

The National Anguilla Club

BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

I can pretend no longer. My job as Editor is as dead as the once numerous dodo. Not one single piece of material has passed through my hands for over six months, despite pleas from myself, Mark Davies and Terry Jefferson. Now I may be easy going by nature, but I am not a bloody fool and it is perfectly clear that not one member wants an Editor. I doubt if we could muster the support of more than three members for the Bulletin itself! When I think of all the hard work done by Terry and Jan to produce the Bulletin, and of all the endless hours devoted to it over the years, it makes me shudder. And this at a time when, much more than ever before, eel anglers must band together in order to protect what little they have left.

It should not matter too much to me (but it does!) for I have not many eel fishing seasons left, but to the majority in the Anguilla Club it SHOULD matter, and I hope that some of you may give it some thought.

But meanwhile, unless something to the contrary is indicated by the members, this must be my last Editorial. I have finally got the message, and I'll go quietly.

Dare I mention the weather we have experienced since the second week in December? A lot of people have suffered from frost and snow and subsequent flooding, and they have my sympathy. I think back to the big freeze up of 1962/63 when skating was the order of the day on all the pits and lakes in the South East. That winter was disastrous for the big eel population on many of the less deep waters and many really big eels were found dead. I would appreciate a word or two from you if you know of a similar thing occurring this winter.

But the floods themselves can be a bonus for I am sure it is then that many waters see an influx of small eels. Such waters probably would never see an eel otherwise.

I recall that many years ago, when the River Lea used to come over its banks every winter, we used to watch really small eels some six or seven inches in length crossing the towpath to find their way into various ditches and drains - ultimately to find a new home. The river no longer floods. It is rather boring, sedate, flow never quickens or slows, and surplus water goes roaring off down concrete conduits to be gobbled up by London's reservoirs or else out to sea via the Thames estuary. As this surplus water is routed through some of the Herts and Essex gravel pits it was hoped that these waters might enjoy a bigger eel population. To date, it appears that this has not happened, although I hope it does for the sake of future eel anglers.

A small culvert near my home flows rapidly for most of the time and thus has escaped the big freeze. We have had a massive invasion of all kinds of water fowl. Swans, geese, ducks, herons and several others have all found their way to our little culvert which runs open for almost a mile before it goes underground. I wish that a few fish could find it too.

On arrival in Hoddesdon, it was not long before I released frogs, toads and some North American Bullfrogs. We saw a lot of them (and heard them) during the Summer. I wonder how they are faring now.

EDITORIAL - CONT'D

I bet those Bullfrog tadpoles would make a satisfactory mouthful for any eel, for they were just short of four inches in length. At the time of their release the young Bullfrogs were twice the size of a large toad.

A J Sutton

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE

I am writing this during a spare moment over the Christmas holiday period when I like many anglers throughout the country are housebound and unable to fish due to the cold spell we are suffering.

On the Sunday before Christmas, Dave Holman and myself decided to go fishing for Grayling, that beautiful fish which fortunately inhabits a number of rivers in our area and which seems to feed better the colder it gets. We had considered fishing the Upper Severn or the Vyrnwy but in the end we plumped for the Derbyshire Dove as it was slightly nearer and we did not fancy being stranded in central Wales. What would have been perfect Grayling fishing weather on the Saturday turned into a howling gale and driving snow on the Sunday. Despite this I got to Daves to pick him up and we set off. However, we had not be journeying very long before we realised that it would be somewhat foolish to continue as the snow was drifting onto the road. The nearest I got to a fish on that day was watching the film Jaws at Dave's house. Despite this set back we hope that we can get amongst the Grayling before the season ends. I had some very good sport last season on the stretch of the Vyrnwy owned by the Ellesmere Club at Llanymyneck near Oswestry.

I was dismayed to receive in the post a notice informing me of the Annual General Meeting of a club of which I am a member, The Prince Albert Angling Society. As anyone in the North West can tell you this is "the" club to belong to as the waters that they either own or lease are very extensive. In fact, there is a three or four year waiting list to gain admittance even though the entrance fee and subscription is in excess of £30. On the Notice convening the AGM I noticed that someone had tabled a motion to ban close season eel fishing on all club waters. Why one asks should anybody be so concerned about close season eel fishing especially when both the North West Water Authority and the Severn/Trent Water Authority allow close season fishing for eels. There would seem to be no logical reason for close season eel fishing to be banned. Certainly the privilege is abused by some but I think that in the main the anglers who dislike other anglers fishing for eels in the close season are persons who take the view that if they cannot fish then nobody else should be able to. This is an attitude I have found amongst many anglers who have come across me fishing legitimately for eels in the close season. I intend to go along to the AGM of this club to have my say and to try and persuade the membership not to accept this motion but I feel very pessimistic about my chances of success.

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE - CONT'D

I am making progress concerning making arrangements for a possible trip to Colemere, one of the Ellesmere Lakes, in that I have received permission from the County Surveyor and Land Agent for members to fish and more importantly to fish at night, a privilege which does not normally extend to day-ticket anglers. I am now awaiting to hear from the controlling club Stoke-on-Trent (of which I am a member) to get their formal approval.

I enjoyed very much reading Dave Holman's article in the last Bulletin and if every member could present his season's fishing in this form then I feel we would be well on the way to finding a successful replacement to the old reporting scheme.

I am sure that many of us have items of tackle for which we have no further need which may be of use to other members and could I suggest that if this is so that members put in a small advertisement, similar to Arthur Smiths. For instance, Dave Walker could get rid of those 500 bottles of minnows in formalin which he purchased off Bill Knott and Dave Holman could pass on some of those very useful all-purpose Newark Needle-floats!

One or two members have very excellent setups for keeping live bait and I would like to see in writing from two in particular, namely Arthur Smith and Dave Holman, the stories of how they obtained their cow trough tanks from local kindly farmers. If the likes of Mike Harding and Jasper Carrott can make a living from their humorous anecdotes I am sure the famous Arthur can reveal all to a private audience within the Club. In any event I find him far more amusing. We can all relate various incidents that have occurred whilst we have been out fishing, why not let's put them in print. For me the kind of camaraderie that such stories evoke are just as important as the actual fishing and catching eels.

"There can be no doubt that the club is at a major turning point in its history. In the space of one afternoon we lost the services of a dedicated Chairman, who had been the main driving force behind the club and at the same time, we decided to radically change the reporting scheme which forms the backbone of the club's activities". These are not my words but lines taken from a Bulletin of November 1971 written by the then Editor, Alan Hawkins. His comments would seem to apply equally well to the present time. We are now ten years on. Let us not forget (as has been stated many times before) that we go fishing to enjoy ourselves and that enjoyment can mean for one person putting in a great effort and catching many large eels whilst for another enjoyment may simply be fishing with other club members and perhaps not catching so many large eels. What I am trying to say is that there is no reason why the club should not cater for a fairly large range of eel fishermen. I like most members have many commitments both in my business life and at home. Having said all that the common ground between us all is our interest in fishing for eels and must be to catch large eels. If we pool our resources, ie via the bulletin and help one another as we have done throughout our history then surely we will be well on the road to achieving our ultimate goal.

Mark Davies

SUB-SURFACE EEL FISHING - THE STORY UP TO THE PRESENT TIME

Most of you will know that in the past two or three seasons my efforts have been increasingly directed towards taking eels on baits fished anywhere but on the bottom. In fact, I rarely fish my home waters now without equally dividing my effort between the two methods. I hope in this short article to instil in you the confidence to try what I have been trying. Were more members willing to do so, our knowledge would surely take great strides in a forward direction. Not that we have learned nothing over the past three seasons - we have learnt much - but what we have learnt has served to open our eyes to the tremendous amount still to be done before we can say that we are on top of our subject.

We can start armed with two indisputable facts. The method of sub-surface eel fishing does produce results, and it does so when bottom eel fishing is apparently producing nothing at all. What I have been attempting in the past summer and autumn is to try to fix the time and the conditions which induce eels to rise from the bottom and readily take their food from near to the surface. This takes us back to the point about greater participation by more members, for at times I appear to have been bogged down by so many experiments and recording of meaningful data all happening at one and the same time. Clearly, when this happens, one is apt to lose ones way and it has become apparent that it must be a case of "slowly, slowly catchee monkey" (or Anguilla). But I've not been so bogged down that I have not learnt a few tricks. The operation has become a very exciting series of episodes, each one better than the last, and if in three or four sessions I learn something new, then I am satisfied.

Ever since my earlier theory about the effect on moonlight was blown sky high, I have become increasingly convinced that water temperatures have a far greater effect than was previously thought to be the case. Thus, I plodded on, using my analogue water thermometer, at times seeing small changes and at others seeing nothing. Then I made my new digital thermoteter, with a probe adapted to take either surface, sub-surface, or bottom readings. I immediately started to note subtle differences - small changes - and was soon able to relate these to results from fishing near to the surface.

Of course, it would be misleading of me were I to state that I could lay before you a range of facts and conditions that were beyond dispute. I cannot. But at the same time the picture is becoming very much clearer, and several things much more apparent. For instance, it is clear that there exists certain conditions related to water temperature under which influence eels feed at or near the surface. The overall water temperature seems to matter little - it is fairly obvious that what matters is the difference between bottom and surface temperatures. If this difference is too great it deters the eels from rising from the bottom. If the difference is too small the effect is the same. The difference which must exist between the two is quite small (to us but not necessarily to the eels) and I emphasise that it is the difference - NOT the overall water temperature. Again, the difference must be positive or in other words the surface must be warmer than the bottom - not the other way round.

From our findings these conditions are largely met when there is very little mixing of the water from whatever influence. That influence

SUB-SURFACE EEL FISHING - THE STORY UP TO THE PRESENT TIME - Cont'd

comes largely from windy conditions, but not necessarily. Thus it is that we find early pike anglers taking eels on bait fished midwater or higher in the autumn. Were I a bit younger than I am, I would carry on through the autumn to see what could be done.

I think those same conditions could well exist in the spring, but as I am precluded from fishing at that time I will never know for certain. The differences we are talking of are (to humans) rather small, in fact they may at first appear to be of no significance. But we have been told authoritatively that eels respond to differences as small as, or smaller than, one tenth of a degree fahrenheit! Our findings bear witness to that. Before leaving the subject of water temperatures, I must also tell you that on a small water the period when our "ideal" conditions prevail may well be short. This is compensated by the fact that the "deal" conditions may occur again quite soon. On a large water, once we have our ideal set of conditions they may well last for a period spanning several weekends - but once they are gone it could be along time before they exist again, and it could be that they will not exist that summer. In fact this past summer has been poor in respect of the all too few occasions when everything was "just right".

Were temperatures the only consideration we would be halfway home. But there are others. Most certainly the light at the surface has its effect. Moonlight deters the eels, and I think any form of light has that effect, even long-established nearby street lights if such light reaches the water. Noise too is a deterrent even if one is misguided enough to believe that the eels must have become accustomed to it!

On the subject of baits we have progressed further. Without doubt live baits are best, and species seems to matter not. Dead baits do produce results but presentation becomes very important. Dead fish must be made to assume their natural position in the water and an additive such as bullock's blood works well. In fact so well that I would not use a dead bait near the surface unless I could inject it with blood.

My favourite bait will be a good sized gudgeon, quite dead, and injected with bullock's blood. But maybe that is because I am a lazy angler - and dead gudgeon do not seem able to tow ones gear about all over the lake.

I use a two hook tackle when dead bait fishing, which allows me to get the bait to assume its natural position in the water. A single hook suffices for live baits mainly because I cannot bring myself to stick numerous hooks into a living fish. At the same time I will admit to missing more than my fair share of good runs when using single hooked live baits although, somewhat philosophically, I am compensated by having more runs on live fish than on dead ones.

As most of my baits are fished not lower than two feet below the surface, no matter what the depth of water is, it becomes apparent that one must use a float in order to suspend the bait at the right depth. I now use only two types - after trying several dozen. My first choice is a bubble float suitably filled with water. It works well and counters any surface draft quite well. I do not think it can be seen by the eels, but as I am not an eel I cannot be certain. Suffice to say that I have taken more eels on that gear than on any other.

SUB-SURFACE EEL FISHING - THE STORY UP TO THE PRESENT TIME - Cont'd

My second choice is one of Arthur Smith's excellent pike floats, painted black and with a central tube through which the line can run. For bite detection I use my MK4 electric alarm outfit - turned down low so as not to emit too much noise. I must explain that earlier I experienced a good number of runs at close range which fizzled out shortly after the alarm sounded. I tried the same thing with the same alarm outfit but with the sound turned right OFF and immediately enjoyed a great improvement!

Believe it or not, but that was the case and I now keep the volume low if I have it on at all!

Another precaution I take is to put an old blanket down if the ground near the water is of gravel, as it invariably is on my waters. The runs which come on dead baits are hit quite soon after they start, but on live baits I find I have to wait quite some time before attempting a strike and even then if I hook the eel it is usually only just in the mouth. It is as though the eels sense that the fish is still living and so travel a long way before trying to engulf it.

No doubt we shall learn very much more as we go on, but meanwhile it is all jolly existing treading, as we are, on virgin ground. When I read Dick Walker telling anglers that eels are to be caught only on the bottom it makes me smile. But I can forgive Dick his ignorance for were not we in the same position a few years back?

I realise that much of what I have said here is as likely to deter as it is to encourage. But please do not be put off trying just because there seem to be a few problems about which we know little. All the more reason to get stuck into sub-surface eel fishing. All my experience is yours if you care to drop me a line although I would prefer that you ask questions via the Bulletin so that every member may benefit. Lastly, I would advise you to start on your own waters, or those that you know quite well, before trying the exercise on waters unknown to you.

Arthur Sutton

 THE WHIT TRIP 1982 - COLEMERE

As I suggested at the AGM in November, Colemere, one of the Ellesmere group of lakes, I feel, would make an ideal venue for a Whit Trip.

Like the other Ellesmere lakes Colemere holds a prolific head of eels and no doubt like the other lakes the chief source of access must be from the Shropshire Union Canal which runs very close to Colemere. In fact if any members have fished Colemere a further walk up the canal from the tunnel would bring one within a very short distance of Colemere.

THE WHIT TRIP - COLEMERE - Cont'd

The one important difference about Colemere as opposed to the other lakes is that it is not controlled by the Ellesmere Angling Club. The club did control the water but apparently the fishing went into a decline and they let it go. As Dave Holman can confirm it is now the definite policy of the Ellesmere Angling Club not to allow close season fishing for eels on any of their lakes despite polite letters from myself. Colemere is controlled by the Stoke-on-Trent Angling Society but day tickets are available as it is a country park controlled by the Shropshire County Council with a warden on site. Neither the Shropshire County Council nor the Stoke-on-Trent Angling Society ban close season eel fishing and in fact the Stoke-on-Trent Angling Society's Handbook states specifically that angling for eels in the close season is allowed. Neither is there a ban on night fishing. From what I have already stated I hope members would agree that it could be an ideal venue for the Whit Trip. The possibility of catching a good number of quality eels is as great on Colemere as it is on any of the other meres as one only has to look at Dave Holman's results on Whitemere in 1980 and 1981 to see what can be achieved with a lot of hard work.

The actual physical location of the mere and the bank upon which angling is allowed makes it fairly easy fishing. There is a proper car park within approximately 100 yards of the water's edge and the bank from which one is allowed to fish is very flat if not perhaps a little too open. Colemere can be found on an Ordnance Survey map at Grid reference 43423. It has an area of 27.6 hectares and a maximum depth of 11.5 metres. This makes it slightly larger than Whitemere although a few metres shallower. For the scientists among you it has a pH₂₀ value of between 7.5 and 8.6 and is rich in calcium. The pH value is roughly approximate to Whitemere and as one would expect this means that there is an abundance of natural food for the fish life present.

Because we will be fishing fairly early in the year we should be able to avoid what is called the "breaking of the meres" which is when the blue/green algae breaks from the bottom of the lake and rises in the water to form a greenish floating scum. It generally means that one does not catch anything.

I have contacted the Recreation and Amenities Department of the Shropshire County Council to ask for their comments about the proposed club trip. If I receive a favourable response from them I will contact the Secretary of the Stoke-on-Trent Angling Society to gain his authorisation also.

If everything goes according to plan and a club trip to Colemere is on the cards perhaps I could ask the "Master of the Meres", Dave Holman, to write a piece for the Bulletin giving us all some advice on how to tackle the water. One thing I am sure he would emphasise in such an article would be the possibility of catching eels as readily during the day as during the hours of darkness.

Much of the scientific and factual data in this short article comes from a fascinating booklet entitled The Limnology of the Eutrophic Meres of the Shropshire and Cheshire Plains of which I have a copy should anybody wish to see it.

ANOTHER MONUMENTAL FIASCO (OR A RIGHT COCK-UP)

Old I may be getting, I hesitantly agree, long-sighted - yes. My sex drive is rather dormant for, like the Queen's birthday it is just twice a year! And then only if I have had my PRO-PLUS tables. One thing I am sure of. After forty years of angling I should be a lot wiser. Am I? Not one iota. Otherwise why do I repeatedly make such a hash of things when it comes to the crunch? Anyway, for what it is worth, here is my latest tale of woe.

After having made plans to fish the GU (illegally) with Tony Hollerbach, I eventually found myself fishing there on my own. At least there was another angler near to where I was to fish, but when I approached he fled like a bat out of hell. So I had the stretch to myself and settled down for this, my second visit to the venue this year. I had started later in the close season than I normally do, and the May blossom which I lovingly associate with the banks of the GU was well past its best, but at least the Magpies were here, and more than one cuckoo heralded what passed for early summer. But I was at peace with the world, and could show one rod licence at least.

My earlier trip had produced two 2lb+ eels and as things looked more promising for this trip my senses quickened and I was full of expectation. The daylight waned and it became miserably cold, for the fresh NE wind got even fresher. Still, I had plenty of gear with me and was soon partaking of a strong brew - made even stronger by a little additive. Midnight came and went and despite two or three more brews my enthusiasm sunk to a low ebb. Suddenly, all was still, for the wind had stopped as if at the throw of a switch.

The first action came to Rod 2, fishing a small dead bait some distance from me against the opposite bank. I should have realised that something was amiss when, every time the eel took a little line the rod would shake violently. When I was certain that the eel was moving steadily I tightened and struck. The rod arched over a long way and I knew that I was into a good fish. Several minutes later I was still playing the eel, or rather, it was playing me. For although the fish could take line I had to struggle like mad in order to retrieve any line at all. Then the line parted. On inspection I found that I had taken the line round the rod between rings, not just once - but twice! And that, I thought, as I throw the rod down in disgust, was that.

However, soon after 01.00 hours I had a run of Rod 1 and landed a lively eel just over two pounds. Ah well, thought I, it might well still be worth while putting rod 2 back in action. Which I promptly did. I was feeling a lot more satisfied when, shortly, rod 1 came into action again and I netted a good looking eel which later scaled 3lb 4oz. Things were a lot better now, of course, and I even felt warmer. Certainly so when, an hour later, the alarm on rod 2 sounded its joyful message. The line was leaving the spool at a steady pace and I soon connected.

No two pounder this one, this was one of the GU grand-daddies. The fish fought strongly and twice snagged me in the submerged branches on the far bank. Yet somehow I had that feeling that he was mine. Thoughts of my collecting the trophy in front of an envious audience fled through my mind. But most of all I was happy in that I had long yearned for a real monster from the GU. Hell, I might even go back to fishing it legally.

ANOTHER MONUMENTAL FIASCO (OR A RIGHT COCK-UP) Cont'd

It seemed ages before that eel was ready to be netted, but when that time came, the fish slid severely towards me and the waiting net. IN-SHE-GOES, I threw the rod and lifted the net high so that my eel could not escape - then CRACK, the blasted net fell into the canal with me still gripping the poke with two hands. Like a flash I dropped the net and lifted it out then realised with horror that the eel had gone. Nitwit that I am, I stood bemoaning my hard luck not realising that the eel must still be connected to the rod. That rod suddenly shot towards the water, stopped only by the sheathing along the bank, and the clutch screamed aloud as it was forced to yield. I hastily picked up the rod but soon found the tackle to be fast into the branches along the far bank. Just before dawn after much heaving this way and that, the line gave up the ghost and parted.

What had happened to the landing net pole. Well, this old soul had been meaning to fix it for quite some time. It was a cane handle, and the brass ferrule had been decidedly wonky for ages. The rivet had finally torn through the cane. Now I have a brand new, bright aluminium thing.

My tale of woe may yet do some good if you heed the warning. I had waited years for that GU eel, and may not get the chance again. All for want of a little attention and forethought. True I had with me my flashy bite alarms, digital water/air thermometer etc, and a wonky landing net handle let me down.

Still, the handle can be excused - for it must be about as old as I am.

PS. I am certain that eel went well over seven pounds and might have been my best ever!

Arthur J Sutton

 TRAPPING FOR LIVE BAITS

One of the major problems during the worse of the eel fishing season is having a stock of bait. One can easily overcome this if your preference is for using worms: by having a wormery. However, if you have a preference for dead bait, this is another matter. How many of us have gone out for a quick, serious eel fishing session and thought "there's a good chance of baits, no problem, we'll go out tonight". Then have finished up with just a couple and as a last resort have gone to the locals and asked for baits. They have answered in no uncertain terms that you ought to visit the taxidermist and "Get stuffed". In conversation with a local angler we get on to the subject of baits mainly, live baits for pike.

TRAPPING FOR LIVE BAIT - Cont'd

Between us we decided that it might be a good idea to have someone or something fishing for us on a permanent basis and the solution was a trap to do the work. We had to decide what sort of trap, so I had a sort out through some of my old catalogues and came up with one from a firm called "Youngs of Misterton".

This firm has been out of business for years but there it was advertising what we wanted - a LIVE BAIT TRAP. These items being illegal and not for sale I decided to make one.

Tools

Wire cutter pliers

Materials

Various materials can be used, ordinary chicken wire, weld mesh, or plastic-coated weld mesh, the latter is better and kinder to the fish. It is also easier to handle and shape. The best size is $\frac{1}{2}$ " square mesh though slightly more expensive than the 1" X $\frac{1}{2}$ " and will cost £3 - £4 to make. This is usually obtainable from gardening suppliers or pet shops and comes off the roll. Some are a bit loathe to split a roll but most will. About 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ yards X 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ yards will do. The length is 1 yard because it is the most convenient size to buy.

Making

A flat base is needed 1 yard long by 18 inches wide being strengthened along the sides and ends with plastic-coated wire as used to support chain-link fencing. The top or dome is then shaped so that it is 12" to 15" high and secured to the base, for this I need soft wire, plastic-coated, again from gardening suppliers.

The next step is to cut and shape the back, this is done best by cutting an oblong slightly larger than the end and then cutting to shape. After it has been wired to the dome and base, reinforce the dome both ends with heavy wire. When this has been done an oblong section can be cut out to make a door for removal of fish.

The size of the door is approximately 6" X 4" giving plenty of room to put the hand and wrist in for removal of baits. A larger piece is needed to cover the hole so as not to leave a gap, I have secured a piece of rigid wire to mine, making it hinged and a couple of twists of soft wire to hold it in position. The trickiest part of it is making the funnel, the entrance for the fish. The easiest solution is to make a template out of heavy polythene, secure it round the outer edge of the trap, then taper it to a cone with an inlet hole about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". I found that a hole of this size allows fish to about 6" long to enter.

When you have the required shape of template, detach it from the body of the trap, open it out and cut the mesh to shape allowing an extra inch for overlapping and securing. It should extend about 1 foot into the trap. It is then fitted and wired in place and the entrance hole can be adjusted for position to about 3"-4" from the bottom.

TRAPPING FOR LIVE BAIT - Cont'd

To each corner of the base a lead or metal weight must be fitted to make sure that the trap sinks base downwards. This is needed as the trap is most likely to be thrown in so attach a cord to the reinforcing wire.

Position in water

I have found the best position is usually behind a weed bed, mainly because this is where the fish will be feeding. If the water is reasonably shallow one can put it in position with the use of waders and anchor the cord to the bottom with a stone or large brick.

Baiting up

It is obvious that with a mesh trap you can not bait with maggots, castors or worms. So what I use is pure bread crumbs with a little rusk added. The crumb and musk mixed together are riddled with fresh casters, sinking type not floaters, making the groundbait really heavy to stay on the bottom of the trap. When the water gets to the rusk it bursts open the balls of ground bait, this leaves a mat of bait on the floor of the trap riddled with casters.

The trap is left in about 2 days to give the fish a chance to get inside. The placing of the trap and removal must be done either very early morning or late at night when no-one is about. Removal of fish must be done while in the water shallows otherwise they flap about and damage themselves, hence the reason (my preference) for plastic-coated wire.

The early part of the season is most productive for baits. If a cold spell crops up, very often the trap is empty. After September it is of little use unless a continued mild spell exists though you still don't get as many fish. The most I have had in the trap in one session was 83, seems incredible but it works. On one occasion I lifted the trap out and a pike of about 2lb was stuck with its head in the funnel part with its gills and dead.

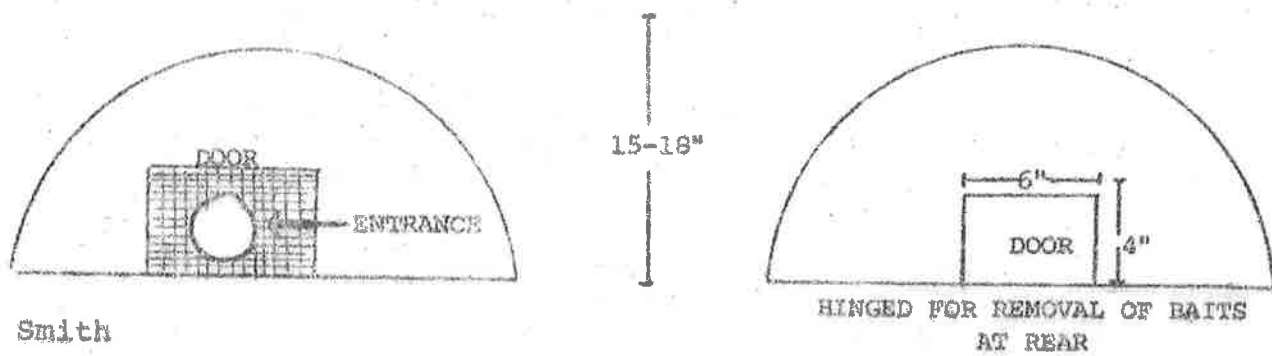
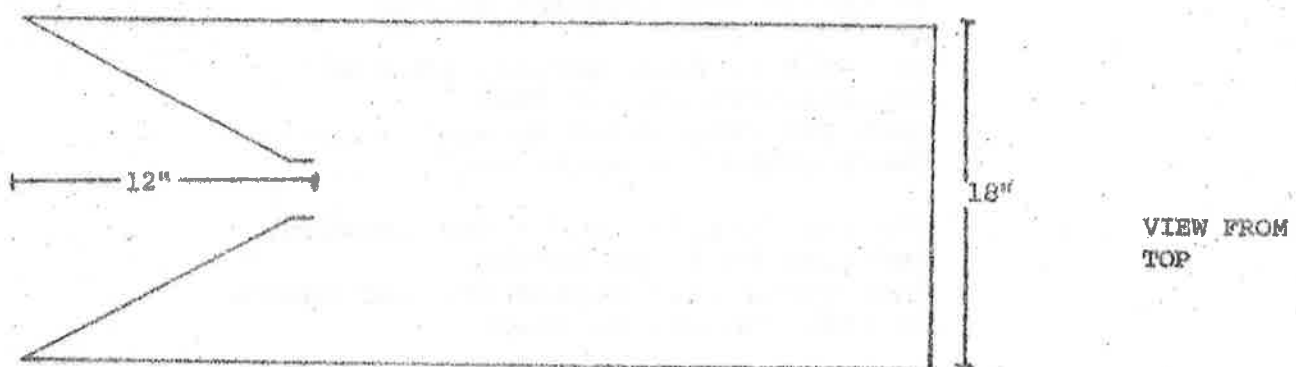
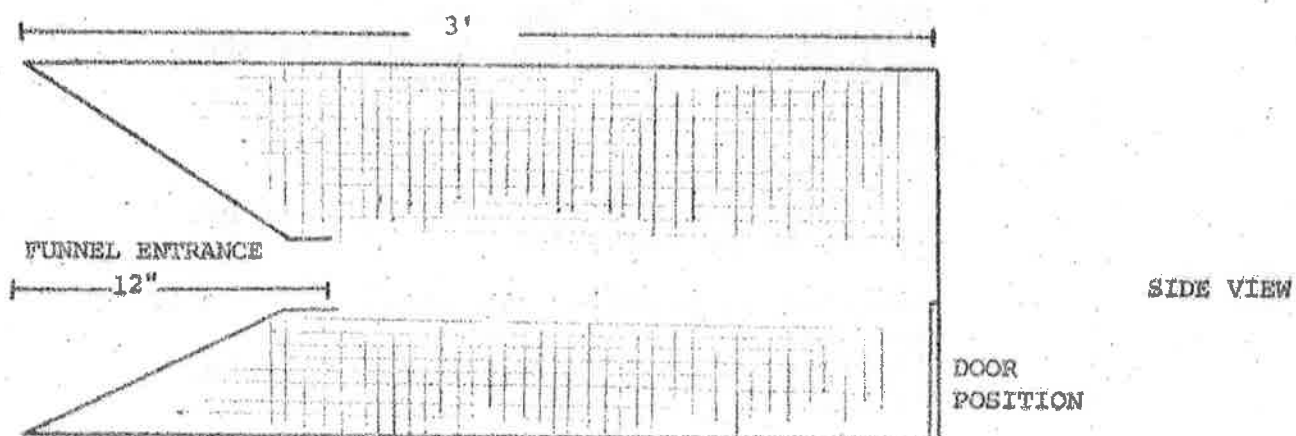
Below are diagrams to illustrate the shape and size of the trap. These are only my dimensions, but one must bear in mind the trap must be of a realistic size and the hole in the funnel not too large so the fish can get out again.

I have only tried the trap in ponds when the fish are mainly overstocked and stunted. Roach being predominant with the odd rudd and crucian carp.

I hope members will find this of interest and of some use, but bear in mind that they are illegal so be careful!

PTO for diagrams

TRAPPING FOR LIVE BAIT - Cont'd



A Smith

LIVE AND LET LIVE

POEM BY A J SUTTON

The netting party gathers nigh,
Good men and true, who wish,
That ere this pond is pumped quite dry,
They'll net out all the fish.

Their services are given free,
Forsaking home and wife,
For the next few days they all will be,
Intent on saving life.

Commendable perhaps, but wait,
Read further through this verse,
You'll see these chaps deserve to rate,
As animals - or worse!

The level drops, good fish are caught,
Handled with loving care,
To another water they are brought,
To thrive and flourish there.

The work is hard but all goes well,
Satisfaction we all feel,
Then one chap jumps up with a yell,
"Here comes a blasted eel".

Men run from far and wide, ashance,
Arriving short of breath,
They queue just hoping for the chance,
To bash the eel to death.

What foolishness, and we protest,
But our breath might well be saved,
Each word is treated as in jest,
For these are men depraved.

Clobbered, bashed, both cut and maimed,
With a knife right through its head,
Some two hours later it is acclaimed,
"This wretched eel is dead".

"Who wants this eel", but all declare
It's too big for the pot,
So it's thrown into the bushes where
It will just lay and rot.

We feel ashamed and sickened, yet,
No one knows how we feel,
The only response we will get
"It was only an eel"!

Were we to do the same to Carp,
No doubt we soon would be,
Hung, drawn and quartered pretty sharp,
For such a cruelty.

A CELEBRATION

Formed late in 1962, the National Anguilla Club will next year (1982) be twenty years old. That it has survived thus far reflects sensible policies as far as the every day running of the Club is concerned.

As President, I see no earthly reason why the Club should not enjoy yet another twenty years. Interest in eel angling, has grown apace since our early years and we are now only one of a number of eel groups. Yet our role remains unaltered and we have a most useful part to play.

Several of the longest-serving members (and the oldest) will, hopefully, be with us for a while yet. But, twenty years! That is a long time. Our twentieth birthday is surely worth a little celebration, and I would like to hear from you all as to what form you think this celebration should take. Or indeed whether or not we should celebrate at all.

I wish to propose a real good get-together of some kind, at which we could possibly swell our number by inviting ex-members to join in our celebration.

So that I can put some firm proposals before our AGM, may I ask you, please, to write direct to me outlining your wishes. Write to A J Sutton, 28 Kennedy Avenue, Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire.

A J Sutton
