

# NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB

## BULLETIN



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David P. Walker

EDITOR

## EDITORIAL

I'M particularlyly pleased with this edition of our Bulletin as there are so many different contributors and such a refreshingly wide variety of interesting articles.

Honestly, if everyone of you can't find something to comment on (in writing) in this edition, then I will be amazed. I would dearly love to produce another Bulletin for release in the first week of May, and although I have some first class material in stock (thank you John & Mark...again!) I obviously need as much as possible to ensure that we maintain a good stock of articles leading up to the new season, when you lot decide to all go fishing again. Certainly some ideas towards Arthur's 'project', would not go amiss, along with all your comments on the Session Reporting Scheme results.

With reference to my last sentence, perhaps John's atricle gives us the basis for the start of a 'project; when he asks what the eels are really feeding on? Could the age old 'stomach contents' analysis, not be reprinted to form the possible start of an entirely new debate?

Terry is correst in assuming that almost all the production problems have now been ironed out, and as long as material keeps flowing in, then the Bulletins will come flooding back. Anyway, enough of that for now.

Included in this edition is a piece from Mark on the Montgomery Canal, and although Dave Taylor was supposed to have updated us on the position at Baston Fen, I feel perhaps we would be rather foolish to pass up the chance of such a fascinating prospect as the 'Monty! Mark made a lovely point in his letter that accompanied the article along the lines that he would not be surprised to find, that if we choose the Montgomery Canal as a trip venue then so would the BEAC and probably the ESG as well!!!

On a prosonal note I am looking at having a particularlyly busy year at work, but I am also gearing myself up to do more fishing than ever before. So watch out Terry there is going to be an awful lot of report forms coming from this corner of Hertfordshire, with hopefully a lot of good eels on them.

I must make a plea for help here, the Club is fast running out of large envelopes the like of which you normally recieve your Bulletin in. Obviously we have in the past been able to rely on the generosity of our fellow members, lets hope this pleasent situation continues. Envelopes, then please.

Thats about it from me, have a good start to the new eel season and hopefully I'll see some of you at the British Angling Conference in Reading in April.

DPW

EDITOR

## PRESIDENTS PAGE

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I write this piece within a few days of yet another close season. Three months enforced idleness except for those lucky enough to have some close season eel fishing and discounting all the lounges and living rooms that will be decorated in the period.

I normally rush to get a few trips in ere it all comes to a stop, but this year mother nature played her hand and the lakes in these parts still carried four inches of ice on the last weekend of the season. So a rather dismal end to what, for me, has been a rather poor season.

Last time we had a prolonged freeze up a good number of large eels fell victim to the conditions, although the following summer was a good one for the number of big eels taken by the club.

This fact of eels dying during a prolonged freeze is an interesting one. I do not know if ti is the prolonged spell of icy weather which brings about their demise, or something allied to it. Its a fact that during a prolonged freeze, even conger eels in the sea die in large numbers. Whem I was in Norfolk in my early years, we used to walk along the ice fringed beach collecting the dead congers. some would be eaten by the village folk and the others added to various compost heaps to make rich compost for the following summer. We often found them in their hundreds. No other fish appeared to suffer, and I wonder now about the reason and if there is a direct conection with our own fresh water eels. Any ideas?

Within a couple of weeks now, at Easter, I am taking early retirement. Don't let that fool you into thinking that this old sod is nearer to giving up fishing. Far from it! I see before me a wonderful opportunity to cram in more hours by the water than I have ever managed in the past, True, it will not all be spent in pursuit of Anguilla, although that species will figure very largely in my activities as i must, for I am first and foremost, an eel angler. Now I will have the opportunity to bait up some swims and keep them baited up. It remains to be seen what the results will be, but I look forward to it with unholy glee. I will also be acting as a bailiff for Leisure Sport, giving me every excuse for being forever at the waterside. If I cannot get to grips with one or two of these Lea Valley waters I'll bust in the attempt.

Of course I will not ignore waters further afield and my son Micheal is now in a position to do much of the driving for me. We will again be visiting the meres in Shropshire this summer and possibly again in the autumn. I will inform you of the dates later on in our Newsletter in the hope that one or two of you can join us there.

Don't forget to build up your stocks of lobworms during the Spring. Leave it too late and a dry summer may defeat you. We even bring home a surplus to add to our lawns. A good soaking with the hose then assures us of at least a few.

No one in their right mind can pretend that the National Anguilla Club is as good now as it once was. But I do not think that makes the future as dim as it might be. I believe the whole Club is aware of its present shortcomings, and if we all have the will to do something about it I am certain that with the aid of our newly elected officers we will restore the status quo. I would dearly love to be able to hand over to a future President a really strong and lively Club. And I surely will, if you all play your part. We have nearly all levelled criticism at John Sidley at some time or other, but by jingo he has certainly put a great deal of effort into the club since joining. Can that be said of most of us? I fear not, but you can put that right this year by at least writing something for the Bulletin. Despite the past lack of effort, I am expressing confidence in you. Please don't let me down.

Without fear of repetition I will say again that I firmly believe that this Club needs a project to get its teeth into. We thrived on such things in the past and I feel certain that it would bring about the revival we sorely need. It has to be a project that most of our members could play a part in. You can make a start by putting your thinking caps on, and don't hesitate to put any idea forward. In the Bulletin in writing.

Well I will leave you to your decorating, or whatever, and look forward to seeing you at the meetings and by the water.

A.J.SUTTON  
(PRESIDENT)

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CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

At long last I've been able to get the Session Reporting somewhere near completed and although at first glance, some of the results appear to offer signs of how we might improve our eel fishing, I would point out that most of the results stem from a far from even spread of effort. That is to say, the amount of effort and success recorded by a few members tends to influence the overall result in a way which might lead other members to believe that a particular approach will pay dividends when in fact, an entirely different approach is required on a particular water. However, if, at the end of the day, any information contained in the analysis helps someone to catch some good eels, than it will have been all worth it. Ultimately we can only hope to get out of any scheme the equivalent of what we put in, so some more effort on everyone's part should be of benefit to us all. I realise that since the AGM the supply of Club material has been poor to say the least, but inevitably, there are going to be problems when the job of producing Newsletters and Bulletins is taken over by someone new, and I think it would be

unreasonable to expect anything other than that following the appointment of Bob as Secretary and Dave as Bulletin Editor. They have had some time now to get organised and I think the scarcity of reading matter is hopefully behind us. Bob is in a position to provide the regularity of Newsletters that we have been accustomed to, and I know that he hopes you will all keep him informed of recent news and any other items of interest so that there will be some variety and substance in the Newsletters. I know from my own experience that without something to write about, you can stare at a blank sheet of paper for an awfully long time trying to think of what to say, month in, month out. The whole job becomes a graet deal easier when you get some steady feedback from everyone else with news of results, gossip or tasty tit bits.

As you will all by now have read, Dave has had more than a few problems getting the production of Bulletins organised. On top of that he has "heard" from me, from time to time, just to see what's been happening. The upshot of all this is an all to familiar scarcity of articles for future Bulletins. Remember this... No articles.....No Bulletins!!

I suspect that the next time your phone rings you may well find yourself on the wrong end of a one sided conversation with Dave, being gently cajoled or having your ears severely bashed, in the hope that you will put pen to paper, and soon. You will have read in the last Bulletin of my Welsh chubbing adventure with Mark and Ernie. A thoroughly enjoyable trip it was too. Suitably inspired, I have been in search of some Essex chub, and I found them extremely elusive for my first few trips, but with the arrival of the harder weather and a change of venue, the results started coming. Four recent trips all produced fish, not massive, with the best at about 3:00, but each session was fished in conditions which were far from ideal and on a river I'd never fished before. So I have felt reasonably pleased with myself and look forward to a few more trips.

A recent edition of the Anglers Mail carried an item entitled, "EEL group score 1000".

Apparently the Eel Study Group has accounted for 1000 eels in its first year, and their spokesman, Kevin Richmond, reckons that they accounted for 25% of all 4lb plus eels caught nationally in 1985. They may not want anything to do with us, and if that is the present case, so be it, but animosity or negative attitudes serve no useful purpose to anyone and I would hope that they will come to realise that a degree of unity and common sense would be in everyones interests.

Incidentally, the best eel reported by the Eel Study Group weighed 6:06, and I wonder, could that be John's fish from Birmingham?

That's enough from me for this month.

Terry Jefferson

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(CHAIRMAN)

THE ERNIE ORME FILE

I've been brow beaten into writing for our Bulletin by our committee men past and present. Well to be frank, though I'm knackered both mentally and physically, I'll give it a go. So please allow me to ramble on.

In my pursuit of eels over the years there are only three "magic" waters (that I can remember) that have had the old adrenalin flowing to bursting point:-

Hunstrete Lake (approx six acres)  
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I knew Alan Dart before he caught the then record eel of 8lbs 10ozs from Hunstrete Lake. Alan knew my feelings on "magic" waters so he invited me down to fish Hunstrete for two nights with his fishing partner Chris Dando. They had on several previous occasions had eels up to 6lbs prior to the big one. Just to be there was pure joy.

You might like to know how fate played its part in Alan's capture of that great eel. Alan had arranged a chub fishing trip with the late Dick Walker on the Great Ouse. However Dick phoned Alan to postpone the chub trip, so Alan went to the Bristol Avon to catch some baits for an eel session at Hunstrete. That evening Alan fished a 7" dace dead bait, which resulted in the capture of the now famous 8lb 10ozs beauty.

Three Gates Pit  
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The size of this water is about three acres, near Wem in Shropshire. It has produced several authenticated great eels in recent years.

I did a recci there in 1984 and spent a couple of hours on its banks, in total amazement that such a small water could produce such massive eels.

I was never allowed to fish the water despite all my verbal begging and pleading and letter writing to the Wem A.C. committee. The only reason I couldn't get on the water was that I lived further than five miles from Wem. Believe me when I say you would tremble, as I did, if you could see Three Gates Pit.

Whittles Pool  
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This is my third "magic" water, this is Terry's syndicate water, the one Terry did the excellent slide show of last year.

A specimen hunters dream water. Solitude, mystique and big fish and each swim an individual swim in its own right. Terry also knows my feelings on "magic" waters. "Come down Ernie" said Terry, "bring Meriol with you, she can keep Jan company for a few days while we fish Whittles". Terry suggested that Meriol and I travel down by train. (how thankful I was that Terry suggested that) I suspect he knows how I detest driving long journeys. He told me not to bring any tackle as he had enough for both of us.

All in all, it was a most memorable occasion, being in Terry's ~~company~~ gives you a great sense of camaraderie.

If I lived nearer I would be happy to apply for membership, and fish Whittles Pool for the rest of my days (that's if Terry could put up with me!).

I hope you enjoyed Mark's latest warm and humorous piece (Chub Trip 1985) as much as I did. I mention this because the camaraderie that Mark spoke of was the high point of the trip. We had no axe to grind with the fish. I feel sad that the camaraderie I speak of isn't obvious amongst the present membership as it was in the early days of the NAC. I'm still of the opinion that it is more important to be a good member than a good angler.

I've been meaning to tell you a few true tales about my first day as a tackle dealer. Opening day for the Anglers Den was 22nd November 1984. I thought I had stocked up with most anglers requirements, including a dozen shakespeare and Galaxy Riva tackle seats with trays and padded straps. Wait for it..... My very first customer asked if I had a wicker basket! I didn't. Ilost that customer.

My second customer was the lady who owns the pet shop next door. She asked me if she could have 30 pence worth of coloured maggots for her pet monkey! She produced the monkeys bowl and I obliged with reds, whites and yellows (this I had to see) and followed her to her shop. Low and behold a scruffy little monkey proceeded to eat all the reds first, then the yellows but he wouldn't touch the whites. However the poor little devil died some days later, pneumonia I believe! That was another customer I lost.

My third customer was one of the local budding specimen hunters who I vaguely knew. My wife proceeded to serve him and he asked her for a monkey climber. My wife replied "your in the wrong shop, the monkeys in the pet shop next door". He wasn't amused and walked out and we never saw him again. Another customer lost! Ah well you can't win them all.

My fourth customer was a chap named Peter. He introduced himself and I thought to myself, he seems a nice bloke, so I thought I'd try a ~~different~~ approach this time. This is how it went, "would you like a cup of tea Peter?"

"Yes please Ernie."

"Have a fag Peter".

"Thanks Ernie. I've got something to tell you Ernie".

Have you Peter. What is it?"

"I'm a schizophrenic!" (oh my God keep your cool I thought)

"I'm sorry to hear that Peter"

"Oh its all right Ernie I have it under control now."

"What were your syptoms Peter?"

"Oh I used to talk to the television at first and later I thought I was the second Messiah!!"

"When did you know you weren't the second Messiah Peter?"

"When I tried to walk across the canal!!!"  
He turned out to be one of my best customers.

God how I hate being A tackle dealer. I'm seriously thinking of packing it up next year.

My fantasy or is it ambition, is to be able to be in the position where I can pack up working and go on a six month eel safari. Travelling up and down the country. Perhaps I'd be lucky enough to catch a couple of fives. Then Gentlemen, I'd be happy to call it a day and hang the old rods up for good. Those of you who know me well enough know I'm not very happy in the present 'eel kitchen' and its almost time I got out.

E.W.ORME

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LATEST GLOSSARY OF FISHING TERMINOLOGY

STICK :What you use on a river....usually to get your waggler back when it gets snagged in a tree, or what you give a fish when there's a snag about.

RODREST :Where AJS has a kip.

PEG :What you use to keep the flap down on your bivvy.

TIP :Do the exact opposite.

FLY LINE :Usual drivel from a poseur.

GAFFE :Often happens when the fly line fails.

RUFFE :Netting team's usual condition.

PERCH :Usually a place on the bank.

CARP :Usual fault finding by specimen hunters.

DACE :Comes after nights.

ACTION :Often from a rod, but then again I wouldn't really know much about that.

CASTER :Poseur that chucks a line.

SWAN SHOT :Most definately Not Guilty.

E.W.ORME

## SUB SURFACE & SURFACE RIGS

Being a member of 3 eel angling clubs, I get to read quite a lot on the subject of sub surface and surface rigs.

Pete Burton of the Eel Study Group has done a lot of work over the past few seasons on the rigs and unlike other anglers I know, he does what he says. Pete has confirmed that at times and on certain waters the rigs will out fish the standard bottom rigs, using all forms of bait.

Knowing that a reprint of my book was due in 1986 I myself started to try these type of rigs on a water in B'ham, I felt that I must have fished these methods before I could write about the subject. So using my own design rig to fish all types of bait, I put my effort into trying this new, to me at least, form of eel fishing. On two of the waters I fished in 1985-6 my rig did reward me with some eels off the bottom. These fish being taken in water of over 20ft, and on a couple of occasions my surface rigs did out fish my bottom rigs, in fact when the surface rigs scored the bottom rigs were untouched. The runs whilst using the surface rigs were as Pete had said, they screamed off like an express train. This I put down to the eels belting back to the bottom of the lake after seizing the bait. Baits fished only a few feet off the bottom created runs that were as if the baits had been fished on bottom rigs, nothing to write home about. All in all these rigs do produce eels, but as yet, unless the lads are keeping mum, they have not yet produced the monster snakes we all dream of. There has been a couple of big eels taken whilst using the off bottom rigs, but this does not impress me at all, for as far as I know these baits were only fished a couple of feet off the bottom, in some cases even less than that. To me a big eel has only to lift its neck to seize these baits. I'd go as far as to say that those baits would have been pisked up anyway if they had been presented on the bottom. I also know of a few good eels being taken on surface rigs, but these have been fished in the margins in water only a few feet deep and I feel that a big eel would have no trouble in just lifting its head off the bottom and grabbing the bait. Once again I feel that a bottom fished bait would have caught anyway.

Off bottom and sub surface rigs are, I feel, only needed when the bed of the lake is heavy in weed and baits fished in this manner do give the angler an advantage in that the eel can find the bait more easily. Myself I'm not put off by bottom weed, I don't like it as it can hinder a free running eel, but as I say I'm not put off by the weed.

I have used the sub surface rigs in my eeling, partly so that I could write something in the book reprint and partly so that I could talk to other eel anglers about the subject with at least some knowledge. What I now ask is, are anglers using these rigs on proven big eel waters, wasting a lot of rod hours. We all know that a big eel is a very old fish and I do not think that such a

fish would waste energy by feeding off the bottom, indeed it can feed very well on the bottom with very little loss of energy, and i feel it is this food on the bottom that we need to know more about. As yet sub surface rigs have not produced big eels in any numbers, they produce eels yes, but not the ones we're after! I do admire the anglers who are trying these new methods, eeling has stood still for to long, but I feel their time would be put to better use by finding out just what those big eels eat, for if the right bait ain'T out there it will make no odds at all what rig you are using!

It could be said that I'm too old to change my ways, you could be right, but just stop and think of all those rod hours you could have put to waste, using surface rigs. No lads, its not the rigs which will produce those really big snakes, but the right baits fished on the end of those rigs.

Think about it?????

I wish you good eeling in 86-87

JOHN SIDLEY

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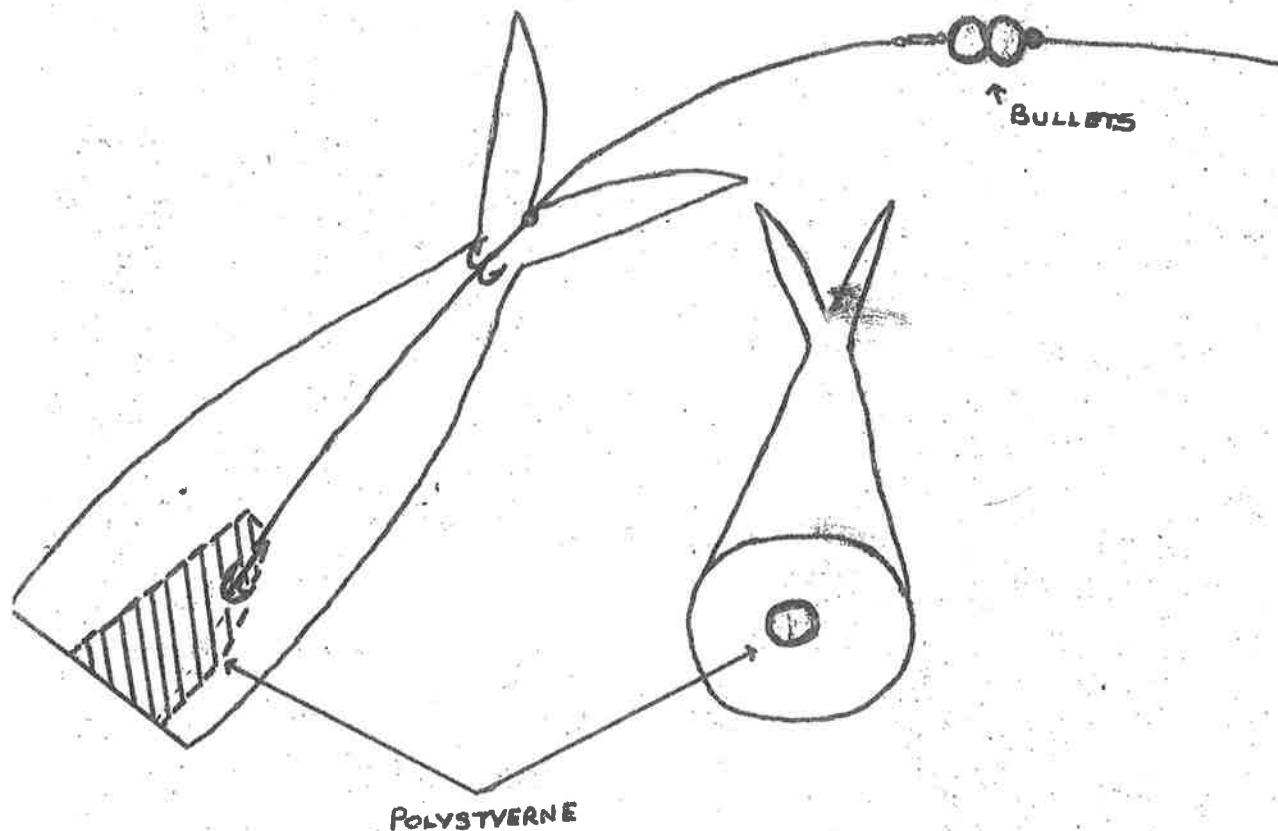
SOMETHING DIFFERENT - PIKING

Being as though my eel season was something of a non-event I decided to write about a local gravel pit. I have fished the pit on only five occasions in the last two and a half years, but I have had some terrific results in those few visits. Each time I was accompanied by Dave Taylor who has also had some very good results.

One of the major problems with this water is that it is extremely private and nobody fishes it unless they poach, because the owners house sits right on the front of the pit, but as the water is so good its worth the risk every now and then. So far we have been very lucky in that we have not been caught...yet!

The water is fairly shallow on the whole with lots of thick weed, but there is the odd gravel bar and a few deep gullies where the weed is not quite so thick. It is in these gullies that the pike are to be found. The water is about 50 acres and is shaped very much like Bra Lake except that this water is nowhere near as deep. We have found that the pike lie in these deep holes, but the only problem is that you have to cast a long way to reach these deeper areas and this restricts where you can fish from.

The baits and the way we fish them are very simple, with ledgered or freelined baits being the only logical way to fish as a float fished bait would not reach the deep water and that's the only place we have had runs. With the weed being such a problem, where possible it is best to suspend the bait up off the bottom, The best way we found for this was with polystyrene as follows.



Inserting of the polystyrene is best done when the bait is soft and the hole in the middle of the mackerel is best done with something like a pair of straight nosed forceps, which can be gently pushed into the mackerel and the polystyrene inserted. If you then freeze the bait you will then be able to cast it out without any worries of whether it is floating or not, and you know that you will have a well presented bait with a good chance of getting a fish. It is advisable to take a good supply of these prepared fish with you so that you can then recast with a new bait, but at the same time you have to make sure that you take precautions to keep the rest of the baits frozen. It is possible to use the unfrozen baits, but you can never be sure that the bait is floating properly. The best thing of all about fishing mackerel this way is that it is totally invisible to the fish. The fish in this water are not fished for regularly so this leaves them in really excellent condition, most of them are long with very large heads and every fish fights like it has never been caught before.

On two occasions an odd thing has happened, the first was when I caught a large double on a roach deadbait which had been suspended by pushing poly into its mouth, and it was not until I was taking a picture of the fish did I notice something in its mouth (my bait and hooks had fallen out on landing). On a closer look I saw that the fish had a mackerel tail with two trebles stuck in its throat, when I removed these hooks I saw that the person who had been using this tackle must have been a fool, for it was a very small jardine snap tackle of about eight inches. As you can imagine the pike had bitten the line above the trace, whose hooks were at least size 2 and like anchors!!



If this is the case than I think we should consider if we really do think that the Bulletin is such a vital part of the Club. At the AGM Terry suggested that we should issue an Annual Bulletin. I think I can work out Terry's thinking behind this, but there is no guarantee that this would be any better than our current output. What would you think if you received one Bulletin a year containing as few pages as the last one? If you're lacking in inspiration then I would suggest you get hold of some old Bulletins and paw over the works of Alan Hawkins, Dave Holman, Arthur Sutton, Arthur Smith, Terry Coulson etc.

Can the officers of the Club, who were elected at the 1985 AGM genuinely sit back and say "I have made the greatest possible effort on behalf of the NAC". If you do think this then you are seriously deluding yourselves. Have you all written at least one article for the Bulletin? Have you been in regular correspondence with other members? Have you recruited any prospective members? If you wer'nt willing to do your best for the Club why did you accept the job? If you have done your best and this has turned out to be inadequate should you continue in office? I'm trying to be honest and not directing my comments at anyone in particular. Am I being unfair? If so tell me why.

I have always accepted that not every member is in a position to put in the effort fishing wise as for instance John Sidley. If you're not able to get out fishing perhaps you could make up for this by writing plenty of articles for the Bulletin.

You will perhaps have realised from the tone of what I'm writing that I'M not certain whether I will continue as a member. Can you persuade me otherwise. All your replies will be treated in the strictest confidence.

MARK DAVIES

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#### HELPING TO FILL THE BULLETIN

I recieved my NAC Bulletin on the 17th Feb, it was dropped through my letter box at nine in the morning, by 9.30 I'd read it all....great stuff eh!!

I enjoyed Mark's piece on his chubbing in Wales on the river Vyrnwy, I need a good water to obtain a efw chub livebaits from...(only joking). I wish Arthur all the best at his talk on eel fishing, I dropped him a line telling him that I would not be able to be at the talk, but wishing him well and I still do. I never did get a reply off of him,(maybe I should have sent a S.A.E.?)so much for trying to keep in close contact with the membersh\_p. Another joke!!!

I feel our Arthur has jumped the gun about my comments in the last Bulletin, I'm not saying anybody should stop going out and catching 2lb eels, if that's what turns them on okay. But I have always been lead to believe that the NAC was a Club who's aims were to go out and catch bigger and better eels. How can this be achieved if members of the Club just sit on waters where the chances of catching a big'un are nil? Would it not be best to put in the time you have eeling, on the

venues that matter, i.e. where the big ones really are. Arthur you are talking a load of rubbish mate. If I was at work I would still put in the effort at the waters that hold the big eels, in fact this is exactly what I did do when I was at work (not all of my big eels came from Earlswood) I travelled far afield to fish what I knew to be BIG eel venues. Places like Wales, Northants, Cambs, etc etc, and those waters are definitely not on my doorstep.

I was catching big eels long before I was out of work and like most members I had only the weekends and holidays, but I used that limited time to concentrate on the waters I knew had the sort of eels I wanted to catch. After all I'm a big fish angler and therefore I put the effort in on the waters that matter. I joined the NAC to hopefully learn more on how to catch bigger eels, I know that a couple of recent new members joiner for the same reason, as yet I have gained nothing.

I joined the ESG and even the BEAC to learn more about eels and hopefully how to catch bigger ones, within those two Clubs i have achieved my target. I must say that I am getting a little tired, no fed up, with people saying that because I am out of work I can devote more time to my eeling and that is why I am more successful than they are. Bull shit. I would and have devoted all my time to eel fishing, work or no work. This what I can't seem to get through to some members of the Club, are you big eel anglers or just plain eel anglers? What are your aims in eel fishing? Please tell me, apart from just enjoying your sport why are you in a club that is supposed to be for finding out more about how to catch bigeels, when all you do is sit on waters that only produce small eels, come on please tell me?? I enjoy my sport and I enjoy every eel I catch, be it one pound or six pound, but I still go out to catch bigger and bigger fish. To do that I need to fish the right waters .

I'm not asking members to pack up work, or stop fishing for other species during the eel season, if that's what you want to do that's ok by me, its not my fault that I don't like fishing for roach, carp, tench, bream and the rest of the other species during the summer. These fish do not interest me and I would not put any effort into their capture, they just don't turn me on like eels (or pike) do. But I certainly don't knock a bloke who does fish for these speciec. I will end by saying that I mean no harm to anybody in the Club, I just cannot understand why some members can't understand the way I go about my eeling. My aim is to catch big eels and if my approach is wrong then I make no apologies for it, I wish you all tight lines in 1986.

JOHN SIDLEY

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ED'S COMMENT

John has got a point in his article. It has long been my contention that the Club should, and indeed, is capable of capturing a much larger proportion of the really big eels that are taken each year. I do believe that the Club has tended to rest on its laurels too much in recent years and as much as anything this has contributed to the gradual decline in the Club over the past few years.

It is now time gentlemen to build new laurels.

It was some time ago (1983?) that I wrote in the Bulletin that I believed that some members should go and "search for pastures new", as I saw this as the only way to increase the size of eels some members were catching. I still think this today. Its no good sitting on the same old waters that you have fished for years, if these places have STILL not produced the sort of eels you REALLY wish to catch. We all know that every water is capable of throwing up a real biggy eventually, but how long do you want to wait, and can you guarantee that you are going to be the lucky captor if it does appear? Dave Holman was probably the best eel angler this club will ever see, and he fished many waters and it took him, brilliant as he is, 21 years to capture the fish he was really after. 99% of the present membership will probably never match Dave's success, but we are all capable of at least getting a good long way down the road towards it!

As eel anglers of some experience we also all appreciate the phenomenon where by, the first few sessions on a new water often throw up the biggest or most eels, and I know that every one of you can quote examples to disprove it, but as a general rule it is a bloody good indication of the potential of a water. So if you have been sitting on a water and not getting runs or indeed only catching small eels, then for gods sake go and find a different venue. Preferably a brand new one, and get stuck into a few new problems. Like, where to fish, how to stop your hands shaking when you actually get a run, changing the line that you haven't put any strain no for years and even making sure that your landing net mesh hasn't rotted away since it was last used, in goodness knows when!!!

For make no mistake, in the angling world at large there are quite a few anglers who fish regularly for eels and they are not coming forward to join the Anguilla Club, because we are not showing ourselves capable of catching the sort of eels that they themselves are indeed catching. One example I personally know is a friend of mine, Simon, who is a very successful and respected carp angler in Kent. He has become a good friend over the years and now spends most of his nights fishing exclusively for eels, only switching back to his beloved carp during daylight. Over the last two years he has taken 8 eels over 4lb, including a 5:08 and a 5:12, but he has no interest at all in joining the NAC, who he says, "don't catch, all together what he does." Now Simon is an intellegent and mature angler who's been around a long time, just the sort of member we could do with, but in today's angling world you have to offer something to anglers too make them join a group or club, and at the moment we don't offer much. (Even Mark's now talking of leaving and he hardly ever even goes fishing!!) Think about it and you will see that potential members like Simon have a good point.

Why join the National Anguilla Club?

Even the old prestige aspect of 'being an Anguilla Club member' wears a bit thin when anglers on the bank ask who, or what the Anguilla Club is, and then go on after your explanation to question you as to whether you don't mean that you are



OVERALL EFFORT

1985 SEASON

NAME OF MEMBER	J. SIDLEY.	B. CRAWFORD	N. EVANS	R. RAYLAND.	D. WALKER	K. STEPHENSON	T. JEFFERSON	E. ORME.	M. DAVIES.	A. SUTTON.	TOTALS.
SESSIONS	34	23	27	19	26	16	15	5	4	4	173
ROD HOURS	1046	567	672	533	1059½	373½	319	156½	115	86½	4928½
TOTAL EELS	89	13	48	4	52	21	1	0	13	0	241
R-H/E	12	43½	14	133	20½	18	319	—	9	—	202½
2:00+	35	—	7	—	13	1	—	—	1	—	57
R-H/2:00+	30	—	96	—	81½	373½	—	—	115	—	86½
3:00+	20	—	2	3	3	—	—	—	—	—	28
H/3:00+	52½	—	336	177½	353	—	—	—	—	—	176
4:00+	4	—	—	1	—	1	1	—	—	—	7
R-H/4:00+	261½	—	—	533	—	373½	319	—	—	—	704
5:00+	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
R-H/5:00+	1046½	—	672	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2464
EELS worm/day	21	—	—	—	31	—	—	—	—	—	52
R-H worm/day	277½	56½	10	12½	255	26½	48½	33½	13½	21	754½
R-H/E worm/day	13	—	—	—	8	—	—	—	—	—	14½
EELS worm/night	18	12	14	—	19	20	1	—	11	—	95
R-H worm/night	485	323½	57½	41½	338½	217½	191½	66	57½	33	1811½
R-H/E worm night	27	27	4	—	18	11	191½	—	5	—	19
EELS db/day	33	—	3	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	37
P-H db/day	158	9	80½	51½	128	22½	33	19½	9	12	523
R-H/E db/day	5	—	27	51½	—	—	—	—	—	—	14
EELS db/night	—	1	26	3	2	1	—	—	2	—	35
R-H db/night	51	147½	454½	381½	257½	95	40½	37½	35	20½	1520½
R-H/E db/night	—	147½	17½	127	129	95	—	—	17½	—	43½
EELS other/day	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
R-H other/day	33	2½	6½	4½	57½	2	2½	—	—	—	108½
R-H/E other/day	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	27
EELS other/night	9	—	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	14
R-H other/night	42	28	63	41½	23	11	3	—	—	—	211½
R-H/E other/night	4½	—	12½	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15

EELS CAUGHT TOP 12.

1985 SEASON

CAPTURE DETAILS: BAIT, WEATHER ETC.

NAME OF MEMBER	WEIGHT	LENGTH	GIRTH	TIME	DATE	BAIT	BAIT POSITION	TRACE MATERIAL	ADDITIVE	PRE-BAIT	GROUND BAIT	AIR TEMP	WATER TEMP	BAR PRESS	BF MOVEMENT	CLOUD %	RAIN	WIND DIRECTION	WIND STRENGTH	MOON PHASE	NAME OF WATER
J.S.	6:06	-	-	14:20	19/9	W	B	MS.	N	N	N	15°C	13°C	M	S	100%	0	SW.	L	N.M.	BIRMINGHAM LAKE
N.E.	6:00	39"	9 1/4"	04:55	9/7	D.B.	B	MS.	N	N	N	14°C	16°C	H	S	75/100%	S	N.W.	L	L.Q.	CLYD LAKE
K.S.	4:10	38 1/2"	8 1/4"	23:50	18/5	W	B.	BR.	N	N	Y	13°C	14°C	L	S	100%	S	O	O	N.M.	GRAND UNION CANAL
R.L.	4:09	39"	7 7/8"	03:20	7/7	D.B.	B.	MS.	N	N	N	10°C	17°C	M	F.	O	O	O	O	L.Q.	SILVER END PIT
T.J.	4:07	38"	7 3/4"	23:55	5/8	W	B	NY.	N	N	N	13°C	16°C	M	R	50/75%	O	S.W.	M	F.Q.	WHITTLES
J.S.	4:04	-	-	14:45	2/10	D.B.	B	MS.	N	Y	N.	17°C	17°C	M	F	75/100%	O	S.S.W.	S	F.M.	BIRMINGHAM LAKE
J.S.	4:03	-	-	17:20	23/9	D.B.	B	MS.	N	N	N	25°C	13°C	H	R	25%	O	SW.	L	F.Q.	-
J.S.	4:01	-	-	07:45	9/10	O	B	MS.	N	Y	N	8°C	17°C	M	S	50/75%	O	SW.	M	L.Q.	-
J.S.	4:00	-	-	13:15	9/10	O	B	MS.	N	Y	N.	15°C	17°C	M	S	50/75%	O	SW.	M	L.Q.	-
R.L.	3:15	41 1/4"	7 1/2"	00:30	23/8	D.B.	B	NY	N	N	N	12°C	17°C	M	F	O	O	O	O	F.Q.	SILVER END PIT
R.L.	3:15	40 3/4"	7 3/4"	06:15	21/9	D.B.	B	NY.	N	N	N	14°C	17°C	M	F	100%	O	O	O	F.Q.	-
J.S.	3:14	-	-	12:20	2/10	D.B.	B	MS.	N	Y	N	17°C	17°C	M	F	75/100%	O	S.S.W	S	F.M.	BIRMINGHAM LAKE

**EFFECT OF BAIT TYPE AND ADDITIVE  
PREBAITING AND GROUND BAIT ON CATCH RATE AND SIZE DURING DAY**

1985 SEASON

BAIT DETAILS	BAIT TYPE			ADDITIVE		PRE-BAIT		GROUND BAIT	
	WORM	DB	OTHER	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
ROD HOURS	725½	527	108½	59	1297	183	1183	122½	123½
TOTAL EELS	52	38	7	0	97	22	75	0	97
R-H/E	14	14	15½	—	13½	8½	16	—	12½
2:00+	21	13	0	0	34	4	30	0	34
R-H/2:00+	34½	40½	—	—	38	45½	39½	—	36
3:00+	5	7	2	0	14	5	9	0	14
R-H/3:00+	145	75½	54	—	92½	36½	131½	—	88
4:00+	0	2	2	0	4	3	1	0	4
R-H/4:00+	—	263½	54	—	324	61	1183	—	308
5:00+	1	1	0	0	2	0	2	0	2
R-H/5:00+	725½	527	—	—	648½	—	591½	—	616

**EFFECT OF BAIT TYPE AND ADDITIVE  
PREBAITING AND GROUND BAIT ON CATCH RATE AND SIZE DURING NIGHT**

BAIT DETAILS	BAIT TYPE			ADDITIVE		PRE-BAIT		GROUND BAIT	
	WORM	DB	OTHER	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
ROD HOURS	1766½	1525½	211½	219	3284½	111½	3392	383	3120½
TOTAL EELS	96	34	14	19	125	9	135	22	122
R-H/E	18½	45	15	11½	26½	12½	25	17½	25½
2:00+	9	7	7	1	22	7	16	2	21
R-H/2:00+	196½	218	30	219	149½	16	212	19½	148½
3:00+	8	5	1	0	14	0	14	1	13
R-H/3:00+	221	305	211½	—	234½	—	242½	383	240
4:00+	2	1	0	0	3	0	3	1	2
R-H/4:00+	883	1525½	—	—	1095	—	1131	383	1560
5:00+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
R-H/5:00+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

EFFECT OF WEATHER AGAINST CATCH RATE & SIZE

1985	SEASON.	EELS	R.H.	2:00+	R-H/2	3:00+	R-H/3	4:00+	R-H/4	5:00+	R-H/5
BAROMETRIC PRESSURE	LOW	35	324½	13	25	6	54	1	324½	0	—
	MED	107	2813½	21	134	14	201	5	562½	1	2813½
	HIGH	98	1500	23	65	8	187½	1	1500	1	1500
	FALL	52	1397½	18	77½	10	140	2	699	0	—
	STEADY	127	2418	28	86½	9	268½	3	806	2	1209
	RISE	61	822½	11	75	9	91½	2	411	0	—
CLOUD COVER	0- 25	63	1425½	17	84	7	203½	1	1425½	0	—
	25- 50	34	717½	4	179½	3	239	1	717½	0	—
	50- 75	62	922½	15	61½	6	153½	3	307½	0	—
	75-100	81	1572½	21	75	12	131	2	786	2	786
RAIN	NIL	189	3522½	41	86	20	176	6	587	2	1761
	SHOWERS	20	807½	4	202	2	404	1	807½	0	—
	HEAVY	31	308	12	25½	6	51½	0	—	0	—
WIND	NW-NNE	27	525½	9	58½	1	525½	1	525½	1	525½
	NE-ESE	10	125½	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—
	NO WIND	46	1359½	7	194	10	136	2	680	0	—
	SE-SSW	41	701½	9	78	2	351	1	701½	0	—
	SW-WNW	116	1956	32	61	15	130½	3	652	1	1956
MOON PHASE	NEW	93	1227½	22	56	7	175½	1	1227½	1	1227½
	FIRST Q	67	1657	17	97½	13	127½	1	1657	0	—
	FULL	40	906	11	82½	3	302	1	906	0	—
	LAST Q	40	847½	7	121	5	169½	4	212	1	847½
AIR TEMP	0-10	59	1280	16	80	7	183	0	—	0	—
	11-20	174	3261	38	86	20	163	6	543½	2	1630½
	21-30	7	97	3	32½	1	97	1	97	0	—
WATER TEMP.	0- 4	1	13	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—
	5- 9	6	286½	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—
	10-14	89	1685½	26	65	7	241	2	843	1	1685½
	15-19	144	2607½	31	84	21	124½	5	522	1	2609½
	20-25	0	52½	0	—	0	—	0	—	0	—

COMPARISON OF USE AND CATCH RATE FROM VARIOUS ADDITIVES, PRE-BAITING AND GROUND BAITING.

ADDITIVES:	ROD HOURS.	EELS.	RH/E.
EMULSIFIED PILCHARD OIL.	103	7	14½
RICHWORTH FISH FLAVOUR.	21½	2	11
ACE WORM EXTRACT.	104½	10	10½
LIVER FLAVOUR.	9	0	—
OX BLOOD.	12	0	—

PRE-BAITS:	ROD HOURS	EELS	RH/E
PASTE OR "BOILIE" BAIT.	16	2	8
MEAT OFFAL.	118½	16	7½
WORMS.	12	0	—
NOT KNOWN.	132	0	—

GROUND-BAITS.	ROD HOURS	EELS	RH/E
SWIFFEDER WITH ADDITIVE.	84½	5	17
CAT FOOD. (TINNED).	17½	1	17½
LUNCHEON MEAT.	38½	4	9½
PASTE OR "BOILIE" BAIT.	18	0	—
WORMS (CHOPPED OR WHOLE).	187½	11	17
MAGGOTS.	63	0	—
WHIRLS.	24½	1	24½
CHOPPED FISH.	17½	0	—
SLUGS.	3½	0	—
OX BLOOD.	31	0	—
NOT KNOWN.	57	0	—

## Montgomery Canal.

You will perhaps remember in Bulletins that you have read containing articles written by myself, that in both 1984 and 1985 I fished a number of sessions on the Shropshire Union Canal ( Montgomery Branch ) which for the sake of shortness I will describe in the following pages as the Montgomery Canal. This Canal is one of the many branches off the main Shropshire Union Canal and it runs from Queen's Head Shropshire to Newtown, Powys. It is disused along its full length and many stretches are completely de-watered, this basically means what it says, in that there is no boat traffic whatsoever. Which means that in all the stretches holding water, the Canal is very clear and extremely weedy and flows rather like a southern chalk stream. For this reason it holds both an incredible quantity and variety of fish, including trout and more particularly as far as we are concerned, eels.

As far as I am concerned, as I have stated previously in these pages and at the recent A.G.M. in Daventry, the Montgomery Canal would make an ideal venue for a club trip. All that is necessary is a good turn-out of club members and I am sure that everyone would catch eels and some good specimens would be banked. The country-side surrounding the canal is very beautiful and the canal itself is very quiet not only because there is no boat traffic, but also because few anglers visit its banks and it is not near any large centres of population.

As I have mentioned the Montgomery Canal starts at Queen's Head Shropshire proceeds through Maesbury Marsh, through Llanymynech, across the River Vyrnwy, running close to the main Welshpool Road at Four Crosses. From here it runs via Ardd-lin via Poole Quay to Welshpool and then via Berriew to Newtown. As I have stated above many stretches are completely devoid of water.

Although the canal is not currently used by boat traffic there has been a lot of talk recently about opening up the canal to boat traffic so, although I do not think this is an immediate possibility, due to the cost, the club should take this opportunity to fish the canal while the conditions are ideal.

The stretch of canal I have mentioned is controlled by a number of angling societies with the Prince Albert Angling Society of Macclesfield holding the most extensive stretches. The Oswestry and District Angling Society, the Brunswick Angling Club ( Liverpool ) the Montgomeryshire Angling Association, the Argae Hall Angling Club, Cammell Laird Sports Club ( Angling Section - Birkenhead ) and the Irby Angling Club ( Birkenhead ) control the rest of the fishing, whilst a small stretch is owned by the Powis Castle Estate. It is a condition of the British Waterways leases to these clubs that they issue day tickets which are available at a modest average cost of about 50p. Some of the clubs have rules about both night fishing and fishing for eels in the close season, although I have never been troubled by any officials. It is of course permissible

in the Severn Trent W.A. to fish for eels in the close season. I do not think this will cause any trouble as I have only seen one or two other anglers on the canal let alone any bailiffs.

The map\*shows the Montgomery Canal along its full length together with the main roads, bridges and locks (many of which are in a derelict condition). Perhaps more interestingly it shows, by use of a frothing glass symbol, where the local hostelrys (boozers to us uncouth southerners. Ed) are situated, as you will appreciate they are well placed along the canal's full length.

I personally would favour the stretch between Llanymynech and Welshpool as I have not yet had sufficient time to pay much attention to the stretch between Welshpool and Newtown. However, as we have got about 30 miles of practically unfished canal to choose from it would seem, if we decide on the canal for a Club trip, that members should spread themselves. As the canal is relatively shallow and clear, bankside disturbance can dramatically effect the fishing and for this reason we should spread out.

The club has not had a canal trip for a good few years now and the Montgomery Canal, in my opinion, is an ideal venue. Its potential as a fishery is relatively untapped and as far as I can gather no serious eel fishing has been done along its length. There are plenty of eels to be caught as I indicated by a single night session I had on the canal at WERN some years ago, when I recorded 11 eels over 2lbs!!

\* (see over for map)

MARK DAVIES

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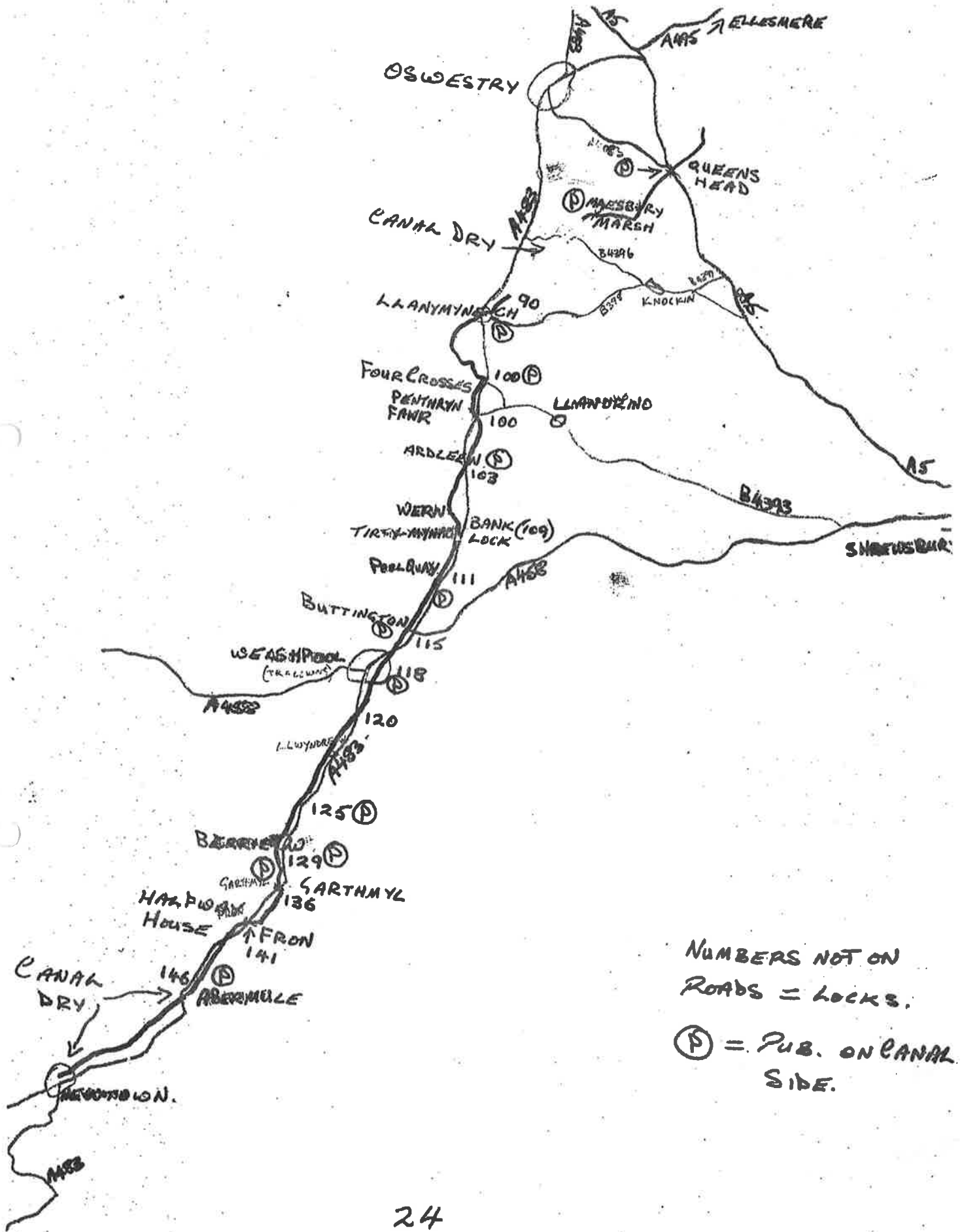
EDS COMMENT

I really fancy this venue, not only for its eels but because it sounds so different from anywhere most of us have ever fished before. Also, if only for a few pints of real Banks beer I will certainly try and make this venue at some time during this year. I feel that a really different and obviously prolific eel venue, is just what we need as a Club trip site and if we decide on the Montgomery Canal I shall be very disappointed if people don't make the effort and travel to a water that I would love to have nearer home.

You've whetted my appetite Mark so even if the trip is somewhere else, you'll have to put up with me for at least a couple of nights sometime this year. And if that's not enough to make you give up eeling, then I don't know what is!!!

DPW

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NUMBERS NOT ON  
ROADS = LOCKS.  
Ⓟ = PUB. ON CANAL  
SIDE.