



The National Anguilla Club

# BULLETIN

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EDITORIAL

The appearance of the Bulletin is an occasion. The appearance of two Bulletins in consecutive months is quite extraordinary; but three issues in three months must border on the miraculous. But the Bulletin is returning to being a monthly publication. There is, of course, one proviso: that material flows in.

In many ways that sounds like the old, old story of the Bulletin, but there is a big difference. For some time the cry has been for material so that an issue can be published, full stop; what I'm saying is that the material should flow in so that we can have a successful monthly Bulletin. It is an unfortunate fact, but material for the Bulletin has always been something of a problem. But is it as big a problem as we tend to think?

Since I took over the Editorship from Alan, I have had no less than ten articles from eight members - excluding my own little bits. No, material is forthcoming provided there is a stimulus, and what better stimulus is there for you to put pen to paper than the receipt of a Bulletin. But, naturally, you are going to be a little reluctant to put pen to paper if you feel that your article will not be seen for several months - ie. the period between expected issues. Now you can write, rest assured, that your piece on winter eel fishing is going to appear during the winter a couple of weeks after you've written it.

As for this issue, well we have a real bumper. Dave Holman has returned from a visit to Kenya - he had great difficulty, so I hear, in convincing immigration officials, on his return, of his white classification and his poor wife is now doing time for smuggling in illegal immigrants! - and given a really excellent account of his exploits at Kinderuma.

Kevin Richmond's name appears in print again appended to a short piece explaining his problems for us all to consider. Never mind, Kev, try Marge Proops. What's your answer? Let him know through the Bulletin next month.

Bob Pountney, our other west country colleague, has a desire to be on the front page of the News of the World - I could answer that, but Mary Whitehouse would have this issue banned as being pornographic!

Furthermore, as a result of certain pressures, I've been co-ersed into letting this issue have a SLASH. No more, please fans, cos I've run out of Superman comics to crib!

Finally, I am a little disappointed. Last month Steve Hope gave us a damn good "gutty" piece on netting and what effect it has had on his fishing. So far, only Arthur Sutton has expressed any view. What's wrong with the rest of you? I'm sure you all deeply care about what may happen to your fishery if you're unlucky enough to have the "parasites" round, but the lack of response gives the impression that you don't care.

So, put your pen to paper and see your article in next month's issue.

DAVID SMITH.

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

By Bob Pountney.

As a reasonably new member of the National Anguilla Club, I feel it is about time I put pen to paper and contribute to the Bulletin, if only to see my name in print - by the way, how do you get on to the front page of the News of the World?

I would not profess to be, by any means, an expert eel angler - indeed, I hope to learn a lot more from the rest of you - but I do fish exclusively for eels now and there is no doubt, in my opinion, size for size, they are one of the most powerful species in freshwater.

Over the years, fishing has become much more technical both in methods and tackle: the introduction of swing tips, for example, and electric bite alarms are but two. It makes one wonder what will develop in the next decade or two. Personally, I must admit that I have never used either a swing tip or an electric alarm in the course of any type of fishing. I've no complaints about the old dough bobbin, although I have now progressed to the stage of using luminous floats - who cried "Extrovert"? I suppose you could say that I'm a stick-in-the-mud or out of date, but you know what they say: "One man's meat is another man's poison."

I freeline as much as possible, as I believe it to be the most natural way of presenting baits, although, of course, it sometimes has its disadvantages.

One thing I have learned, however, is that using fresh herring strips pays off better than the ones I used to brush with pilchard oil - my sandwiches taste better too! You may be interested to know that the eels in one of my waters have a distinct liking for bread paste mixed with Shredded Wheat. This may be due to the fact that I used to fish this water for big bream using the same bait.

Many thanks to those members who have written to me, and I would like to hear from more of you. I intend coming on some of the trips with the Anguilla Club this year so that I will have the opportunity to meet more members. If someone brings the bread, I'll bring the Shredded Wheat!

S.L.A.S.H. (Again.)

By David Smith.

I have never learned how to live with fame and fortune - my pocket has never been graced with great wealth (can you lend me a few quid?). Suddenly, I have found my portals festooned - that may sound rude, but its not - with well wishers screaming for my autograph. The reason for this sudden rise to literary fame - I'm just waiting for Stockholm to tell me when I can pick up my Nobel prize - is a result of SLASH. The pressures upon my person have been so great that I have been forced to write a sequel.

(The story so far: SLASH has encountered and defeated Green Gilbert, that pesky little brat, who has said that he knows the secret identity of Bootlace (Alan Hawkins) Billy and will reveal it to Angling times. A bigger threat is posed by the fact that he might have photographs to prove that he is right.)

Alan Hawkins crawled bleary eyed out of the bathroom for his breakfast.

"And what's the meaning of this?" asked his lovely wife, throwing a copy of the Sun at him across the table.

Alan winced and flipped through the pages to find the "Daily Male".

"Are you kinky?" she asked in catching him gazing full of awe at some famous negro's bum (the negro being famous, not his behind).

"I thought...." began Alan.

"The back page, you idiot!"

Alan read the headline: "Liverpool nil, Northampton ninety four in cup KO." He sighed, as much with relief as anything else. "Sorry, love."

"Sorry? I'll give you bloody sorry. It wasn't Everton. It was the 'Pool. And against grotty Northants at that."

Meanwhile Alan's eyes had crept lower down the page to the fishing column. The words printed there made him sit up with a start.

"Grief!" exclaimed Alan.

"That's better," said his wife.

\*

Brian (Mudman) Crawford sat reading a copy of the Beano. He had swapped it with the headmaster for a peashooter that he'd confiscated from some fellow teacher the previous day. HM had, in turn got the Beano from some poor boy who in his enthusiasm to improve both his English Grammar and knowledge of Biological sciences had amended the stories by adding certain words that are of dubious origin and rarely found in the school's edition of the English Dictionary. However, the entertainment value of the Beano had been enhanced and for the price of a pea shooter, Brian had made a good swop. In fact, when he had finished reading it, he could get more back than he paid - provided, of course, that the R.I. teacher didn't get hold of it first.

So enthralled was Brian in the rape of Korky the Kat that it was some minutes before he realised that a small boy was standing next to him brandishing a copy of the Sun.

"Sorry to disturb your marking, sir, but I wondered if you'd seen this."

There, circled in red ink, was the same article that had caught Alan's eye. The headline read: "Angling syndicate gain new water". On reading further, Brian discovered that the syndicate was run by the evil Matchman. On this water, one which the local kids fished, the syndicate were going to have a "match only" rule. Furthermore, bait of all kinds were banned unless the had been bought from the syndicate and would fit on to a hook no bigger than a 26 with lmm of hook showing.

"Never mind, lad," said Brian. "They won't be able to stop you fishing there."

"Thanks, sir. By the way, when you've finished with that copy of the Beano I'll swop you my catapult and a Little Jimmy Osmond record for it."

\*

As the leader of the super pals, Mudman now found that he had two problems to deal with. Despite the fact that GG's threat had not come to anything, it could not be ruled out completely. Now there was also the possibility that their arch super rival, that super villain of all time, Matchman was behind the ruination of the local pit.

He was wondering what to do about matchman when he arrived at the local book shop. He wandered in and picked a copy of "Playgirl" from the shelf and started to browse through. The Matchman problem had such a hold of his mind that he was unaware of the strange looks he was getting from the other patrons. To them, he looked completely engrossed in the study of the assortment of hairy chests and absence of Y-fronts. He soon noticed that Bootlace Billy did not appear: he didn't notice the policeman.....

The following morning, having recovered from the unpleasant experience, he set to work in order to foil that master of all fiendish super plots. His first task was to contact his super pals. The way to do this, of course, was through the super-newsheets that Arthur (Brolley Boy) Sutton super printed at regular super intervals.

\*

Ernie (Eelman) Orme sat in his eelseat listening to the barking of his Afghan Eelhound. The postman was coming. As he had expected, there was the sound of the letter box being forced open; a blood curdling scream rent the air; finally there was the gentle fluttering of falling letters and bits of finger - the latter being the former possessions of the postman who had just been ruthlessly savaged by the goldfish.

"More bills, I expect," shouted Mrs. Eelman. Ernie proceeded to kick the cat, who immediately ran out of the way of the flashing super boot and proceeded to sharpen its claws on the poor Eelhound. This series of events gave the canine a bit more incentive to "do" the postman next time he stuck his unwelcome nose through the garden gate. Eelperks did not extend to gas bills.

But all was not gloom, for in the midst of the bills was the SLASH super news. This, Ernie concealed on his person - for no-one, save you and I, knows the secret identity of our super heroes: least of all their wives, for if they new the poor souls would be constantly blackmailed into buying new dresses and other feminine trivia rather than the essentials of life, such as a gallon of maggots and a tin of cat food.

"By the way, my little cherry blossom," he told his wife, "I must go out tomorrow on buisness."

\*

The day of the match came around. This was the first of a series of matches to be held. On the days when there were to be no matches, guard dogs would patrol the banks to prevent any pleasure anglers ruining the fishing for match days. If people did not fish the match, they could not fish at all.

As Mudman had suspected when he had had his super thoughts on the problem, the ring leader of the new owners was none other than the powerful and evil doer of all wrong, Matchman. He and his super villain companions, Sprat Basher, Tiddler Snatcher and the most evil of all The Descaler, had recruited Bream Boy into their midst. They sold tickets to the poor unfortunate and misguided locals and directed them to their pegs.

At the appointed hour, the magic flute rang out across the water and all the contestants cast out into the lake. At this moment, SLASH got into action.

Shortly after the blowing of the flute, when all contestants had cast in and adjusted their swing tips, there was the sound of a super whistle. This meant that the match was over. The contestants reeled in. Matchman knew that the match wasn't over, so blew the flute again. The anglers cast out. Whistle: reel in. Flute: cast out. This proceeded for some time. If the contestants, anticipating another blast of the whistle following the flute, did not cast in, the whistle did not blow: only when they had cast in did the whistle blow.

Needless to say, the anglers did not care too much for the treatment they were getting and soon decided that the protagonist should suffer for his sins. It was, therefore, the unfortunate Matchman who suffered for the general air of not coming or going.

Discretion being the best part of valour, saw the arch villain flee in haste pursued by more than one angler whose normally pleasant natures had been beaten down by the knowledge that here, in their midst and owner of their pond, was a con merchant who should be taught not to interfere with local interests.

\*

Brian, Arthur and Ernie sat in the bar of the local pub listening to tales of the local match from the local anglers, who, like all local anglers, made the whole affair sound much more spectacular than it actually was.

"Of course," said one angler, "he was dying to go to the toilet when we was chasing him."

"How do you know that?" enquired another.

"By the way he kept shouting 'I WANT SLASH!'"

### FISEY AFFAIRS

By Kevin Richmond.

To such a degree does the eel angler's world revolve around the legered worm and deadbait, that any other methods are looked upon with some degree of scepticism and a certain amount of amusement. However, during my chats with local anglers it seems that fishing with one's bait on the bottom is not the only way of catching eels.

Twelve eels have been caught, from a local clay pit near Barnstaple which I fish, over the past two years, and the most amazing thing is that six of these fish have been taken on deadbait fished near the surface. The local pike anglers use this method to extract our pike - fish that average three to the pound. Their gear consists of a 2-3ins. diameter pike bung, 20-25lb line, wire traces and a treble festooned dead roach, which is fished two to three feet below the surface in anything from 10 to 14 feet of water.

The eels caught with this tackle so far have weighed: 3:5, 3:2, 2:10, 2:6, 2:5 & 1:14½. Also, most of these eels were caught during really hot, sunny afternoons - a time when any eel should, in theory, be on the bottom.

It is all too easy to dismiss this, declaiming it as not worthy of attention: but when 50% of eels caught from this water in the past two years have come

to this method, it is obvious that it warrants some constructive thinking. I would be most grateful if any member could suggest why eels should take roach deadbaits fished 2-3 feet below the surface on a hot summer's afternoon. Is it a normal occurrence, or are our eels plain thick?

Another thing that really makes me think a lot - a very difficult thing with my rather limited intelligence! - is the way eels down here seem to take perch deadbaits the "wrong" way round. During an all night session last season, I fished two rods baited with perch deadbaits and the total results were two slight twitches, one on each rod. However, upon reeling in my baits in the morning, I found that the complete rear section of the perch (tail to dorsal fin) had been crushed into something resembling jelly.

I noticed on the summer trip to Bala that a couple of members experienced the same thing. At the time we debated whether a deadbait with the hook position in reverse - coming out at the tail - would solve this problem.

Could anyone throw some light on this subject as all this thinking I have done is very demanding. As my 'ol mother said: "You always was a bit daft, but now you've come over proper peculiar."

#### THE EELS OF KINDERUMA

By Dave Holman.

Most of you will, perhaps, remember an excellent article called "Eel fishing in Kenya" written by Andrew Hunter of Nairobi, which appeared in a recent Bulletin, describing how he and his friends tackle the monster eels of Kinderuma: eels the size of which we natives of sunny England only dream about. During last December I had a chance to fish there.

\*

Ever since Andy arrived in Kenya he has been asking Eileen and I to come over for a holiday and this year we finally made it, thanks to Andy and his wife, Pat, paying for everything bar the bus ride to the airport.

Landing at Nairobi Airport and staggering towards the customs post laden down with tackle, I can't help remembering that Kinderuma was high on our list of priorities. We didn't have too long to wait - the trip had been arranged long before we had got there. These lads really have camping and safaries sorted out and, apart from the usual tackle, we loaded the Range Rover with a huge variety of top class camping gear, tent complete with sun veranda, food aplenty - including two kilos of steak - and, pride of place, was the cooler box loaded with thirty-six one-pint bottles of the local "Tusker lager" brew packed nicely with dry ice.

So, one beautiful Tuesday morning, with high hopes - particularly as a 16lb eel had been landed two weeks before - we set out from Nairobi on the 107 mile journey into the "sticks". Soon the tarmac roads deteriorated into the coarse Murran second class roads of Kenya; but no problem here for the Range Rover as we skipped across the pot holes at a pleasant 75mph.

In just over two hours we pulled away from the main road and dropped steeply



towards the dam. Here was Kinderuma: and what a sight to delight any angler's eyes. The muddy brown water contrasted sharply with the vivid greens of the trees and bushes which surrounded most part of the water; the bright blue sky without a trace of cloud; fish splashing in the shallows and, far to the left where the river flows into the dam, huge hippos snorting and crashing about, obviously not bothered by our intrusion into their territory.

Putting a tent up in the midday sun with the temperature soaring into the upper ninties is something I'm not used to, but a quick siesta followed smartly by two Tuskers improved the situation, and then we set about fishing.

We groundbaited with mud and small worms and set about trying to catch some bait. Huge patches of bubbles came clouding from the baited area and soon we began to catch fish, but not the usual Tilapia and Barbus we were hoping for, but a ridiculous looking creature called an Elephant Fish - similar to a Tench with great long snouts and little mouths and obviously making merry on our groundbait. We put these fish back thinking they were little use as bait. (How wrong we were, we found out much later.) We eventually caught some bait. The Tilapia, being very considerate, move into a baited area and having once found food, they stay there all day waiting for more: but it was Barbus we wanted most and they proved to be not only the best bait, but also the most difficult to catch. However, as light faded, we each had two eel rods baited and connected to simple buzzer units. I decided to try a huge deadbait of 6oz since the eels here would easily swallow a bait of that size, and on the second rod a more conventional bait of four inches. Andy had two small baits well out into the dam. The water here quickly shelved away to 10' and then slowly shallowed to a mud bank forty yards out, then deepened quickly again. Fishing in the channel seemed the obvious choice, but the mud bank proved the most productive over the trip.

As darkness fell we made a huge log fire. The idea was not to keep warm, but to keep away some of the animals that frequent the area. The hippos don't seem to mind who's tent they tread on when they come out to feed, and Kinderuma is elephant territory too. All around the tent was the sound of crickets chirping somberley to each other, bull frogs croaking and now and then a hyena howling far away into the bush. Then a new noise we hadn't heard before - one of the buzzers was sounding. We both quickly arrived at my rod and, in the torchlight, line was being stripped of the reel at an enormous pelt. Hell, was this one of these ten pound jobs I had heard about? The line was positively melting away from the spool and I had to strike fairly quickly before I ran completely out of the 200 yards of line I had on. I missed and reeled back an untouched bait. That horrid feeling after waiting so long needs little explanation from me.

Back under the tent veranda, the lights were beginning to attract hosts of insects - great fat moths, praying mantis and all manner of unnamed creepy crawlies. The constant buzzing was to get louder during the evening between our regular runs and inexplicable misses. What was wrong? We did not know. We used all sizes of baits as well as fillets and still no eels.

My big bait, as yet untouched, eventually went at 22.00. A jerky unsure run, but something was chewing this time. I let him have plenty of time and struck into a strong eel. It was obvious that it wasn't a big one, but I secretly guessed about four pounds: I was way out, landing a tiny eel of 2½lb. Eels of this size just don't get caught there! Never, in over thirty trips, has an eel of less than three pounds been landed.

I had thought that, since Andy and his friends were landing these giant eels,

the smaller chaps didn't fight very well. This proved to be completely false, and all the fish we caught fought equal to if not better than eels of comparable size in our own waters. And trying to handle these chaps on the bank was a terrible problem. Introducing these bottled green eels into a sack was quite a dicey business, and the more fish we caught the worse it became: putting one eel in the bag meant two more getting out!

Meanwhile, my wife, Eileen, was coping very well with all these insects when we abandoned the camp for an eel run: even when the area was visited first by a scorpion and a poisonous centipede, and then, huge, but harmless, millipedes flowed over the lighted ground area, reminding me of aerial photographs of a busy railway yard.

Up until 24.00 we caught eels steadily, small eels to 3½lb; and the more we caught, the more angry Andy became at not hooking bigger fish. The average Kinderuma eel is five to six pounds - he kept insisting as we landed another two to three pounder.

Next morning I awoke at seven and strolled outside the tent for a look round. It had been raining hard during the night and everything seemed so fresh and new in the morning sun. Kinderuma is a naturalists paradise, for with every moment you could see different animals and birds. Hyrax scampering over the nearby rocks; fish eagles soaring over the open water; brightly coloured kingfishers - four times the size of our British version - diving on their unsuspecting prey; butterflies as big as tea trays floating about; all this and the inevitable hippos and marabou storks. This morning could not even be marred by our early morning tea which tasted as if it had been brewed from my old socks.

Breakfast finished, the rods were soon in position again. From first light to about 13.00 was, according to our local expert, the "best" time.

The eels were conspicuous by their absence and never a bleep was heard until 10.00 when Andy hooked an enormous fish which sorted him out in no uncertain manner before shedding the hook. A great disappointment and the only run of the morning. Later in the day I had a fish of about 6lb under the bank after a terrific battle, only to have the spring clip swivel open out on me. Andy never raised an eyebrow, but for me that was the biggest eel I have ever hooked and I walked away after planting my rod in a bush to have a long sulk.

Later in the day we were again plagued by missed runs. Was it other species or small eels? No one had ever caught anything but eels on deadbait. But within minutes we both had big barbuses of two to six pounds on the bank. We took some photographs and returned them to the water. The small ones swam away quite happily, but the biggest was very shaken and flapped around on the surface for several minutes before disappearing in an enormous swirl.

"Crocs," said Andy, and he carried on rebaiting. Hell! Crocs that big, and there was me the previous night flying down to the water's edge every time the buzzer went!

Early evening, and I landed a 4½lb eel only for it to be termed a "bootlace". That fish had just given me one hell of a fight on 3lb test curve rod and 15lb line.

"Please refrain from making your remarks, sir," (or something similar) I suggested, only to have some Tusker bottles thrown at me. Nice people, these Kenyans!

That night we had several more runs, only this time I had a good look round

before venturing near the water. We caught more small eels, had a meal of giant steaks, emptied a few Tusker bottles and killed another scorpion, which was about to fly up Andy's leg. Later, we were invaded by thousands of flying termites attracted by the camp lights. Never a dull moment.

Next morning, despite more of Dave's tea, we were back at them. No more runs, but we were catching plenty of these barbus and tilapia when we were joined by the African Fisheries Officer. No permits needed for rod and line fishing, but a few fags and a bottle of Tusker's didn't go amiss as he began to tell us tales of the eel fishing. Just a few days before, a local had netted a 20lb eel and had taken it to Nairobi on the bus to sell it; and those elephant fish we had thrown back were the very best bait for the big eels. He also talked about the crocodiles which he explained grew to twenty five feet long. That, said Andy, was probably an exaggeration and they probably only grow to about twenty. Our friend left us some time later carrying a string of barbus and tilapia which we had caught. He would make a fish soup, he explained.

Time to go. Very sadly we brought the Range Rover out of the shade only to find that we had a puncture. While jacking up the wheel my busser sounded again and I was soon down there watching the line steadily running through the water making that satisfying "VW" as it did so. He didn't stop and when I struck into him, the rod lurched forward as he slammed into me. The reel seized solid, I couldn't let line and with the rod getting very near the horizontal I ploughed into the water tearing at the reel which yielded line at the last moment.

The fish was in no mood for nonsense. He was taking line in no uncertain manner, slamming into the rod with fierce regularity and moving to my right. Then, all went slack. It would be difficult to explain the horrid feeling I had while reeling back 70 yards of slack line only to find the trace wire broken. I'd give my back teeth to hook into him again.

If Kinderuma has taught me anything at all about eel fishing in general, it is that although those eels could easily manage big baits, they didn't seem to want them and took the smaller ones instead. I shall never use clip swivels for my traces, and that Black Seal was to let us down on other occasions.

So, the Kinderuma trip was over and as we packed up the equipment and headed away, I felt more than a little sad to wave goodbye. Here was probably the best eel fishing in the world and no one ever goes there let alone fishes the place - the African Fisheries Officer was the only person we had seen during our three day stay. All this amidst the most beautiful surroundings that could ever be offered.

If only it wasn't 4,500 miles away!

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I recently received a letter from Alan Otter - secretary NACG - from which I feel one paragraph would be of interest to us all.

"Rest assured that the Association will be adopting a more aggressive attitude than hitherto. If our type of angler can only be shaken out of his apathy,

(Continued on page 18)

MY SEASON (Or how not to catch eels)

By David Smith.

Terry Jefferson's description of his poor season has given me the courage to make a few confessions about the season that has now gone into history. In so doing, I lay myself open to attack from termites and any other form of pest.

My first sortie into the realms of eel fishing 1974 style was at the Whit trip. Here, I shall shatter the first illusion. Brian Crawford in writing about this trip pointed out that my appearance at the trip was meritorious because I had hitched a lift up from London. It was not true. I travelled by train. It is true that I did lead a few people to believe that I had in fact travelled in the aforesaid manner, but that was no more than a cunning ploy designed to coax a cuppa out of those who were brewing - looking so worn out and forlorn, they took pity upon my humble self and insisted that I sit down to rest and have a cup of warming liquid.

The truth is, as I said, I travelled by British Rail. After my 1973 Broads trip, I promised to take cousin Ron "proper" eel fishing, so he accompanied me. As is the way of a Smith, I arrived at the lakes to find the gathered ensemble gathered in the most notorious place - the boozery. By spinning a yarn about being down on my luck, I was able to purloin a few beers, and even Alan Hawkins parted company with one of his fags: even more surprising, it wasn't attached to the piece of elastic that normally accompanies one of his cigarettes.

Out of the boozery I rolled and collapsed in a heap near my gear. "You going to fish this swim?" enquired Ron. I mumbled something that must have given the idea that I'd said yes, for he soon trotted up with all the gear. Soon we were set up. As luck would have it, one Alan Billington was behind us. After giving him a suitable yarn about having tramped halfway across the country in nought but my wellies he readily parted company with both a few baits and a refreshing cuppa.

Nightfall. By now I was sober. Not content with my lot, I returned once more to the boozery where I consumed a few more beers. Returning to my bog end casting out, I collapsed into my beloved bedchair and fell into blissful sleep.

I did have one run which resulted in the capture of a solitary bootlace which had eyes bigger than its belly - In fact, I'm not entirely convinced that the lobworm was not eating the eel.

Following a hearty breakfast of lamb stew, I discovered to my delight that the local landlord had resumed trading. Needless to say, I wandered off to partake of a sherbert or two. Whilst on the licenced premises I met Brian Crawford who offered to transport myself, Ron and our gear to Barton.

At Barton, I slept well. So did Ron.

That then was the Whit trip.

I had resolved that early June would see the capture of a really good tench. I knew the water to fish; I knew how to fish it; I knew the good swims; and last, but not least, I had the means of transport. Everything was set for a tench bonanza - in size, not numbers. A few days prebaiting before the season began and I knew everything was ready. I knew that when July came round, I would have caught a tench in excess of six pounds.

By the time August came round it had become personal! I had been doing better

than my companion. I had had a bite. In the six weeks that I fished the water I saw not a single fish emerge from the water attached to a line. The time was well past that when I should have turned my attentions to Anguilla.

Unfortunately, 1974 proved to be quite a good year for eels. Every week I saw these photos in the Angling press of eels over 4lb; every week I decided to scrap the search for these mythical tench and go after eels; every week I decided to have "just one more go". By August, so many good eels had been caught that I was loosing confidence - I was frightened to go eel fishing in case I didn't catch any. So I stuck to blessed tench, still to no avail. In the end, my Norfolk trip was coming up again and I'd still done no eel fishing bar the Whit trip.

Norfolk did much to restore the flagging confidence. True, the biggest was only 2:9, but the fact that I managed to catch eels at all - or any fish, come to that - after having had such a lean time, did the ego a lot of good.

So, that was that. Pretty diabolical really and not what would be expected of an Anguilla Club member. Eel fishermen are supposed to fish for eels and not get involved with such lesser species as invisable tench.

I am now thinking of my campaign for the coming year. Tench? I think not, somehow, or at any rate, not to the same extent as last year. I'm certainly not planning another assault on that water. If tench are the quarry, I'll lower my sights and fish for four pounders from a water that always yields threes and fours.

As for the eels - and they're more important - I'm going to get a little more involved once again. The West Country calls to me as does Norfolk; and I've promised myself a trip to Bala.

So, 1975 will see me once more going on the jolly old "walkabouts" again.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Cont.)

there is so much we could do. Would that all members were as actively interested as those belonging to the National Anguilla Club!

Best Wishes,  
Signed, Alan Otter  
22, Peveril St,  
Alfreton Road,  
Nottingham, NG7 4AL

Dear Editor,

I was mighty pleased with Steve/Hope's article regarding the netting and trapping of eels in enclosed waters. I have mentioned this before - when it came to my notice that certain German parties were trapping eels in a water near to where Brian Crawford used to live (South of England). I do not doubt that this activity is going on throughout the land virtually unnoticed. I feel that we should, as an interested body, protest most strongly. Possibly the N.A.S.C. is the most likely outlet for our protests at the present time. They could, no

doubt, take up the question with the National Angler's Council.

Steve has drawn attention to this menace. It is now up to us all to keep alert and report any such activities to our committee. No one, as yet, has the right to plunder our inland waterways. The commercial trapping and netting of eels has been going on in almost unlimited fashion in estuarial waters for some years now, and it might be advisable to let interested parties know of the evidence in Steve's article so that they can learn the lessons the easy way without having to first suffer the hardships. If we do not protest strongly, how on earth can we expect others to do so.

The article adds weight to Brian Crawford's advocated policy of returning as many eels as possible. I do not wish to enter argument as to when this is so, but there must be many times when we could return eels unharmed. There will always be enough eels to take otoliths from should we require them, if we pursue a policy of conservation. Otherwise, with netting and needless slaughter, there will be so few eels left that we ourselves will have to resort to netting in order to catch any. When that day arrives, what price the survival of the Anguilla Club?

Yours sincerely,  
Arthur J Sutton.

15, Westoe Road,  
London, N9 0SH

Dear Editor,

In answer to Arthur Sutton's question "How far shall we go" (Bull. 12.1), I sometimes wonder if, perhaps, we have gone too far and not only in the realm of bite alarms. In this age of electronic marvels, I sometimes feel the need to shun all mechanical and electrical aids, except, of course, for rod, reel and line, and rely totally on my senses to help me catch fish - eg. looking at a dough bobbin or silver paper indicator.

Having just joined the Club, I've not heard of alarms with long cables before: is it really a cable? As for "ultra-sonic transmitters" ..... Well, surely we are starting to get too engrossed in gadgets - just like the matchman and his hundreds of floats - and further away from fishing for eels which is, after all, the main object. Anyway, why must we get further away from our rods? Twenty yards is a heck of a way to run in darkness!

In my mind, I can picture a sort of science fiction thing about anglers in 2050 AD. The angler sets up a sort of camera-cum-lazer by the water plus some sort of detector and retriever. He then retires home to watch a TV screen and, as soon as anything is detected, push a few buttons, going to collect his bag the next morning.

Wait a minute, though! Just think, it may not be a bad thing after all. I mean, no long cold nights; always at home, nice and warm .... I think I've changed my mind: carry on Arthur, mate!

A final word, though. I'm new to the club and don't understand properly yet everything you do. So, if you see me at the SGM don't hit me too hard with your landing net handles - please?

Yours,  
Tony Hollerbach,  
39, High Street,  
Rushden, Northants.