

The National Anguilla Club

# BULLETIN

VOLUME 13

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THE NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB.

BULLETIN VOLUME 13

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EDITORIAL

In an effort to be extremely helpful to our General Secretary and prevent him from having to help me out in the re-typing of the scripts for this issue, (unfortunately our friends in the Post Office have been playing games!) I have ended up causing more problems than I have solved. Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in the publication of this issue.

I should like to be able to say that the delay has been caused by a surfeit of fishing. Alas, that is not the case. In fact, fishing has occupied a low priority in my social calendar for the past months, mainly because the whole "scene" has not appealed to me. Apart from Alan Hawkins' contention that one should get away from continuous eel fishing, it is my contention that one should get right away from fishing altogether now and then. It certainly broadens the horizons. Not that I have become a hermit or anything. I still indulge in my weekends away from the city; but I have been looking at places through new eyes and in a different way.

Fishing (people say) is just a form of relaxation and gives one the means from the daily toil to escape. Such people are not fishermen. I am sure you will all agree that fishing is hard work, whether it be a days roach fishing or a nights eel fishing. It's certainly not relaxing - indeed, it is a pleasure to return to work to relax!

Me, I've been relaxing. I've been reconsidering my own position and philosophy and getting reality into perspective. And I feel all the better from it.

Having stood back awhile, I feel equipped to comment on a few aspects of Anguilla Club politics that have been bothering a few people of late. This "controversy" came to a head with the publication of two articles under separate cover.

Firstly, there is the question of the British Angling Conference. I am shocked at the speed with which those people who could not put themselves out to attend this function have rushed to criticise those who did.

Secondly, there is criticism of our social set up. Would people prefer that we do not speak to each other? As we hardly see each other, I hardly believe that this is a social club.

Thirdly, we are eel fishermen.

Fourthly, the present reporting scheme is rubbish, but until we are prepared to drag ourselves away from our conservative attitudes, we'll stick with it.

Fifthly, it is claimed that we are a democratic organisation. Thus, if you vote and loose you have the right to criticise; if you don't bother voting you lose the right to complain. In other words, those who do not attend the AGM forfeit the right to criticise on the grounds of default.

Sixthly, as this publication is the instrument of the "Social Club", I hereby resign as editor.

DAVID SMITH.

So, we have the resignation of our Editor - yet another crisis to overcome. I do not feel too despondent for no one, least of all I, is indispensable. There must be plenty of young men in the Club who would make ideal Editors. Think about it for a while and see whether or not you could do the job. At the A.G.M. we will have to elect an Editor, but a volunteer is far better than ten pressed men.

Meanwhile, your Chairman has asked me to carry on as best as I can until such time as we have another Editor. I have the material with which the present issue of your Bulletin is made up, but now I do desperately want more if the Bulletin is to regain its former continuity. I will turn it out, never fear, but I cannot, and will not, write all the material myself.

So see what you can do, please, and write that article or send in those ideas on tackle set-ups etc. Send all material DIRECT TO A.J.S. please until further notice.

Let me emphasise the fact that I cannot do this job indefinitely, for I do like to go fishing occasionally, and I have a mammoth construction job in finishing my electronic organ during the coming winter.

Dave Smiths' resignation has made me think about my own position as General Secretary. I have done the job, most willingly, for some few years. I have now turned thirty years of age (and want no rude remarks please) and on looking at the average age of those members in the Club I get the feeling that the Club ought to have a younger General Secretary.

Don't get me wrong. I am not resigning and would be most willing to carry on AS LONG AS THE MEMBERS WISH ME TO. Few of you have ever criticised what I do, although God knows that much of what I do is surely open to criticism. Its just that feeling that you may want a younger man to do the job, in which case I hope that you will have the courage to say so and not keep quiet for fear of upsetting this poor soul. Meanwhile, on with the nitty gritty. A.J.Sutton.

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#### REPORT ON THE MINI TRIP TO CORNWALL - EASTER 1976.

Earlier in the year several members had got together and organized a mini trip to Cornwall at Easter, and under the jurisdiction of Dave Smith, eventually met up in a cafe' car park near St Austell on Good Friday morning. Those present were Dave Smith, Bob Pountney, Kevin Richmond, Nigel Jeyes, John Bell, Dave Knee, Keith Stephenson, Stephen Woods and Dereck Minards who joined up later when the other eight members besieged his house for cups of tea. Special mention must be made of new members Keith Stephenson and Steve Woods who travelled to Cornwall overnight from Havant on a motor bike and scooter and had camped out on the local moors. Considering that they had only 350 cc between them their effort is highly comendable.

Kevin Richmond was somewhat shattered after travelling down from Barnstaple in Nigel Jeyes mini van. The reason for this, apparently, was due to the fact that Nigel kept trying to run down rabbits and wood pigeons for breakfast, and swerving from side to side on a small Cornish road is not everyones cup of tea. After tea and toast at Derecks house we all set off for the Electricity Pool to catch some baits - the permits had been kindly seen to by Dereck beforehand. Nigel and Kevin went off to see some relations and were to meet up with the others at Wheal Rashleigh where the eel fishing was to be undertaken. Dave Knee captured most of the baits from Electricity Pool consisting of rudd and perch, and Dereck had gone over to Conbis Moor and had managed to get some excellent minnows. So, with plenty of baits everyone set off for Wheal Rashleigh where they found Nigel and Kevin with pogs already set up and already fishing.

Dave Knee, Dereck Minards, Steve Woods and Keith Stephenson chose swims at the far end of the big water, while Nigel Jeyes, Kevin Richmond, John Bell,

Dave Smith and Bob Pountney fished the shallower opposite end. Dave and Bob occupied the same swims where they had taken eels of 3:9 and 3:5 respectively in 1975. Friday night produced eels of 0:4 for Nigel Jeyes and 0:14 for Kevin Richmond both of these fish falling to lobworm baits. Saturday saw members attempting to snatch fresh baits and spinning for the big perch and trout which are known to be in the water - both efforts proving rather fruitless but again Dave knee managed to catch the most baits and the best perch of about  $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. Bob Pountney continued fishing for the eels as he was experimenting with live baits which he hoped would be successful. Throughout the day tea and coffee flowed freely in more ways than one ! The weather was excellent and looked like staying that way.

Saturday night produced eels of 0:8 $\frac{1}{2}$  and 0:15 for Bob Pountney, the larger of which took a rudd livebait during a full moon at 04:20. Bob had dispensed with his wire traces and was fishing his liphooked livebaits on a 2ft nylon trace. The smaller eel took a lobworm bait at 21:30 hrs Dave Smith somehow managed to miss three runs during the night and therefore took a fair bit of stick from the lads the following morning. Sunday morning saw Kevin Richmond waking everyone up as usual - and being told exactly where to go ! There was a rumour going round that Kevin had actually made a cup of tea but there appears to be insufficient evidence to support this !

At noon, Dave Smith realised it was opening time and being the wino that he is, went to the pub with Dave Knee. On their return our venerable Editor gave a detailed account of how he had undergone certain sanitary rituals. Nigel Jeyes and Bob Pountney decided to visit the local cafe, where the owner accused Bob of being an Australian, of all things. The two of them had a great time continuously playing 'CONVOY' on the juke box and bursting into choruses of 'let them truckers roll, ten four' ! When Nigel and Bob returned they were confronted by John Bell who was holding something long and smelly in his hands. "Do you know anything about snakes" ? John asked. Fortunately Nigel explained that John was, in fact, holding a grass snake. Dave Smith was asleep in his pog by this time and it was suggested that the snake be stuffed down inside his long Johns, but not wishing to be cruel to the poor creature ( the snake, that is) Nigel retained it to take home with him.

Sunday night saw one more eel of 0:14 to lobworm by Dereck Minards. Nothing showed up to take the live baits being fished by Bob Pountney, Dave Smith and Dave Knee. The packing up started on Monday morning and, by noon, members had said their farewells and had started for home, although many had second thoughts as the sun became hotter. Dereck Minards was particularly pleased that the members had decided to fish in his neck of the woods. It also gave him, Steve Woods and Keith Stephenson the chance to meet and fish with at least some of the Club members.

All agreed that, although no big eels showed up they all had a really enjoyable time and are looking forward to fishing in Cornwall again. The weather was very good and the only upsets came when Nigel Jeyes and Bob Pountneys bed chairs collapsed !

Secs Note. I do not know the Author of this piece, but would like to thank him for a most detailed and amusing piece. Will the wielder of the green pen stand up please.

-----  
A LETTER TO DAVE SMITH.

By STEVE RADFORD.

In the recent Bulletin 13:4 I read a letter to the Editor which has actually made my pen become alive. As I am not very good at writing I rarely put pen to paper. This particular letter was about big eels and live baits. I will say now that I have not read the article in Angling which is referred to, but that will soon be remedied.

Besides being a keen eel fisherman I am keen on Zander fishing and have, after six years, the first three of which only produced Zander to 4lb 12 oz at last

started to have success with four doubles to 11lb 12oz. Anyway, back to the point, whilst fishing the Relief Channel in August, September and October from 1973 onwards my methods have been such that I catch both eels and Zander on a variety of baits but basically the same rig.

Rig - 1 to 2oz Arlesy bomb 15lb nylon trace 6 or 4 for Livebait and 1/0 or 2/0 hooks for deadbait.

I have noticed over quite a long period using a variety of baits during the same session with baits usually fished in Mid channel, that when there is any flow or strong wind to cause an undertow thus causing quite coloured water that  $\frac{1}{2}$  baits or deadbaits with the throat cut are FAR MORE PRODUCTIVE than livebaits (i.e. four runs on the deadbaits to every one on livebait). Also, although not yet as noticeable is a theory that wide baits I.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  bream or rudd seem far more slective for large eels or Zander. The idea of  $\frac{1}{2}$  baits for pike in coloured water seems to work although whether it is better is anyones guess. When the channel is clear it also seems to us that deadbait is more productive of runs especially as mentioned above but the difference in number of runs is not so noticeable.

Just to give some idea of the fish that have fallen to the above method I.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  baits.

R.Channel.  $\frac{1}{2}$  or cuthroat deadbaits.

Livebaits.

Zander 7 over 10 lbs

None.

EELS all mine are 3lbs since '73  
best fish 3:15 and 4:7

I over 3lbs before '73  
none by myself or that I  
can remember since '73.

Our usual method to start with is Rod 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ bait Rod 2 deadbait and Rod 3 livebait and it is usual to keep a livebait out all night on at least one of the rods. It is worth noting that before 1973 we fished more or less totally with live baits and mainly for Zander.

I would like to say that I am attempting to go through all my notes on fishing this particular water in order to give a better presentation of the facts regarding the number of runs but as yet I have not done this. I hope that this letter has been of interest and I would like to receive comments from other members on this topic especially with regard to the relief channel.

Note from Sec. In answer to your query regarding BRA lake and where it got that name I can tell you that BRA st<sub>a</sub>nds for Brians Record Anguilla. O.K. Steve ?

OVERCOMING LIVEBAIT PROBLEMS.

By A.Smith.

One of the biggest problems of summer eels fishing or winter pike fishing is the problem of having livebait to hand. To save time, and often frustrating hours of fishing I decided to have a more or less permanent supply of baits ready. Various methods of containing the baits were tried, from the standard eel dustbin to zinc baths. Finally I solved the problem - a horse trough made of zinc. Getting hold of one was the poser. If you know a friendly farmer you may get hold of one for a few quid and, if you dont know a farmer they are even cheaper ! Mine found its way into the back of Clive Houghtons van one dark stormy night. Clive needed a new set of underwear afterwards!

Having got hold of your container the problem of where to put it crops up. My own is situated at the coolest corner of the garage and out of direct sunlight. This is essential. Not being sure whether or not mine was toxic to fish I lined it with polythene - perhaps not essential, but kinder to the fish. This has to be shaped to suit the contours of the container and make sure you have an overlap.

The sheet is placed in the container (presuming that it is metal) and filled with hot water, softening the material and allowing it to be shaped easier. Due to the heavy weight when filled if the container is not on the ground or floor raise the tank on a suitable and strong trestle. Mine is 6'6" x 18" x 18" approx; 80 gallons.

Having got the tank ready, the next step is to set up the air pump. This is essential to aerate the water. The types I have tried are RIMA and MONTROSE MAJOR. Both are about £3. Of the two, the latter is by far the better pump, reliable and very economical - costing about 5-10p per week to run.

A better pump is the MONTROSE MAJOR but with a double outlet which could be very beneficial in the warm summer months, coupled to two aerating blocks instead of one. To give cover for the fish I place a couple of plant pots in the centre of the tank, planted with water plants. Any of the oxygenating plants are good, I.E. Elodia species Genus Elodea - Elodea densa and Elodia Ernstiae.

If you cannot get the pondweed from a local pond, then it is available from any tropical fish shops, being suitable for cold water tanks or aquaria. Prior to stocking the tank with fish I put in a couple of bags of Daphnia to propagate and produce a natural food.

Of the various baits kept for eel baits, dace are superior. Roach and rudd chubb and perch and also crucian carp if used. A small mesh net is used to get the fish out when required. Having stocked the tank a frame must be placed over the tank to stop the fish from leaping out. Chicken wire or Netlon are good. I use the latter mounted on a wooden frame. Before I fitted the frame it was surprising how many fish I found on the garage floor. I have watched them leap right out, especially dace and chubb.

Fish mortality is largely unavoidable and the worst offender is fungus - another reason why I line the container. To try and overcome this I use one of the proprietary brands of liquid. The best I have found is FUNGISTOP put in at the recommended rate. It costs about 40p a bottle. If this fails to clear the trouble, it is obvious that the fungus spores are in the tank. To overcome this I remove all stock from the tank and disinfect it with a cupful of bleach after which I swill out several times with clean water before replacing the fish. I have found that most of the fish will feed within a couple of days - dace especially. I do not attempt to keep any fish which have been deeply hooked or those which have lost scales. To transport the fish to a water, if required alive, the normal eel bin can be used. A battery operated air pump is used and the best of these is the SHAKESPEAR. This model uses two HP2 batteries which will last for up to 25 hours running time.

At the waterside I prefer NOT to transfer the fish to a keepnet, but to keep the pump running. The water can be changed occasionally to give the pump a rest. Aerate the water or change it every half hour or the fish will be lost.

The water in the stock tank is changed each week and often twice a week in the summer and the waste matter syphoned off. This job may take a couple of hours. Another important factor is not to overstock with fish, especially in the summer. In the winter the tank will hold twice as many fish as in the summer. As a rule, I find that one bait per 2 gallons of water is about the summer limit assuming 4" to 5" fish.

To the various members enquiring I hope that this is of some interest. It takes up some time, but is well worth it.

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NOTE FROM SECRETARY.

Nearly all the articles received at this end begin with "although I'm not much good at writing articles" etc Or, "my writing and spelling stop me from sending in articles for the Bulletin". Honestly, IT DOES NOT MATTER as long as you have something constructive to say. The only requirement is that I can understand what you are getting at. So come on, how about that article from YOU.

BEGINNINGS ..... AND A TRIBUTE  
by N.L.S. Jeyes

I would not be as presumptuous as to claim perfection in the art of eel-angling but along with piking and trouting, wrassing and mulletting (none of which I'm particularly good at) I get inestimable pleasure from my pastime. I challenge anyone to state exactly why he (or she) develops a love of our sport - there's a nebulous something, intangible yet emotionally stirring about our craft - I can never wait to cast out a bait, and I hate, nay positively loathe, tackling down. The long hours of waiting, requiring plenty of both patience and self-discipline, body and soul alive in anticipation of that first run. The carefully planned and executed strike. But the battle that ensues on hooking my prey, although pleasurable I admit, lacks that essential something that pervades the atmosphere of waiting and anticipation. When the exhausted and frightened quarry lies gasping with time possibly limited by an exhilarated hunting instinct - an instinct that cries for the death of this living organism - I feel a pang of regret, saddened and depressed. In its watery element a fish, of whatever species, is a perfectly designed unit of life, for whatever purpose, a supreme product of the natural way of things - its lines, its grace, its very life, delight me. Out of water though a fish is a pathetic sight. That is, with the exception of the eel. On land the eel can survive long periods, no doubt very long periods during wet weather. When caught it does not flat<sup>P</sup> about helplessly on one side but writhes about in an irritated manner, perhaps instinctively panicking, before accepting its predicament, making the best of its misfortune and moving off on its belly in the manner of a serpent. When taken from its element, even crudely hooked, there is no fear in the eye of the eel. Annoyance, perhaps, but not fear. An eel



deeply hooked, twisting, writhing, contorting itself into knots - like an epileptic - is a sight that sickens me - it happens, I know, I feel shamed that it can occur because I'm not a good enough fisherman. I enjoy watching fish in the water, especially eels - they are supremely graceful in their malevolency of purpose as they swim an undulating but straight course, probing with their snouts, before disappearing into the dark depths that are their kingdom.

My first encounter with anguilla took place years ago and with the young of the species. I was on holiday with my parents in the Channel Islands, Jersey to be precise. It was a hot day and I was searching amongst the rocks on the beach as small boys do, when I came across a rock-pool full of 'glass eels'. I picked up a handful and felt them slither between my fingers. A fascinating experience but not formative, I think, of my later search for their bigger brethren.

Many years later I met their antithesis. I was at boarding school in Somerset at the time and used to spend hours wading about in the River Brue, picking up stones and collecting crayfish which I used to sell to members of staff for 2/6d a bag. This particular afternoon I lifted a particularly large paving stone which had somehow found its way into the river. No crayfish but a great eel lay underneath, which casually uncoiled itself and swam out slowly. I clearly remember grabbing at it, hoping to scoop it onto the bank. I even got a grip on its fat body at one point until it turned its head and opened its mouth as if to bite. I, of course, let go. That eel escaped into a crevice in a wall.

Again several years passed and then came the fateful time I undertook to become an angler. Book-taught, dry fly at first, amusingly farcical it appears now. I turned to the float and learnt our art on minnows, dace, gudgeon and roach. I had read about eels and catching

them on a hot, still summers afternoon, and the stage was set for my first formal introduction. The place, a small millpool on the River Yeo. I lay back on a high grassy bank watching my swing-tip in a rather lazy fashion whilst eight feet below my two anchored redworms washed about on the edge of the current in a few inches of water at the opening to an old stone drainage culvert. The swing-tip suddenly jerked and I leapt into unexpected action, striking and hauling the hooked eel vertically up to the top of the bank on my crude tackle. I was rather struck silent in amazement as I watched this creature swinging about in mid-air - it was difficult to believe that it wasn't a snake. I dropped it into the grass where it thrashed frenziedly into a slimy mass of vegetation. But something clicked in my soul and another eel-fisherman was born. With that experience to spur me on, I read gluttonously every available piece of information on the eel and precious little did I find. By natural progression I started using minnow baits as well as worms, <sup>and once,</sup> rather daringly I thought, a gudgeon. I was convinced that anything larger would be too big for an eel to manage and so I persevered until I caught a fabulous fish of 11lb 3 or 4ozs. My personal best. A great achievement to me (laughable now I know) <sup>and I</sup> ~~but~~ lusted after larger victims without success until almost another year had lapsed. At that time I fished regularly with two companions as earnest as myself. One got through the barrier ahead of me on a Wiltshire lake one night. Eels of 3lb, 2lb, 1 1/4lb and 1 1/4lb he took to my great envy. I muffed my only run. A few days later I reaped my reward in the shape of a very slim 37-inch long 3-pounder. However shortly after I caught my first 'double' pike and anyway the season was almost over. My objectives

wavered.

I had read about the 'National Anguilla Club' and it had become a kind of Mecca to me. It was<sup>at</sup> about this time that I wrote requesting membership but feeling certain it would not be granted. I was elated when I received an affirmative letter. Although during my apprenticeship I took only three eels over 2lbs, best 2:12, I was pleased for I have learnt much in that year, too much in too short a space of time, but now that knowledge is, I hope, being assimilated and I will develop new and constructive thoughts. A club is its membership and your dedication and your generosity and consideration to others have succeeded in making it uncontestably the best. But I hope I shall always remember that still, hot summers afternoon a few years ago.

#### A Quick Comment

I do sincerely exhort you to keep contributing material for the bulletin. I often feel those pangs of guilt which I'm sure many others amongst our number also suffer. My usual excuse to assuage my conscience is that I have nothing of interest to write. If you've laughed at my epistle you must have read it and that's all that's asked. Congratulations to AJS & Dave Smith for keeping us going but they can only read what they have written - and I sometimes wonder - Oscar Wilde once said something to the effect 'If I wish to read a book, I write one!' and we all know about Oscar Wilde, don't we?

N.A.C. BULLETIN 13.5.

Nowadays, there is a considerable number of large landing nets on the market. When an item of tackle such as this is manufactured, it is not simply a case of "scaling-up", as this usually results in an unacceptable weight increase; to make a lightweight job results in a flimsy affair which in some cases is not strong enough to land a big fish. I believe that I have arrived at a net frame which is both light and strong, and is capable of being made by the ~~individual~~ angler.

~~INDIVIDUAL~~

The arms are made of hollow glass boat rod tips, the spreader of metal tubing, and due to the method of erection, a high tension is developed in the drawcord. At a cursory glance, it may seem a little expensive to buy two blanks to make net arms, but when you reckon that the nearest commercial equivalent costs over £20, then it all falls into perspective.

The method of construction is thus: (see accompanying diagrams and photos).

A length of tubing (approx. 10-12") is bent to approx. 90° (most electricians have this facility for bending conduit). Measure the I.D. of the tubing, and cut the blank at a slightly smaller O.D. so that it will slide into the tubing for approx. 3ins. Decide on the length of arm required and chop off the tip with a hacksaw accordingly. Repeat this on the other arm. Insert both arms into the spreader and prepare to attach the cord. Use epoxy resin to secure two large split pins down the centre of each arm, and if you wish, about 1" of whipping can be carried out to prevent cracking. The nylon drawcord is now attached via a strong split ring to the split pin, and pulled so that the arms bend, giving a "shrimp-net" shape; this gives a more effective netting area than a triangular one. Tie the cord.

To dismantle the net, place the tip of one arm on the ground and push so that the arm bends sufficiently to remove the tension in the other, which can then be removed from the spreader. Release the first arm, and off comes the spreader.

Select a suitable net handle. The standard thread for this is a 5/8" B.S.F. Drill a hole through the centre of the bend in the

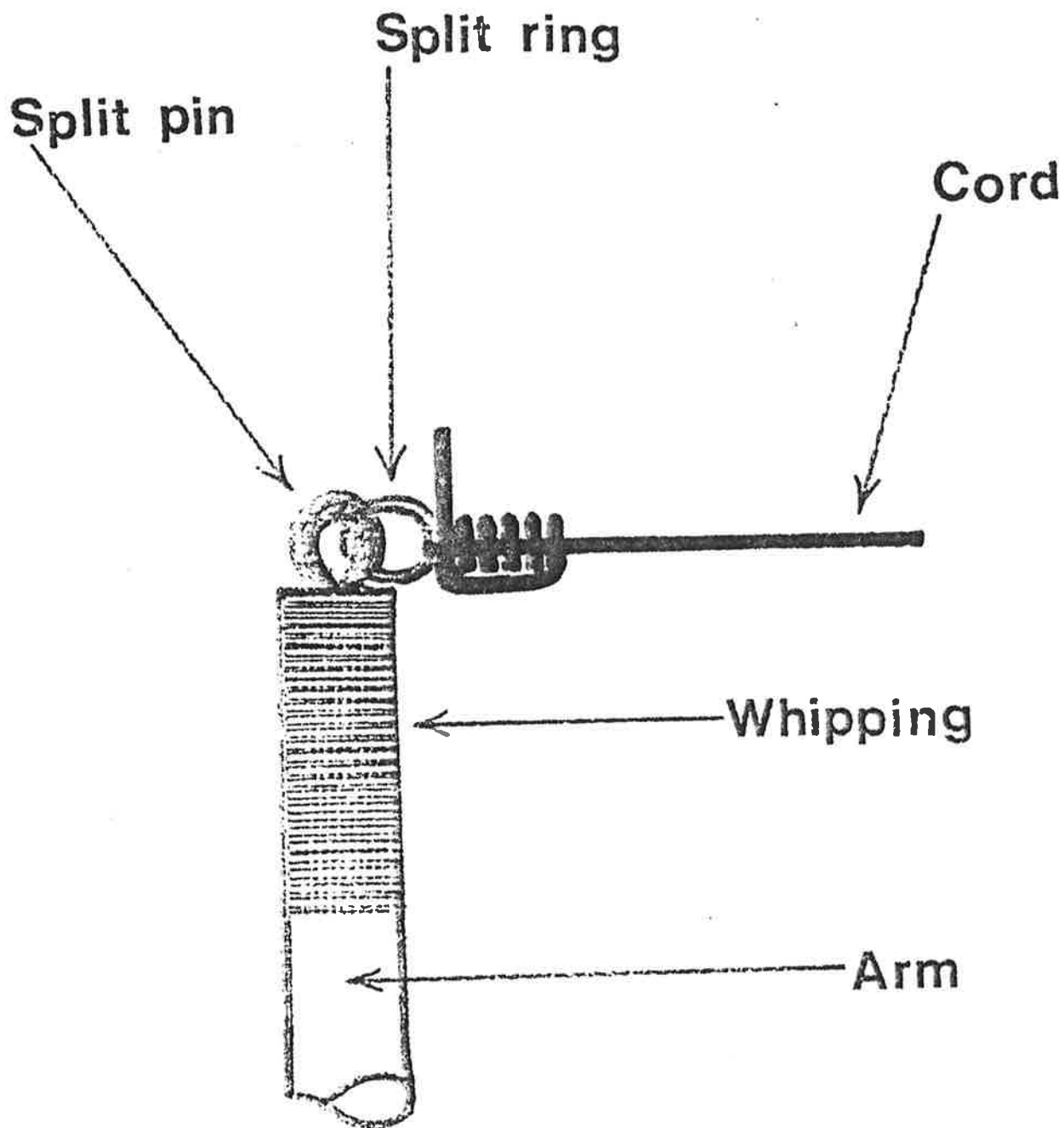
tubing wide enough to take the bolt. Insert the bolt, put on the nut and tighten. If you wish it can be welded. This nut has the added advantage that the handle tightens snugly to it and prevents the handle from working loose in use.

The net can now be threaded onto the arms, and the whole affair is ready for use.

Assembly of the net is a quick affair. (My friends who use the spreader leave it permanently screwed into their handles). Simply insert one arm into the spreader, push the tip of the arm on the ground until the other arm can be inserted, insert the other arm, and release. ~~The assembly is very simple and quick.~~

The cost of the construction is such:

2 Boat Rod Tips (at approx. £3.00 each)	£6.00
Drawcord, split pins, rings, tubing, bolt etc.	£1.00
Net (dependent upon personal choice and availability)	£4.00
	<hr/>
	£11.00



# The Net Spreader

