

Gofod Glas. Afon Lledr, Dolwyddelan.

In 1972, **Cymdeithas Yr Iaith Gymraeg** (The Welsh Language Society) held a protest on the banks of Afon Lledr in Dolwyddelan, opposing the purchase of fishing rights and parts of the river bank, by the Prince Albert Fishing Association from Macclesfield. The argument was that this large fishing club could afford to bear the cost for cheap licences, pricing local fishermen out of fishing on their local river.

The purpose of the protest was to draw attention to the weakening of local culture - in this case fishing - which in turn would lead to the weakening of the Welsh language and consequently the society that speaks it. It was a different campaign from the usual one by CYI, because it did not deal directly with a linguistic issue such as campaigns for official forms in Welsh, or bilingual signs for example.

A small group formed the protest, and they came to Dolwyddelan with the intention of trespassing on the newly aquired Prince Albert land with make-do fishing rods of bamboo. The protest received some coverage in the press at the time including on BBC television news - it is unclear if the idea went on to be repeated on other rivers in Wales.

54 years later there are far fewer fish in the Afon Lledr than there were in 1972, and the number of members of the local Fishing Association is also now relatively low.

If the right of access to a river to fish can affect the culture and language of a village and area, wouldn't it be true to say the same about the health of the rivers there too?

Does the pollution of rivers such as the Lledr, and others in the Conwy Valley directly affect culture, indigenous customs and language as it affects nature?

The historian Gwyn Alf mentioned in 'When Was Wales' (1985), that Wales exists in a state of oblivion "Half-memories, folklore ... fantasy is rampant. We are a people with plenty of traditions but no historical memory."

Controversial perhaps, but 'collective amnesia' is the term used when the current generation gets used to what they have, and small changes from one lifetime to the next are not noticed - this is true for change in nature, as it is for culture and language. That is, it is easy to get used to smaller numbers of fish in a river if there is no memory of an abundance of them there in the first place.

A video was recently shared on Facebook of sewage being poured into