

Newsletter October 2017

The Annual General Meeting of the Association will take place in the Lounge of the Ex Serviceman's Club Lower High Street Merthyr Tydfil on Wednesday the 8th November at 7PM. Members are invited to attend. .

Please come and support the Committee.

The trout season on the river ended for those who had the time to fish with some excellent catches of fish up to four pounds in weight. It is gratifying to see fish of this quality as these will go on to breed in the next two months. A note we get many reports of from anglers who quite rightly wish to show the best of their catch. However a critical component of any fishery Coarse or Game are those fish that can be sometimes a nuisance, those from the smallest parr to fish of 8,9,10, inches. These are the waters future just like our children and Grand children are to us. Please therefore take the time to send us picture of the small fish as well.

The salmon season has now ended and the tally of salmon taken from our waters with most returned is 39. With 18 off the Kemys 10 off the Mardy and 11 off the Ysybyty. A possible one of these was taken. There is a consultation taking place on new Salmon bylaw restrictions that will come into place in 2018? There is support on bait and hook restrictions but fierce opposition to a mandatory catch and release. We strongly support voluntary catch and release but the Association is opposed to the mandatory route as Natural Resources Wales are not playing the game and looking for a quick hit with no thought of the damage this will do to the revenue of fishing Associations. In England, and after all we are one country, they have gone down the route of bait restrictions, banning certain baits, number of hooks on artificial lures and Banning yes banning net fishing. We are beginning to despair when we see the work that Environment Agency is carrying out for Fisheries in England when all we see in Wales is a succession of measures that will have a detrimental affect on all Angling and Fisheries in Wales.

Please remember that Talybont has closed on the 17th October for fishing until the 20th March 2018. However Cantref is still open and there are still a few Rainbow to be caught until the 30th November, brown trout must be returned.

To keep you all updated , after the AGM in November we will be preparing for the sale of licences in early January. A newsletter will be sent out with application forms and a form requesting our members to indicate how often they fish on our waters and which ones. All the waters will be listed so please fill it in.

Our Chairman and his wife are getting over their current illnesses. The Chairman has been out of action since the end of May, hospital visits, and we wish them both a good recovery. Our Saturday Morning discover fishing days have run every other Saturday through Sept and October and all those room for more, who have attended have done really well. Our only young lady member to attend had her first go on the lake with her father last Saturday and hooked a large fish which sadly ran her line into an island. We are devoting the following pages to some of the catches that we have had pictures of in the last few weeks

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Access To Inland Water.

This is the current up to date response from the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment on the Access Consultation. We implore our members to keep up the pressure on their AM's and indeed if you live outside Wales then write to the AM whose constituency is the nearest to you explain that as a regular visitor to Wales to go fishing you hope that he/she will push for Voluntary Access. The canoeists in their response are demanding nothing less than for the benefit of clarity **all yes all inland water** is included if granted by the WAG.

This could put all our Rivers, Ponds, Reservoirs at risk if they have public access or no.

Access to Waterways: National Assembly for Wales - Oral Answers - National Assembly for Wales

Mark Isherwood: 4. What assessment has the Welsh Government made of the benefits that access to waterways brings to Wales? (OAQ51188)

Lesley Griffiths: In addition to considering activity tourism and recreation participation reports and strategies, the Welsh Government has undertaken significant public engagement. The recent consultation on sustainable management of our natural resources received around 15,000 responses. All show the value and potential of water recreation activities such as angling and boating and why a resolution to current disagreements is necessary.

Mark Isherwood: Thank you. The September 2017 update on the report 'The value to the Welsh economy of angling on inland fisheries in Wales', collated by the Sustainable Access Campaign Cymru, found that under the current arrangement for access to Welsh rivers, around 1,500 Welsh jobs and £45 million in household income is supported by angling on inland fisheries each year. There are 1.7 million days fished on inland fisheries in Wales by licence holders, generating £104 million annually, and that the contribution to the Welsh economy of angling on inland fisheries in Wales must exceed over £125 million annually in Wales. In that context, how do you respond to the concern expressed by Salmon and Trout Conservation Cymru that it would not be in the interest of the ecological integrity of such habitats to move to unfettered access under the proposed extensions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and that environmental protection is paramount when consideration is given to increased access to the natural resources of Wales, and especially the fragile ecosystems in and around rivers and lakes?

Lesley Griffiths: I think your question lends me to say that it's really important that you get the balance right, and that's absolutely why we've consulted on such an important issue. You're quite right, fishing tourism, in both domestic and day-trip visits to Wales, is very important. I think it was about £38 million in 2015. You referred to a report in 2017, but I know in 2015 it was about £38 million per year. I think it also highlights the importance of developing a framework so that we can facilitate responsible access opportunities, going forward.

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David Rees: Cabinet Secretary, I have received many representations from constituents regarding this matter in particular, and I think, as you've pointed out, there is resolution that needs to come together between the two groups. Now, you've just mentioned fishing tourism, but many of our citizens actually enjoy fishing as a pastime, and therefore enjoy the activities they undertake, not as tourist activities, but as part of their spare time. Do you agree with me that, actually, a way of resolving these by coming together and getting an agreement that is voluntary between the organisations is the best solution, not having something imposed upon them?

Lesley Griffiths: Yes, I do, but I think—. You know, when I was a backbencher, this was a very hot topic, and I think the consultation showed it can be incredibly divisive and incredibly polarised, so it is about getting that resolution. We want to see that because it is vital for our tourism. So, I'm hoping that, following the analysis of the consultations and when we come forward with resolutions, we're able to engage with all the stakeholders to make sure we have the absolute best way forward.

David J. Rowlands: Cabinet Secretary, following on from the comments earlier, I'm sure you're aware of the potential for conflict that free access to Wales's waterways may bring between those who use them in differing ways, in particular anglers and canoeists. I would say that David Rees is quite right in that if we can get some consultation between these two groups, that's the best way forward. Unfortunately, the feedback to me from the angling societies is that there doesn't seem to be that desire for talking coming from the canoeists.

I've been contacted by a number of angling societies, and have had meetings with Isca and Hay-on-Wye, one situated on the river Usk and the other on the river Wye. Both showed considerable concern with regard to canoe activity on the rivers, which, at this moment, is not regulated. One important factor pointed out is that canoes do not carry any form of identification, so any canoeist committing offences or simple nuisance cannot be identified. Does the Cabinet Secretary intend to bring in regulations to make registration and, hence, identification a mandatory requirement? Are there any plans to get canoeists to pay a fee for access to our waterways, as, of course, anglers have to, by way of fishing licences and/or society fees?

Lesley Griffiths: I mentioned in my answer to David Rees that it's an incredibly divisive issue, and it's a divisive issue that's been around for a long time. However, I think this is our opportunity now to get it right. I would certainly want to bring all the groups together. I don't want to take sides with any group, but if we can facilitate groups coming together, then I'd be very happy to do that. In relation to your specific policy questions around identification and fees, again, that is something that we would have to look at, coming out of the consultation.



A lovely Rainbow from Cantref.

Picture : Nicholas Wilding



A lovely natural Cantref Brown Trout. Picture Nicholas Wilding



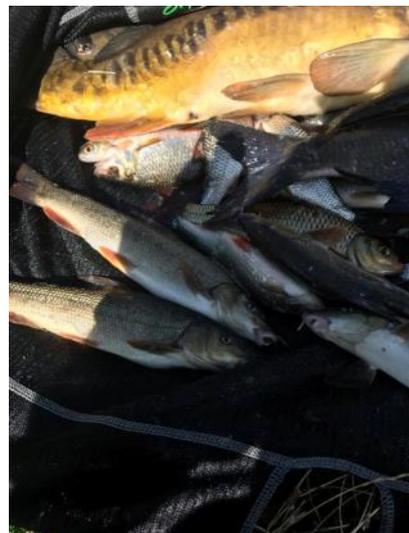
Two proud young members

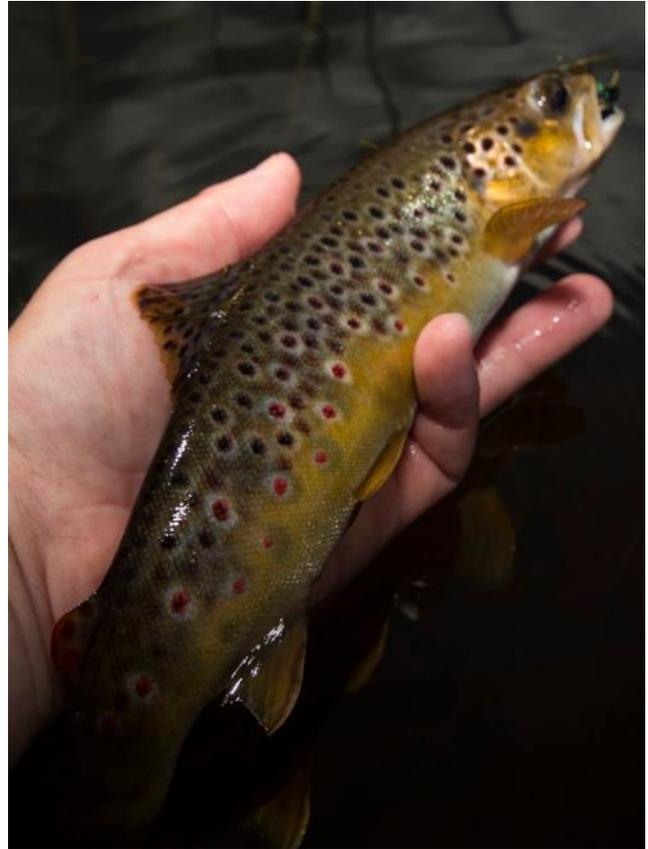


Two fish
above from
Top Pond



A good bag of
fish from Top
Pond caught on
feeder and
Waggler by Mark
Sweeny.
Note the Barbel
in the
foreground





Ceri Thomas from Fishtec has written an article about fishing Cantref for Total Flyfisherman. It is out now in October and in it he gives some tips and the best way to approach the fishing on the lake.

Cantref is a lake that years ago produced excellent wild Brown Trout Fishing. Since the Association took it on two years ago we are having more reports of Brown Trout being caught and the size seems to be on the increase.

We are currently working on the Associations Response to the new consultation on restricting methods and hooks for Salmon fishing as well as the proposal to make it compulsory catch and release for all Salmon fishing across Wales. We feel this is draconian as they wish to bring it in for ten years so we are opposing it as we see it as Natural Resources Wales taking the simplest way for them with no real basis for this. This point has come out strongly in two meetings the Association has attended this week. We ask our members to respond to the consultation.

This will be your last newsletter for 2017. Yes we mean your as it is produced for the benefit of the members to inform them of what is happening in the Association. We do get a little peeved to see things on Facebook when a simple e:mail to tonyreesuk@googlemail.com, or sec.mtaa@googlemail.com or to the Web Page with your pictures and tell us what method ,bait, be it Fly Worm Spinner or any mixture of baits you use while coarse fishing to help us make up an article.