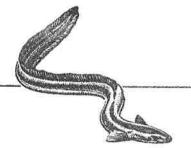
SEPT 79



The National Anguilla Club

BULLETIN

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SEPTEMBER 1979.

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EDITORIAL.

It often seems to me that I spend al least half of my life making apologies of one sort or another. But I do apologise most sincerely for the lack of Club material of late. We started the year so well, and were all set to carry on in the same vein when along came the difficulty with members Hansen and Richmond.

I will not dwell on the pros and cons of that affair here, as it will be fully covered at our A.G.M. in November, but I can tell you that it fair took the wind out of my sails. Had it not been for the encouragement given me by members such as Ernie Orme Tony Hollerbach, Alan Mitchell and others, I think that I would have turned it all in. By the very nature of this Club, a few members do the bulk of the neccesary work, and when things appear to go wrong it is they who suffer more than most. One gets to feeling that the whole affair is hardly worth all the agro it brings. It has its brighter side, of course, for when things are going well you are on top of the world and very satisfied with your efforts. However, I do hope that we can now get back to normality again. In this I earnestly ask for your co-operation. We do urgently require a stock of articles of interest to our members. Here I would apologise for the fact that some of the material in this issue is long overdue for publication. But do write, and I will do my utmost to ensure some form of continuity of publication.

Recently, the Club held its Late Summer Trip to Emberton Park. I will not give details here as I want to publish a report of the trip by a member other than myself. I hope to include that report in this issue, but if it is not ready in time then I will publish it in the next. Suffice to say that I went along to Emberton Park not realy knowing what to expect — with the Spring trip still in my mind. And I did not know whether the very short notice of the trip would be enough for any member. What a pleasant surprise I had. It did my heart good to see a gathering of members intent on renewing old aquaintences and sharing news and views and Suttons tea. It brought home to me a remark made by one of our newer members following the upheaval earlier. I quote * The Anguilla Club cannot be allowed to perish * Neither will it I am sure, while we still have members who so readily demonstrate what a common bond we have. I personally would like to thank all those who went to Emberton Park for making the effort and for making the trip so very worthwhile.

By the time you read these pages the sands of time will fast be running out as far as the capture of large cels is concerned. Some waters still fish reasonably well into late Autumn, while others will have already gone past their best. It must be remembered that several good eels are taken each year by early pike anglers, and it may be that late Autumn is as good a time as any to try mid-water eel angling. Several members have taken their personal best eels this summer, the latest being David Walker who missed the magical four pound mark by only one ounce. I have it from David that he will not bother with a four now, but will go straight on to the five pound plus model. That's a good outlook, is it not ?. If there be a Saint Anguilla I would like to praise him, for I am enjoying one of the best season that I can recall. To date I have taken the following cels. 7:1, 5:6, 4:7, 4:1, 4:0, 3:1, 2:8, 2:6, 2:3, and 1:4. It seems that I have had short spells of success interspersed with several blanks, and I cannot imagine anything more exciting than that. Just recently I fished another of my 'home' waters which I had previously not tried, and I was broken by a very large eel. Possibly one of the few times when I will admit that the eel went through the nylon trace, but I am sure he did. I have done quite a bit of near surface fishing for eels this year with a very good measure of success, and I feel well qualified to write about that later on - for your winter reading.

It is good to see our Chairman back in print again, and I look forward to it being a regular feature once more. Our next highlight will be our A.G.M. when I hope you will ALL make the effort to attend. It is so important this year, for we have a lot to do in order to tidy up our house and make the Club exactly what YOU wish it to be. Notice of the A.G.M. will be sent out in good time.

THE CHAIRMANS PAGE.

The last time I wrote a Chairmans Page and sent it off to Arthur, it was out of date before it could be published due to developements within the Club. I deeply regret the way the affair concerning Kevin, Henry and myself has been allowed to upset most members of the Club. I found myself in a cleft stick, being greatly critisised for actions I was said to have done as Chairman, but as soon as I tried to comment on the issue and tried to take steps to prevent total unrest and chaos within the Club, I was strongly accused of dictatorship.

It is said that there is no smoke without a fire - well, of course, in this case there was certainly a fire but not the blaze indicated. I do not want to go into the gory details here as I still believe Arthur is right in not allowing personal arguments or vendettas in the Bulletin. I fully intend, and always did, once this situation began to develope, to discuss the matter as fully as possible until no member present could be in any doubt as to the situation, at our A.G.M.

I have a full dossier of letters received and copies of letters sent to both KR and HK and will read these out in full at the ACM. Arthur has something similar. It was because of my situation that I was grateful that Arthur took the initiative, as President. Terry Jefferson, because of several pressing problems was out of touch and unable to participate actively in Chub affairs. He did warn us of this at the SCM but I am pleased to say that he has overcome most of his problems and should be able to return to an active part in our activities.

As both KR and HH were Committee members, this left only Arthur and Ernie, plus myself, to try to carry on running the Club. I myself have probably written more letters to members in the past couple of months than in any other year - not mainly in my defence or to counter HH and KR, but to keep contact with members and to let them know the show is still on the road, even if it is progressing slowly.

I would like to thank those members who have sent in their session reports. Severely our have not done so up to the present, so please do so as soon as you can. I am still waiting to get back all the reports you sent to Kevin, despite his being requested to return them to me earlier. It may be now that you will have to make copies of those sent to Kevin. Henry has assured me that he will send me all the membership data, plus details on a couple of new applicants. However, I feel it unwise to admit new members until the SGM at least, to allow the Club to settle.

Nou will have realised of course by now, that we will have vacancies on the Committee for a membership Secretary and a Club Analyst for the A.G.M. Neither position is very demanding. The Club analyst does have a lot of figure work to do, but anyone who is reasonable at maths or understands statistics can manage. Between now and the AGM I will also be taking a long look at my own future within the Club as recent events and others over the years have given rise to several questions.

I have completed 10 years of service, half as membership Secretary and the other five years as Chairman. The real question is, of course, has the Club benefited by my actions

on its behalf - not counting what I am supposed to have done - but in real terms?
Will the Club benefit if I stand down? At the SGM, because I thought the Club was really settled and progressing smoothly with a good set of Committee members, I thought about announcing my intention to stand down at the AGM at that time. However, I did not, and of course it is very unfortunate that I did not, as I am convinced that the upsets of late would not have happened and perhaps either Kevin or Henry would have replaced me without any problems. Now these two devoted servants of the Club appear to have let everyone down, despite being asked by several of the more mature members to 'cool it' until the AGM. So where do we, or at least I, go from here? Do I go out into the wilderness to reflect on what might have been? If I do take that course, will there be a call for the return of KR and HH to lead you all back on the straight and narrow road? Is there another member in the Club prepared to take over the helm?

Has any other member the experience or the qualifications. What qualities are required.

Well, I have many other questions to ask myself in my soul searching until the ACM Will I stand again? Should I? What more can I do for the Club? I feel that many of you are better judges of the correct answers than I may be. The answers are, of course, vital for the good future of the Club. Most of you know me very well by now. My abilities, my strengths and my weaknesses. Perhaps some of you may like to help me with suggested answers. But bear in mind, it has to be for the long term benefit of the Anguilla Club — not Brian Crawford.

Of one thing I am more than certain. If KR or HH return to the Club as Chairman, then the real sorting out will begin. All the rest of the Committee followed by all the suspect 'dead wood', all the 'old gang', until just a few 'catch eels at any cost' anti social members remain. It will be a future I will not want a part of, and the death of the Anguilla Club as I've known it. Six months ago I would have supported KR or HH as Chairman, as I have stated, but certainly not now that their real colours have been revealed.

Perhaps between now and the AGM, some of you would take a serious look at the Club and let me know your views. If you wish, save it until our discussion at the AGM. Whatever you do, do try to keep things in perspective. The only way must be the best compromise.

Brian Crawford (Chairman)

Note from the President.

I would like to make my own position known to you at this time, so that you may be helped in any decision you may make. I do give, and will continue to give Brian my full support. I think that the Club requires at least another twelve months with the officers it has now in order to settle down and aim for the highest results possible. This year should have seen the highest activity the Club has known. It has not - but that is hardly the fault of any Committee member - let alone the Chairman! If Brian is put in a position whereby he feels that he must go, then I will join him. I am not blackmailing anyone - I merely want you to know

A.J.S.

Coarse Fisherman Conference

The recent conference held at Guildford University by "Coarse Fisherman" magazine was a successful affair. Most people arrived on the Friday evening and, after having registered, drifted into the bar. One big advantage was that the bar did not close until 12.30 a.m. and nobody left until 1.00 a.m.

Throughout Saturday and Sunday several speakers gave talks on different aspects of coarse fishing, mainly with regard to fishing from a specimen hunter's point of view, although a lot of anglers agreed that probably the most interesting was by Ron Lees, a Severn Match angler, who discussed meat fishing for barbel. Other speakers included, to name just a few, Jim Gibbinson, Terry Eustace, Arthur Russell, Kevin Clifford, John Bailey and Ivan Marles.

Several specimen groups displayed photographs and tackle was also on show (and for sale!) by Trevor Moss and Terry Eustace. Two or three films were shown during the day and were made by the "Shakespeare" tackle company and featured the American and Canadian fishing scene. All three films created quite a few laughs from the audience, especially the part on one film where a couple of anglers motored across a large "Canadian lake, stopped in the middle and then promptly hopped over the side wearing chest waders and commenced spinning for bass.

Nearly 300 anglers were present, a lot of whom were at the previous conference at Nottingham, however where were the "Anguilla" club?

Several ex-members were present. Dick Hudson, Dave Smith, Keith Sykes and Dave Ball. Actually, thinking back, I did notice somebody in the bar on Friday evening wearing an Anguilla club sweatshirt who was it?

Probably the best thing about these "dos" is the chat that develops in the bars during the evening. If another conference is arranged by "Course Fisherman" next year I would certainly recommend Anguilla club members to attend what is guaranteed to be an enjoyable weekend.

Eel fishing in South Devon

Having recently been fortunate enough to obtain membership of the N.A.C. and living in an area which was previously devoid of members (apart from Kevin Richmond in North Devon) I hope it will interest people to read about eel fishing in this somewhat forgotten area of coarse angling.

Let me say at the start that I am only just beginning to understand the cel and although I am really keen to advance my cel fishing, up to now I have not had any staggering successes. This coming season however, is going to see me, along with my fellow N.A.C. members in South Devon (who were admitted at the same time as myself), putting in much more time in pursuit of big cels.

I think that we have possibly more potential for big eels than for any other species, as we have a multitude of unexplored waters which could well hold some real monsters; its rare to see anyone fishing specifically for eels on any of our waters and therefore not a great deal is known about them - of course stories of huge eels caught or more often lost are rife, but at least these give clues as to where to start ones hunt.

This is how we first came to fish a large clay pit called rather unappropriately "Blue Waters" - a delightful name but not such a delightful pit! There is a lorry come rubbish tip on one bank, a caravan site on another, whilst the banks are scattered with wrecked cars and other charmless objects deposited by thoughless, uncaring people. Not only are the banks covered with debris, but the pit bed is also littered with numerous objects only too willing to help an eel in its struggle for freedom. Despite the depressing state of the water, it certainly looks as if it should hold big eels with its steep, sometimes verticle banks, its shallows and sharp drop-offs into deep gullies - it feels right as well!

Our first few sessions produced a number of runs which, no matter how or when we struck, we couldn't connect with. Suddenly the problem cured itself and since then hardly a run has been missed, but as they say, it is always the big ones that get away and as far as myself and friends have been concerned, this has certainly been the case on this pit up to now. Personally I have hooked two, what I like to think must have been truly gigantic eels. Neither one could I move from the pit bed and in between short, powerful runs and dogged head shaking sessions, the best I could do was to pump them slowly towards the bank. Anybody who has hooked, played and landed big fish will know what I mean when I say that the feeling of power when playing the fish always tells the angler roughly what size the fish is. that is not a very good way of putting it, but I KNOW that those two eels were really big. In each case the fish found one of the many snags and even my extra heavy line parted eventually.

At last my persistence paid off in the long shape of a 4 12.5 ozs. eel which I heaved in on 15 lbs. line and which chalked up my personal best. That was last year, a time when runs were somewhat far and few between, unlike the year before that, when three or four runs per night were expected rather than hoped for - most of these produced eels over 21bs. As for this coming year - well, as I have said, my two fellow N.A.C: members Jon Martin and Mike Cullum, myself and the

other Devon member, Kevin Richmond, intend to give Blue Waters a good go and I have a feeling we could have some good eeling!

I have spent a lot of time on this one water because I feel that it is the one with the best potential in our area, but there are plenty of others scattered around, most of which hold seemingly seething masses of eels that pick up anything from broad beans to huge balls of carp bait! I prefer to give these waters a wide berth when it comes to eel fishing; perhaps I am wrong but I think that the chances of hitting into a big eel in infested waters are remote and I would rather have one run per session on a big fish water than cope with twenty wriggling bootlaces on an easy water!

Amazingly enough the largest eel I have seen was in a tiny pond situated within two hundred years of the Exe estuary. At the time it was attached to the end of my line and I had the monster within ten feet of the bank. I had pumped her to the surface fairly easily and expected a pike, but you can imagine my surprise when an eel of some four feet in length and with a girth to match came snaking up through the murky water. Unfortunately she decided that she did not like the look of me and crashdived into a sunken tree, so ending my forlorn hopes of landing her. I do not like to put a weight on that eel but the fact that she was in an estuary side puddle shows that big eels are likely to turn up anywhere!

Obviously there is not space to comment on all my local waters that hold big eels or have the potential, but it suffices to say that we in South Devon have a virtually untapped supply of eel waters. This may sound like paradise but with only a handful of serious eel fishermen any coarse fishermen come to that - building up a knowledge of these waters is painfully slow. Hopefully with our recent admission to the N.A.C. our techniques and ideas on eel fishing will improve and we can really get amongst the monsters. I know it is easy to write about big fish that exist in a water and even easier to say that you hope to catch them, but eel fishing has really set my imagination alight and I feel in my bones that things are going to go well.

A lot of people come to Snowy (sorry I meant Sunny) Devon for their holidays and whilst I avoid most of them like a decomposing hedgehog I should be only to happy to hear from any N.A.C.members who are planning a holiday down here and would like to sample our eel fishing with the wife's permission of course: Drop me a line and perhaps we can arrange a trip or two.

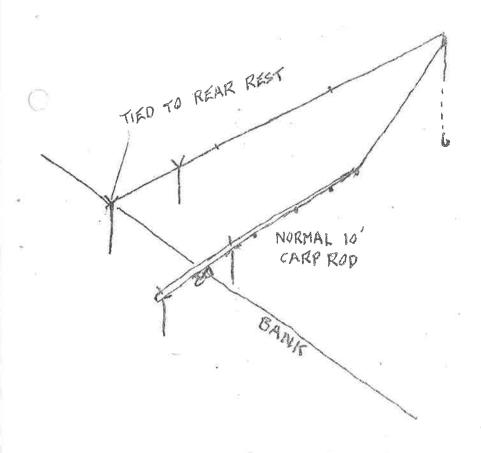
Anyway, I hope I have given everyone a short insight into the eel fishing prospects in South Devon and I trust that Jon, Mike and myself can prove that we are worthy members of such a good club by catching some of the specimen eels that undoubtedly live in our waters.

I have been reading with a great deal of interest the spate of articles on surface eel fishing and the effects of moonlight which started with Arthur Suttons excellent article of some months back. In the last Bulletin(16.6) Andy, Steve and Henry kept up the high standard with some relevant ideas and observations on the subject — so much so that I would like to throw in my own views, hence this article.

Now fish of any species do not grow big by refusing to eat, therefore it is quite wrong to assume that eels do not feed during the week of the full moon as would appear from our results. However, not only eels but most other night feeding species rarely get caught when a full moon is glowing in a cloudless sky. Many of the waters which I fish have rudd, crucians, mirrors and bream which enjoy leaping and priming especially during the night, yet when the moon appears the temperature drops as does the surface activity. Having said that, midwater and surface eel fishing must be an area we should be looking much closer into - whether it is a full moon or not.

Many of the rigs which have been put forward as worth a try I cannot get to work properly - many are difficult to cast out or when you reel in the whole lot is tangled in a mass of nylon, swivels and floats. Possibly it is me not doing it right. My own tackle for this type of fishing is somewhat different and is, to borrow a phrase from Andy Lister * a bit way out.

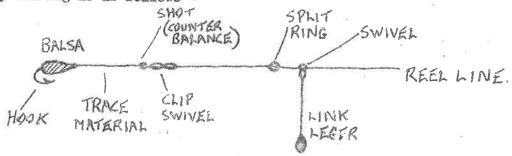
Quite a few anglers use the continental glass poles in order to get perfect bait presentation and my idea is pinched from this. Not actually fishing with a pole but using it to place the bait directly above the position it is desired to fish. Not being able to afford the luxury of a pole, ordinary garden canes are tapered down and fitted together to give a length of up to 25° in length using old brass ferrules. The last 2° is a thin quivertip end to which is whipped a clip swivel. The reel line is eased between the clip, setting the length to the depth required and placed in position over the stout rod rests as shown —



Madness? It certainly look a little radiculous I know, but it does work. Up to the present time I must admit that I have not used the set-up for eels (no longer the case ED) it has only been tried for pike using a small livebait dangled beneath a tree which overhangs the water. A gentle tug from the fish releases the line from the clip and then it is as a normal run. Another benefit not quite so obvious is when the wind starts to move the whole assembly about, then the bait is continually on the move. Anyway, it gives another string to your bow and I made the whole set-up for 50p and if nothing else it certainly is a conversation peice with other passing anglers. O.K., so it is only for margin fishing. What do you need when more distance is required? My own rig is as follows. I use a fabilish downland drill 76 hole through a short length and araldite in a lightweight Aberdsen salmon hook and shape like so -



By placing a counterbalance weight usually consisting of AAA shot or BB shot the required distance up the trace the dead bait will cook up with the shot resting on the bottom. One drawback with this method is that not all deadbaits can be presented without damaging the bait. Perch and, surprisingly, large gudgeon, work well but roach and rudd will have to be used without their head so that the balsa can be hidden in the belly. Longer distances still require the use of a leger to get the required range. My own rig is as follows —



The link leger is optional but by inserting the nylon line the same length as the trace you eliminate twists around the leger which you will inevitably get without it. The counterbalance shot can be moved up to the split ring which will give you a lift above the bottom of a maximum of 6°. Above that distance the whole rig does not work correctly, so a further modification is required if you wish to increase the lift.

BALSA FISH
CORK PVA

The balsa within the fish has not enough lift to make the bait rise high in the water. Cork on a PVA strip attached around the hook and stuck back into the cork with a carpet tack will give the bait tremendous buoyancy. After casting in the leger hits the bottom and the bait quickly ascends to the surface. Given a minute or two the PVA dissolves and the cork drifts away - then it is a simple job to reel the bait back to the depth required.

Last Autumn on a hard fished pike water all three methods produced a number of good fish and I see no good reason why they should not work as well with eels. More recently while fishing the ultra clear waters of Rhyl clay pit I had the opportunity to see the various rigs working in position in up to 20° of water and they all caught eels, albeit small ones.

Arthur Sutton gave us all the neccesary push to think more about bait positions so let us see what the results of all the ideas forwarded since his article will produce. I will certainly be trying them all.

Editors note. Since Dave wrote the article above, I have had the good fortune to fish with him and see the long cane assembly in action. It certainly looks practical, though Dave may well get clobbered for a second rod licence.

Alan Mitchell, The Chairman, South East Specimen Group.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor and fellow Members,

Firstly I would like to thank you all for the really friendly reception we received at the Spring Meeting. I read the issues of the Bulletin with great interest. The articles on mid-water and surface dead-baiting were of particular interest; long range mid-water and surface dead-baiting has always had its problems. Here is a method I have considered but I confess it is not my own idea. The method is described in Fred Buller's book Pike. He calls it the "Green Cork Method" and states it was an idea put forward by Dick Walker.

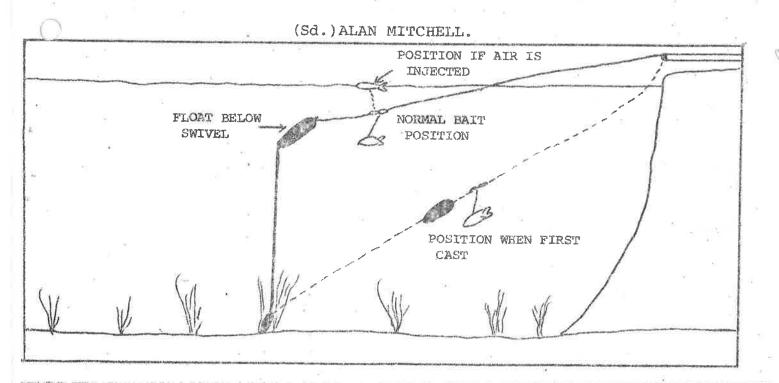
Firstly you will require a length of line approximately the depth of the swim being fished. The the casting weight to one end, then put a plain pike float (sliding slim all green or black) on 18 ins. from the other end with a peg to stop it moving. To the top attach a swivel or split ring. The main reel line passes through this and is connected to the trace via another swivel.

The baited tackle is cast to the desired position and tightened up. The line is then slowly slackened until the bait rises to the required fishing depth. The more you slaken off the higher the bait will rise. If a floating bait is required a little air injected will provide the answer. If you wish to use an oil attractor, instead of the normal weight a feeder-link filled with oil-soaked cotton wool gives a steady outlet of oil for quite some time. The best thing about this method is the fish taking the bait feels very little resistance and runs are similar to free lined runs.

Finally if the swim is deep i.e., over 12ft the weight float etc., should be carefully tied into a bundle with P.V.A. prior to casting.

This sketch may prove useful.

Yours sincerely,



Are eels individuals?

Individual tastes and references affect all of us every single day in everything we do. Our actions, our thoughts, all go to reflect on our individuality, "as different from chalk and cheese", an old saying but how true! How hundrum our lives would be if we were all "pre-set" would it not? Look now at the animal kingdom; every animal has its own individual temperament and manner be it dog, cat or mouse every single one has its own.

Now to eels. Does it not follow that eels too, along with other fish, are individuals in a similar respect. I admit one or two more basic instincts are common to all species but eels must be individuals to a great extent unknown to us. I feel we must make a breakthrough in this to enable us to learn greater things which I feel we have been missing out on, and by doing so, increase our catch rates and, more important, weights.

I expect criticism for this but let me try to justify briefly have you ever (and I am sure you have) fished a particular water with successful results and yet the same conditions and methods have not succeeded on a different water even given exactly the same conditions. Well, I have many many times (far too many for me) to even put it down to experience. I put it down to the eels being individuals and we the "experts" not being like that - individuals I mean. We are stereo-typed in that the same methods and conditions are looked for time after time after time; that is why we do not succeed as well as we could. we should strive always to "remain behind" so to speak and not to "join the herd" for to do so is to fall. If each and every session is treated on an individual basis and seeing the eels in this light - the water, the weather, everything - if this is done all the time results must Every notable achievement in the word (angling included) has been the direct result of someone being, and remaining, an individual. Every discovery and invention have all been the result of the same trait -No? Think about it!

I say again eels are individuals! We must begin to treat them as such. Take the close season: if you are one not able to get out eeil. - and even if you are - then is the time to look at the "eels' living quarters". Why do they live in any particular spot? What food does it prefer in any particular water? How deep do individual eels prefer to live, hunt, sleep or rest? Let us face it, an eel certainly eats the majority of animal life in the water and some vegetable matter but, and I say, but give a choice what would they eat? Results from individual ecl's stomachs show eels eat a vast amount of small crustaceans, etc. I admit it does vary from water to water insofar as such food is available to choose from. To put it in a human context, if you have a preferance towards, say, cod - then suddenly cod became extinct, you would then turn to whatever food nearest that type was available - right? So, consequently, the eel, as an individual, most certainly has preferences with regards to food (again this varies from water to water). Therefore I feel we the "specialists" should firstly find out what the eals' preferences are in any particular water and secondly, when main likings of the eel in a particular water have been found then bait usage can be confined to their preferances only.

I feel that a general combined picture of all waters is not accurate enough as there would be too many variances overall which, at present, we have with our system.

Consequently, my opinion is that we are putting far too much emphasis on dead bait/worm results. We should be experimenting more on unused baits (to us!) which the eel may well be looking for out of preferance. Do you not think so? My next season will consist (I hope) of 2 rod fishing, one rod on our usual worm/dead bait and one on small food items found in the water to be fished. I admit this will entail a lot more research in individual waters - but I consider it will be well worth it (that is where the close season look/see will come into its own). Well I am sure this bit has got you thinking - but do not dismiss it - consider it and answer it. Most of all be an individual:

"Pecking Order" where the strongest (not necessarily the biggest) eel takes first choice of territory and food. I have some ideas on this but would welcome any thoughts you may have.

Editors notes.

I trust that you will enjoy the articles in this issue of your Bulletin. I apologise to ail concerned for the delay in publication. In particular, newer members please note that articles imbuitted to me do not normally suffer such a lengthy delay.

Items in the text set wring to 'next meason' are of course meant to relate to the present measure.

I do require your co-operation in getting the publication of the Pulletin back to something like normal. What we require is a stock of articles of any length as long as they are suitable for the Bulletin. I know that the majority of you can write, and very well too. So please put pen to paper and let me have your articles - urgently. If you can type your articles direct on to AA paper I would be obliged to you, for it makes the task that much easier for me.

In my position as Editor I am able to steal the march on you, for I see the written material long before you do. It's the perks of the job. Therefore I have been try out several interesting tackle set-ups as described in this Bulletin and the last. They all appear to work well, with the occasional problem, and I will be writing down my findings - and the results of having used these rigs - in the Bulletin during the coming winter. But we can never have too many ideas, and everyone would be pleased to read of YOUE ideas. The effort is never wasted, as someone, somewhere, will enjoy what you have written, and till perhaps benefited from it.

Several of you have asked me if we could possibly start again that series of articles in earlier Embletias entitled "Man of the Month" - when in each issue we did our best to highlight a particular member so that you, his fellow anglers, might know him a little better. I used to get no end of pleasure in publishing these articles, for they were, without exception, always highly amusing. Facts both serious and factual as well as the more humourous ones, can be gleaned from wife, brother, fellow angler, in fact almost suyone who knows the chap in question. And some very interesting things no come to light, Well, it is largely up to you. You have to submit the pieces for me to work with, and if I get a goodly response, then I shall certainly start the series once more. Tight lines to you all.