

SPRING NEWS UPDATE

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Easter, as we await rivers coming up to good levels!

WILD TROUT TRUST AUCTION

For the first time ever the Auction passed the £100 k mark. There may be a few “bargains” still to be picked up if you check on the WTT website.

The Trust is extremely grateful to all those who gave their support with the generous bids made.



COURT OF APPEAL.

I could say **“Anglers 2 – Secretaries of State 0!”** It would be a fair precis of events! In summary the Pickering Fishery Association and Fish Legal won a judicial review against the then Government and the Environment Agency. This was based upon “Defective river improvement plans”. Obviously, there is a lot to take into account. Not satisfied with the outcome, the Government proceeded to take the matter to the UK Court of Appeal. On the 2nd of April 2025 the Court of Appeal unanimously dismissed the Secretary of State’s case. The Appeal Court found that “an unlawful approach in failing in failing to consider what specific action was required to meet legally binding environmental objectives set for each water body every six years”. This effectively applies to 4929 waterbodies in England. As this is the Court of Appeal it also will apply to Wales.

To get the full details search **“Court of Appeal – Secretary of State -v- Pickering Fishery Association”**.

Well done boys and girls of the Pickering Fishery Association



IN THOSE IMMORTAL WORDS “AND THERE’S MORE!”

A firm of lawyers have been instructed to take action on behalf of local residents, in respect of sewage pollution which has spilled into the rivers Wye and Lugg, in England. (For those outside Wales, the geography here means what goes into the English Wye is also in the Welsh Wye!)

The case relies on data, released by the Environment Agency, which showed at least 12,500 hours of sewage, at 45 locations, in was spilled from overflow incidents, into these rivers, by Welsh Water, in 2024! There is much more details but, suffice it to say at this time, the case rests on a claim that “this has resulted in pollution contributing to the deterioration of the river”.

In the interests of fairness to England and Wales, in February 2025 Welsh Water were added to the action. Also in the claim are Avara Foods, Cargill Plc., and Freemans of Newent, as the primary defendants, alleging that the industrial scale chicken production is responsible for the bulk of the pollution in the Wye area.

MUDHORSE FISHERMEN

With the kind permission of the Editor of Fishing News I reproduce an obituary. Why? Many may not have heard of this style of fishing and, as you will see, Adrian was the last!

OBITUARY

Last of the mud-horse fishermen

ADRIAN STANLEY SELICK

6 March, 1958 –
20 December, 2024

Adrian Sellick of Stolford, Bridgwater Bay, who passed away at home just before Christmas, aged 66, was perhaps the last mud-horse fisherman in the world.

His father Brendan Sellick, who died in 2021, ran the small fish shop which Adrian supplied with fish caught in the bay. Adrian started fishing with Brendan at the age of 12. The mud-horse is a sort of sledge, which he pushed up to two miles out over the mud to his shrimp and gill-nets. It was a strenuous task, and he was often asked why he didn't use a mechanised mobile sledge – but every experimental

device they tried was deemed unsuccessful. They simply sank into the thick, oozing mud of Bridgwater Bay.

Archaeologists discovered an ancient mud-horse buried deep in the peat of the Somerset Levels which was thousands of



▲ Adrian's shrimp nets and gill-nets were staked some two miles out in the bay, to await the incoming tide.

years old – and which was very similar to the one Adrian had made himself.

There used to be at least 12 mud-horse fishermen in the bay, and more across on the Welsh side between Newport and Cardiff. But the building of the nuclear power station at Hinkley Point, just a few miles west of where Adrian fished, started the decline in fishing in this part of the Bristol Channel. They saw their catch plummet over the years after it opened.

Now, with Hinkley Point C under construction, it seems that plans to build an acoustic fish deterrent, which would have prevented up to 90% of the fish mortality through the cooling water intakes, are about to be abandoned by the Environment Agency.

Adrian was often asked why he did it. I remember him telling me of the feeling of solitude out



▲ Adrian Sellick with his mud-horse.

there – and he was eager to keep the tradition alive. He'd go out in most weathers, clad in shorts and trainers – but always with one eye on the tide, as getting caught out there on an incoming tide would necessitate a very long walk round.

Adrian declared he was going to stop fishing after his father died, but he persevered a bit longer. Now his son Cane is hoping to continue the tradition for years to come.

Mike Smylie

BIO-SECURITY!

With all this talk of sewage and mud, a reminder of the need for all of us to exercise due diligence in our own bio-security. A succinct reminder appeared in the West Sutherland Fisheries Trust, 2025 Annual Review.

It is re-produced here by kind permission of The Trust.

The Check, Clean and Dry Campaign

Principles

- Non-native species could be spread in any water or material. If you are visiting a water body there is a real risk that you could spread harmful organisms unless you follow good biosecurity practice.
- Biosecurity means taking steps to make sure that good hygiene practices are in place to reduce and minimise the risk of spreading invasive non-native species. A good biosecurity routine is always essential, even if invasive non-native species are not always apparent.

Check, Clean, Dry disinfection procedure

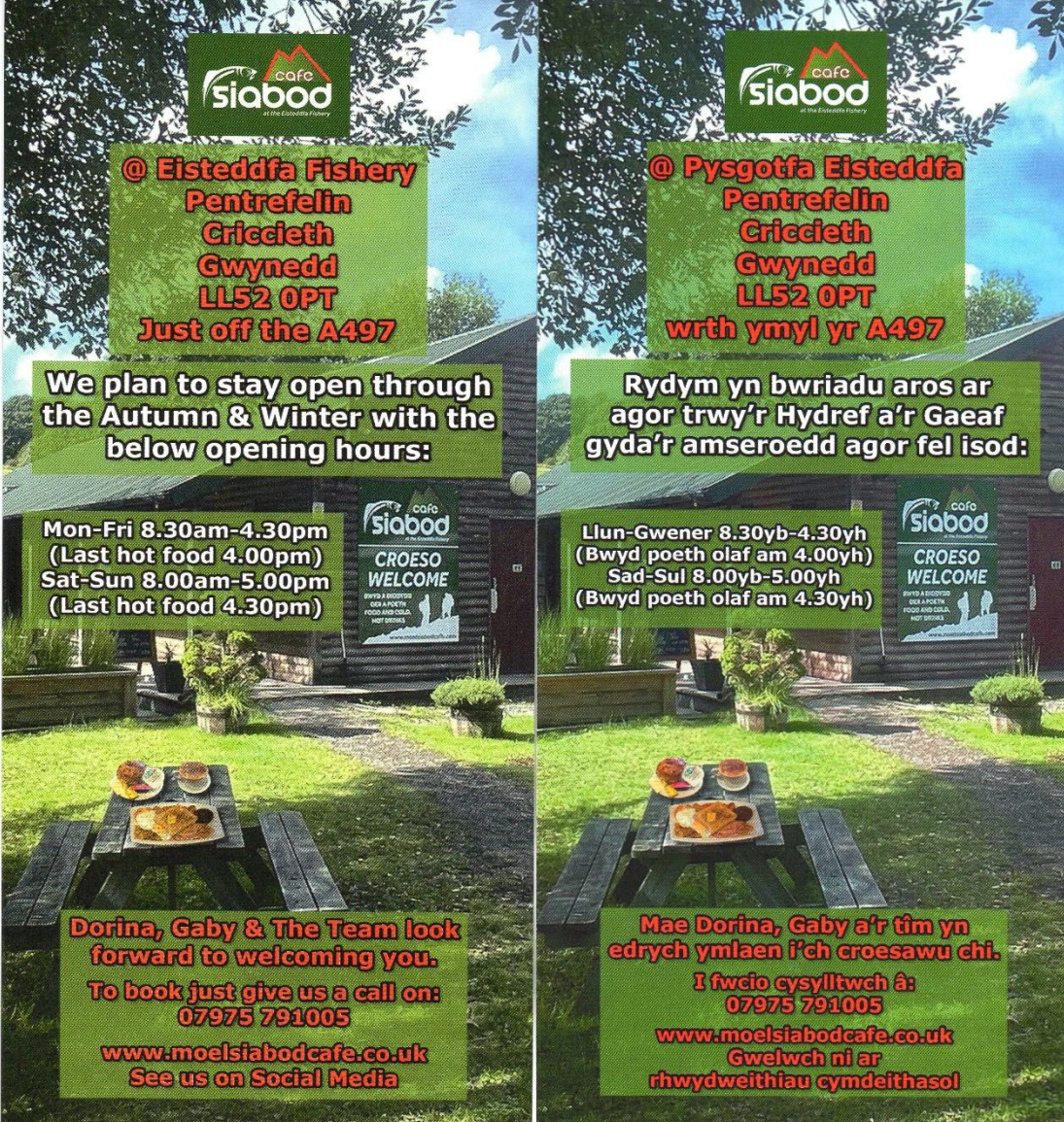
- **Check** - All clothing and equipment should be thoroughly inspected and any visible debris (mud, plant or animal matter) should be removed and left at the water body where it was found. Particular attention must be paid to the seams and seals of boots and waders. Any pockets of pooled water should be emptied.
- **Clean** - Equipment should be hosed down or pressure-washed on site. If facilities are not available equipment should be carefully contained, e.g. in plastic bags, until they can be found. Washings should be left at the water body where the equipment was used or contained and not allowed to enter any other watercourse or drainage system (i.e. do not put them down the drain or sink). Where possible, clean equipment should be dipped in disinfectant solution (e.g. Virkon) to kill diseases but note this is unlikely to kill non-native species.
- **Dry** - Thoroughly drying is the best method for disinfecting clothing and equipment. Boots and nets should be hung-up to dry. Equipment should be thoroughly dry for 48 hours before it is used elsewhere. Some non-native species can survive for as many as 15 days in damp conditions and up to 2 days in dry conditions, so the drying process must be thorough.

Further details from: <https://secure.fera.defra.gov.uk/nonnativespecies/checkcleandry/>



Himalayan balsam amid the garden plants (S. Marshall)

AND FINALLY.....



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Sad-Sul 8.00yb-5.00yh
(Bwyd poeth olaf am 4.30yh)

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