



Neath and Tennant Canals Trust

Quarterly Newsletter – No. 126

December 2008



Did you recognise where this photograph was taken?
See inside for the answer.

Canal News.

New Committee.

A new committee for 2008/2009 was elected at a recent Council of Management Meeting and full details are printed on the back page of this Newsletter.

Thomas Dadford.

The Thomas Dadford has been taken out of the water and is now stored in the Neath Canal Navigation Company's Yard. An inspection will take place soon to decide on what maintenance will be needed during the winter months.

Certificate of Boat Management for Small Passenger Boats.

As the majority of members will no doubt be aware, as from September 2008 the Maritime and Coastguard Agency now require operators and crew of small passenger boats operating trip boats on certain inland waterways of Britain to be certificated in some way.

This obviously affects the volunteers crewing 'Thomas Dadford' on the Neath Canal. To this end we have contacted the Inland Waterways Association, the Royal Yachting Association and the Community Boat Association regarding the content of their courses and at the moment we have received a reply from the IWA which refers us to the document on the internet, and we await replies from the other two bodies.

We have also contacted all crew members with a relevant questionnaire regarding their willingness to undertake training/assessment and have received a positive response. 93% would be willing to undergo training and an assessment of boat handling and related practices by a recognised trainer using the 'Thomas Dadford' as the training base. 70% would be interested in attending a 2/3 day course and assessment at a recognised centre to obtain a RYA or CBA Certificate.

Further details will be given when the situation is clearer.

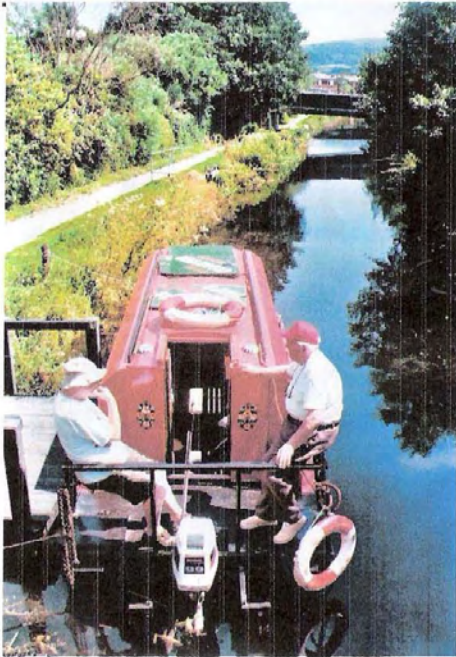
In the Press.

A number of photographs featuring the Neath Canal have been sent into the Evening Post by readers recently. Good publicity!

An item appeared in the Evening Post recently reporting that Community Councillors in Resolven were concerned about the state of the canal since the closure of Ty Banc Cottage and the ending of 'Enfys' trips on the Resolven stretch of the Neath Canal. It was hoped a new tenant could be found to run the Ty Banc Tea Room but the County Council has so far failed to find one. The Clerk to the Community Council was instructed to write to the County Council about this issue.

Neath Harbour.

Over 220,000 tonnes of sand have been removed from the mouth of the River Neath to enable shipping to continue to use the wharfs at Briton Ferry. The work was carried out by Neath Harbour Commissioners (closely linked to Neath Canal Navigation Company). The sand was distributed along low sections of Jersey Marine Beach with the aim of preventing further erosion to the beach and dunes.



'Thomas Dadford' and crew wait for passengers between B&Q and Morrisons on one of the rare sunny days we had this summer.

Thanks to Ian Wilson for sending in this photograph.

We are always looking for suitable canal-related photos and articles for printing in this newsletter. Please send any contributions to the Editor – contact details on the back page.

More from the Archives!

What was happening in the Society in 1977?

Negotiations were underway with Neath Borough Council to use Danygraig House, Aberdulais Falls for a Society Headquarters and Visitor Centre (now National Trust)

We were in the process of making our own Access Programme with Swansea Sound.

We were approached by the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery to help move canal boat 'Sylvia' from Neath to Swansea Museum.

We decided to form a Limited Company – 'The Neath and Tennant Canals Preservation Society Limited.'

We decided to purchase a dumper for £150.

The Job Creation Scheme at Farmers Arms, Resolven was in progress.

The Society cleared Granary Lock, Aberpergwm of vegetation.



Above - The Tennant Canal Company has been improving the towpath alongside the Tennant Canal near the interchange of the A465 at Neath Abbey. This photograph was taken on a frosty December morning. Note the ice on the canal.

Below – swans near Neath River Bridge.



Neath Canal Details The Neath canal is 13.5 miles in length from Giants Grave to the Terminal Basin at Glynneath. The following are distances between locks and other locations of interest on the Neath Canal.

Location	Miles	Lock	Navigable
Briton Ferry (<i>Terminal Basin</i>)	0	-	-
Giants Grave (<i>Original Terminus 1798</i>)	0.6	-	-
Railway Crossing (<i>R&SB, GWR</i>)	0.8	-	-
Bridge Street Neath (<i>Low Road Bridge</i>)	1.2		✓
Tyn-yr-heol Lock, Tonna	1.4	1	✓
Aberdulais Basin (<i>Tennant Canal</i>)	0.7	-	-
Lock Machin	1.1	2	-
Clyne Lower Lock (<i>Toll House</i>)	1.0	3	-
Clyne Upper Lock	0.1	4	-
Ynysbwlllog Aqueduct	0.5	-	-
Abergarwed Lower Lock	1.03	5	-
Abergarwed Upper Lock	0.8	6	-
Ynysbibben Lock (<i>Resolven Lower</i>)	0.83	7	-
Resolven Lock	0.17	8	✓
Crugiau Lock	0.72	9	✓
Rheola Lock	0.1	10	✓
Rheola Aqueduct	0.25	-	-
Aberclwyd Lock	0.57	11	✓
Ynys-yr-allor Lock	0.4	12	✓
Maesgwyn Lock	0.35	13	✓
Ysgwrfa Lock	0.2	14	✓
Granary Lock	0.2	15	-
Chain Road Lock	0.4	16	-
Pentremalwed Lock (<i>Fox's Lock</i>)	0.24	17	-
Lamb and Flag Lock	0.17	18	-
Maesmarchog Lock	0.25	19	-
Terminal Basin Glynneath	0.3	-	-

The last three sections of the canal from the Lamb and Flag bridge to the terminal basin at Glynneath are in-filled and under the now abandoned Glynneath Bypass.

From the Archives.

Flood Damage 1979.

"The floods which devastated much of South Wales just after Christmas 1979 took their toll on the Neath Valley and in particular, the Neath Canal. The River Neath rose several feet and Ynysbwllwg Aqueduct, carrying the Neath Canal over the River Neath near Ynysarwed, gave under the weight of water. Two of the six arches were washed away, severing the right of way across it. Because of a previous collapse in the early 1960s, the canal was piped across the river at this point, so there was no immediate danger to the water supply lower down the Neath Canal. We hear that plans are afoot to rebuild the aqueduct with a modern one when the A465 Truck Road is built and hope that these plans will reach fruition, rather than a cheaper piped bridge.

At the height of the flood, Aberdulais Aqueduct was under water too, and the torrent stripped many of the coping stones from the downstream side of the structure. River silt was washed into the Basin at Aberdulais and into the nearby Neath Canal.

Restoration of Tonna Workshop – 1980

"The renovation of this late 18th. Century canal depot has been undertaken with the utmost care to ensure restoration follows as closely as possible the original design and construction methods. The pillars, door arches and walls have been restored to a high standard by a NACRO team under the watchful eye of a skilled stonemason. Rather than use concrete lintels, door arches have been restored using inner timber lintels with an outer stone arch facing and although present visitors to the site will stand on concrete flooring, the search is on to find suitable flagstones to replace the broken ones removed from the forge and joiner's shop.

To help with the roof, a carpenter with 60 years in the trade has been enlisted to help NACRO with the detailed work of replacing the missing or decayed area of the king post roof and the trusses of the forge and joiner's shop. It was encouraging to hear him exclaim on first seeing the roof that he had never seen anything quite like it in 60 years. It is probable that the old purple slates (strongs) on the covered area once covered all the buildings and although it will be impossible to match these we hope to use slightly smaller purple strongs to recover the whole complex. Mr. Idris Hale, through Glamorgan Roofing and Flooring, is helping by providing good secondhand slates at a substantial discount, whilst Robinson David of Neath are helping similarly with the timber.

In all, nearly 3,000 feet of timber and 2,000 slates will be used and all will have to be carried down the hill to the site! Once this part of the complex is completed attention can turn to the Long Shed and Sawpit. Already Neath Borough Council have surveyed the site and discovered that the walls are bearing some 15cm. towards the river. A firm of engineering consultants from Blackwood in Gwent are advising the Society as to the feasibility and possible methods of restoring this building, whilst the Coal Board has informed us that we are not situated over a coal mine but are in fact over workable coal deposits!

Society work parties have constructed steps down to the orchard (built to last at least 100 years!) and local people have commented on fact that they are pleased the Workshops are being looked after for future generations.

Mystery Photo – September Newsletter.

This one had you puzzled! The answer is NEATH! S4C filmed a period drama called 'Treflan' back in 2004 and they used the area around Church Place in the centre of Neath. The window in the photo is normally a Solicitor's Office – between the Town Hall and the Mechanic's Institute.



Left - St.Thomas's Church is on the left, the Mechanic's Institute is on the right.



Above - The St. Ives Pub.

**Neath and Tennant Canals Trust.
Council of Management 2008 – 2009.**

Chairman: Peter Ricketts.

Vice-Chairman and Work Party Organiser: Malcolm Smith

General Secretary: Ian Milne

Treasurer: Trevor Morgan.

Membership Secretary: Trevor Morgan.

Social Secretary: Vacant.

Publicity Officer: Hywel Jenkins.

Newsletter Editor: Ted Porter.

Other Directors:

Edwin Farrar
Jean Morgan
Mike Jones.

Articles, letters, photographs etc. are always needed to keep your newsletters interesting. All contributions should be sent to the Editor:

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- by the first week of the month of publication i.e. March,
June, September and December.