

SWANSEA CANAL SOCIETY

CYMDEITHAS CAMLAS ABERTAWE

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NEWSLETTER INFO. PLEASE KEEP ME 12 SPARE COPIES FOR DISTRIBUTION TO NEW MEMBERS ETC.

Membership Subscriptions 2004

Subs are now due. Thanks to everyone for supporting our work last year and previous years. Without your help the society could not function, your commitment is as valued as that of the officers of the society who meet monthly to organise and to manage the work of the society. The membership period has been changed from January to January each year to follow the financial year instead which is April to April. The amounts due are unchanged from last year. A membership form with details of fees is enclosed for those who not yet paid. A number of members have already sent in their remittances early. If so please disregard this reminder. A number of members forgot to send in their subs last year and it would help the society if they paid this year and last years dues. If your membership form is marked with a cross it is a gentle reminder that you forgot. Please continue to support our work. Your money is important to keep the society functioning. The running costs are very high. The insurances the society has to take out for holding events, workparties, litterpicks, cycle rides, walks and for operating the trip boat are quite heavy. Society insurance is £332-00. Trip boat insurance £218-66. IWA membership £38-50. This has to be funded by the society members, **a total cost of £589-16.**

Events for the year.

18 April. Workparty on trip boat at Pontardawe. Meet 10.30am. Cleaning boat, repairs to equipment, litter picking.

9 May. Repairs to boat engine etc at Pontardawe. Meet 10.30am.

15 May. Cycle ride from Pontardawe to Swansea Marina following route of the canal. Meet Cwmtawe school bus park 10.00am.

27 June. Canal walk Ynysmeudwy to Cwmdu Pontardawe, an environmental heritage walk. Meet Ynysmeudwy canal bridge 10.00am.

15 August. Car treasure hunt somewhere. Meet Pontardawe 10.30am.

19 September. Canal walk along Brec and Mon Canal. Location to be confirmed at a later date. Meet at Brecon 10.30am.

Meetings.

February 25. March 22. April 21. May 26. All at the Cross Pontardawe 7.00pm.

The AGM is being held on Wednesday 26th May. If anyone wishes to nominate a member for a committee post or to stand themselves please submit names to the secretary ASAP. Minutes of the last AGM will be circulated at the meeting. Copies can be requested from the secretary.

Historical Snippets.

The following was supplied by Mr T Joseph of St. Leonard's-On-Sea East Sussex, the son of Mr Isaac Joseph the person named in a parchment of the Royal Humane Society.

The testimonial reads *That this Honorary Testimonial of this Society inscribed on Parchment be hereby given to Isaac Joseph for having on the 16th September 1899 gone to the rescue of J.E. Williams who was in imminent danger of drowning in the Swansea Canal at Clydach and whose life he gallantly saved.*

Mr Isaac Joseph was 18 years old at the time he rescued Mr Williams from the canal.

Cambrian newspaper 23 March 1877. Page 8.

Sir,- Kindly allow me space in your valuable and widely circulated journal to say just a word or two with reference to the supply of water to the Swansea Canal. There is (as everybody is pretty well aware) a small steamboat belonging to Messrs Cory, Yeo and Co, which tows coal barges up and down the canal. Now, as long as this little steam-boat is at work, there is plenty of water, but as soon as her work is over, and she is laid up, down goes the water, until the bottoms of the barges sink into the mud, and it is painful at times to see how the poor horses are worked, pulling these barges through the mud. Now, Mr Editor, since everybody who trades upon the Swansea Canal has the same dues to pay, I don't think it fair that such favouritism should be shown. Trusting this will be the means of obtaining a regular depth of water at the canal so that coal barges drawn by horses may have the same chance as those drawn by Messrs Cory, Yeo and Co's steam tug.

I remain, Sir, yours truly.

A Lover of Justice.

This is the first mention of a steam boat operating on the Swansea Canal.

British Waterways Reorganisation

The Swansea Canal is now managed in a new canal region known as the Wales and Border Counties Waterways with its headquarters at Northwich in Cheshire. Previously the Swansea Canal formed part of the South Wales and West of England Canals Region. There has been a change of management with Julie Sharman as General Manager, David Baldacchino as Operations Manager, Ron Kaiser Estate Manager, Alan Powell Service Manager and Wendy Capelle as Finance Manager. Richard Dommett is involved in the Social and Economic Development Department. British Waterways have two key stages in its strategy for the next ten years.

1. Widening public awareness and generating a desire to visit canals.
2. Ensuring that canals are of the highest standard and exceed visitor expectations.

Locally – Kevin Phillips is responsible for maintenance. British Waterways projections for the Swansea Canal include safety works on the locks number 6, 8, 9, 12, 13. Improvements to sluices and weirs estimated to cost £200-000. Repairs to the river embankment at Trebanos costed at £100-000.

The Swansea Canal Society welcomes the spend on maintenance on the Swansea Canal and hopes that this will increase in the future years and help to improve the rather dilapidated appearance of the canal at present.

Coed Gwilym Canal Centre.

We reported in past issues the break-in at the canal centre at Clydach in May 2002 by young vandals. The insurance company has paid the society £195-00 for the losses it sustained at that time, replacement value for historic items that are really irreplaceable. The damage to council property which included photographs, display items and artefacts, light fittings and damage to the building was estimated at £12,000-00. Of much more concern is the police attitude to vandalism in the locality. Letters to the South Wales Police at Swansea expressing the society's concern at the lack of prosecution of youths apprehended at the crime scene did not bear much fruit.

Two youths were apprehended in the building by South Wales Police Officers. ie. Caught in the act. The parents were not brought to the scene of crime to see the damage their children had caused. The local youth Offending Team member was not involved. After three letters to the South Wales Police the society ascertained that the two youths were only cautioned and

were not going to be prosecuted or shamed. **A caution for over £12,000-00 of damage.**

In the words of the Divisional Commander :-

The youths have not been allowed to get away with the crime.

They received a formal caution.

This is a legitimate means of disposing of a crime.

We leave it to you to make your own judgement. Personally, this case does not inspire much confidence in the police force.

Clive Reed. February 2004.
