



Neath and Tennant Canals Trust

Quarterly Newsletter No. 120

June 2007



Aberdulais Basin from the skew bridge

Important Notice

Notice of Annual General Meeting

to be held at

Lock House (British Legion), Aberdulais,

on

Wednesday 11th. July 2007

at 8.00p.m.

AGENDA

1. Apologies.
2. Minutes of AGM of 25th. July 2006
3. Matters arising.
4. Chairman's Report
5. Presentation of Accounts.
6. Election of President.
7. Election of Council of Management Members – Messrs Huw James, Edwin Farrar, Trevor Morgan and Gareth Hughes retire on rotation. Please send any nominations to the General Secretary, Mr. Ian Milne, 16, Gower Road, Sketty, Swansea, SA2 9BY to arrive at least 21 days before the date of the AGM.
8. To ratify the proposals of the Council of Management recommended on Wednesday 11th. April 2007 that Membership Fees be changed as follows:-

Adults	£15
Family	£25
Affiliation(Clubs etc)	£25
Corporate	£50

Neath Canal Update.

Tyn-yr-heol Lock.

Completion of the outstanding work on the restoration of the lock by the contractor is still incomplete and the Trust is pressing Atkins Ltd, the consultants, for the work to be finalised to enable the lock to become fully operational.

Resolven Lock.

The contract for the replacement of both the top and bottom gates was awarded by the Trust to the Rochdale Canal Workshops of Calderdale Council, Halifax. The first visit to site was in March during which measurements for the new gates were taken and the ironwork of the ground paddle and bottom gates was removed and taken to Halifax for new patterns to be made. On the second visit in April both sets of existing gates were removed and the new wooden access bridge at the tail of the lock installed. Completion of the contract was programmed for June 2007 but due to delays by the Customs in Africa the delivery of the Ekki wood for the building of the gates will not reach the workshops at Halifax until late June causing a delay of approx one month.

Aberdulais Aqueduct.

Preliminary discussions between NPTCBC, Environment Agency, CADW, and the Trust continue with the aim of finally restoring the aqueduct. The E.A. have provided the group with the flood relief model for Aberdulais and CADW have commissioned their consultant to prepare a brief for the assessment and feasibility study for the rehabilitation of Aberdulais Aqueduct and the flood relief in the vicinity.

Ynysbwilog Aqueduct.

The contract for the building of a new steel aqueduct across the gap in the existing aqueduct has been awarded by NCN to Dawnus Construction and work has already started. The Environment Agency constructed an access way from the towpath of the canal into the river channel to allow the contractor access to the base of the aqueduct. Large stones have been placed alongside the aqueduct for a working platform and the footbridge and steel pipes used to take the canal water across the gap have been removed. As stated in the previous update when completed the new steel aqueduct will be the longest of it's type in the UK. Completion of the construction programme is scheduled for September 2007.

Peter Ricketts.



News.

Thomas Dadford.

Trips have restarted on the Neath Canal - Saturdays and Bank Holidays until the Summer School Holidays, then daily (except Sundays) through the holidays. After many years of organising the Boat Crew Rota, , Veronica Warren is retiring this year and so we are looking for: someone to take .her place.. You need not be a member of the committee to do

This important job and you will receive lots of help. from other Trust members. If you are .interested, please contact our General Secretary, Ian Milne.The Trust would like to thank Veronica for her hard work over the years in helping to keep, the Thomas.Dadford crewed and running.

Award

Congratulations to the Neath Canal Navigation Company for, being runner up at the British Urban Regeneration Association Awards held in Manchester recently.

Thanks.

Many thanks to Western Power Distribution: for a very generous donation of £500 towards publicity material for the Trust.

BBC Week In Week Out.

Did you see Ian Milne, Roger Thomas and Malcolm Smith on Week In Week Out recently? They were interviewed about the reopening of coal Mines in the Neath Valley. After two and a half hours filming on the Thomas Dadford, the interview lasted for about 3 minutes!!

'No Smoking' Legislation

Notices have been placed at the Eorkshops in Tonna and on the Thomas Dadford.

Web Site

Our web site continues to develop thanks to Richard Farrar, Edwin and Hywel. The address is:-

www.neath-tennant-canals.org.uk

Kingdom Tours.

Forty two canal enthusiasts from all over Britain were conducted around the Neath, Tennant and Swansea Canals over the weekend of 18th - 21st May. Based at the Towers Hotel, Jersey Marine, they were given a slide show by Peter Ricketts on the Friday evening, were shown around the Swansea Canal and the Tawe Barrage on the Saturday by Clive Reed and the Neath and Tennant Canals by Peter Ricketts and Ian Milne on the Sunday. They seemed to be very impressed with all the work that is going on, and a feature will appear in the August Edition of 'Waterways World', courtesy of Hugh Potter, Consultant Editor and one of the visitors during the weekend.

In the News.

The canals in the area are frequently featured in the local press. These stories appeared recently:-

Evening Post - June 4th - 'Society is gutted by boat fire attack - a Pontardawe pleasure boat, saved from the grave may have made its final journey after going up in flames. The boat, named 'David Papa Thomas', was re launched in 1994 after a £12,000 refit and carried Passengers on the Swansea Canal. Clive Reed of the Swansea Canal Society, said 'The boat has been totally gutted - it is heartbreaking.'

Neath Courier - June 2007 - 'New friends clean up canal - Friendships Were formed as volunteers cleaned up a Neath eyesore. The area of the Neath Canal at Milland Road Industrial Estate has been targeted by fly-tippers but now it is a brighter place thanks to a few hours of hard graft. Working in partnership with the Neath East Communities First Team were - Keep Wales Tidy, Neath East Action Team, Neath Canal Navigation, Neath Port Talbot Council's Biodiversity Unit, Community Wildlife Officer, Volunteers and the combined services of the 3rd Battalion Neath Army Cadets, 334 Squadron Neath Air Corps Cadets, and the Port Talbot Sea Cadets.'



Work in progress on Ynysbwlllog Aqueduct. Here the old pipes which carried the Neath Canal waters over the River Neath are being removed (May 2007)

(Photo by courtesy of Hugh Potter, Consultant Editor, Waterways World)



Work Part at Tonna Workshops - May 2007

Holsworthy to Bude (continued)

I dont know ifee remembers but we had just got to Vealand Incline the last time you read this and I just saw Mrs Aggie Yelland and her daughter Millie for the first time. I'd heard about poor Aggie Yelland some time ago. Horace Yelland , her husband, was in charge of Vealand Incline and twadden (sorry, it was not) a well paid job, well none of um was if you worked for the canal company. Trouble was Horace liked his cider and after the last barge went through in the night he toddled off to Holsery and called in The Huntsman. Well he was there then till they chucked un out and by that time he couldn't crawl let alone walk. Everybody used to talk about un because Granny, Mollie O'Rourke, the gypsy used to take 'n home to her caravan to sober up. Nobody knew how she sobered un up but he was never home in time for the first barge in the morning, or the second.

Aggie had to do it all, the incline work, the housework, the cooking and cleaning, and Millie used to give her a hand.

What I was going to tellee was that Horace was coming home one morning only about dree months ago and it seems that Mollie hadn't done too good a job sobering un up and he slipped into the canal. Well he still had a bottle of cider in each hand and there was no way he was going to let them go so he drowned trying to get up the bank. There were not a lot of boats that morning and the first time Aggie knew there was anything wrong was when she found him floating at the top of the incline. Do you know, they say he had lost one bottle but he was still gripping the other so tight they had to lever it off him!

Well the Canal Company told Aggie they would have to get a new incline operator and she and her daughter would have to get out of the house that went with the job. Then Aggie gave them a piece of her mind and said she had been doing all the work for the past two years and they had not complained.

Well it is most unusual in this day and age to give a woman this sort of work but we heard the bosses thought about it for a day or so and came back and said she could hang on to the job but they would be watching her carefully. It would seem that the Captain on one of the cargo ships that came into Bude told the canal boss that over in South Wales there was a woman working the Lock Gates somewhere and she was doing a great job.

Anyhow, we glided along the bank on the port side and Jed slipped the towing rope eye off the bow cleat on the barge and there was Millie passing the incline rope eye for him to make fast on the same cleat. As soon as this was done Jan eased to starboard and the bow slid gently to the base of the incline. By this time Aggie at the top had started to take up the slack and by the time the bow grated on the incline. The whole operation had only taken a few moments but the skill involved with the four of them was incredible.

We all had to jump ashore and for the first time in my life I experienced something so earth shattering it would remain with me forever.

I was standing next to the most beautiful person I had ever seen in my life.
Millie Yelland



Volunteers at the Margam Show June 2007



The Mudlarks taking a tea break

Your Committee - 2006/07

Chairman: Peter Ricketts

Vice-Chairman & Work Party Organiser:
Malcolm Smith

General Secretary: Ian Milne

Treasurer: Gareth Hughes.

Membership Secretary: Trevor Morgan

Social Secretary: Vacant.

Publicity Officer: Hywel Jenkins.

Other Directors:

Edwin Farrar.
Veronica Warren,
Ted Porter,
Mike Jones

**Articles, letters, photographs etc. are always
needed to keep your newsletter 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.**