



Neath and Tennant Canals Trust

Quarterly Newsletter

Sept. 2010 – No. 133



The re-launch of the 'Thomas Dadford' on the 24th. August 2010 following an extensive refurbishment programme – more photos inside.

NEATH & TENNANT CANALS TRUST LTD.

CHAIRMANS REPORT 2009-2010.

The past year has again been relatively quiet compared with the activity of previous years and activity by the Trust has concentrated on raising the awareness of the potential tourism attraction of the canals and fund raising.

Work on the Neath Canal by NCN continues following a large grant from Environment Agency's Splash Fund and other sources under the control of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council of £200,000 being used to carry out towpath improvement work and an improved access off the B4242 to the launching ramp facility at Ynysbwllog.

NCN has also carried out work to improve the approaches to Lock Machin on the Neath Canal. The lock now has an improved landing stage to facilitate easier working by boat handlers when passing through the lock.

The Trust's trip boat Thomas Dadford is twenty years old and in urgent need of an upgrade along with a new engine. Engine problems are the main reason for the failure to operate the boat over the 2009 season. Following a survey of the boat it was decided by the Council of Management to carry out upgrade improvement work at a tender price of £16,000. To fund the work £12,000 has been raised by the Trust through various grants from Y Gronfa Wledig, Church in Wales Act, Western Power Distribution and Skewen Methodist Church. The refurbishment work is being carried out by Starline Marine at Upton-upon-Severn and the boat will be returned in time for operating on the Neath Canal during the forthcoming 2010 summer season.

A structural survey of Aberdulais Aqueduct has been undertaken by OPUS, the consultant to CADW on behalf of the partners involved in Aberdulais Aqueduct Restoration (N&TCT, NPTCBC, DIEN, Welsh Assembly and Tennant Canal Co.). We are waiting the publication of the report. The intention is to carry out restoration of the aqueduct to restore the link between the Neath and Tennant canals but this project obviously will only take place when the present financial position improves.

As a director of Neath Canal Navigation Co, I have attended their Management Committee meetings and Annual General Meeting over the past year. Following the cessation of their activity in this area, BP have now transferred their major shareholding in NCN to St Modwen, a national development company. At the meetings I attended, now chaired by St Modwen, they have given an assurance that restoration of the Neath Canal will continue into the future.

I have also attended meetings of the Southern Canals Association at Devizes and Droitwich, the Vale of Neath Steering Group which oversees the development of the Vale of Neath Action Plan and as a guest the All Party Group on Waterways at the Welsh Assembly, at Cardiff.

In recognition of the restoration carried out on the Neath Canal, the Inland Waterways Association has confirmed that following a request to the IWA by the Trust the 2011 IWA National Trail Boat Festival will be held on the Neath Canal. The festival will involve the Trust in a considerable amount of work to organise the event, which will be spread over the

Spring Bank Holiday, 28th – 30th May 2011. The site of the festival will be on the fields adjoining the Neath Canal at Ynysarwed Farm near Resolven. The festival is being jointly sponsored through the Neath & Tennant Canals Trust, Neath Canal Navigation Co., Neath Port Talbot Council, the IWA and Peter Mayberry the farm owner. Several meetings have already taken place by a committee formed from the sponsors and I chair the committee on behalf of the Trust. The work of organising the festival is well underway.

I wish to make an appeal for any willing member to volunteer their services to help with the organisation and/or manning of the festival. Any member or friend wishing to contribute and help with the setting up of the event or for instance acting as marshals, supervising car parking, litter picking along with other general duties over any of the three days would be gratefully welcome. At present I have only three volunteers from the Trust. Anyone wishing to volunteer please contact me, Peter Ricketts on 01792 360688.

The voluntary work parties carried out by the Trust on the Neath Canal have been limited over the past year and mainly concentrated in and around Tonna Work Shops and Aberdulais Basin, there being no work required involving the trip boat maintenance or operation.

The financial position of the Trust is sound at this time but expenditure is expected to rise this coming year with the Trust being involved with the Trail Boat Festival and our contribution toward the upgrading of the Trip Boat. The work of fund raising within the Trust must be expanded to enable the work of the Trust to continue and the positions of Fund Raiser and Publicity Officer desperately need to be filled.

Finally I wish to thank members of the Council of Management for their support over the past year and for the work of a number of Trust members who have contributed to help with the upgrading and modernising of Thomas Dadford. I would also like to thank Hywel Jenkins, who resigned from the committee, for his service to the Trust as a Committee Member and Publicity Officer.



Chairman.

Peter Ricketts MBE,
Chairman.

20 July 2010

Welsh Waterways Festival 2011
Incorporating the IWA Trail Boat Festival
27th – 30th May 2011
Ynysarwed Farm
on the Neath Canal

Volunteers wanted!

Thomas Dadford – Welcome Back!

As most of you know, our trip boat, ‘Thomas Dadford’, was in need of a good refurbishment after 20 years of service on the Neath Canal. After weeks of frustration the boat was finally completed by the middle of August and on Tuesday 17th. August arrangements were made to return the boat to Neath.

Gareth and I arranged to meet the lorry at Starline Boats near Ledbury. We left Swansea at 7 am and arrived at the boatyard at about 9.30 am.

What a sight met our eyes – the ‘Thomas Dadford’ in pristine condition! Doyle’s lorry arrived at about 10 am and the boat was carefully loaded. The lorry arrived at Bridge Street, Neath at about 2.15 pm. and the Contractors who were painting the railway bridge removed fencing on the road bridge to allow the boat to be lowered into the canal. At this stage there was no engine on the boat, so Trust members had to paddle and tow the boat the few hundred yards to the landing stage at B&Q and then to its mooring in the basin near the Castle.

On the Thursday evening, Young’s Boat Yard delivered and fitted our new outboard engine in awful weather – torrential rain! Gareth has refurbished the Sales Cabinet and in all Trust members have put in over 50 man hours over three days to get the boat back on the water.

Everyone is very pleased with the work carried out – new windows (the glass can be taken out and metal blanks put in when the boat is moored overnight) The glass can be removed on fine days to provide a semi-open boat. Additional windows have been fitted along the side to increase light inside the boat and to provide better views for the passengers. The interior of the boat has been relined and the cupboard at the back of the boat has been removed, being replaced with a low level cupboard to store the window glass and metal blanks. The boat has had a full re-paint outside.

On Tuesday the 24th. of August the boat was officially re-launched and a film crew from the BBC was there to record the occasion. An item appeared on the BBC Welsh News that evening. The Evening Post photographer also turned up and photos appeared in the paper a few days later.

Representatives of Neath Port Talbot Council, Neath Canal Navigation and Skewen Methodist Church turned up to help re-launch the boat. Public trips started later that week.

Malcolm Smith.

(Photographs on opposite page taken by Edwin Farrar.)



'Thomas Dadford' arrives at Bridge Street, Neath on Tuesday 17th. August 2010



Helping hands guide the boat over the side of the bridge and onto the canal.



'Thomas Dadford' arrives at the mooring near B&Q, Neath.

Trust News.

Gaynor Corles.

It was with great sadness that we heard recently of the death of one of our longest serving members, Gaynor Corles. Gaynor regularly attended work parties in the early years of the Trust and was an eager helper in the many social events which were held in the early days. Our sincere condolences go to Richard and her family.

New Book.

One of our Life Members has just published a book. David Coles has already published poetry but his latest work is slightly different and is entitled – ‘The Difficult Birth of the Driver & Vehicle Licensing Centre in Swansea.’

It is a 20 page booklet with B&W photos and outlines the early days of the DVLC in Swansea where David was Welfare Officer. Copies cost £5 and can be obtained from the author (contact the Editor of the this Newsletter if interested) The first print run was limited to 100 copies and all proceeds will go to the Civil Service Benevolent Fund.

A.G.M.

The Annual General Meeting was held on Wednesday 28th. July. The Chairman presented his Annual Report, followed by the presentation of accounts. Retiring members of the Council of Management were re-elected and it was noted that there are some vacant places on the C of M (anyone interested, please contact the Hon. Sec.) The evening concluded with an informal discussion about the Welsh Waterways Festival & Trail Boat Festival.

Welsh Waterways Festival.

A lot of work is already being done to organise this Festival in May 2011 and volunteers are urgently required to help in a variety of ways. Please contact Peter Ricketts on 01792 360688 if you can help in any way.

Tennant Canal Bridge.

The Bridge which crossed the Tennant Canal at Red Jacket, near Jersey Marine is back after an absence of about six years. The old bridge was removed by the Tennant Canal Company because it was unsafe and as a result, the public were unable to walk from Jersey Marine to Neath along the towpath. Dyffryn Clydach Volunteers managed to acquire a redundant BP bridge and after a few modifications to the bridge and the parapets, the new bridge was installed. This work was a joint effort between the Tennant Canal Company, Dyffryn Clydach Volunteers, Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, Environment Wales (funded by the Welsh Assembly) and Keep Wales Tidy.

Newsletters on Website.

All issues of the Trust's Newsletters over the past couple of years are now on the Trust's website – and the photographs are in colour! So, if you loose your Newsletter, just log on to –

www.neath-tennant-canals.org.uk



Guests, mainly from Skewen Methodist Church, enjoy a trip on the Thomas Dadford on re-launch day.



Visitors admire the 'Thomas Dadford'.

**Neath and Tennant Canals Trust.
Council of Management 2010 – 2011.**

Chairman: Peter Ricketts MBE Tel: 01792 360688

Vice-Chairman and Work Party Organiser: Malcolm Smith Tel: 01792 774991

General Secretary: Ian Milne Tel: 01792 547902

Company Secretary – Huw James.

Treasurer: Trevor Morgan.

Membership Secretary: Trevor Morgan.

Social Secretary: Vacant.

Publicity Officer: Vacant

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.