



The National Anguilla Club

# BULLETIN

NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB BULLETIN

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David P. Walker

EDITOR

## EDITORIAL

Wow what a job I've taken on here. Recently whilst producing the Newsletter I discovered that I had no lead for the duplicator and so had to operate it manually, which was probably a godsend because the duplicator screen broke while I was on the first page of the Newsletter and two of the stencils split and had to be re-typed. I also think it's about time the Club thought along the lines of investing in a new, or at least more upto date, typewriter. Still thats enough of my problems.

Now it's moan time.....If you the members don't write something for this bulletin then expect the Anguilla Club to suddenly get a darn sight richer, because I shall sell the scanner, duplicator and all, as for Club purposes they will be redundant. This dos'nt apply to Mark and John, without whom the rest of you lazy bastards would have nothing to read! Get the message.....if not then I suggest you leave the Anguilla Club and go and be a burden on someone else.

If my memory serves me correctly, about 3 years ago it became a condition of membership that everyone wrote an article about their previous seasons eeling for inclusion in the bulletin. Had this been enforced then I think the Club would be down to about three members if that, sobering thought eh!

On a brighter note I received a christmas card from Arthur Smith and his wife and I understand from Ernie that he is keeping well and looking forward to his retirement, good on yer Arthur.

As editor I will be wielding the proverbial editorial chopper as I see Fit on the copy received and shall even return articles that I feel are unsuitable for the bulletin. That is if you lot bother to write any.

As we are all NASA members (if you've paid your subs) then I would draw your attention to the regional structure of the association and the various meetings held all over the country. I often think that a visit to these great social occasions ghelps to get the old adrenalin flowing and always makes me want to get the old rods out. I think that some of our problems in the Club stem from a lack of will to go and sit on the bank waiting for that eel to come along, and I think that a visit to one of these regional meetings would help to re-kindle a few members fires. Think about it and go along, at least you can get drunk with some fellow anglers who know what a size 2 looks like. If you are interested in finding out about your local NASA region then contact, Steve Bowers, 12 Machin Road, Erdington, B'ham. Tel. 021 350 0825

One final thing for this time round WRITE AN ARTICLE.....

DPW

PRESIDENTS PAGE.

It is a belated but nonetheless sincere New Year greeting that I extend to all our members. I do sincerely hope the year ahead will be a good one, both eelwise and Clubwise.

Your new committee members got off to a rather slow start, although that was to be expected with a much bigger change in committee than we have ever had before. To those who wrote asking 'where the hell is the Newsletter' I apologise for its late appearance at a time when it was needed. All I can do is to keep a watchful eye open to ensure that it does not happen again. I fully expect that once the new committee gets under way it will show us what it is made of.

So, what's old Suttons resolution this time? Well, I have been forced to resolve never to smoke again. True, I may every so often celebrate with the odd cogar which someone else might pay for. But honestly, I had not realised just how bad I was getting until my son chose a venue which required quite a long walk with all our tackle. Oh, how I suffered. I arrived at the swim several minutes after Michael, grunting panting and wishing that we were carrying oxygen instead of groundbait. It has only been a matter of three weeks since my last smoke but already I can say that I do feel fitter and can run for the train which I so often missed previously.

The big river Lea roach have so far eluded us this winter, although we always did favour February and March as the best time. All we have managed is the odd trout which, although nice to see, is not what we are after. Michael has taken to the roach pole rather better than I did when I started using one. Of course, they are a LITTLE lighter now than the Sowerbutts weapon I once owned. I hope he gets as much enjoyment from the pole as I have done over the years.

Its always delightful to be able to say that you have a NEW water to try in the coming Summer and Autumn, yet that is once again the case with Michael and I. We know little of the eel fishing potential, but floods regularly connect it to a river which itself does carry a fair head of eels. A bailiff hooked what is described as a very big eel on two lobworms intended for tench, just two seasons ago. He lost the fish after five minutes. The water does produce outsize versions of most species except carp, although like most big fish waters the fishing is far from easy. This year we will not put all our eggs in one basket, but intend going to an easier water as a relief. With my taking early retirement in March the plan is for me to visit the water several times each week to bait up and get a hot spot going. I will bear in mind Dave Holmans philosophy about attracting other fish to the swim and getting them actively feeding there.

Last summer I did it again, I caught a good sized tench on a dead bait. Most anglers look at me in total disbelief when I tell them of this, and yet it happens to me nearly every season. This time the tench scaled just over seven pounds and was taken on a five inch dead roach.

To those of you who have queried it, dont be put off by John Sidleys latest piece on the Anguilla Club. If you enjoy catching two pound eels on those waters available to you and in the time you can allot to that pursuit, then by all means carry on doing so and may the pleasure never diminish. John is quite wrong to envisage a standard of achievement for all based solely on his own achievement and the amount of time he has been able to devote to eel fishing. Were I able to spend such extended times in pursuit of eels I would naturally expect to do much better than I do now. And based on the success I have enjoyed in the limited time available, that means I would expect to do far better than John has done. But we all know that one cannot take logic to such conclusions. I do not envy John his success or deny him his personal disdain for anything under four pounds. All I ask of him, please, is to appreciate the other chaps position whether it be in relation to the time he can spend on those waters available to him, or relative to the sort of sport he wants from whichever water he fishes.

I am looking forward to giving my talk at the NASA Conference, and I would like to see a few of the Anguilla Club lads there in support. Fight Lines to you all in 1986.

CHAIRMANS PAGE

I phoned Dave Walker the other night, just to see how he was coping with the worry of having to sort out the bulletin for the first time. I finished up being badgered into providing this Chairmans page as soon as possible. (Fine old state of affairs when a poor editor has to chase his chairman for copy! ED)

More power to your elbow Dave. He's already bemoaning the lack of material for the following issue !!

Thats where you lot come in.....

Bob is looking for items for the newsletter also, any little snippets or bits of information that may be of interest. Tackle for sale , fish captures of any species or tasty bits of gossip!

Keep both of them busy and they will find their jobs a great deal easier and more enjoyable, and you will all benefit from regular Newsletters and Bulletins.

Before going any further, I would like to record once again my personal thanks and the thanks of the Club to both Brian and Mark for the very great deal of work they have both done for and on behalf of the Club in the years they have served as members of the Committee. Without doubt they have both, by their efforts, ensured a sound future for the Anguilla Club.

It is up to all of us to ensure that those efforts will not be wasted.

I hope that both of them will be able to sit back and enjoy the fruits of someone elses labour now, and get a bit more fishing done when the opportunity presents itself. Good luck and tight lines to both of you. Thank You...

As was discussed at the AGM we would do well to recruit more new members than we have done of late. I don't want to see a free for all, but if we anyone gets the opportunity to do a bit of PR work then do so, (regional NASA meetings are the perfect place. ED) or if you know anyone who might be Club material as it were, a bit of prompting or a nudge in the right direction might not go amiss. Dave has sent out application forms and answered membership enquiries from a lot of people in the last year or so, but thus far there has been little worthwhile comeback. Hopefully we will hear more from some of these enquiries in due course, but we should not sit back and let Dave deal with all of the recruitment. If you get the chance, try a bit of gentle coercion.

Thats enough of my ramblings for now. Doubtless I'll have a lot more to say in the coming months, but what I have to say will be greatly influenced by the effort you lot make!

THINK ABOUT IT.

Terry Jefferson      Chairman

## PARTING COMMENTS

Despite the atrocious weather conditions Ernie Orme and myself experienced on our journey to and from the recent AGM, we thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and felt sure that the club had come to some sound decisions which would ensure a healthy future for it.

Could I take this opportunity to wish Terry Jefferson and the rest of the club officers the best of luck. I am confident there will be an upturn in the club's affairs. As I hoped I made clear in both my Chairman's pages and at the meeting, I felt a fresh face, in the Chairman's job would have a beneficial effect. In Terry Jefferson's Case you have selected the right man. He is an excellent angler, has been in the club for many years and what's more has shown himself to be an intelligent and efficient organiser. As you know he was secretary for a good period and has lately made an excellent job of organising the session reporting scheme.

Could I make one suggestion to all club members. Nothing is more frustrating and unrewarding than a club Chairman who has to constantly nag at members in an attempt to grind them into action, This, especially in the last two years, has caused me some annoyance and detracted greatly from my enjoyment of being club Chairman. Let's all start off by putting pen to paper to make sure that we have plenty of material for the Bulletin so do your bit (and that includes you Ernie!).

Despite what has been said by John Sidley, we have every right to be proud of our Bulletin. For such a small group (confirmed by the AGM attendance) to produce a regular magazine is some achievement.

I felt that a great weight was taken from my shoulders when I was relieved of the Chairman's job. I felt that I can do more good for the club from my position as an ordinary member. I will do as much as I can by contributing to the Bulletin and going out fishing to make the club a success again. Although at the moment I can't see myself doing a great deal of eel fishing, I will still be out next season. I have now done most of the major work on my house so I should have a little more time in 1986. Dave Walker and Ernie Orme both made the point at the AGM, that not everyone is able to make the same amount of effort year after year. Ernie now feels he has done his bit, whilst Dave luckily, has been able to get out and do more fishing. Circumstances change and the club should be flexible enough to accomodate all types of eel anglers.

Finally I wish to thank you all for your support during my period as Chairman. Please support Terry and the other club officers don't hesitate to contact them if you wish to have your views known.

I hope that I haven't given you the impression that I am leaving the club. You'll be stuck with me for many more years to come.

Mark Davies

## THE WAY TO A NEW RECORD EEL ?

I suppose one must start this feature by saying that if more anglers spent more time fishing for big eels a clearer picture could be gained on the number of big eels present in our waterways. I, for one, am quite sure there are more eels over and above the 8lb weight bracket swimming around than we care to give credit for. I am also convinced eels well into double figures are present, eels that would smash the present 11 lb 2oz record by a clear nine pounds or more!

It seems that today's specimen anglers are now showing a greater interest in the big eel scene, this can be seen by the interest shown in the BEAC. If all the anglers who had shown interest in the club had joined since its formation in May 1980 it would be well over 400 strong. My own Put Eels Back campaign which started in 1976 has shown that there is a growing interest in big eels and their conservation, the stickers sent out over the years bearing the Put Eels Back slogan has totaled many thousands, and I'm proud to say it is still going strong. The eel has at long last gained the respect it has been denied for so many years. The repeat captures each season of known carp, tench, bream, pike and catfish with some even having 'pet names', does not offer a challenge to many of today's up and coming big fish anglers, some seek that challenge and have now turned to the big eel scene to find it.

The only problem facing the aspiring big eel angler is where one starts in the search for those truly monster eels, for me to advise on this subject would, in detail, take more room than this mag could offer, those interested can find more information in my own book on eels.

The type of water that any record fish has been taken from is usually unique in one form or another, they can be found by using scientific means ie. P.H. level, etc. But do these scientific means tell the angler anything, I think not, for I have never heard of anyone analysing the water contents of the venues which have produced those very big eels, then putting these findings together to try and establish a common factor in why those waters have produced those big fish. Even if someone was to attempt it the many years gap between the captures of record eels would make it impossible to be accurate as an analysis would have to had been made at the time of capture. What makes other waters so unique is that when a big eel is taken from a venue it usually comes as a big shock to all, for it is normally a water that everybody would have least expected it to come from, a fine example being the present record venue, Kingfisher Lake, not even rated as an eel water until wallop.. a record!

So where does the eel angler go in search of that really big eel, my choice would be to seek out those very old still waters. As eels have a very slow growth rate, waters that gave good access in the early stages of life but more difficult later on are ideal. A water that is rich enough to sustain a potential record breaker from its early stages which has not been polluted during its long existence, or drained or never yet been fished for eels is a first class bet.

For big eels survive on neglect as do most other big fish species, this has been proved on our large trout waters where coarse fishing has never been allowed the fish grow to record proportions, the eel is no exception. (remember Greystone..Ed). A water that has been eel trapped should be avoided like the plague, although a big eel could avoid being netted, your chances of catching any really big eels from these waters are greatly reduced to say the least. The south and the midlands are the best areas to go in search of those big eels, as one travels north big eels become very thin on the ground, the prolonged winters I feel are the main factor for the shortage of big eels in the north, plus the main elver runs being in the rivers in the south so the eels find their new homes mainly in the south. Also the winters can go on for two months longer in the north making the eels less active feeders than their southern cousins who may be able to feed for much longer.

Daytime and winter eeling has long been looked upon as taboo by eel anglers, but one only has to look at the occasional very big eel taken by pike anglers to realise that we should be showing much more interest in eel fishing in the daytime in winter. I feel that the very prolonged mild spells are when the pike should be forgotten and we should head for those big eel waters, despite the fact that these are just the conditions under which the pike also feed well, but are you an eel angler or a pike angler? I'm going to give it a go during the coming seasons, who else is?

I now turn to baits. These last few years many anglers have been trying all kinds of food items including carp baits, amino acids, sea fish, squid, dead birds, you name it it's been tried, yet those big eels still fall to the humble lobworm or dead fish. Myself I will stick to the four or five lobs, or section deadbait, for they have proved very rewarding for me over the years, and who can argue with 27 over 5lb, 6 over 6lb, 3 over 7lb and an 8lb'er. Yet there is an area that must be looked into in more depth, do the eels we catch on, say lobs, learn to know that a lob is a danger to them, can these eels pass onto other eels in the lake that the worms are a danger. If so then this would explain why we never see the big eels caught again on the waters we fish, for once returned those big eels do a disappearing act, could this also explain why we never catch those big eels that are in our waters that either show up dead or are trapped, how have they avoided capture by us? For we have all fished the type of water I'm on about, many of us putting in years of hard fishing on these venues for no reward. Do these eels know, have they been hooked when younger say on worm, and being very slow growers could they remember longer that a certain bait is a danger, it happens in the carp world, so why not with eels? Do we in fact have to be one step in front of the eels bait wise? If an eel has been hooked in a certain area of a water will it avoid ever coming into the area again, can the eel sense that that part of the lake is a danger to it, if yes this would explain why swims die a death after a few successful stints.



Does every eel caught leave the water and search for pastures new, wher it has not been harned? This may seem all a bit far fetched but we all say the same, those big eels just go, but where? I do not believe that they all die as some eel anglers say, I know this is not true for I have kept many deep hooked and lip hooked eels at my home, in my pond and bath, and they have survived the ordeal of being captured. I feel that if we can find out more about baits for eels then those very big fish (8lb plus) will start falling to our rods, perhaps even those double figure eels that I know are out there, how do I know? Well if you had seen the eel I lost at Earlswood Lakes on the same night that i took my 7lb Ioz then you to would believe in the fact that there are a few doubles swimming around out there, and Steve Terry's fish was not such a fluke!

Exactly waht is needed to get these really big eels onto our scales is still a mystery to me, but the eel is a very mysterious fish, even today all is not known about it, the eel still baffles the best of scientists. I surpuse if we it all we would not bother, this is what makes eeling os interesting, the shear challange, and at long last the angling world is waking up to the fact.

Apart from baits and venues for the capture of really big eels new rigs are coming onto the scene. One being the sub-surface rig where live baits, deads and worms are fished just under the surface in deep water, a fair few eels are being taken using this method, but as yet those big eels have not come to these rigs. If the big 5's, 6's and 7's started to show in numbers then I would join these lads "on the top", but as yet no one has claimed great eels using the rigs so I will stick with my methods, maybe I'm getting to old to change my ways, but good luck to the lads who are trying. Eel fishing methods have stood still for too long, it's about time new methods and areas were tried, it worked well in the carp fishing world , why not in eel fishing, I wish you all the luck in the world lads prove me wrong.

To explain the full chances of a record eel would mean having to write a book, sadly in the bulletin there is not enough room to say all one needs to on the subject. I hope I have put forward a little insight into the world of really big eels and I hope one day to stand up at a conference and speak, I have been asked but as yet I have declined, only because I'm scared stiff to have to stand up in front of such a large audience and speak. I think I'd rather have sex with the Mrs, and that scares me to death, or worse still go fishing with Dave Philllips(have you seen that man drive!).

JOHN SIDLFY

If you take time to read this little piece, you will learn nothing whatsoever about eels and eel fishing. What you may be able to appreciate, is the fact that NAC members sometimes think about fishing for other species and even have the cheek to go out and try their hand at catching other sorts of fish.

As you may know, Ernie Orme and myself are very fond of our chub fishing, particularly during the winter period and especially on the river Vyrnwy, which flows from the Welsh Hills to join the river Severn near Sherwsbury. Ernie had been invited by Terry Jefferson to spend a few days fishing Whittles Pit in Essex, so Ernie decided to return the compliment, by inviting Terry along to spend a few days fishing the Vyrnwy. Ernie kindly invited me to join in. Although it took a great deal of organisation, I arranged to spend the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday with Ernie and Terry.

Ernie had managed to rent a small cottage from a local farmer. This stood about 5 yards from the river where it joins the Banwy at a spot called Newbridge about one mile from Meifod. Ernie met Terry in Oswestry on the Sunday and they drove over to Meifod to get settled in. I understand that they fished for a few hours that day but had no success. I arrived at about 8.30 on Monday morning in time for breakfast. Terry was sweating over the stove, whilst Ernie was sat in his romper suit trying to eat a sausage and bacon sandwich (this was simply the first course) I had always considered myself to be a 'good eater' but Orme and Jefferson made me look like a mouse. 5 rashers of bacon, 5 suasaes beans and 3 eggs were consumed with relish and ease. "That will set you up for the day" said Terry. How true, I began to feel slightly hungry at about 9 pm! We cleared up and proceeded to drive the short distance to the river. We all quickly tackled up and spread out along the bank. The knack of chub fishing on this type of river is mobility. You (with any luck) pull one or two fish out of each hole, spending a maximum of 30 minutes in each likely looking swim. Tackle is simple. II $\frac{1}{2}$  foot ~~Arthur~~ Smith Quiver Tip Rod and link legered bread, luncheon meat or special cheese paste. I consider my 'special' to out-fish any other bait on this river. It consists of 1 tin of luncheon meat, 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb of Cheddar, 1 lb of gorgonzola and 4oz of margarine. The margarine is to prevent it going hard in the cold water, when you strike the hook sets easily. Using plain cheese would make this impossible. The fish weren't very co-operative on the first day I had two, one just under and one just over 3lb whilst Ernie had a nice fish of 3lb 11oz. I noticed Terry's face when I showed him one of these fish, they had obviously never been caught before and were in perfect condition.

We returned to the cottage to have a brew at 3 pm and got ready for our evening session. In my experience Vyrnwy chub really get bold as it gets dark. Gone are the slight pulls and plucks experienced during the daytime to be replaced by really vicious bites. However things did not go according to plan and on this first night as it began to rain we packed up and walked back to the cottage, we soon got the fire roaring and our evening meal on the go and sat pondering our days fishing. To me this is what the NAC is all about, camaraderie. Just enjoying being well fed, warm and each others company.

Terry had mentioned to me that Mr Orme had a problem which was difficult to cope with. Snoring! apparently Terry had occupied the same room as Ernie the night before, Terry had slept in the double-bed whilst Ernie was in the adjacent single. Terry, who assured me he was a heavy sleeper got little or no sleep. I explained that I was a very heavy sleeper and would share a room with Ernie so that Terry would go in the smaller room with bunk-beds. We all proceeded to settle down for the night after consuming a good dose of whiskey and beer, so I presumed I would have a good nights sleep, I climbed into bed with Ernie's dentures grinning at me from the bedside table. Well to put it in a nutshell I lasted 30 minutes. Ernie's snoring is just out of this world. I didn't realise that it was possible for a human being to produce such a sound, if you can imagine two pigs copulating you will get some idea what it was like, God knows what Ernie was dreaming about! I decided to cut my losses and fled to the top bunk in Terry's room. I couldn't win as Terry also snored, but not as badly as Ernie and at least when I snored back to him he got the point and shut up.

Mrs Orme must be a very brave (or deaf) woman to put up with Ernie. My sympathy goes out to her.

Another good breakfast the ~~following morning~~, what an understatement! Saw us out on the riverbank by 10 am, Ernie said he would fish near the cottage so Terry and I drove to fish nearer Meifod village. It was cold, wet and windy and not very tempting. I have a natural gift for attracting lunatics, simpletons and drunks. I can guarantee that if I am in a crowded situation one of the above mentioned will seek me out. Thus I wasn't surprised when the village idiot engaged me in conversation as Terry and I were tackling up. Terry said he reminded him of Dave Smith. After a few grunts 'Neddie' whipped his non-existent horse into action and ran off to join the local Tanatside Foxhounds, who happened to be meeting that day by our cottage. Terry and I fished during the morning in a beautiful slack. I managed to contact a reasonable fish of about  $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb and this one was joined by another one of similar size in the afternoon. Terry, using my special cheese paste, managed to catch his first (of many I hope) Vyrnwy chub so he was well pleased. As the weather was poor we made

our way back to the cottage, to find Ernie roasting in front of the fire. I will diversify at this point to illustrate how quickly Ernie has learnt the tackle business. After sleeping, eating and doing everything else in his thermal lined one piece undersuit for four days, Mr Orme, as enterprising as ever, takes it into his shop re-packs it and sells it to some poor innocent. Talk about shop soiled! The customer asking Ernie why the garment smelt was told that it was because it was new!

Back to Meifod. After stocking up our boilers, we set up for a final night session. Ernie had decided not to join us but would stay in and prepare our steak dinner. I took Terry down to Godor Fach where we fished along a short stretch of water which is very slow and deep. Various swims were pre-baited with mashed bread and we were settled in our places fishing as it got dark. I had in my tackle box some starlits which I opted to use instead of betalites. My word, do they glow. My first and only bite was a terrific pull, I connected with the fish but it took me straight into the roots and broke the line. It was now raining steadily and so after  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours we packed up and returned to our cottage for our evening meal. The next day we cleaned up the cottage, packed our gear and departed. I hope Terry and Ernie enjoyed the trip as much as I did, that's why I continue to be a member of the NAC, because you members are my good friends whose company I enjoy.

We are planning another trip on the Vyrnwy next year, we may even get there during the summer, for there are good eels to be caught as well. AJS has promised to join us, so if he snores as well I will be sleeping in the wood shed.

Mark Davies

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Comment John Sidley

I thank Dave Walker for his comments on myself in the Bulletin and for his support in my claims in trying to put the true story about myself and my eel captures over the years, cheers Dave. A comment made by Mark on me writing about how I have been so successful over the years with big eels, I feel was answered by Dave Walker, I have no secret methods or baits and rigs, as Dave said, Mark and the rest of our members would be not very excited reading about standard ledgering rigs, for that is all I ever use. This season is the first time I have used surface and sub-surface rigs with all types of baits. I took eels but nothing to write home about. My aim in using the rigs was so I can write about the methods in the reprint of my book. I feel one must have used and tried a method if one is going to write about it.

No Mark my success is not due to secret baits or rigs, it's due to putting the

effort into my feeling on what I feel to be the right waters, the rest is then in the lap of the gods, and that little bit of luck we all depend on. My statement on myself trying to become the eel when I'm on the bank are true. My statements on having a gut feeling that I have chosen the right water or the right swim and bait, are I feel, based on hard won experiences, to explain fully why I have been so lucky over the years would be very hard to do, this being one of the reasons that I refuse to do talks at angling conferences, to me you have to live eat and breath big eels to be really successful in their capture, there is no half measures, like the old saying "If you can't stand the heat stay out of the kitchen".

I wish all the NAC members good fishing in 1986-87.

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ED'S BIT

I must thank Mark and John for writing this edition of the Bulletin and only hope the rest of you enjoy their work as without it you may never have seen this copy.

I must also apologize for the lateness of this edition but the day i intended to start running off the pages I slipped over on some ice and am now the proud owner of a plaster cast from my fingers to my elbow and have also gained a new nickname 'the one armed bandit'.

With a few more articles we should have another Bulletin out at the Spring Meeting or just before.... but it's up to you lot to write it!

DPW