

**W.G.Davies**

Mick Bates AM  
Chairman  
Sustainability Committee  
National Assembly for Wales

Ref; Access Inland Waterways in Wales

Cc Ms Jane Davidson AM, Ms Elin Jones AM, Mr Brynle Williams AM, Mr Alun Davies AM, Ms Leanne Wood AM, Angela Burns AM, Ms Lorraine Barrett AM, Ms Lesley Griffiths AM,

Dear Mr Bates,

I have been a weekend sailor for the past 50 years using all types of small craft mainly power boats. My affection with the sea has been tempered with the vagaries of the wind and tidal currents off the Gower coast. The sea off all headlands around Gower is a very dynamic and testing place. You wouldn't think this when viewed from the shore on a fine sunny day, but the currents around headlands create standing waves which a novice in a powered or sail boat could find extremely dangerous. The same situation with a canoe can be life threatening, I know I have rescued many canoeists who have got into difficulties.

My point is this: A river with its rocks and twists and turns can be as dangerous as the open sea to the novice.

If unrestricted access is granted to all and sundry the same scenario would apply as happens at the seaside. Mr and Mrs Joe Public who being pestered by little Johnny will say OK you can use your plastic dinghy/canoe. They then take little Johnny to the river and away he goes only to capsize in the first rapid, which does not have a lifeboat or life guard within 10 miles. This could be a tragedy in waiting and it will happen with unrestricted access.

Another point is: As a boat owner I must be registered with Swansea City Council to use any slipway or launching facility in the control of Swansea city. Also I must pay for use of the facility, and must have insurance for public liability. More often than not you have to be a club member. The club itself insists that you are insured and have all safety equipment on the vessel.

The question of access as a boat owner (power/sail or rowing) is that you will pay wherever and whenever you use your craft, be it on a river, canal or lake.

Please differentiate between the canoe and the afore mentioned boaters, bearing in mind that ALL craft must pay to use the Thames and other waters covered by British Waterways. If there is no fee therefore no revenue WHO funds the upkeep of canals, locks, weirs and river banks. Would it be local government or National government paid for by all tax payers?

My registration No with Swansea is 298, and I am a member of Port Eynon Bay Boat Club, membership number PEB 128.

In my humble opinion unrestricted and unregulated access will be an anathema to Health & safety. Also free access for paddlers/canoes especially rafters operating on commercial lines will not sit well with the other fee paying regulated boaters.

I Remain

Yours Faithfully

G Davies