

# THE BULLETIN

THE NATIONAL ANGUILLA CLUB

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## THE WOLFMAN'S YEAR

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# EDITORIAL.....

Welcome to my seventh edition of the *Bulletin* as Editor. As you will have gathered it's taken on a new look, which is part of my constant endeavours to make our club magazine as professional as possible. The new look has come about via constructive criticisms made by our chairman and a considerable investment by my self. Today is with no doubt the age of the computer and to be without one nowadays is to be left behind. It only goes to show, that when I returned home with one, the kids took to it like fish to water, whereas I was scared stiff of the thing. Still as time has gone by I am slowly coming to terms with it, and indeed find it difficult to see how I got on before without one. Obviously I'm still on a learning curve so you will have to excuse any errors I may have made.

It would be nice to think that with the improvements in the magazine I would be inundated with articles and material. Though if the apathy I have encountered during the last four years or so, in the post of magazine Editor I very much doubt it. I'm not quite sure what it is that puts people off contributing, those of you who know me will know that I'm not an intimidating chap, in fact I will try to help anybody as far as I can regarding articles. Maybe you just have nothing to say? Or are unsure that what you do have to say is valid. Does it matter? Every one has their own opinions and ideas The club exists to encourage and help its' members not criticise and ridicule them, so this surely should not be a point of concern. Often I have come across fellow members who have not caught what they consider fish of a size worthy of mention, and are set in comparing their efforts against some of the other members, who are constantly catching, fish which many of us would consider fish of a life time. This of course is rubbish, all fish are worthy, it's not the size that counts ( where have I heard that before!) it's the approach and enjoyment in the participation that really matters. It is often a common mistake to compare other people's captures with ones own, it is important to remember that you can only achieve these goals if the waters you have chosen to fish contain them. For example a former "Mega Eel" water I used to fish called Barry Res. contained a huge amount of specimen Eels, here it was relatively easy to catch 3-4 LB Eels if you put in the time, it would be easy to get the wrong perspective from a water such as this. Since the closure of Barry Res. I have struggled to find new waters which I think will contain the sort of fish that I am after, still the search continues and I must admit there in lies the enjoyment. I have often said that the fascination to me regarding fishing, is the uncertainty and anticipation I feel before each fishing trip, it is this which drives me, a Holy Grail? Perhaps, but after all that's what it's all about, isn't it?

Right then that's enough of that. Let's get on with the rest of the mag. Please try and get something to me for the next edition as soon as possible, don't forget I can never have enough material. The next edition will go out when, and only when, I am sure it will be of the standard we can achieve, it would be nice to do two mags a year, one at the beginning of the season and one at the end, however, unless more people are prepared to contribute then this would seem unlikely. I am not prepared to waste the club's money or my time or money on something just for the sake of it. It is up to you.

*Dave Board*

*Editor*

## *My new P.B.*

*Malcolm Lucky Law.*

Keith and I arrived at the venue at 10 pm, and after scooping the margins for hookbaits we made our way to our respective swims. Keith's swim was nice and flat but mine was covered in rocks all the way to the waters edge, thanks wolfman. After setting up the left hand rod was cast out with a Bream head as bait, the right hand rod went out with the tail section on.

The weather was perfect , a really warm and overcast night with a light wind. At about 1.30 am I decided to rebait, but Keith had the bait bucket, and so after scrambling though the undergrowth to Keith he said " Have you just missed a run?", " I don't think so I replied "

When I got back to the rods I found the left hand rod was out of it's line clip but there was no indication of anything happening. After rebating my other rod I went to pick up the left hand rod when it gave off two single bleeps on the optic. On striking the rod arched over and the fish came in with no fight at all. When I got ready to land what I thought was a large Bream the Eel's head came out of the water and all Hell broke lose .

On hearing the commotion Keith came over to assist and help with the netting. At this point the Eel was all over the place and I was unable to reel any more line in due to my swivel being stuck in the top eye of my rod. My rod bent double and me unable to walk backwards any further because of all the rocks and after four attempts by the Wolfman to knock the Eel off she came into the net and on to dry land.

Keith said it was a big five and I was off for my scales, " Give over I said it came in like a sack of coal ", but as it happened he was right and she went 5lb 11 oz and was 42 inches long with a girth of 8 inches.

Thanks go to Keith for getting me on this water despite his valiant efforts to try and lose my ambition of catching a five ( Better luck next time mate ).



## THE POINT ..... HOOKS.

### ***The Thames Trotter.***

For a long time now eel hooks have been large long shanked models designed for sea fishing, but with modern methods and the rise in Carp fishing, there are now lots of brilliant new hooks on the market.

When I started eel fishing, the best hooks were either Jack Hiltons or C & R uptide hooks, which were very good for deadbaiting at the time. The subject of hooks is a fascination for me at the moment and to find the best hook to suit each situation such as livebaiting, deadbaiting, worms etc.

I know from reading an old copy of a B.E.A.C. mag. That Nev. Uses barbless hooks. I personally believe this is the way forward (although semi barbed/micro barbed is a compromise). As I said I have been looking at the Carp market and there are some superb hooks around. What I've done is to list them down explain my uses for them and the sizes I use.

#### **PATRIDGE:**

K Maddocks boilie hook (2 - 10)	Worms, sections & Whole
J Sidley Eel Hook (1 - 4)	Worms, slugs, prawns
V.B. doubles (6 - 10)	Whole deadbaits

#### **FOX:**

Series two (2 - 10)	Worms, slugs, sections
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#### **GOLD LABEL:**

Penetrator one (2 - 10)	Worms, slugs, sections
Penetrator two (2 - 10)	Worms, slugs, prawns
Continental Pen (1/0 - 2)	Weed and snag fishing

#### **OWNER:**

Flb (1 - 8)	
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#### **DRENNAN:**

Boilie hook (1 - 10)	Brilliant all round hook
Continental Boilie (1 - 8)	Weed/snag version

As you can see it's quite a large list, but as I said there are different hooks for different situations / baits. But if I had to choose particular favourites it would be the Partridge V.B. doubles for whole deadbaits and stepped up livebaiting, and the Fox series two for worms, slugs e.t.c. The Fox series two are very good being short shanked and perfect for worms, the same goes for the penetrator models which are especially good as they have been designed to stop mouth damage and hook pulls, and since I have been using them they have performed superbly.

When fishing in mega weedy waters at short range there is no hook that comes close to the Owner Flb, they are the sharpest hook on the market so sharp that

they could penetrate the bone ( I'm not kidding) you should be very careful with them as there known as cutting point hooks which are very effective but they can come out as easily as they go in, so I no longer use them when fishing at range.

When fishing at range in weedy lakes I prefer to use the Drennan continental boilie hook which are very strong and only slightly thicker in wire than the standard boilie hook which is an added bonus on weedy waters. These hooks also stay in and in all the time I have been using them I have never had one pull out on me , defiantly my standard / favourite Eel hook and because of them having an upturned eye they are perfect for use with Harry's Pennell rig.

If I was to choose the ultimate Eel hook for deadbaits & worms it would have to be either the Owners or the Drennan coninetal boilie hooks and for fishing at range with worm / slugs e.t.c. the Penetrator range. I was speaking to Wayne at the fish-in about hooks and he said it was not a subject gone into much, but belive me there aer such a vast array of hooks now avaiable that it,s worth experimenting a bit.

If any members are already using these hooks I would be grateful for any feedback, if not and you decide to get some let me know your findings. In the end the hook choice is down to what you have most confidence in using, so if your happy with the old style of hooks then don't take my advice, as they say " If it is 'nt broke don't fix it ".

As you can see from the list I've included the double hooks, now I know this may cause some upset , but it's the best way I've found of presenting a whole deadbait and to this day I've not deep hooked an Eel whilst using them, and as for using them for livebaiting it was Kev. Richmond who sent me a rig using them and I now use nothing else.

N.B. since writing this piece I have found a better hook, it's the same pattern as the owner flb and is also made by owner, the hook is called the" Gorilla" livebait or glb , this is truly a mega Eel hook.

I hope all members are well and catching and by the way I've finally passed my test so now I'm mobile.

THE THAMES TROTTER.

**Coming soon..... Attractants balls III**

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## IT'S SAFER WITH **RUBBER**

I bet the title has got you turning to this piece , first shame on you all. So here we go , it's not what you're thinking , sorry to disappoint you it's about my first Eel session of the year. Well that would be a lie , I did get out for about four hours the other night with my daughter Nicola, only it was too cold to stick it out , must be getting old or something, so it was in fact going to be like I said my first full session of the year.

It was going to be a Friday night session, along with my daughter Nicola, and my mate Malcom, only Nicola came down with a cold and could not go much to her disappointment. So it was going to be Malcom and I who would be going to give the Eels of Gardners some hammer. I picked Malcom up and off we set , it did not seem to take too long to get there as the talk was of Eeling and what this year would have in store for us Eel-wise.

We were in our chosen swims and got set up for the night , the nights baits were soon sorted out they would be deadbaits on to rods and Lobs on the other, nothing like fresh bait to get them Eels going. We also had some frozen sprats just in case we could not get any fresh bait. Malcom decided to fish a sprat head on one of his rods and lobs on the others while I opted to fish basher head sections on two rods and lobs on the other. The rods were soon cast out and we settled back on the bed-chairs, myself on my new Fox bed-chair I had bought off Andrew Clarke at Christmas.

We did not have long to wait before Malc missed a run on the deadbait rod. I had shown Malc how to place a small piece of rubber-band over the point of the hook when you have baited up with lobs as it stops them sliding down the hook. My hooks are the Fox series 2 a good strong hook which I quite like .My lobs were air injected to keep them up a bit and I was using three different rigs, one was the J.S. RIG, another was an inline rig and the other was like the J.S. rig only instead of the lead it had a feeder on filled with fish bits and juice. There isn't any need to go over the rigs as we all know what they are don't we.

It was brew and a fag time and Malcs turn to crash the ash, when I got a run on the lob worm rod , the drop off fell and the Daiwa burst into life with a scream and the line was whizzing out , good word that, the run was met with a firm strike and the rod bent over to take on a healthy curve to get the blood rushing , it wasn't long before it was ready to net , to which I looked to Malc and said don't miss it and he looked at me and said do I ever , best ever nets man around, and with that we soon had the Eel in the net .I didn't even have to unhook it as Malc just looked at it and the hook fell out of the Eel's mouth. Malc said it looked a good one and it was placed in the sack while I recomposed myself and got cast out again. I looked at my watch it was 23.30hrs , I weighed he Eel later and she went a lovely 4 lb 2 oz. My first Eel of the season and it was a four, I was over the moon . Later and a couple of dropped runs I had a bootlace on the worm rod , I was quite exited over this as it shows that there is a fresh supply of young Eels to fish for in later life when hopefully I will have caught lots more of the big Eels from Gardeners , the place never fails to amaze me with it's Eels.

Morning came and with it the normal amount of pictures were duly taken and with that she was slipped back into Gardeners , to put on a few more pounds and maybe come out again, who knows?

We made our way back to the car and pointed in the direction of Blackpool and went home. So until next time tight lines and may your first session of the year be as good as mine.

### **Keith Bradbury.**



*Club Chairman Kevin Huish with the N.A.C. stand.*



*Club Secretary Steve Richardson with a 4 lb 10 oz. Eel, caught on Roach livebait.*



## More thoughts on Groundbait..

Stuart Dean.

Having read Keith Bradbury's article "groundbait or soup" in issue 6 of the Bulletin I have decided to write about the groundbait mixture I used during the Spring / Summer of 1996. This mixture I feel helped in what I consider to have been a successful season and I will be using it again in 1997.

I am not sure whether groundbaits work by attracting eels directly or by attracting smaller prey fish which the eel in turn is attracted by, but either way it seems to have some attraction for the Eels so that alone warrants it's continued use.

The groundbait I use has quite a few constituent parts and I will try to explain why they were included.

The mixture is made as follows;

- 1 lb Brown crumb
- 1 lb White crumb
- 1 lb Dried blood
- 2 lb liquidised fish
- 100 ml Nutrabaits Salmon oil
- 20 ml Rod Hutchinson's compound

The first stage of this groundbait is done at home, the white crumb and brown are mixed together in a large bowl, when this is evenly mixed add in the dried blood and give this a thorough mix. The dried blood is added primarily for it's smell but I am sure it's chemical make up is not unattractive to Eels, whilst the white and brown crumb are being used as a carrier for all the additives and give a decent consistency to the groundbait. This powder mix is then re-bagged into convenient 1 lb bags, which are taken to the bank when fishing.

When I prepare my liquidised fish I first of all freeze any fish to be used. I normally use Roach, Bream and occasionally Perch, but I am sure that any fresh water fish will do. Once frozen I remove all the heads, tails and fins and then skin the fish to remove all the scales. This is done to prevent all the scales from clogging the holes of Blocked end feeders if the groundbait is to be used in this way. The flesh of the fish is then put into a food processor and liquidised into what can only be described as a sloppy mess. It is sometimes necessary to add some salmon oil at this stage to make sure the sloppy remains reasonably liquid. This is then bagged and re-frozen.

When I am going fishing I take three 1 lb bags of crumb / dried blood and one 2 lb bag of liquidised fish which has been allowed to defrost. The liquidised fish and crumb are thoroughly mixed together in a bowl at the lakeside. When this is done it should be almost impossible to tell that there is any fish in the mixture at all.

It is now that I mix in 100 ml of salmon oil. I use salmon oil because it is known to be a very effective attractor for other species of fish such as Carp, Tench and Bream and I can't see any reason why Eels should not find it attractive also.

The final additive I use is the compound T.F. This is an additive I came across in the winter of 1994. I had phoned up Rod Hutchinson to ask about the recommended inclusion rates of emulsifier to oil for injecting into deadbaits when Pike fishing. I was told that some of the Pike anglers in the South were injecting this compound into the throats of deadbaits and it was proving to be very effective on some very hard waters. Having been told this I bought a bottle and it also proved effective for me during the winters of 1994 and 1995 when I often caught when others around me blanked. After discovering just how effective it could be I decided to include it in this groundbait for Eels.

Compound T.F. is an unusual additive, in that it is based on Theorganic acid profile excreted by Molluscs and other water life. All creatures give off organic acids in their waste and I believe it is possible for fish to detect these creatures, which maybe hidden from sight in silt, weed e.t.c. by the concentrations of these organic acids in the water. In effect I believe this additive gives of a signal to Eels that there is LIVE food in the area and they come searching for this food. When the Eels arrive in the area all they find is a carpet of bread crumb ( which is hard work for them to feed on ) so they pick up the larger food items ( baits ), which are being fished on top of this carpet of crumb.

I know that Rod's Monster Crab flavouring is also based on organic acids excreted by crabs and molluscs, this may also work as an attractor for Eels, but I haven't tried it yet so cannot recommend it.

I have also used compound T.F. injected into deadbaits for Eels and the only difference it seems to make is that any injected baits tend to be the first baits eaten, with any baits not injected being taken later in the session if at all.

This groundbait has been put together to attract on many different levels - smell - dried blood, Salmon oil and liquidised fish, live food signals - compound T.F. and limited food values - crumb and liquidised fish.

Now I could tell you this groundbait is the Dog's Bollocks, but I think that would be misleading, I have total confidence in it's ability to help capture Eels as on occasions when I did not use it last season I either had smaller catches or blanked. When I am using this groundbait I use one or two pints of Squat maggot, either thrown by hand over the groundbait in the margins or mixed in the groundbait and put at distance using either a Gardener Bait Rocket or swim feeder.

BEST WISHES

## *Loch Ness Tour 97*

At the last AGM I was talking to Dave Board and he told me he was considering a trip to Loch Ness in the summer of 97. I didn't hesitate, and told him to put my name down immediately. If any of you out there feel the same I think it's time to get the ball rolling. Dave suggested a week long trip, but obviously you can do as many days as you like, he also thought it might be a good idea to hire a van and go up mob handed, it's up to you.

I've never fished on Loch Ness and I don't know anybody who has, so theres plenty of homework to do in the coming months. I think John Bailey fished the Loch some years ago, so that's one avenue that can be checked out. Maybe some one has old articles e.t.c.

The next General meeting may be the ideal time to put our heads together, if anybody who can't make it to the meeting but who would still like to go on the trip, you can ring me and I'll let you know the state of play.

It's been suggested that the latter half of the summer may be the best time for the trip, as it should provide warmer (hopefully) and shallower water conditions. This idea and many others can be decided upon as and when we meet. I hope these few ideas have stirred up a bit of interest and we can make this trip a great success.

**Steve Gardener.**

16 Chelford close,  
Middleton,  
Manchester.  
M24 2NW.

*As Steve says, the details of the proposed Loch Ness trip, will be discussed after the next AGM meeting. If however, anybody interested has any ideas regarding the trip, then please let Steve or myself know as soon as possible. Knowledge of what permits we may need, the cost and the best areas to try would be a great help. Members interested in joining us on this trip Should also let either of us know what dates would suit them best. I have suggested the back end of the summer for several reasons, less tourists, less mosquitoes, warmer water conditions and longer nights also most people will have taken their family summer holiday by then. We can also try to arrange our travel plans to suit, i.e. any members going from my neck of the woods could share transport with me, and the same as far as Steve is concerned. I should imagine, all things going to plan, that I will travel up to Steve and we will all carry on from there. As Steve said there is a lot to organise and plan, so any input will be most welcome.*

**Dave Board.**



# **BRIAN CRAWFORD**

## **MEMBERS PROFILE**

I have been fishing since the age of seven , back in 1949. I am 53 years old , born Friday 13 th March 1942.

I currently hold a British record with a Golden Ore of 6 LB 11 oz. And entered in the 1996 Guinness Book of Records ( page 222 ). In July 1990, I equalled the then Golden Ore record of 4 LB 12 oz. I have caught 10 other Ore over 5 LB , usually on size 22 barbells hooks to 1.1 LB line.

I try to go fishing at least once a week , twice when we have lighter evenings. I fish rivers , pools and canals, local or sometimes up to 100 miles away, depending on which species I am trying for.

I do not mind what type of water I fish as I have tackle to cover almost all venues and all species of fish, Freshwater, Game or Sea- as long as I can go fishing.

I would not like to put a replacement value on my tackle as some of it I made myself or have had it quite a few years but I suppose I would not get much change out of £2000.

In 1993 a rod manufacturer asked me for my help in designing a rod for Freshwater Eel fishing and the rod is available as the Brian Crawford Specialist Eel rod, available for £155. Of course I was given the first two to try out and get a nice sum of money for each rod sold.

The biggest fish I have caught several Pike of 18 lb , on mackerel, 20 lb Conger and 20 lb Cod again on Mackerel but to me , size is not every thing, but the value of the size of fish to it's maximum size in the water the fish is in. A 2 oz. Gudgeon would be a valued fish as the record is only 4.25 oz. I value all fish I catch, regardless of size and try to match the tackle I use to the expected size of the fish. My best fish is obviously my British record Golden Orfe. My best Eel is 4 lb 8 oz. Although I have hooked and lost bigger.

I do not normally enter competitions as I do not like being told where to fish and for how long as happens in matches. I like to go to venues I choose at times to suit me and the species of fish I desire. I do fish the annual Fur & Feather of the local Telford Angling Association. The first time I entered I came last out of 60. Last year I came 11 th out of 65 so I am improving.

I have written two books on Angling. " Catch more Eels " in 1974 , which was reprinted twice, and " Fishing for big Eels " in 1984, which has had it,s second edition reprinted. Both are at present out of date and I am working on the third edition. I have also had chapters on Eel fishing in two other books compiled by Specialist Anglers, " The Haig guide to Angling " and " Red letter days ". I have also had numerous articles published in the weekly and monthly Angling Press. I am also working on another book on action / adventure fiction. The book " Catch more Eels was recently featured in the weekly competition magazine " Take a Break ". From 1982- 1988 I have published five books on Angling as Ironbridge publications / Big E publications.

I have been the Editor of several Angling publications including one specialising in Freshwater Eel Fishing, another on general Specialist fishing and an annual publication on fishing in the Telford Area.

My car ( a Rover SDI ) has the registration number EEL 381 V together with the name " Eel Mobile " on the number plate. I obtained it on a Rover SDI but transferred it when I replaced the car.

As you can guess from the previous statement, my favourite fish is the Freshwater Eel. I have fished for these for over 40 years and have been Secretary, Treasurer, Magazine Editor, Records Officer, Chairman and presently President and Life member of the National Anguilla Club- Eel Angling Specialists- a member for over 27 years. I like to fish for Eels because they are such a mysterious fish, apparently spawning in the depths of the Sargasso Sea and the young Eel travelling 3000 miles to Europe to grow for 8-15 years then to migrate back to the Sargasso to spawn and. Most of my Eel fishing involves all night fishing and I like being on a old, quite lake or mere all alone - just nature and myself.

All the fish I catch are returned to their natural environment as carefully as I can no matter what their size or species. The only I may kill are Sea fish when I may bring just a few home to eat as I do like a fresh Sea fish, being born in Fleetwood, Lancashire.

Fishing is obviously my main hobby and a major part of my life. I have been involved in angling committees on local, regional and national levels and a few years ago, regularly attended up to 80 meetings per year. Have also Chaired the Annual British Angling Conference held in various Universities in April, for the past ten years. However now I prefer to spend more time actually going fishing than talking about it. Apart from being Present and Life member of the N.A.C. I am President of the Telford Anglers Association, and Life member and ex- Chairman and Secretary of The National Association of Specialist Anglers. I have also been the West Midlands National Federation of Anglers Education Development Officer and assisted in the setting up it's Angling education Kingfisher scheme.

I have organised many angling classes for youngsters as I am a great believer in education of anglers of all ages. While a teacher in Peterborough I was involved in the setting up of a National proficiency scheme in angling to Bronze, Silver and Gold standard, working part-time for the National Angler's Council as the Eastern Region National Angling Development Officer. My school was chosen to run the pilot schemes. I have organised many classes and angling clubs in both Peterborough and Telford, training young anglers in basic angling and for National fishing matches. I still fish with lots of ex-pupils, some of them now in their mid-30's. I have been a qualified National Angling Instructor for about 20 years. I have also helped organise angling courses for disabled anglers.

I took part in a special fund raising weekend in Cheshire in 1988 where anglers raised £10,000 for Children in Need, it was part of a programme made for Sky T.V. which was screened some time ago on one of their angling series. I have also been interviewed for radio programmes in Lancashire, Peterborough and London. I have also been invited to participate in several T.V. chat shows but was unable to do so because of short notice and other commitments. I have also appeared in an episode of " Screaming Reels " on Eel fishing which was shown on Channel 4 in 1996.

I only like to enter competitions for the biggest fish caught of a particular fish species. I am more interested in quality not quantity. One ambition was to hold the British Record for any fish of any species, which I have now achieved was Secretary of the National Freshwater Record Committee for 10 years and have had the opportunity to talk to many record holders.

I would like to spend several years exploring the fishing in the warmer fresh waters of France, Italy, Spain and Portugal as I have heard many stories about giant Carp to 80 LB, Catfish to over 200 lb and Pike over 60 lb, but especially, Eels over 15 lb. I am

part way to my dream having purchased a cottage in Brittany- all I need now is to get more finances together to make the transition - a win on the Lottery would be nice!

My wife and I celebrated our 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary this year to illustrate that although I have given a large chunk of my life to angling ,I have balanced this for her in other ways. I have always ensured we spend as much time together as possible and usually on our holidays - I leave my fishing tackle at behind! She has never fished but has come with me many times, often overnight or for the weekend, sleeping on a bedchair inside my fishing umbrella tent. Both my daughters, now 29 and 26 have fished the younger one lived for a couple of years in Paris and taught youngsters there to fish in her spare time.

I cannot imagine life without fishing and can only feel sorry for non- anglers or those with no imagination who say in ignorance " Fishing is boring !" Fishing has given a great quality to my life and I like to think I have given much back in return. I obviously feel there is more to fishing than catching fish!

Tight lines

Brian Crawford.

## **THE SINKING ROAD TO WIGAN PIER**

Our tale begins back in, suprisingly, sunny Manchester? With myself and number one son Lee, loading up the new Carp mobile, ( for Carp now read Eel ). At this point my loved one was going though the time honoured tradition of " your poisoning that child's mind with your bloody fishing " and don't come back, e.t.c., you know the sort of thing.

It was a great relief to eventually point the vehicle up the mighty M61 motorway and escape for this much looked forward to fish-in ( try saying that with a meat pie stuffed in your mouth ). I must explain to the reader at this stage of this literary masterpiece, that my son Lee, has only just returned to fishing at the age of thirteen first introduced him to the piscatorial delights at the tender age of two, and indeed he did manage to catch a number of reasonable fish, with a personal best Pike of 12 LB by the time he reached five. Unfortunately he seemed to drift away from the sport and has only recently re-found his canal legs, so this was to be a good trip to return him to the fold as it were, with the added bonus being that as he grows up bigger and stronger, I will be growing older and weaker and my rucksack appears to be growing heavier, ( think about it).

Back to the trip, and a quick pit stop at the Northwest Angling Centre in a backwood called Hindley, one spool of grossly over priced hook length material later and we were soon on our journey again travelling though the delightful, picturesque, back streets of beautiful downtown Wigan, a pie eater's Eldorado and home to the world



famous Wigan Pit lasses of the latter industrialised period, ( sod the expense Nel, throw the cat another Kipper).

After passing through an environment of wreckers yards, and driving along numerous dirt tracks, we finally arrived on a car park situated so that it overlooked the chosen water. The Limey. I think Jolly Anthony had played the pit down somewhat and indeed we were pleasantly surprised to find such an attractive looking water set amidst what was once a largely industrialised area of central Lancashire.

The Limey is a pool of circa one and a half acre, slightly oblong in shape and nestled neatly between the Leeds and Liverpool canal to the west bank, and the old Lancashire and Yorkshires, Wigan Wallgate to Southport Chapple street railway line to the East. Which meant that if I didn't catch many fish, well I could always go train spotting.

A number of well placed pegs have been built in strategic areas while for features the pool is littered with marginal reed mace and lilly pads, a steep bank on the railway side with a jutting floating island farther on, a quiet back bay full of Elodea Canadensis and water violet.

The first person to greet us was Keith Bradbury along with his lovely little daughter Nicola, Keith is without doubt one of the Northwest's leading Eel specialists, the next person I bumped into was a long time friend, resent Anguilla club member Gary Leigh.

Gary is a bit publicity shy so he may not thank me for this piece, but for the record, Gary was very instrumental in the revival of the Manchester Carp Group and has since moved on to become Secretary of the Middleton Angling Society, who as history will record is currently the fourth oldest angling organisation surviving in Britain, The Society was founded in the winter of 1845, Gary works literally twenty four hours a day for the sole purpose and benefit of the local angling community, a real stalwart, good on yer mate.

A quick reccy around the pit with lots of handshakes e.t.c. and we were soon setting up the encampment in our chosen swim, lots of food, bedchairs, buzzers and beers, always prepared that's my motto, and it was not long before I was cadging rigs of Jolly Anthony and beers of Keith Bradbury ( well I am a Carp angler ). This fish-in was to be a bit special as not only was it the first National Anguilla Fish-in I had graced, but was also being the subject of a BBC 2 television programme " Tales from the river bank" which is due to go out in spring 1997.

Currently being away from the grindstone at university ( sixteen weeks holiday a year, I can live with that ), we arrived at the water by 2 pm although we could not actually fish until four, this gave me a little time to plumb the swim and generally scare the shit out of any fish which just happened to be in the area at the time. By around six o'clock on the Friday afternoon, a number of the Southern contingent had arrived, these took the form of Nick Rose and his son Andrew a very close knit family both fishing at opposite ends of the lake, much loved N.A.S.A. membership sec. Kevin Stephenson who was doubling up as a South American Indian with a grossly illegal new toy he had bought in the States, Jerry Parkins, additionally some strangely spoken folk from Wales and Scotland of mountain and valley descent, it was like the canteen at the United Nations building. Group mascot and Bolton spezzie club escapee " Cousin it " came along for the first night, under the ever watchful eye of chief pie eater " BT ", sadly Ken had to flirt off on the Saturday night, rumoured to be going to hospital to have his hat removed?

An incredible sunset signalled the end to Friday evening and twenty or so National Anguilla Club members settled in for what was to be an exciting first night on what

was for many, a new water. To my left was Clive Elison and his son Steve, both very competent Eel anglers and it was a great pleasure to share their company for the weekend, Clive is a natural comedian and had us in stitches most of the time. Further up the bank was magazine saviour Dave Board, next to Dave was Malcome Law with Keith Bradbury occupying the last peg in the top bay. To my right was a lovely lad who spoke like Youngy another competent angler, while further down the bank where the main stray of the Southern contingent positions. On the floating island was Andrew Rose, a lovely looking swim which lay beneath a canopy of Hawthorn trees a bit inaccessible but gave a good cast onto some lime patches which appeared in front of the platform, I did originally fancy this swim, which was empty when we arrived at the water, but the thing that put me off most was the thought of the last time I had chosen to fish from a swim with overhanging trees, when I had spent a good two days scooping dead Aphids out of the frying pan. Along the railway embankment we had Kevin the netsman, Ooh Ar Stevey and me old mate Gaz ( all ex commandos you know ) well they had to be on that bank.

The BBC arrived for a walk around before dark to introduce themselves ( aren't BBC crews getting younger these days? ). At the time I was doing the cooking for young Lee, I did offer to do a cooking on the bank programme, but the BBC declined? Andrew Rose took the first fish of the weekend, a Carp around the 10 lb mark. The next action of the night came from Keith Bradbury who took a magnificent Eel of just over three and a half pound, two more Eels came out around the same time which I think was around 11.30, and all from different ends of the pool on deadbaits, these came to Kevin Stephenson and Tom Calder each of around the three and a quarter pound mark, lovely fish all caught by very competent Eel anglers.

It had been the first time out with my Christmas bought Fox one man Dome, which for the purpose of the trip was to be used as a Fox one and a half man Dome. Amazingly, I managed to fit two bedchairs for both myself and my son Lee inside the dome, with Lee taking up a position at the back of the tent. Fishing this way I can strike at his rods as a run occurs, this gives him time to wake up, have breakfast brush his teeth and stroll out of the bivvy while I hand him the rod with a tired fish on the end ( he gets it from his mothers side of the family you know ).



Although it was great to be fishing with young Lee again, he does have a habit of snoring in his sleep, being a light sleeper myself, I must confess to giving the little fellow a dig in the ribs every time he snored. At one point he appeared with his head pointing in one direction, while later in the night, he had completely turned around with his head at the bottom of the bedchair. I don't know what actually happened in the night, but on being woken by a missed run at six in the morning, Lee was underneath the bed chair rolled in a ball at the bottom of his sleeping bag? Maybe that's the reason Andrew Rose fishes at the opposite end of the lake to his dad.

The first fish I saw out Saturday morning was a lovely Common Carp of around 11 lb by Jerry Parkins from the deeper water, the film crew spent most of the day interviewing Steve Gardener, Keith Bradbury and Dave Board while I ran about doing my David Bailey impersonation and being told off by the film crew for using my flash while they were filming ( I didn't want to appear anyway ) Ha Ha, who needs the BBC?

Saturday evening and one of the little lad's Eel rods is away, like a good farther, I leap up and strike, only to wind in a long funny green fish, Dave Board said they call them Pike? Saturday evening we had another lovely sunset, another couple Eel rods had turned themselves into Carp rods and the night went largely without event. Another missed run occurred again at six the next morning, I nodded off again in the dim light of Sunday morning when the next minute I was being woken by a chap with a Welsh accent Dave Board had caught a nice low double mirror in the night, a quick photo session and sadly Dave and a number of the lads departed, in fact by dinner time we were the last Anguilla club members left on the water. Later Sunday afternoon and the locals had returned, a young Carp angler fishing in the swim vacated by Jerry Parkins produced two nice Carp in quick succession, Mirrors of 10 and 11 lbs respectively, being a knowledgeable and experienced Carp angler? I quickly moved into the next peg and cadged some bait off the lad. Within ten minutes of my first cast I had a lovely dropback but the bloody thing got stuck in the weeds, by the time I had hit the fish, the rain started to come over heavy, I stripped off to my underpants ( not a pretty sight ) the first step into the margins I sunk upto my naughty bits in about three foot of thick slimey smelly silt, the hero bit was aborted and the fish was eventually lost.

The lake owner Mr Cankey and his bailiff came to visit and we had a good chat about the weekend and the Limey in general. Mr. Canky is very competent in the skills of modern fishery management techniques and the fishery is a very well run affair, indeed if it was not for the efforts of Mr Canky, the Limey would be lost to angling and in the ownership of the boating fraternity, a pool ideally suited for the Leeds and Liverpool canal which may have met a similar fate to Adlington, for those members who know it.

Another Carp of around the 7 lb mark came out from the swim opposite the floating island, again by one of the locals. Lovely lads, not at all secretive like some of the lads I meet on some of the circuit waters, after twenty five years of Carp fishing I still find it difficult to come to terms with the secretive side of the sport, although not as bad as it was in the Seventies, small pockets of it still exist, I have always believed that I can match my skills against anyone, and if I cant then it's because I am not fishing efficiently with the knowledge I have or of course the lack of knowledge of the method currently bringing success on that particular water. Jim Gibbinson, a former NAC member from around 1964 who fished for the record, the Grand Union Canal with Fred Wagstaffe, made a very interesting observation in a carp angling magazine a



few years ago. Jim said that in no other sport does time substitute skill. At the time I had a tendency to agree with that statement but a few more years down the line I'm not so sure? Skill and knowledge are they the same animal? Sorry I am drifting again, must be the beer, ignore that last bit as I have a tendency of arguing myself into a corner at times, ( all very etymological ).

We fished on until 10 pm on the Sunday night, Mr. Canky was very kind to us and gave me the opportunity of return visits, which I will take his kind offer up and write further of the water in a future Bulletin. We packed up in heavy rain literally soaked to the skin, but it was well worth the effort and a landmark of a weekend. A quick pit stop on the way home at one of the famous Wigan chippies, a warm Lancashire welcome and we greeted the homeward M61 motorway with a satisfying glow and it was turned midnight as we arrived home in the usually wet Manchester after an absolutely fantastic weekend with the National Anguilla Club.

A special thanks to Anthony Jolly for organising a marvellous fish-in, and thanks to all the members whose company I was fortunate to share, hopefully I will get the opportunity to participate in a few more fish-ins next year, until then tight thingies, love and kisses.

## THE MONK

### FIRST SEASON EELING

My interest in Eels had firstly come about following the capture of a 3 lb 8 oz fish on a small livebait intended for Pike many seasons ago. I had read a few articles on Eeling in the angling press and although the interest was there I didn't get around to having ago. This season a change in target fish was long overdue and my mind returned to that Eel I had previously caught - 3 feet of muscle which was in no doubt that it was not going to be picked up or photographed by the uninitiated! This fish also had the kindness to spit out the size 10 treble hook in the net, sparing me from the expected unhooking problems.

March passed quickly and I was back on the venue of my previous Eel encounter now open on a "spring ticket" for day time fishing ( unless you wanted to join the £200 Carp syndicate ) and a few late evening sessions were attempted using lobworms as bait. The result was a disappointing nil return- this I feared was not going to be an easy option and fishing at overnight seemed inevitable.

In May, I attended the Barwell Court fish-in and was pleased with my result of three small Eels, which gave me some idea of what to expect handling wise and some useful information from some regular Eel anglers.

The new season start in June saw the first all night session on a water reputed to hold some "big Eels" and I managed another spectacular blank. Undeterred I continued to fish other night sessions finally with success, though frustrated by lighting fast runs and abortive strikes - winding down onto the first indication of a take the result being a returned mangled half Roach. With luck I was managing to hook 1 Eel in 5 runs but the size was good. It is still a trial and error experience hitting an Eel run especially

frustrating when the number of runs dwindles to one a session if lucky and then you mess it up!

Bite indication was an initial problem, I wanted something light, that would cause little resistance to a taking fish and also as little change as possible in residence when a take occurred, I also wanted something that was I was not going to lose when I struck. I experimented with bobbins which seemed to result in dropped baits when the bobbin came off the line and also variations on a drop off indicator, monkey climbers positioned horizontally below the reel and have finally settled on a tube type indicator between the lower two rod rings-the Eels don't seem to mind the continued light residence and the tube does not tangle as it did when positioned between the butt ring and reel. It can however give annoying bleeps when windy.

Rigs are simple JS rigs sometimes incorporating a feeder instead of a lead and using leger rings to reduce possible resistance. I have continued to use wire traces as the are sharpened toothed and dont seem to be bothered by the wire. Kryston Quicksilver was recommended by the only other angler I have met Eel fishing and perhaps something to bare in mind but resistance must figure more in a rig incorporating rig tube?

My final tally of Eels from the beginning of the season to the end of September was 5 Eels over 3 lb's in weighing 3 lb 11 oz 3 lb 8 oz, 3 lb 3 oz, 3 lb 2 oz and 3 lb\* and 2 Eels over 2 lb weighing 2 lb 12 oz and 2 lb 6 oz. With more experience this could probably have been doubled but never the less a very pleasing introduction to Eel fishing, maybe not the numbers I was anticipating but in excess of the size I was expecting. I only hooked one Eel using worm as bait, the preference seeming to be fish baits, the worm bait also accounted for a jack Pike and Bream, I feel the wire may have deterred some of the Bream?

The Eel marked 3 lb\* was a bit of a disaster coming on an absolutely soaking night when it seemed to rain non-stop. One of my new bite indicators started playing up so a lonely vigil over the rods was envisaged. Luckily I got a run fairly early on and having netted the fish, and unhooked it, it was obviously over the three pound mark, and was placed in the keepnet for the rest of the night.

No further runs were forthcoming until just before dawn when the same rod indicated another take which I promptly missed. As per usual the final tally was not going to be more than one. After a cup of tea and an assessment of how wet every thing was I set about packing up. Luckily it had stopped raining but the bank was covered in very slippery mud. The camera, weigh sling and scales were made ready and the keepnet was retrieved. This particular Eel, having had the benefit of a few hours in the net was not ready to be weighed or photographed and in an instant had left the confines of the net and writhed through the mud, down the bank and away. I was not impressed but really had to laugh at my antics as I grovelled about trying to retrieve my prize - to no avail.

So that is about it for my first season Eel fishing and very interesting it has been. I really could do with some more experience in unhooking and handling Eels and more practice in hitting runs but for a first season I am more than happy with my results- perhaps I will go a couple more times before the temperatures really start to drop at night.

STEVE POLLEY.

## SO FAR SO GOOD

Well were do you start, having covered my first Eel of the 1996 season in my previous article "it's safer with rubber" I thought I would take you through my season so far this year, which before I go any further, I must say has been my best year so far, not only though catching some good Eels but because of the company shared with Malc "Lucky Law" and Steve "Ooh ar", and especially being present when Malc caught his new PB 4 lb 3 oz, what a fish that was. It was nice to land it for him and to be on the other side of the camera for once "magic it was", and what about Steve and his three Eels in one night, two big fours and a three, what more could you ask for, a great nights Eeling. The fact I was able to share with them is the spirit of the N.A.C. No doubt the above anglers will grace the pages of the next Bulletin, so I wont dwell on there captures but leave it to Malc and Steve to do so.

it was the 26 / 4 / 96, and was going to be my second trip of the year to "Gardeners", having had a 4 lb 2 oz fish out on lobworm the week before I was up for it, with me this night was Nicola my daughter who kept going on at me to take her Eeling the way only kids can so I gave in and said she could come. We loaded the car up and off we went. It did not take to long to get to "Gardeners" as I just point the car as it now knows the way by it's self, we were soon sorted out in a swim and the gear set up, bait was soon scooped up from the margins and cut up with clinical precision. Head section was placed on one rod and tail section on the second rod, three lobworms were to be the bait on the third rod. With all the rods cast out all that was left to do was to settle back on the bedchairs and wait for the action to start.

Nicola dived on to my Fox bedchair while I was left to try and get settled on a sun lounger. I had said to her which rod she wanted and she replied "the first rod which had a run", couldn't win could I. It was not long before the first run came, but was missed, it was nice for to happen top her for a change, "never mind it's early days yet" I said not the normal shouts which come from my swim.

The missed rod was soon cast out again and Nicola settled back on the bedchair, a brew and a fag latter and it was my turn. The run was on the head section and was hit just right, the rod bent over and I was just about to turn to Nicola and say to pass the net (Malc was working that night) when she appeared beside me with the landing net. I took the net off Nicola and duly landed the Eel, on the scales she went 4 lb 7 oz, the Eel was placed in the sack until day light so some photographs and video footage could be taken. With the photo's out of the way some video footage was taken to look back on in years to come. With all this out of the way the Eel was returned hopefully to put on more weight.

My next trip was on the 5 / 5 / 96, this was to Daisyfield a club water I had joined and had asked Steve and Malc if they fancied joining as well, which they did'nt seem to bothered about, so it was up to me to take the place apart. On this night Malc was working again and Steve was off some where else so it would be my chance to fish the place alone for the first time.

It took me some time before I was in the club car park and looking across this vast water, so to get away from the other anglers I made my way around to the other side which when loaded down with all the gear is one hell of a donkey hike. I finally made it around to the other side and collapsed in a heap so I decided on a quick "can" as I weighed up the swims. I decided on a swim with a weed bed near it also I just couldn't go any further.

The rods were soon placed on the bank sticks the rigs were my boring old, much talked about and written about, J.S. rigs, only one rod had a closed feeder on it instead

of the usual lead. Nothing fancy with my rigs the feeder was packed with sponge which had been left soaking in some oil flavours, some tape was also placed around the feeder and then pin pricked to slowly allow the sent / flavour out into the lake ,hopefully bringing any Eels into my swim. Three lobworms were placed onto the hook and injected with air to keep them up off the bottom, I had head and tail sections on the other two rods . All the rods were cast out to different places and distances. With all the rods cast out the swim was made ready as the night drew in. I settled down on the bedchair and had a beer and a fag while looking out from the bivvy thinking to myself what a lovely looking water it looked, the gut feeling was it would be a good night for Eeling . Suddenly the Roach tail was away, I missed it so it was quickly cast back out. Some time later the worm rod was away this was hit and the rod hooped over and a good Eel was giving it's all trying to get away, this time the Eel had met it's match and was soon slipping over the cord of my landing net. The Eel was lip hooked and soon in the weigh sling ,I closed my eyes and then opened them again looking at the scales, the fish went 5 LB 12 oz , my first five of the season and from a new water, I was over the moon , eat your heart out Mac and Steve. I would be back ( heard that before ). After the photo's and video were taken the Eel was slipped back into Daisyfield . I missed a few more runs after that but I was not to worried.

Later I packed up and made the long way back to the car, this time the journey didn't seem to take as long maybe because I was on a high. The car loaded and I was soon pulling out of the car park I'll soon be back I thought ,when I'm not on Gardeners Eeling , two fantastic waters to fish what can I say!



*"That smug 5.12 look, and for once things went right."*

My next trip was on the 1 / 6 / 96 and was to be on Gardeners, with me this night was to be Steve Gardener. Swims chosen bait was scooped out and we both cast out , Steve had set up close by and we were both using three rods each. Once settled down we opened the first of many cans and it was not long before Steve was into the first of the three Eels ( Steve will cover this ). I was thinking when will it be my turn when the buzzer sounded, I was up in a flash and then with in a split second my rod was in the lake, I just looked not really taking in what had happened. The rod had been pulled clean out off the rod rests! I got my back up rod out of my holdall which was already



set up and I tried to work out where the missing rod should be, on my third cast I managed to snag it and very carefully reeled it in. Eventually the rod but came up, I grabbed hold of it and placed my back up rod on the bank out of the way. I was happy that I hadn't kissed good bye to £ 250 the cost of the rod and reel, when I then noticed the reel line being taken out very quickly, by this time Steve had come around to see what was going on and saw me striking the run and playing what was a good Eel, Steve netted the fish for me and on the scales she went 4 lb 12 oz, this fish was caught on head section. It was after this that I noticed my line had a big tangle in it so looking back on the event, when the Eel hit the bait and ran it must have been like a bolt / self hooking rig. The Eel almost got away with the rod and reel so always make sure your line is not tangled or you might not be as lucky as I was, what does not bare thinking of is the fact that the Eel would have been towing a rod and reel around with it until it got snagged up.



*"What nearly wasn't, me and a 4 lb 12 oz.*

My next trip after that near disaster was on the 8 / 6 / 96, again it was off to Gardeners, I was hoping my good luck in choosing the right swim was still with me as this would be my last trip before my holiday with the wife and kids to Cheddar and all those cider farms and of course those cheddar Eels. Any way back to Gardeners, I was going to fish another swim tonight, bait was soon sorted and the rods cast out, two rods were put in the margins and the third was placed about 50 yards out. I sat back and had a fag and was just enjoying being there, the warm night was getting to me and I nodded off only to be woken by the sound of my buzzer going mad, it was the good old head section rod which was away again. I wound down and struck the run and the tell tale thumps of a good Eel could be felt through the rod, it was not long before I slipped the fish over the net, nicely lip hooked she was. The Eel was the placed in the weighsling and

I did my usual eyes closed ritual and looked at the scales 4 lb 1 oz, I was again over the moon , it was a really nice looking fish. Photo's and video over with she was quickly returned to the water .

After packing up I was all set for my holiday and with a bit of luck I might get into some more Eels,as next to Gardeners and Daisyfield, I do like fishing Cheddar res. As the sun sets over Cheddar have to be seen to be believed they really are some thing else on the right night.



*"4 lb 01 oz and Cheddar here we come"*

18 / 6 / 96 ,holiday and Cheddar time. I knew that this was to be a family holiday as well so if I only got a couple of night sessions in I would be happy. What with the Cider farms and nice weather and a bit of Eeling what more could I ask for. .

I did get to fish Cheddar one night, the rigs e.t.c. were the same as last time ( off the bottom rigs) and I would be using lobworms as bait which was what did the damage last time. This year was just like the last time I fished with lots of runs and boat loads of Eels. I know fishing is full of if's and but's , but if only I had hit every run I had then come morning it would have been some catch. Still I was not complaining as I managed a nice bag of Eels the best two of which were 3 lb 4 oz and 3 lb 6 oz , not bad for one nights Eeling. Good Eeling, chilled cider and "mega" sunsets ,Cheddar is out of this world.



*"Morning picture shot brilliant"*

Sorry to have gone on a bit about my season so far but it has been so good, I will continue with the rest of my season some other time , until then I hope you are all having as good a time as me ! **Keith Bradbury.**

# **NICK ROSE.**

## **MEMBERS PROFILE**

Married to Jean with one son Andrew ( Golden Bollocks ) Rose. I am an industrial cleaner i.e. window cleaner , carpet cleaner , grass cutter and estate management and any thing else the customer wants.

I caught my first fish ( a small Wrasse ) while on holiday at Weymouth from the river Dovey, my first Eel also came from the river Dovey whilst on holiday to me it was the biggest thing I had ever seen , it was caught on cine film by my uncle and looks about 2 lb. After that it was just Perch ,Roach and Bream at my local reservoir , Lifford in Birmingham. That was until I saw my first bivi with a young man and his girlfriend on bedchairs inside , outside was a keepnet stretched along side the bank with to Eels, both big 3 lb;ers. The angler was the now famous ( infamous) Zander record holder Ray Armstrong and his future wife, I suppose he re-kindled my interest in Eel fishing and from then onwards it was none stop Eeling.

My P.B. Eel is 5 lb 6 oz. Caught with many 4 & 3 lb'ers , with those first 10 years being my most productive. My best Eel in the terms of achievement is probably a 4 lb 2 oz Eel caught on a lake I had spent 40 odd blanks on not knowing if there were any Eels present, I suppose it was more stamina than achievement.

My most memorable Eel session was a week later on the same lake, I had a mid-week talk to 3 other Eel anglers about how they thought that Eels were just not caught again and that they wised up to baits and rigs and how they left the water once caught, so I went and caught my 4 lb 2 oz Eel again on a different bait on the other end of the lake, almost in the outlet of the lake, makes you think , maybe they were right, and it had changed it's eating habits and was on it's way out of the lake.

I used to fish for Zander and Pike during the winter but just lately I have been fishing for small stream Chub culminating in a 6 lb ½ oz fish early this year (1996).

My favourite item of tackle apart from my rods and reels has to be my Optonics , you cannot imagine what it was like without them, coins on reels, silver paper and bobbins of many kinds, then came the Heron bite alarm, luxury, and about as sensitive as a Bull's backside.

My favourite venues have to be Lifford Res. Where I first started and caught my P.B. and Badens pond with Eels of 4 lb 2 oz. Twice , 1 lb 8oz. , 3 lb 14 oz , 1 lb 12 oz ( the last 2 both last year) ,not a bad result after 11 years and over 130 blanks.I just keep going back. Andrew my son has had one Eel of 5 lb 1 oz. ( hence the name golden bollocks ) on one of his first trips.

My dislikes about angling must be the litter problem and the way the banks are dug out and trees cut back to make it easy to fish.

Other interests are a mild following of Birmingham City football club, they don't win much just like my angling at the moment.

My best trip this year has to be a trip to a Cambridge pit, I actually got Jean to come with me, she slept in the bivi and was impressed as I caught two 2 lb 4 oz. Eels and one at 1 lb 1 oz. And Andrew didn't.

Here is a more detailed catch report;

3 / 5 / 96 Barwell farm. 5 Eels ½ lb to 1 ½ lb on worms, deadbaits, livebaits, maggots and on all methods at all times of the day.

4 / 5 / 96 Barwell farm. 8 Eels ½ lb to 1 ½ lb as above.

30 / 5 / 96. Biro pool 2 lb 10 oz. Worm / leger 9 pm ( dusk ).

4 / 7 / 96. Badens pond 1 lb 12 oz. Cockle / leger 11 pp ( night )

5 / 7 / 96 Badens pond 3 lb 14 oz. Cockle / leger 12 pm ( night )

2 / 8 / 96 Cambridge pit 2 lb 4 oz. Worm / leger 11.15 pm ( night )

2 / 8 / 96 Cambridge pit 2 lb 4 oz. Worm / leger 11.45 pm ( night )

3 / 8 / 96 Cambridge pit 1 lb 1 oz. Worm / leger 8 am ( dawn )

10 / 8 / 96 Pine lodge 2 lb 15 oz. Worm / leger 10.30 pm ( night )

10 / 8 / 96 Pine lodge 2 lb 4 oz. Worm / leger 11.45 am ( day )

11 / 8 / 96 Pine lodge 2 lb 12 oz. Livebait / leger 2.30 pm ( day )

11 / 8 / 96 Pine lodge 1 lb 8 oz. Worm / leger 10.30 pm. ( night )

In- between these dates and upto the 31 st. of October, I have suffered 27 blanks, 21 of which were on Badens pond. I have had a good year, with two Eels on Cockles and loads of Bream ( not fun Bream that is ).



Nick Rose.



# *ERNIE, FAT JIMMY AND THE GIANT EEL*

## THE MONK.

It was a chilly summers evening when our two heroes set off on a journey of discovery, to fish for a supposedly large Eel which was said to inhabit the deepest section of the long railway tunnel, which carried the old Lancashire and Yorkshire railway over the Rochdale canal. It was in the earlier years of the cotton industry and the mills were in full swing, while the canal was rife with barge traffic. A thick smog filled the cobbled streets as the two lads made their way to the tow path. It had been a hard days slog in the weaving shed, and even on a night like this it was good to get out in the fresh air. Tales of an enormous snake-like fish had been on the grape vine for some time now, and talk at the King's Arms had led Ernie to believe that it was just possible that a large fish did actually exist. He had fished many of the club matches, but had never come anywhere near the top three, indeed in his thirty years of involvement with the club he had never caught anything notable at all, so much so that on numerous occasions poor Ernie had been ridiculed for his catches or failure to catch as the case often was.

Year in year out he would enter all the club matches, but never came anywhere in the running. He desperately needed a big fish, something which would wipe the smiles off the faces of the club smart Alec's who always won those matches. He reasoned anyone could catch small fish simply because there were lots of them about, but not many club members caught large fish, and what a feat it would be if he, Ernest Wormtongue, could capture this large bohemian of the deeps, and how nice it would be to have such a monster stuffed and set up in the club room, there for all to see, and with his name engraved in large bold letters across the case, they wouldn't laugh at him then.

Ernest had been studying his plan of attack for many months now. He had mapped out the details of every sighting where the fish had been seen, checked the depths and spent a considerable amount of time by the water, baiting up a few selected areas and mainly just watching where he thought the fish may be. The bait he was using was a chicken liver and ox-blood, a bait he had read much about in an old book written by a bloke called Walton? He knew that Eels only fed by night and also that they were summer fish, his campaign had dragged on a bit and it was only now in September that he was actually able to fish the canal.

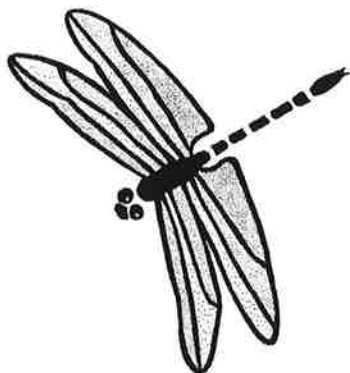
Now our Ernest was not the bravest of anglers and although he had fished at night once before, albeit many years ago, he still shook from the fear from the thoughts of a bull which appeared behind him at three o'clock in the morning, as he dozed off for a moment. His partner in crime was Fat Jimmy, Fat Jimmy was a Black Smith and was frightened of nothing neither in the material world nor the spiritual one, and although he had never handled a fishing rod in his entire life, Ernie had offered to show him the ropes, as it were. Fat Jimmy would protect him from any eventuality that the night could throw at them, so it was with great anticipation that the journey began. Crossing the old stone bridge the water beneath looked calm but yet menacing as Ernest's heart raced with thoughts of what the night had instore for him.

Walking along the well trodden tow path the two fishermen eventually arrived at the dark tunnel portal, which with the clinging deep smog resembled something like the

gates of hell. Nervously, Ernest positioned himself at the tunnel entrance while instructing Jimmy to fish at a point further inside. Both baits were cast to a spot which was around the middle of the tunnel in a position very tight against the far tunnel wall. Ernie now laid his oil skin sheet on the ground and awaited the nights events. It was at around eleven o'clock that Jimmy had decided that fishing just wasn't for him, handing the spare rod back to Ernie, Jimmy had decided to call it a day or night as the case was. Poor old Ernie now had to make the decision either to sit it out alone and with the chance of his record breaking capture, and end forever his mocking contemporaries, or to simply follow Fat Jimmy's lead and take the easy way out. Surprisingly, Ernie decided to stay. Jimmy's departure was a swift one and our little hero was very soon all alone, sitting in the thick smog.

The witching hour came and went and Ernie's eyelids became very heavy and the inevitable sleep took over. It was a few hours latter that Ernie was awoke by aloud whistling noise followed by a kind of scrapping sound like something being dragged along the inside of the tunnel. Looking into the smog, Ernie just caught a glimpse of his rod being dragged along the tow path by some monstrous creature from the depths. Quickly, Ernest leapt up off the oil skin and reached for the rod, the rod took on a terrifying new shape as the fish fought for all it was worth. Ernie dug his clogs into the cobble stones and wiped the sweat off his brow, the fish made it's way deeper into the tunnel pulling poor Ernest behind it. It made it's way into deeper water, fighting with more fury as the battle went on. Two hours had passed by and the fish was showing no signs of weakness. Ernest's arms were beginning to feel the strain, his clogs slipped on the cobble stones and the line tangled around his legs, the giant Eel pulled Ernest into the deep mire with a terrific spla-doosh!

It was the morning after that Ernie's body was discovered in the water. His neck was wrapped in line and his face had turned blue. Poor Ernie had drowned, and amazingly a large Eel, also dead, was attached to the other end of the line. It was the largest Eel ever recorded in the area and indeed in the clubs entire history, and after poor old Ernest was laid to rest, the giant Eel was stuffed and set up in the club room for all to see, and that was more or less the end of the story. Although it is said that on a smoggy September evening, in the area of the railway tunnel at Slattocks, a lonely ghostly figure of an angler can sometimes be seen out fishing alone, some say it's old Ernie looking for his Eel, but that's another story, sweet dreams.



## *THE SECRETARIES PAGE*

When I first joined the National Anguilla Club, way back in the dark ages of time, the only topic covered by the then Secretary of the club was a call for written material for the Bulletin. This was also the echo of past secretaries and other committee members in their time. Thank goodness then, we don't have to drum up the membership in this regard.

Certain happenings have occurred over the last years that I feel should be laid down in the history of the club, so that future members can read how the has developed over the seasons.

Three years ago, Brian "Frenchie" Crawford asked me if I would attend a NASA meeting with him. The purpose being that I may like to sit on the committee whilst he retired and cleared of to France. So I went along, very much in awe of the men and women sitting around the room. It will shock those of you who know me, that I didn't utter a word on that first evening. To be honest, I didn't know what I was doing there in the first place. When I got home I realised Brian had "caught" me good and proper. He recognised that I was a meeting animal.

Brian has served the NASA for many years, he is also the President of the NAC, such was the respect he had from those people in that room I found that I just could not refuse to attend, after that meeting.

Brian thought I could do a good job by contributing to the NASA committee. The NASA committee welcomed me, on the back of Brian inviting me to come along.

What am I trying to say?

The NAC and the NASA have always had strong links, at this present time there are five NAC members serving on the NASA committee, these are Kevin Stephenson, Kevin Huish, Phill Smith, Phill Coupland and myself.

When I speak at these meetings, I find that I am listened to in a different way to the other meetings I attend. It seems that the ears listening to my words hold respect for the National Anguilla Club. When I give opinions it is the NAC talking, such is the bond between the "National association of specialist anglers" and ourselves. We should all be proud of that statement and recognise that other members of the NAC have, in the past, made this bond come together.

We are seen as a seriously important part of the make up of the NASA, given that we only fish for Eels, ( they're not fish are they???) I think that is something to be pleased about.

In a few months time the National anguilla club will be holding yet another Annual General Meeting. The minutes from the last years meeting will be dropping through your letter boxes around the middle of March, leaving you a couple of weeks to read them before the next AGM

As secretary, it is my "job" to minute both of our yearly meetings. A few years ago, this would have been a simple and quick write-up, but over the time that I have been secretary of the NAC the job has become a "short story affair". By rights I should only cover the AGM meeting but I feel that a comprehensive coverage of each meeting is worthwhile, If only for the members who cannot attend. I find it hard to write a brief outline of the days discussions and hope that a more detailed report is what the

membership would like to receive. The problem with a long draft is that reading it out before a "real" meeting gets under way is time consuming and I worry that it comes across as boring. My answer to this problem has been to issue the minutes a week or so before the AGM meeting, then just to mention the fact that everyone has seen the minutes and ask for comments. As yet I haven't written the last AGM minutes up in full, so with the winter social meeting to cover as well, you will be receiving what will seem like a lot of detailed coverage of the last two meetings.

Now that we have got the yearly meetings the right way around, I intend to read out the full minutes of the previous AGM at each Annual General Meeting. A copy of the AGM will be sent to all the members at least two weeks before the AGM date, so that members can comment on any issues, given that they cannot attend the meeting. I shall then write up the details of the Autumn social/ presentation meeting and send them out to the membership in the manner of a news letter. Some of the details of the social meeting will have to be included in the AGM meeting minutes, such as trophy winners e.t.c.

As you can imagine, the one thing that puts people off wanting to become Secretary of any club is the task of taking the minutes of meetings held, (I've been proud to hold the position for the NAC.) Thank god we only have two meetings a year, unless we have to call an emergency committee meetings between times. So far we haven't had to do this, in my time at the helm.

At this year's AGM I intend to offer the secretaries position to the membership. There are several reasons for this move, these are as follows;

- a) I have done the job for two years now and maybe there is some one within the membership who would like a crack at the job but does not wish to tread on my toes in order to have a go.
- b) I have always said that committee positions should be available for new blood after a few years of being filled by one person. I don't like the undertones, that sometimes exist within a club structure, that the club is run by the "Clicky" few. I welcome change, and with it the fresh ideas of the new men/ women elected onto the committee.
- c) I feel that the time is right in the club for a new secretary, if there are any takers out there, because we are in the healthiest position that I can remember for the club, both financially and strength in membership.

So if anyone fancies the job then please put your hat in the ring at the next AGM. When I first joined the NAC, Brian Crawford, Kevin Huish and Nick Rose ran this club and kept it alive during some very hard times. When I look at the minutes that I have to write up, I can see big changes that have taken place since those days. Their will for the club to succeed, created the gathering of the present membership, and that in turn has helped this club to develop in a positive manner, over the years. The achievements we have made are many.....

- 1) We have a Junior section within our structure that does work, and we will continue to support young anglers who want to fish for Eels, because they are the National Anguilla Club's future.
- 2) We have a regional structure that I think holds the club together more strongly than before. As I write this, the Northwest region are about to hold a meeting which is a first for themselves and the club. I offer thanks to Anthony Jolly (BT) for his commitment to his region and its members.



David Board and members from his region have fought, and won, Eel netting practices in angling clubs in their area of the country. They also removed many Eels from Barry Reservoir, into new homes, before the lake was filled-in.

Nick Rose has made his home the "Midlands Eel Hotel" for travelling NAC members. He has also organised local fish-ins for the members in his area, as well as being a stalwart member of the NAC for more years than I can remember.

We now have a new region that was started up at the Autumn meeting, 24 / 11 / 96. This will be known as the Eastern region, headed by Phillip Coupland. I'm sure Phil will make his area very active in the coming season.

3) The present committee formed a new area within the club structure because it knew that in time it would pay dividends. This was the forming of a "committee nursery group". The idea being that potential committee members could work along side the elected committee and gain confidence, ready for the day they became fully fledged and elected.

We have now got three willing members who are prepared to step in and cover positions on the committee if need be, i.e. through illness, work overload or officers resigning half way through their term. This gives the club strength it has never had before. The three people are; Steve Gardener, Stuart Dean and Ken Ward.

4) We have now got, under the management of Dave Board, the best magazine that we have ever had. As I write, there are plans to make each edition even more professional.

5) The club opened up negotiations with the E.S.G. and the B.E.A.C. regarding working together towards political Eel angling problems. This gathering created the Eel conservation society, led admirably by Clive Dennison. We now have the political body to open up discussions with the E.A. (water authorities).

6) We are in the throws of recording the clubs history for the archives. This is an important step for us, as we are the oldest single species group in existence, and looking stronger not weaker.

7) There are imminent plans for the club to produce a book on Eels. This will become the "Definitive book of Eels and angling". The plan is to create a book along the lines of the Chub Study Group book.

8) The club has now produced a metal lapel badge. It is the same design as the original ones were years ago. It came from a ten minute meeting of the committee members after the Autumn meeting. Brian Crawford showed us his old badge, we liked it and Nick Rose acted on it immediately and they were available just before Christmas. Several collectors contacted the club as soon as they knew about them, knowing they had to have one for their collections.

9) And finally, we have the largest membership in our history.

All of the above is excellent news. The best part of it all, is that you are all part of it, making The National Anguilla Club what it is today.... A healthy. Successful, exiting, respected group of anglers, whose one common denominator is their love and dedication towards Eels and Eel angling.

Long may it continue.....

*Steve Richardson.*

# TRACE MATERIALS

## THAMES TROTTER

After speaking to Steve Richardson about a new type of trace material I've been using he asked me if I'd do an article on the ones I use, so here goes. Most eel anglers tend to stick to using wire, now personally I hate using the stuff, unless I'm using an off the bottom rig. The make I use is the new Fox Easy Twist in 20 LB, but if I had the choice I'd bin the wire altogether, as I'm convinced that the springy nature of wire spooks

eels, having said that some E.S.G. members are putting pole elastic over it, but I'm still not sure. With modern braids they are just as thin as wire but much stronger, take 30 LB wire, the stuff is like shark trace, where as the new Spectra type braids are very thin, the 30 LB is the equivalent of 6 LB mono (although I never use these braids below 50 LB as they are too thin and seem to turn into cheese wire.

If members are using wire and catching then don't take my advice, carry on with what you are confident in using, I know some of you may be thinking what if a Pike picks up the bait and I'm not using wire. Well you don't see Carp anglers using wire just in case they catch an eel on a boilie. The thought of an eel with wire still left inside it turns me over.

There are many new types of braid on the market worth looking at and I've listed below the ones I use and the use I put them to;

## KRYSTON

**Multistrand/ Snake -Skin** 25 lb Brilliant for deadbaits.

## CORMORAN

**CORA- STRONG** 46 lb Same as above but not as cheap and is also harder to get hold of.

## SPECTRA

**SPIDERWIRE** 50 lb This has replaced the Cora-Strong, mega strong but expensive.

## SUNSET

**AMENSIA** 20/30 lb Suprisingly this is my favourite new trace material the springey nature is what makes it so good, I use clear only

## FOX

**LEAD-CORE** 35 lb Same as the above but sinks like a brick, and it is abrasive resistant, another fave.

## CORTLAND

**KERPLUNK LEAD-CORE** 48 lb A stepped up version of the Fox stuff but even stronger.

**KEVLAR.C. TIE** ? lb Mega strong and thin, my only braid for worms  
top secret availability.

I know some of you will be wondering why I have not included Quick Silver in the list, well I've used both the 25 & 35 lb versions and have been bitten off several times although I've never used the 45 lb version I do not hold out to much hope.

As you can see I rate Amnesia very highly but what about it's likeness to wire? I hear you say, well I've never had any dropped runs whilst using it and as long as you stretch the stuff out before you cast I can't see anyone having any trouble with it.

Always keep Amnesia traces short ( 4-10" ) and it must be tied with a blood knot at the hook end with a overhand loop at the swivel and both knots should be super glued. You must make sure not to glue the loop as this aides to the anti-eject part of the rig ( I only use semi-fixed and in-line rigs now and never use free running rigs any more ). Other braids I've used to some extent are Kevlar Bow-String which is available from all good archery shops, it has the same appearance as M.S. but is coated in wax, this has to be removed by boiling the trace in hot water. If you don't remove the wax the Bow-String floats, Bow-String costs about £8 for 300 m and is a lot cheaper than the M.S. the breaking strain is around 25/30 lb.

As you can see from my list there are so many alternatives to using wire, but as I said if your happy and catching using wire then carry on, but if your getting dropped runs it's certainly worth taking a look at.

When it comes to rigs to use with the above braids most standard eel rigs will work, but as I have said I now only use semi-fixed / in-line rigs which are just amended Carp rigs.

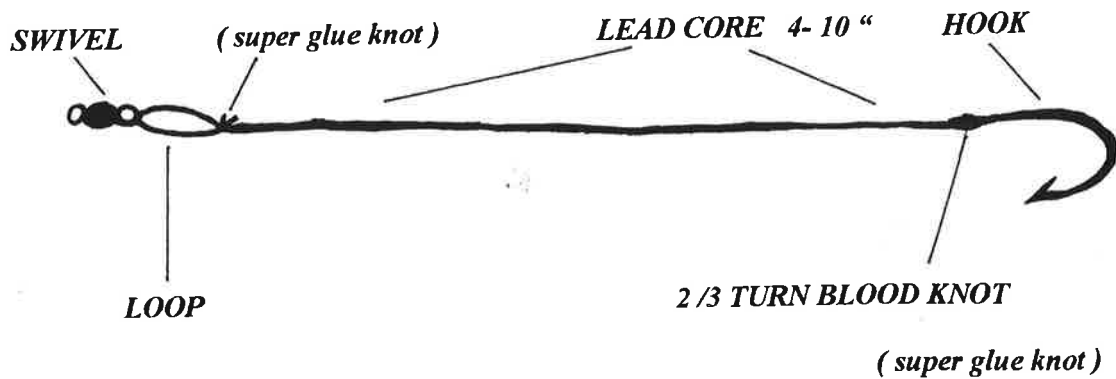
There are several new braids coming on the market such as ABU Excellent and Gorilla braid, if any members are using these new braids I would be grateful for any feedback.

Coming back to my list my other favourite is Fox/ Cortland lead core which is a bit of a suprise as I thought that it would never work, but it does and then some ! I started using it after reading an article in Carp World, the piece read that a Carp angler used to use Quick Silver as a deterrent to Swan mussels, but this had been very poor so he started to use lead-core instead ( both in 35 bs. ). I too have found it to be one of the strongest / toughest braid I have ever used, some of you may be thinking what about the weight, well I've never had any problems and have actually I've found the weight to be a benefit as it makes the deadbait semi-bouyant ( remember something that is heavy in air is nearly half it's wait in water ). Lead core should be tied the same way as the Amnesia i.e. with a loop at the swivel end and a 2 / 3 turn blood knot at the hook.

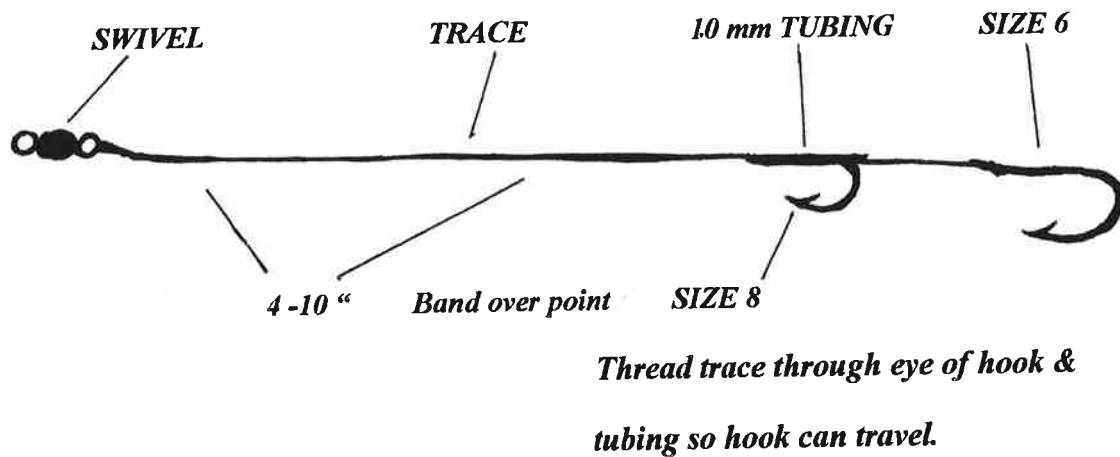
The other braid is Kevlar Cable Tie this is brilliant stuff for worming due to it's diameter and strength, as I said availability is top secret but if you look towards the moon you should be on the right tracks.

The following rig diagrams explain further how to tie the Amnesia / Lead core rigs just Incas anyone did not get what I was on about, I've also drawn a rig that a fellow E.S.G. member sent me which I know use all the time when fishing with deadbaits, just one word of warning this rig must be used with a semi-fixed rig ( N ash bead or in-line lead 2.5 oz min. ) and Never with a free running rig.

**AMNESIA / LEAD CORE RIG.**



**DOUBLE HOOK PENNELL RIG.**



**Method:**

On the strike the size 8 hook slides down to the point hook.

**Comment:**

In all the time I've been using this rig it is always the point hook that hooks the Eel. The size of the hook depends on the bait size

**Alternatives:**

Size 6 sliding & size 4 point, Size 10 sliding & Size 8 point or same size hooks for both.

**The THAMES TROTTER.**



## SO FAR SO GOOD 2

**KEITH BRADBURY.**

You will by now have read through part one of " So Far So Good " which was a brief run down of the first part of my season, of which I have no complaints regarding the eels which have graced my landing net, and if that was to be my lot for the year I would have still been well pleased ( who wouldn't ).

I hadn't planned to do a part two for the Bulletin and to leave it where it finished, only my season just kept getting better, and a couple of the lads said to carry on and complete it. So here is the final part of " So Far So Good " but as I eel fish all year round my season isn't really over yet.

Previously I had taken you on to Cheddar, but before I go on any further , one thing to remember is not to judge my eel catches against your own, as a couple of lads had been doing. As they told me at a fish-in , comparing their eels to mine and saying that I have been having a better season than them, who says so?, their captures are theirs and mine are just that, mine. It does not mater if your PB is not as big as my PB .The fact is that it is yours, it could be a low three but before you only had been catching two's, get what I mean? If your PB is big for the waters you fish then that's what counts. Anyway on with the article.

It was 5 / 7 / 96 and I was back on Gardeners, along with Steve and Malc, we all picked our swims that we liked the look of, as before I let them pick first and dropped in furthest away from them. Malc soon sorted the bait out in a flash, a couple of scoops gave us lots of bait, these were shared out between the three of us and we were back to our swims to cast out. I was using three rods, the bait was Roach heads and tails on all rods, these were cast out to various locations in the lake. As I settled back in the bedchair I was soon joined by Steve and Malc complete with cans of beer and fags, I wasn't bothered and we soon got talking about eeling e.t.c. Suddenly one of my rods was away, the run was hit right away as it was a head section bait, the rod looped over and took on a healthy curve as a good eel was making a fight of it. Steve grasped the landing net ready to net it for me when Malc shouted " That's my job!" to which Steve passed him the net. Malc got ready and did the bizz first time, as he has done on many occasions, he doesn't miss. We moved away from the water's edge, I unhooked her and placed her in the net ,while Malc zeroed the scales with the weigh sling. 4 lb 8 oz, she was placed in the sack until morning so we could take some photo's and video. This four took my total of fours to six this year megga. There was no further action for the rest of the night but at least an eel had been on the bank, this time to yours truly.



*4 lb 8 oz Eel from Gardeners 5 / 7 / 96.*

It was the 13 / 7 / 96, and I had made my mind up to give Gardeners a miss and move onto Daisyfield again as last time out there I had a lovely eel of 5 lb 12 oz.. I was on my own this night as Malc was working and Steve had something else planned. I was soon pulling into the car park and made my way around the other side of the lake stopping to have a beer and to get my breath back. Tackle and bivy were soon set up and all that was left to do was catch some bait, it did not take long to catch some Skimmer Bream and pack away the nod rod. Two of my three eel rods were cast out with Bream head on and the third with a tail section on, this had been trimmed down a bit resulting in a good size middle section left which I stuffed cat-food in either end to act as plugs with P.V.A. tape holding the whole lot together. A swim feeder filled with cat-food completed the tackle. With all baits cast out I settled down for the night and waited for the eels to pick up the bait.

This night I was using my new eel rods which my local tackle shop "Ted Carters" had made up for me, these are now the Keith Bradbury Specialist eel rods. I was starting to think that fishing Daisyfeild instead of Gardners was the wrong move, when the rod on the Bream head was away. Line was being taken very fast and the strike was met with the tell tale thumps you get with big eel on. The fish was soon ready to net, when I said "Don't miss it Malc", it then dawned on me I was alone and would have to net this one by myself, which I did. The eel was nicely lip hooked, she took the scales down to 5 lb 2 oz, my second five from Daisyfeild and this one on one of my new rods. They had done the job lovely job, at no time did I think I might lose it threw the rod not being up to the job. The time was 3.45 am and it was starting to get light I was not to bothered though if this was to be my only run.

Some time later the Bream middle section was away, the strike was just right and the rod number 2 was nearly ripped out of my hands as the rod bent over, I gathered by now from the feel of the fight the eel was giving me, that it was something special. After one hell of a good fight the eel slipped into the net. My first look told me it was big just how big the scales would soon let me tell.



***"Some catch 6 lb 10 oz. Along with a 5 lb 2 oz, two runs at first light.***

I unhooked the fish well back from the water, zeroed the scales and read the weight 6 lb 10 oz. A new P.B., and beating my old P.B. of 6 lb 2 oz. By 8 oz. Was I over the moon or what! A new P.B. and on my new rods to. Daisyfeild has now given me five runs in two trips and three eels over 5 lb, some water or what! The 6 lb 10 oz. Came

out at 4-15 am, half- a- hour after the five had . Two runs in such a short time after each other, when all night I hadn't had a touch. Just shows not to give up on a trip as long as you have bait on. Eels can come out at any time they want.

By using the middle section up I put a new P.B. on the bank, if I had used another head or tail section who knows, one thing is I will be giving middle section another outing.

After my last trip and two mega eels, I was thinking that I had , had my lot regarding eels for one season. But there was more to come.

It was the 19 / 7 / 96, and I was back on Gardeners, bait was soon sorted out and cast. I sat back on the bedchair and still could not take in the fact that I had got a new P.B. of 6 lb 10 oz. When a couple of missed runs soon had me back on earth. One more bumped eel had me thinking that I was not going to get anything out of Gardeners , when my next run was hit just right.

After a nice fight the eel slipped over the net cord, she took the scales down to a very nice weight of 4 lb 3 oz. And came too a Bream mid-section which , like my six, was plugged with cat food, not a new bait or idea, just trying something a bit different.



*4 lb 3 oz. Gardeners Eel taken on a mid-section bait.*

26 / 7 / 96, fish-in time. The venue Wigan, pie eating land. Nicola my daughter and I followed Malc down to Wigan, the venue was to be the Limey. As soon as we arrived in the car park and saw the lake I new were I fancied fishing. The swim I fancied was

at the far end of the lake, the idea behind this was it was the least likely of the swims to be disturbed, by fellow eel anglers walking past umpteen times with their gear. I said to Malc that due to the nature of the bank / lake, I would only be expecting a couple of runs over the weekend, i.e. noise disturbance and the fact that the B.B.C. were going to be about on the Saturday to do some filming.

At this point I would just like to thank the members who were there for making it a great weekend for Nicola, on her first N.A.C. fish-in. She was a bit worried about what to expect, but you all made her feel welcome, she soon made some new friends, and to other young members of the club, don't be put off, get along to a fish-in and enjoy yourself as Nicola did. Nicola had a great weekend, but unfortunately, like any young kid ate too many sweets and made herself ill so my weekend was cut short.

But I did manage to get an eel out on Roach head on the Friday night. The eel came out at about half-past-twelve and weighed 3 lb 9 oz. And became a T.V. star on the Saturday, I'll not go over the day too much as one of the other members who was there may cover it in an article.



***Destined to become a star a Wigan fish-in Eel of 3 lb 9 oz***

I spoke to Malc on the Sunday night and he told me nothing much came out on the Saturday night, so like I said to him, a couple of eel runs might be all I would get. Still a fine eel of 3 lb 9 oz. On a club fish-in can't be bad.

My eel season by now was really moving, nice eels had been coming to my rods, my good mate "Lucky" Malc had beat his P.B. twice, which no doubt he will cover in his own article.

At this point it looked as if I could do no wrong, when I hurt my ankle, which put me off work for seven weeks. I had torn a ligament in my ankle and was on sticks. I did get out eeling when I could with the help of Malc, but the pain made it hard to fish most of the time. I was missing lots of runs due to not being mobile enough.

It was the 29 / 8 / 96 and I did hit one run on Bream head, which after a spirited fight produced a nice eel of 3 lb 2 oz. Which video and pictures were duly taken of, but the playing of the eel had really taken it out of me and I knew deep down that my season would have to end rather suddenly, as I did not want to damage my ankle any further. There was always the chance that I may end up deep hooking an eel through not being able to get up and strike straight away.

So it was with this eel that I said goodbye to Gardeners for the season along with Daisyfeild, and would get ready for Alkali for the winter, for some winter eels. Typing that last bit I had tears in my eyes, wasn't it moving? Well I thought so.

So my season was over. Winter eeling is something else. When I look back at the end of the season like you do, I can't help thinking were I might have gone wrong, should I have changed this? Or done that? I did every thing I could and had one hell of a great season and a new P.B. which can't be bad, I had some other good eels out as well. If I had to list the best things this season it would of course be my new P.B. but there are other tings as well, fish-ins, and my daughter coming with me and the members making her feel welcome.

For me the two high-lights of the season must be my good mate Malc's new P.B. at 4 lb 3 oz. (megga eel) and then beating it with another megga eel at 5 lb 11 oz. These are the things that stick in my mind, for once it was nice for Malc to be on the other side of the camera. To be there to share someone's catches, P.B.'s, is what it's all about, well it is to me anyway. With that I'll close for now. Till next time tight lines, and may the eel of your dreams slip over your landing net cord, as they have for me this season.

**Keith Bradbury.**

## ***PRESS RELEASE AND A SPECIAL THANKS.***

The National Cancer relief *Macmillan* fund has hooked up with the *National Federation of Anglers* in an appeal for funds to help expand the charities specialist cancer care services. With around 6,000 new cases of cancer being diagnosed in the UK every week, anglers up and down the country have decided to work with *Macmillan* on a range of fund-raising activities, to help the charity provide even more help for people living with cancer. A colourful enamel fish pin type badge, incorporating the familiar *Macmillan* green bow, has been designed and participants are being encourage to offer the pin badge to their friends and relatives in exchange for a £1 donation. If you would like to help out in selling these badges then please call *Jenny Edwards at Macmillan on 0171 887 8224.*

Could I additionally take this opportunity to thank the *National Anguilla Club* Committee and the members for all the very kind support in phone calls, letters, donations and flowers due to the recent loss of my wife June, who passed away in my arms on January 28<sup>th</sup> earlier this year, she had suffered from ovarian cancer for the previous 12 months, a terrible disease which prematurely ended her life. I have experienced some of the darkest moments of my life after the event and it has only been thanks to the wonderful friendships I have built up over the years within angling, that has pulled me through and kept me sane, death is a very difficult thing to deal with, but I'm sure we will all meet up again one day, thank you sincerely for all your support and long may we remain, ***BROTHERS OF THE ANGLE.***



# FUNNY FISHES, EELS.

**Peter mann.**

People all over the world have known and enjoyed eels ( gastronomically ) for thousands of years, but it is really in the last half century or so that there has been any serious scientific study of them. Some of the facts about their amazing life cycle are only just begging to emerge, and there are still wide gaps in our knowledge. But the facts that do emerge almost match in incredibility some of the most fanciful legends and theories that have surrounded eels over many centuries past.

One writer has said that of all the well - known fish none can compare with the common eel for the amount of suppression and prejudice which it has engendered.

Many centuries ago, Aristotle, " the father of natural history", noted that eels could crawl on dry land, that they made their way down from marshes and rivers to the sea, and that they were neither male or female, having no eggs at all. He concluded that eels arose from the ground from the " entrails of the earth" that is, presumably, from the worms found in river mud.

Other early theories were equally difficult to reconcile with modern notions of genetics.

Pliny considered that small fragments of skin rubbed off on stones from the bodies of eels, turned into young eels. But the prize ( a bound volume of " The Birds and the Bees") should surely go to one Helmont' a disciple of Paracelsus, who gave the following recipe for raising eels.

" Cut up two tufts covered with May dew and lay one upon the other, the grassy side inwards, then expose them to the heat of the sun. In a few hours there will spring up a number of eels".

But let us not sneer too haughtily at the ignorance of our ancestors. In the Highlands of Scotland, in parts of rural England, and in similar regions of most European countries, there was a belief held strongly well into this century, and one that I have heard expounded as gospel by old timers around coastal rivers of the New South Wales South coast- that horse hairs, placed in a stream or soaked in water, will turn into young eels. The origin of this one would appear to lie with the curious aquatic worms known as *Gordius*. They are found in some ponds and streams like long, tangled black threads. These are possibly Aristotle's " entrails of the earth" and also, the " horse's hairs soaked in water. Moreover, the young of these worms live as parasites in the air bladders of fish, including eels, and no doubt, mistaken for embryonic eels, gave rise to the once strong belief that eels breed in fresh water.

Are these early fictions stranger than the facts?

After centuries of casual observation on many countries, two positive facts were known about eels. Firstly, that every year large numbers of adult eels headed down the

rivers to the sea, and that every year vast schools of tiny, miniature eels came in from the sea and swarmed their way up the rivers. The little eel fry, about two- and- a- half inches long, were termed elvers and their mass ascent of the rivers was known as an eel fare. But nothing was known of their earlier life history

However, some scientists suspected that the missing link between the going of the adult eels and the coming of the elvers might lie in a certain curious little transparent, leaf shaped fish captured from time to time in the Mediterranean. Scientifically labelled *Leptocephali* ( meaning “ leaf shaped” or “small head”) these were commonly called “Glass eels” and seemed related to eels. Proof came when, first a French zoologist, and later two Italian scientists, kept *Leptocephali* in aquarium conditions for study and found that in due course they turned into elvers. They had discovered what another scientist, Sir Ray Lankester, was to call the “Tadpole” of the freshwater eel.

And that, excluding horse hairs, entrails of the earth and dewy sods of turf, was the sum total knowledge of the life cycle of freshwater eels by early this century - the seaward migration of adult eels and the return of elvers with *Leptocephalus* established as the link.

Since all *Leptocephali* up to this time had been taken in the Mediterranean, it was accepted that there lay the breeding ground. But when , in 1904, a couple of Glass eels were netted in the Atlantic, the neatly wrapped up theory came unstuck.

With commercial eel fishing becoming big business in Europe, accurate knowledge of eel’s haunts and breeding habits was of increasing importance. Denmark had a particularly large commercial interest at stake, and so its Government assigned Dr. Johannes Schmidt of the Carlsberg Laboratory in Copenhagen, to investigate the problem in detail. It was an investigation that was to occupy the rest of his life and to which we owe very much of our basic knowledge of the life history of eels.

One of the obstacles in trying to trace eels to their breeding ground had been the fact that virtually no specimens of adult freshwater eels have been taken at sea , either in the Atlantic or the Pacific or anywhere eels. So Dr Schmidt decided instead to trace back the migration of the *Leptocephali* or larval form of eels.

Using fine meshed plankton nets, and casting wider and wider out into the Atlantic, he collected and studied the specimens that enabled him to piece together the story and migration route of the *Leptocephali*. All the time he was searching for smaller and smaller specimens, for he reasoned that when he found the smallest specimens he had found the breeding ground. Eventually he was netting specimens half-an- inch and less in length ( earlier they had been up to three inches) and he pinpointed the breeding ground as a locality in the western Atlantic, north east of the West Indies. Nearby, and, infact, overlapping, was the breeding ground of the American eel.

Schmidt later extended his study of eels to other parts of the world and in the early 1920’s was hard at work for some years in Australia and the south west Pacific. He uncovered a great deal of information about Australian eels and traced their breeding ground, pretty much as he predicted, to an area in the Coral sea, near New Caledonia. Here the water was of the required great depth and with the characteristics of temperature and salinity which he had found in the Sargasso sea.

In the northern hemisphere, Schmidt found that it took the larvae form of the European eel three years for the larvae to reach a length of some seven-and-a-half centimetres, that being the time it took them to travel from the Sargasso sea across the Atlantic to Europe, riding the Gulf stream. But he observed that the larvae of the American eels, with only one third the distance to travel from the same general breeding area, had their rate of development speeded up to achieve the same growth in the one year it took them to make their journey. So, it would seem reasonable to assume that the Australian eel larvae, with a similarly shorter distance to make, would likewise take about a year for the trip.

At this stage they are ready to metamorphosis from the larval stage to the elver form. They decrease in length and height; the flat leaf-shaped changes to a thin, near-cylindrical needle-shape. They develop fins and the rudiments of teeth and they become active swimmers instead of helpless drifters. All this takes place close off the coast. When it is completed, the now elvers head for the mouths of the rivers.

To diverge for a moment, there is a popular legend that these young eels return unerringly to the rivers from which their parents came. Well, it's a pretty little story, but there isn't a shred of evidence to support it; rather to the contrary. The notion is probably based on the life-history of the Salmon, which is the exact opposite of the eel.

To return to our elver, the story has now come practically full circle. The males probably remain in the lower reaches of the river and the females continue upstream. As soon as they begin to encounter freshwater, pigmentation commences, and they develop the normal blackish colour. When this happens, they take to seek cover by day and travel by night. Since they are normally observed only when forced into view while surmounting some obstacle such as a waterfall, the number of elvers running in a typical eel fare is unknown, but it must run into many millions. In New Zealand some years ago a trained scientific researcher did observe a "run" of elvers ascending the Waikato River in day light. They passed the point of observation in a densely packed shoal which he estimated to be some five meters in depth. This shoal passed the point of observation unbroken for more than eight hours!

So they press upstream in their millions. Countless catastrophes await to deplete their ranks. Water fowl flock to gorge on them, harrying them continuously day after day. Their own larger brethren are carnivorous and thoroughly cannibalistic. But so vast are their numbers that there are always thousands to survive the trip to their chosen habitat and there survive another 10 to 20 years of living and growing until it is their turn, too, to answer the call to embark on the spawning migration.

## **PETER MANN**

*The above article is an extract taken from an article of the same name from an Australian journal.*