

Dear Sir,

As a lifelong angler I would like to express my concerns about the views of the canoe lobby who appear to want complete and unrestricted access to all Welsh inland waters. I have been an angler for 50 years and have been very fortunate to witness the huge improvements on many Welsh rivers following years of misuse by heavy industry and other polluters which rendered

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many rivers totally lifeless. It is only through the work of the now defunct National Rivers Authority, the present Environment Agency and the huge input of anglers that many Welsh rivers are now enjoying a revival with increased fish life and all the other life that clean water produces. This has only been achieved through the tireless work of many anglers who are the eyes and ears of our waterways.

On a personal level I am pollution officer with Merthyr Tydfil Angling Assc., the largest angling club in the South Wales valleys with about 1000 members. I believe that myself and my colleagues have

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contributed significantly for 45 years to the huge improvements that have occurred on the upper River Taff which now supports a large brown trout population with many anglers enjoying this facility. To think that canoeists, who have contributed nothing, now want to move in and oust anglers from the river is extremely concerning.

Anglers also contribute financially to the upkeep of our waters through licence fees. This money is used in many ways, to enhance fisheries through stocking and habitat improvement schemes and to fight pollution. All aquatic life benefits from this. It appears

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that canoeists, despite wanting unrestricted access, do not want to contribute one penny for the privilege of using our rivers.

Most angling is done "by agreement" and strict limitations are imposed on anglers such as closed seasons, method restrictions and access restrictions. These are put in place to protect fish stocks and the aquatic environment in general. We are not allowed to fish when the fish are spawning. This prevents disturbance at this critical time. Salmonids i.e. salmon, sea trout and brown trout by their very nature lay their eggs in shallow water, the very areas most prone to disturbance by canoeists.

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Furthermore, in a long angling career, I have met many anglers and curtesy, and good manners are common place. This cannot, unfortunately, be said of some canoeists. I have met some who show other water users some respect but this does not apply to all. In one particularly unsavoury incident on the river Rhymney at Uanbradach I was informed by four young "thugs" that if I don't move they will "knock me in". This behaviour may be rare but many other anglers have also experienced abusive behaviour at the hands of canoeists.

Most anglers, myself included, are not entirely opposed to canoeing but we

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feel it must be controlled with agreements which suit all water users and canoeists should also contribute financially as other water users do.

Yours faithfully

R. Jones.