



# **Neath and Tennant Canals Trust**

## **Quarterly Newsletter**

**Sept 2011 – No. 137**



**'Thomas Dadford' safely moored in Neath.**

Chairman's Report  
April 2010 – March 2011

The time period from April 2010 to March 2011 was an exceptionally busy year, the main highlights being the organisation and planning of the Waterways Festival and the arrival of our trip boat 'Thomas Dadford' after a major refurbishment. Canal towpaths, locks and bridges were given a face lift to be aesthetically pleasing to the anticipated visitors that would visit the canal.

Peter Ricketts was elected Chairman of the Waterways Festival Steering Group with Malcolm Smith taking on the duty of Harbour Master. It was an arduous task for the members as meetings were held every month in addition to the various site visits during the year. Members showed real commitment and enthusiasm. The Committee worked hard with advertising and circulating resources and information leaflets to promote the canal. By the end of March most of the trade and boat applications had been received. During this time period, the Neath Canal Company carried out dredging of the canal at the festival site along with towpath improvement, tree pruning and grass cutting. The bridge over the canal leading to the festival site was in need of repair with the parapet and wing walls needing to be rebuilt.

Grants were received to help aid the face lift of the canal. Y Gronfa Wledig were exceptionally generous in donating a grant for £8,000 and a grant of £2,000 was received from the IWA. (*Other organisations also helped and have been thanked in previous Newsletters.*)

The Canal Company placed mooring bollards at the slip way near Ynysbwllog Aqueduct, at Clyne Lock and Lock Machin. A landing stage was built above the bridge near the Festival Site for passengers to embark on the trip boat.

Our trip boat, 'Thomas Dadford'. received a major refurbishment with Gareth Hughes overseeing the work. The boat was repainted, the cabin area was relined, a new floor was fitted, extra windows were fitted and a new engine was installed. The boat was re-launched in August 2010 and was publicised by the BBC who attended the event to do a feature about the boat.

Under new rulings from the Maritime and Coastguard Agency, all boat crew members were given training by Gareth Hughes in boat handling, Health & Safety etc.

During the year Peter Ricketts retired as Chairman of the Trust. As a Council of Management we would like to thank him for the many years he has served in this role. He has represented the Trust at many Functions and Meetings, leaving the Trust in good shape for the future.

A few work parties were held at Tonna Workshops throughout the year.

It must be documented and recorded in the Minutes that sincere gratitude must be acknowledged to all Council of Management Members for their time and effort in attending the numerous Council meetings throughout the year.

The Crew of the Thomas Dadford must also be commended for their commitment in crewing the boat during August and September. As we all are aware, our climate is sometimes something of a challenge.

Malcolm Smith  
Vice-Chairman.

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## **NEWS.**

### **Annual General Meeting – July 2011**

The Annual General Meeting of the Neath and Tennant Canals Trust was held at Lock House, Aberdulais on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>. July 2011. A new Council of Management was elected and as can be seen from the back page of this newsletter, there are a few changes this year. Jean Morgan retired and did not stand for re-election. We would like to thank Jean for her support over the years and she has been a regular attendee at Council of Management meetings. The Council of Management elected Officers at the first meeting in September.

### **Thomas Dadford**

The trip boat has had quite a successful season and trips finished on the last Saturday of September. Final figures are not available yet but approx. £1600 has been made this year (net profit) This figure would have been higher but petrol costs were very high this year. The Thomas Dadford will be taken out of the water for the winter and a few small jobs will need to be done. Thankfully, because of the major refurbishment in 2010, the boat is in very good shape. Edwin, our Boat Co-ordinator, will shortly be planning the crew roster for 2012. If you would like to crew the boat and you are not on Edwin's list, please contact him – 01792 362166.

### **Work Parties.**

Mike Jones, our new Work Party Organiser, will contact members when work parties are arranged.

### **Calor Gas.**

Calor Gas will be organising a litter pick along the banks of the Neath Canal.

### **Waterways Festival.**

The Trust has received a number of very complimentary letters and emails from boaters who attended the Festival back in May.

## **Swansea Community Boat.**

The Swansea Community Boat – The Black Prince – will shortly be operating on the River Tawe from the Marina up to the Liberty Stadium. It is licensed to carry 50 passengers and round trip will last about 2 hours. More information can be found on their website - <http://scbt.org.uk/>

## **Newsletter in Colour.**

To keep cost down, this newsletter is printed in B&W and as a result some of the photos lose their impact. If you would like to see the newsletter in colour, this issue and past issues can be found on our website under ‘Publications.’

Go to - <http://www.neath-tennant-canal.org.uk/>

## **Local Development Plan.**

Neath Port Talbot Council is considering plans to abandon the length of Swansea Canal under its control in the latest Local Development Plan. The stretch in question is between Ynysmeudwy and Ystralyfera. British Waterways, which owns the rest of the canal, says it is disappointed. Full details can be found on NPTBC website and on the Towpath Talk website – search for Issue 71.



‘Whirligig’ (owned by Trust member Bill Bath) at the Welsh Waterways Festival.



This boat must have won the prize for the tallest boat at the Festival.  
The mast could be lowered to get under the bridges!



And this boat must have won the prize for the smallest boat at the Festival!

*The following information came from Bradshaw's Canals and Navigable Rivers of England and Wales – a Handbook of Inland Navigation for Manufacturers, Merchants, Traders and others. It was compiled after a personal survey by Henry Rodolph de Salis and was published in 1904.*

### **Neath Canal – Short Description.**

The canal commences at Glyn Neath and proceeds down the Vale of Neath by Resolven to Aberdulais, where, after passing the junction with the Tennant Canal, it bends sharply to the southward for a quarter of a mile and continues its course on the South-east side of the valley through the town of Neath to its termination at Giant's Grave, near Briton Ferry. Here it joins the Giant's Grave and Briton Ferry Canal belonging to the Earl of Jersey. The whole course of the canal is in the county of Glamorganshire.

The principal trade is coal and silica. The portion of the canal between the town of Neath and Giant's Grave is not much used.

Proprietors - The Company of Proprietors of the Neath Canal Navigation. Clerk - Thomas Williams. The office is at Victoria Chambers, Neath, South Wales.

Maximum size of vessels that can use the navigation-

Length – 60 ft. 0 ins. Width – 9 ft. 0 ins. Draught – 2ft 9ins. Headroom – 6ft 0ins.

The lowest bridge on the canal is that carrying the main road over the canal in the town of Neath.

There is a towing path throughout the navigation.

Neath Canal and Tennant Canal boats measure about 60ft. long by 9ft. beam and draw when empty about 9 inches and when loaded about 1 inch extra per ton. Their average load is 20 tons and the maximum 24 tons. None of these boats have cabins. All of them are double ended, the rudder being transferred from one end to the other as required.

### **River Neath – Short description.**

The River Neath is navigable from the main road bridge in the town of Neath to Briton Ferry and Swansea Bay. The channel of the river from Briton Ferry Dock to the water of Swansea Bay runs through sand flats. A branch of the river known as Red Jacket Pill, on which are situated Red Jacket Pill wharves, affords communication with the Tennant Canal.

Proprietors – Neath Harbour Commissioners. Clerk and Solicitor – C.Valentine Pegge. Harbour Master and Collector of Dues – Lieutenant Gwyn Lewis. Office – 22, Villiers Street, Briton Ferry.

Maximum size of vessels – Length – not limited. Width – not limited. Draught on Spring Tides – 12 feet.

Types of vessels using the navigation – sea-going vessels.

There is no towing path, navigation being conducted on the ebb and flow of the tide.

**Tennant Canal** – short description.

The canal commences at Aber-dulais by a junction with the Neath Canal, and, after crossing the River Neath by an aqueduct, proceeds down the north-west side of the Vale of Neath and through the town of Neath to Swansea. Shortly before it terminates, it forms a junction through a side lock with the Prince of Wales Dock. There is a short branch from a point about three miles below the town of Neath to Red Jacket Pill, a branch of the River Neath, in which are situated the Red jacket Wharves.

Proprietors – Mrs. Tennant. Agent – Thomas Williams. Office – Victoria Chambers, Neath.

Locks – 1. Aber-dulais – fall from junction with Neath Canal.  
2. Side lock at Swansea giving access to Prince of Wales Dock.  
3. Red Jacket Pill Branch.

Maximum size of vessels – Length – 60 ft. Width – 9 ft (except through Red Jacket Lock – 15 ft) Draught – 2 ft 9 ins.

There is a towing path along the whole length of the navigation.

Types of vessels using the navigation – similar to Neath Canal boats – max load 20 tons. Max draught 2 ft 6 ins.



**Neath and Tennant Canals Trust.  
Council of Management 2011 – 2012.**

**Chairman:** Gareth Hughes

**Vice-Chairman:** Malcolm Smith

**General Secretary:** Ian Milne Tel: 01792 547902

**Company Secretary** – Huw James.

**Treasurer:** Trevor Morgan.

**Membership Secretary:** Trevor Morgan.

**Publicity Officer:** Hwyl Jenkins

**Newsletter Editor:** Ted Porter.

**Work Party Organiser:** Mike Jones

**Boat Co-ordinator:** Edwin Farrar

**Archivist:** Peter Ricketts

**Other C of M Members:** Martyn Lyddon

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.