

The National Anguilla Club

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EDITORIAL.

D.G.SMITH (by invitation)

Another eel fishing season slips to a close. I cannot, in all honesty, say that I am disappointed for this has been my worst season ever. It has had its highspots, notably in the re-establishment of my partnership with Arthur Sutton, and it is he, rather than anything else that has kept me going through the seemingly endless blanks. On reflection we have had only ourselves to blame and we were sidetracked by tench to such an extent that our choice of water was tending to rest on its potential for tench rather than eels

It is fair to say also that we were invited to fish a very prolific water - but as that water had certain restrictions on night fishing and because quite a few members were already fishing it, we felt that it would be unwise to add to the burden on the water and thereby possibly precipitate the Authorities to take punitive action. All the same, lads, thankyou for the invitation.

Fortunately, the lack of a good summer meant that the tench were not as co-operative later in the summer as they had been, which resulted initially in blanks and the return to eel fishing. Our later months efforts were rewarded by a few decent eels.

But, all has not been wasted. Even as early as late July I began to get enthusiastic about next year (by that time I had already written off 1977 as a disaster). I have now got things together and am mentally assured that 1978 will be the converse of 1977. Even another dose of the lousy weather we have had this year will not deter me. There's a darned sight more to eel fishing than chuck it and chance it !

I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Kevin Richmond for his part in keeping up my morale. Before the season started we exchanged many letters with regard to technique and approach. Employing more or less the same approach he succeeded where I failed. But I have indulged in vicarious success, knowing that what I am doing is right.

What is left for me, then, between now and April next year ? For a start, there are other fishes swimming about that deserve to be caught ! Also, my tackle needs an overhaul. Add to that a couple of Anguilla Club General meetings and the NASG Angling Conference and my timetable is full. Anguilla may be off the hook for now - BUT THE EIGHT STONE ASSASIN IS BACK.

David Smith.

Editors note.

Many thanks, David, for filling the breach at a time when I had so little to say. In any case, mine would have been such a doleful editorial for I am always in a doleful mood as eel fishing comes to yet another close. This old'un may have a few seasons left, but each successive one slips by that little bit quicker than the rest. That's the one thing I hate about Dave Smith - he's so YOUNG.

Young or old, you will probably have noticed in this issue the absence of a heading on each page, i.e. NAC Bulletin Vol x No x. By mutual agreement between your Secretary and myself that such heading is not required on each page and will from this issue only appear on the front cover and the heading for the list of contents.

I would like to ask you ALL to try your utmost to attend the forthcoming A.G.M., notice of which will possibly accompany this Bulletin. We have a very full agenda, a good meeting place and, not least, very good company. Such an appeal is not just to fill up this page, but is a sincere appeal from me to you to help make our A.G.M. an even more successful event than it already is.

Editor.

ANOTHER LOOK AT WIRE TRACES.Dave Holman.

I can hear it now, "Ye Gods, not Holman on wire traces AGAIN"
Well this time I promise all and sundry that this is positively the last time I will take a part in the great trace wire debate.

In his recent piece (Bulletin 14.7.) Kelvin Hardman covered many aspects of our branch of the sport. Briefly mentioned were - rods, lines, hooks and indeed striking a run. All I wish to reply to is this thorny question of the 'wire'.

Firstly, let me say that I have little doubt that Marlinsteel is all it is cracked up to be. I hope to acquire some for a few trials myself. Indeed, you may not be able to see it if it is dropped on the ground (the assumption being that eels have similar sight to our own) but I have yet to find a trace material, and doubt the existence of one, which is as supple as even the springiest nylon. This is the problem, not that of diameter. No one will ever get more runs using wire than when using nylon monofilament. The question is, where does one make the choice - cutting down on the number of hittable bites or, having connected with your eel, being certain of landing it.

Kelvin believes that you should always go for the wire. Perhaps if I fished the same waters as he I would feel that way myself. Consider for the moment why this same argument has caused so much debate over the years - passionately at times. Each side believing it is right. I believe it is possible to get the best of both worlds and I only use trace wire when I have to. In Bulletin 14. 5. I explained once again my own rule of thumb, perhaps I am 'way out' but over the years it has served me well.

A few years ago I was having many sleepless nights trying desperately to reason why I was having so many blanks on those Ellesmere lakes. The answer was all the time staring me in the face. Those Ellesmere eels would not even look at any brand of ferrous hook length. Since that time I have got runs once more

Kelvin asks how many eels I fail to land and I must confess to losing a fair number but if we stick to the reason why, then biting through the line accounts for just one eel which I do not think was a very big one. Indeed if I went out tomorrow and added to this total I would still consider myself in credit. Funny thing is, I must have lost four or five good carp when the hook length has been bitten through.

The biggest single reason for the loss of eels in my early eel angling days, back in 1960, was that I lacked an adequate landing net and I suspect that many of the 'eels lost' stories related by Kelvin have this as their root problem too, although I would not pay too much attention to these tales for it seems that every fisherman who has ever legered a lobworm has lost a record eel - its the fashion, you know. Many experienced anglers can't estimate an eel out of the water let alone in it, and think how much power even a two pound eel can show when hooked at close range. I myself have been caught out on occasion.

I would say to Kelvin - think about your fishing before tackling up - like the old lady on top of the Old Bailey, balance out the evidence for and against and then decide. If you use the same tactics and same tackle every time you go out I argue that you are missing out.

Alan Dart has the perfect answer to all his critics when he refuses to use a trace on his own waters - "Beat That", he says. Now surely we should listen to that!

CHAIRMAN'S PAGE (OR PAGES).

Brian Crawford.

Well, for many Club members, their eeling season is fast drawing to a close. Water temperatures are falling and the nights getting longer and much colder. The pike are active and are calling. For all kinds of reasons we tend to slow down or stop eel fishing altogether at the end of September/October. Is this a good thing? Water temperatures generally are higher than in May and many nights are milder. We have longer periods of darkness in which to fish - should we perhaps extend our efforts into late October/November. ?

These are just a few of the questions that occur to me from time to time and, I feel, we should give serious thought to them. Several good eels have been taken this month (September). When was the last time you fished until the end of October, or November? I should like to believe that we had members dedicated enough to fish for eels all year round. I know that Kevin Richmond catches eels in every month of the year. Do you? Have you?

Arthur Sutton in his footnote to my article in Bulletin Vol 14 No 7, page 72, says the Chairman has become the 'Daddy' of the Club. I must add to that, it often feels more like Aunt Sally, especially over the past twelve months or so. I guess that's the way of the world. I'm not Chairman for my benefit but, I hope, for the benefit of the Anguilla Club. I have to make decisions based on the advice given by the Committee who do their best to represent your views. Silence solves nothing. If we hear nothing we can only assume that what we are doing is in the right direction. It is also stated in the Club rules that the Committee has the power to manage the Club, making decisions affecting the Club without having to wait for an A.G.M., except for changes to the rules. Under normal circumstances, the committee leaves major decisions until the A.G.M. but from time to time situations arise whereby action is required within a short time. The committee must be able to manage the Club as it sees fit, and to justify its actions to a General Meeting of the Club. I am saying all this to clarify points raised elsewhere and also to point out that there must be times when, although rare, the Chairman must, as the Senior member of the Club, make decisions and/or take action without prior consultation with the Club Committee if there be insufficient time but to inform the members of the committee as soon as possible thereafter. It is a power which I hesitate to use, but I do have it and will use it when necessary. Enough said (at least from me).

Arthur Sutton's comments that it was nice to have a contribution from me again made me feel a little guilty, but it has been one of those years. I find I only have one or two evenings free each week - even my wife has to look at my daily diary to see when I am in. Since I started my new school in January, I have had to set up the science dept's apparatus and chemicals, plus all the course work. I am now in the process of setting up orders for chemicals and apparatus for a new science block of nine labs to open next year.

I was very busy with NAC work too - new rules, new reporting scheme and new membership structure. Add to that the NASG work, AWA enquiry etc. However, I do like to be busy, and organize my life to cater for most demands. The trouble is so many other things turn up to upset my schedule, visiting relations or their visiting me, the death of my Mother in May and jobs on the car, house and garden. I do know that the Committee members are often in a similar position. I have been very pleased with the effort and the work put in by the Committee, Terry, Chris and Bob particularly in their first year, and Henry giving his usual high quality service in the membership section.

This will be the last Bulletin before the AGM so I will try to get a few things off my chest now, to give you all time to consider them properly before we meet.

In the recent batch of info you received from Terry was a reminder about the sweat shirts. It is important that Bob receives your £5 within the next week or two for us to get our order in time for the Conference. If you get one, and I hope you all do, wear it with pride and follow the washing instructions to the letter. I have one from my Rugby Club which is very good and I hope ours will be of similar quality. If you do not get one on this order it is unlikely that you will get one at all as there is a minimum order quantity and the Club cannot afford to pay out a lot of money in order to keep some in stock. The same with badges.

Kevin Richmond informs me that he has just landed an eel of 4;05½ to round off an excellent season. Arthur Sutton has also landed one over four pounds to complete his century of fours. Actually, when I commented on Henry's capture of his 4;01 eel on Daves rod I was only trying to point out the irony of the situation. It was only natural for Henry to do what he did. I am always pleased when members catch 4lb eels whoever they are, and I suggest that the capture of that eel was the result of team effort.

I am sorry to learn that Dave Holman has not been receiving support from members in his area - J.Watson, A.Billington, S.Mottram and S.Radford. I hope they do not send a big batch of forms to Dave just prior to the AGM as all reporting officers must bring to the AGM a detailed report of members efforts. We will have a basic norm of effort that the Committee will decide on when the full AGM is over - such as each member shall have put in at least twenty sessions and/or caught at least 10 eels over 2lbs otherwise they will be asked to resign, or something along those lines. I had been hoping to hold a second full committee meeting prior to the AGM but time and finances seem to be against it. We must all bear in mind how easy it is for a member to put in false reports etc, so great care will have to be used before final decisions are made.

Latest reports of 4lb + eels indicate a total of 30 nationally up to the end of September, with about eight of these reported by our members. Incidentally, following my correspondence with Keith Sykes of the N.Glos Specimen group for over a year at regular intervals, he now indicates a desire to apply for membership. So far this year he has had eels of 6:7, 5:0 and 4:14 from his local waters. He does not catch many eels per year, but his average weight is about 5lb or so. He informs me that members will be able to visit one or two of his waters, in ones or twos once or twice a year. Keith, I feel, would be a valuable asset to this Club as he is not just interested in catching large eels but in also collecting information as we do. He has organised a similar reporting scheme to ours and will have many contributions to make. His group consists of about five members but should pose no problem regarding Keiths membership. He has also offered to supply tackle, photos and slides for our contribution to the Conference next year. I must also point out that he reports that the eel of 7:3 featured on the front page of A.T. 14/9/77 caught by 13 year old Stewart Gregory was taken from his water by the lad while poaching and was killed, in July this year.

Following my trip to the meres in August I had trouble with the rear axle on my car, resulting in a bill for £180 plus £21 for a new exhaust system. Just you wait, Terry Jefferson !!

I have been following the articles on traces this year with interest as it is a question I take very seriously. I have had nylon traces bitten through and have seen other anglers nylon traces bitten through- by eels- as I actually saw the eel on several occasions. I have also landed eels over 4lb without traces and have seen bigger eels landed without traces. Bob Jones and Pete Climo caught eels to 8lb using nylon. I hope the new reporting scheme will give us some clues on this. However, I find the simple answer is when using baits where a quick strike can be made i.e. worms or section baits, I use a long shanked hook to 15 lb nylon. When using large baits I use wide gape short shank hooks to wire trace. This has never let me down although it is personal opinion. As Arthur says, it depends a lot on the water and the rate of abortive runs. If I land an eel for every run, my tackle must be O.K. If I get abortive runs something must be wrong and some part of my tackle must be changed, whether it be bait, size of bait, hook type or size trace length or type or whatever. These are the questions we must base our choice of tackle on. The question may well be very different for each individual water.

I thought Kevins article on hooks very good indeed, and the kind of thing I need for the course in Angling science I am teaching at school to CSE. I try not to teach fishing, but the biology, chemistry and physics of fishing as a form of background.

Well, having exhausted my stock of material for this Bulletin, last but not least I feel I must reply to Dave Smiths article on the 1977 Reporting Scheme Vol 14 No 7. I was thinking of making it a seperate article but will leave it to the Editors discretion.

Members will be aware that I have frequently requested comments about the scheme, repeated by Terry Jefferson in his Newsletters, all to no avail. It is remarkable how the many hours spent on your behalf are met with so much apathy at times. I have had comments from both Kevin and Dave Holman. Dave Smiths article came rather out of the

blue. That's what I like about you lot - you are so kind to me - I don't know what I do to deserve it. Dear old Aunt Sally.

My first reaction on reading Daves article was to leave the whole thing until the AGM but as we have such a lot to process then I thought it best for members to know my opinion, for what it is worth, now. You never know, someone else may also write in about it, in support or against Daves effort. I cannot but admire Dave for his effort and persistence - as an ex editor of the Bulletin he is well gifted in the art of written presentation - it's not so much what is said, it's the way it is said.

At the AGM last year I requested ideas from members, those who had anything to say had their ideas included. You are just too late Dave - by ten months. Thanks though. I will try to answer all points raised in Daves article as I go through it, so members may like to read it as I go on.

1/ Apart from his comments at the SGM Dave has not communicated with me regarding the reporting scheme.

2/ The aims of the scheme were given at the SGM and are to be found in the guide to the 1977 Reporting scheme. We ARE collecting data for Club records and we ARE trying to answer specific questions (about 50) A third aim of any reporting scheme which Dave does not seem to appreciate is that it MUST be able to be analysed. He makes no attempt to show this in his scheme, whereas the Reporting officers have their own detailed analysis sheets and analysis guides to the new reporting scheme.

The original scheme from 1967 asked too many questions - not a few - as the 1970 Report shows. Even this had to leave out many questions which could have been answered because the analysis time required was too great. Only about one third of the potential data of the last ten years has been extracted analysed and published. I should know, as I get frustrated every year doing the same basic analysis that takes up all my time leaving none for further investigation. I am still working on the 1973/74 individual water results which will take a further six months or so and then there are the 1975/76 water results still to do. We fish, on average, 100 different waters each year, but it is all just extra work for the analyst. If I had to single out the one big fault of the scheme up to 1976 then I would say it was the use of rod hours.

For any scheme to work we must see results. Members have been brainwashed into judging everything by rod hours. Well, we have had 10 years worth of session reports, these represent a lot of effort, eels, and rod hours, but as I've said there is still a lot of information to be extracted from them than has been done so far. It would take a full time team of statistical experts a year, perhaps, at least to justify the scheme to its fullest potential. Kevin Richmond has been working on just the 1974 results to extract new trends, for a year now, with still a lot to do. Do any of you feel like having a go at another years work - you only need about twelve hours a week ?.

At the A.G.M the committee was requested to set up a new reporting scheme. I asked for suggestions and got very few. The rules state that the Committee will decide on the reporting scheme and members shall comply with whatever it is (Rule 7b Nov 1971 rules). There just is not time to present a draft reporting scheme at an SGM and have to possibly change, reprint and redistribute it afterwards - it would be a mammoth task and most unfair on Terry.

The lower half of Page 64 Vol 14 No7 again deals with aims of the reporting scheme so I will comment on these. I must say that I agree with 1,2 and 3 and feel the new scheme follows these, with the exception of rod hours. Dave, having said the Club has produced nothing new over the last six years, indicates a similar form for the future - just to keep similar un-analysable records. Having now got a set of 10 years records, we should logically look to the next decade and what we can achieve. My having analysed results for Club reporting for the last 3 years in the traditional manner has demonstrated to ME that rod hours are very unsatisfactory.

Going on to page 65 and the records for individual members, the new scheme gives performance of individual members by recording the number of sessions fished and the number of eels taken. Actual rod hours are useless for this as some members have a limited season, some fish with only one rod while others fish with six or seven. Some fish only a couple of hours per session - others for a whole weekend. To total 1000 rod hours is seemingly a lot of effort but on close inspection not necessarily so.

The overall effort and individual effort each year is very simple and quick to determine without extensive use of a calculator or computer. I realise that it is sad to have to limit a scheme to how much time and effort is required to process it, just as one cannot design an aircraft without having the engine or engines capable of allowing it to fly.

Therefore, individual and overall effort each year can still be determined as before, comparing numbers of eels, sessions, different sizes of eels, but not the length of each session. Dave goes on to mention rod hours per eel or 2lb eel etc. Over the past decade, taking into account the good years and bad years large numbers or low numbers of new or inexperienced members, overall the averages were about the same, so what did it prove ?

Is it required to know that we have to sit using a particular bait for 200 hours on one rod before we can be sure of catching a 2lb eel, or if we catch one within the first five hours do we have to wait a further 395 hours before catching another and if we put in 1000 hours with one bait in one season we expect to catch five eels over 2lb ? I feel that, overall, using large numbers these statistics may mean something, but to an individual he wants more information.

Alan Hawkins at the 1976 NASG Conference spelt out the percentages for each decision an eel angler makes when he goes fishing. The choice of water, line, hook, swim depth, distance, snags, trace, bait etc you can be right or wrong. A wrong decision decreases your chance of taking an eel. Admittedly, the longer you stay the better your chance of getting a run, but what of turning that run into an eel on the bank.

The new reporting scheme asks questions, relating them to the size of eel captured, not how long it takes to get a possible run, and in such a way that just about all variables are covered so that when averaged for several years trends will be obvious as to which situations and tackle produce the better eels. I do not want to know how long it takes me to catch a five pound eel - it may take me all my life, or never. I just want confidence in the tackle and methods that I use. The new reporting scheme WILL do this AND in a way that should be easy to analyse.

Kevin Richmond for example, should be proud of his average rod hour per eel total. However, until the capture of his four pound eel he was most unhappy in his letters to me, wishing that he had some DECENT waters near to him. Not being concerned with RH/E he persisted, experimented and was successful. Ernie Orme when fishing the meres had many blanks on Blakemere but by experimentation and determination landed two eels over four pounds from there.

We do not give a trophy for effort in rod hours but for the biggest eel whether it took 200 or 5000 hours to catch. If I wanted to get a good RH/E figure I would fish the Nene, but I am interested in much bigger fish, as we all should be, and should therefore have a reporting scheme which helps us to do this.

Halfway down page 65 Dave is totally wrong - having said (line 12 page 65) to collect Club data only i.e. by using rod hours, he says the new scheme only does just that! Sorry Dave, the new scheme collects data that can be easily collected and analysed. The questions were asked first, then the questionnaire devised so they could be asked, answered and analysed. A total of four considerations, not just one. You are incorrect, Dave, and you were told the aims at the SGM and in the guide, if you were still not sure why wait until now to question it?

The bottom of page 65 deals with the questionnaire. Here Dave is much too critical. As I have already said, as many important questions as possible were asked, in such a way that they could be answered. ALL of the old water questionnaire is included because of the failure of the original. We fish about one hundred different waters each year. The water questionnaire has been going for three or four years. I have about THREE for analysis. There should be about fifty or sixty I'm told, but where are they ? I think Alan Hawkins has them but despite many letters appears to want to keep them, along with the Clubs stock of several hundred otoliths and growth rate study work, Club photos and slides, but that is another story. However, with the failure of the old water questionnaire and the value of the questions it asks, they have been included in the new scheme, on page three. The details are analysed per size of eel to give a different answer, but one which can be obtained to give us information relating size of eel to water characteristics. I feel however that page three only needs doing once for the first eel, and left blank for further eels from that water. Daves objections are thus, I hope, answered.

- 1/ The new scheme has defined objectives - all of which can be achieved within the capabilities of the Club.
- 2/ Few of the questions asked on the new form have been answered relating to eel size satisfactorily by the 1967/76 scheme.
- 3/ Daves remarks here are rubbish.
- 4/ The Clubs record of numbers of big eels caught will be maintained and improved on.

Daves closing comments to his first article are not necessary and are unwarranted. The Committee has the power to do exactly as it did and to suggest otherwise is wrong. Daves suggestion concerning the completion of the old S.R. forms is totally undemocratic unilateral and wrong, and unacceptable. The Bulletin is no place to make such suggestion. Dave may raise the issue with the Committee to consider now, or suggest it at the AGM for the Committee to consider, BUT the new reporting scheme does not have to be accepted at the AGM or any other meeting. The Committee decides, that is the rule. We will consider any suggestions made by any club member and will sound out the opinion of other members (usually a waste of time). If sufficient pressure was put on the Committee by enough members we would consider changing it, but a condition of membership is to follow Club rules and these say all members follow the reporting scheme set up by the Committee.

I have now been involved with the Committee and the reporting scheme for seven years, so should know who can do what. If, though, the old S.R forms were filled in, who would analyse or process or store them? If you can persuade all members to fill them in, Dave, will you analyse and store the data? We cannot do two schemes. Looking at Daves alternative proposal, to my simple mind, it is a great big backward step of ten years. His alternative scheme revolves around rod hours as being the only way to indicate effort and trends, and that how many hours it takes to catch an eel of a particular size range on a particular bait etc is more important than first of all finding out what which type of bait, hook, water, swim, weather condition etc produces the most eels of a particular weight range. When I know most of the variables that produce big eels, then I might be concerned with how long it may take me to catch one. Each time I go eel fishing I want to know I am doing everything to increase my chances.

There have been many amendments to the reporting scheme as devised by Terry Coulson in 1967 - all amendments have been made in order, mainly, to make the analysis easier. In the three years I did the analysis for 1974,5 and 6 I followed the usual formula until I was familiar with the system and then tried to adapt or amend it slightly each year to ask different questions or to make analysis easier. Alan Hawkins did the same during his two years, trying to get the members to do more of their own analysis. In the event, this caused more work. The reporting officer set-up is first class, but still required much effort under the old system - restricting what could be asked and how it could be analysed. The new system is a bold effort to get over these obstacles and to ask many more relevant questions and in a way as all members can fill the forms in and, most important of all, the forms can be easily analysed. One of the few things I appear to agree with Dave on is that all new schemes require patience.

Well, I've said quite a bit, but I hope you all realise it is sincere. It is NOT an attack on Dave, but a defence of the new scheme. As they say, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. I have had a lot of experience with the Clubs reporting schemes, with questionnaires and with analysis and, if I may say so I do have a good Honours Degree in Chemistry. I teach Chemistry, Physics and Biology to 'A' level and have a fantastic reference library enabling me to look up things I do not know. I often have a lot on my mind nowadays, so often forget the simplest things unless I write them down. I do not have a PH.D. or Dr in front of my name and have no need to as I feel that it puts one on a pedestal. I could have stayed at University for another three years to get one, but I couldn't afford it anyway. However, I do not intend this to be a Brian Crawford ego trip - nobodys perfect - But I feel it needed saying to illustrate that there could be a possibility that I do know what I am talking about.

I might add that any member who has had a serious chat to me about the Club, knows that I value it and its reputation almost above all else and all I do or say is, I hope, for the Clubs benefit. Being Chairman, I AM an Aunt Sally but remember, my bark is usually worse than my bite. It must be your round this time, Dave.

Brian Crawford (Chairman).

Flax indicators.

By Chris Davy.

Picture the scene.

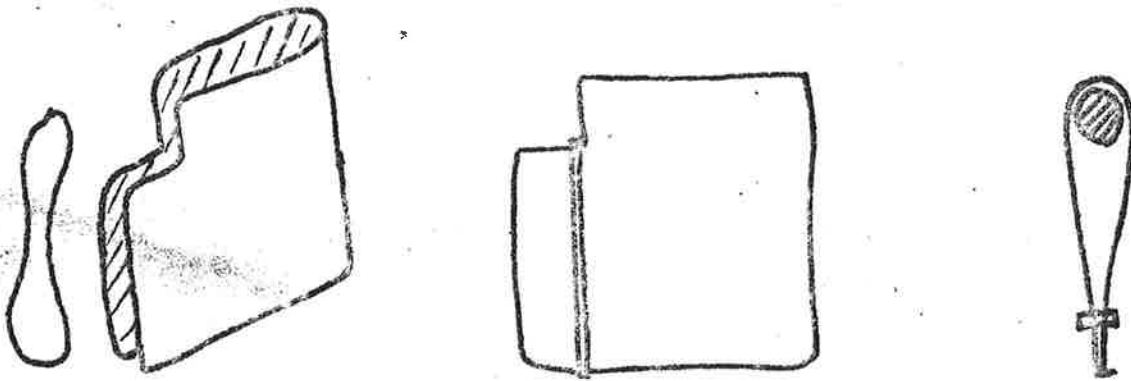
The angler has been on the water for three days without a solitary run. Just after dawn on the fourth day a silver foil indicator moves up to the butt ring and is held up against the ring before dropping and then climbing upwards again and again, the sleepy angler reaches his rod and tries to remove the dancing foil off the line without hindering its passage. As he frantically claws at the dancing foil it spins around on itself and jams in the butt ring causing the rod to bounce in the rests. The panic stricken angler emits a scream of anguish as he throws all his well practiced procedure to the winds and makes a wild swipe of a strike at the fish! Alas, he is too late the unforgiving fish has ejected the bait. He enters in his log, 0630 hrs, aborted run.

That somewhat cruel incident is one we have all experienced at some time or another and seems to be very common. Over the years in my search for the ultimate, non tangle, easy to see, non hindering indicator I have tried many types of varying materials and designs, and still I have yet to find one that meets all the requirements I desire and strive to perfect. Once or twice I have come across a design that smacks at the imagination by its sheer simplicity. I would like to describe a rather unique type of indicator that Terry and I have been using for 3 or 4 years for both daytime Eeling and a lot of our Piking. We cannot lay claim to having invented it, only modified it to our needs slightly. We were first introduced to it at a London Pike society meeting by Peter Mann, formerly of the Home counties S.G. Those of you who attended the last N.A.S.G conference may well remember the excellent talk he gave on his pet subject Air Injected Dead Baits, one with which he has had a great deal of success.

Terry and I have used them more for daytime fishing without buzzers, but there is no reason why they cannot be used in conjunction with alarms at night. The aspect I like most about them, apart from their infallibility is that once the flag drops away you are ready to strike without having to remove anything from the line. That awful feeling of trying to remove a twisted indicator from the line with it being wrenched from your fingers is gone, for the present anyway.

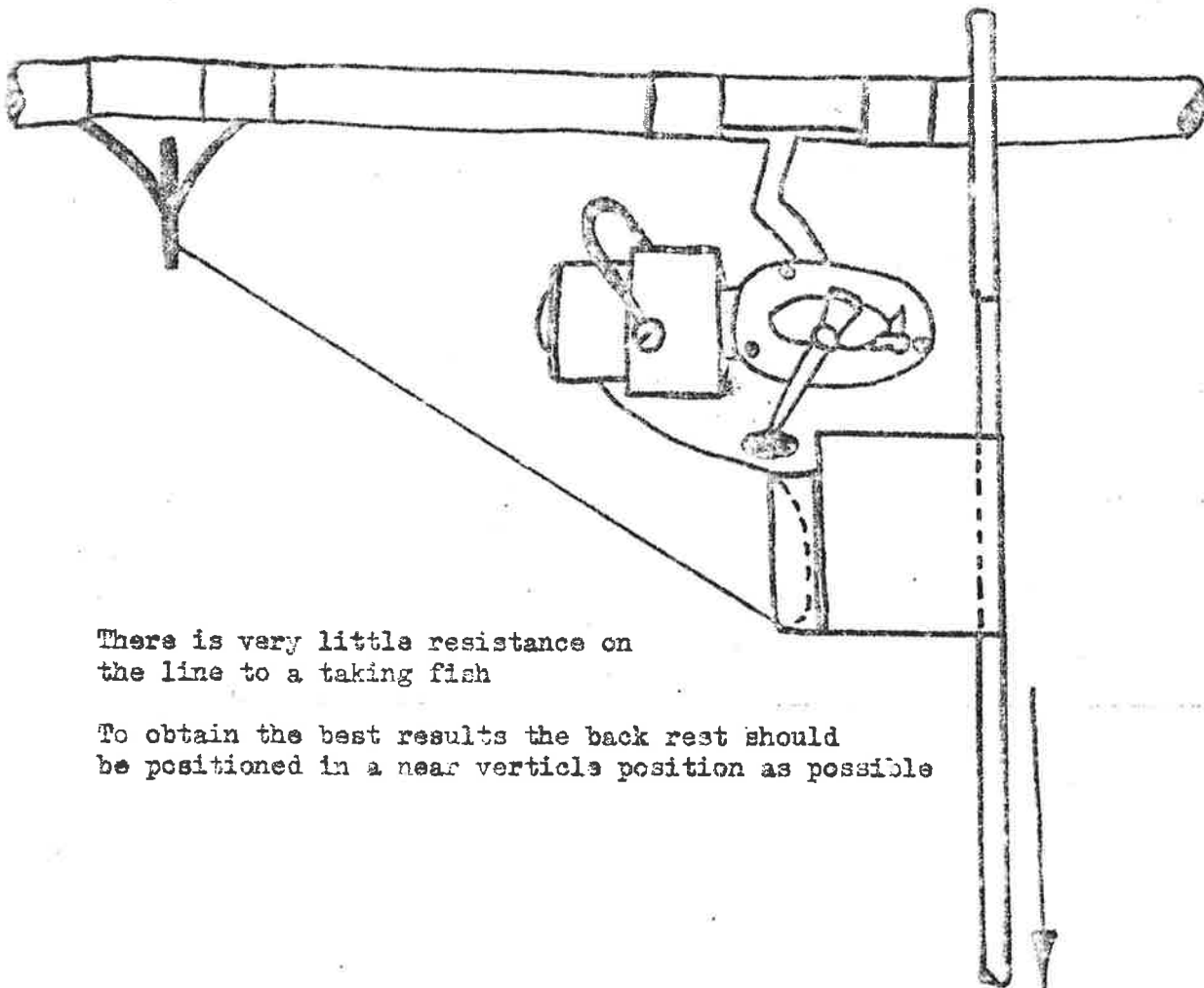
Constructure.

We first began using Acetate, a thin clear perspex used in modelling. Supplies of this however became difficult to obtain. This material was also prone to distortion at low temperatures which caused problems. Terry then began using a thin flexible lightweight plastic sheeting, this we have found to be excellent. Basically any lightweight material that can be shaped or bent without fracturing is perfectly o.k. Size is one of personell preference, Terry tends to favour something in the 3 by 1 1/2 inch range, whereas I usually use a 3 by 3 square. Painted dayglo pink (Aurora Pink by Humbrol) they can be clearly seen (Terrain permitting) at a range of several hundred yards, just in case your the type who likes to wander away for a chat or a cuppa. When the line is pulled from between the faces they slide down the backrest with an unmistakeable rasping sound. Ken Goward used to put a couple of acute bends into his which kept them clear of the rest which made them fall that bit quicker with more of a clunk, either type works okay.



An Elastic band is used to hold the faces together after the flag has been folded around the back rest. The inside of the faces can be ruffed up slightly to grip the line a little more securely.

They are best mounted directly under the reel, therefore the rod must be positioned on the rest with the reel hard up against the back rod rest. The sketches should be self explanatory.



There is very little resistance on the line to a taking fish

To obtain the best results the back rest should be positioned in a near vertical position as possible

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

Dear Editor,

I have read with interest the comments regarding wire traces. Unfortunately I have the feeling of *cleja vu*. Indeed, a few years back there was a similar exchange of views about the same subject. At that time a fellow member said to me that we had been through it all before. Alas, the subject of traces is an extensive subject, but nevertheless, I should like to make a few observations.

Every year there are a number of pike caught on roach tackle. That they are played and landed on such unsuitable gear is fact, but no one going after pike would deliberately use such tackle. The teeth of a pike are such that they can easily cut through nylon, given the chance. Bearing in mind that treble hooks will probably kill the fish (by sealing the gullet) no self respecting pike angler fails to use a trace. Nevertheless, good sport can be had using heavy nylon traces, provided the right approach is used and the quarry not too big. With eels the situation is slightly different. Their teeth are unlikely to chomp through nylon with one bite. They will, however, abraid the nylon by waving their heads from side to side. The use of wire, then, is to avoid or reduce abrasion. Even wire can be rasped through by an eel given long enough. Allow it to anchor itself and its whole mouth becomes a pair of bastard files capable of wearing away heavy wire traces.

The problem then is not a matter of wire v nylon in the sense that "if you don't use it you may lose a big one". Rather, it is "do you give the eels a chance to abraid nylon traces"?

In any situation there are extremes. At one end of the scale there are relatively large snagless waters in which there is little chance of the eel being able to abraid a nylon trace if a little angling skill is employed. Conversely, deep rocky pools with plenty of snags may give the eel that chance. Allowing the eel to run twice before allows the running eel the freedom of choice as to where it goes. In such a situation a wire trace can be useful but if the eel has the chance to go through an old dumped car or abandoned plant in worked pits even a wire trace cannot help.

A point Alan Hawkins once raised could be very relevant, namely, our aim on connecting is to get the eel off the bottom and, to ensure we do, we used (and may still do) heavy rods and line - but perhaps this prompts the eel into moving off in a panic. To the nearest snag. Perhaps wire traces are essential when heavy gear is used? Personally, and I know others using light gear who will agree, I have found that using lighter gear does not result in that panic reaction and the eels fight in midwater rather than in snags on the bottom. As with all things it is a case of 'Horses for Courses'. There are occasions when wire traces are essential, and I am sure Dave Holman will agree. But there are also occasions when their use is deleterious to good sport. It may be that Kelvins wire is the very best available but one should not be dogmatic. Anyway, it is not the diameter which is important, not its breaking strength, but its resistance to abrasion under tension. Similarly to Supersteel, it would have to be as supple as nylon, perhaps more so. In any case, if an eel is lip hooked the shank of the hook effectively replaces the need for wire traces. Isn't that what we should be doing, rather than devising more efficient ways to gorge bait?

Finally, I wish to comment on Kelvins attitude to Black Seal. Personally I do not like it. However, many members do. The great thing about the Anguilla Club is that we are NOT stereotyped although we do follow a pattern. I highly disagree with the view that it should not be seen in the tackle box of any self respecting member. Those members who use it have confidence in it and I cannot think of a better reason for using any item of tackle!

David Smith.

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At last, a letter to the Editor! Someone still cares! Thanks Dave, and in case you are still sore about my hurtful comment at the end of the last Bulletin I would have every member know that DAVE Smith has caught yet another eel (on nylon). Of course it should have been MY fish, but I have to let the little chap have a modicum of success on occasion otherwise I lose an angling companion - and a sincere friend.

Editor.

WHAT PRICE AN EXTRA LARGE EEL

By Kevin Richmond.

Any angler who sets out to specialise in Eel angling must at some time ask himself "What chance have I of landing a really big Eel?" Most are content to believe that "their" waters all hold large Eels and that eventually one will be caught.

However is this the case? I believe that whilst our members spend a great number of rod hours on big Eel waters, quite a considerable amount of time is wasted on waters that just do not have the required potential to produce large Eels.

During the N.A.C season of 1974 members caught Eels from 65 Fisheries, these are set out in table A as can be seen, only two fisheries (3%) produced Eels of over five pounds, whilst eight waters (13%) produced Eels of four pounds, 25 waters (40%) had Eels of over three pounds taken from them.

Waters that produce smaller Eels are obviously in the majority. However, when the rod hours are compared as regards weight class per water they show that our members "Wasted" just over 40% of the comparable effort put in on three plus waters, table B.

Some members due to uncontrollable factors e.g lack of fisheries in their area may be in the position of only being able to fish waters that produce Eels in the lower weight class. This article is directed to those anglers who live in areas that abound in waters but do not exploit them to the best of their ability. What is the point of fishing X number of waters rod hours at a water where there is only a remote chance of hooking a large Eel? Some may say that fishing is not just catching fish, The flora and fauna around the angler matter too. However, I would rather catch large Eels from an unattractive fishery than small Eels in beautiful surroundings. If I had to sit on top of a rubbish tip to catch large Eels I would, wouldn't you?

Table A. Individual Fisheries 1974.

Name Of Water	County	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	Total
HAXBY POND	YORKSHIRE	2	-	-	1	-	2	3
GULSLOPE POOL	WARWICKSHIRE	-	2	1	-	-	1	2
EARLSWOOD LAKE	WARWICKSHIRE	-	2	4	6	2	-	14
HERON WATER	BIRMINGHAMSHIRE	-	1	1	1	2	-	5
ELMFIELD POND	YORKSHIRE	-	-	-	1	2	-	3
LAKE BALA	MERIONETH	65	22	23	9	1	-	120
GRAND UNION CANAL	WILTSHIRE	1	1	2	-	1	-	5
BOURBLES S'ALL	LANCASHIRE	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
ABBOTTS RESERVOIR	ESSEX	-	-	12	14	-	-	26
KINGS LEAD	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	2	6	12	5	-	-	25
LAKE POND	DEVONSHIRE	-	1	-	3	-	-	4
JAMES PIT	SUFFOLK	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
BARFORD BROAD	LINCOLNSHIRE	6	11	4	2	-	-	23
WHITBERRY	SHROPSHIRE	17	25	1	2	-	-	45
RIVER OUSE	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	-	1	-	2	-	-	3
STANSTEAD ABOTT	ESSEX	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
RIVER THAMES		10	15	9	1	-	-	33
EAST HILTON BRICK PIT	LINCOLNSHIRE	4	12	3	1	-	-	25
HILSEA HOAT	HANTS	-	1	4	1	-	-	6
RIVER LODDON	BESKINGHAMSHIRE	1	1	3	1	-	-	6
DUMWEAR	SOMERSET	4	3	2	1	-	-	10
WINDHILL	LINCOLNSHIRE	1	1	1	1	-	-	4
TOTHAM PIT	ESSEX	3	2	-	1	-	-	6
GUTHOUSE POOL	YORKSHIRE	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
LIFFORD RESERVOIR	WARWICKSHIRE	-	-	-	1	-	-	1

Name Of Water	County	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	Total
MARKET RASEN	LINCOLNSHIRE	-	4	4	-	-	-	8
SALHOUSE BROAD	NORFOLK	11	13	3	-	-	-	27
WROXHAM BROAD	NORFOLK	4	6	3	-	-	-	13
SHROPSHIRE UNION CANAL	CHESHIRE	2	4	3	-	-	-	9
BRA LAKE	HUNTINGDOMSHIRE	2	4	2	-	-	-	8
BRIDLE LAKE	YORKSHIRE	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
RIVER YEO	DEVON	10	7	1	-	-	-	18
BUTLERS	HUNTINGDOMSHIRE	13	4	1	-	-	-	18
SUTTON SAND PIT	NOTTINGHAM SHIRE	3	3	1	-	-	-	7
BARROW HAVEN	LINCOLNSHIRE	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
CARTWRIGHT PIT	LINCOLNSHIRE	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
IVY LAKE	SUSSEX	-	1	1	-	-	-	2
WESTFIELD NO 1	LINCOLNSHIRE	3	-	1	-	-	-	4
WESTFIELD NO 3	LINCOLNSHIRE	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
BLAKEMERE	SHROPSHIRE	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
CHAPMANS PIT	LINCOLNSHIRE	1	-	1	-	-	-	2
OTTER POOL	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
BARLEY POOL	MORCESTERSHIRE	13	12	-	-	-	-	25
BELSTRIDGE POND	DEVON	2	4	-	-	-	-	6
WILLOW PIT	SOMERSET	7	3	-	-	-	-	10
LAMBETH RESERVOIR	SURREY	1	3	-	-	-	-	4
WESTFIELD NO 5	LINCOLNSHIRE	5	2	-	-	-	-	7
HYBRIDGE PIT	SOMERSET	4	2	-	-	-	-	6
RYL BRICK PIT	CLAYD	3	2	-	-	-	-	5
SILVER LIND PIT	ESSEX	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
KNIGHT AND BESBOROUGH RES	SURREY	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
SMITHS	LINCOLNSHIRE	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
GREBE POOL	BUCKINGHAMSHIRE	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
HATFIELD BRICK POND	YORKSHIRE	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
WORCESTER CANAL		-	1	-	-	-	-	1
HERON POND	MIDDLESEX	3	-	-	-	-	-	3
MARBURY MERE	CHESHIRE	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
HAWK LAKE	SHROPSHIRE	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
HURLESTON RESERVOIR	CHESHIRE	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
APPERLY POOL	GLoucestershire	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
BLACK PIT	SOMERSET	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
HYBRIDGE SMALL PIT	SOMERSET	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
WESTFIELD NO 4	LINCOLNSHIRE	1	-	-	-	-	-	1

TABLE NO 4

RELATIVE MERIT OF 0 - 31b FISHERIES V 3-61b FISHERIES

Weight class	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6
Fisheries	3	13	17	17	6	2
TOTAL FISHERIES		38			25	
ROD HOURS		5630			13921	

HAXBY BRICK PIT.

By; Richard Hudson.

Since Graham Booth and I first joined the Anguilla Club, most of you will have heard the name Haxby mentioned a few times in our conversations, so this article is to give you a better picture of the water.

Haxby pit is situated about 3 mls. north of York and was formed in a disused brick-pit which was worked sometime in the last century. It is just under 3 acres in area, 50x100 yds. The owner of the water just happens to be a member of York Specimen group of which Graham and myself are members. This is very useful as we are the only ones who fish it regularly for eels.

The first time I heard of the large eels was back in 1964 when an eel of 4:02 was entered for the fish of the year prize in the now defunct Fishing magazine. The eel had been caught by a 16 year old lad using a rudd livebait, (he was purposely fishing for eels.). This report didn't mean much to me at the time as I had only recently taken up the pastime of angling at the ripe old age of eleven.

I was first introduced to the water in 1971 when I joined the Y.S.G., but Graham, and two other friends, (John and Al,) had fished it since 1969. The water at the time was choked with weed and two other members had done a stout job in dragging a large swim and in the process, they had dragged out a dead eel of about 4:00, so it didn't take too long before Graham, John and Al fished the water.

The first two sessions produced eels of 4:11, 4:05, 4:03, and 3:04, plus numerous runs missed and fish lost mainly due to the use of inadequate tackle. After these first two sessions, all three of them thought that they were in for an eel bonanza, but for the rest of the year they caught nothing else, though they did get a few dropped runs to keep up their morale. I must add that a coot and a swan were landed after some exciting moments.

In 1970, all three of them fished the water hard and two eels, 4:00 and 3:10 were caught by Al and a monster was lost off the mill, (the story of that fish still lingers on.). By the end of the year the water had obviously got a reputation of being extremely hard. As the weed made the fishing very hard indeed, without carrying out massive weed dragging operations, steps were taken during the winter to try and destroy the weed when it's defenses were down. An experiment was tried by putting a stack sheet, (20ftx20ft of black polythene,) in one swim and leaving it for the summer. This idea worked well, so well in fact that no weed grew in the whole water the next spring- quite mysterious isn't it? (Please don't go rushing about with plastic sheets though, it might not work again.)

1971 was the first year that I fished the water and my first weekend was a disaster, with plenty of rain and wind ruining the proceedings. It was two months later when I ventured near the water again, and summing up the efforts of Graham, John and Al it was apparent that although not many eels had been caught since the initial burst, there had been a few runs which usually proved abortive so I decided to use Perch heads for bait, perch being the most easily caught small fish in the pit.

Three of these baits were swung into the fray and I sat back to wait for the action. At 22.30hrs., one of my indicators moved up to the butt-ring and after two feet of line had been taken, it stopped.....I fumed. The next time I had a run, I made my mind up that I would hit it immediately. At 23.15 hrs. on my next session one of my indicators eased off the ground and before it moved much further, I struck and duly landed an eel of 4:04. I'd cracked it, so I thought, but not so much as a twitch was forthcoming for the rest of the year. To our great delight, one of the locals who fished from his back garden caught a 5:03, and a 2:12 was caught by the owner.

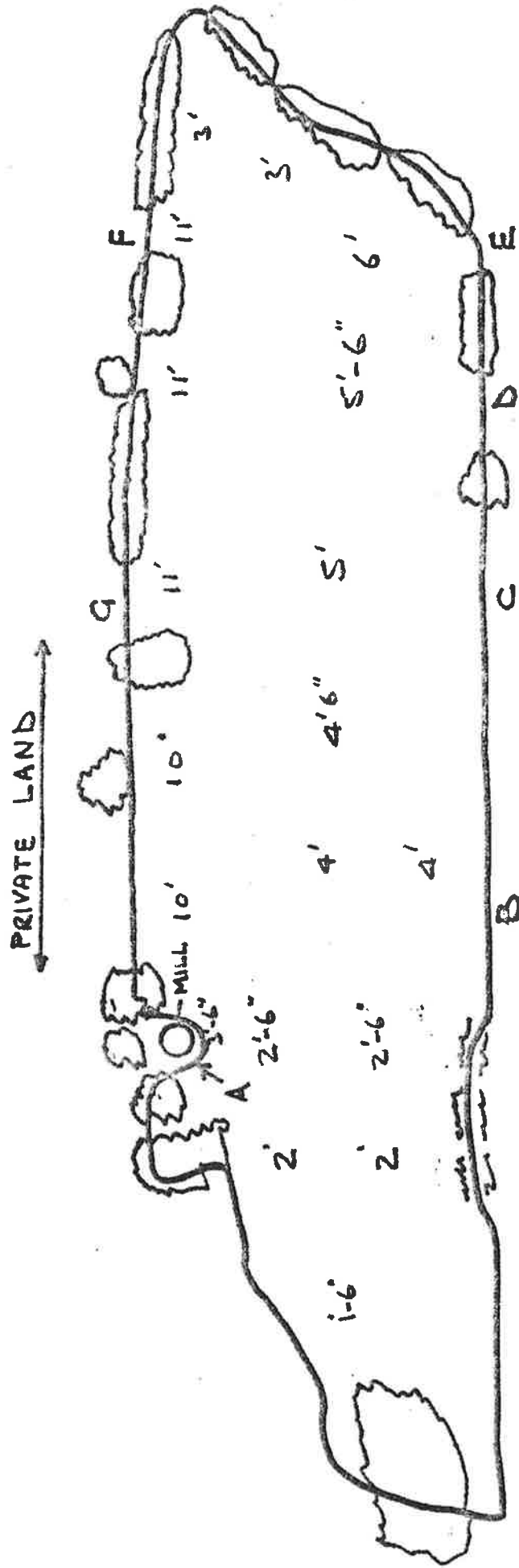
The start of the 72 season came and I thought I had a good chance of a few fish, but it didn't happen, 14 takes resulted in two fish 3:14 and 3:03.

In 73 we managed to fish a few sessions in April and May with worms. This was a rare feat as thousands of small perch normally gobble up the worms as soon as they enter the water. They must have lost their senses for a while, but it didn't last long. However, during this time I had fish of 4:02, 3:11, 3:11, 2:13, 2:08 and Graham had eels of 4:11, 3:10 and 2:14.

Graham and I were convinced that there were bigger eels in the water, but as yet we

(cont'd)

SWIMS TO PRODUCE EELS:- A- 3-11, 3-3, 2-14
 B- 4-10, 4-10, 4-4, 4-3, 4-2, 3-14, 3-10, 3-4, 2-13, 2-8
 C- 3-3
 D- 2-12
 E- 5-10, 4-0, 3-11, 2-1.
 F- 3-11
 G- 5-13, 5-3, 5-1½, 4-15½, 4-11, 4-5, 4-3½, 4-0½, 3-10, 3-6, 3-2½,
 2-14.



HAXBY BRICK PIT

....hadn't caught any, but 1974 changed all that. Graham had big eels of 5:10 and 5:01 $\frac{1}{2}$ plus a 3:08. I managed eels of 3:11, 3:06, and 2:14.

I was now in even hotter pursuit of a big eel after seeing those two big fish of Grahams, and to make matters worse, whilst on the Club trip to Westfield lakes, the owner of Haxby decided to fish my usual swim using a terminal rig identical to that which I normally use and a similar bait and he clobbered a 4:10.....RATS!

1975 didn't help at all in my quest for a large eel from the water as I didn't even get a run.

Graham fared somewhat better, and had one good night, landing eels of 4:15 $\frac{1}{2}$ and 3:02 $\frac{1}{2}$, (I was witness to the large fish.....couldn't have three FIVES, could he?). He also had another of 4:00 $\frac{1}{2}$ that year.

Beginning of 76 and by now it was obvious that one swim in particular was producing the large fish, so I duly ensconced myself in the pitch and my second session produced a big un of 5:13 which unfortunately died and is now enjoying itself in a glass case on top of my wardrobe.

I also had a 3:03 last year, and Graham had one at 4:03.

This has been written during my first session of 77 and sad to relate, no eels yet. The only excitement has been two monster breamlets!

Anyway, I hope there are still some more eels to come out. Who knows, there just might be a six staring at my bait this very minute. I will keep you informed.
