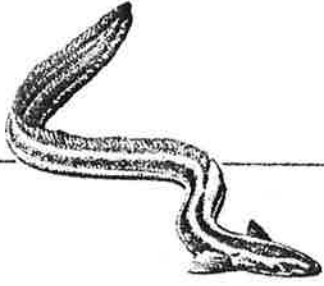


20:2 (1983)



The National Anguilla Club

---

# BULLETIN

C O N T E N T S

VOL: 20

No 2.

PAGES

Chairmans Page.....	Mark Davies.	1
Four Taste (Part one).....	Dave Walker.	2 - 4
Bullterus Anguilla.....	Tony Mills.	4 - 6
Story of a 7.8 Eel - With Apologies to Dave Holman.....	Brian Crawford.	7
Ghosty Ghoulies and Things That Go Bump...Alan Mitchell.		8 - 9
The 1982 Season or How Not to - Set a Good Example.....	Mark Davies	9 - 11

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE.

Mark Davies..

For the first time since I joined the club in 1979 I had to drive down to Daventry alone as Dave Holman was unable to attend due to work commitments and poor old Ernie Orme was laid up in Warrington General Hospital with a slipped disc. Although I missed the company, I was rewarded by yet another enjoyable meeting. I hope all the members and those that were accepted as provisional members enjoyed the day and it will be the start of a long and a happy association with the club for them. I am sure they will find that membership is rewarding in that we are a friendly group who are always trying to improve our methods and our catches. As I tried to make clear at the meeting we expect all members to contribute articles for the bulletin and it is now a condition of membership that all members provide an article for the bulletin based on their seasons Eel fishing. Members reading the reports of Dave Holman and Stewart McGowan in the last bulletin will get a good idea of how to write such an article,

I was very sad to learn of Arthur Smith's resignation as I am sure all members who know Arthur were. However, I hope that this will not mean the end of Arthur's connection with the club and that he will take up the offer of associate membership as was suggested. I was very pleased to hear that Arthur is fishing regularly with his old pal Clive Houghton and that he has no intention of giving up Eel fishing. I know that Arthur Smith will be reading this edition of the bulletin and future bulletins I hope so, so could I ask him to keep in touch. I'm sure the club trips would be much the worse for his non-attendance so here's hoping that we see you at Chase Water for the spring trip and Emberton Park in the summer.

I hope those members that attend the British Angling Conference enjoyed it and learnt a lot and promoted the interest of the Nation Anguilla Club as we would expect of them. As I mentioned at the meeting, Brian Crawford is now the National Education and Development Officer for the National Anglers Council in the eastern region and I'm sure we are the only Specimen Group who can boast two N.A.C. officials. Let us hope that the involvement of myself and Brian in the N.A.C. proves to be of benefit to the National Anguilla Club. Brian has had to attract a number of young members into the club as he is getting too old to carry his own fishing tackle!

Our Membership Secretary, Mr. Hollerbach, was looking very fit and prosperous at the meeting and I'm sure all members would wish him well for the future now that it seems his luck is changing. The kind offer of help from Tony in supplying paper for the bulletin and the assistance offered by Tony Mills was very much appreciated and as we were aware from the treasurer's report, without such assistance producing the bulletin can be a very costly item. Arthur Sutton, as we all know, has made a considerable contribution to the running of the club in this respect.

Returning to our old friend Ernie Orme, I paid him a visit in Hospital the other night and he was in high spirits expecting to be discharged fairly shortly. He has been using "insulting and abusive" language to the nursing staff and other patients and was placed in solitary confinement. He was in traction and had great lead weights on ropes attached to his legs and his chief concern was being able to fit these on his bedchair when he comes out fishing with me shortly. I passed on the good wishes of the members and suggested to him that his sojourn would be a good opportunity for him to write articles for the bulletin. He muttered something which did not seem like enthusiasm and said he was going to see about getting a supply of forceps and syringes for the coming season. By the time you have read this I hope to have wheeled Mr Orme down the banks of the Shropshire Union Canal for some occupational therapy.

My appetite is getting wetted for the forthcoming campaign and I cannot wait for the weather to get warm enough to go out fishing. After my poor season in 1982, I hope to make amends in 1983 now that my new firm has got off the ground. Should anyone want to ring me at my office please feel free to do so, the number is 061 832 8844.

I can't think of anything else to say so remember, get your priorities right, enjoy yourselves first, then catch some good fish, hopefully both elements will come together.

PART 1

Close Season phone calls are often full of expectation and none more so than the one I received in late April from my great pal Bill Walford from Kent. It transpired that Bill and his wife had attended the Dartford & Dist A.C dinner and dance the previous night and had been seated on a table with Gerry Savage and his wife. Conversation flowed along with the music, food and plenty of Ale, the result being, Bill found out that there was two tickets remaining for the coming season, on Gerry's lake at stone in Kent. If I was quick enough in phoning Gerry then one of the tickets was mine. Well, quick wasn't the word, as smoke poured from the Dial I prayed that Gerry would be at home... he was and I was IN! A cheque was dispatched as fast as the Post Office would allow and after five years pestering, bribery and waiting, I was finally going to fish Cotton Farm. Surely, one of the finest Eel fisheries in the country.

The rest of the Close Season was spent in preparing mentally, for a water where I could actually catch Eels, something I had sadly lacked in previous Seasons. I also spent a lot of time congratulating and encouraging Tony Mills, who was whopping out Eels like nobodies business, including his first four pounder.

Then as it usually does the 15th crept up on me and I was already in my car negotiating the traffic through the Dartford Tunnel. Once clear of the Tunnel I panicked and remembered that it had been 3 or 4 years since I had been to the Lake and couldn't recognise the road I was on. Would I ever find the Lake before Midnight? Stationary on the side of the road I realized that on previous visits I had approached the Lake from the South, no wonder I didn't know where I was! Proceeding along the main road I crossed a junction and did a 'U' turn (in the middle of the A 2) and returned to the road I had recognised at the junction, I turned Northwards to Stone Village. Now I knew where I was. The car park in the Lane was only occupied by four other cars I knew roughly where I wanted to fish and after depositing my mountain of pataphenalia in the swim, I went for a walk, immediately bumping into an old mate I hadn't seen for some time. Lee Jackson and his friend Micky Sly were very informative about the fishing in general and especially about the Eels. They advised me to move and fish in the North West corner but I decided to give my chosen swim at least one night of my three nights stay..

Midnight came and two Rudd sections flew out into the inky blackness. Twenty past midnight and I was nice and comfy, just ready for the first brew of the Season when an Alarm rudely interrupted my thoughts. An indicator flew up and stopped about one foot short of dropping off the needle. I was pretty rusty and didn't move off my chair, I just sat there and peered through the darkness as the indicator slowly rocked up and down on the needle. Gently it rose up and hovered again about an inch from dropping free. This time I was kneeling by the rod and removing the bobbin. The line shot forward immediately and poured from the spool in a classic fast run.

Well this was the sort of start to the Season that I dared not contemplate, a run after only twenty minutes and on a water that produces lot's of 4's & 5's. Fortunately my strike only met with minimal resistance and a smallish Eel was now battling it out far away in the Lake. I doubt if my system could have coped with a real cruncher of an Eel so early in the Season. When I netted a fish of 11b 13oz I knew that it was going to be a very rewarding Season in terms of quantity if not quality.

The first Eel of the Season is always a good fish even if it's only a few ounces. I was rather pleased with this Eel as it proved I was on the right water to produce plenty of fish, if not monsters. The problem of Cotton Farm was now to plague me for the next couple of hours as I had at least 20 short sharp pulls and tugs.

Only one of these progressed into a proper run and I missed that screamer anyway! About 03.30 it all went quiet and I settled back to have a cuppa and some grub. At 04.00 my second rod, which had produced my Eel exploded into life and a tail section of a Rudd was taken by an express train of a fish. Suffice to say I missed it, I normally do when I'm just tucking into boiling hot Meatballs and manage to put a large spoonfull into my unsuspecting mouth, in a hurry. 04.30 saw another run come my way, again on rod 2. This time however it was a slower, more cautious affair, after a lot of stopping and starting it finally ran steadily but slowly away into the gathering daylight. The strike met with a good tug and much head shaking out in the depths. Now I was starting to enjoy the 82 Season as I slipped the net under a definite two pounder and lifted it up the steep bank. On the scales it went 2lb 3oz and was in perfect condition. Both Eels had been hooked cleanly in the bottom jaw and unhooking was simplicity it's-self.

After this fish, came the most frustrating hours Eel fishing I have ever experienced. Between 04.55 and 05.55 I managed to miss four good runs, at 04.55, 05.20, 05.45 and 05.55. The first one was a real belter on a Rudd tail, the second, a slow, very steady run on a middle section bait. The next, another on a tail and the final one, a long steady run on a Rudd head section. These takes were interspersed with a series of short sharp takes and very slow, long pulls.

It is worth mentioning here that Cotton Farm is a nineteen acre gravel pit that was excavated about thirty years ago. It has a rather interesting ecology. The water depth averages 10-11ft, the whole pit is fairly barren in terms of weed beds but is fairly rich in free-swimming crustaceans, ie shrimp ect. There are only a few mussel beds but they are quite dense and very localised. The fish tend to move around very easily and can crop up in almost any area of the lake. The stock is basically made up of many thousands of Perch, (hence the short missed runs and the major problem when Eeling) quite a large head of Roach going up to nearly 3lb and the quite inevitable Carp, as the Lake is in Kent. The Pike population is healthy with many doubles and a top captured fish of 29 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. The Eel population is vast and ranges from fish of about a pound to at least one authentic 7 pounder, I personally believe there are bigger Eels as there is certainly a very large head of fish in the 5lb range. This has been proved by the fact that nearly all the resident Carp anglers have caught at least one 5lb'er with quite a few of them having landed a 6! There is also a small head of large Tench which have been caught to 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb in recent years. The Crucians appear very rarely but are usually over 2lb when they do. The pit is underfished by S.E England standards with only 22 swims around it's nineteen acres. It also has a tendency to be very windy and only affords cover on it's Southern bank. This side being a virtual sheer cliff some 40ft high with trees and bushes growing from it, the only swims on the Southern bank are to be found at the base of this cliff. The rest of the Lake is open-banked and rather sparse of good undergrowth.

One o'clock in the afternoon of the 16th I started fishing again and by 14.50 added another Eel to my total albeit a littl'un of 1lb 2oz, on Mackerel strip 17.40 in the early evening and I missed a slow run again on Mackerel. Several Perch hung themselves on my baits until it again became real Eeling time. Darkness arrived and settled but my world was silent, as nothing touched my baits and no runs came. Not even the troublesome Perch seemed hungry. The rain that had started around 19.00 petered out around midnight, within twenty minutes the Perch started to give their characteristic little indications. The bobbins jumped and jiggled on the needles. Suddenly one of the bobbins flew up and fell with a small plop into the water. A 12oz Perch was the cause and was treated to a few true blue expletives for my skipped heart beats.

Attention was now concentrated on the indicators as I sat only two feet from my rods on a ground sheet. Several bait changes were needed as the Perch raged but at 01.45 rod two hissed to life and line screamed from the spool as an Eel fled from god knows what. It had no intention of staying where it had found my middle section of Rudd

My rather violent strike didn't seem to alter it's path one iota. This was a much more powerful fish and I soon realised that Cotten Farm Eels of specimen size were no slouchers as this one was fighting like hell. All the way to the net my arm was being jarred by fierce lunges and the second attempt was successful when netting, what was obviously a good Eel. Neatly hooked in the bottom lip my prize weighed in at 3lb 0oz and was  $35\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$  a very pleasing capture for my first visit to a new water. Boy was I having a good start to the 82 season.

My third night produced my first dropped runs and two missed one's, Only one Eel came to my landing net and a strange beast it was too. At 1lb 12oz it was neither particularly small or large but it possessed the broad head of a four pounder and was very short for it's weight. It looked for all the world, in silhouette like a small catfish, such was the size of it's mouth. All the third nights action was on the native Perch and it posed an interesting problem. The Perch as baits seemed to cut down the attention from their living brethren. The Eels however are a bit cagey when picking them up. Live-baits or whole deadbait may be the answer but my next trip to Cotton Farm would have to prove this as I now returned home. The opening of the season well and truly heralded.

I now gave Eeling a rest for a few weeks and although I wanted to return to Cotton Farm I was drawn to an unbelievable water close to home, in north east London. Hollow Ponds is just about the most unattractive water I've ever fished. It smells, is like a rubbish dump, with litter of all sorts covering not only the banks but much of the bottom and the Islands as well. With an average depth of only four feet it resembles a great stagnant puddle. Despite all these features the Hollows ten acres of water supports an unbelievable number of fish. The many Islands and irregular secure a safe haven for the fish at most times should they need it. The water holds a vast population of Tench, Roach, Pike and Bream all of which reach specimen size, a few Crucians, Perch and the odd Carp and Rudd survive here also. The Eels are not as rare as in other waters in the area but it has to be remembered that during the first six weeks of the season you are lucky to find a spare swim, day or night, weekday or weekend. The fascination of the Eels is that they are present in good numbers and have grown to such a size that they draw me to this virtual sewer, like a pin to a magnet.

Thus on the 10th of July I was to fish a session on a water that had already produced a six and two five pounders since the start of the season. My love affair with the Hollows was about to start. I chose a swim in the 'back bay' near one of the islands and settled in just before dark. I had no runs but as if to tempt me back a nearby angler landed whilst Tench fishing, a fine Eel of 4lb 03oz. Bait was lobworms, float-fished only 30ft out. I thought on the way home that maybe the Hollows was going to be the water that finally gave me a four pounder. This was going to be my Season and after six years I just knew I was on the brink of breaking the most difficult barrier in Eeling.

The trouble was I didn't know just how close!!! To be continued.....

Dave Walker

#### "BULLTERUS ANGUILLA"

After reading Dave Holmans report in the last Bulletin, mine seems a little thin but I blame Dave Walker entirely.

My 1982 Season started on the 26th March at a venue remembered from my match fishing days in the late sixty's early seventy's.

Those were the days of 30lb of bread crumb (none of your sophisticated French crap)  $\frac{1}{2}$  a gallon of Casters,  $\frac{1}{2}$  a gallon of Squatts, whack it in and wait for the slabs to arrive. They did sometimes, lots of times for Ivan Marks and friends but normally it was the odd skimmer, small Roach and the much dreaded "WONKIE". Yes dear old A Anguilla certainly knew how to sort out 1.8 main line, 11lb hook lengths and size 20s. A  $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb Eel fought like hell and it's antics, if you landed it made "Hot Gossip" look like old grannies.

In those days Eels were not game for the matchmen so they were invariably shaken off. Looking at match reports today, they fish for them! Weigh them in and even win with them, one well known team, the ABC won a leg of last years Captain Morgan on the Chelmer with Eels. Deliberately fishing for them!

My tackle consists of,  $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb Fast Taper Rods, 10 or 8lb Sylcast, Zebco 154 closed face reels (ye gods, the cry goes up, he's a'lboney) 15lb wire traces. Hook sizes and types varie although I seemed to prefer the stiletto towards the end of the Season. As the Anglian Water Authority insist on sea baits, it had to be Spratts and I was a little surprised at how successful they proved to be.

My first trip produced Eels of 1.8, 2.2, 2.6, 1.4, 1.6, 1.4 all falling to Spratt dipped in Pilchard Oil.

Trips 2 and 3 produced nine more Eels including two weighing in at 3.5 and 3.2. All the fish were short fat with big heads, in fact they reminded me of my old Bull-Terrier Grip.

Trip 4 came on the 4th April, 2nd run and wallop "Jesus Christ Mother" it was like hitting a submerged trolley bus. When it finally arrived at the net, it looked en enormous. The first Eel of the day only weighed 1.6 and this Eel weighed in at 4.2. I'm sure it barked at me as I slipped it back. I was absolutely elated with my first 4 and driving home I had time to think about the capture. The only thing that stuck in my mind was it's head, big fat and ugly, it looked as if it had done 10 rounds with Henry Cooper, still beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Trips 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 produced a total of 15 Eels, nothing big but with 5 over 2lb I was well pleased. The rest were small but in these sessions I had been experimenting with various groundbaits and additives. Rabbit guts, chicken offal, minced spratts and herring meal, kit-kat, pilchards and an additive given to me by a friend. As of yet my conclusions are mixed, it definately draws Eels as I proved on more than one occasion. This particular occasion, 4hrs had seen no runs or twitches, which for this pitch was uncanny. I put in 6 balls of minced Spratts, Pilchard Oil and wholemeal flour as a binder 30yds from the bank, within 25 minutes I had 2 Eels on the bank. Not big but I'm convinced it was the groundbait that attracted them. I did find on sessions 9 and 10 I had to change to nylon traces and very small hooks. AS wire only produced twitches and I had fished this pit very heavily, I presumed the pressure was taking affect.

Trips 11, 12, 13 produced only five Eels, one falling to luncheon meat on a Carp/Eel trip. Although it did weigh 2.15 I would have been happier if it had taken the  $\frac{1}{2}$  deadbait on offer.

Trip 14 proved to be a total disaster, cloudy, cold and the water looked like oxtail soup, I can only presume they had been pumping. I tried a subsurface rig and two rods on the bottom. 12hrs later I wished I'd gone down the pub. My first blank and I felt a little sick as I drove home.

Trip 15 back to Cambridge a little apprehensive, having blanked on the previous trip. On arriving I fished the same swim as trip 14, not too deep,  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft max, adead tree 25yds to the left, a small island to my right. I put 500 chopped lobs mixed with emulsified pilchard oil, minced spratts and whole meal flour as a binder. The result

2 Eels to the lobworms, 2 to half fresh killed deadbaits dunked in the emulsified pilchard oil. I missed 5 runs on lobs, 2 on deadbaits. The Eels weighed 1.1, 2.5, 2.7, 1.5 I had regained my lost confidence and drifted home quite satisfied.

Trip 16, 13.7.82 unlucky for some but as I was to find my best trip so far. Hatfield Forest Lakes have a reputation for big Carp, Tench, Pike and thousands of small Roach. I had fished the water as a match practice venue, by feeding floating Caster and fishing a greased line 18-20lb of roach was a comfortable target in 3-4hrs. Having talked to both the previous Baliffs the topic of Eels obviously arose and to my amazement stories of big Eels plus one found dead in the margins weighing 9lb 6oz. The trip was an impulse bad day at work, so nip off early. I arrived at 3pm caught 20 or so Roach and set up 3 Eel rods, I decided to fish at the end of the dam wall 2'-18" some margin weed a dead tree, it looked about right. I fished lobworm on 2 rods, 1 on deadbait dunked in my emulsified additive. At twenty past twelve rod one's buzzer blipped, an Eel of 2.1 went into my net. 3am, an Eel of 1.8 joined it. Nothing to write home about but the water holds fish. At 3.20am rod 3 fishing a four ounce deadbait murmured into life. As I stood over the rod I almost had a premonition this was it. 1 min, 2 mins, nothing. I turned to return to my bed, wallop, a butt ringer, buzzer screaming and line leaving the spool as if it were attached to Concorde. I picked up the rod and slammed it back. I've landed some fairly good fish in my life but the fight that followed left me shagged out and that's being polite! Minutes passed and seemed like hours as I pumped the fish towards me "Get it in the net you dope, you're on your own". Scrambling up the wall it felt like I'd just had a knee trembler from a certain young lady behind the school bike sheds. I grabbed the light "Kinell" shaking like a leaf. I gently unhooked it, I dropped it in my dustbin bag 5lb 10ozs "You've been drinking", I said aloud. My only regret is that my 'Yashkamat' 2 1/2 camera was being repaired, I had it witnessed by a dear old lady walking her dog. She was convinced I was a looney and had stolen a Python from the Zoo. I had another fish of 3lb 10oz at 5am and lost 2 ggd fish on the tree, I personally think this water has great potential and am certainly going to give it several long sessions in 1983.

Trips 17 and 18 in Cambridge produced 5 fish 1.6, 1.12, 2.15, 2.12 and 1.14 all to lobworm fished in conjunction with my new additive added to a little breadcrumb for binding and feeding.

Trip 19 was a blunder, Eels of 3.6, 3.5, 3.15 2.6 1.4 2.8 all to 1/2 tail Roach dunked in my special. I fished size 8 hooks to 15lb platted nylon traces, the reason being twitches in the early part of the session didn't develop.

Trip 20, I fished a new pit, a little late in the season it produced only one Eel for me. 1.12 to a 3inch whole deadbait, Nigel Perrin, now a provisional member had one of 2lb. This pit looks very easy so we are going to fish it heavily next season. One thing I did notice, both fish were very short, fat and had enormous heads, and when they take a bait, they are butt slammers.

Trip 21, back to Hatfield Forest still full of confidence from my previous trip. I blanked, too late in the season, the temperature dropped so much I had to kip in the car. Still there's always next year.

My first season has been superb I've learnt a lot talking to various members and with my experiments with groundbaits and my new found gunge I hope to write an article for the next Bulletin.

Tony (Lurcher) Mills.

STORY OF A 7:8 EEL - WITH APOLOGIES TO DAVE HOLMAN!

I was very pleased when Dave Holman caught his 7:8 eel as it was a just reward for a great angler who puts in an awful lot of time, effort and thought into his fishing. His successes have not just been with big eels but with big fish of just about every other species, in fact I wouldn't be surprised if he did not hold the Club record for most species of fish.

However, there I was, just before the end of the season, in March, thinking (I can sometimes) Daves' eel was the best reported for the 1982/83 season when in the Angling Times Top Ten, March 9th 1983, I read 7:8 eel caught on sprat from Coate Water by Swindon angler Matthew Hopes. Well, there was food for thought. I rang up Rod Barrowman of A.T. for Matthews address and when Rod told me Matthew was a 14 year old lad I was a bit suspicious.

However I wrote to Matthew asking for details of this fantastic catch and a couple of days later I received his reply.

He gave full details of the capture, a couple of photographs, the eel was weighed on two sets of scales with four witnesses, including the bailiff of the water, Coate Water Country Park. The names and telephone numbers were enclosed.

The details were as follows;

Matthew and a friend had gone to Coate Water for a days piking. Matthew had a 8½' pier rod, Mitchel 300 and 8.2bs line tied to a size 8 Jardine 'snap tackle, no weights or floats. A whole sprat was the bait to be fished sink and draw.

There was a 9' margin of ice around the lake with clear water extending from the 9' to about 25 - 30 yards. They had been fishing various swims and arrived at this one which had a small overflow running into it. Matthew cast out about 20 yards and allowed the sprat to sink to the bottom. He began to reel in but all went solid. After a struggle the eel was landed, unhooked, weighed and returned.

A story that should give you much food for thought, particularly remembering the 7:14 eel caught by Ian Mann from Earlswood in December on a small livebait several years ago. Perhaps we ought to seriously consider sessions for eels on selected waters during the winter and certainly when the end of a season is near.

It may be interesting to hear members views on these winter big eels and the numbers of very big eels caught during the day including of course the record 11:2 eel. Are these just 'freak' captures that we should ignore or should we be looking for a logical explanation that will be of use to our own pursuit of big eels.....

In conclusion, let me wish all of you every success for 1983.

Brian Crawford

## GHOSTY GHOULIES AND THINGS THAT GO BUMP!

As you know I didn't Eel fish last season. This was due at first to work commitments and latterly to ill health. The club <sup>wants</sup> everyone to contribute an article about their seasons successes, well I could include a blank sheet but instead I will tell you a little story about something that happened last November.

If you are sitting comfortably I will begin.....

My firm landed a contract to supply a filtration plant for Retford Sports Centre in Nottinghamshire. To those who don't know the area it's situated approx 12 miles from Arthur Smiths abode. Needless to say, Arthur kindly invited me to call round and spend the evening, in fact it turned out that I spent all my evenings with Mr & Mrs Smith, it was a nice change to have somewhere to go when I'm away from home. Those evenings were great, thanks Arthur!

My accomadation was booked in advance, I was to stay in a 15th Century Coaching House called The White Hart. I arrived on site at about 4.00pm had a quick look round and then headed for the Hotel. After settling in I phoned Arthur and he invited me to come around 8.00pm. I had my evening meal and then drove to Rossington. The evening was a mixture of rod building fishing ect. When I finally said my goodnights and headed back it was after midnight. When I reached the Hotel I went to bed and crashed out.

As with all these jobs things weren't going too well during the first day, in fact I was glad to be back in the Hotel by 5.30pm. I had a wash, shave and read the paper and went to have dinner. As Arthur had asked me back for a second evening (he must be a gluten for punishment) I again drove to Rossington. Another pleasant evening and I travelled back, it was now the early hours of the morning. I dived into bed and fell asleep almost at once.

I must have been asleep for perhaps an hour. Suddenly I woke, it was freezing, then I was in a split second warm again. I sat up turned on the lamp, nothing! I lay for perhaps twenty minutes when I felt a freezing cold sensation cross my chest. I was also aware of a very pungent odour, like stale flowers. The hair on the back of my neck and head was bristling, I very nearly S--- myself! I got up crossed the room put the main central light on. The smell had gone as quickly as it had come, now nothing. I was by now not feeling too clever, I turned off the light and got back into bed and lay there for some time until I finally dropped off again. Some time later something woke me again. This time the smell was accompanied by a hollow rasping sound (like a cat trying to vomit). I flew out of bed, the light was on in a second. The noise was coming or seemed to be coming from the centre of the bed, the smell was very strong. I stood looking at the bed for a good 2 minutes while the noise continued. It stopped and as I stood there the cold sensation went through me or rather passed by me, it was like being sprinkled with fresh fallen snow. It was suddenly quiet and the smell had gone.

I looked at the clock, it was 6.30, breakfast was at 7.00 thank christ! The days work went well, it was 5.45 when I returned to the Hotel. I thought "How can I broach the subject of the previous nights happenings, without looking stupid". When the receptionist asked how I found my room ect I said casually "Actually, my company did book a single room. I didn't expect to have to share". She looked up a very serious expression on her face and see said "Oh no, not again", she already had an inkling of what I meant. She told me there had been quite a few strange goings on only the week before a guest had booked in for one night and had gone to bed early. While reading in bed the table lamp suddenly lifted off the table and hovered in mid-air. He left without waiting for a refund. She asked if I would like to change rooms, not wanting to appear a cissy I said "No thats alright". Bloody hell what a hero now I was stuck in that room again.

After my visit to Arthur during the evening, I returned, by christ I was scared. I got into bed and finally fell asleep. Breakfast and then off to work. Another fairly good day.

The evening passed all too quickly, when I got into bed I thought please don't come again tonight. My silent prayers were ignored as the cold sensations and smells came and went quite a few times during the night, I was petrified.

The Friday night was uneventful and also my last, I was however to return a couple of weeks later to commission the plant. This time I had a different room.

Before this lot happened I would have laughed at anyone who thought Ghosts were real. Not anymore. I made enquiries about the White Hart and it appears that several hundred years ago a young house maid was in love with one of the long distance coachmen. After he had jilted her she ran out as he was leaving to try to make up and was trampled by the horses in an archway directly under the room I was in. As I had no prior knowledge of this what so ever the hair on my neck did a double take when I heard this. The landlady insists there are no such things as Ghosts, however she refuses to go upstairs to the top landing after dark.

I know this has nothing to do with Eel fishing but when you're out in the dark waiting for that next run, remember this little story it will help to keep you on your toes.

Alan Mitchell.

#### THE 1982 SEASON OR HOW NOT TO SET A GOOD EXAMPLE.

As my Eel fishing season was not outstanding to say the least the minimum I can do is to put down in writing precisely when I did go fishing and to reveal my sins to the whole membership, who I'm sure went out fishing more than I did and caught more Eel's.

First the facts. My diary records that I went out fishing for Eel's on eight occasions and caught two bootlaces. My largest Eel which probably just about made three quarters of a pound was caught on Luncheon Meat when I was fishing for Barbel on the river Severn. What went wrong? Any helpful and constructive advice would be appreciated if members care to write to me.

The season began on the 4th April on the Shropshire Union Canal at Victoria Wharf just outside Market Drayton in Shropshire. This was the spot that both Dave Holman and myself thought had great potential for specimen Eel's in that it had certain features that naturally would harbour fish. Perminantly moored on the opposite bank two or three long boats which attract small fish and so accordingly would attract Eel's which would feed on them. The night was very dull, with the moon being overcast and there was a slight breeze, the water temperature remained constant at 50°F whilst the air temperature was at it's lowest, 53°F. Four rods were set up, two using A.J.S. alarms and two with Optonic alarms. Rod one had a live Crucian carp fished approximately two feet off the bottom, rod two was a legered single lob, rod three was a free lined dead Crucian Carp and rod four was a legered double lob worm. Rods two and three were fished right on the edge, practically underneath the Long Boats whilst rods one and four were fished at either end of the line of Long Boats. The Towpath in this area is very popular for people taking an evening stroll and it was not very eventful with just one bootlace being caught on a single lob at 10 pm. This about one hour after the towpath at last be coming quiet. However, it was very early in the season and the fact that I caught an Eel at all gave me some hope of better things.

After my trip to Victoria Wharf the weather got somewhat colder and it was not until the 18th April that I felt confident enough with the weather conditions to go out fishing again. On that date I travelled to the Prees Arm of the Shropshire Union Canal which is between Wem and Whitchurch, this is an offshoot of the main branch of the Shropshire Union Canal and disused for most of it's length, however, where I chose to fish was in the Black Prince Marina which is at the end of the navigable stretch. It is an ideal spot to fish in that there is little or no through boat traffic and there is plenty of cover for the fish amongst the boats and stages. Although it produced only one small Eel, I still feel it holds great potential and propose to fish there during 1983. The night was moonlit and clear and with no breeze and as a result, the air temperature dropped to 40°F although the water temperature remained constant at 54°F. The rods were set up as before except that pilchard oil was added to the Crucian Carp deadbait. Many pulls and twitches were experienced on the worm rods but only one very small Eel was caught. This Marina is absolutely full of natural food and I'm sure is home to many large specimens.

The 24th of April saw me fishing during the day at Hurlesdon Reservoir near Nantwich, in company with Dave Holman and his son Martin, the club that controls the water allows close season Eel fishing and a number of good quality fish have been caught from the water. Two rods were used, one with a small Gudgeon deadbait and a swim feeder, and the other with a legered single lobworm. Although one or two boot laces were caught I had a blank. The end of May saw me once again at the Black Prince Marina although on this occasion I had persuaded Dave Holman to accompany me and whilst I set up in the main Marina, Dave chose to fish a little way up the disused Canal which I must admit looked very promising, however, the weather conditions determined that we were not to catch any fish.

Every year, usually in the early part of the season, Dave and myself fish on the Shropshire Union Canal and ever year without fail, we decide to go out fishing on what is probably the worst night of the year. On this occasion we experienced gale force winds, showers and quite a severe frost if one can believe that all those weather conditions could happen within the space of eight hours. So consequently where as I should have been hovering over my rods waiting for the merest twitch, I had some hot soup, got into my sleeping bag and the trusty car cover did the rest. I didn't catch any fish as I said but I had a fairly good nights sleep.

On the 9th of May, I decided that I would sample the delights of Bolesworth Lake which is a water where the Three Counties Specimen Group have had a number of fish over seven pounds from. After driving at break-neck speed to the water I was very surprised to see no-one else fishing, I checked on my club book to see when the season had opened. It hadn't. As members will be aware, the club I am referring to who controls the water has committee meetings which make the Nuremburg Trials sound like a cosy chat. Not wishing to get yet another "conviction" I again drove at break-neck speed and went to Colemere, one of the Ellesmere lakes where close season Eel fishing is allowed. I managed to get to the water and set up my pitch just as it was getting dark but with the hurried preparation I had not expected to catch fish and I didn't. This is however is a water that is very much under exploited all around and I feel has as much potential if not more than any other of the Ellesmere Lakes.

Further trips to Bolesworth Castle Lake on the 27th May and 6th June produced plenty of Carp, Tench, Rudd and Roach but no Eel's. The lake is very long and narrow and has had a lot of Eel fishing pressure in the past which I feel has resulted in a rapid decline in the Eel fishing. I have fished there on many occasions since I was admitted as a member of the S.S. but have yet to catch an Eel and have only had one run.

Dave Holman has given an adequate outline of our unfortunate experiences at Marbury Mere over the 16th and 17th of June. Needless to say I am not impressed by the attitude of some so called specimen hunters or of well heeled old ladies who do not appreciate my musical talents, for the sake of accuracy Mr. Holman I do not play a

small accordian but a concertina.

Besides the accident while Barbel fishing late in the season, that was the end of my Eel fishing for 1982, I'd started fishing very early on and was so disappointed about the first proper session of the coarse fishing season that my enthusiasm had gone, I was pleased to see that Dave's hadn't and that he went on to catch that superb specimen which gave him the trophy for the best Eel of 1982.

A two week holiday in Greece during August in effect put me out of action fishing wise for about a month and although I had good catches of both Bream and Tench from a water within half a mile of my home after that, I neither had the time nor the inclination to put in the required effort after Eel's.

The moral of this tale perhaps is that one should not put one's efforts in very early on in the season so that you do not have the keen's when the season starts proper.

Ernie Orme and myself have agreed to share a blank or two during 1983, however, I would be hard pressed indeed not to catch more Eel's during 1983 than I did during 1982.

Please don't give up, I'm not going to.

Mark Davies.