

# A N G U I L L A

The Magazine of the National Anguilla Club  
56.2 Spring 2020



## The bit at the front

**A**s you will have noticed, 2020 has been a very strange year! This long overdue edition of the magazine reaches you much later than anticipated due to the same thing that will have no doubt have disrupted you own life, at least you have it now.

Given the impact on all of us in 2020, and the delay to putting this magazine together, I was confronted with the challenge of either publishing as was just prior to the lockdown, or seeking to update it given some of the things that have happened since. I made the choice to leave it pretty much as it was and what you have here is that edition.

Couple of things: First, I am stepping down from the comittee and from editing the magazine, so hope that whoever picks up those roles continues with the work done by the comittee over the last couple of years. I think we chieved some fantastic things, with the web shop for clothing and the update to the magazine amoungst many other things, and I want to thank all those involkved in the comittee for the work put in behind the scenes to make it so. I wish you all the best for the future and am sure the club will go from strength to strength.

Secondly, the news came in just before going to press of the amazing capture by Steve Pitts of a fully authenticated double figure eel, a rare beast indeed. I wont say much on this here as I am sure Steve will tell the full tale in the future, but a huge congratulations to Steve on what is the culmination of a lifetime spent in the pursuit of a fish of this calibre. You'll find part 3 of Steve's series on scents and attractants in this edition. Truly inspirational stuff.

Finally ran out of space for the mole this issue, so he'll have plenty for the next one.

So long, and thanks for all the fish!

Che Osborne



Anguilla



Another Nene Valley Pit, the search continues for one that holds that elusive big eel.....

## Contents

Presidents Bit - John Davis .5  
Effort Equals Reward - Barry McConnell .6  
My Eel Fishing Journey - Stuart Jepson .10  
The Farm Pond - Stewart Alexander .12  
French Eel Fishing And Some Bi-Catches - Nick Rose .16  
Scents And Attractants For Eels - Steve Pitts .20  
Eels, Friends And Memories - Mark McAndrew .23  
National Anguilla Club AGM Minutes .28  
Better Late Than Never - Rich Swan .33  
Eels Love Bridges - Steve Dawe .36  
Records Officer Report .39  
East Delph Fish-in - Tony Kelner .42  
Patshull Park Fish-in - Rich Swan .45



**Nick Duffy is glad he used his  
new Chris Brown big eel net to  
land this specimen.**

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# PRESIDENTS BIT

John Davis

By the time you receive the next club magazine our season will be nearly over, well mine will be as I don't fish for eels at all past October. I'm looking forward to the next mag as the last one was one of the best since I joined the club many years ago and hopefully some of you will of contributed to it's pages. Please remember it doesn't just happen, lots of very hard work is involved into creating it before the finished magazine drops through your letterbox. Remember it's your mag, if you haven't yet wrote something get scribbling!

Those of you that attended the 2019 AGM will have listened to Che regarding our proposed book, this subject gets talked about all too often and never really gets past good intentions and well meaning debates so you'll all be happy to know that following a night on the bank in deepest Northamptonshire, Che, Rosey and myself (with a few cans of cider) made some major advances towards our goal. It will happen!

All being well the next copy of Anguilla will be with you before our winter social at our new venue and I hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Tightlines

JD.



# EFFORT EQUALS REWARD CAN YOU BE BOTHERED?

Barry McConnell

What makes a top sportsman tick? In football, some top premier league players have the edge. They may be a split second faster than the average player, with lightning athleticism, extra effort and dedication, super-fitness, constant training and repetitively practised moves, all the little edges add up, all the little tenths. The fastest racing drivers have lightning precision and have to be alert, aware, fit, toned and have a car that is extremely modified, lightweight, with special tyres and a highly tuned engine, every little bit gaining a very slight edge. A top driver may go around each corner one-tenth of a second faster than the rest and there are lots of corners, all the little tenths adding up. Have you got enough enthusiasm to attend to the finer details that make up a top premier league player or an F1 winner?

When angling, do you put in an extra bit of effort to finely hone your tackle, choose the right water, bait and more? It is said that ten per cent of the anglers catch ninety per cent of the fish. Such anglers will put in extra effort in order to catch big eels and they will attend to the finest details, the tenths, that make up a 1/10 angler. Have you got a plan or are you a chuck and chance it merchant? Remember, effort equals reward. Can you be bothered?

I baited with worms and lined my cast up against the moonlit sky where it peeped through a gap in the dark treeline along the far bank. It took a powerful cast to reach the deep water at long range and I feathered the line with my fingers to slow the cast down, and then trapped the line tightly against the rod, to stop it dead as the rig

hit the surface. I then counted as the rig sank, "1 2 3 4 5. It's too shallow." I had cast short and so I rewound and then whacked it out again. This time I counted to 44 which is too far and too deep because there are not many eels at that depth at this time of year. I rewound, recast once again, and then counted to 15. Perfect! The bait was halfway up the steep slope coming up from the deep hole. I had found through trial and error that this is where the eels tend to feed. I then repeated the procedure with my other four rods, spanning baits out from my bivvy, covering water, seeking eels.

My mate baited one of his rods with worms, cast out randomly, splashed down and then counted as the rig sank "1 2 3 4 5 6." He left it where it was and turned to me saying, "That went a bit shallow but it will do, there's always a chance when you have a line in the water." He baited the other rod with a deadbait (on an out-and-out worm-water where the eels rarely take a deadbait) and then cast it towards the horizon, not even trapping the line to count down the depth. "I might get an eel or maybe a pike, I don't mind. I like pike." He had just the two rods, while I was using four which he qualified by saying, "It's easier to look after two and you only need one-rod licence."

He is what I call a chuck and chance it merchant. That's ok for him and many others. It's good to be out on the bank, relaxing and happy to be catching the odd fish. Some people want to get a better result. There are different levels of dedication, passion, obsession, call it what you may, when it comes to catching big fish. On this outing, my mate caught 2 eels while my efforts **accounted for 14. Some of the things that matter**



4lb eel caught while touch legering at long range, part of a catch of 5 eels - on Christmas Day!



to me as a 1/10 angler are: -

**Choice of water. Very important! The 1/10 angler will put an awful lot of effort into this.** It's no good asking other eel anglers or asking Google. You have to find your own waters, be the first on. Look at the OS map, get out there. The more exploring you do the better. It can be a hard slog, even when you have found somewhere that fits the bill you have to get permission to fish and to night fish too - if you can! If there was a trophy for the most number of waters found where permission could not be gained I would be in contention for it that is for sure. It's surprising how many eel anglers fail at the first hurdle and don't put in the necessary effort to find somewhere new.

**Swim access.** Are you prepared to do a long walk or do you prefer the car park swim near the pub. I like remote swims that are difficult to access, and often as not, so do the big eels.

**Pinpoint feeding zones using watercraft and gut-**

**feeling guesswork.** Multi-rod allows you to try different zones, to span the baits out and search the water. I like to position the bait at the chosen feature or depth with some critical casting. If it doesn't land exactly where I want it to I will cast again, and again, until I get it right.

**Summer Oxygen levels.** In very deep still waters you have to be aware of stratification; there is not likely to be any oxygen in the deep water in summer. Cast into the margins in deep pits in summer: cast into the deep area in winter. One deep claypit I fish has sheer sides and little shallow water and here I catch eels under the rod tip in summer, any further out and it's too deep, there is not enough oxygen. It's surprising how many eel anglers just whack it out without thinking about it. They could do better.

**Braid.** When touch-legering/teasing eels, the choice of braid (where allowed) makes a huge difference and with the braids' lack of stretch, direct contact to the bait is achieved so that every

little pluck on the bait can be felt. Nowadays I often catch eels while touch ledgering –at long-range in very deep water and doubt if this would be possible with mono, all its weight stretching, drooping and sagging into a bow down into the depths.

Sleep patterns. Try to be alert and on the rods at feeding times, such as sunset through the first few hours of darkness and especially when it is getting light in the morning. Sleep when the eels are quiet. It can be a long night. Alcohol does not help you stay awake... yawn! Or to feel bright and breezy at first light when the world sleeps quietly and big eels are on the move I don't bother drinking when I am fishing.

Bait. For many eel anglers it is merely a choice between worms and deadbaits. It is not just the choice of bait that makes a difference. It's also to do with how you use, cut, hook and store it that gives an edge. Fresh bait is better than frozen. Broken worms let off more scent than whole worms. A careful angler will cover the hook with worms bearing in mind the fact that they slip down from the shank and onto the bend with a long-range cast. Deadbait sections can be cut at an angle to leave a longer exposed edge with extra flavours oozing out of the fresh cut. Deadbaits can have the head removed to allow more blood to dissipate into the water; also, when the head is removed from a small deadbait, this allows the critically balanced body of the baitfish to stand up vertical on the bottom making it more visible to a feeding fish.

Is the set-up resistance-free? Is there anything to impede the line from freely running when an eel takes? Scrutinise everything. Is the spool filled close to the rim, are there any knots, tag-ends or paternoster links on the rig that will be trapped or twisted to cause resistance to the wary eel? Cover the knots with a sheaf of silicon tube if you are not sure.

Use an indicator that is as light as possible. A Rollover is a precision instrument that should be set as lightly as conditions allow and so there is little resistance. I move the counterbalance

weight up the tube to a very light setting when fishing on small, sheltered stillwaters and would not dream of putting it down the tube to its heaviest setting or taking it off completely to put even more resistance on the line, like I do on rivers and big shallow, windswept waters. Always adjust the indicator to be set as lightly as possible because underwater tow varies with conditions and from water to water; one size does not fit all. Every little bit counts, it all adds up.

Scrutinise tackle Small sleek swivels are preferred not a big horrible conger-style one. Make sure you have a sharp hook, checked regularly for damage or blunting. How do you attach the hook to wire, do you twizzle? I don't, I prefer to tie it as this leaves the hook, hinged to swing freely in either direction on the end of the wire, another edge, another 1/10. I like to choose a bead with a sufficient sized hole to accommodate the knot so the bead will be free running up the line and it won't jam on the knot and attach to the small swivel and maybe spook the eel. Little things: adding up.

Long or short rods seem to be the offered preferences. Long rods are needed for long-range; if you don't fish at range a shorter rod will be more wieldable in smaller spaces and also be lighter. For me it's the weight of the rod that matters. When I get a bleep on my worm rod I will be on the rod straight away. Take the rod from rests and then touch-leger, feeling the eel plucking at the bait. I have developed a technique where the rod is balanced across the palm of one hand in such a way that it can be pulled around freely by the eel. It's no good gripping your hand around the rod; instead you should lay the rod on top of the palm of your hand so it can be freely pulled across your hand. Modern rods are so lightweight that they are easily pulled around by an eel when it takes the bait. First the tip knocks and then as the tip of the rod bends it will start to move across the hand. Strike! It is so much more successful to strike at a positive force such as this. Before I developed this technique, I used to trap the braid between my fingers to feel for the bite and the success rate was annoyingly lower.





It becomes very frustrating when the eels keep on feeling the braided line pull tight and they end up pulling the ends of the worms off until just the nibs are left. It's as though they can feel me gripping on the line just as much, or perhaps even more than I can feel them plucking on the other end. Sensitive these eels are indeed.

Groundbait, scents and attractors leading to belief and confidence. Many anglers believe in baiting up the swim with smelly concoctions that attract eels. They may fill a swimfeeder with chopped up fish or add scents and oils to the bait as an extra attractor. From this belief spawn's confidence and an angler will fish better if he believes in what he is doing.

I am the odd one out with this subject because while most eel anglers are into baiting-up, I don't bother with any groundbait, scents or flavours myself. I am not knocking baiting up – most anglers do it and it helps them. It's just that I have always caught just as many eels as anyone else without using any groundbait and whenever I tried a baiting up campaign it attracted too many other species of fish. I prefer to concentrate my energies on a multi-rod approach, spanning baits out from the bivvy point, casting here, there, and

everywhere to cover a wide area of water, rather than fishing my baits over the limited area that has been baited. I find that the eel has such a strong sense of smell that one will soon smell and seek out single baits and I have enough belief in this to fish with confidence.

If you can find enough enthusiasm to be bothered doing all that has been discussed above, and to attend to even more and finer details, then success is most likely to follow. How keen are you? Some anglers are even more particular than I ever could be and they will scrutinise every little item of tackle in fine detail. For them it's the twentieths that add up. I am not in that league, I am not particular enough. Does this 1/20 scrutinising approach put more big eels on the bank - hell yes ask Mark Salt – the NAC's Mr Precision himself, an angler with the most incredible CV of 6lb+ eels. I rest my case.

Remember: effort equals reward. Can you be bothered?



# MY EEL FISHING JOURNEY

Stuart Jepson



Well it started for me about 5 years ago, when I caught an eel on a bunch of lobworms by mistake weighing 4lb 9oz whilst having a go for carp ( I hardly ever fish for carp ,honest ) one closed season on a local club lake close to home, one evening. they have always fascinated me, with their mystery and prehistoric-ness, and the great thing is anglers dont give them bloody names. Another plus point for me was not many anglers fished for them, as they can be frustrating and difficult at times. I always remember tales my dad used to tell me, of how he started fishing with his grandad when he was about 10 years old ( about 70 years ago ). They used to go to an estate lake near Lincoln, row out in a punt setting lines with beer bottles as floats in the evening, sleep overnight in the boat house at the lake then go out in the punt next morning as it got light and collect the bottles/ lines which were invariably in the reeds with an eel attached, bag them up and sell them to a local butcher who would then send them down to London to be sold as jellied eels. Not good

nowadays I know but this was over 70 years ago...

Anyway after my accidental eel I fancied a proper go at them. Trying some of my local lakes I did manage to catch a few up to between 3 and 4lb. One of the waters I tried was a local 200 acre gravel pit, which had a good history of some decent eels a d a few years ago a carp angler had one over 7lb on a boilie (I've seen the pics and spoken to the captor and it was defiantly very big).

I and a friend decided to have a go for them. We had a few between 3 and 4lb and a low 4lb one each, but didn't connect with any of the real big ones that live there. I no longer fish on there as I have not renewed my ticket as the place is not pleasant to fish any more with gangs of youths roaming about lighting fires, swimming and generally being arseholes and one angler had his car badly vandalised whilst he was asleep in his bivvy next to it.

My next place to try was a group of gravel pits I had a ticket for. I haven't had a lot of eels from here



but they have all been over 3lb and also three over 4lb. A friend has had 4's too and a couple of 5lb+.

As I am writing this a club I belong has just acquired a lease on a lovely estate lake with a history of eel to over 6lb, but it hasn't been fished much at all the last few years and we can also night fish it now too. I am at present fishing for tench on a syndicate water I belong to, but will be getting my eel head on at the beginning of June, fingers crossed, my hope is for a 5 (or bigger). Even if I don't catch a 5 it's not the end of the world and I just love the challenge angling gives and I will continue to be on the bank somewhere twice a week (minimum) 52 weeks of the year.

In my opinion there is nothing to equal the sight of a big eel, knowing what it has been through to get to ripe old age. I mostly fish on my own enjoying the peace and tranquillity and just getting away from everything, though I only work three days a week (through choice) and having 4 days at my disposal to fish it still didn't seem enough at times as I class myself as an all rounder and also enjoy fishing for chub, zander and tench too but I think if I had to choose just one species to fish for it would be the eel. An interesting point on a water I fished last

year was all that I could catch in daylight were pike to about 7lb but as soon as it got dark the pike switched off and you could fish baits off the bottom and be in with a chance of an eel, knowing your baits were safe and not having any pike problems. All my eels from here previously came to bunches of dendrobenas on a Dyson rig, but last year I couldn't get a touch on worms up in the water and the three eels I did catch (a 3 and two 4's) all came to prawns fished hard on the bottom. I've probably waffled on a bit but I hope to have some pics for you next time of my 2019 exploits. I am also having a go at breeding my worms this year as from the research I have done it doesn't look too difficult (famous last words). I have been using more dendrobenas the last couple of years after reading that a few NAC members favoured these to lobworms, they certainly wriggle and stay alive longer on the hook/hair than lobworms and are considerably cheaper too. If this is successful I may even do an article about this for the magazine, but let's see how it goes first. Fingers crossed ..tight lines all, Stuart. As I am finishing this article I have just learned a club I belong has got access to a lovely old estate lake that has not been fished much recently with a history of eels to nearly 7lb in the not too distant past, can't wait. Watch this space!



# THE FARM POND

Stewart Alexander



6lb 10oz

The whereabouts of this little place was first brought to my attention while I was perch fishing on the Fossdyke canal in Lincolnshire. I had had an unproductive morning and fancied a change. After driving down the canal to an area that had produced for me in the past, I pulled along the verge and readied my gear. Another angler was pike fishing, so I went for a chat. I came away after the half-hour yarn with info on a new water that was a 'dead cert' for some live baits 'any time of year'. When I asked if the lake held any predators, 'Nah it's just a carp puddle' was the reply, followed by 'oh actually, it did an accidental big eel a few years back!' I never bothered with farm pond for a season or two but it was on my radar as a water to probably write off as a myth. I fished it in the winter of 2017, mainly as a source of baits, but I knew I wanted to have a go the following May. Farm Pond is actually a couple of lakes. You drive through the farm and along the track, it winds down to two small lakes, one about 1/3rd of an acre and the other around 1 acre in size. Both have small islands and a maximum

depth of 4ft. they have a well maintained grass area you can drive all the way around and both ridiculously overstocked. Strictly dawn till dusk, fiver a time. My first session was in the May of 2018 as I had planned. After knowing from the previous winter trips how full of carp they both were I knew I wanted to only fish with fish baits. I arrived on the Wednesday evening after work and made my way down the track chuckling to myself thinking 'what on earth am I doing here' looking at the barrage of anglers strewed along the banks. I pulled up and took a walk, buzzers going off everywhere, kids running between swims and wives sat sunbathing on deck chairs in the blistering heat alongside their male counterparts, all catching carp every time the bait hit the water it seemed. 'Oh well, I'm here now' I set myself into the only quiet corner left on the big lake and caught some baits. Within 30 seconds I had 10 perfect sized baits, all on the same maggot! Such was the brimming silvers available. The lady came wondering down to collect her fiver after seeing me drive through the farm. She



knew me from the winter visits and I indicated I fancied a spot of carp fishing for the evening. Something told me that if she knew I was targeting eels should have seen that as out of line on her very well-loved carp puddle. As she trotted back off up the track I put the baits out, sneakily, as not to let the surrounding anglers see what I was up to. One was a live roach on my favoured sunk float paternoster set up and the other a roach head on a simple run rig. I sat well back and poured a coffee. Within the first 10 minutes, the roll over's had turned over 8-9 times with carp swimming through the line. This place was crazy, no way was I going to single out an eel! The tiny stream that barely flowed behind me had me questioning if at any time it could have been in flood and an eel or two had made residence? The rollover on the live bait turned over yet again but this time the line kept peeling off the spool at a rate of knots. I flicked over the bail arm and struck in the opposite direction of the running culprit. My heart was racing, within 30 minutes I had a take on a live bait with no predators in here! Thud thud indicated I had made contact and the rod hooped over, blimey, was I into an eel? The fish

took an uncharacteristically long and fast run into the middle of the lake. Three or four minutes later I slipped the net under a super-charged 9lb common, hooked perfectly in the scissors. Was it a fluke? Three more carp within the hour indicated it wasn't and they were also fish eaters! I had constant action on the roach head, plucks, half runs, full runs, but all striking into nothing. I was starting to regret my decision to sit amongst all these other people on this very bizarre commercial. The roach head was away again, peeling line through my index and thumb expecting to strike into thin air again as another 2lb carp made off with the freshly scented morsel in its lips. I was surprised and my senses instantly awoke when I felt a solid resistance and that ever so more familiar characteristic of a head shaking eel. I was in! On two or three occasions this angry eel ni-on flat roded me, having me fumbling to loosen the clutch. Huge plumes of silt and bubbles hit the surface as we tussled in the shallow muddy water. The eel hit the surface a couple of rod lengths out, thrashing twisting and turning as they do. This was all very surreal considering I had only been there an hour and a



4lb 3oz

half. The fun started when I tried to get what was a clearly decent eel into my pan net! I had made the conscious decision not to bring my normal 50inch net and opted for my river Gardner pan net so to not look too out of place on this tiny puddle. I was regretting that decision as on three occasions the eel easily backed out of the net and continued the battle. On the next chance, I heaved its head as high up the pole as I could before engulfing its chunky remaining 2/3rds into the net. PHEW! It still had a lot to say for itself as it thrashed in the net, so much so that it flung the bait and head section out of its mouth and into the margin. Result! I lifted the eel out making sure the few remaining anglers left around the lake didn't see that I had caught an eel, never mind a goodun! I had just got it onto the mat when I noticed my rod bent double in the rest and an almighty explosion two feet from the bank. A carp had taken the 'fling'd' roach head!! Great! Now I was having to deal with another small carp while the eel lay on the mat, still in the landing net! Trying to keep as calm as possible in this comical situation I found myself in I bullied the carp and unhooked it in the margin, this time making sure the bait was hooked onto the butt ring in the rest. Back to the eel, it lay there motionless, my adrenalin was pumping as I turned her (as not to seem sexist) over to remove the net. At this point, I could really grasp the size. I hoisted her onto the scales and a mix of shock and pure joy ran through me as I watched the needle settle. No one had clocked me yet so I quickly set up the tripod and tried to hide behind the only bit of vegetation available in my vicinity. A couple of well behaved shots done, I lowered her back into the muddle puddle and she slipped out of sight. All 6lb 10oz of her! YES! I had to gather myself together but before I had a chance the live bait was away again. Another small carp was swiftly returned and I threw everything into the back of the van and drove myself back up the track with what had been the craziest 2 ½ hour fishing trip I had ever experienced. To get an eel was a result, but to get such a specimen from there was unbelievable. The best thing about it was no one else was none the wiser. My next trip was a couple of weeks later. Turning up around 6.30 pm I had

hoped most of the day anglers had left. I was right with only three cars dotted around the lake. I drove round to the part that I couldn't be observed by the other lads and put the rods out. To my immediate left was a tiny bay, only a couple of feet divit in the bank but just enough for it to seem like a feature. I dropped a live in the middle of that and put a roach head out in front on the other. Apart from the expected continual liners and a couple of the predicted carp on the roach head nothing happened until the lake feel quiet around 9 pm and the live bait down to the left was away. A good tussle and a minute or two later I had my second eel in the net. At 4lb 3oz I drove home a happy boy. I was really starting to enjoy this super short smash and grab angling and the excitement of knowing that by 8 pm on most occasions I had an hour or two left to myself, pushing the boundaries of dusk each time. My third trip saw me on the little lake. It was a Saturday evening and the big lake was rammed. I didn't fancy waiting around for a few to go home so I set up out the way. I had assumed there had to be eels in the little lake also? A quick lead about told me the bottom was very silty and shitty, I kept one on a live on my trusted little paternoster rig and I opted for Dyson roach head on the other in the three feet of water available. The last angler on the lakes left at 9 pm so I had an hour to myself. The golden hour! Around 9.30 pm the Dyson rod was away. I gave myself a little fist pump as my third eel in three tips was lowered onto my mat. At 3lb 10oz it was the smallest so far but still a very good stamp. I had a few blank trips after the 3.10 but that was to be expected with the size of the lakes. It was now the end of June and I was back for my usual 3-4 hour session. No one was fishing when I arrived so it was nice for a change to be able to choose where I wanted to fish as apposed only going where I could keep myself to myself. Just as it was getting dark again my live bait, which was dropped just in front or some margin reeds was away. I missed the bite but the roach came back with a C chunk missing out of its back. I frantically got the float rod back out of the van as I had packed everything away bar the rods mat and net and soon had a diddly roach swinging into my palm. I dropped that back in front on the reeds



and as I was hooking on the rollover it pulled the braid right out of my hand peeling line off the open spool. Another strike into nothing.. AHHHHH I yelled at myself. I should have really been leaving but I caught another roach and popped it back into place. Like clockwork, nearly instantly the roach was taken again and I forced myself to allow it a few more seconds than I normally would. I flicked the bail arm over, waited for the line to tighten and lifted into solid resistance. YES, third time lucky. At 4lb 6oz it was another really nice eel and a glance at my records showed it was a much shorter fish than the last 4. I had a couple more evening trips that year but nothing else but carp was caught. I was conscious not to hammer it as tempting as it was, I wanted to try and keep this good thing going for as long as it would allow me. Fast forward to 2019. I was working away in May and June so my first trip to The Farm Pond was mid July. I fished the corner that I did my very first session in with the 6 and found myself pleased to be back on this bizarre lake. I hadn't really expected anything so I actually was surprised when on dark, yet again, I connected with another head shaking eel. It

hugged the bottom and I really was struggling to gain anything on it, twisting under full pressure. Eventually after a superb scrap I slipped the net under another lovely eel. As I held it up to my camera I noticed the owner walking down the track towards me. Shit, it was pretty much dark now so I guessed he was on his way to turf me off, but more importantly to me was that up to now no one at all had seen me land or photo and eel and of all people the bloody owner was now about to see that I was holding up a 4lb 12oz eel to the camera. Luckily, 30 yards before he reached me he hung a right and headed off around the little lake. Result, this gave me just enough time to get a couple of shots and slip it back just as he reached me, but without seeing."I really sorry" I said, "it's been a mad evening catching carp, but I'm leaving now" thankfully he was fine and left me to pack up. I'm not sure if that little Farm Pond will keep surprising me like it has done on each occasion I have caught from there, but amongst the madness that comes with fishing it, I am certainly going to give it a few more trips!



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# FRENCH EEL FISHING AND SOME BI-CATCHES

Nick Rose



4lb 7oz

Every year I go to France with my good friend Disco Dave (He was a top DJ back in the day) and I eel fish. In the past, I have caught some pretty impressive Bi catches. It started at a Lake in Le Mans way back in 2004 with a 113lb cat on a small roach head and 105lb cat on worms. It proved to me at the time my rods, reels and traces were defiantly up to the job in my quest for big eels. Since then every year I eel fish and usually manage to catch something big, be it cats, carp or more recently sturgeon. I have always asked myself will my tackle stand up to catching a big eel and I think over the years I have proved it can with ease.

Dave usually books the lake and bless him he always tries to accommodate my strange liking for eels, picking a lake fitting my spec. A pit in a river valley usually fits the bill doesn't need any history of eels and more recently I am not bothered about so-called eel munching cats. He is a carp angler and despite all of his illnesses and the major surgery that he has endured over

the last 10 years he still manages to beat the crap catch wise out of all the younger carp boys.

We had fished this particular lake twice before in 2017 and 18 with both me and my son Andrew catching eels the first trip. Andy is a natural angling talent and will try anything to put a fish on the bank and put out a rod for the sturgeon resulting in captures of some big fish to 90lb plus both of us.

The following year Dave and I were back again but there was a problem, a couple of months before there were a flash flood and the lake put on over 5ft of water inside an hour or two and flooded down the valley into the river. Locals told tales of 30 and 40lb carp swimming in the small river going through the village. We didn't know what was left in the lake and despite promises from the owners and the bailiff results from the trip was disappointing with just a few small carp for Dave and a couple of large 90lb Sturgeon to me. I had eel rods out all week and not a sniff. Results were crap in every swim



which going on years gone by and our the results of the last trip was unheard of. The Sturgeon was easy to catch and pretty much saved my trip.

Moving on to this year, back again because we had already booked the lake and the swims a couple of years in advance as due to Daves physical problems we needed nice easy banks and easy access to the facilities.

The first night and great I had an eel 2lb 8oz and a new Tench PB of 7lb. on the following day early morning, I broke my Tench PB again with a fish of 9lb 2oz followed by another of 9lb 8oz. All of these on eel gear with wire traces and worms for bait. Just after I self took the photos and released them before the bailiff spotted me (No sacks allowed) I had another take and an eel of 3lb 8oz came to the net as it was daylight I again took self took the photos and returned it well pleased with myself. Then an hour later another PB graced my net with a 3lb 2oz Perch, again to the worms.

That night I thought had done all my luck and to be honest wasn't expecting it all to carry on but at 2,30 am I had a take and in came a 4lb 8oz eel followed by another 9lb 8oz Tench more Tench followed and a Carp of 14lb 7oz.

The following day I again had Tench at 7+ and 8+ lbs, I wasn't ground baiting at all with a few maggots thrown in on a margin rod which produced very little. All the fish were taken on random casts out to the centre of the lake.

The next day Dave decided to go and have a shower and said to me can I watch his rods I told him the way my luck was going he should wind in. Anyway 5 mins after he had gone he had a run on his boilie rod resulting in a 20 min battle with 108lb Sturgeon. I couldn't believe it, the way my luck was going I started to think I really should be back in England on my big eel water.

The next night At about 12 another run and a 4lb 7oz eel was in the sack and a new PB Tench of 9lb 10oz, followed by more Tench to 7 ½ lb and yet another eel at about 1lb.

Things went quiet for a day or two except for

a few Tench and a small eel of about a pound, and our holiday was nearing the end. Dave had caught quite a few small carp up to about 25lb but mostly mid double which we recon was stocked after the flood. Last day came and Dave went off for a shower leaving me with his rods yet again, saying it couldn't happen again. Well it did and a 50 lb sturgeon was the result.

My result were 5 eels 1lb plus 2lb 8oz, 3lb 8oz 4lb 7oz and 4lb 8oz which is my best results eel fishing in France. And with 4 9lb Tench, 1 at 8lb plus 2 at 7lb plus and a few 6s.

A new PB perch at 3lb 2oz and a couple of "Joint" captures ( Dave's Rods ) of Sturgeon to 108lb.

Incidentally I checked the dates and the moon phases coupled with Mike Jacksons Perigees and Apogees theories. Mmmm and you should all have a look. But that's Mike's story.

Footnote,

Our second holiday was to a new lake to us, I managed a 3lb 3oz eel first night and the following morning a 93lb sturgeon on a small perch head. I thought here we go again but the rest of the week was just a 1lb ish eel loads of micro cats and small perch. Plus of course the obligatory 36lb carp on Dave's rods.





Anguilla





Anguilla





# SCENTS AND ATTRACTANTS FOR EELS: 35 YEARS OF AN OBSESSION PART THREE

Steve Pitts

In the last two articles, I wrote about the scent and attractants I have used for over 35 years of fishing solely for specimen eels, and how I came up with the idea of using scented carriers that would hopefully attract specimen eels to my baited rigs. The carriers had to have no food value apart from small amounts of food items added to entice eels, but care had to be taken not to overfeed them before they found my baited rigs. Carriers also had to be 100% natural and safe. Using carriers has the massive advantage of putting out huge amounts of scent and attractants in situations where normal

ground baiting methods on low-density waters, would, I feel, so easily over-feed the intended quarry before they found the baits.

I targeted many large, rich, low-density waters with very few eels which I hoped would increase my chances of a new Personal best eel, using the benefits of scents, movement and attractants. Having tried different carriers I started to use molehill soil, which I have used for over 20 years. As explained in Part Two of this article, moles eat almost the equivalent of their body weight every day munching on lobworms and releasing amino acids into the



Fig 1.

6lb plus. taken on a Mole Hill Mix containing dead maggots.



soil. I am sure that's why molehill soil on its own will attract fish of all species which is why I prefer this to just topsoil. Adding further scents and items of food to the mix improves this massively. The food items to use depend on what species are being targeted at the time. I only fish for eels, but this same method can be utilised for any species of fish, adapting the flavours and food items mixed within the molehill soil accordingly.

I will now go through how I go about making up a typical mix for eels. First of all, you need to get yourself a decent sized bucket, or buckets, and collect soil. I always use the newest worked molehills. These are easy to find as they are always darker and damper. These newer molehills have the added benefit of having the most worm scent and amino acids in the soil content and often have small worms, insects and so on already present. Fresh mole hills are also easier to ball as they are still damp.

One thing to bear in mind is that soils vary from sandy to clay types. I always look for rich, dark, good quality soil which binds together and is absorbent. The clay types don't take in scents so well and do not break up sufficiently, whilst sandy soils will not bind at all. Once you have your soil, take out any large stones and twigs and add a small amount of compost. I prefer the types with peat in as this helps to break up the balls on the lake beds and helps create an active mix, which I will explain in due course. Then, with the use of a spray bottle and your chosen liquid scent/flavour, spray and mix thoroughly. I then add a small amount of

fish oil and mix in again, followed by a small amount of ground bait which has light, small food particles.

For me Senses Lake is a long-time favourite brand of ground bait. I look for ones with large amounts of crushed hemp in as opposed to fish meal ground baits which bind too much and are much less active. The reason why I add the compost with the peat is to have different materials that are lighter and of different buoyancy, so, as the balls of attractant break up, these lighter parts will rise and fall above the mix. This activity creates movement around the mix as well as making much greater scent trails. The fish oils are to help with the buoyancy of the compost, and help to break up the balls, as well as being a great eel attractant in its own right. Fine fizzing is created in ground baits containing crushed hemp and light particles help this whole process causing the hemp and ground bait particles to rise up through the whole water.

The reason I try to create movement around and above the mix is the fact that all species of fish are attracted to movement, which in turn helps with triggering feeding responses. A massive plus is when a fish investigates an area of attractants, their movement reactivates the whole process. As a rough guide I use approximately 70% mole hill, 10% ground bait, 15 % compost, then 5% food items. If you find you need a binder, Pave 1 or tiny amounts of powdered-grey clay can be added to mix.

I add powdered grey clay when I am winter eel fishing in very deep brick pits (which can go down to 90-plus feet in areas), to ensure my



Fig 2.  
7lb 2oz over large area of mix.  
No food items



Fig 3. 7lb 9oz P.B.

balls of attractants get down to the lake bed without breaking up. I have had a fair few eels in the winter over mole hill mixes to over 60 plus feet using this method. One little extra tip if fishing in deep water, I add pea gravel to add weight to get the mix to the bottom faster, this being the sort of size gravel they use in aquarium fish tanks. Another good tactic when fishing rivers is to get the mix down to the river bed as fast as possible before the balls of mix break up. It is also worth making up a mix of balls with pea gravel in to freeze. This will draw scents into the mix as they dissolve. If you don't have a spare freezer then making the mix up a couple of days before your planned trip is never wasted time. If there are lots of fish fry in the venue, and eels are dead bait feeders, a dead or live bait fished off bottom over the mix is a brilliant method, with the added benefits of the mix attracting fish fry. This, in turn, I am sure, pulls in any feeding eels that are in the area and is much more effective and faster than a standard dead bait.

I always have at least one rod in the margins and what I tend to do is add a few live maggots to the mix which helps the breakdown process. Then I catapult a few dead maggots over the top to entice eels to feed. When fishing further out, I mainly use a ground bait catapult and spread a few dead maggots or chopped worms over the top. Other food items I have had great results with over the years, are tinned tuna mashed up

finely, chopped luncheon meat, grated cheese, finely chopped fish, or chopped prawns to name a few; and the latest thing I am trying is meal worms. I almost always target large, low density waters which are rich in food but containing very few eels in the belief I will one day catch the eel of my dreams which has grown massive on the rich food life like shrimp and water snail. The downside to all of this is that at times, eels get so preoccupied with natural food items that getting a take becomes few and far between, it's definitely not for the faint hearted!

By the use of scents, movement and attractants, I feel my odds of getting one or two more extra eels every year is somewhat increased. My number one favourite liquid attractants for mixes is Ace Worm Extract, then liquid liver, krill fish oils, squid oil and a few I will keep to myself...well, I have to keep the odd secret! It has to be said, like all things in angling, some waters seem to respond better than others to my use of mole hill mixes, but over many years of fishing for these amazing creatures, I am sure it has helped me put a few extra good eels in my landing net.

I haven't covered rigs in these articles but you have to have total confidence in your rig's presentation, which comes with years of hard effort. Maybe that's an article for another time – Rigs Through The Ages!



# EELS, FRIENDS AND MEMORIES

Mark McAndrew

Well, that's another glorious season down and one that will live long in my memory for many different reasons. With each new year spent pursuing eels I grow ever more distant from the angling life I once lead. It was a much simpler life, an easier life and one that was much easier to succeed in but, the success was nowhere near as sweet as the success of eel fishing. Although success in eel fishing is short lived and you are often brought back down to earth with a bang shortly afterwards, the challenge and the lure is everlasting!!

I never get out as much as I would like but I can often lose myself reminiscing over previous sessions, the lessons I've learned, the places I've fished and all the good times still yet to come. All seasons have highs and lows and there are always positives to be taken from any session, no matter how they may turn out and I thought I would try share a few of the recent highs I've experienced in this article with you guys

I suppose I best start with the 2017 season really as I felt I passed a milestone during this season. Not so much so with success of catching (although it was a great season) but more so my mental approach to eel fishing, which I genuinely believe plays a huge part in pursuing eels.

During 2017 I didn't really have the time to do many long sessions or as many nights as I usually like and most of my time, or what I remember of it was spent doing much shorter sessions of just a few hours on a Sunday evening. Knowing this was all the time I was going to have eel fishing I think I must have taken a much more laid-back approach to it and more often than not just went fishing for the love of fishing, as opposed to achieving personal goals or challenges that often result in me putting myself under pressure and

feeling dissatisfied with my results. I can become obsessed by eel fishing. Which then takes a lot of fun away and I forget to enjoy fishing for what it is and I start to try force it too much. But 2017 season taught me a lot and those short Sunday evening sessions soon became my new Saturday night sessions. I still looked forward to them all week and I still went regardless of conditions and more often than not, I caught eels. Sometimes good eels and sometimes many eels. By the end of 2017 I was very pleased with my season and I put my success down to my new laid-back approach and I vowed to maintain the same mentality throughout my fishing and no matter what, ENJOY IT!

A 4lb 12oz seasons best backed up with 2 other 4lb+ eels taken from short sessions.

2018 eventually came around and the season started with me doing a few short sessions again. Time was still equally as short, but plans were unfolding and changes were coming, I would soon have a little extra time to do what I love doing best. Most of spring was taken up by other matters. I had 2 holidays, my girlfriend Rachel moved in with me, I changed jobs to be at home more and before you could say "I BLOODY LOVE EELS" summer was pretty much upon us and I was heading down to Grafham for our first fish-in of the season.

Grafham is worthy of an article all on its own and I bet we could fill the mag on just that topic alone, and rightly so, it's a great venue, a mysterious, magical, dream making, dream breaking wonderful venue but I'm going to try not go into too much depth about it, which will be difficult as it was the highlight of my last two seasons

So, the first visit this year was another great fish-in. It was difficult to say the least and conditions

were against us. Very, very hot days and very short nights with clear skies and a moon that shone as brightly as the sun, which I spent most of the day time hours trying to avoid.

The days at Grafham were long but it was a good time to have a chat with the lads and there was quite a bunch of us seeking shade at the end of the dam wall talking about all things eely and I'm very glad to say I got to know a few members a little better. Deano, Duffy and Tony Kelner to name just a few, Who were also fishing on the dam wall.

I remember me and Deano discussing PB's and him saying how long his had stood for. That night his dreams came true! And I've never been happier to see a man catch a fish before. It was a hard earned and well deserved capture. It came at a time when I had almost given up all hope of any of us catching, which of course restored all faith in an instant and inspired me to fish on hard for what was left of the trip.

Fishing on the dam wall is a challenge in itself but it brings the lads that do it a little closer together, its like we are all in it together and fishing as a team. We are a band of brothers joined in unity by our shared love of eels and I don't know how

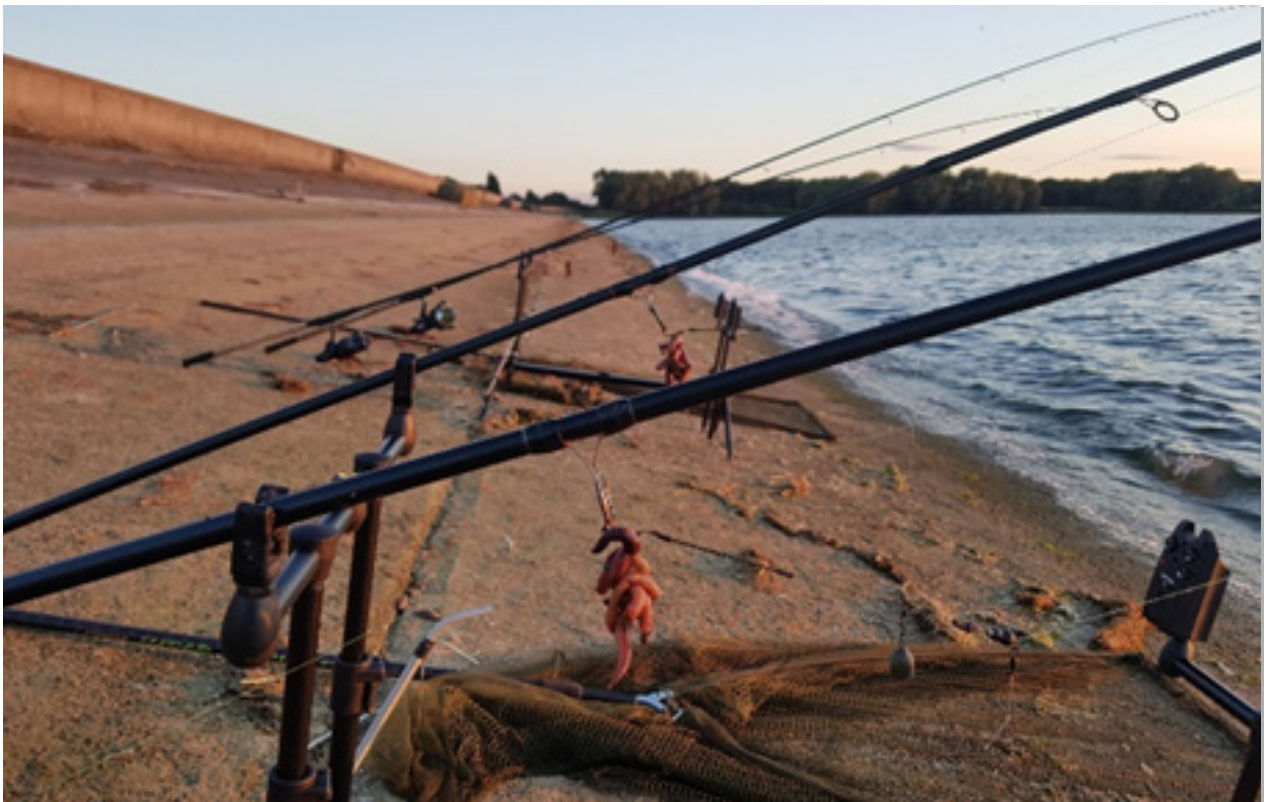
or why but when Deano caught his eel, it felt like I caught a bit of it too, which I must say, I definitely didn't. it was all his fish! But I felt fortunate to be a part of it and to see such a fine specimen

I can't quite remember how my fishing went between the 2 Grafham socials but I do know by the time we revisited the place for the second time, I felt I was due a good fish, which tells me things hadn't gone too well, but never mind, we were back again, and this time around conditions were much better!

There were slightly less members attending this time, but the dam wall was still pretty full with eager eel anglers and I was one of them. I picked a lucky number peg and attempted to set up base in what was probably the worst bit of fishing tackle I have ever purchased.

After forgetting my bivvy at home I bought this as replacement on route to the fish-in

It was less than adequate for the job and by 9pm, when fishing was due to commence that heap of junk failed miserably to protect me from the elements and as I cast out my first rod the day shelter blew completely inside out





Anguilla



6lb 7oz - 41" x 9.5" and a new PB



4lb 2oz

and was blowing in the wind like an out of control kite. I got drenched! All my tackle did too. It was almost enough to ruin the session but once you get so wet, you just can't get any wetter and bearing in mind I was on the dream making, dream breaking dam wall, I just fished on regardless. long into the night my enthusiasm out weighed my sanity but by 5am I was a shivering, shrivelled up soggy mess and I retreated to my van for warm dry clothes and a cup 'o' tea

Luckily, there was a nice gentleman and long standing member, Steve Pitts attending this social and he had a much more reliable day shelter going spare which he kindly lent to me for the rest of my stay and I was much better prepared for the second night

Tonight was the night my dreams came true!

The planets aligned, the eel gods shined and a 6lb eel was finally mine!!

6lb7oz to be precise. 41" x 9.5" and a new PB for me

Two great guys, Steve Markwell and Sam Pritchard..... I mean Sam Pitcher! were on hand to help out with weighing, measuring and photos which greatly added to the whole experience.

Rods baited up ready for the long awaited 9 bells to chime

The 3rd and final night was soon over, and it was time for home. I've found that coming home from Grafham gets harder and harder each time but what's harder to deal with, is the amount of time it takes to slip back into normality again. It takes days, many days of feeling down and a little depressed and that's when you know you was born to fish but forced to work

The week at work was eventually over and I felt fortunate to be back out beside the waters edge once more. Riding high on my recent success I was eager to try test my luck and see if it may continue. This fine 4lb 2oz specimen proved I was on a roll.

The eel was only 1" shorter and 1" thinner than the 6lb 7oz I had the week

previously, which now makes me wonder if it was a correct weight. Either way, it's a great fish and the 2nd biggest of the season.

After that session I began to explore new waters. I find myself revisiting the same waters over and over and as a result catch similar sized fish but I was now in a good position to try new venues. I told myself my season was a good one no matter how things turned out from here on and vowed I would only fish waters I've not caught from previously but sadly, I feel I only found waters to tick off the list really. Most waters produced smaller eels than I was already catching and too many to try wading through in hope of something bigger

7 eels to over 3lb on an overnight session

There is one water that has been on my radar for a long time but it's a little "iffy" with the people who like to frequent the place after dark. I did a few short sessions after work on it though and it wasn't as bad as some make out. I think it's a water that will take extra effort to get amongst its hidden treasures and a water I hope to spend more time on next year.

There are no recent reports of eels on there, but I've found snippets of info and heard one or two things from reliable sources which prove there was once a good head of eels in there many, many moons ago, which gets the eels senses tingling today

Towards the end of September my catches began to slope off and the old familiar panic fishing began to set in. the laid-back mentality was hard to uphold, and I began to lose control of my obsessive eel addiction. I was thinking about eels constantly, which isn't an issue. Its talking about eels constantly that is. Especially when its to people who have no interest in eels and they look at you like your odd. The thought of digging just a little deeper to catch another big eel was just so tempting. I visited my trusty old water a few times and forgot all about my vow. This water has done 2 PB's for me. One of 5lb 2oz and one which was bigger so naturally it draws me back again and again. I could only manage to catch 2's and 3's



though and that was amongst a few blanks too.

I had one last shred of hope of catching a big eel before the end of the season and that was definitely going to be my last.

It was a visit to one of my day only waters with some of the NAC lads, but this time we were doing the full weekend, including nights!

I was very excited at the potential of doing nights on this water and it's something I've dreamed of many times while packing away at dusk on it. The weather was absolutely crazy for the middle of October. Temps were in the high teens all weekend with thick clouds, strong winds and occasional rain. I thought we struck very lucky.

My mate Danny bagged the first eel at 4pm, which was of average size at 2lb 15oz and round about the same time as I usually start my sessions on there, so I thought everything was falling in to place but no more eels came out until the following day at 6pm. This time I was the lucky one but at around a pound in weight and probably the smallest eel I've had from there it wasn't really what I had been hoping for.

Roy Piggot had a 2lb+ eel during Saturday night which concluded the eel fishing.

The fishing in general however was a different story and possibly one of the reasons the eels were hard to come by. There were around 8 cats out and all of a decent size. The biggest out was 41lb and was caught by me Friday night and again Saturday afternoon by Stu, Tony Kelner's mate. There was also a few carp caught and one in particular carp that Bernard Pielow was over the moon to catch, which weighed around 17lb I believe.

In those conditions at that time of year I would have expected many eels out but sadly it didn't happen. I think we all still enjoyed ourselves though and we have been invited back to fish it again next year, fingers crossed we get amongst the eel population

So, to sum up the season simply, it was great!! I caught big eels, I made great friends and I loved just about every minute I managed to get out. I hope you enjoyed yours as much I enjoyed mine and let's hope winter passes as quickly as an eel season does....



**National Anguilla Club AGM**

**23rd March 2019**

**from 12am**

**Venue: Aston Old Edwardians Rugby Club,**

**B44 oHP**

**Attendance: 18 (7 Committee members)**

Nick Rose

Che Osborne

John Davies

Ade Lees

Nick Duffy

Stephen Cotton

Jason Webb

Martin J. Dorman

Steve Dawe

Terry Woolcock

Bernard Pielow

Jackie Proud

Jason Proud

Dean Aston

Roy Piggott

Paul Martin

Tony Booker

Simon Garrard

**Apologies**

Graham Wilkes

Steven Richardson

Stephen Richardson

Janssen Bostock

Carl Hill

Tony Kellner

**Officer Reports**

**President:**

Club healthy with many prospective new members. Thanks for attending.

**Chairman:** Can't add much but it feels like the club is going in the right direction. Please give me feedback if not.

**General Secretary:** Nothing to add.

**Treasurer:** The club has a good bank balance, everything is going well. Money is coming in and not much is going out.

**Records Officer:** Gave a summary of the report presented in the latest club magazine. Stated only 34 catch returns down from 38 last year, despite Jason Webb setting up an electronic submission form. This is disappointing. A discussion of how to improve matters was made, but most options sug-

gested had been tried/discussed before. In conclusion, it was thought that the same members each year submitted their returns and the same members didn't. It was difficult to see a way around this. Also the first year where no paper copies were submitted, all were via the online system or by email submission, a sign of the times.

The Eel of Merit Trophy was presented (following engraving) to Dean Aston for his Grafham eel of 6.06.

Membership Secretary: Stated there had been a drop in members of 8% on last year, however there is a healthy waiting list and all on the list will be offered membership this year.

**Products Officer:** There will be a change in the product supplying company this year to an online shop set up. An example of a hoodie supplied by the new company was shown and Nick Duffy promptly nicked it! The hoodie was considered to be of good quality, but the NAC logo badge was considered to be too large and the inner yellow colour wrong. Going forward the logo badge will be smaller and the yellow colour will now be gold. The online shop will similar to that offered on the Pike Angling Club website and a link will be made to it from the NAC website. One product at a time can now be ordered rather than the previous situation where a number of products had to be ordered between members before an order was placed. The new set up should generate a small amount of profit for the club, compared to the previous break-even situation.

**Environment Officer:** Mark Salt will be stepping down from this role. Terry Woolcock and Steve Dawe offered to jointly take over this role in the future.

**Social Officer:** Anglian Water have offered Hollowell and Grafham reservoirs for the club this year. Hollowell has been extensively fished by Che Osborne, who caught no eels, so the club has decided to return to Grafham in May/June, with dates to be confirmed when available. On the 26th of July the club will hold a fishin at Patsull park fish-



ery, which contains lots of eels so all should catch (lol!). The cost will be £20/24hrs, £40 for the weekend and members will be able to book their partners into the adjacent Country Club hotel if they wish to attend and don't want to rough it. Up to 25 members can attend. The final fishin will be at the East Delph carp complex in Lincolnshire on the weekend of the 4th of October. This fishery consists of 3 lakes and should accommodate up to 22 members. There is a large barbecue area at the fishery so it should be a good social.

**Junior Officer:** Nothing to add.

Election of Officers

No new nominations or complaints so the committee was voted in, en-mass as last year.

Nomination for Life Membership

No new nominations.

### **Magazine Feedback**

Good feedback was given, with two minor points. A word was the wrong way round in Bernie's article and there was no date listed for the AGM. Che gave a proposal for a second magazine this year, however it was pointed out that this years mag was actually a delayed Winter mag from last year! There were no objections for another mag however. Che proposed that we should allow some limited adverts in the magazine, e.g a possible advert for Chris Browns eel nets, with proviso that the advertising company should provide suitable articles for the club raffles. This could also be extended to tackle shops recommended/used by club members. The proposal was passed.

Che also stated that members should submit articles for the magazine in plain text, with photos supplied separately. He also stated that it is difficult to use photos taken using mobile photos due to their limited size. These do not blow up well making their appearance poor in the magazine. Where possible members should use suitable quality cameras. Tony Booker offered (?) to provide guidance to members in this area if required (see AOB).

All renewing and new members are to get a copy of the rules & regulations set with their new membership card/pack. There are no issues with members who have applied this year. Attendees were invited to look at the prospective new members list and to say if they had any objections. No objections were received so all members on the waiting list will be offered membership.

2019 to 2020 membership fees are to remain the same as last season.

### **Winter Social**

To be held at the same venue as the AGM. Dates to be arranged but likely 2nd or 9th of November. A question was asked what had become of the previous venue, why have we changed venue? In answer the reply was that the new venue is free and Nick Duffys wife works there so easy to arrange. Attendees were asked if anyone had any issues with the new venue. No-one expressed any issues with the new venue.

Four potential speakers were discussed as possible's for the winter social. They included Garry Newman who is very interested but can't commit at the moment. Also Terry Theobold (Nick Rose to ask) and Tony Costello of river Severn Zander fame.

### **AOB**

### **Angling Trust**

This topic caused some heated discussions.

The club pays £60 per annum to the AT. We are not sure if this is just a donation or if the club has any benefits (primarily Public Liability Insurance) from this payment.

Some members (e.g. John Davies & Che Osbourne) were not happy with the recent actions of the AT with respect to Otters, the Drennan tackle money issue and their dealing with the EA.

Other members (e.g. Stephen Cotton, Tony Booker) saw the AT to be acting in the benefit of anglers in the UK. In conclusion Tony Booker who has contacts within the AT due to his dealings with the Colne Valley HS2 & Thames Relief Channel issues is to ask AT what we get for our money. This years fees will be paid to the AT and a vote will be held

on whether to continue this next year following feedback from Tony B.

**Risk Assessments**

Che asked if we need these for our fishins (related to public liability insurance). John D said we have been round this topic extensively in the past and no we don't. Che/Nick D questioned this. Nick R asked why don't we ask the AT. In conclusion Tony Booker is to ask the AT this and Che is to follow this up with Tony B.

**The Book**

Nick R, John D and Che O are trying to progress the book. By the end of December they have set themselves a target to have the book issued in electronic form. In addition by next years AGM they will try to have the book issued. They will be after articles so, please get writing and help them out. At the moment they are struggling for high quality images as photos from mobiles are not of high enough quality. Tony Booker offered to help out in this area.

The Book team were asked if they had got a publisher. In answer no, but lots of firms now offer the potential to publish circa 500 copies including a short run of leather bound books. Self publication was discussed. Simon Garrard gave his opinion that this was not a good idea as it could cost the club a lot of money.

Martin Dorman asked if the club is trying to make money on the book. In reply no, the club is trying to make a quality product to represent the club to the greater angling world. This is following on from books produced by the Perch Fishers and the Chub Study Group etc. It is likely the club will approach Little Egret or Martin Bowler in the first instance to publish the book.

Meeting closed approx. 1:45.





# EARLY DAYS

Geoffrey Fletcher



e-mail:fl

Dear Che,

National Anguilla Club – early days

Herewith just a couple of, hopefully, interesting things for you...the article of our Loch Ness trip, don't we all look young?

The two photos attached are of me, wearing my City clothes, the usual practice for some years was that I left my office, got the tube on Friday evenings, and met Arthur Sutton at his home in Edmonton. I didn't have any change of clothes but did have an old parka which was kept with my gear at his house! In those days we brought a small selection of 2lb plus eels home and sent the otoliths for assessment by Natural History Museum (I think)...eels of this size were common then, not so now!

Normally, we, just the two of us, went to waters controlled by the, then, Slough Estates Angling Club which we had been introduced to by George Moss, one of the founders,, or on 'free stretches' of the River Thames. Then in 1968 the Kingsmoor Anglers were formed and brought more gravel pits /lakes into the equation, from then up to 1971, when I married and moved out of London, we fished probably every other weekend. I left my two 'Anguilla Master' rods and broly with Arthur where they stayed as I never ever picked them up.

I have a few odd memories of 'the early days' which I will try and put down into an e-mail to you sometime.

Yours sincerely

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*Dr. TERENCE COULSON and JIM GIBBINSON describe  
a seven-strong expedition to the lochs of Scotland...*



THERE'S NO DOUBT that eels very much bigger than the present rod-caught record exist in British freshwaters, and the objective of the National Anguilla Club is—ultimately—to catch some of them. One of the main problems facing any angler in search of big fish of any species is 'where to fish?' and this question is possibly harder to answer logically with big eels than with most other species.

Some time ago, the N.A.C. learned of a number of supposedly well-authenticated reports of eels of exceptional size in certain Scottish lochs, notably in and around Loch Ness. We decided to try and establish their validity, and set about gathering information from reports of scientific expeditions to the loch, from books about the celebrated 'monster', from correspondence and conversations with zoologists, local officials and residents, anglers and wherever else we could find it.

We soon learned that Loch Ness is so exceptional a water as to be unique. It is 24 miles long, yet even at its widest point—across from Urquhart Bay—it is only about 1¾ miles wide. Its average depth—430 ft.—is greater than any other British lake, and it is 750 ft. at its deepest. The surface area is an enormous 14,000 acres and the loch contains something like two cubic miles of water. It is a place of wild and awe-inspiring beauty.

It took us a long time to get any concrete evidence that the loch contained any worthwhile stock of eels, but gradually the informa-

## In search of big eels

tion came in. For example, Mr. Alex Campbell, who has spent the whole of a long life on its shores, recalled that a party of professional eel-fishers from Ireland had spent a summer there, in his boyhood before the 1914-'18 war, and sent quantities of eels to Billingsgate. He remembered the biggest eel as being 'as thick as the calf of an ordinary man's leg'.

We won't go into all the mass of detail we gathered and studied during many months; suffice it to say that we reached a point at which we felt there were ample reasons for supposing that the loch might well offer a much-better-than-average chance of catching some really big eels. So seven members of the club, Steve Edwards, Geoff Fletcher, Les Hudson, Bob Rolph, Arthur Sutton and we two, decided to mount a little expedition and find out at first hand what the eel fishing was like.

The waters involved are private game fisheries, but the owners kindly gave the club



LOOKING SOUTH across Loch Ness from above Urquhart Castle. The far shore, seen through the mist, is about one mile away. A strong south-west wind is blowing up the loch, but the waters of Urquhart Bay in the left foreground are sheltered and reasonably calm.



# BETTER LATE THAN NEVER!

Rich Swan



My own personal journey to joining the NAC started almost 20 years ago now. At the time I was working in a bakery in Staffordshire when a certain John Davis joined the ranks although for a while we didn't really have much to do with each other as we worked in different departments. Our paths would cross from time to time and through normal conversation we found out we had a mutual love for fishing and so began a friendship that continues to this day. As the years rolled by John and I would often arrange to meet up outside of work for a fishing trip although at the time I couldn't drive and he would drive 40 minutes from his home to pick me up, then drop me back off at the end of the day only to have another 40 minutes

to go before he got home himself. I have many fond memories of our fishing trips through the years, like stopping for a pint in the Swan Inn at Fradley junction after a freezing cold day Pike fishing on the river Trent. They had a roaring log fire and we huddled by it trying to get the chill out of our bones. Another great memory I have is sitting up all night drinking cider through a gloriously warm summers night during a weekend tench fishing. I could go on but I am sure you all have memories just like these.

It was during our fishing trips we would have plenty of conversations about all things fishing and the NAC would crop up from time to time. John was the

General Secretary at the time and he would tell me about this eel club and eels. I would happily listen to his stories but that was where my interest ended, I had absolutely no intention of wanting to catch eels. The thought of catching these slippery creatures didn't exactly float my boat and this is how it stayed for many years. My first experience of seeing a big eel was during a 3 night fishing trip at a lake in Shropshire.

I had just settled into my sleeping bag for a snooze when I heard John calling my name. I went out to see what was going on to find John with a large eel snagged on the drawstring of his landing net so we used mine to scoop it up and land it safely. I cannot remember the exact weight but I do remember it was over 5lb. The next morning John brought the sacked eel out for photographs and everyone was extremely impressed by this elusive creature, myself included. A few years later John left our place of work for pastures new but we still kept in touch and still had our fishing trips from time to time. It was during some night fishing trips on the canal I would pay more attention to what John was doing, looking at his rigs and bait and asking questions about them and seeing him using old monkey climbers for bite indication. I still resisted the temptation however to try and catch an eel and would stick to trying to catch Carp from the canal instead.

During our conversations John would often tell me I need to learn to drive, I kept meaning to as I knew it would open up a whole new world for me fishing wise so after even more encouragement from my wife I finally bit the bullet and took lessons, eventually passing first time at the grand old age of 39, but better late than never I suppose! I can honestly say it has been one of the best things I have ever done as my fishing world has opened up so much that I will be forever grateful to John and my wife for talking me into taking the plunge. Now I was mobile I would often travel Derby way to fish with John on waters closer to him and as always we would have chats about fishing while we waited for a bobbin to drop off while Pike fishing during cold winters days or the bleep of a bite alarm to pierce the quiet night air while night fishing during the summer on the river Trent. During the chats the NAC would crop up again and how now John was now the Chairman and these fishing trips, or fish-ins as he called them would happen throughout the year and how much fun they were.

He then asked if I would be interested in joining the club. I must admit I was pretty intrigued about the idea but was hesitant as I knew pretty much nothing about eel fishing except for what I had seen John doing on the canal. He said there was nothing to worry about as when it comes down to it eel fishing is just fishing, just slightly different tactics and rigs, its not rocket science and I would be fine.

So in 2017 I joined the NAC and its online forum and began exploring in more detail the world of eel fishing. The forum in particular was a treasure trove of information with many articles on different rigs and bait, many experienced anglers giving their opinions on hook patterns and trace materials, it really was an education to read through and very enjoyable as well. My first real experience of eel fishing by design came at my very first fish-in in August 2017 at Grafham water in Cambridgeshire. I arrived around 8am on the Friday morning, I had been at work the previous night and had driven the 2 hour journey to Grafham straight after work so was pretty tired already. I didn't really know anybody in the NAC apart from John so I was a little apprehensive about what to expect. I had pulled into the car park and didn't see a soul there and started to worry I had somehow got the wrong place. I took a short walk and noticed a couple of other chaps walking near the waters edge. Looking closer I could see the unmistakable NAC logo on their hoodies so I knew I was in the right area. I walked up to introduce myself and noticed one of the chaps was Roy Piggot. I had fished with Roy and John on a couple of occasions on lakes and maybe once on the river Trent so a familiar face put me at ease slightly. The other chap was our very own Nick Rose, we shook hands and chatted for a short while before deciding we should all drive round to the other side of the reservoir to where we thought the rest of the members were meeting.

We finally found our way and arrived at the lodge. I walked in to find a fair few of the club members enjoying an early morning cuppa in the cafe area. As I said I didn't know anybody so I felt a little out of place as groups of chaps all sat around talking and catching up with each other. I spoke to a few people and introduced myself, explaining I was a friend of John, hoping somehow this would curry favour with everyone, but as I would find out this wasn't needed as everyone was welcoming to this new face. John turned up fashionably late as always and we all gathered for



the briefing from the head bailiff. Once this was over we all scattered in different directions, some to find a spot to bivvy up or scout out where they might fish, others like myself, John and Nick Rose headed to the nearest pub which was the Wheatsheaf in the village of Perry. Unfortunately it was closed when we arrived so we hung around the front door waiting for it to open like a bunch of alcoholics you would see in front of any Wetherspoons in any town.

The day rolled on and more NAC members showed up at the pub, it was quite a nice pub with good food but I am not sure the landlady appreciated being inundated with rowdy fishermen as we would often get a sly look from her when someone let slip with an expletive or two. Afternoon turned to early evening at we decided to make a move and begin searching for a place to fish. Me and John decided to fish on the dam wall along with a few other members.

We got to the car park and loaded up our barrows and made our way onto the dam. We bivvied up along the tree line just at the start of the dam and then moved further along to begin the setting up our rods. We fished next to each other and shared an umbrella the first night, however as darkness fell the rain began to fall and it got worse as the hours rolled by.

At one point I remember being curled up on my chair with an old overwrap from my first ever bivvy just thrown over me just to try to stay dry. We caught nothing and in the morning the rain had relented and the sun came out to dry off our damp gear. We got back to our bivvies and made some breakfast before getting a few hours sleep and after that returned to the pub for an afternoon beer and some food. The second night we were not going to make the same mistake as the first as rain was forecast again so with Johns broly and my overwrap using bags and tubs to hold things down we made a decent enough shelter to keep the bad weather off our backs.

The night went pretty much the same as the first with nothing caught by ourselves, however we were both privileged along with Sam Pitcher to witness Steve Markwells 8lb 4oz eel. It was a magnificent sight, I had never seen anything like it in my life and I watched in awe as it was weighed and returned safely back to the depths from whence it came. After much congratulations we all returned to our own swims to see out the night, dreaming of our own 8lb+ eel. The night gave

way to dawn and the rain relented once again to give us another glorious sunny morning. Sam Pitcher who was fishing the next peg along to us came and said he had some kind of hybrid bream in his net so me and John walked over to his swim and he peeled back the mesh of his net to reveal a stunning Roach! It was weighed and it tipped the scales at an impressive 3lb 10oz. Sam was obviously over the moon and we were for him so that night I got to witness 2 beautiful specimen fish. The fish-in ended but we stayed for another night along with a few other members.

It was a beautiful still night with clear skies but it didn't change our luck and we both blanked the whole weekend. I returned home content I had survived my first NAC fish-in, I had met some really nice guys and had really enjoyed the experience. I was certain it wasn't going to be my last and it hasn't been. To date I have been on several fish-ins and have enjoyed every single one of them, notably the 2018 fish in at Nickolls in Kent where depending on your swim you were either baking hot in glorious sunshine or freezing cold in howling wind! or the 2019 fish in at Patshull park in the West Midlands for which I did the write up for the NAC Anguilla magazine. Now when I turn up to a fish-in I no longer feel like I'm out of place. I will go and sit with the guys and have a laugh like I belong there and I do feel like I belong. It doesn't matter to anyone that I am still very much a novice when it comes to eel fishing, everyone treats me as an equal and that's the kind of club any of us can be proud to be a part of.

My eel angling career is still very much in its infancy, my PB stands at only 2lb 11oz which I caught at the latest fish-in I went to at East Delph lakes in Cambridgeshire but that eel means the world to me. I caught it with new techniques I had learned from an amazing club and I caught it while fishing with friends old and new. So here I am almost 20 years after first meeting John and hearing of the NAC. He is now the President and I am now into my third year of membership and I will never leave this amazing club. I have found a place that feels like I belong and there is no way I would ever want to give that up. My only regret is I didn't join the NAC many years before, but as the same as my learning to drive....better late than never!

# EELS LOVE BRIDGES

Steve Dawe



Everyone in our club have a passion for Eels and my own love of the species has spanned over 40 years, man and boy. Most of us confine our relationship with eels to our various fishing sessions, or via literature and social media. I however have been fortunate in recent years to continue rubbing shoulders with Eels through my working career as a Bridge Inspector with Devon County Council. Fig 1

I have carried out several positions in the last 30 years with this local authority, but I can honestly say I love this role the most. My duties are to undertake structural inspections on the several hundred bridges, retaining walls and sea defences in South and West Devon. These range from 200 year old multi-span listed Dartmoor Bridges to Concrete Box Culverts, most involve water and some I have to crawl through. Fig 2

During the summer when river flows are low, and temperatures are warm wading in the deep water is a truly pleasing experience but in the winter the Dartmoor rivers can be far from welcoming. Fig 3

So, you're probably wondering where Eels come

into all this, well when I am inspecting, I generally encounter eels on a weekly basis. Eels love feeling safe and secure, Bridges and Walls create a perfect environment via a number of situations and opportunities that the Eel can exploit.

The first of these is Debris, Bridges by their very nature cause an obstruction to a water course that during heavy flows leads to a build up of debris, normally large trees and vegetation. On the major bridges and rivers these obstructions are quickly highlighted as a high risk and are generally cleared quickly to prevent damage to the bridge piers and scour of the foundations. However, the smaller streams and watercourses can have debris sat against the abutments for years, and its this situation that creates a perfect habitat for the Eel. Fig 4 fig 5.

The eels love these rafts of twisted wood and vegetation, they attract food items and provide a slacker area in flood situations. The issue I have is that these constitutes a defect and once discovered I will need to clear it myself or arrange for a contractor to remove it. The temptation to push the debris through the bridge and on down the river is outweighed by the fact that it will proba-



bly catch on my next bridge further downstream. However, any along the border with Cornwall can be happily pushed through as I won't have to see that again. The downside is this destroys the eel's habitat, but this is merely a temporary set back to the ever-industrious eels, fig 6 shows an eel I disturbed heading downstream. I have come across eel's resident in debris on several occasions but there could have been many more that were not visible due to water clarity.

The next opportunity Eels regularly use are Gabion Baskets or rock retaining walls, these metal baskets are filled with large clean stone and tied together in huge stacks to create a strong, quick solution to water erosion and bank stabilisation. Fig 7 shows a Gabion Basket structure.

Due to the angular nature of the large stone's voids are created allowing eels to move in and set up a totally protected home. The downside is that these baskets are regularly failing as the basket corrodes and splits allowing the stone to pour out and eventually wash away. These are not something we would use in water anymore but there are thousands out there waiting to collapse. Fig 8 shows a failing basket wall  
So, a bit like the three little pigs the eels don't always select the best of properties to take up residence.

The next one is something we anglers know eels love and that's deep silt beds, I have several culverts where the water flow is virtually non-existent and leads to a build up of silt on the bed rock or concrete invert. These silted up culverts can sometimes have 5 feet of silt in them and when they run for 100m it creates a hazardous confined space. In these situations, we would undertake a multi-team inspection using Breathing Apparatus. Many of these heavily silted culverts have large concentrations of eels but they are only noticeable as they bump into you and wriggle underneath your body. I have a couple of warnings listed on my inspection software that flags up any hazards to an inspector prior to entering a structure that states

This may seem terrifying to some of my colleagues, but I am always excited when that one comes up. Figure 9 shows an eel holding silt filled culvert.

As far as a permanent residence goes, we very rarely go to the trouble of de-silting these culverts, preferring to allow mother nature to flush them through every 10 years in monster floods, so probably a good choice for the eels and explains their large numbers.

Another habitat eels frequently use and probably where I physically see most of the eels is holes and voids within the bridge's abutments, the part of the bridge that goes into the water. These areas are prone to water scour or loss of stones and mortar. They can provide a secure, strong and semi-permanent residence, eels positioned here can have their heads poking out to grab any passing food particles and sink away quickly if danger appears. Fig 10 shows a void going back 750mm, plenty of room for a huge eel.

Unfortunately for the eels big voids in these locations need urgent remedial works as once started erosion quickly expands with catastrophe results. I am never too worried about the smaller holes and sometimes I have seen 5 or 6 eels poking their heads from missing mortar or stones. They are extremely nervous in clear water and quickly retreat back into the holes, fig 11 shows the only eel from a group of eels that kept its head poking out under a bridge built in 1806, fig 12 shows the bridge with me holding my Eel wrangling pole.

I would say that most of the eels I come across are below 2lb and I am not sure if they are using these structures as stepping stones on their way to a home in a Stillwater. As well as eels I regularly encounter Kingfishers, Mink, Otter and Dippers, fig 13 shows a dipper nest built inside a bridge.

I am determined to gather a bit more information on the eels that I am coming across and hopefully get some underwater pictures with the GoPro this coming year. I haven't really mentioned tidal sections but as I look after several sea walls and



tidal culverts, I do see eels but the fact the areas dry out twice a day keeps these eels on the move.

Our little town has the East and West Okement rivers running through it and as a lad I would very often fish for the numerous wild brown trout that drifted near the surface in the deeper pools. The water was clear and largely shallow allowing fish to be spotted easily, despite the numerous trout very rarely was an eel spotted. This changed at night and anyone foolhardy enough to remain when the sun set was destined to tangle with an eel. A chunk of cheese would be quickly gobbled up by an eel even in the shallowest of glides but where did they come from?

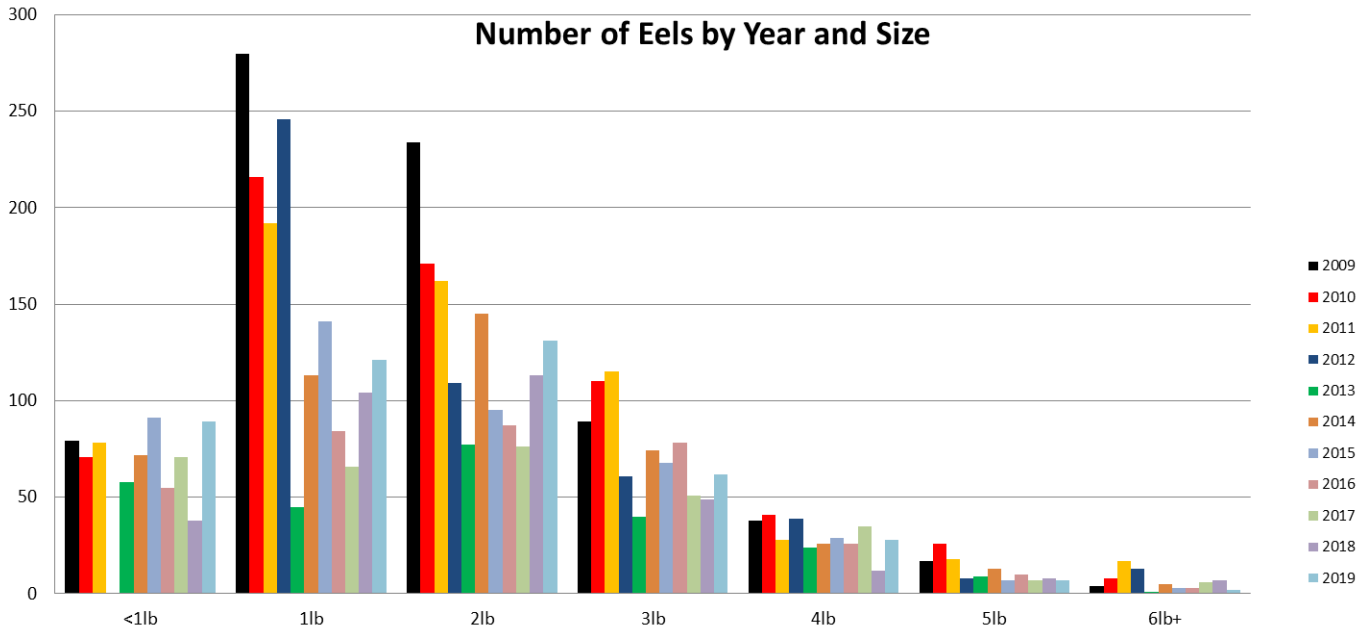
Well one day I was fishing a pool with a large building opposite, the supporting wall was 3 feet under the water to provide solid foundations. In the middle of the pool sat a dead trout and judging by the condition it had been dead a while, despite a slight flow it was stationery on the bottom. I noticed it suddenly move violently as something shook it, behind it was the purple grey shape of an eel pulling bits of flesh from the car-

cass. I noticed from a hole in the far wall another eel snaking its way across the river to reach the trout body. Their frantic feeding caused the rotting Trout to disintegrate and flow downstream, the Eels clearly happy with their fill returned to the wall and disappeared within.

This solved the riddle of where the eels were and with many more walls and bridges around the town Eels could be abundant. When I am fishing for eels on a 40 acre lake I now appreciate how little space they require to remain hidden and just how well they utilise any type of structure.



# RECORDS OFFICER REPORT 2019



Hello to everyone from your records officer, it's time for me to present members catches for this season (2018-19) and to detail who has been awarded club trophies.

First many thanks to everyone who returned a catch return, the number received, 48 has set a new record and is very pleasing. Please continue to keep up the good work next year! 440 eels were reported this season compared to the 329 eels reported last year. This looks like a big increase in the number of eels caught, however there were only 34 catch returns last year. If you work out the figures the average number of eels per return is approximately the same as last year.

Of the 440 eels reported this year there were 62 x 3lb eels, 28 x 4lb eels, 7 x 5lb eels and 2 eels over 6lb. The following table gives you an idea of how this compares to previous years.

The seasons best eel of 8.00 measuring 45" in length was reported by Steve Ricketts and came to deadbait presented on the dyson rig. Steve reported one other notable eel of 5.02 from a his total of 12 eels, which came to deadbait on the JS rig. Steve's 8lbr won him the Best Eel of the Season and John Sidley

Memorial trophies and his 12th place on the NAC top 50 eel list.

The second best eel of the season at 6.05 measuring 43" by 10.25" was reported by Mark Salt in June and came to a Dyson Style rig and worms. Mark also reported another notable eel of 5.03 from his total of 14 eels, all of which were over 3lb, except one (unusual for him!) "boot".

The next largest eel reported was a cracking new PB to Steve Bygrave at 5.14. Steve's PB came to livebait on the Dyson in August. Notably Steve also reported 3x 4lb eels to 4.10 and a further 5x 3lb eels from a total of 26 eels.

Baz McConnell reported a seasons best of 5.14 which came to deadbait fished on a Dyson style rig in a Staffordshire reservoir in May. Baz also reported a further 3 x 4lb eels to 4.06 from the same venue from an overall total of 27 eels.

Tony Kellner reported fishing variety of waters during the season from the Thames to commercials to giant reservoirs in pursuit of a new PB. This wasn't to be however, but he reported probably his best season for better

fish. His seasons total of 15 eels from 25 sessions included a best of 5.06, 3 x 4lbs to 4.09 and 2 x 3lbs.

Stephen Richardson reported a frustrating year with only 2 eels caught, despite that his best was a great 5.03 which came to worms fished on a dyson style rig in August.

The final 5lb eel reported was to Alan Unthank at 5.02. This eel was caught to worms fished on a JS style rig in July. Alan's eel was considered to be particularly noteworthy as it came from Northumbrian lake and it therefore earned him the Eel of Merit Trophy for this year. Alan caught a further 21 eels including 5 x 3lbs.

Next on the list is Roy Piggott who sent me his catch return 4 times! Roy put in 34 nights and caught 19 eels including 3 x 4lb to 4.14 and 4 x 3lb to 3.14. 8 of Roy's eels came from the Patshull park fishin with the rest coming from gravel pits.

Stewart Alexander reported a pleasing seasons best eel of 4.12, caught in July from a Lincolnshire lake to a deadbait fished on a dyson style rig. Stewart reported a further 5 eels.

James Faulkner put in 12 sessions this year giving him a total of 5 eels, including a seasons best of 4.12 in August and 3 x 3lbs to 3.12. James's 4.12 was caught on bottom fished worm.

Nick Rose fished 22 sessions this season catching 10 eels, which included 2 x 4lbs to 4.08 and 3 x 3lbs to 3.10. 6 of Nick's eels were caught during trips to France and included his two 4lbs which both came to worms.

Janssen Bostock reported a seasons best of 4.08 from a total of 9 eels, which also included 4 x 3lbs to 3.12. All Janssen's eels were caught early in the season to deadbaits except the 3.12 which came to lobworm.

The next largest 4lbr reported was to new member Stephen Silver at 4.03. Stephen's eel came on the Patshull park fishin and earned him the Best Eel on a Club Trip and Denys Lawrence Memorial trophies. This cheered his mate Che up no end as I think Che blanked on the same trip! This was the only eel Stephen reported this season and it came on deadbait fished to a dyson style rig.

Devon angler John Grayling reported 13 eels this year including 3 x 4lbs to 4.02. John reported catching 9 eels to prawn between 1 and 2lb from a small farm pond, a venue which has given him plenty of blanks over the years. John's two largest 4lbs were caught on either dead or livebaits.

Norfolk lad Paul Utting reported 16 eels this year including a best of 4lb+ and 12 between 2 and 3lb.

Ryan Jones reported 17 eels this year to a seasons best of 4lb+ and also including 2 x 3lb.

Steve Dawe put in 6 sessions this year which gave him a total of 4 eels. Steve's best of 3.10 came to live Rudd fished on a Dyson rig in June.

Mark Macandrew was another member to fish in France this year but unlike Nick Rose only caught 1 French eel for his troubles. Despite this Mark really enjoyed his season fishing many new areas, catching a total of 44 eels this season to a best of 3.09. Marks total also included 8 more 3lb+ eels.

Nick Duffy reported a poor year this time with a seasons best of 3.09 to deadbait. Nick also caught a further 5 x 3lbs from a seasons total of 25 eels.

Stuart Jessop reported one eel of 3.08 this year which was caught in July on live bait fished on a twig rig. Stuarts eel was caught from a carp infested days only venue reputed to have good form.

Scouse eel Bernard Pielow fished 4 venues this year but caught all his eels on the Patshull fishin. Bernie's best was 3.08 with 2 x 2lbs and a "microboot".

Michael Davies reported a new PB eel of 3.03 from a total of 11 eels caught during the year. Michael's eel was caught using the twig rig rig and a deadbait from a North Wales venue in July.

Jason & Jackie Proud reported 21 and 27 eels respectively with each reporting a seasons best of 3lb+.

Ade Lees reported a one 3lb+ eel from his sea-



sons total of 4 eels.

Lee Saxon caught 4 eels this year, with his best of 3lb+ coming from a Lancashire reservoir in July to worm on the twig rig.

Jason Webb tried a few new waters this year but without too much success. He reported 12 eels in total including three 2lbs.

Wayne Staddon struggled this year fishing over 41 nights for 3 eels with a 2lb being his best.

Dave O’Sullivan also struggled, blanking on a syndicate lake, the canals and on a weeks fishing in Hampshire. He did catch on his local river and a Somerset lake to end the season with 7 eels, with a best of 2.11. 4 of his eels were caught on bacon and he commented that he really enjoyed his season.

Gordon Collier reported 4 eels this year including 3 x 2lbs.

Ginger Wizard Andrew Morgan reported one eel of 2.06 this year, caught in July on a JS style rig and worm from a West Midlands lake.

Paul “Digger” Martin got sidetracked this year and only put in 3 sessions after eels, catching a 2.10 gravel pit in August on chicken liver. I also put in only a few sessions this year and all my 4 eels were caught at the Patshull park fishin with biggest going 2.06.

Dambuster Dean Aston reported having a “crap season” with only 4 eels to 1lb+.

Richard Ivinson reported 14 eels this year, including 4x 1lb+. From approx 10 sessions.

Chairman Che Osborne put in 50+ nights after his dream eel but had to be content with 3 eels.

New member Malcolm Hough reported 10 eels this season, including 5 x 1lb+.

President John Davis put 26 sessions on “Rainbow waters” between May and the end of September without any reward. He finally came good at the Patshull fishin and on Che’s “easy water” landing 7 eels in total, to a seasons best of 1.12.

Greekophile Terry Woolcock reported one eel at approx 1.08 from the Patshull fishin this year.

Richard Swan also reported one eel this year of less than 1lb.

Six members, Jim Smith, Nicholas Bland, Alan Williams, Simon Garrard, Malcolm Law and Kevin Payne reported blanking this year. Some of these members reported fishing a considerable number of nights showing how difficult the pursuit of specimen eels really is. Better luck next year lads!

Eel size	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<1lb	79	71	78	123	58	72	91	55	78	38	89
1lb	280	216	192	123	45	113	141	84	71	104	121
2lb	234	171	162	109	77	145	95	87	78	113	131
3lb	89	110	115	61	40	74	68	78	53	49	62
4lb	38	41	28	39	24	26	29	26	35	12	28
5lb	17	26	18	8	9	13	7	10	8	8	7
6lb+	4	8	17	13	1	5	3	3	6	7	2
total	741	643	610	476	254	448	434	343	329	331	440
Number of Catch Returns	37	33	36	21	32	31	36	28	38	34	48

# EAST DELPH FISH-IN

Tony Kelner



The last club Fish-in for 2019 or should I say first for the NAC season 2019-20 was organised for the first weekend in October.

Nick had sorted a small commercial fishery close to the town of Whittlesey in the fenland District of Cambridgeshire called East Delph lakes.

A small complex of 3 lakes, which included a stock pond for which we had permission to fish.

The meet was sorted at the Dog in a Doublet pub for midday and after a swift pint, around 15 eel anglers made the short journey up the pot holed dirt track towards the lakes.

For reasons only he can answer, Bernard decided to continue on the track into “children of the corn” territory. Quite how he missed the gated car park remains a mystery. Anyway, some distance up the track Bernard must have realized his mistake and proceeded to put his trusty Peugeot Scudo into reverse eventually ending up off the track in a side ditch which required the assistance of a few members to help with the Stricken Peugeot’s extraction

Rosey had apparently purchased some new hook link material as wire was banned and he used scous eels plight to put it to the test attempting to toe him out with it (

With car dramas eventually sorted and anglers safely within the compound, we were allowed entry into the fishery via the inner gate. We were then given a comprehensive briefing by the fishery manager regarding the rules of the fishery on what baits and rigs etc we could employ on the lakes.

Once completed, we then set off in our chosen directions to find a pitch for the session.

6 anglers decided on the long lake (stock pond), 5 on the front lake and 4 on the back lake.

Mark McAndrew started to catch fish from the off on his favourite float method. A tactic that was ideally suited to these ponds. I believe he had around 5 fish before it had even got dark up to mid 2’s.

Rich swan then got in the act, also on the front lake and proceeded to catch a few fish, even bagging himself a 2.11 personal best – which he celebrated with a packet of Cadbury’s “animals” and a quick blast of his bivvy heater well done Rich!

Rosey and John were set up in the “social swim” on the front lake where Kev had to assist with johns erection (his reatree bivvy obviously) which was expertly set up 50yds away from the rods on the “bivvy platform” whereas Rosey ignored this space and set his bivvy up on the lawn next to his rods - much to



the displeasure of the bailiff who made him move back to the designated bivvy spot next to Johns. Rosey did explain that he was much older than everyone else, and that it would be better being closer to his rods, but his pleas fell on deaf ears. Later that night he went on to catch the lakes solitary Tench, an amazing feat of angling skill or was it a result of paranormal activity as the owner was insistent that no Tench existed in the front lake?

The long lake started a bit slower, but the runs soon came, many being missed. Nick banked the first one, which ended up being one of the biggest from that pond at around the 2lb mark.

I had decided to fish a nice looking reed lined corner swim, which had an island gap in front of it. It looked like it had a few good spots to intercept an eel or two. However, I was massively disappointed to find a complete lack of depth throughout the swim and the area in front of the reedy corner was very boggy and silty. Nick walked past me whilst I was setting up and could detect my disappointment, but took the piss regardless. Hey – what are friends for!

Anyway, I'd made my bed so I would have to lie in it, for at least a night anyway.

It was pleasant surroundings and the weather was holding so we decided to finish off the day with a few beers, and some burgers and hot dogs on the now controversial "snide BBQ". A useful piece of kit that folds up to the size of an A4 piece of paper which allows you to stow it away without your mates knowing you

even have it. For more details on this kit please don't hesitate to contact the Long lake shady gang.(pic5)

I managed to bank one fish of around 2lb during the first night, but had had around 4-5 aborted takes throughout the night, mostly on dead bait sections, which seemed to be a theme as both Ade and Alan also suffered similar, where you could feel the eels plucking away at the bait, but just couldn't hook them.

The front lake fished well, I think everyone caught; some had had a fair few, Bern accounted for a mixed bag of eels, perch and even carp, but none of his beloved bream graced his net.

Over on the back lake, the fishing proved to be much harder. Wayne, Steve, Roy and Kev had surprisingly blanked on the eel front, but Kev and Steve managed to bank a few nice carp.

Some cracking (excuse the pun) release shots were taken of mr Markwell and he has duly been noted as top contender for the NAC rear of the year competition and future sponsorship from Veet. (Whoever said we were all hairy arse anglers was clearly wrong). That'll teach him for catching carp on a NAC fish-in!

Duffy left on Saturday, having had to endure the bucket of sawdust in the toilet which clearly took him out of his comfort zone (pic 7) and a few others also left as they didn't fancy the boot bashing plus







the weather forecast was for an unpleasant night of persistent heavy rain and a very wet pack up.

Nicks peg wasn't even cold by the time myself and Stew moved in and began to catch a few more eels. There was a noticeable difference in depth in this swim, always amazes me how Duffy finds the better swims, his watercraft is amazing.....

During the second night the rain began to fall quite persistently and a few more eels were caught, Mark McAndrew equaling Rich's 2.11 on a live bait. This was a short fat eel that had 47.5 inch girth – incredible for a 2lber (fig8)

It was a shame we didn't manage to connect with any of the ponds larger eels as no doubt a few exist, but the population of eels in the 1-2lb bracket seemed vast making it difficult to connect with anything bigger. It was still an enjoyable event and good to catch up with all the lads.

Those in attendance:

Nick Duffy  
Mark McAndrew  
John Davies  
Nick Rose  
James Williams  
Roy Piggot  
Wayne Staddon  
Bernard Pielow  
Kev Payne  
Rich swan  
Steve Markwell  
Ade Lees  
Alan Unthank  
Stewart Alexander  
Tony Kellner



# LARK IN THE PARK

## PATSHULL PARK FISH-IN

Rich Swan

The second NAC fish-in of the 2019 season was hosted at the beautiful Patshull park golf and country club just on the border between Staffordshire and the West Midlands and just 7 miles away from the city of Wolverhampton. This 110 acre site comprises of four pools but it was the Great lake and the Bridge pool that would host us all this year.

The fish-in was held on the 26th and 27th of July, however special permission was given by the head bailiff Rich for anyone who wanted to arrive the Thursday night beforehand would be allowed to do so but no fishing would be allowed and there would only be a place set aside to bivvy up for the night. This news was greatly received by seven of the lads who settled in for a night of beers in the clubhouse followed by more beers and a few bottles of red back at the bivvies. A curry (delivered by a man in a suit and tie, how posh!) was also the order of the day and I have since received unconfirmed reports that in the morning the 'bivvy city' resembled a camp site more in keeping with what we shall call for political correctness the 'Travelling community'.

With 23 members set for attending including four first timers, these being Mike Davies, Malc Hough, Ian Gray and Steve Silver the fish-in proper began on the Friday morning with a lot but not all of the members meeting at the fishing lodge where we could order breakfast sandwiches and a cuppa tea. Once we had all done our usual meet and greets and ate our sarnies we all gathered together to get our briefing from Social officer Nick Duffy. Most of the things were pretty straight forward like don't go swimming, keep off the golf course and no naked spodding (pay attention Bern!) but we were also told we were welcome to use all the facilities in the clubhouse should we wish to have a shower or freshen up which was a real nice touch by the management.

Once the briefing was over everyone scattered to claim their swims for the weekend. There were two main areas to fish, these being the shallows and the deeper

pegs near the clubhouse and lodge, however Malc Law decided to go rogue and fish the Bridge pool next to the main entrance all by himself. The pegs in the deeper end were at water level near the lodge but as you got closer to the clubhouse they became steeper and steeper until you pretty much needed a harness and safety rope to get down to your rods. Bernie Pielow nicknamed his swim the north face of the Eiger so that should give you some idea as to how steep they were!

I had planned to fish alongside 'El Presidente' John Davis and as he hadn't arrived yet I gave me time to have a wander around and look at all the available swims and chat to those who had already picked their spots. During my walk I had a chat with Steve Dawe who had picked a swim right next to the bridge which was the only access to the place. I jokingly told him I wouldn't touch that swim because of the noise of cars all night but he reassured me that Rich the bailiff said it was pretty quiet unless there was a wedding on so I wished him tight lines and went on my way. John turned up around 10:30 and we drove up to the shallows and had a look at what swims looked good and we decided on pegs 11 and 12. We returned to our cars to begin unloading our kit for the slog to the swims, luckily I had brought my barrow but John hadn't been able to fit his into his car so most of his stuff was lugged by hand, I did load some of his kit on the barrow to help out. It took 2 trips to get my stuff there, having to push my barrow past the practice green, along a golf cart track then skirt around another green and cross over in front of a tee hoping not to get a Titleist in the side of the noggin as you passed across. Once we had all our kit there we began the task of setting up in quite warm but overcast weather, this gave the air a very tropical mugginess to it and the sweat soon began to trickle from our brows, so like a true gentleman John cracked open a bottle of red to wet his whistle. He put it down to 'let it breathe' and began setting up only to return for another swig a short time later. Unfortunately for John a wasp who had also fancied a drink had crawled just inside the neck of the bottle. Alarmed at seeing the cavernous hole that

was Johns mouth approaching it did the only thing it could to save itself and this was to sting John squarely on the top lip. This caused John to splutter and spit and cough (and maybe a few expletives) as the pain of said sting took hold. He then proceeded to grab his lip and virtually pull his own face towards me asking if there was anything on his lip (which I couldn't see) so apart from saying he feels like he's been punched in the mouth he continued setting up as if nothing had happened. His lip on the other hand was not happy at such a cruel and unwarranted attack and began swelling up, so not only did John feel like he had been punched in the mouth, he looked like it too!. Roy Piggott arrived and began looking for a good swim and decided on peg 10 right next to me and Jim Smith had made camp in unlucky peg 13. James Faulkner had moved into the Hilton suite peg 14 which was big enough to hold a fish-in all on its own!

While all this setting up was going on various members were having eels grace their nets, messages were flying back and forth over the Whatsapp group we had created especially for the fish-in. Bernie Pielow had a mid 2lber and Alan 'Paddy Kirk' Unthank had a 3lber around 3pm. Now you may be wondering why Alan has been nicknamed Paddy Kirk so please allow me to explain. Alan Unthank, Stewart Alexander and Dean Aston all fished along the same small section of the lake, this was to become known as Emmerdale bank. Alan is the spitting image of the vet Paddy Kirk but even more surprisingly Stew looks like he has been separated at birth from his twin brother David Pollard and quite harshly in my opinion Deano has been compared to Sam Dingle, but that's according to Duffy so don't shoot the messenger Deano!. I'll let you all judge for yourselves how right and wrong we are by looking at the pictures.

Once everything was done John and I decided to have a walk to the clubhouse for a well deserved pint so the bat signal was sent out on Whatsapp for anyone else who wanted to join us. Obviously with a lot of the lads being serious eel anglers they did what all serious anglers do and wound their rods in and said they would meet us there. As we walked up the fairway we popped into the next set of swims to see new boys Mike Davies and Malc Hough. They gladly accepted the invitation to come for a drink and in no time at all Mike appeared from his bivvy in what could only be described as his pulling shirt. I'm not sure if he

was hoping to get the attention of any barmaids that might be there or what but it certainly became the butt of our jokes for a short while. As we approached the clubhouse the unmistakable sight of a woman in a wedding dress surrounded by guests greeted us (remember the conversation I had with Steve Dawe earlier in the day). As we walked past I couldn't help but notice the slight look of horror on the brides face as she saw four sweaty anglers trudge past her. We got to the bar a bit hot so John and I had a cider each. I think John was thirsty as I don't believe it even touched the sides before he was at the bar again to get a refill. Once refreshed enough we sat outside with all the other lads who had decided to come for a drink. The warm weather had brought the wasps out in force and it was to everyone's great amusement as we watched Deano panicking every time a wasp came within 5 metres of him. He was doing more ducking and diving than Delboy Trotter from Only fools and horses!. Duffy was convinced that it was my 'girly' fruit cider that was attracting them. It did get bad to the point that we felt under siege by these miniature Stuka dive bombers so we all retreated to the bomb shelter that was the bar again. As the drinks flowed the hunger gremlins started to growl so cheesy chips and onion rings were ordered which really hit the spot once they were served. While waiting for food John Davis and Che Osborne were having a conversation about the prices of beer and how much it used to cost back in the day. When Che asked John how much his first ever pint cost I piped up with "2 Groats!" maybe having a gentle poke at Johns advancing years wasn't a good idea, you wouldn't poke a bear with a stick now would you?. However, Che found this quite funny and raised his glass at a zinger well delivered. Mike and Malc were sitting on the table just behind us and would you believe it but his pulling shirt was working its magic! However....it was his mate Malc who was getting all the attention. The barmaid appeared from behind the bar with some croissants, butter and jam all wrapped up neatly. She cooed over him telling him they would only go to waste and to have them for his breakfast. Malc squirmed uncomfortably in his chair as he reluctantly accepted her gift. Now you would think Malc stealing Mikes thunder might create a bit of a feud between friends BUT the barmaid in question was around 70 years old so Mike certainly dodged a bullet there, unless grab a granny is your thing Mike?.

After everyone had been adequately fed and watered



we all began to disperse to our swims. John Davis decided he needed to have a sleep before fishing so I left him to it and returned to my own swim. I baited up and cast out then retired to my bedchair to enjoy the late evening serenity. The eels began to show regularly as the evening moved on with James Faulkner having his first out around 7:45pm at 2lb 8oz. Just before 8:30pm new member Ian Gray lost his first eel at the net and shortly after Steve Dawe got off the mark with a small eel. At 9pm Mike Davies netted his first eel of around 1lb. At 9:30pm Dean Aston landed a small eel and shortly after Mike Davies got on the scoreboard again with his second 1lb eel.

As darkness fell the alarms and rollovers began to come to life in my own swim, small twitchy pulls that kept you on the edge of your seat and your adrenalin flowing. After a few dropped runs I managed to hook into something pretty decent. It was pulling back hard as I applied the pressure, my heart began to race as I began to imagine a large serpent looming out of the darkness and into my net. The reality was however something totally different, as it got closer it began kiting to my right and then out of the gloom I heard a voice....."have I got you?"

My hopes and dreams were shattered as the realisation I hadn't been playing a fish at all but had been playing John Davis as our rigs had tangled up somehow in the lake.

Other people were having luck though with Nick Duffy catching a 2lb 8oz eel around 10pm. Shortly after that newcomer and Ches' friend Steve Silver hooked into a cracking eel and after a good hard scrap a new personal best and fish-in biggest fish of 4lb 3oz was in the net. Congratulations to Steve for a new PB. Mark MacAndrew had a small eel just before midnight. Just afterwards the gentle pitter patter of light rain on the bivvy roof soon gave way to the thunder of constant rain lashing down, and it wouldn't stop for many hours to follow. This didn't stop the eels from coming though as Ade Lees was next to catch with a lovely eel of 3lb 4oz slipping in the net around 2am. This was a welcome catch as he had lost a good fish just beforehand. John Davis had his first eel of the trip just minutes after this, even though it was only around the 1lb mark it was a welcome relief from the plague of Bream that had been snaffling up his worms constantly all night. Between 2 and 7am Whatsapp went quiet as everyone tried to get some sleep and any other captures weren't reported but I am sure there were a few

more caught that night. Dawn broke with the rain still constantly falling and after a sleep deprived and blank night from missed runs I managed to get a few more hours kip until around 10am. Duffy on the other hand who had been feeling ill since Thursday night (maybe it was a dodgy curry Nick?) awoke to find it was as wet inside his bivvy as it was outside. He had left his vents open all night and the rain had seeped through and formed a nice puddle on his groundsheet. I laughed when I saw the pictures of his wet bivvy floor, little did I know karma would bite me firmly on the arse later on.

I decided to head to The lodge for a breakfast sandwich and went to see if John wanted to join me. He was awake but not looking too happy. He then told me his phone was dead and he had forgotten his power bank and he had also forgotten his jogging bottoms so was condemned to spend the entire fish-in in shorts!. Luckily for him I had plenty of power banks and loaned him one to get a full charge back on his phone. We went down to the lodge and ordered our breakfast, a hot brew and a bacon butty always makes everything better and my fatigue from lack of sleep soon disappeared. Steve Dawe on the other hand wasn't so lucky. He arrived at the lodge looking completely distraught. Now remember Steve was the one who chose a swim directly next to the bridge that was the entrance to the place, the one where he said it would be fine unless there was a wedding on at the clubhouse, the very same wedding we had walked past the evening before, can you all see where I'm going with this? Apparently Steve suffered a noisy, sleep deprived, Chav interrupted hell on earth of a night. He knew he was in trouble when a Mitsubishi Evo with wedding ribbons tied to the front came screaming into the place with sound system blaring. What made things worse is that with every car that arrived it had to go over a speed hump and the bridge had a loose steel plate on it which made the ground shake every time a car went over it. Things settled down for him until around 11:30pm when cars constantly streamed out of the venue until around 2am. Unfortunately for Steve his bivvy was facing the bridge so as it was now dark every time a car passed over the bridge its headlights lit him up inside his bivvy like a World War 2 searchlight. He attached the front panel of his bivvy to escape the intruding lights only to discover he only had the transparent panels attached which diffused the light even more making it 10 times a worse!. It didn't help matters when cars would stop right next to his bivvy and shout out

stupid questions to him like “Have you caught any cod?” or “You got any more room in there mate?”. After what seemed like the hundredth car had rattled over the loose steel plate and speed hump he decided to reel in and try to get some sleep but the headlights would not let him so he did what all good anglers do and improvised by sticking a carp sack over his head to block out the light. He said it must of worked because he doesn’t remember much else as he finally fell asleep or he may have slightly suffocated, he’s not sure which. Now, I am not one to judge, and what happens in another man’s bivvy is his business but I think there is a fine line between improvisation and erotic asphyxiation!. Steve had decided that 1 night of hell was enough for him and packed away that morning for the long trip home.

Shortly after Che Osborne arrived and told John he wanted to have a committee meeting in the clubhouse about the winter social. This all sounded very formal but a group of us attended. As we sat there waiting for others to arrive it became apparent that Deano was nowhere to be seen so Duffy went to look for him. A few minutes later the both walked in the door with Deano exclaiming that he got lost! Now I will ashamedly admit I got lost 3 times driving to a venue that is less than 30 miles from my home, but to get lost in the 50 yards it is from bivvy to bar is unforgivable! Once all those who were attending were there a round of drinks was very kindly gotten in by Che and Terry Woolcock (I only had coke as I knew I would be driving shortly) and the meeting took place. If I’m honest it didn’t take all of 5 minutes for the meeting to conclude and the rest of the time was spent chatting amongst ourselves and planning the day. John and I had decided to drive into the village of Pattingham to have a pint in the local pub but no matter how much we tried nobody else would join us. I did however get given a shopping list off Che, Duffy and Steve to go to the local Co-op and get some Beer, Cider and Wine. Luckily the Co-op was right next door to the pub so it was no bother at all. The Pigot arms is a lovely little pub with big comfortable armchairs to sit in and relax, it was also nice and quiet so the much needed pint could be enjoyed even more. We sat for a while just relaxing and chatting before heading back to the venue as a BBQ had been arranged by Rich the bailiff and we didn’t want to miss the food!

We arrived back at the park to see the BBQ had started and the rain had stopped. I dropped John off and

the drinks for all who had ordered them. The BBQ included free beer but as there was no cider I decided to head back to my bivvy to pick up a cooler bag full of bottles of passion fruit and apple flavoured cider. As I was getting the bag from the back of the bivvy I noticed the sound of water spilling, I assumed that I had knocked the bivvy roof and water that my have collected there was now dripping down onto the floor but as I turned round I noticed in horror that it was actually a half drunk can of pop I had on my bivvy table had been knocked over and was spilling out all over my alarm remote and then onto the bivvy floor!. I spent the next 10 minutes cleaning out my remote (which still worked thank god) and mopping the fizzy puddle up off the table and groundsheet. (Karma really is a bitch!). I eventually headed back to the car and as I got there I realised I had left my car key back at the bivvy and had to trudge all the way back to fetch it. I finally got to the BBQ and unloaded the cider onto the table for anyone to help themselves when Duffy, who had the day before said my drinks were girly commented that he had tried them before and they were a tasty drink. Oh how you change your tune Nick!. Young Bobby was hard at work cooking us all some great burgers and hot dogs with mountains of chips. These washed down with beer or cider were an absolute feast.

Rich the bailiffs dad Reg came down to meet us all, he has a fascination with eels himself and couldn’t wait to meet this group of insane anglers who spend hours, days and weeks chasing this elusive species. As I looked around at groups of lads all chatting and joking I truly did feel part of something special. It is moments like this that makes being a member of the NAC a true joy.

Che who was still on the blanklist abandoned the BBQ early, he said he couldn’t bear leaving without catching an eel so he promptly went back to his swim and got baits back in the water. The rest of us carried on chatting and drinking for a while before the BBQ came to a close and we all headed back to our swims to get settled in for another night. As the evening light began to fade I struck into a run to feel something hooked on the other end of my line. It didn’t take me long to get a small 1lb eel in to the net. It may have been a very light eel in weight but the weight of not blanking lifting off my shoulders was more like a tonne rather than a pound. Elsewhere Bernie Pielow was catching his biggest eel of the trip. Duffy reported that all he could hear very loudly was



“NOW THAT’S A BIG EEL” coming from Bernies direction and to be fair to Bernie it was a really nice eel of 3lb 8oz. The Saturday night seemed to be a night of threes as Steve Ricketts had 2 good eels out over the 3lb mark, these being a 3lb 7oz and 3lb 8oz and Roy Piggott had nice eel at 3lb 10z. Elsewhere in the night Malc Hough saved himself with what he described as the smallest eel of the weekend weighing 12oz but I think he was happy just not to end up on the blanklist. Mark MacAndrew had a Saturday night to remember, or maybe it’s one he would rather forget as firstly he lost his baitboat out on the water during the night which had to be rescued in the morning and secondly having hooked into a 2lb eel it didn’t play ball coming to the net and wiped out another rod. While sorting out the 2lber he had a run on another rod but he had to leave it as the 2lber was in such a mess. Then he had another run which ended up tangling that rig so badly he had to set back up as well as sorting his other 2 rods out. I bet a few expletives came from his mouth as all that was going on. Terry Woolcock got off the mark with the capture of an eel around the 1lb 8oz mark around 3am. The rest of the night was quiet over Whatsapp with nothing else being reported. I am sure eels were caught but the lads were either too tired to report it or they were not noteworthy captures. As night turned to day and the fish-in came to a close. Che Osborne who had abandoned us at the BBQ for extra fishing time still blanked, as did rogue angler Malc Law who had fished the bridge pool alone. Jim Smith had many fish but none of them were eels so that also counts as a blank and Ian Gray who was oh so close to landing an eel on the first day didn’t manage to get on the scoreboard. People started to pack their gear away and say their goodbyes before heading off home to all different parts of the country. Me, John and Roy all packed away around the same time and trudged back to our cars with damp gear. We bumped into Mike and Malc who said they had had a great time and will definitely be attending more fish-ins which is good news. It’s nice to see first timers enjoy themselves. That is one of the NAC’s defining qualities, it is not a club of cliques or factions, everyone is made to feel welcome from day one. Any members who are yet to enjoy the spectacle that is an NAC fish-in I cannot recommend it enough, get your name down on the list next time the fish-ins are advertised. You won’t regret it I promise!. Patshull park has really left a mark on a lot of the NAC members who fished there, Duffy commented that it may even be the best fish in he has ever been on

and coming from a man who has been on many many fish-ins over the years that really says something. I will most certainly be returning to Patshull park in the future, partly because it is a wonderful place to fish, and partly because I left my cool bag at the fishing lodge!

Rich the bailiff has since been in touch with Nick Duffy offering all members of the NAC the opportunity to fish at Patshull park. All you will need to do is pre book your visit and offer evidence of NAC membership. Prices are £20 for 24 hours. You can contact Nick on 07903 615889 for more information.

#### Catch reports

Over the weekend 66 eels were caught in total, the biggest being 4lb 3oz and the smallest 12oz.

Steve Silver had 1 eel of 4lb 3oz. A personal best  
Steve Ricketts had 11 eels to 3lb 8oz.  
Bernard Pielow had 4 eels to 3lb 8oz.  
Ade Lees had 1 eel of 3lb 4oz.  
Alan Unthank had 11 eels to 3lb 10z.  
Roy Piggott had 8 eels to 3lb 10z.  
Stewart Alexander 4 eels to 2lb 14oz.  
Mark MacAndrew had 6 eels to 2lb 11oz.  
Nick Duffy had 1 eel of 2lb 8oz.  
James Faulkner had 1 eel of 2lb 8oz.  
Steve Dawe had 2 eels to 2lb 4oz.  
Wayne Staddon had 1 eel of 2lb 4oz.  
Tony Kellner had 4 eels to 1lb 15oz.  
John Davis had 4 eels to 1lb 12oz  
Terry Woolcock had 1 eel around 1lb 8oz.  
Dean Aston had 2 eels not weighed.  
Mike Davies had 2 eels to 1lb.  
Rich Swan had 1 eel of 1lb.  
Malc Hough had 1 eel of 12 oz.

#### The Blanklist

Ian Gray.  
Malc Law.  
Jim Smith.  
Che Osborne.



Anguilla



Ade Lees



Nick Duffy





