



**Neath and Tennant Canals Trust**

**Quarterly Newsletter**

**December 2009 – No. 130**

*Nadolig Llawen!*



*Happy Christmas!*

## News.

**Thomas Dadford** - As most members know, Thomas Dadford, our trip boat, did not run last summer for a number of reasons. Firstly, all crew members had to receive training and obtain a new qualification - the Boatmasters' Licence or equivalent - to satisfy the Maritime and Coastguard Agency. Secondly, we have been having trouble with the engine and a replacement would have to be purchased or costly repairs carried out on our present engine before any training could take place. In addition, after many years running trips on the Neath Canal, the inside of the boat was beginning to look shabby and a refurbishment was necessary. The Council of Management has been discussing these points over the summer months and a number of ideas have been put forward. One is that the boat is modified to take an inboard diesel engine. Other improvements would be to replace the rubber seals around the windows, or possibly make the side windows larger, renew front windows, renew floor covering, new rear doors, and a re-spray. All this will cost a lot of money and members have been working hard trying to locate possible grant aid. A number of quotes for the required work have been obtained from local and national boat builders to support these grant bids. If any members know a source of funding or know a large company which may like to sponsor this work, please contact the Hon. Secretary, Ian Milne.

**Peter Ricketts, MBE** – Peter, accompanied by his wife and daughters, attended a ceremony at Buckingham Palace in November where he was presented with his MBE by Prince Charles. Congratulations to Peter once again.

**Colin Powell** – Congratulations to Colin on being appointed to the Inland Waterways Advisory Council. The following appeared on the IWAC Website recently –

### New members appointed to Inland Waterways Advisory Council

Minister for Waterways Huw Irranca-Davies today announced the appointment of new members to the Inland Waterways Advisory Council. Mike Cooksley, John Dodwell, Amanda Nobbs, Tamsin Phipps, Colin Powell and Alan Stopher will take up their three year appointments from January 2010. IWAC members are unpaid. A minimum of twelve members are appointed by Ministers including two by the Scottish Government. All appointments are made in line with the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointment's guidance, and are made on merit – political activity plays no part in the selection process. Mike Cooksley is Chair of Weaver Valley Management Board and *Visit Chester and Cheshire*, a board member of Natural Economy North West, and a former vice-chair of Anderton Boat Lift Trust. John Dodwell is Chair of the Commercial Boat Operators Association, a director of Freight by Water, and a member of the British Waterways Advisory Forum. Amanda Nobbs is Chair of the Environment Agency Thames Regional Flood Defence Committee, a member of the Environment Agency Thames Regional Environmental Protection Advisory Committee, and a former chief executive of the Council for National Parks.

Tamsin Phipps is the Public Affairs Manager for the British Canoe Union, an official for the International Canoe Federation, and a volunteer for a local community narrow boat (the Falcon Adam). Colin Powell is the Principal Country Parks and Grant Officer for Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, a member of Afan Forest Park Tourism Growth Area Project Board and has a 25-year involvement with canals in Wales, in particular with restoration works on the Neath Canal and Tennant Canal. Alan Stopher is a retired Property Services Assistant Executive Director for Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council, a former project director of Huddersfield Canal Company and has advised on the Cotswold Canals restoration project by leading the Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council independent review team commissioned by Stroud District Council.

**Neath & Tennant Canals** – For many years, the Neath and Tennant Canals have been supplying water to local industries. BP Llandarcy extracted water from the Tennant Canal at Skewen and BP Chemicals, Baglan Bay, extracted water from the Neath Canal at Briton Ferry. Both BP Llandarcy and BP Baglan Bay have long disappeared but a new name has been in the news recently – St. Modwen. St. Modwen is a very large company specializing in the regeneration of brownfield sites. The £1 billion transformation of the former Llandarcy Oil Refinery into the Coed Darcy Urban Village has already started and plans are being drawn up to regenerate the former site of the BP Baglan Bay Chemical Works. In fact, St. Modwen have taken over a number of former BP sites across South Wales, Scotland, The Midlands and South East England. Other sites in Wales taken over by St. Modwen include – the former Tank Farm and Queens Dock, Swansea and Crymlyn Burrows, Neath. I think we may be hearing a lot more about this company in the future!

**Welsh Waterways Festival 2011** – as mentioned in the last Newsletter, The Neath & Tennant Canals Trust applied to hold the Welsh Waterways Festival (including the IWA National Trailboat Festival) in 2011. It has now been confirmed that our application has been accepted. Further details will appear in future Newsletters.

**Welsh Waterways Festival 2010** – The 2010 Welsh Waterways Festival, which includes the IWA National Trailboat Festival, will be held at Kimberely Park. Malpas, Newport on the Whitsun Bank Holiday weekend – Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> – Monday 31<sup>st</sup> May. Organised by the Mon & Brec Canals Trust, it should attract boats from all over the UK. A similar event was organised at Newport in 2000 and in 2004 when over 12,000 people attended the 3 day festival. The organisers are hoping that some narrowboats will attend but the logistics of moving them by lorry and craning them into the water make it a very expensive operation.



### *From the Archives.*

Details of works carried out at Aberdulais Aqueduct and Basin (Tennant Canal Co)

- 1868 - May Repairs to Aqueduct.  
1873 - Aug. 3 masons and 2 labourers work at Aberdulais.  
8 days work for masons, 9 days for labourers.  
1873 - Sept. David Howell & Co (Masons) repaired aqueduct. Benjamin Reynolds tarred aqueduct and lock gates. Paid 16/6d.  
1876 – Nov. Jones & Jeppson’s men paid £15 4s 2d for cleaning rubbish from Neath River at Aberdulais Paddle.  
1876 - Dec. Dulais paddle raised from flood.  
1876 – Dec. Copper slag (ashes) applied to towpath.  
1879 – Sept. 13 men worked on clearing rubbish from river – filling under aqueduct arches 10 ft deep, washed out by late terrific flood, being the heaviest flood on record.  
1879 – Dec. Clearing bed of river and securing the wall and entrance to feeder at Dulais River.  
1889 – Aug. Flood – 5 men used to clear the sluices and paddles and fill in the arches of the aqueduct.  
1881 – Apr. Repairs to Dulais Lock and Aqueduct by Philip Williams.  
1881 – Sept. Repairs to weir at Dulais and clearing of culvert from river to canal.  
1881 – Nov. Lock gates repaired – carpenter and 5 assistants.  
1882 – Jan. Repairs to aqueduct, pointing cement, repairs to headgates and paddles.  
1884 – Oct. Wall along towpath at Dulais built. Lock gates repaired.  
1886 – Jan. Repairs to aqueduct. Filling in of arches.  
1886 – Aug. 27 men employed in clearing and deepening canal at Dulais.  
1886 – Sept. Additional men employed – 53 men and 7 masons.  
1886 – Oct. 23 extra men and 4 masons pointing the aqueduct at Dulais.  
1916 – Mar. Fred Daniels (Leading Hand) was employed at the Dry Dock at Aberdulais – repairing a barge.



- 1918 – Mar. Junction Bridge at Aberdulais repaired. Stones removed from canal under bridge and work done on parapet walls.
- 1920 – July Phil Jones (Canal Foreman), Jack Hughes and Jack Lewis laid concrete on the river bed at Aberdulais.

### Canal Tolls.

Tolls for traffic on the Neath Canal were determined by the 1791 Act of Parliament. Fixed rates to be applied for transportation and storage of goods on the canal were –

<i>Goods</i>	<i>Not to Exceed</i>
Iron, Goods, Wares, Merchandises.	4d per ton per mile.
Iron castings.	3d per ton per mile.
Pig Iron.	2.5d per ton per mile.
Iron stone, iron ore, coals, culm.	1.5d per ton per mile.
Cinders, charcoal, timber. stone tiles.	Ditto
Bricks, clay, limestone, lime, manure.	Ditto

A barge with less than one quarter of a ton must be charged for a full quarter of a ton and if it travels under one quarter of a mile, it must pay the rate for one quarter of a mile. (There were marker posts every quarter of a mile.) Exemption from tonnage rates was given for Proprietors of Melyn-y-Court Furnace, Ynys-y-Gerwyn Tin Mills & Aberdulais Forges along certain lengths of the canal, that is, when the goods were theirs and for use between the respective works.

Rates had to be paid to an appointed collector. If refused, the owner of the goods could either be sued or the barge/goods seized. If the debt was not paid within 5 days, the same may be sold.

Rates could be altered (lessened) by the General Assembly – if 3 months notice be given, only with the agreement of two thirds of the shareholders.

Since most of the users of the canal were regular company barges, the bargee did not actually hand over money to the lock-keeper. Having examined the shipping notes, the lock-keeper entered the details in a ledger and usually at quarterly intervals, invoiced the Company involved.

Tolls for wharfage were also fixed by the 1791 Act. Wharfs made by the Landowners/Lords of any manor remained private – not to be used by Proprietors of Neath Canal. Charges were not to exceed 1d per ton wharfage for coal, culm, limestone, clay, iron etc which may remain for one calendar month on the wharf. There were other charges for shorter and longer storage.

# THE TENNANT CANAL.

## NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN,

That the Charges upon all Coal, Culm, and other Articles, to be borne upon the Tennant Canal, from and after the 31st day of March, 1856, will be as follows:

	For Ten of 20 cwt.
For all Coal and Culm borne thereon to any place lying to the Westward of Crwmllyn Bridge, from any place whatsoever - - - - -	Eight Pence.
For all Coal and Culm borne thereon within the following limits (that is to say), the Junction Bridge opposite the Red Jacket Stone Quarry, and the Neath Canal, near Aberdulais - - - - -	Five Pence.
For all Coal and Culm borne thereon otherwise than as aforesaid - - - - -	Six Pence.
For all Iron Ore, Copper Ore, and other Ores, Ironstone, Limestone, and other Stones, and Manure - - - - -	Four Pence.
For all other Articles, a sum not exceeding - - - - -	Eight Pence.

Neath, March 1st, 1856.

By Order,

(Signed)

JOSEPH HINDE.

### *Notice of revised charges on the Tennant Canal - 1856*

It would appear from a note inside the cover of George Tennant's Account Book that private carriage of goods was permitted.

*"N,B, On the 27<sup>th</sup>. October 1824, the body of William Morgan, the Lock Keeper of the Neath Canal (who died at the Lock House near Dylais) was borne over the towing path of my Aqueduct for internment at Crynant and as is usual on such occasions to take some acknowledgement, as evidence that the load is private, Thomas Williams, my Lock keeper at Dylais, demanded and received one penny which he paid to me."*

This custom persisted and in 1890, four bodies crossed the 'akwedcok' through 'parmishon' still being charged 1d commission to carry the body, probably en route to Cadoxton churchyard.





**A reminder of warmer days and a functioning trip-boat!**



**Neath and Tennant Canals Trust.  
Council of Management 2009 – 2010.**

**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.