



The National Anguilla Club

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EDITORIAL.

Dear Members,

For quite some time now, it seems, I and others have had to badger you into doing your stuff as far as producing suitable articles for the Bulletin is concerned.

For an equally long time, I have ~~hoped and prayed that one day - I would be able to say~~ thankyou for your efforts. Now, at last, I can and do. I thank every one of you who have played your part and produced an article for the Bulletin. The articles are coming along quite steadily at the present time, and what fine articles they are, too. They should provide you with adequate reading and something to get your teeth into. If you do not agree with what has been written, then DO write something in reply. Don't just write saying that you feel it is so much codswallop - put something down in writing as to how you arrive at that conclusion. That will be constructive. Useful discussion is a thing we have been a trifle short of at times in the past. We have weathered a few storms and have come through, but now we have things really rolling again we have the opportunity to make this Club, through the medium of your Bulletin, even stronger than ever before. Do try.

The public Enquiry held at Boston, Lincs, in which anglers at large who cared for their way of angling did battle with the giants from the Anglian Water Authority, was a very interesting affair. We will endeavour to produce a special report on the enquiry for you, but suffice for the time being to say that I feel we came out of it very well. Justice, I have found, is a peculiar thing the outcome of which I would not dare to speculate. So I will not wave any flags as yet, but say that IF justice IS done, then we must surely have won several of the points about which we disagreed with the A.W.A.

I must tell you that the Anguilla Club was strongly and ably represented by a Barrister at law provided for us by the N.A.S.G., and the thanks of each one of our members must be due to them. The N.A.S.G. were also represented by Alan Beat who spoke very strongly in support of us regarding close season eel fishing, as well as on other topics being pursued by the National Association. Our own Chairman, Brian Crawford, presented an excellent case and stood up very well under cross examination by the enemy.

One could not let this subject go by without praising the efforts of Brian Crawford and Mrs Crawford for their efforts in entertaining, feeding and housing myself, Alan Beat and the lady Barrister. They were put to considerable inconvenience what with the prolonged discussion of tactics, the clicking of typewriters and the duplicating of written material until well into the early hours of morning. Thankyou, both.

Well, the new season is at hand, and I trust that due preparation has been made for I expect that you are all straining at the leashe. Far be it for me to lecture you, but you should all be aware that Water Authority Rod licences arerequired. I do not like the present laws, and will oppose them whenever the opportunity arrises. Yet because a law is a bad one, or even though it is bad, there is little excuse for breaking it I'm afraid. So keep your noses clean and do not bring yourself - or the Club - into disrepute. I do wish each one of you the very best of sport and may good fortune attend your efforts. This Jubilee year would be a fitting time to record an eel of six pounds or over on our trophy.

We do now have a brand new electronic scanner, and I dare say that it will be put to good use in the coming months or even years, by your very able secretary Terry and his assistant.

The first of many feature articles we hope to send to the new angling monthly 'Coarse Angler' has been sent to the publishers and the author, Dave Holman, will receive payment for same direct from them. The Editors have shown considerable interest in the Anguilla Club and wish to receive regular news of the Club. They will allow us editorial space without charge, and will pay for any suitable feature article. Remember, however, that any material must first be submitted to us. In that respect I have to tell you that your Chairman has asked if I am willing to act as P.R.O. as John Watson has expressed the wish to drop that post. I have confirmed that I am willing, and therefore all articles for the Press - apart from indignant letters of protest that is - should come to me.

A.J.Sutton.

A COMPARISON BETWEEN SECTION, DEAD AND LIVEBAITS.

By; Terry Jefferson.

Livebaiting for eels is a subject which has come in for a fair amount of discussion in the last year or two. I think that possibly the main reason for this has been the reported captures of eels of a good average size on livebaits intended for pike. Every season, good eels turn up to pike anglers, accidentally on livebaits..... or are they accidents? I think not! It happens too often for it to be accidental.

However, is it a method the eel angler could use to improve his results?

I decided to give the method a try last season to see for myself how livebait would compare against dead and more especially, section baits.

Although one season's results are not enough to reach any firm conclusions, I will try to give a practical appraisal of the method of livebaiting compared with the other more established methods.

With section baits, the average size of section used by most anglers seems to be between one and two inches, be they head, tail or middle sections. The hook is normally well hidden with just the bend and point exposed.

One of the main ideas behind section baits is to hit the eels soon after picking up the bait, if not immediately, whether the reason be to make sure the eel cannot reach snags or weed before swallowing the bait, or to simply improve the chances of lip hooking the eel instead of the more common trace disappearing down the throat trick.

With the size of the section baits, you do stand a far better chance of lip hooking the eels. There will obviously be a fair proportion of misses as there are with any method but if the eel is of a reasonable size then the chances of hooking such a fish with a quick strike are greatly improved because the eel is perfectly capable of engulfing the bait as soon as it picks it up.

Obviously there are areas where section baits could be taken by much smaller eels, instance the tadpole eels of the Norfolk Broads and Lincs where five or six inches dead-baits seem to present few problems to all but the eels under about 1½lbs., but the chance of lip hooking the eels is still greatly improved.

When using whole deadbaits, the main problem which faces the eel angler is one which has always been with us, and I don't think we will find a sure fire solution, and that is when to strike in order to stand a chance of hooking the eel somewhere near the front of the mouth where the hooks can be easily removed.

Obviously, noone wants to risk loosing what could be a big eel, as there is no way of knowing how big an eel is when it picks up the bait, and as a result of that, I think we all tend to delay the strike a little bit longer in order to make sure of hooking the eel and invariably it turns out to be deep hooked.

It's fairly normal practice when fishing with whole deadbaits to wait until the traditional second run has started before hitting the fish.

The eel normally picks up the bait across the flanks, certainly in my experience, as has been shown by the marks on dropped baits, or baits that have just been taken and the strike failed to make contact. The eel then moves off with the bait, maybe inches, or sometimes many yards,(like the Bala eels,), eventually stopping to turn the bait before swallowing it and then moving off again.

I havn't had the courage to try it yet,(has anyone else?), But it would seem that the best chance of lip hooking the eels would be to hit them shortly after the first run has stopped, say 5-8 secs. Obviously, there is still a chance of missing the eel, or it might have just dropped the bait, in which case your not likely to catch it anyway, but it just might be a way of getting some sort of consistency into lip hooking the eels, instead of the all too regular deep hooking.

The only drawback I can forsee is that with a stationary eel it is necessary to wind right down to the fish before hitting it, with the risk that the eel will feel the build up of tension in the line and eject the bait before the strike can be made, whereas with a running eel, tightening up to the fish is so much easier as the eel does half the work for you, plus the fact that the eel may have already swallowed the bait making ejection almost impossible.

When fishing with livebaits, similar problems arise as when fishing deadbaits, for example, when to strike.

Plus one other which tends to put me off the method, and that is the fact that the..

(cont'd)

.....hook is almost entirely outside the bait, together with the trace, whether the bait be hooked through the lips or the tail.

With a lip-hooked bait, the obvious problem is that when the eel turns the bait to swallow, it gets a mouthful of metal before it tastes anything it expects to. To my mind, not a very desirable situation. I have tried this using smallish hooks down to size four and six which might help to alleviate the problem mentioned above, but then the problem arises as to whether a hook of that size would find a decent hook-hold, particularly as when the strike is made, the hook may remain pointing in the wrong direction, that is to say down the throat, not being able to swivel round between the bait and the side of the eels throat.

Perhaps the best, easiest and most effective way of fishing livebaits would be to tail hook the bait. That way the hook is almost certain to be pointing in the right direction when the strike is made, plus the fact that if the eel has already started to swallow the bait, the chances are that the hook will still be somewhere near the front of the eels mouth.

In conclusion, I would say that all of the aforementioned methods have their good and bad points which I have by no means covered fully, and I don't think it is possible to say that any one method is better than the others.

It's all too easy to fall into the groove of finding some success with a particular method, and then to use it to the almost total exclusion of all others.

Different waters and varying conditions call for a continually changing and varied approach, and it is up to us all to see that every possible method is given a chance.

We should all endeavour to prove that eel fishing is not the stereotyped pastime it is often reckoned to be, and can so easily become.....do you not agree?

HOW WRONG CAN YOU BE!

By; Terry Jefferson.

Many of you will have heard of the Liesure Sport waters at Broxbourne in Herts. They were to be the venue for the Club trip last Summer, but we had to change venue at the last minute.

Anyway, Chris Davy, Ken Goward and I first fished Broxbourne about 4 years ago. Our main quarry at that time were Tench in the summer and Pike in the winter.

We had modest success with both species, but nothing to set the Angling world alight. We often discussed the eel potential of the waters, and we agreed that they undoubtedly had everything going for them; situated right next to the River Lea, but virtually Prison waters. Very rich in weed growth with an abundant supply of natural food. Established gravel workings, they just had to hold some massive eels just waiting to be caught.

NO NIGHT FISHING!

We didn't want to risk poaching the waters at night. It might jeopardise our chances of night fishing in the future, and the River Lea was patrolled at night by groups of Baillifs just looking for trouble.

All we could do was fish on in the hope that one day we might be able to night fish the place legally.

Then.....lo and behold, Liesure Sport introduced night fishing at Broxbourne last year for the first time.

This is it we thought, we're made.

We teamed up with Arthur Sutton and felt sure that each season would be good for a couple of sixes, fives coming out every month, and so many three's and four's that you couldn't go anywhere without walking on them.

HOW WRONG CAN YOU BE!

In all the time we spent there, which was considerable, we failed to get one positive eel run.....not even a bootlace on worm. We know the eels are in there, big sods as well, but where are they?

Arthur has had experience of the Lea valley waters before, and they have normally proved to be late season producers, but surely we should have had some indication of the presence of eels. All we got was a couple of small pike.

There is one idea I thought about a bit but never actually tried last year.

We know of a couple of good eels taken on worm in daylight by Tench anglers, so why not give it a try?.....Has anybody else?

WIRE TRACES- THE PRO'S AND CON'S.

By; Dave Holman.

I read with interest, Kelvin Hardman's recent article on wire traces and was immediately saddened that still the same old arguments are raised by the users of this item of tackle for eel fishing.

Kelvin suggested in his piece that we should all use traces, come what may and even said that he was surprised that many eel anglers don't like them.

I don't like them Kelvin, the reason is extremely simple. I reckon at a conservative estimate that they will cut your chances of a good run by at least 50%, no matter how long or short they are. Having said that, I do believe that traces have a part to play, albeit a small one in my part of the country.

One of our main problems as an eel group searching for more and larger eels, is that we remain convinced that heavy tackle is required to land the big fish we seek. We are horrified at the prospect of our giant prey breaking free when hooked and consequently, our tackle strength is far in excess of anything that is required.

I was delighted that Kevin Richmond wrote of the merits of lighter tackle in a recent Bulletin and that since adopting this approach, he has enjoyed much better fishing. Good luck to you Kev, I sincerely hope that your sport continues to improve.

Whats all this to do with traces?, you may ask. Every time that someone advocates a return to our traditional set up of 3lb test curve rods, 15lb line, wire traces etc., it sows the seed of doubt in any members mind who may be thinking of changing or modifying their gear or tactics. Instead, they play safe and continue with tackle more suited to landing dock-yard conger.

Just take a quick look at the six figure rod hours for the last decade and then say without blinking, "Yes, we are right to continue as we are."

My own sport took a nose dive when I first joined the Club and picked up the habit of using wire traces, now I know better!

Firstly, imagine if you will, a set up for fishing worms, it doesn't matter how you attach the hook, there is either a huge knot or a doubled length of 25lb nylon coated trace wire just where you least want it-right at the bait.

No wonder so many eels drop the bait-wire traces on worm tackle is just not acceptable to me.

With deadbaits, the join with the hook is at least hidden in the bait fish. However, many eels just will not accept this springy rigid stuff flapping about at the back end of the bait. Whatever the reason for this, more runs peter out than is ever acceptable.

Why do we use wire traces then,-to hinder our chances?

Eels will bite through nylon, make no mistake about that, but only if they have sufficient teeth to do so, and here lies the key to my argument.

As some eels are long, some fat, have pointed heads or different colourings, so some eels are equipped with considerable dental gear while others have teeth of more modest proportions. The reason is obvious enough - it depends simply on the eels diet.

Some anglers will tell you that eels eat a mainly fish diet but this is completely untrue. Eels are highly adaptable and where other species struggle to attain a few inches, eels grow to a good size even in such places as ponds and canals. No other fish can claim to be so highly efficient at making the best possible use of its environment than our friend the Anguilla.

Certainly they eat small fish when little or nothing else is available, even turn cannibal in some instances, but given the chance, our quarry will seek a life of picking and choosing the finer delicacies in his habitat rather than see off the carrion that some misguided writers would have us believe.

On many waters, eels just don't need these nylon chomping teeth and consequently they don't develop as the eels grow, as they would on other eels living where the main food source is fish.

So very often this question of using a trace doesn't even arise. Don't take my word for it, next time you catch a few eels from different venues, check their teeth yourself.

Another vital point often overlooked when considering wire traces, is the angler himself. If you insist, as some people do, in murdering your eels to the bank immediately you hook them, then you will need a trace. Play your eels carefully and with respect as you would any other species and don't be in a hurry to get the eels out. This way I have dealt with many good eels with lines down to 4lb.B.S. Each water, or even swim, you fish should dictate your tackle and method needs. Don't be stereotyped. Keep your options open.

So Kelvin, I havn't had the pleasure of meeting you, but please think before you clip on your next wire trace.....is it really necessary?

TRACES.

By; Henry Hansen.

In the last Bulletin (Vol 14 No5) there was an excellent little piece by Kelvin Hardman on whether Eels knew about traces. I would like to chip in with a few words, as I hope many others will have done (I hope @ dont miss the follow up issue). Its articles such as Kelvins that are the very guts of Eel fishing and thinking. One that we all should have very definite views about.

I freely admit that my first four or five years Eel fishing was done without wire traces. I used to use three foot of mono of about 20lb bs. Of course each trace length was rejected as soon as a fish had been caught on it. Neither I nor John Szechlowicz (A past club member) actually lost any fish whilst using this arrangement, but a few friends did (They were more brutal then us!). A very large number of Eels (Up to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb) were taken in this way, but warning signs were soon apparent. At the time, most of the places we fished were open clay pits that held no real snags for Eels to get hold of. But it was soon very noticeable that even small fish could cause considerable damage to the mono traces.

I started to switch over by using both mono and wire traces, so that a direct comparison could be made. On the waters we fished at that time the use of a wire trace had no noticeable detrimental effects, so I switched to them completely. As I said, in the waters we fished at that time the fish were so thick on the ground that I firmly believe that they could have been caught on any terminal arrangement. But actually, I feel certain that in both hard fished waters and those of the natural type (ie Whitemere), the use of a wire trace could be detrimental. By this I mean that do you sacrifice sport by using a trace, knowing that when and if you hook your fish, you should land it? Or else do you forget the trace, get more runs and hope that your line is up to it? Obviously it is up to the individual to choose his terminal gear, such that he has the best chance of catching the calibre of fish he is after. But other factors come into the arguement of whether to use a trace or not, more of this later.

Now to the actual trace make up. I personally use the plastic covered multi strand wire, Black Seal to be precise. I will continue to use this until my supply runs out (Very soon) I probably will then use some of this MarlinSteel stuff. Bob Croxhall showed me some at Bra last year and it certainly impressed me. Now Kelvin in his article, said that he used about 20 inches of wire so that it was supple. Now this is sound reasoning but equally so is the use of a stiff trace. I quote from a past article from A.J.Sutton (Vol 11, No1, page 7) "Recollections of Jack Bellanys come to mind. Jack used piano wire, really stout stuff, the wire protruded some fourteen inches from the anal vent of the dead bait, the idea being that when an Eel took the bait crosswise, the line connected to the wire was held away from the Eel. I never knew Jack to experience an abortive run! Make you think doesnt it! Incidentally whats the average breaking strain of piano wire?

If the trace is supple, there is a very real chance that as the Eel swims away with the bait crosswise, the trace will bend (Towards the Eel). There is then the likelihood of the swivel hitting the side of the Eels body. This could scare it enough to drop the bait, or equally, it could cause it to give you a faster run. Whereas if the trace is rigid and sticks out at right angles to the Eels direction of travel, the swivel cannot possibly come into contact with the Eels side. Obviously though, there is a greater probability of the trace and line fouling some underwater obstruction if the trace is rigid. At least a supple trace would be slipsreamed (To a certain extent) by the Eel with the probability of hitting less obstructions.

In my opinion, the trace should be a compromise between the two types. This can be dictated to a large extent by the actual length of trace wire used. At present, I use about fifteen inches. I greatly look forward to the results of the new reporting scheme which should give us valuable information regarding the merits of using traces, their lengths and compositions.

Incidentally, although I have only mentioned two types of trace material (Mono and Wire) I realise there are a great many others. I did start using braided terylene as the hook length, especially when worm fishing. This I thought would cut through thick weed far better than mono. Of course a wire trace would do this, but braided terylene is both lighter and limper. I stopped using this when Steve Hope had several bite offs. I would greatly appreciate other people experiences on other trace materials.

As I said previously, there are other factors that need to be considered before a choice can be made if whether or not to use a trace. Namely the kind of Eel that you expect to catch. I dont mean the size, but the actual physical make up of the fish in the waters you fish. Dave Holman has repeatedly stressed that in the waters he fishes (Cheshire Meres, Shropshire union canal) a trace is simply not necessary. This is because the Eels have hardly any pronounced teeth and also have small heads (widthwise). I feel sure also (Plus from some experience on these waters) that with feeding on worms, leeches and weeds the Eels are far more choosy over what they eat and the appearance of what they might eat. Being more choosy, due to the abundance of natural food, they have a far better chance to feel the trace. I am sure a short chat with Dave will confirm this. But try not using a trace at Bala or a North Lincolnshire pit and see what happens! Up here we have the infamous "Tadpole type Eels" A breed that Alan Hawkins did not mention when he gave his talk at Nottingham last year. These type of Eels are usually about 2 to 3lb in length and head size, but the rest of their body is that of a ten ounce bootlace. They have mouths and teeth like Pike! They can chew through mono in naught seconds flat. This is the reasons why we use very large baits. Actually they are really strange fish, because once they reach three pounds, the rest of their body catches up with the head (Proportion wise). I am not lying when I say I have seen Steve Hope land pound Eels on ten inch Roach manytimes. Greedy isnt the word!

It is the altter point, one of physical characteristics that is overlooked by a lot of people. In the press recently there was an article by Phil Smith and also in the past by Bob Jones. Whilst I am not trying to knock them (How can I with their records), they really piss me off when they make such sweeping statements as, "Why use a trace"? I've landed some nice Eels to 8 pound and not needed them! Bob Jones, and "The use of a wire trace is a matter of personal choice" Phil Smith. Both these anglers, from photographic evidence, fish waters where the Eels are small headed and hence have no pronounced sets of teeth. Phil Smith practically admits this when he recommends the use of a bleak on a size Ten hook. As for Bob Jones, he fished a water with a fair head of Eels and practically no other fish (Except a few Trout). Hence he could use Worm for bait, this being why he didnt ever use a trace. He never mentioned this slight detail. Its alright advocating using certain methods and tackle, but you must fully elaborate on the condition under which it is to be used and the type and size of Eels to be expected.

Well I've said my fourpennyworth, for the time being! Kelvin lets hope you have started something, something which is picked up by others. After all, if we are constantly think. ing about such fundamental problems as this, and equally, coming up with the tight answers, then we can be sure that this clubs members remain progressive and not Stereo Typed.

A

A FEW IDEAS, AND MY SEASON.

By: TONY HOLLERBACH.

Eel fishing, a much neglected theme in the press or in books. Apart from a few more enlightened writers, who for the most part regard Eels as only good for the pot. So, how do we improve ourselves? In the following lines I have put a few of my thoughts to paper, maybe you will agree or disagree, but most of all I hope it makes you think.

I think that we as anglers have far to many pre concieved ideas which we blindly accept before even starting to fish, for example, on a new water, do you look around it? I mean look positively around it. Or how many times last season did you use an entirely different bait apart from the universal worm and deadbait. (My first Eel was caught on chicken guts last season) To see it another way Eels have been caught on some very uncommon baits in many different conditions, which we as specialists would hardly class as the norm, what of it? Well it does make you think, doesnt it?

(1) Do you think that if we used a different bait on at least one rod all season we would have improved catches, ie, did you know that worms and deadbait form only a small part of the Eels diet in its natural surroundings? And that its main food (Nearly 50%) is crustaceans etc (Sinha and Jones, The European Eel 1976.) Well so what does that tell us? I think quite a lot! I mean so many possible baits are largely ignored for the sake of easily obtained and handled worm and deadbaits. I think also that a lot more varied bait usage would at worst help our knowledge a lot, and for the best, well who knows!

(2) How often do you give a water, be it lake, river or pond a really good looking over? Finding out such things as depth, bottom conditions etc, fish distribution. For example where the smaller shoal fish spend most of their time. Because I think it follows that where fish congregate that is where their natural food is, and this in turn will mean food for the Eels themselves. Another point which I think is quite important is to try and locate Mussel beds, because I am more or less sure that quite a few of a waters Eel population feed largely in and around these "beds" (A garden rake head tied to a long line and literally heaved in at random or where there is evidence of empty shells will soon locate beds that are within reach.) Also, what about using Mussel as bait when fishing near beds. This is what I intend to do this season, in my local river anyway, and possibly on the Grand Union Canal this spring. Talking of the G.U. A.J.S., Dave Smith and myself are going to try out a lot of new ideas. One of which Arthur was talking to me about last Spring in one of our think sessions on the G.U.C. This is a midwater or surface bait for using on Moonlit nights. We seem to accept I think, that moonlight is a bad influence regarding Eel catch rates. Arthurs idea is based on what an old Norfolk (I think? Correct me if I am wrong Arthur please) countryman told him, what he told him was "I only go Eeling on moonlit nights so as to catch the big ones! And I always fish on the surface to do it! Lets race it, it does seem a funny idea, BUT in capital letters an experiment doing this could completely change our views on moonlit Eeling, Or, it could prove that only Norfolk Eels prefer 'Moonlit serranadeing'. But anyway without trying how will we know.

Next I come to another favourite (At one time) N.A.C. question, "what line strength to use". Well when I first started fishing for Eels I fished light, result, lost Eels. So I stepped up my line to around 10 to 15lb b.s. This state of affairs is still on, however as a result of a talk to Dave Smith (Yes he can talk as well as drink) I am revising my tackle set up for this year, ie, on one rod I am having 7 yes 7lb b.s and the other stays at the usual 10 to 15lb. I am really starting to believe it may be better to, as Dave puts it "Fish for bites". I admit a hell of alot more a gling skill will be needed should you get a fighting 4lb Eel on the end of 7lb line, but with a slipping clutch, a lot of swearing, it may well work. Why dont you try it as well! Oh and no trace either!

I was going to write an article on groundbaiting and on Eels teeth in differing conditions, however I had a negative response from my plea for help in this early last year (which is usual). However my experiences of groundbaiting can be read in my article "My Season 1976" which follows this one (To make it seem longer!). So hear goes, instead of last season when I wrote only of the good things this time you will have to suffer everything thats happened this past season, so there. I am writing this as you would read a diary, which really is what it is, so each session will occupy a few lines to try and give you all a general picture of My Season 76. I feel that if we all give detailed descriptions of our seasons and the good and bad, our likes and dislikes etc, we can learn one heck of a lot, So anyway herea goes.

Session 1. 24th Feb, River Wene "Avon works" Rothampton, opposite power station. I had firstly decided to fish the G.U. but left it a bit late so settled for the above venue, the fisrt time by the way. The air temperature was 33f (Dam cold) the sky was overcast and it was very windy. I was fishing with two rods both baited with worm. The No1 rod was in 6ft of water and rod 2 in 7ft. At 22.15. the bait on rod two moved off against the current, I struck and landed a 2lb 13oz Roach. At 2300 rod 1 gave indication of a bite, result, a Perch of 7oz. Total rod hours 10, line strength 14lb b.b.

Session 2. 26th Feb, Caslte Ashby lakes, Northants. Weather clear with slight frost, air temp 33f, 3 rods used (I wish I'd never gone on this

one because I had a puncture.) Two rods had Sprat dead bait, and one with lobworm, which yielded a bream of 1½lb at 0100. Catfood (Kit e kat) used as groundbait. Session started at 2200 and finished at 0200, total rod hours 13.

Session 3. 28th Feb, G.U.C. Blisworth, near tunnel.

Weather clear with heavy ground frost, air temp 31f. 3 rods used, two with sprat one with worm. I had one run on deadbait which went for twenty yards or so towards, and into the tunnel mouth, then nothing, on inspecting bait one side was ripped open, the other side was very serrated. Can anyone give me some idea as to what it was? Rod hours 16½.

Session 4. 29th Feb, G.U.C. Blisworth village.

3 rods all worm, no results, air temp 33f. Total rod hours for Feb, 64 and no Eels. One Roach, one Perch, one Bream.

Session 1. March, River Nene, Doddington, Mr Wellingborough, Mr Gelatine factory.

3 rods all worm, continuous rain, air temp 41f, no runs, 19½ rod hours.

Session 2. March, G.U.C. Bugbrook, Northants.

Weather cloudy, snow showers. Air temp 35f, 3 rods, worm on one bleak on the other two. No runs at all. 21 rod hours.

Session 3. March, Ditchford lakes, Rushden, Northants.

Continual snow, air temp 35f, two rods both with Roach DB. One run at 2000, result a Pike of 7½lb. Total RH 11.

Session 4. March, Bra lake, Eye, Peterborough. (with B.G.)

3 rods, 2 with Roach DB, one with Bleak DB. No results, air temp 40f, water 41f.

Session 5. March, G.U.C. Northampton.

Slight rain, air temp 42f, water temp 41f. 3 rods, 2 worm one DB, Catfood used as ground bait. A blank.

Session 6. March, Peacock No 2, Peterborough.

Intermittent cloud, windy, 2 rods, Herring head and worm. A Pike of 3lb on the Herring. Total RH for March 109, Eels nil. (Is it worth it!)

Session 1. April, G.U.C. Gayton, Northants.

Rain at first then clear. 2 rods worm on one Chicken liver on other, a blank. Air temp 40f (start) 44f (finish), water 41, 42f.

Session 2. April, Bra lake, Peterborough.

Slight cloud, ½ moon, 2 rods Roach DB, worm. No results.

Session 3. April, G.U.C. Milton Malsor locks.

Cloudy, air temp 52f, water 51f. 3 rods, 2 with chicken liver, one with worm. At 2230, wow, my first Eel of the year a veritable giant of 1:7, and lo and behold after changing location (Because someone tipped my bike into the canal, Bast***!) Another Eel of 15oz both taken on chicken guts (liver). The worms were ignored. Total RH for April 100 for 2 Eels.

Session 1. May, G.U.C. Bugbrook, Northants.

Cloudy, air temp 49 to 52f, water 50f. 3 rods all worm, one Eel at 2315 of 2:6½.

Session 2. May, G.U.C. Milton Malsor (Near the scene of the 3:7 Eel capture.)

Clear weather, air temp 54f, water 53f. 3 rods all worm, nothing at all, but John ~~Microcrusen~~ caught his 5:3 20 yds downstream!

Session 3. May, Bra lake yet again.

Cloudless, half moon, water temp 51f, air temp 50f. 3 rods, 2 Spratt 1 worm. Total blank.

Session 4. May, G.U.C. Bugbrooke.

Quarter cloud, full moon, water temp 55 to 52f, air temp 54 to 49f. 3 rods, 2 DB, 1W.

One run which petered out.

Session 5. May, Castle Ashby lakes, Northants.

Water temp 50f, air temp 50f. 100% cloud. / 3 rods all worm. One Eel of 3:2. Groundbait chopped worm and maggot in bran.

Session 6. May, G.U.C. Gayton.

Cloudy, water 55f, air 48f. 3 rods, 1 W, 2 DB. A blank.

Sessions 7&8. May. Bra lake. (The Spring trip.) A bit of a washout really, wasn't it lads. In the two nights I fished I used 3 rods per night, using Crucian Carp, Bleak, Perch and Roach. The water temp aver 52f, the air 49f. No results. Total RH for May 229, Eels 2, (I'm getting worse.)

Session 1. June, Peacock Pool, Peterborough. (Another mini club trip.)

Cloudy, I fished 3 rods all with Roach sections. I caught one Eel of 1:12, hooked, yes hooked, right in the tail!

Session 2. June, Castle Ashby lakes.

3 rods all with Bleak DB. Stormy night. Managed Eels of 2:8, 2:10 and 3:4, not bad. Again groundbait the same used on previous session (May, Session 5).

Session 3. June. Everything seems to be happening at the moment, we get notice of a new house. So I decide to give the Great Ouse at Bedford a hammering. This first night I fished on a cloudy night, 2 rod DB one W for one Eel of 2:1b on worm.

Session 4. June, This was to be my best night ever, although it started out very dismal, first I had a puncture, repaired that, and then found my darling daughter had "freed my worm supply. I only salvaged twelve or so. I set up 3 rods and a shortage of worms (It was too late to catch any DB.) I cast out at 2100, at 2215, they (Eels) started coming, 3:0, 1:11, 2:10, 3:8, 4:6 and 2:9 at 0100 I had run out of worms just 4 hours after starting, six Eels in 12RH, Cor! Groundbait was Bacon fat, breadcrumbs & catfood.

Session 5. June. Another go at the same swim. (Car park No 1)

Again the same groundbait and tackle, but none of the tagged Eels recaptured, but another of 3:6.

Session 6. June. A move upstream of some 50yds, again all worm, same groundbait. Eels of 2:4, 2:6, 2:15 and 3:4. None of them had been caught before. A session of 5hrs 15 RH.

Session 7. June. Same swim as before, same tackle and groundbait, result, a blank! I think there's a message here somewhere? Total RH for June 136½. Eels 16.

Session 1. July. Another move on the great Ouse, but try as I may, I'm on the decline. 3 rods all worm, no groundbait, no Eels.

Session 2. July. Gt. Ouse again. 3 rods, 2W, 1DB, no Eels?

Session 3. July. Gt. Ouse again. 3 rods all worm, groundbait used and no results.

Session 4. July. Gt. Ouse. 2 rods W, 1 Bleak DB, groundbait used to catch one Eel of 4:½.

Session 5. July. Same place, same tactics, no Eels.

Session 6. July. A change on the Ouse to Kempston. 3 rods all DB, groundbait used, to catch 2 Eels of 1:11, and 2:8. Total RH for July 165, Eels 3.

Session 1. August. Back to swim on Gt. Ouse, 3 rods all Bleak DB, for one big blank, groundbait used.

Session 2. August, and so on right until the end of September to catch 2 Eels.

In conclusion? Looking back and thinking how to better my results, I have decided on my

last season results that (A) A different type of bait appears to be more successful early in the year.

(B) My experience shows that groundbait had a definite pattern on the Gt. Ouse, in that the first time a groundbait is used in a particular spot it is very highly productive, but not on successive sessions. This is certainly something to think about, and if you can help please let me know. I would welcome any advice from anyone to get over this problem. But anyway do let us know about your Season 76, however good or bad (It cannot be any worse than mine).

Diagram for surface or midwater fishing
(Allowing for a run.) Not to scale.

A small weight is placed on line near reel to keep shot tight to float



