

The National Anguilla Club

BULLETIN

VOLUME No ELEVEN

ISSUE NO FOUR.

N.A.C.BULLETIN. VOLUME ELEVEN. NUMBER FOUR.

CONTENTS.

| | PAGE |
|--|-------------------|
| EDITORIAL | DAVE SMITH 51 |
| THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF AN EEL HUNTER | KEVIN RICHMOND 52 |
| MISCELLANEOUS AND MELANCHOLY THOUGHTS | ERNIE ORME 533 |
| THE LEAGUE OF ANGLING SUPER HEROES. | DAVE SMITH 55 |
| RANDOM NOTES FROM THE SECRETARY | A.SUTTON. 57 |
| POEM - THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS | A.SUTTON. 58 |
| EDITORIAL FROM N.A.S.G. NEWSLETTER. | 59 |

EDITORIAL

I always find this time of year to be a little unadventful. The AGM in early November serves to underline the fact that the summer's fishing has come to an end, and winter fishing, for me, does not begin in earnest until Christmas day. The fact that I fish on Christmas day may bemuse a few (if not all) of my readers. In actual fact this is something of a family tradition - the term "family" is used loosely since the tradition applies to only two of us out of a grand total of some dozen in the family (excluding my mother's side which, if added, would boost this figure by something in the order of 50! - big family, my Mum's). The two concerned in this tradition, then, are myself and cousin Keith.

Christmas morning sees us waking up at some early hour with the traditional hangover - that tradition, I believe, is shared by more members of our family than just we two: it's also shared by my mother's side - and the terrible prospect of spending the day indulging in a simple orgy of eating too much, highly sickly and mighty rich food and, dare I say it, partaking to great excess of the fair juices of the hop or grape; alternatively one's fancy may be taken by the pleasures of the waters of the Volga or the waters of the Tay. The eventual outcome of the day is pretty certain: judgement will be impaired and Boxing Day will witness the presence of yet another hangover.

So there we are, four o'clock Christmas morning: Santa Clause has been and I'm fed up playing with my toys and all I've got left to face on this Holy day is a host of secular activities - ie boozing and gorging - with a hangover as long as King Kong's left arm. The cure? You've guessed; go fishing.

The basic aim of this expedition is not to catch fish. Last year, Keith was feeling so bad that he spent a whole hour fishing without any bait. This was on account of the fact that the frozen sprats kept moving out of reach. No, if the aim of the exercise was to actually catch fish, we would not go. The only thing we are liable to catch is a summons for being drunk in charge of a rod or carrying an offensive weapon with malicious intent. This swift sortie is purely one of convenience and the duration of the trip is directly proportional to the size of the hangover: the bigger the hangover, the longer we stay flailing the water. As soon as we feel as fresh as a daisy, we pack up and set off home again where we can warm up with a brandy or some thing.

This trip, even though it is not really of a serious nature, starts the winter fishing, and between the end of the summer season and Christmas I am inactive on the fishing front.

This year, having moved home yet again, these inactive months are being put to good use in the form of redecorating. So, here I sit typing away, up to my armpits in wallpaper, paste and paint. Most of my fellow anglers find this occupation a chore that is done during the close season simply to appease the beloved wife and thereby gain her permission to spend a few weekends away in pursuit of the dreaded eel - the sight and smell of which disgusts her - rather than do the gallant thing and spend the long summer nights at home in her sweet company. I enjoy decorating.

Of all the redecorating pastimes, I enjoy stripping (walls) most. As chunks of the redundant rubbish falls to the floor, I look with gleeful anticipation for the hitherto undiscovered masterpiece by some obscure Latin artist, or an equally rare short ode scribbled on the dining room wall one day by a satiated Tennyson. So far, not too good. All I've got for my trouble is a cartoon

of a female contortionist in a position that even the Khama Sutra fails to mention and a poem that stars the world famous Kilroy. And all this in the dining room! This has, of course, spurred me on. What will I find inscribed on the walls of the smallest room in the house? or better still, what will the toilet have to offer once its papyrus covering has been removed? The mind boggles.

Since Kilroy has come into this conversation, you may think that he is a well travelled sort of fellow. But what with my walkabouts, as friend Arthur calls them, I too have knocked up a few miles. On reflection, had I appended my name to the walls of every loo I had visited, friend Kilroy might have a viable challenger. Alas, "Smith was here" lacks that certain bit of magic that Kilroy has. So, this common sewer of the porcelain stays in the background.

There again, it is a good thing that I do not have the national acclaim of Kilroy. You wouldn't believe what he is supposed to have done if you believe the rhyme on my wall! I have never done it and, to be quite honest, I would be a little worried to even try.

So here I am, using up paper, of which there is a national shortage, and am yet to say anything earth shattering about eels, about which you've paid your hard earned pennies to hear. Suffice to say that before repapering I added another rhyme to the wall:

"I'm full of glee,
I'm full of joy,
I caught an eel before Kilroy."

DAVID SMITH.

THE TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF AN EEL HUNTER

By Kevin Richmond.

Being the sort of fellow to raise a laugh - people dissolve into fits of uncontrollable laughter when they see my face - I thought I would tell everyone how we "yokels" catch eels.

As I am the only civilised anguilla hunter down here in the wilderness (though rumour has it that there was another person who tried to catch eels a couple of years ago, but he was burned at the stake for practicing Black Magic rites within the confines of his brolly), these methods have been tested by myself over the past three seasons with great success.

One of the favorite methods for any member who likes to get up his fellow angler's nose and catch eels is to play such tunes as "On Mother Carey's doorstep", "Eel aye adio we'll win the cup", or "Golden Dace are here again" on one's sensors. This will have the dual effect of lulling the eels into a false sense of security, and make all of the bream and carp anglers jump into the lake frothing at the mouth. Those that do not jump into the lake make sure that our budding pop star will. This method is not recommended for members who cannot swim.

Whereas, all over the country, the favoured "flask of tea" method works wonders in getting runs from eels, the snakes down here have a much more sadistic streak in them and that method is a non-starter. Instead, I get the primus stove out and heat up a tin of soup - oxtail works best - making sure that it is really boiling. This is important, for the hotter the soup, the greater the chance of a run. I then get a very shallow plate and fill it until no more can be poured into it. Now, I put the plate in my lap and start to eat. Without fail, the sensors go off leaving one startled angler trying to play an eel with one hand whilst, unsuccessfully, trying to stop boiling soup running down his legs with the other.

So, if any of you are down here in Devon and see an angler who's bowlegged appearance makes him look as if he has just been around the world on horseback, don't laugh. It might be me.

MISCELLANEOUS AND MELANCHOLY THOUGHTS

By Ernie Orme.

Many things have made me think of writing an article for the Bulletin, but two things have prompted me into putting pen to paper. Firstly, there are the generous comments made about my most successful year in pursuit of *Anguilla anguilla* by our amiable ex chairman, Alan Hawkins. Secondly, the many devious remarks made about me by old Izaak Walton, in the guise of (guess who?) Arthur J Sutton, in recent issues of the Bulletin and Newsheet cannot go unchallenged.

Before going any further, for the benefit of the newcomers to the club, I had better explain the reasons why this love-hate relationship exists between old A.J.S. and myself - I love to hate him and vice-versa.

It all began, I think, last March when Arthur played host to me at the NASG National Angling Conference held in London. I travelled on the London Underground from Arthur's to the conference hall in Chelsea for only 3p - one of the perks of my job, gentlemen, all fair and square! Oh, God, chaps, how I enjoyed that experience. You should have seen Arthur's face! I still giggle about it. He, a London rate payer (or so he says), had to pay 25p and I, a Cheshire boy, only paid 3p. Long live my "perks"!

Arthur's latest outrage appeared in November's Newsheet entitled "A Shaggy Dog Story". Right Izaak, old mate, you've asked for it! Arthur implied that I fished the swim nearest the road at Whitemere because I was afraid of the "Whitemere monster". The real reason why I fish the swims nearest the road and civilisation is because I was privileged to be in the company of Mr & Mrs Alan Hawkins when he caught a number of magnificent eels from the roadside swims. The two best specimens weighed in at 4lb+ and 5lb+. I, myself, was broken by an eel in no uncertain manner not thirty yards away from Alan's swim.

As for me being frightened of the "Whitemere monster" well, that's ridiculous! The only time I've been frightened at Whitemere (or anywhere else for that matter) is when old AJS has popped his piscatorial face round my broolly tent. Also there is the fear of him catching me pouring Southern Comfort out of my hip flask into my cup of tea or coffee. It's too strong for him anyway.

You see, Arthur, I do have your best interests at heart - you would only blame me for making you feel bad after drinking my Southern Comfort, and I should hate to be blamed for "losing" the best General Secretary any club could wish for.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, I might add that in case Arthur has any designs on suing me for libel I should point out that, owing to inflation, I am absolutely penniless and, with the price of petrol being what it is, my Volvo estate has no value at all. So, Izaak, may I suggest that you get that chip off your shoulder and try to be the nice, loveable character that we all know you can be. God bless you and may you live forever.

Now, Alan, Back to you. Yes, I have had a great year. I vividly remember that time in early June when you rang me at my home to ask if I would pick you up from Bangor station to join AJS and I at Bala Lake. I didn't say so at the time, but I would have willingly carried you and your gear on my back from Bangor to Bala. I knew how much you would enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the place.

Yes, Alan was one of the lucky ones to see Bala at its most magnificent best. In all, I think Arthur, Dave Holman and I were lucky enough to see Bala tranquil no more than half a dozen times in May, June and July. I shall never forget those daybreaks when it was possible to see a million ripples on the surface. No, not raindrops, but fish of most species. Each one was, no doubt, in prime condition.

I shall never forget the sight of Dave's 3;12 caught in early April. It made one's eyes ache with the sheer pleasure of looking at it. In these dark, miserable days of winter, I recapture the sight of my own eels, up to 3:14, caught from Bala lake and remember those heart stopping, never ending, positively determined runs.

How sorry I was that the weather was so unkind during the summer trip there. I know in my heart that you all would have come up trumps had the weather been kinder. But how thrilled I was to see such a good turn out of the best bunch of characters it has ever been my privilege to meet. Men like Arthur Smith - a warm and gentle giant, a living pantry just oozing contentment and kindness.

May I suggest to those of you who have not had the pleasure of fishing with Dave Holman, please take the first opportunity to do so. His enthusiasm and delicate skill and success at the gentle art of angling have been a revelation to me. There is no doubt in my mind that he has got the touch of a Richard Walker or an Izaak Walton.

John (Bomber) Holliman, please accept my congratulations for your success at Bala. That 4lb+ eel you caught (and rightly deserved) has proved the potential of Bala Lake and I think we would all like to believe that there are many more eels of that calibre in those depths of Llyn Tegid. What's more, Bomber, please don't change. Your out going personality and warm cockney humour is what you'll always be remembered for in the NAC.

I hope you will all do me the honour of letting me see you all back at Bala some time soon. I shall be returning there myself soon to try for those big, fat, bronze roach; those huge perch, and pike that do exist in there. I hope you'll wish me luck.

I read in the angling press recently of those two 6lb+ chub supposedly caught from the Welsh Dee at Farndon. Oh, how I would like to believe that that really did happen! I used to fish it often some years ago. It is a delightful river, not far from my home. I have never heard of any chub being caught, let alone huge chub. Ah well, I could be wrong. Perhaps I should go and see

for myself.

So, my friends, another eel season has gone by and I feel that for many of you it was a memorable one. Now, you, like me, are left only with memories. Come the spring though, and I, like you, will be trying like hell to get the name of the National Anguilla Club its rightful place in angling history.

THE LEAGUE OF ANGLING SUPER HEROES

By David Smith.

In a recent letter, Arthur Sutton suggested the revival of an old Bulletin feature. In the days of yore when the Bulletin appeared monthly, there was a column entitled "Man of the Month". This feature saw the dissection of one member so that all his inner secrets were revealed. This, of course, meant that the members of the club could get to know of each other if not each other, if you see what I mean. This I feel is a good idea, but we can't very well call the feature "Man of the Month", can we? Arthur has suggested "Highlight on a member". If you have any suitable ideas for a title, please let me know. Send your suggestions to me with a cheque or postal order for £5 made payable to yours truly at his secret Swiss bank account. The sender of the best suggestion will win £1. The remainder of the monies will go to a well known charity of my choice - notably the "Keep Smith's pocket warm this winter".

In anticipation of having my not so good name destroyed by one of you, I'm going to have my pound of flesh now, while I've got the chance.

The observant ones amongst you would know that I have recently moved, again, and am in the throes of redecorating. If you didn't know this, you've not been reading the important bits of this honourable publication. Should I find out that that is the case, I'll smash you in the kneecaps next time I see you - or bite your ankles if I don't feel like stretching.

Anyway, where was I? Oh, yes. I've just moved. Its funny, but everything that came out of our old loft was earmarked for the new loft. Since we had taken the trouble to clear our's out, I was surprised to see that the previous occupant of this residence had not been so considerate. All manner of rubbish littered the place, but the thing that caught my eye was a pile of old Superman books.

Needless to say, being youthful at heart and suffering from a "Peter Pan" complex, I put these on one side while I disposed of the other rubbish. Superman is now being read. I use the term Superman loosely, since included in the pile are other such goodies as Batman, Green Lantern, Superboy, Super girl and last, but not least, the League of Super Heroes.

So involved have I become in my bed time reading, that I have now started to dream about these Super characters of fiction. In the fantasy world of my dreams, fact and fiction have no boundaries. All this leads me to the startling conclusion that the National Anguilla Club has had it. How can we compete with the League of Super Heroes? If you can't beat them, join them.

So, gentlemen, let's have a SLASH - Super League of Angling Super Heroes.

Dr. Alan Hawkins, Industrial Scientist (or something) wandered through the field of wild oats he had just been sewing. Suddenly, there before him stood a sheet of still water. Stripping off his white laboratory coat and other outer garments, he changed his secret identity to become the famed "Bootlace Billy" - Super Angler of our time. Alas, he had forgotten to put on his Super costume of filthy smelly parka and gumm boots under his outer garments. He shivered; he blushed; he dressed. He approached the water.

"This Super water must hold some Super eels", he mused. "This is a job for SLASH."

That evening, Arthur (alias Brolley Boy) Sutton was having a Super printout of Super-news Super-letters. Suddenly the control box on his super-action belt whistled, indicating that Bootlace Billy was summoning a session of SLASH.

Meanwhile, Ernie Orme was thinking of cheap travel on London's Underground. His telephone rang. It was Bootlace Billy. He told Ernie of the Super water he had found. Ernie took a swig of his magic elixir given to him by some grubby little indian in Bootle. This liquid turned our Ernie into the fabulous Eel man. Grabbing his Eelmerang and Eelticket. He drove the Eelmobile to the station and travelled by motorail to London on a cheap return. At 3p his eelperks were paying off.

Brian Crawford stood in front of forty screaming morons. His chalk squealed across the blackboard as he drew out the structural formula for Deoxyribose Nucleic Acid. The bell rang to indicate the end of the day's studies. Forty screaming morons filed silently out of Brian's room, none the wiser for their day's education.

"Pearls before swine," thought Brian: but now he was free for the weekend to adopt his alter ego of Mudman. He knew of the new super venue that Bootlace Billy had found and was soon speeding off in search of his super pals.

They arrived at the lake at the same time. Eelman and Brolley boy arrived in the Eelmobile; Bootlace Billy and Mudman arrived seperately. After looking at the water, the quartet of super heroes decided that the assistance of Butty Boy would be of great value. Eelman set off to find a telephone.

Arthur (Butty Boy) Smith listened intently to his pal Eelman.

"We 'll need your help on this one" said Ernie, now dressed in his Eelman suit of long thighlength wellies and frilly coat. "Our old enemies Matchman, Tilley lantern and Green Gilbert - that snotty nosed, tackle pinching little brat - have been trying to make a takeover and depriving the local folks of their sport."

Soon Butty Boy was speeding to the assistance of his friends.

The first encounter with the super villains came shortly after our super heroes had set up their super brollies. Baliff boy - a minor villain - collected their money and proceeded to acquaint them with the misguided rules of the club. However, it did not take him long to realise that he was up against a different sort of angler than normal. Without much hesitation he cleared off.

Next to arrive was the infamous Tilley Lantern and his sidekick Bream boy. They were soon to feel the hostility of the Angling Heroes. The matter was soon resolved, for once Tilley Lantern's glowing orb had been thrown into the lake, he was unable to carry on fishing. From midnight onward the lake was a safe place. But the big battle was to come at daybreak. The local people knew this and stayed away.

Shortly after dawn, that pesky imp, Green Gilbert appeared. Butty boy caught

him delving into his own tackle. The imp was quickly dealt with by throwing him into the water.

"I'll fix SLASH for that," shouted Green Gilbert, pulling himself out of his watery prison. "I'll bring my big bruvver up here and he'll fix all of you."

"Clear off," said Bootlace Billy, wielding his infamous landing net pole.

"And I'll fix you myself, Botlace Billy. I know your secret identity and I'm going to reveal it to Angling Times!"

Everyone was shocked by this news. Did Green Gilbert really know that Bootlace Billy was Alan Hawkins? Had the little imp seen Alan undress in the field that day? Did he have photographs?

To find the answer to this and many other exciting questions, read the next installment of SLASH. Or buy a copy of AT. Or buy a copy of playgirl, and see if GG did take photos of Alan's predicament! All will be revealed.

Random notes from the secretary.(just to fill up the page)

Well! Can anyone say that we do not have a light hearted side to the N.A.C.? I've seen Alan Hawkins in most of his moods - But undressed ? Hm, interesting.

I would like to say thankyou to the efforts of our contributors and our Editor for making this Christmas issue of your Bulletin possible. Thanks lads, keep it up.

You may like to know that the whole of this issue has been scanned electronically and that within three hours of receiving the material from Dave your Bulletin was ready to be stapled together and ready to be posted off to you all.

All we require from you, the members, are the articles with which to fill these pages. Most of you will know that our Bulletin is not always so light hearted as is this issue. We do have quite a name for our technical activities, thanks to members like Alan Hawkins and Brian Crawford - to name but two. The technical side of our activities will not be neglected in these pages, as I'm sure Dave will agree.

It has been suggested by one of our members that we could run a kind of 'Swop Shop' within these pages. Members could suggest what items they have to spare and which items they want to aquire.Perhaps some of you have items you would like to give away. Whichever it is, just drop a line either to me or to the Editor, and we will act on it.

I hope you will all acctpt my re ason for including in this issue a piece from the N.A.S.G. Recently, that Association has taken on a new look, and from what they have to say, they do mean buisness this time.

A full copy of the recent N.A.S.G. newsletter is available on loan to those who wish to read same.

/

A.J.S.

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.

By A.J.Sutton.

'Twas Christmas morn in the Clubhouse
No anglers gathered there
And who can blame them staying home
And supping Yuletide fare.

In the morning light the rod racks
Stand gleaming 'gainst the wall
The rods all true and just like new
Well cared for one and all.

Well, almost all - one rack is bare
No rod adorns it now
The owner lost his rod last week
And I will tell of how.

He is our youngest member
One rod was all he had
And very little else because
The youngster had no DAD.

He often fished here all alone
In the Clubs own lake
Last weekend he fished for Pike
Two days without a take.

The take he DID have has, I'm sure
Left him broken hearted
For someone sneaked up - stole his rod
And hurriedly departed.

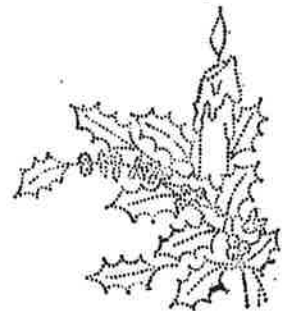
Outside the snow lays crisp and deep
And drifting, gleaming white
No one about - yet suddenly
Two figures come in sight.

Our Eldest members, Looking tired
For many miles they've trod
They come inside and with fingers numb
Unwrap - a brand new rod.

The two of them I know quite well
Old Tom and poor deaf Jack
With loving hands they place the rod
In what was the empty rack.

And then return from whence they came
Into the swirling snow
They've brought the young lad joy anew
Though their names he'll never know

And now the Club House seems quite warm
Warmed by the Christmas cheer
And all should know that on this day
The Spirit of Christmas was here.



A.J.S.

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NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 1974

At the Extra-Ordinary meeting of the Association held at Quorn earlier this year, there was unanimous agreement that the NASG once more enter into the arena of angling politics.

I am well aware that the word 'politics' is a dirty one in some quarters,—it has caused no little trouble in the past, — but the fact remains, unless we get up off our 'back ends' and not continue in our present coma, the big angling associations of this country will ride rough shod over us all in their determination to destroy the freedom and the rights of pleasure anglers to pursue their sport just when, where, and how they please. There will come a time, in the not too distant future, when we will all be bound to the NFA and their like. Night fishing, live-baiting, dead-baiting, groundbaiting, pike-fishing (there will be no pike left by then anyway) etc etc., will all have become things of the past. Memories to relate to your grandchildren, no more. You will have to apply to 'them' before you can even go fishing at all, and you will be allocated a square yard of some concrete-banked, weedless piece of water containing nothing but teeming millions of tiny roach/bream hybrids.

IF THE PREVENTION OF ALL THIS IS CALLED 'POLITICS', THEN I'M ALL FOR IT !

Over the past year or so, we have been subjected to more and more of these bans and restrictions, culminating in the now infamous pike-fishing ban on the Delph. How long are we going to sit back and take it ? As a local Specimen Group you can do little, as an individual you can do even less, but as a strong national body we could do quite a lot. Our effectiveness must lie in our unity and strength however, and I appeal to you all, not just as specimen hunters, but as anglers who love fishing just for the sheer pleasure of it, to support the NASG by all possible means, and to spread the gospel among other anglers that you meet. The NASG is the only national body which represents the sport of angling AS WE KNOW IT, and is thus worth support. It is the 'right arm' of pleasure anglers,— so lets use it !

The recent inactivity is over. From now on, the NASG's voice will be in the forefront in protecting our rights, pestering, cajoling, threatening, whenever necessary. We shall seek support from ordinary anglers and angling clubs. There are supposedly more than three million anglers in Britain, and they can't all be matchmen. Lets go get 'em.

There, I've said my piece, and I hope it's set you thinking, but now to the rest of the Newsletter.