

SWANSEA CANAL SOCIETY
CYMDEITHAS CAMLAS ABERTAWE

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 14th June 2006
The Cross Community Centre Pontardawe 7.00pm

Chairman's Report

Treasurer's Report

Lynne Gent maintained and managed the Society's accounts in an excellent manner and was thanked by the Chair for her work over the past year.

Income

Grants	£0.00
Donations	£567.00
Membership subs.	154.00
Fund raising	£243.00
Interest on monies	£545.00
Total income for the year	£1509.00

Expenditure

Insurances	£834.54
Work boat purchase	£800.00
Postage	£69.18
Room hire at the Cross	£65.88
Stationary	£13.10
Affiliation of other societies	£53.50.
Fundraising costs	£42.25
Expences of committee	£51.21
Total expenditure	£1924.36

Assets at bank £13,005.22.

£10,000.00 (Annie Hopper legacy), which has been allocated toward the publication of the next book on the Valleys industrial heritage, in partnership with the RCAHMW during 2007.

Society's inventory.

Trip boat	£8,000.00.
Dell Quay Dory and engine	£1000-00
Turfors, wire ropes, lock access ramp	£200-00
Exhibition equipment/projector	£750.00.
Archive material and artefacts	£1200.00. The collection is not saleable.
Total inventory value	£11,150-00.

A full copy of the treasurer's Report is available to all members.

Secretary's Report.

The Society's work.

No restoration projects were initiated, but maintenance and workparties continued throughout the year. The Society presented BW with a list of 22 canal projects which it wished to see proceed. BW suggested the listing of individual projects to help bring about the Swansea Canal restoration. BW offered to cost the projects so that funding may be applied for suitable schemes.

Workparties. Only two litter picks were carried out during the year. One at Pontardawe, assisted by the Twinning Association of Pontardawe, and one at Ynysmeudwy in partnership with British Waterways. A skip-full of debris was removed from the canal and the adjacent land at Pontardawe thus greatly improving the visual aspect of the canal through the town. At Ynysmeudwy, the old refuse tip adjacent to the locks was cleared of broken glass, timber, metal, and concrete. A workparty evening was held at Pontardawe to prepare items for the Pontardawe Festival.

Trip boat "David Papa Thomas" still not working. Sadly, the Society's boat could not operate again the past year due to low water levels on the canal in Pontardawe. BW have had discussions on this issue with the canal society for the past five years, and have now said that repairs and alterations to the canal will be too costly. BW suggested that the Society sells its trip boat and purchases a smaller boat. The boat is a drain on the Society's finances at present with no financial return for the outlay of over £500.00 per annum insurance and maintenance costs. The Society receives no income from retaining the boat at Pontardawe.

It was unanimously agreed at the AGM for the Society to dispose of the craft. BW offered to broker the craft, which the Society accepted.

The members present at the AGM felt the Society should attempt to find a replacement trip boat to promote the canal for leisure uses.

Dell Quay Dory. The small boat has been purchased to show that a craft can still operate on the Swansea Canal. It is for members use only and not for public use. It has not yet been launched into the canal due to BW wanting several hundred pounds in mooring charges from the Society to operate the boat. After all the work the Society does to support BW and to promote their canal, a free licence would be in order. Discussions are ongoing.

Canal audit . A selective audit was carried out, concentrating on areas under threat from housing developments and encroachments at Trebanos, and from litter nuisances at Clydach and Ynysmeudwy. This monitors the condition of the areas around the canal and this feeds information into BW and the local authorities for them to take action if required. Discussion are ongoing with council and BW over encroachments and litter nuisances adjacent to the canal.

The Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Committee (IWAAC), Visited Swansea to gain first-hand information on the canal restoration projects in the area to enable them to update their 2003 Report. CR gave a presentation to the group in addition to leading a walk to visit the Swansea Canal. IWAAC emphasised the importance of the

35 mile three-canal system to tourism and recreation in South Wales. They were concerned by the lack of support and leadership for the project from British Waterways and the L/A's

Gift Aid. A scheme to improve the Society's finances whereby tax can be claimed back from the Inland Revenue for members who are in employment and who pay tax. It does not cost the member any money or work and the Society benefits. MH and JB completed this task. Not all forms have been returned by members, when all forms are accounted for they will be presented for tax returns.

Newsletters. Four were produced, including the Annual Report. Joint effort, with CR writing the articles and JB with MH posting and admin etc. We hope our membership finds the articles of interest.

Exhibitions. The Society put on three exhibitions for publicity purposes. Jude Biss located suitable venues such as libraries, and CR arranged the exhibitions. Several hundred persons attended those events.

Slide shows, seven were presented by CR in 2005 on the Swansea Canal, its history, its restoration, or its related industries. These were to OAP, WI, and historical societies. 334 persons attended those events. These do highlight the Society's work and are a good way of informing the interested public of what the Society does for the betterment of the community.

Membership has declined in the past year, and now stands at 123 paid up members compared to the 149 of the previous year. 25 members live outside the region. 50 are OAPs. One reason why membership has declined is probably the lack of progress on restoring the Swansea Canal over the past four years.

Events were better supported. The car treasure hunt in May was excellent and those participating had a good day out with considerable fun and amusements. This event was designed and organised by Meryl Hunt and Jude Biss. Thank you girls.

Cycle ride from Pontardawe to Swansea and return was less well attended, probably down to the inclement weather on the day.

Christmas social was enjoyable and gave members the opportunity of meeting new faces. The quiz raised quite a few laughs also.

One **walk** was organised, to copy Iolo's canal walk as appeared on television.

Eighteen persons enjoyed an interesting historical stroll.

Pontardawe Festival stall, Held in August. A weekend event that publicised the Society and its work, and raised money with a raffle.

Funding surgeries. MH attended a number of these events to obtain information on the types of funding available to volunteer societies such as ours.

Memberships. The Swansea Canal Society is a member of the Inland Waterways Association. Pontardawe Arena Project. NPTCVS. SCVS.

CVS support. The two volunteer services provide information on the funding opportunities to volunteer groups. This is excellent support for volunteers. The Society has not accessed the grants due to lack of information on project costs from BW.

Canals Regeneration Partnership. Meets four times a year at Swansea. The Society chairs the meetings and provides the secretariat. We organise all meetings, take and distribute minutes. The Partnership of the WDA, BW, EA, Neath Canal Company, NPTCBC, Swansea City, and the Neath and Tennant Canals Society, relies heavily on the Swansea Canal Society support. **There is still no concerted action by the Partners into restoring the three canals involved.**

All Party meetings. Held in Cardiff, four times a year. Grant Duncan, Clive Reed, and Julie Fallon attend for the Society. These meetings offer ideal networking opportunities to meet waterways managers, Assembly Members, and to discuss issues with other canal supporters. The APM provides a platform for speakers and waterways groups to give presentations on canal restoration, tourism projects, and environmental issues.

British Waterways.

The largest spend by BW during the year was on sluice and weir repairs at Trebanos and Ynysmeudwy. The work commenced in 2005, and continued into 2006. Estimated to cost £100,000-00. Planned future work for 2006 is redesigning the Ynysmeudwy overflow outlet, which was built after the canal breach in 1998. This has not proved to be a success and BW intend improving this structure in 2006/07.

BW carried out selective dredging at Clydach, removing silt from the canal channel and depositing it on the off-bank. This is cheap way of disposing of silt but one which is not effective in the long term, as it only clears a narrow canal channel which will silt up quite quickly in the future. The dredging extended from the aqueduct to the garden encroachments, and could not proceed any further. We hope BW will resolve the encroachment problems and continue the dredging of the rest of the canal at Clydach.

BW intends to carry out a property survey along the off-bank of the canal between Clydach and Ynysmeudwy to prove their boundaries. The Society has complained to BW on many occasions about the garden encroachments and litter dumped behind gardens, this has encouraged BW to take action to try to resolve those issues.

A water-levels team was established in June 2005 to look at the low water problems besetting the operation of the Society trip boat at Pontardawe. This was in response to the Society's continual complaints of not being able to operate the trip boat.

NPTCBC

UDP. This took up a considerable amount of Society secretarial time in negotiations with the Council, checking planning guidelines, working with the IWA, meeting council officers, writing letters of objections, notifying the membership, and attending the Public Enquiry.

Mrs Holland, the Inspector, pointed out the ambiguity of NPT Policies for recreation and heritage, against the Council wishes of not supporting the Society's aims of protecting the canal corridor to Ystalyfera.

There has been no decisions from NPTCBC regarding the outcome of the Inspectors decision on whether the Society's case was proven, or will be accepted or not. The UDP's are to be superseded by local Development Plans(LDP) later this year.

NPTCBC Valleys Strategy. A Draft initiative for the NPT Valleys, including the Swansea Valley. However, the Strategy failed to include the Swansea Canal in the recreation, heritage, and tourism elements. The Society wrote letters of objection and enlisted the support of the community councils, and AM's in the area. The Society was later informed that there had been a number of letters supporting the canal project.

The Final Report is expected to be published by early July 2006.

NPT Planning Applications. NPTCBC continue to send copies of all planning applications to the Society that are near the Swansea Canal. This is good practice by the council in working with community groups. Several planning applications were received for Trebanos. A number were objected to, the reason given by the Society was encroaching into the canal.

City and County of Swansea. The county's intentions are to re-open the closed Coed Gwilym Heritage Centre at Clydach. The Society is assisting the council with the design of the layout, information, images, and artefacts.

The County is also supporting the Clydach Development Trust to improve the village. Part of this work is the enhancement of a small part of the canal at Clydach. This will entail environmental improvements such as tree planting etc.

Swansea UDP. The Society is researching the document to ensure the canal and the canal corridor is protected inside the Swansea City boundaries.

The council yard at Clydach, which is built over lock number 7 is becoming vacant in 2007, this might give us the opportunity to restore lock 7 at this location.

Serving officers agreed to serve for a further year in existing capacities.
Clive Reed.

Dates for your diaries.

September 14th. Slide show on the Swansea Canal at The Cross Community Centre Pontardawe at 7.00pm. Come along and learn about your canal, its history, and its restoration.

Committee meetings at The Cross Community Centre 7.00pm – 4th October. 8th November. 6th December. All members welcome.

Christmas dinner details to be announced soon, probably 18th December.