

## Diary Dates

Friends Meetings to be held during the Autumn and Winter on the 4th. Tuesday of each month, normally alternating with the Gloucester & Hereford branch of the Inland Waterways Association, who hope to arrange meetings on the 2nd. Tuesday.

Advance notice is as follows for the Friends' programme so far arranged to the end of the year, so make a note in your Diary:

**Oct.17** Sydney Brewis will talk about Hull Trawlers.  
This should be something different!!

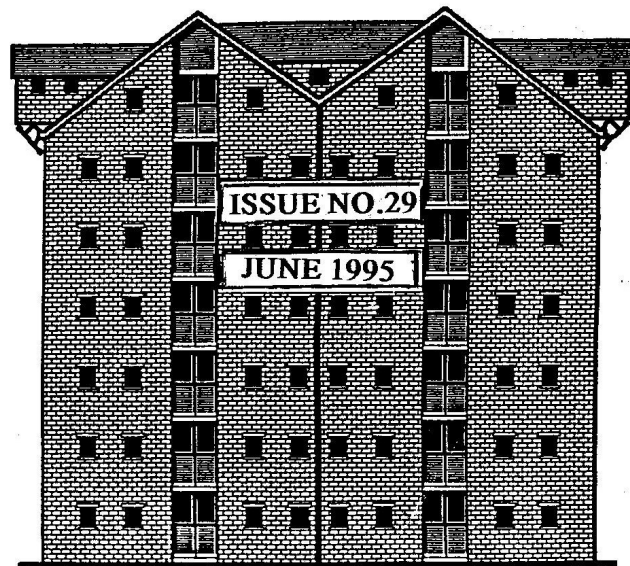
**Nov.21** Speaker to be arranged.

**Dec.19** Members Night - See 'Think Christmas'- page 15.

All Friends Meetings are normally held in the Museum's Schools Room, entered by the grey stable door in the building to the left of the Museum Main Entrance. Please note however, that we cannot use the Museum, for the October and November meetings as a major exhibition will be staged in the Schools Room. These two meetings will be held in the Friends Meeting House, Greyfriars, off Southgate St. in the turning by St. Mary de Crypt Church. As parking in this road is not encouraged, suggested alternatives are NCP Blackfriars Car Park, entrance from Ladybellgate St. or in the Docks below the new County Court Buildings and walk. All meetings start at 7.30pm. When the Museum is available as the venue, use Southgate St. Entrance to the car park.

No information is currently available on IWA meetings, but it is hoped to include it in the next Issue of Llanthony Log. Friends are welcome at these Meetings, which are usually held at the Tewkesbury Marina Yacht Club which is off the Bredon Road B4080 on the left, 250 yards north of the junction with the A38.

# Llanthony Log



Newsletter of the Friends of the  
National Waterways Museum

The 'Friends' is Registered Charity No. 800282

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## EDITORIAL

I wish to congratulate all those people, both Museum staff and members of the Friends, who worked so hard to make the 1995 Boat & Watersports Jumble on 2nd April another successful event. There is more about this in the AGM Report on Page 4.

Having included in the last Issue an article about filming activities in Gloucester Docks which involved the square-rigged ship 'Maria Asumpta', it came as a shock to me, to Museum personnel and no doubt to many members of the 'Friends', to hear about the tragic accident which occurred off Padstow which resulted in the loss of this vessel with one of her crew drowned and two more missing, presumed drowned. On behalf of the Friends I wish to extend our sympathy to the relatives and friends of these three and to the surviving members of the crew at this sad time. A Memorial Service, organised by Museum and Docks Co. staff, was held on June 5th. on the quayside adjacent to the berth used by the ship during her time in the Docks. The Service was conducted by the recently appointed chaplain of the Mariners' Church in the Docks, the Rev. Stephen Gwilt. The Queen Boadicea II was used as a floating pulpit. The Service was well attended and included some of the crew, including the owner - Capt. Mark Litchfield. Flowers were laid on the Quayside in memory of those lost in the accident.

On a happier note, I wish to congratulate the Museum on receiving an 'Investor in People' Award in March. The plaque commemorating this achievement is now mounted on the wall alongside the entrance door to the Museum Office building.

Finally, you will probably notice that this is a slimmer Newsletter than usual, but a couple of anticipated contributions have not yet come to hand. I am always pleased to receive any article, even if only a paragraph or so in length, handwritten is acceptable, on any topic of waterways interest. Contributions from any Friends not local to Gloucester would be particularly welcome. In fact, this Issue contains one such contribution.

A.L.G.

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An acknowledgement of Friends' help at the 5th. Boat & Watersports Jumble, from Les Dalton.

A couple of dozen Friends turned out on Sunday, 2nd. April 1995 to help at the fifth Boat & Watersports Jumble and contributed greatly to its success by selling tickets at the four gates.

They also helped in many other ways and thanks are due to: Jim Andrews, David Avery, Kath Avery, Barbara Bagge, Alan Barton, Liz Barton, Mildred Bramley, Frank Colls, Hugh Conway-Jones, Les Dalton, Dorothy Davis, Alan Garnett, Tony Gregory, Derek Hall, Judy Hall, Bob Ingram, Hilda Lockwood, Mary McGhee, Derek Shorthouse, Nicola Sparrow, Phyl Tovar, Peter Wallace, Judith Woollam and Paul Woollam. (Apologies to anyone who may have inadvertently been omitted. - Editor).

## Hugh Conway-Jones reports on the AGM - 2nd. May 1995.

At the AGM in May, Les Dalton was elected Chairman, and he immediately paid tribute to the effective work of outgoing Chairman Peter Wallace who will be remaining on the Committee. Earlier Peter had thanked the Committee members for all their hard work during the year, adding special thanks to Richard Treffa and John Millican who are standing down this year. Their places are being filled by Ken Dunn and Eric Sturt who are involved in dredger restoration and Kennet operation respectively.

While presenting accounts for 1994, the Treasurer announced that provisional accounts for the 1995 Boat & Watersports Jumble showed that the proceeds were likely to be around £7,900 which is more than 20% higher than last year. He thought that this outcome owed much to the excellent spirit of cooperation that had existed between the Friends and the Museum staff.

The meeting went on to approve the Committee's recommendation that the family subscription rate should be increased slightly - the rates for the coming year will be £8 for an individual and £14 for a family.

The meeting also approved a new paragraph for the Constitution allowing the Committee to award Honorary Life Membership to members who have given exceptional service and are severing their active connection.

### First Honorary Membership Awarded.

Following approval at the AGM of the new category of Honorary Life Membership, the Committee were delighted to nominate Ian Parsons as the first recipient of this honour. Ian was a very regular restoration volunteer with a particular interest in the railway-related projects like the turntables and the fireless locomotive. He had also been a member of the planning group which set up the Friends in 1988 and was on the Committee for several years. Ian moved away from the area just over a year ago, but the award of Honorary Life Membership means that he will continue to receive Llanthony Log and he will always be welcome to visit the Museum.

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### New Chairman of Trustees.

Due to declining health, Dr. Alan Robertson has resigned as Chairman of the Trustees who are responsible for overseeing the running of the Museum. Dr. Robertson took over as Chairman after the Trust's first year and guided it skilfully until 1994. He will be succeeded by David Wain, who has a wide experience of canals and of museums. His family started one of the first hire-boat businesses on the canals back in the 1930's, he ran the canal museum at Llangollen for many years, he has served as Chairman of the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council and he is a trustee of the Boat Museum at Ellesmere Port.

-4-

## An Update on Friends' Donations to Special Projects.

### a). Schools Room Computer Appeal Reaches its Target.

Thanks to donations from Friends sent in with subscription renewals, over £1,000 has been raised to provide a computer and appropriate software for use in the Schools Room. With this money, the Museum has purchased a computer of the type commonly used in schools, and programs suitable for use by schools are being tried out on it.

### b). A Transparent Screen for the Dredger Main Steam Engine.

*(Although brief mention was made on this proposal in the article on Restoration Work in the March 1995 Issue of the Log, fuller details were unfortunately omitted from the Log. The following information provided by Hugh Conway-Jones rectifies this omission. Editor)*

Following the successful appeal to provide a computer in the Schools Room, the Friends Committee has now agreed to invite donations towards erecting a screen in the dredger engine room so that visitors will be able to watch the engine working. At present, visitors cannot be allowed near while the engine is running because of the danger - especially to young children - from moving parts. The proposal is to provide a screen, probably made of laminated glass, so that visitors passing along the engine room gangway can watch in safety. There will also be interpretation information so that they can properly appreciate what is going on.

There is no formal cost estimate for the screen at this stage, but Committee members were unanimous in backing the proposal - so much of the Friends' effort has gone into the restoration that it is considered important that the end product should provide as much interest to visitors as possible. The interpretation information will include an acknowledgement of the role of the Friends in the work of restoration and in fund raising.

For at least next year, therefore, subscription reminders will include an invitation to make a donation towards the cost of this screen and the accompanying interpretation information. Further details of the design and the estimated cost will be published in due course.

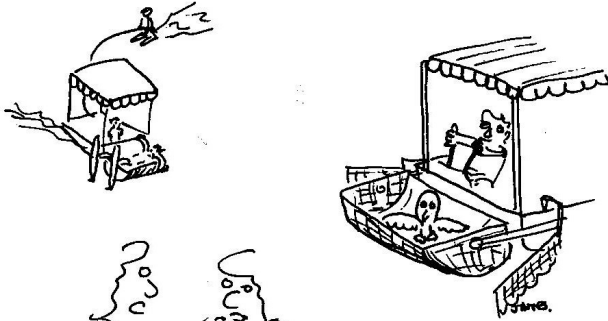
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### What's It Really For?

A new Heath-Robinson type contraption has appeared in the Barge Arm near to the Museum, and there is much speculation as to its real purpose. It has a flat-bottomed plastic hull with a blue and white awning, it is powered by an outboard motor and it has a huge perforated scoop at the bow. This can be raised and lowered by a hydraulic cylinder, and further cylinders control the position of perforated panels either side of the scoop. (continued on Page 6),

-5-

The official reason for its presence is to collect up the floating rubbish that can otherwise become an eyesore in the down-wind corner of each dock. But eagle-eyed observers have quickly realised that it must also have some other purpose as it is fitted with a fine set of navigation lights. Can it be that someone has established a secret elver farm along the canal? Are smugglers leaving contraband floating in the canal for nocturnal collection? Please let the Editor have any other suggestions, and the most unlikely ones will be published. - H.C.J.



IT WAS SO USEFUL FOR THE SEAGULLS  
WE HAD TO GET A SECOND ONE  
FOR THE WATERSKIERS.

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### From Cabin Boy to Captain: The River Severn to the Seven Seas.

By Anne Oliver.

Anyone christened "Festus Agrippa" deserves to be remembered for posterity and the Museum has recently acquired a fascinating collection of documents and artefacts relating to the life of one such named man. Captain F.A. Roberts is proudly remembered by his offspring for his prowess as a master mariner sailing the world's seas on lofty tall ships and, in particular, for the tale of great performances in the famous sailing clipper runs. He seems a curious subject, therefore, to hold interest and merit display space in a museum of the inland waterways. When the numerous documents relating to Festus were offered to the Museum by his grandson, however, a close examination of the evidence they contained brought to light a little-acknowledged aspect of the history of the Port of Gloucester.

The collection is a remarkably complete record of the training days of a Master Mariner. It comprises 14 letters of reference, one certificate of discharge and training notes on navigation.

(continued on Page 7).

The actual Port of Gloucester issued Master's Certificates as well as the sailor's personal possessions of telescope, sextant and rope gauge. Another navigational instrument, his ship's "log" (*a device for measuring the ship's speed through the water - Editor*), may be loaned to the Museum in the near future.

A local lad, Festus was born in Eastington in 1870, moving to Saul in 1884 and starting work as a cabin boy in the same year. His subsequent career progression up to the time of becoming Master Mariner at the age of 26, is charted clearly in the documents and support the theory that the Port of Gloucester served as an important recruiting and training ground for the future captains of tall ships. A "Certificate of Discharge" lists the vessels which he served on between the age of 14 and 18, all of which are classed as coastal trade. Five out of the seven are vessels registered at Gloucester. After this period, letters of reference confirming service and good conduct chart a gradual promotion in rank matching the increase in the scope of the voyage. In 1890 for example, Festus served on the 765 ton vessel "Archer" as Second Mate, journeying to Oregon in a trip that lasted a year. His next service was on the barque "Dumfriesshire", 1221 tons, on which he was First Mate, voyaging from Sharpness to Sydney to San Francisco. In 1896 Festus became Master Mariner, having passed the necessary exams and gained the necessary experience. The next 10 years were spent sailing the high seas.

In 1906, after a lengthy illness abroad he bowed to the concerns of his family who considered coasting work to be safer and gave up the long trips, buying the ketch "Hibernica" jointly with his wife. It is curious that this final stage of his career sees him come full circle back to the sailing of small coastal vessels. It is also ironic that whilst on such a 'safe' short journey to Ireland, helping out on an aunt's ketch, the "Beatrice Hannah", tragedy struck and the vessel was sunk in a storm of 1910, all crew being lost.

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(The following very welcome contribution to Llanthony Log comes from Jan Starkey - a Birmingham 'Friend' - and two children from St. Luke's School).

### LEE BANK COMMUNITY MURAL.

Where is Lee Bank? And what has a mural to do with MWM? I will endeavour to explain.

Lee Bank is an inner-city area of Birmingham. The mural will be on the wall of a pedestrian subway which goes under Bristol Street Motors. It has been painted by children from six of the local schools, each school doing a panel on a topic of local historical interest (transport, buildings, industry, etc.). An artist was engaged (funded by Central T.V.) to advise and coordinate. The finished mural will be "unveiled" at an opening ceremony on June 21st.

I teach at St. Luke's Primary School, which is one of the schools involved. My Year 3 class (7-8 year olds) was chosen to paint our panel, and for our theme we chose the canals of central Birmingham - hence the waterways connection.

(continued on Page 8),

The first stage in our project was to find out as much as we could about canals, past and present.

We went for a walk along a section of canal with our sketch books and cameras, looking at locks, bridges, boats and architecture (old and new, including the NIA and ICC), we read books, watched videos, looked at artefacts, in fact found out everything we could about canals - the only thing we couldn't fit in was a visit to Gloucester to the Museum. Our classroom is full of roses and castles, horse brasses, old maps, paintings, photographs and much more - no one visiting is left in any doubt what we have been finding out about.

The whole class was involved in the research and in producing sketches. We talked to the artist who helped us draw up a large plan, which consisted of a map of the area we had visited with our drawings placed on it. Only six of the children actually got covered in paint because we had to work on our panel alongside others in a small room at Lea Mason Secondary School.

The children involved have produced a display about their work for the rest of the school and for visitors. It consists of a narrative written on the word processor by two of the children and illustrated using photographs, sketches and maps. This is what they wrote:

### Painting the mural

by Shabana Yasmin and Michael Harris, Y3 St. Luke's.

The very first thing we did was Mrs. White went abseiling and she raised money.

Then our class walked along by the canal. We sketched and then Mrs. Starkey took some photographs and Mr. Gilbert took some photographs. (cont. on Page )

Then Paula (the artist) came to meet us and find out about our mural. We finished our rough mural on a big piece of paper and a few days later we went to Lea Mason and Paula sketched our map on our board. Paula made a mistake and she sorted out the mistake and then we coloured the land in yellow.

We did the boarder with magic string and we pinched the string when it was on the border.

Then we helped Lillian de Lissa to do their border. While we did the border the little children were quiet in the room and then they painted their border in blue and they coloured their road in yellow.

When we did our border we did some diamonds and in the corners we did some roses. When we did the diamonds we put masking tape on the edges to make it straight. We coloured the diamonds in red, blue and yellow.

Then we drew a few pictures. We did some horses and some bollards and some bridges and locks and some narrowboats. We scribbled on the back of the sheets then we traced on hard to see it on the board. For some we used the projector. Then we did some water cans and pots and some people.

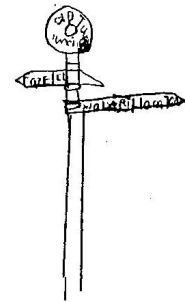
Then we painted everything and then Mrs. Starkey took photographs of us in front of the board.

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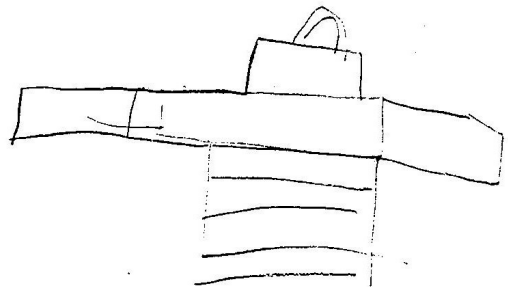
The class who did the mural was Y3 but not all the class. It was only Simon, Fiona, Michael, Sohun, Shabana and Oluwayimika.

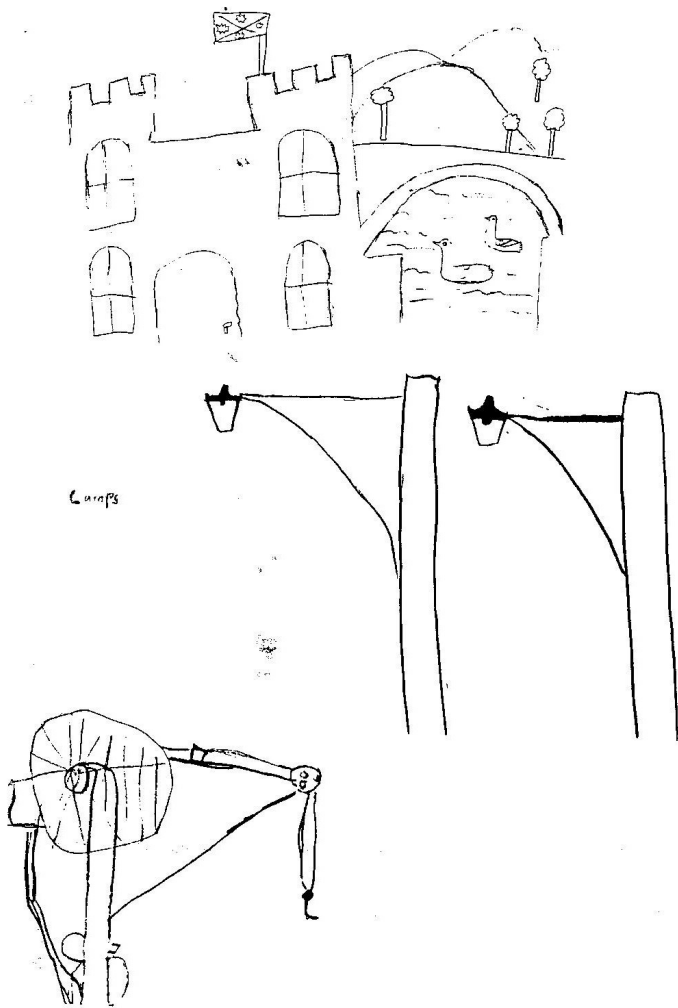
The mural is going up in the subway to let the people look at it. You will be able to see it after a special ceremony in June.

(The following sketches were produced by the children - Editor).



Sohun





## Steam on the Severn - Part 1.

*An early attempt to run passenger services is described by Hugh Conway-Jones.*

Following the success of the first commercially viable steam packet in 1812, several entrepreneurs around the country tried to set up similar services, and the Gloucester Journal carried reports of one local attempt towards the end of 1814.

A steamer with two cabins for passengers was tried out on the Severn in August, when it was found that she could travel from Gloucester to Worcester against both wind and current in about seven hours and return in about four and a half.

Early in October the vessel was advertised for hire temporarily. "The steam boat that has been for some time on our river may, for a few days this week be hired as a pleasure boat to sail up the River Severn, either for whole or half days, by any parties of ladies and gentlemen who may wish to enjoy such an excursion and the many picturesque views on both sides of the Severn. In addition to her steam engine, a sail is provided to increase her speed. Guard irons and ropes are placed around the cabin deck. Price for a party for three hours, in the morning or in the afternoon, one guinea - for the whole day, two guineas. Application may be made at Kendall's Warehouse."

By mid-October, an advertisement announced the start of regular services. "Charlotte Steam Boat. Gloucester and Worcester Packet. The public are now respectfully informed that this packet is now established on the River Severn to convey passengers and goods to and from the above cities and sails from Gloucester on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings at nine o'clock and returns from Worcester at the same hour on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Fares from Gloucester to Worcester 4s cabin and 2s steerage. Passengers are requested to take their places (previous to the packet's sailing) at Kendall's Warehouse, Gloucester, and at the Sign of the Wherry, Quay St. Worcester, where goods are also booked for the above conveyance. The cabin passengers in a cabin neatly fitted up will be accommodated with a good fire during the winter, and the steerage passengers will find their cabin sufficiently warm and sheltered."

Towards the end of November, a second steamer was introduced to give a daily service in each direction. "Gloucester and Worcester Daily Packets. The public are respectfully informed that two packets are now established on the River Severn to convey passengers and goods to and from the above cities, from which they sail every morning (Sundays excepted) at nine o'clock and arrive at their respective destinations the same afternoon, and at Gloucester in sufficient time for the Bristol coaches. Fares from Gloucester to Worcester 5s cabin 3s steerage. The rise in fares is found absolutely necessary as the prices now taken have not paid the expenses of the voyage."

The steamer Charlotte was probably the one of that name that had operated services between Bristol and Bath in the previous year. In Grahame Farr's *West Country Passenger Steamers*, she is described as being 28 tons with a four horse-power engine built for Theodore Lawrance, a Bristol attorney. The second steamer was probably Hope, which Farr notes was also built for Lawrance but "on a larger scale and improved principles." Unfortunately, it seems that even with the increased fares there was not enough income, and the venture soon came to an end.

This article is a combined contribution from Dave McDougall and Ron Williams who is a member of the Wednesday 'Gang' of the Friends.

## CONTAINER TRAFFIC (1).

Visitors to the Museum may have wondered what the large blue box is that has been wandering about the yard and on the dockside; well, its not a mobile home as someone suggested, but one of BW's "mixed traffic containers" of the '50's that has been undergoing restoration by yours truly ie. Ron Williams.

It was decided last November that the time was ripe, no pun intended, to repair the fibreglass and steelwork. The doors were removed and all the steelwork was replaced together with the frame around the door opening. It was quite some job removing screws that had been in place for nearly 40 years. The metalwork will now last considerably more than that, as it has all been zinc sprayed with 5 or 6 coats of paint applied.

The fibreglass took a bit longer to repair, consuming many tins of car body filler and glassfibre matting. Unfortunately some of the filler was pink and some grey, blue not being available. However with the doors open you will not see much of the outside, as the container is going to be part of an exhibit in the narrowboat "Wye".

"Wye" was built in 1958, one of a group of 6 boats, designed to accommodate 10 of these 5ft. cubes. The containers were the brain-child of Mr. Ralph Kirkham, Manager of the Willerby Plastics firm. Subsequent digging through archive information has brought to light that CCS 14 is in fact a BW serial number "Continental Container Service No.14". The larger 5 ton containers had similar numbers, so it was possible that the 2 ton containers may have had trips abroad.

## CONTAINER TRAFFIC (2).

The other, larger, blue box in the yard, and which at the moment is the steam crane coal store, is the 5 ton version of the continental container. Our example is Serial Number 4219. They were never used to capacity, as most of BW cranes were of 4 ton SWL. About 100 were built at Hull, and 3 fitted very neatly on the BW articulated Scammells of that time.

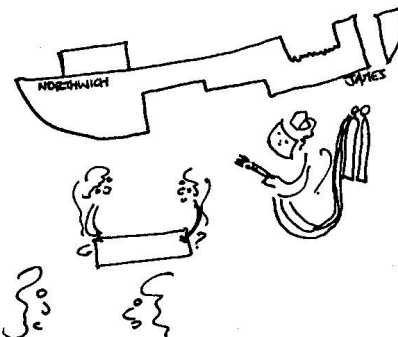
The majority of traffic was from Manchester and Yorkshire industries via Hull and Goole to all European North Sea ports, a small proportion being from Birmingham. The scheme was launched from BW's Dock St. depot at Leeds on January 1st. 1959 much to the chagrin of BR who only had in use then the heavy wood and steel containers and maintained that nothing else was suitable.

These boat containers were also built by Willerby Plastics, and the service was based on the Humber waterways. They were fitted at the factory, loaded on to BW lorries, taken to the nearest barge canal, transhipped and the barges would then proceed to Hull or Goole, where they were loaded into ships. At the beginning, Scandinavia was the main destination, but in the 7 years or so that the containers were in use they travelled to most European ports.

(continued on Page 13),

One concept was that they could be loaded and sealed by HM Customs at the factory, thereby facilitating the export of many goods but it was defeated by the insistence of Hull dockers of opening the containers, thereby invalidating Customs seals, and direct outside loading was objected to and they had to be double handled.

Consequently the service never became very popular and did not attract the business that BW had hoped for. With the growth of lorry transport and the aforementioned problems, the service had folded by mid-1966 and another brilliant idea 'bit the dust'.



" ACTUALLY AFTER THE  
REFIT THE AIM IS TO PUT  
THE BITS WHICH ARE LEFT IN  
WYE'S CONTAINER "

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Peter Wallace gives the result of "Name the Narrowboat 'X'"  
Competition in the last Llanthony Log.

X = MILDRED.

The six foot long model of the narrowboat which I constructed for the 'Roses & Castles' exhibition has been beautifully painted by Tony Lewery and duly named 'MILDRED'. The nomination for the name was entered by Betty Conder, who suggested that the boat should named after MILDRED BRAMLEY who has done so much at the Museum as an active Friend. The sub-reason given was that Mildred was an expert at getting into small places, such as boilers. The adjudicators were unanimous in deciding that this was the winning nomination and the bottle of champagne was duly presented to Betty at the AGM. Mildred was taken aback at the news, but responded superbly to the dedication and applause.

Expenditure of Funds raised by the Friends.

The successful fund-raising activities carried out by the Friends - particularly the annual Boat & Watersports Jumble event - has considerably assisted the Museum in its work over the past years. Any requests from the Museum for such financial assistance always have to be agreed by the Committee and some items recently approved, which may be of interest to the Friends, are given below:

1.	Delivery of ROF and Midland railway wagons, and purchase of tarpaulin and spare wagon springs	£435.50
2.	Fabrication of new door frames for fibreglass container destined to be an exhibit on Wye	£197.65
3.	Purchase of new cloths for Oak	£1490.22
4.	Purchase of materials and welding for gang-plank for Sabrina V.	£162.54
5a.	Purchase of timber for replacing flooring on work-flat Hesketh,	
5b.	Transport of Atherstone crane,	
5c.	Purchase of books on the Gloucester Wagon Works and on Victorian life in the Black Country,	
5d.	Purchase of wiring and electrical fittings for the containerisation exhibit in Wye.	
	Total for 5a-5d	£274.33
6.	Specialist work and purchase of materials for the dredger, including repairs to main winch crankshaft, new layshaft, paint, lubricating oil and belting materials.	£553.37
	Total payment authorised	<u>£3113.61</u>

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THINK CHRISTMAS 1995.

William Rowley will be delighted if you can help with a contribution for the above event on 19th. December.

The Members' Night held before Christmas 1994 was considered by many to be a success. We had two videos, two short slide presentations and a musical recital from Peter Wallace on a bass viol which he had made himself.

There have been suggestions that we do something similar in December 1995, (subject to the Committee's approval). If we do, now is the time to start thinking about a contribution. It might be an idea to finish that glorious piece of knitting you started last winter and tell us about it, or that model you started. Don't forget to take your camera on holiday, and use it. You might get some pictures you can share with us. It is an informal evening so there is no need to feel self-conscious about your contribution. It is a chance to show your hidden talents and share a passion.

So 'THINK CHRISTMAS' - it would be good to be inundated with contributions!

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National Monument Record at Swindon.

The NMR's excellent archive of text and photographs relevant to our national heritage will be open on selected Saturdays as well as on weekdays. The search rooms will be open from 10.00 to 16.00 on 17 June, 15 July, 19 August, 16 September, 21 October, 18 November and 16 December. Material stored in their archives will only be available by prior arrangement, and anyone planning a visit should 'phone in advance on 01793 414600. For further details, contact Hugh Conway-Jones on Gloucester (01452) 619679. - H.C.-J.

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