred at regular intervals from 2130 until 0330, four of them to the rod to my right cast near the side bank.

For session 21 on September 17th, I moved round Long Lake to fish from the side bank I had been casting to in my last session, peg 72. Dave came with me and fish in his successful swim on Long Lake, peg 63. It absolutely poured down all night and almost blew a gale. Dave only had his brotly and was soaked through but happy with 2x1lb plus eels and 4 x 2lb plus eels - he had found that gravel bar again. Again I blanked. I was beginning to feel Dave and Pete jinxed me...

Session 22 - back to 69 but this time fish sections on sub-surface rigs. Three runs, two eels, 1:14 and 2:6. No Dave or Pete...

My last session for eels saw me back where I started at Baston, on Park Lake, peg 180. Four rods, all suspended baits and I was rewarded with my last eel on a small perch section at 0610 weighing 2:5. Again the weather was windy, cloudy and cold.

Thus concluded my 1983 season. I caught three 1lb plus eels, nine 2lb plus eels and two over three lbs, best 3:8.

However, I hope I learnt a lot about these new waters. With luck I may be able to start my eeling there during the close season and fish where I like before the weed beds grow again. I am looking forward to eel fishing in 1984.

As a postscript, the pike lake now had at least 10 pike in it over 20lb including at least two over 27lb. Unfortunately I have not been able to fish it seriously but you never know....

## The '84' Scene.

Well, at last I've finally managed to get finger out and put pen to paper. While reading the last edition of the Bulletin I made several decisions. The first and perhaps the most important being "NOT to mention last season". Having said this I think the best thing to do is to tell you all about last season. It started off on the 14th April with a monumental blank. After this really awe inspiring start I decided to ease the pressure off a bit, as we all know how quick these Eels catch on to hooks and things, once they've been caught a few times.

Anyway after this cooling off period I decided that it was time to crack down and hammer out a couple of six pounders. This I did but unfortunately due to the recession and the rising cost of food my six pounders turned the scales at 1:1, 1:8, 1:12. Well, I said to myself, we cant have everything our own way, can we.

At this stage, time had slipped by and I found myself in the middle of my final exams in college. After this slight upset I decided that it was time once again to show the world how it should be done. However, this time, me being the generous intelligent, macho, angling master that I undoubtedly am, I decided to share some of my all time successes with my foreign friend. The one and only Ernie Orme. In passing I might mention that Ernie is now a grand master in the famous Irish game of "dodge the crater" having passed with honours. This game is a more advanced version of the quaint old pastime of "dodge the pothole". The main difference being that the new revised version is carried out at a minimum of 50mph with a 12ft ditch on one side of the car and a 6ft deep canal on the other. It is strongly recommended that the passenger does not try to sup on his 110 degree C soup while the game is in progress as this will invariably lead to severe third degree burns in a most sensitive and important part of the body.

However, enough of Irish customs and back to the fish. We spent an unforgettable night on the Grand Canal - thankyou Ernie. Then as morning broke we decided to move camp nearer to Dublin after catching a large selection of Rudd, Roach, Perch, Skimmers and not to mention a couple of genuine Irish Bootlaces. Oh, I nearly forgot to mention that we didn't catch any six pounders that night. After much discussion and a good many cups of tea later we decided to try Ard Lough in Celbridge County Kildare. This small lake is renowned for its massive population of titanic Eels.

During the night and about 150 cups of tea later we had our first pure Irish bred specimen. A gargantuan - sorry - big 2:4 of hot bloody fury. As I unhooked it and put it in the keepnet, I could see that Ernie, who was at this stage gasping for joy, would not be able to stand much more of this excitement. What with his age and all that. Anyway, unfortunately his back started showing signs of the dreaded "Bend over syndrome", so we decided to head back home. In a matter of a few hours Ernie was on the boat home and I with a tear stained handkerchief in one hand and what was left of a hundred weight sack of tea in the other, turned and headed back for the warm comforts of my bed.

Its a great pity that I have to announce that this was the end of my season and vow to do better next time. Thanks to Ernie I now feel that I have the place sussed, what with a second opinion. Anyway I'm more confident and thats 90% of the battle.

Before I finish off, a reminder. The last article I wrote for the Bulletin was about the Irish Fish Lists. Since then there have been a few more big Eels caught. These are:- 6:4 Lough Naback Co. Cavan 4th July '82 Maggots

3:89	Kaats Strand Wexford	24th Oct. '82	Crab.
3:85	Aughrisbeg Lake Clifden	12th Sept. '82	Worms.
3:5	River Barrow	12th Sept '83	Worms.

So with that said I'll finish up by saying that if any of you want to fish Ireland give us a shout for information or accomodation.

Tight Lines.

STUART GREENE

### My Season 1983.

The first weekend of the season found my son and I on the big lake at Stanstead Abbots. I suppose our first priority was a bag of Tench but the Eel rods were brought into use just the same. Baits were difficult to get, even on an easy pond nearby and we had to use sections in order to make them last out. Not that we needed many as things turned out, for the water was its usual mean self. But we were happy to get a few Tench although even they were difficult, until we realised that they were shoaled up in very shallow water. With that discovery it became a fish at every cast. But again no Eel, ah well, perhaps next week.

The same tale applied that next weekend but with one heartening exception. When we arrived on the Friday evening a young man, fishing our swim, informed us that he had been broken several times on a large fish which he thought was a Carp. He had scaled up his tackle after each break and was now up to 11lb mono. Soon after 11pm he gave a yell, to the effect that he was into a big one. Micheal and I both went to watch the fight and I said to him "This is no Carp". Some twenty minutes later I was proved right when we netted an exhausted Eel of exactly 8lb. I expect that you can imagine how I felt, although it did something for my theory that the water did hold Eels - big ones too. The big Eel, I ought to mention, was taken on two maggots! In the daylight next morning we found no fewer than seven hooks in the mouth of the Eel. After much debate we managed to persuade the captor to return the fish. This we achieved after threatening to jump on the head of his largest Tench. Thus, the point was conceded.

After that we tried hard enough but apart from a twitchy run on whole Bleak while fishing at Ryemeads (probably one of the big Perch), the Eels were conspicuous by their absence. Then it was time for Micheal and myself to head for Shropshire and the Meree. Arriving quite early we never even looked at Whitemere but headed for Blakemere after a good breakfast and a spot of shopping. With enough food to satisfy the rest of the Anguilla Club for the whole season, a caseful of cigs and Mars bars all over the place, we soon settled in two likely looking swims. With all the gear set up and ready to go we turned our attention to the canal just behind us. Soon we were knocking out baits every few seconds or so and Micheal had his first Eel of the trip. It just went four-inches! We put the little thing in Blakemere and were now assured that at least the water held one Eel.

That night we both blanked although Micheal had one abortive run. During the next day, Ernie Orme and his son Simon arrived. We chatted all afternoon, then, after devouring great steaks, chips and peas we set up for an evening match on the canal. Old'uns versus the young'uns. The old'uns smashed the youngsters and I recall that Ernie did actually catch one. With the youngsters threatening to get revenge on the following evening we retired to our swims on Blakemere to start the nights Eel fishing. At 11.30 my right hand alarm sounded and I had a very fast run. Striking early, I was into a really lively Eel. Steve, from Steves Tackle Shop in Ellesmere was standing behind me and exclaimed "Bloody hell, whats that", as the line began to sing under the strain. "This", said I "is one hell of a good Eel". I was proved

when I netted the Eel, for it scaled just 3lb 4oz-but what a fighter. I had another fast run which stopped suddenly and that was the action for the night.

We fished our match again the next evening and the old'uns won again. I fished under some low branches and caught some Dace which Hampshire Avon anglers would have admired. That night I took another Eel which did not fight at all and scaled just under three pounds. Poor Micheal, he couldn't get a run at all. Even so, he was being trained in the ways of the Anguilla Club-manning the tea station, full time! After bidding Ernie and Simon farewell the following day we followed that up with another blank, after which it was time for a re-think. I went back to the car and nipped up the road to Whitemere. Oh, what a sight-crystal clear water with no sign of algae at all. Our gear was packed and after a spot of shopping (more Mars bars etc) we were soon at Whitemere.

I have learned a lot about Whitemere and it is now clear that if you get no action at night then you stand a good chance of Eels during the day, from 10am on. And so it was, two blank nights there but action during the day. Micheal had two Eels one of which, at 3lb 8oz, was his personal best. I took several to 3lb 10oz. All too soon it was time to head homeward but I looked forward to a return later in the year

Soon after arriving home we were stocking up for a further week long trip to fish a variety of waters. This was something of a bonus week for us and was made possible by the arrival of my daughter to stay with her mother for the week. We were determined not to look a gift horse in the mouth and with the success on the Meres to spur us on we were soon speeding towards those West London waters around Wraysbury which we have come to know quite well. A couple of Thames backwaters were also to receive our attention.

It was another glorious week, weatherwise, lounging lazily in the sun during the day and taking the occasional Tench but reserving ourselves mainly for the night fishing. We only used our bed-chairs to recline on during daylight, preferring to sit by the rods at night. A couple of dozen Eels to 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb was all we could muster from the grave pits along with a few nice Tench and several notable Bream. The two Thames backwaters we fished were delightful waters and once we had found out a little about them we managed several nice Barbel as well as Chub and good quality Roach. But we were there primarily for the Eels and at dusk turned our attention to that species with unholy glee.

Now I know from my experience on the Thames that Pilchard Oil injected baits work well, always with the proviso that there is at least a moderate flow. Alan Hawkins Dave Ball and myself had proved that if one bait out of several positioned at different points across the river was injected with Pilchard Oil, it would almost certainly be that bait which took the Eels. Our theory was that wandering Eels downstream would pick up the scent and follow it upstream to find the source. This was further illustrated by the fact that if all three of us were using injected bait the most downstream angler would take the most Eels. Often, they would be the only Eels taken.

I wanted to illustrate this to Micheal and it worked like magic. So well did it work that we had to keep swapping positions in order to give the other person a chance. Being a rather narrow stream meant that the Eels 'homed in' on the bait with deadly accuracy. The only way we took an Eel on a bait not injected was to place that bait immediately downstream of an injected one, when obviously the Eel following the trail of scent upstream would come to that bait first.

We took Eels regularly-until we ran out of Pilchard Oil. Then all the action ceased just like some joker had turned OFF a switch. But how could we complain, for hadn't everything been just about perfect. I'm certain that Micheal will remember it for a long time and the memory will stand him in good stead.

August came and went without anything about which I could write except that I was in daily dread of being made redundant and that doesn't help ones peace of mind. We took several more small Eels from a gravel pit at Wraysbury and a few late Tench from Stanstead Abbots. I put in several sessions at St Margarets on the River Lea but with the water levels going haywire, blanks were almost expected. The official reason for the fluctuating levels is given as the result of work being done to install land drainage pipes. But that work was completed in '82 and I feel sure that faulty Locks are to blame. If so, it could be a long term thing, bearing in mind the present financial restraints. I cannot think where the Eels have gone but they are not there now I'm sure.

By September the firm had made such a recovery that I was working overtime and at one time I feared that I might have to put off my September trip to the Meres-but all turned out O-k. I had nothing firm in my mind as to the length of my stay there but I had ten days in front of me, just in case the Eels were feeding!

September can be a magical month on the Shropshire Meres-or it can be a pain in the neck. My arrival at the water was not a happy one, for the water was green and fast becoming like Pea Soup. That is always a bad sign. Nor was I impressed by the comments of an angler who had been there for some time. I ought to have gone to Blakemere perhaps but I had told Ernie and Dave that they would find me at Whitemere, so I decided to make the best of it.

The wind blew very strongly although that in itself is by no means a bad thing on Whitemere and down came the rain in torrents. The only alarms worth putting up in those conditions were my grippers and I spent an hour in the car making sure they were in good order. Setting them up in a well known swim, I was highly amused by the morse code being sent out by the optonics employed by the other angler.

I had about three hundred of the best looking lobworms I have ever seen, all highly tuned and ready to go, so how could I fail. In any case, it just had to get better, (when will I learn). I found myself pining for midsummer and all those gorgeous lovelies on the boats, then hastily recalled that I'm supposed to be past such delights. After a couple of hours I wandered along to see Mr Morse Code. He complained bitterly about the conditions then said "Why aren't your alarms constantly sounding". I explained a little about my set up whereupon he hurried back to my swim to have a look. Within a few minutes he had paid me for a set of grippers on the promise that I would send some on my return home. After that, the morse code ceased as he had switched the things off.

I connected with a smallish Eel that night but it somehow came off and there was no more action. Conditions were the same at midday the following day, when Ernie arrived. Said Ernie "There's no way that I'm sitting out in this tonight", and that sums up what it was like. He departed the following day not even having got his rods out of the car. All the same, it was nice seeing him again by one of his favorite waters. The other angler packed up and headed for other waters and suddenly, I felt lost. I do not normally get like that and can fish for days on my own. But the fact that I could be fishing somewhere else bugged me and by the middle of that afternoon I was packed and headed homeward. I had intended going straight home to get a good nights sleep and would then probably head for the gravel pits at Wraysbury where I knew that I could find some shelter from the elements. However feeling very tired by the time I reached the M 1 I decided to stop off and take a look at the G.U. canal at Flore.

The canal looked perfect. The high winds were not reaching the water and there was no sign of boat traffic. How could I miss such an opportunity? Within an hour I was set up- no tiredness now as I looked forward to the dusk. Darkness came and I smoked and drank tea until midnight, then tiredness came over me again and I made myself

comfortable ready for a doze. I had only just dozed off when I was awakened by the left hand alarm. "This was it", said I full of expectation but when I got to the rod I found a king size Vole inspecting my line. He scurried off and left me cursing all Voles and vowing to always carry my Air Rifle.

No sooner had I returned to settle down when the alarm sounded again, continuously. "Curse that bloody rodent", I muttered as I took my time reaching the rod. But this time it really was action, with line pouring from the spool. After checking that I knew where the net was, I struck and was immediately into a good fish. It wasn't a mad fight although every now and then he reminded me that he had no intention of leaving the canal. I slowly retrieved line and remember being surprised at the amount of line he had taken. Soon he was safely in the landing net. With the Eel transferred to the keepnet I started to rebait but was interrupted when the other alarm sounded. Line was leaving the spool at a fair pace so I closed and tightened. In reply there were a couple of powerful lunges-then all went solid. Sad to say that the Eel had found a snag right in the middle of the canal and after a lot of heaving and twitching the line parted, abraided for some length from where it had parted. And that was that for the night. At 7am I weighed my Eel and was very pleased when it scaled 4lb 2oz. My first 'four' of the season.

It was to prove to be my only 'four', and try as I may in the next few days I could not get a run at all. The middle of October came and I decided to give it best. After that we had a few sessions for Roach on the River Lea at Hartford. Most were blanks but we both were rewarded with some excellent fish, the best of which tipped the scales at 2lb 4oz. Which brings me up to date.

Nothing spectacular but I have known worse seasons and I think that we both thoroughly enjoyed season '83. I don't think that I learned a lot but we did re-prove the theory of injected baits on rivers. If there was one thing I missed apart from a few more 'fours' and a couple of heavenly bodies waking me in the small hours, it was the non-appearance of our Bulletin. Not being on the phone (at that time) it was virtually my contact with the rest of you and with what you were doing. And sadly it was missing. Yet another lesson with regard to our worst enemy, APATHY. 1983 closes with my vowing that I will do all I can to see the Bulletin return to its former glory. Hence this dribble-but I do not apologise, except to Alan who has to type the whole thing.

ARTHUR SUTTON.

#### Chairmans Page.

I hope that you all arrived home safely after our meeting at the Falconers at Daventry on the 18th March. Considering the long journey that everyone has to make to attend, I have always been very impressed by the response that the Club gets to its two meetings each year. The impression I got was that everybody enjoyed the meeting, and I hope that as a result of our discussions the activities of the Club can gain some momentum.

I was pleased to see our recent associate member, Phil Smith, at the meeting and I he has applied for full membership of the Club. It can only be of benefit to the Club for an angler of his quality to be associated with us. Stuart Greene again made the long journey from Ireland to be present at the meeting, and I really feel that the Club needs to return the compliment by organising a party to go across to Ireland to fish with him. On the journey down to Daventry from the north, and on the way back, I had a good opportunity to discuss the Eel-fishing prospects with Stuart and to put it mildly, the Eel-fishing potential is untapped. I am hoping to get over to Ireland in September for a long week-end with Ernie Orms, and I hope that this will be a useful way of doing some scouting work for a fuu-blown Club outing to Ireland in 1985. Members will remember that when Stuart applied for

membership, we were all very interested in the information he gave out about Eel fishing in Ireland, and a number of people expressed interest in travelling over to Ireland. I think such a visit is long overdue.

I trust that our long discussions concerning the Bulletin will result in Alan Mitchell receiving sufficient articles for the Bulletin to be issued regularly and by this I mean at least once every six weeks. By the time you read this article a Bulletin will be ready for issue, but I think we should work on the basis of having at least 3 Bulletins in stock. By the time of the Annual General Meeting in November every Full and Provisional Member should have written at least one article for the Bulletin and I will be wanting an explanation from those who have not felt able to contribute in that way.

I hope the weather warms up shortly so that I can get in my first Eel-fishing sessions of 1964. As usual I intend to start on the local canals and as the weather gets warmer move on to the still waters, which if my preparations goes according to plan should be to some extent, baited in readiness for the fishing.

I hope that those members that attended the British Angling Conference at Nottingham University found it informative and enjoyable and made sure that the National Anguilla Club prominent. It must place a great strain upon Brian being the Chairman of N.A.S.A. at such a prestigious event and I am sure that everyone in the Club appreciates the hard work that Brian puts in in the work that he does for angling in general and N.A.S.A. in particular.

I am making enquiries with the British Field Sports Society's Headquarters in London to see if it would be possible for the National Anguilla Club to join the Society as a corporate body. This was touched on at the Spring meeting and I did not note that anyone had any strong objection to being connected with the British Field Sports Society. If anyone has any comments for, or against, such a connection perhaps they would like to contact me or more properly air their views in the pages of the Bulletin.

Finally, could I welcome our new provisional member Kevin Stephenson into the fold. I hope that his association with the Club is long and fruitful and that we will be able to offer him full membership should he feel that this would be worthwhile.

MARK DAVIES.

#### My Trip To The Library.

While off work recently I went to my local Library, which is only a matter of one hundred yards from my home. After looking up the usual dirty words in the dictionary I wandered over to the fishing section. This was my first trip to the library for years. The books contained in this section were mainly game, sea and Mr Crabtree.

One book there did catch my eye, it was called "More About Angling", by John Piper. It contained articles from the Anglers Mail. It was published in 1974 and is worth a read. It contains lots of short stories and strange tales. One of them I have copied out. It may be of interest, it may not, so here goes.

If ever a Specimen Group proved the value of its expert knowledge it was the National Anguilla Club back in 1967. But for their efforts, and those of Dr T Coulson in particular, a Conger might now hold the freshwater Eel record. The record fish committee of those days had only to satisfy itself that the fish in question was an Eel. What sort of Eel was never considered-you don't expect a 9lb Conger to turn up in the Grand Union Canal. But that is exactly what happened.

Two young anglers from Luton claimed the capture and it would seem that when the fish was sent for examination someone opened the box, said "Oh, yes, that's an Eel", and promptly shut the lid. Fortunately, Terry Coulson followed up the press reports and was given permission to remove the Ear Stones or Otiliths in order to check the age of the fish. The one stone he took from the skull of that Eel made him pause a while and check other points of identification.

"What struck me forcibly at this point", he wrote later, "was that the Otiliths bore little resemblance to any of the Anguilla (ie. freshwater Eel) Otiliths I have handled, so I examined the carcass more closely, and the conclusion I came to seemed so incredible that I thought I had best hold my council until I had cross-checked the facts. Next day, I studied the reference books and confirmed what I had suspected, that the Eel was not Anguilla but Conger.

That check involved Terry in three main points of identification, the jaws, the scales and the fins. You do not have to be a biologist to do the same thing yourself if you ever have to identify an Eel.

In Congers the upper jaw protrudes beyond the lower jaw at the tip of the snout. One can imagine the fish rising slightly from the bottom and bearing down on its prey. By contrast, the freshwater Eel seems better equipped to take its food from below, the lower jaw protruding quite distinctly beyond the upper jaw.

As to the scales, Conger have none at all. Scrape the skin with a knife and there is virtually no resistance. Do the same thing with a freshwater Eel and you not only see scales, you feel them.

In the freshwater species the pectoral fins, immediately behind the head, are rounded at the extreme edge. The Congers pectoral fin tapers almost to a point. Had the Grand Union fish been a true Anguilla, the dorsal fin would have started some way back from the hind edge of the pectorals-a clearly defined gap between those two points. In fact, the dorsal started almost immediately above the pectoral fin, a sure-fire pointer to its correct identification.

So there you go, now you know. I have now found another book on Eels. It is called wait for it, 'Eels', a natural and unnatural history. I have yet to read this book, but it looks quite interesting.

Bob Layland.

Editors note:- Nice one Bob, this sort of item makes a nice change. One thing I have learned from this article is that the Record Fish Committee don't change do they!

IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU .  
.....

A.J.SUTTON.

1. An elderly angler named Orme  
Was, sadly, losing his form  
He perceived a notion  
To partake a potion  
To restore him to somewhere near 'norm'.
2. A reward for his patience was earned  
As sex drive and vigour returned  
Nothing safe far or near  
He was into top gear  
All thoughts of senility spurned.
3. Expecting great things he soon feels  
A desire to go angling for eels  
So, feeling so fine  
He purchased some line  
To load on his rusty old reels.
4. He worked out a carefully laid plan  
Packed tonic wine and Fortisan  
Then lugging his gear  
Down to Whitemere  
A two week long session began.
5. And so this Anguilla Club squire  
Soon realised a long felt desire  
Before long had passed  
The eels came thick and fast  
And the record was soon under fire.
6. Now without further ado  
Ernie's dream really came true  
And soon in his creel  
Was a sixteen pound eel  
Plus or minus the odd dram or two.
7. The Mail and the Times were soon there  
To cover this exciting affair  
Many people were told  
Before the news got cold  
One of whom was the Ellesmere Mayor
8. Now the Mayor in regalia so grand  
A public holiday planned  
And down to the scene sent the Carnival Queen  
Sent the Carnival Queen  
The most beautiful maid in the land.
9. Said she "The Mayor must do things right  
And has asked me to stay for the night  
This I'll willingly do  
I so want to please you  
And am sure that I will - before light.
10. Ernie foresaw the end of his quest  
And eagerly stripped to his vest  
When with a splutter and cough  
The potion wore off  
And he fled home to Runcorn - to rest.

CLOSE SEASON EEL FISHING IN THE NORTH WEST - THE END OF AN ERA.

Since time immemorial, even before the creation of our present water authorities anglers have fished in the area now controlled by the North west Water Authority for eels, and more importantly, have done so during the normal coarse - fishing close season, i.e. the 14th. March to the 16th. June. This privilege has now been ended by the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food giving formal approval to proposed Bye-Laws first advertised in the North west Water Authority area in 1982.

On Saturday the 31st. March I attended a meeting of the Mersey and Weaver Anglers Consultative Association which is a body which deals with matters concerning fishing and fisheries in the Old Mersey and Weaver river Board Authority area, which is now the Mersey and Weaver Area of the North West Water Authority.

On my way to the meeting I had stopped to purchase a North West Water rod-licence as I intended to commence my eel fishing in the close season in the area covered by the North West Water Authority. I noticed on the licence that although it indicated that close-season eel fishing was allowed, any persons who were proposing to fish should consult the water authority as there was an imminent change in the Bye-Laws. At the meeting I questioned a Mr. Newton a fisheries officer for the Mersey and Weaver Division, who informed me that the Bye-Law had been formally approved by the Minister of Agriculture, Food & Fisheries.

How could it be that this bye-law was brought into effect without any objection. I had first had it drawn to my attention by Briar Crawford who was informed of the proposals by the staff of the Angling Times. By the time I had had an opportunity to write to the North West Water Authority, which I did on the 28th. January 1982, the time limit for objections had long since expired as they should have been lodged with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food by the 20th. December 1981. The North West Water Authority, as by law they were obliged to, had advertised the proposed bye-laws in the local press and in the National Angling press, but they did not go to any great lengths to make the notices prominent, and myself and many other specialist anglers knew nothing of the proposals until it was too late.

I had heard a rumour in May 1981 that the North West Water

(2)

Authority were considering amending the bye-laws and had written to the Regional Fisheries Officer, Mr. J.D.Kelsall indicating that if any changes were proposed I would wish to make representations in a personal capacity and on behalf of the National Anguilla Club and the National Association of Specialist Anglers. I did not have the courtesy of a reply to that letter and was never given any prior warning of the proposed change in the bye-laws.

My purpose in writing this article is not simply to draw to members attention the situation that now exists in the North West, but to ask all members in their own areas to be alert as to what could very easily take place in other Water Authority areas without their knowledge. The work of the Club, the then National Association of Specialist Anglers and Brian Crawford at the public enquiry at Boston, Lincs in May 1977 shows what can be achieved by successful lobbying. As a result of that enquiry the Anglia Water Authority were not able to implement their plans to end close-season eel fishing, although of course they did manage to restrict it in other ways.

It now appears that the only water authority areas that we can legitimately fish for eels in the close season is in the following water authority areas:-

Anglian (with special restrictions)

Severn/Trent

South West,

Northumbrian,

Welsh (Gwynedd, Dee & Clywd, Wye and Husk river divisions)

So in 5 of the 10 water authority areas, in some cases with certain restrictions we can legitimately fish in the close season for eels.

Why should the North West Water Authority have felt it necessary to bring in bye-laws to prevent close-season eel fishing?

Well, it goes without saying that the privilege was being abused. Anglers were fishing in waters where it was highly unlikely that eels could have entered naturally. The area I am thinking of in particular is that within the catchment area of the River Mersey and its tributaries. This river system is so polluted that there would be no prospect of an eel run. Despite there being little or no eel fishing in Greater Manchester,

Merseyside and Central Lancashire, the eel fishing in the rest of the North West Water Authority area which covers an area from the border with Scotland in the North around Carlisle to the Shropshire/Cheshire border in the South, ~~the eel fishing in many other areas~~ was reasonable to good, so a very worthwhile concession has been lost.

It must be said that very few of the angling clubs in the North West were in favour of the privilege of close-season eel fishing and this perhaps has a lot to do with the lack of objection to the bye-laws. Almost without exception; angling clubs made specific rules to stop their members fishing for eels in the close-season, and this coupled with a night fishing ban made legitimate eel fishing difficult to find. The Shropshire Union Canal Angling Association which is an amalgamation of large angling clubs, set up to control the fishing on the Shropshire Union Canal throughout its full length, that is to say the main stretch between Ellesmere Port to the south of Market Drayton, the Llangollen arm, and the Middlewich Branch specifically states that not only is close-season eel fishing not allowed, but that no night fishing is allowed. If followed to the letter this would mean that it would not be worth fishing on the Shropshire Union Canal for eels at all, as it is only during the close season that the boat traffic is light enough to allow fishing during the day, and during the season the boat traffic is so heavy that the only period when you are able to fish is during the hours of darkness, (and even darkness does not deter the more enthusiastic sailors).

The maps included in this article will indicate how this will affect eel fishing on the canals in the area, which is usually the most profitable form of close - season eel angling.

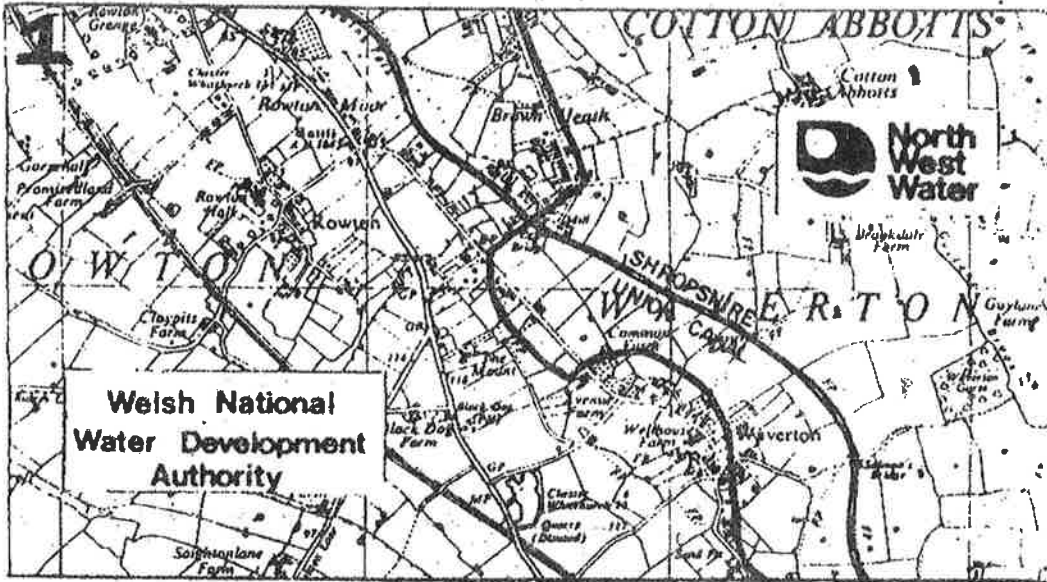
Map 1. shows that if the Shropshire Union Canal Angling Association allowed it, one could fish for eels in the Shropshire Union Canal just south of Chester, North of Chester and a few miles north of Whitchurch and south of Market Drayton.

You may ask what I am intending to do about my close-season eel fishing. I have available in the area south of Chester some good quality but hard fishing in the Lakes controlled by Stoke on Trent Angling Association (who should be well-known to members as a result of what I would call the 'Colemere Incident') and fishing south of Market Drayton on the Shropshire

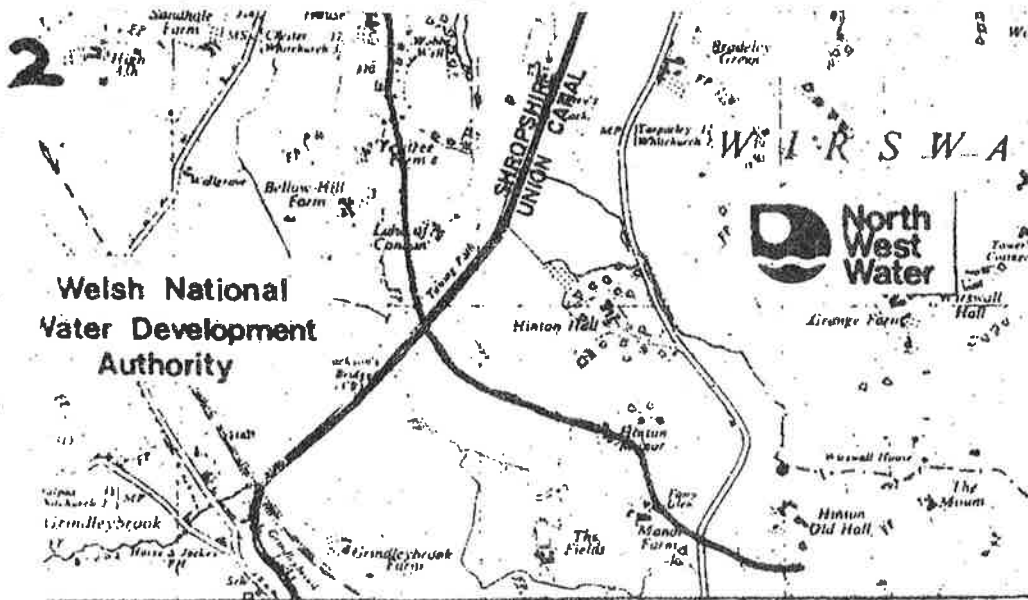
(4)

Union Canal ignoring of course the controlling clubs ban on close-season eel fishing and night fishing. It should be said, that with all its faults the Stoke Club allows eel fishing on all its waters where eel fishing is permitted by the Water Authorities, and it is the only club that I have come into contact which has a well thought out fisheries management policy for all its waters. I hope to be fishing on the Shropshire Union Canal and also venturing into the Severn/Trent Water Authority area to fish on the Severn, and also on the River Vyrnwy, which as far as I am aware has received little attention from serious eel anglers. I hope that the next article I write for the Bulletin gives an account of a successful expedition fishing for eels during the close-season.

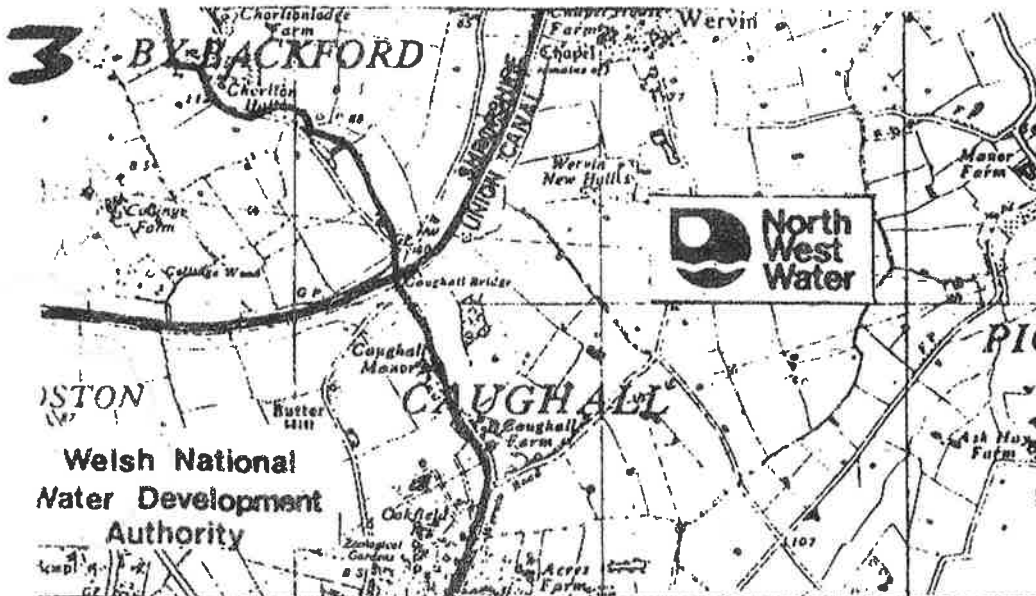
In conclusion could I suggest that all members of the National Anguilla Club who live in areas where they are allowed to fish during the close-season for eels, contact their local water authority and ask them if there are any proposals to bring in bye-laws to end this privilege. If you are a member of an anglers consultative association raise the question at the next meeting and ask the Secretary of the association to write to the Water Authority on this topic.



Canal crossing of Authority boundary at Egg Bridge, Chester



Canal crossing of Authority boundary at Whitchurch



CANAL CROSSING OF AUTHORITY BOUNDARY AT CAUGHALL BRIDGE