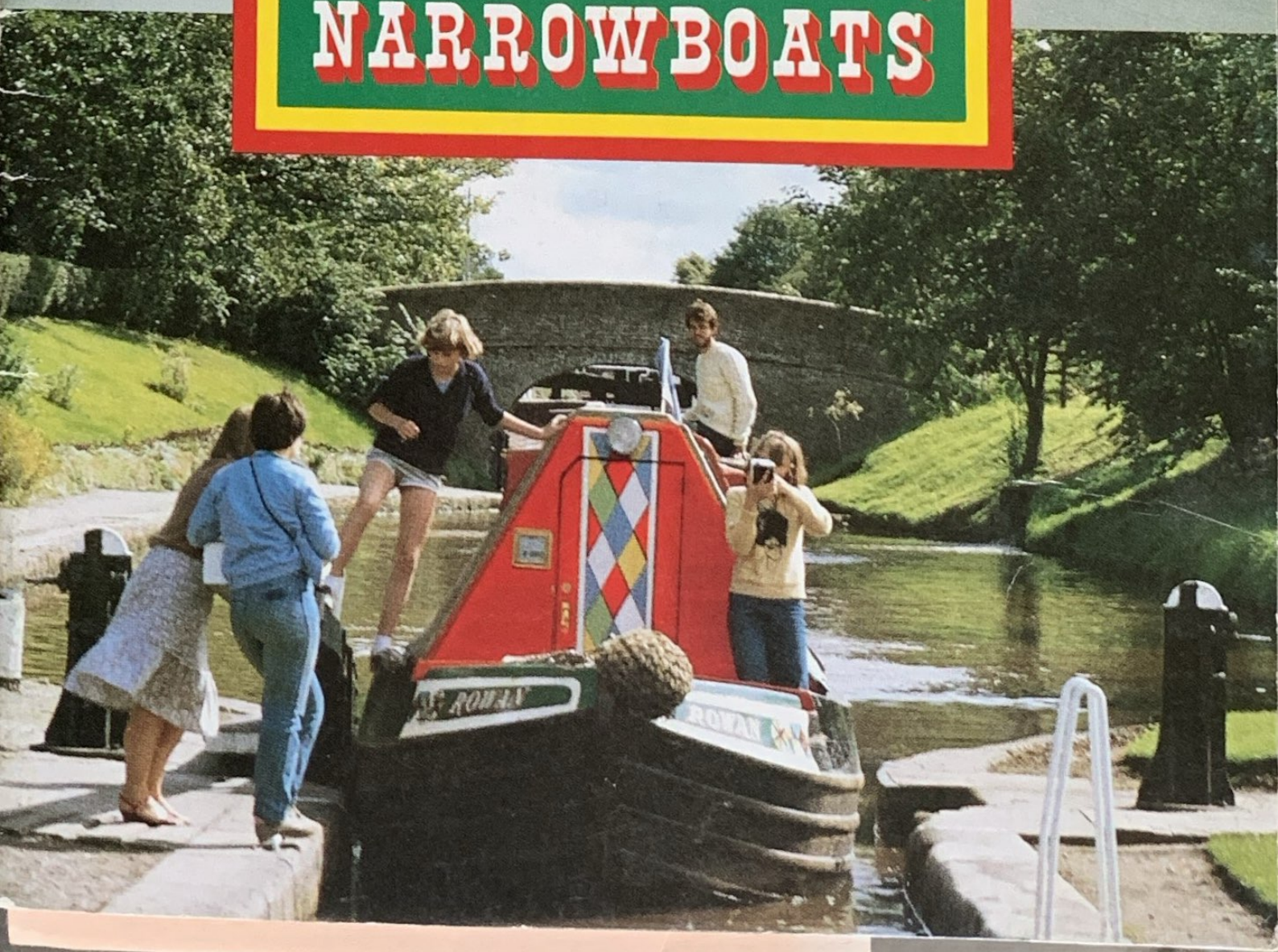


Comfortable holidays on unique  
traditional-style boats



# MIDDLEWICH NARROWBOATS





For families – there's always plenty to do.



For groups – room for all on our big 12-berth boats.



For the enthusiast – they don't come much more traditional than 'Maple' ... or 'Holly'.



An enjoyable holiday ...



... for all!

## What's so Good about a Canal Holiday?

It's difficult to know where to begin. Perhaps the most immediately obvious thing is the pace – maximum speed is 4 mph, and the twisting, narrow meanderings of many of these fascinating old waterways ensures that you can't go faster even if you want to.

So, no rush, no pressure – in fact you leave your everyday life firmly behind you. Slow enough to watch the heron as it wheels away ahead on its enormous wings or the brilliant flash of the kingfisher. Slow enough to really appreciate the beautiful countryside, well away from normal travelling routes, then to decide to stop in an attractive country village you are passing through, or at one of the hundreds of pretty canalside pubs. This slow speed makes getting into trouble very difficult, but if you do need assistance you will find canal boaters the friendliest and most helpful of people.

Also freedom to come and go as you please and moor mostly where you like – no traffic wardens here! You have a choice of over 2000 miles of inter-connected waterways to explore. Flexibility as well – there are no 'hotel-style' restrictions. You can bring the baby, the dog or even the budgerigar, and change your plans to suit yourself whenever you like.

You steer your own boat and work your own locks, like boat people have done for over 200 years. This is easy, but if it is new to you we will give you instructions in the simple procedures involved. If you don't fancy this you can laze, possibly sunbathing on the cabin roof and watching the scenery slowly slide by. You will pass over great high aqueducts, under hundreds of beautifully shaped stone or wrought iron bridges, and through tunnels, the only contact with the outside world being the slowly enlarging point of light ahead.

Being Britain, it does rain occasionally of course, but your boat is snug and dry with heated cabins and a fully equipped kitchen to help keep you warm inside as well!

You are on an adventure holiday (but in comfort), travelling back in time 200 years. Most things on the canals have changed little in that time and history is everywhere, from the marks of countless horse towing ropes worn into bridges to the old canal signs, wharves, cottages, etc. You will sometimes meet beautifully maintained, brightly painted old working boats chugging along, or even the occasional horse-drawn boat.

To sum up, a canal holiday is a unique experience which we know you will enjoy and want to repeat. We look forward to meeting you.

## The History of British Canals

Canals in Britain originated in the middle of the 18th Century, as a result of the Industrial Revolution. They were created in response to the sudden need for a vastly improved transport system to get material to the new factories, and finished goods to the places of sale.

Roads were unmetalled and impassable in winter, and the easiest thing was to improve rivers, by widening and deepening them – a procedure called 'canalisation'. The first wholly artificial canal was an obvious development, and this was the St Helens canal in Lancashire. This was a success, and paved the way for what was to follow . . . the Bridgewater Canal, considered to be the start of today's canal system. It was built by the Duke of Bridgewater, who had seen how canals were used on the Continent and decided such a project would solve his problem of moving large quantities of coal from his mine in Worsley to Manchester, 8 miles away. He employed James Brindley as his

engineer and Brindley started his canal actually at the coal face, where coal was loaded into the boats. There was in fact an underground system of 46 miles of canal, including locks and an inclined plane.

Boats leaving this amazing piece of early engineering then travelled over the Barton Aqueduct, another 'first' for Brindley. This took the canal over the River Irwell and then it continued to Manchester and later Runcorn. The price of goods carried between these points was halved after the canal was built. The Barton Aqueduct was replaced in the late 1800's by the famous swing aqueduct, which opens to allow large ships to pass below along the Manchester Ship Canal. This was the beginning of the first canal age, and Brindley's success soon gave rise to other major schemes, among them being the Trent and Mersey Canal. Here the first tunnels were built and, the art of tunnel building being in its infancy, were built crooked and still of course remain so. The 1.6 mile long tunnel at Harecastle was a great wonder. Brindley built his locks 7 feet wide, which then became the standard size.

These canals were built by gangs of wandering labourers, called navigators or 'navvies' for short, using mainly only hand labour; they were contour canals, following the profile of the land. Later came the second canal age, and these canals were different – straighter and more level, going across the country by means of embankments and cuttings as well as locks – the engineer mainly responsible being Thomas Telford. He built the Shropshire Union, and the famous aqueducts at Chirk and Pontcysyllte on the Llangollen Canal.

By these means the extensive canal network was created and prospered until the railways came. Then canal carrying began to decline because trains were quicker

and the boat people, who previously had lived in houses, could no longer afford to do so. They moved into boats and lived in cramped but very neat and tidy back cabins. Thus the narrowboat as we know it today was born, firstly horse drawn, then sometimes steam powered, then lastly diesel engine and usually towing another boat, or 'butty'.

The canals' most serious decline came in the 30's and 40's, but now they have a great new potential as recreational waterways; many old, long abandoned canals are being cleared and restored. They now have a bright future once more to be used in ways that Brindley, Telford and the other engineers would never have imagined in their wildest dreams.



Bridgewater Canal, early 20th century.

Hugh McKnight Photography

## History of the Company and its Policy

The company was established in 1971 as Willow Wren Kearns Ltd., and since 1983 has been under new ownership: the trading name Middlewich Narrowboats reflecting this change. The customer therefore has the benefit of the lessons learned during long experience of boat hiring, which have been passed on to the new management, combined with a new approach and new ideas.

Our regular hirers say that they use our boats because they are tough, substantially-built, traditionally styled craft that look and feel closely related to their 'working' forbears. Few, if any, hire firms offer a fleet of boats of this sort. The name 'Willow Wren' indicates the firm is a descendent of the famous commercial carriers of the same name who took over many of the boats and traffic from British Waterways in the 1950's and 1960's and we intend to continue this emphasis. We also intend to continue specialising in large group bookings, but also now cater for the smaller family group, who are increasingly beginning to appreciate the type of boat we offer.



Middlewich Narrowboats – the boat yard.

## What You Need to Know

Before you take over your boat our staff check the engine and the inventory, clean the boat and carry out any necessary repairs and replenish the water, gas, and fuel supplies. Craft carry sufficient fuel for at least 3 weeks cruising.

Technical skills are not required. Inexperienced hirers begin their journey with a short tuition period. You will be taught how to handle the boat and shown how to work a lock. You'll soon understand and be a confident skipper. You'll be shown the details of the boat including the simple daily task of checking the oil levels. On board there is a copy of Boat Operating Instructions that includes navigation information. In the event of a problem developing during your cruise, all you need to do is phone for assistance.

We will gladly arrange a tuition cruise prior to your holiday – and we strongly recommend that hirers of 70 foot boats have some members of their party with previous experience in handling narrowboats. Such a cruise can be booked November to February.

**Included in Hire Charges** Charges include free items listed below, and VAT, Insurance (see Conditions of Hire), a full inventory, calor gas, toilet pump out, and necessary licences for travel on British Waterways Board canals and the Rivers Severn, Soar, Trent, Weaver. Travel on the Warwickshire Avon and the Stratford and Manchester Ship Canals requires additional licence charges. At least 1 month's advance notice must be given for the Manchester Ship Canal.

Unlike some hire companies who make all inclusive charges for fuel, breakages, and bed linen – we believe you should only pay for what you use. You will therefore not be charged for bed linen and towels if you prefer to bring your own. You will be refunded for unused fuel; and, if you return the boat and equipment clean and undamaged, you will have your damage deposit fully refunded. You should normally receive this during the following week.

**For Small Children** Cot sides can be provided free. Please request when booking.

**Parking** Car parking is free in a locked compound.

**Pets** Pets are welcome provided they are house-trained but we ask that they be kept off blankets and bunks. We make a small charge – see Booking Form.

**Safety** Buoyancy aids for children and small adults are available free of charge. Small children are advised to wear them – see Booking Form.

**Waterproofs** A set of steerer's waterproofs is available free – see Booking Form.

**Bed linen, Towels** Pillows, pillow cases and blankets are supplied free on all boats (except Rowan). Sheets, towels and tea towels can be provided at extra cost – see Booking Form.

**Fishing** Licences can be obtained from British Waterways Board, Fisheries Officer, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford, Herts.

**Shaving** The boats have a 240 volt shaver socket. It cannot be used for anything else.

**TV** The boats are wired for 12 volt TV – please order when booking. You may (at your own risk) bring your own TV set. Suitable plugs are sold in our shop.

**Party bookings.** We welcome party bookings and have long experience handling these.

**Our canal shop** We stock maps and guides, souvenirs, provisions and toiletries.

**Provisions** We will arrange your requirements if we receive them at least one week before you arrive. We charge £1.00 for this service.

**Embarkation** We aim to have your boat ready for you to make your pre-boarding check at the time stated, but please note that there is only the shop in which to wait if it is raining so we would be grateful if you do not arrive before that time. If you do, please keep clear of the operating area of the yard and towpath to avoid delaying boat preparation.

If your boat is late it will be for a good reason – we do not want to delay you any more than you want to be delayed! So please be patient if you have to wait and do not plan too tight a schedule for the first evening.

When you arrive at our boatyard come into our canal shop for a complimentary cup of coffee to help you relax after your journey. *The yard normally closes at 5.00 pm.* If you will be later than this please let us know in advance.

After you check the inventory and board the boat you will then be given a detailed

demonstration of your boat. If you are inexperienced you will be taught to drive and taken through a lock.

**Return** *The boat must be returned to the boatyard in a clean condition by 9.00 am and vacated by 9.30 am.* Please adhere strictly to the return times as a boat late in means that boat is also late out, which is unfair to others. For this reason, it is essential that you moor in the vicinity of Middlewich on your last evening.

**Boat Viewing** Ring us to arrange a convenient time – we will gladly show you round.

**How to Book** It is best to book early. Normal office hours are 9.00 am to 5.30 pm Monday to Friday. The yard and offices close on Sundays, except for emergencies.

1. Phone or write to discuss dates and boats and make a provisional booking.
2. Confirm your provisional booking by sending the completed booking form with a deposit of one-third hire charge within one week unless otherwise agreed.
3. We then send you the official Hire Invoice, which completes the booking.
4. The balance of the hire charges must be paid six weeks before the date of embarkation.

**Cancellation and Hardship Cancellation Scheme** See Conditions of Hire/Booking Form.

**Starting Arrangements** Most boats start Saturday. A few boats start Friday. The price list gives details, including starting times. Some advantages to a Friday start are that you are a day ahead of most hire boats taking the more popular routes and you can boat all Saturday when most boats are idle at base. The result is a more relaxed journey.

**Length of Season. Weekend etc bookings** Our normal season is from March to the end of October, but we will hire in November and December (until Christmas). Remember though that cruising routes are restricted outside the season because of canal maintenance work, although we do ask the British Waterways Board to keep at least one week's cruising water clear. If you are interested in this please enquire. Weekend etc bookings can be arranged when boats are available, but can only be confirmed one week beforehand.

**What to bring** Casual clothes; sunbathing gear; a waterproof coat; non-slip shoes; a torch; a dressy outfit for a meal or evening in town; sleeping bags if you dislike bed-making; first aid kit for minor emergencies; matches; washing-up liquid. Waterproofs and non-slip shoes are sold in our shop along with canal maps and guides, O.S. maps etc.

## A Typical Boat Inventory

**Crockery.** Tea plates, dinner plates, bowls, mugs, glasses, casseroles, jugs, pudding bowls, butter dish, gravy boat, pie dish, meat dish, condiment set, carving dish, sugar bowl, egg cups, wooden spoon.

**Cutlery.** Place settings, carving knife and fork, bread knife, tea strainer, corkscrew/tin opener, kitchen knife.

**Cooking utensils.** Saucepans, frying pan, baking tin, bread board, bread container, colander, grill pan, kettle, fish slice, egg whisk, grater, scissors, teapot, measuring jug, ladle, potato masher, straining spoon, basting spoon, roasting tin, tea caddy, toast rack, cooking fork, oven gloves, potato peeler, knife sharpener.

**Miscellaneous.** Adequate cleaning equipment, dish cloth, disposable refuse sacks, tea tray, fire extinguishers, lump hammer, mooring irons, 2 x windlasses\*, 1 x Ashton/Leeds & Liverpool key\*, boat shafts, gang plank, screwdriver, spanner, hose pipe and reel, mooring ropes, lifebelt, toilet rolls, Jif, Brasso.

**Bedding.** Pillows and pillowcases, 3 blankets per berth. Sheets can be supplied as an extra.

**'Rowan'.** To keep the cost low, 'Rowan' has no personal crockery, personal cutlery or bedding. However, personal crockery, cutlery, pillows and pillow cases can be supplied as extras – see Booking Form.

\*3 windlasses on boats 60' and over. Additional windlasses and Ashton keys are available on prior request.

## Conditions of Hire

**1. Brochure.** The information in this brochure is generally accurate, but the Company shall not be liable for any minor inaccuracies that may exist.

**2. Booking.** A boat is not booked until the completed and signed Booking Form, together with a deposit of approximately one-third of the total Hire Charge, has been received by the Company and the Company's official Hire Invoice issued to the Hirer.



*Balance to be paid in advance – not on arrival.*

**3. Balance of Hire Charges and Cancellations.** The Hirer, upon his booking being accepted by the Company, becomes responsible for the whole of the Hire Charge and the balance must be paid six weeks before the date for embarkation . . . unless otherwise mutually agreed. Payment for other items (e.g. provisions) to be made on embarkation in cash. Should the Hirer wish to cancel the booking he must immediately notify the Company and return

**4. Young Hirers.** Bookings will not be accepted from Hirers under 18 years unless the Booking Form is signed by a parent or guardian accepting full responsibility.

**5. Hire periods.** Unless otherwise agreed in writing, from the day and time shown on the price list (depending on the amount of servicing required) vacating the boat by 9.30 am on last day of Hire at the boatyard in a clean condition. The Company reserve the right to make an extra charge for cleaning a dirty boat, and a charge of £10.00 per hour for late return.

**6. Insurance.** Boat insurance and Hirer's liability to other parties is included in the Hire Charges. However, to cover the policy excess etc. we require a damage deposit of £35 (£60 for large boats) which will be refunded less the cost of any damage after hiring. Hirer's personal effects, motorcars, etc. are NOT covered and the Company accepts no responsibility for loss or damage to these while on their boats or property.

Any charges made by the Waterway's Authorities for loss of water or damage to equipment through negligence are also not covered, neither is deliberate damage to the boat, or mechanical etc. damage through failure to carry out instructed procedures.

Equipment is not insured, and the Hirer must report and pay for equipment lost, broken, stolen or damaged. Unsuitable substitutes are not accepted.



*Accidents.*

**7. Accidents.** The Hirer must report immediately by telephone to the Company any accident to the boat or to Waterway property, and must proceed as instructed by the Company. The Hirer must not admit liability for any accident and must not put repairs into the hands of any person without the permission of the Company. Names and addresses of any witnesses to an accident must be given to the Company.



*Young Hirers.*



*Navigation.*

**8. Navigation.** No boat may tow another, travel after dark or navigate any tidal water without prior written permission of the Company. The Hirer must at all times comply with the instructions given to him by the Company or by Waterways Authorities. Minors must not be allowed to navigate boats unless an experienced adult is close at hand at all times so that he can take over in an emergency. No boat should be occupied by more than the booked number of people unless previously agreed with the Company.

**9. Unsuitable Hirers.** The Company reserves the right to refuse to hand over the boat to any person, who in the opinion of the Company is not suitable to take charge. In such cases, all Hire Charges shall be refunded in full and all liabilities of the Hirer and the Company shall cease; the Company also reserve the right to decline to accept any booking without giving any reason.

**10. Boat Availability, Restrictions and Delays.** If, due to circumstances beyond its reasonable control, the Company is unable to provide the Hirer with the Boat booked or a suitable alternative, the Company will refund all Hire Charges paid in full and will have no further liability. The Company accepts no liability and is not bound to make a financial adjustment in the event of cruising waters being restricted through any cause beyond the control of the Company. It reserves the right to restrict the cruising area under these conditions if hazardous circumstances arise.

Similarly, the Hirer shall have no claim upon the Company as a result of any failure of the boat or equipment. Hirers must not attempt to repair the boat or its equipment without prior authority from the Company.



*No overcrowding.*

### Hardship Cancellation Scheme.

Hirers are reminded that they are responsible for paying the hire fee if they are prevented from taking over the craft. This condition, whilst necessary and common to all Hire Craft firms can result in hardship in the event of cancellations arising from illness or accident. To guard against this liability, hirers are advised to participate in our Hardship Cancellation Scheme.



*Insurance.*

This scheme covers cancellation due to: Illness, Accident, Death or Maternity of any member of the party listed on the Booking Form, providing that the cancellation is supported by a Doctor's certificate, and that we are immediately notified in writing of the circumstances, and the Hire Invoice is returned to us. Cancellations due to other reasons do not qualify. Upon receipt of satisfactory evidence of the genuineness of the claim we shall forego the balance due to us and return the deposit paid on booking.

Our decision in any case shall be final.

## Boats

Our boats are different, and each one is individual. There are no boat 'classes'. They are not constructed as 'floating caravans' like most hire craft but are specifically designed and built (except 'Laurel') to follow the style and feel of the old working canal boats.

Most of them are also constructed from the traditional materials, with heavy steel hulls carrying oak framed wooden cabins, the whole being in concept a lengthened version of the living accommodation of the working boats (but containing refinements the boatmen would never have dreamed of – gas cookers, fridges, hot and cold running water, showers and even carpets). For this reason they have full length cabins with engine rooms, rather than the large rear decks of most hire craft, the steerer standing in the doorway in the traditional manner. Three of the boats are 70 feet long, giving the steerer the experience and satisfaction of handling a full length narrow boat. Four of the boats even have 'boatman's cabins', replicas of the boatman's living quarters with the authentic features and decorations.

All the boats are well appointed (as above) and furnished. They are gaily hand decorated with the famous roses and castles and can be supplied free with the brightly painted 'Buckby' water cans which were carried on the roofs of the working boats – this should be requested when booking.

Our two 1985 boats are a unique expansion of this theme. In 'Maple' every effort has been made to create the authentic appearance and feel of a converted working narrow boat. We have obviously succeeded in this, as an independent test report on the boat states "....if you're a traditionalist or want admiring glances and comments from private boat owners, then 'Maple' could be for you..... the rear cabin and engine room are in working boat tradition but forward the boat has every luxury expected in today's discerning market" (Waterways World August 1985). A magnificent craft, ideal for two families or a small group.

'Holly' is similarly laid out to 'Maple,' though it is smaller and has been designed to suit (amongst others) the family boater. It therefore has a large (nearly 8 feet long) and deep front hold which can be used for seating or as an activity area for young children, and covered at night for sleeping. Large front windows allow this area and the passing countryside to be easily viewed from inside. An unusual and most attractive boat.

**These boats are unique among hire craft** and further details on them and the others are given on the back pages. Further new boats will be to a similar specification and will reinforce our boast of being "the boater's hire base".



## Middlewich – the ideal starting base in the North West

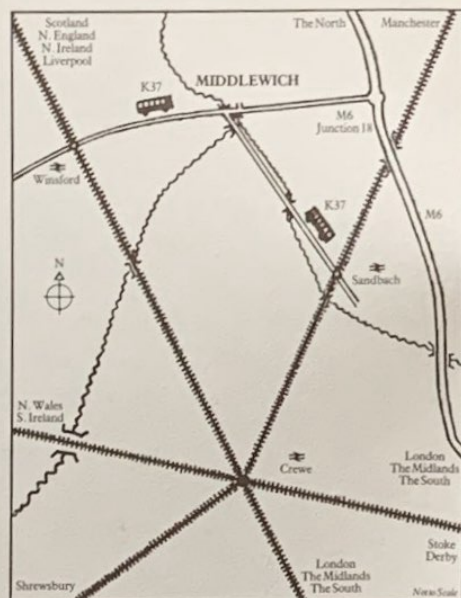
This is a bold claim, but we feel it is justified. We operate from the interesting old Trent and Mersey Canal depot in Middlewich, located adjacent to a major canal junction from which three main routes radiate, these in turn leading quickly to other choices. Among these are some of the most attractive and popular routes on the whole system – please refer to the system map and list of suggested cruises for further details.

One word of advice though; although 'rings' are very popular, we suggest that hirers may find it easier and more relaxing to pick an 'out and back' route where return time can be more easily gauged – this advice applies particularly to first timers. The canal looks completely different from the opposite direction and you will know where the best places are to stop.

From Middlewich four of the 'Seven Wonders of the Waterways' (Barton Swing Aqueduct, Anderton Lift, Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Harecastle Tunnels) are within a week's cruising distance and the other three (Burnley Embankment, Bingley 'Five Rise' Lock Staircase, Foxton Incline Plane [remains of]) within two weeks.

We are also very well situated for access, being only 2 miles from Junction 18 on the M6. Public transport is no problem – Winsford and Sandbach railway stations being 2½ and 4 miles away respectively (with frequent electric trains connecting at Crewe to main line services). A half hourly bus service runs from both stations to right outside the boatyard. Taxis can be booked to meet trains at these stations. Manchester Airport is only 20 miles away. The map illustrates these details.

Being located in a town, there are reasonable shopping facilities near the boatyard, including a supermarket. You can therefore leave some of your shopping until the day of departure...or leave the work to us by taking advantage of our shopping service. See the 'What You Need to Know' section of this brochure for further details.



Our fleet in 1984.

## Where we are

Middlewich Narrowboats, Canal Terrace  
Middlewich, Cheshire CW10 9BD  
Telephone: Middlewich (060 684) 2460

## Suggested Cruises

The freedom of the canals is all yours to go where you please, and starting from Middlewich gives you an especially large variety of routes. However, here are some suggestions to help you plan your particular route based on the cruises most popular with our customers. (H=Hours; M=Miles; L=Locks; and star rating indicates amount of boating/lock work required per day; ★easy, ★★moderate, ★★★sometimes fairly intensive.)

### One Week Cruises

#### 1. Llangollen ★★

West along the Shropshire Union Canal to Barbridge Junction, then to Llangollen. Regarded by many as the most attractive of all routes. Includes the spectacular Chirk and Pontcysyllte aqueducts. Rural trip. 47H, 112M, 50L.

#### 2. Chester/Ellesmere Port ★

As No. 1 to Barbridge Junction, then on to historic Chester. (Extension to Ellesmere Port-Junction with Manchester Ship Canal and site of the National Boat Museum: 7H.) A mostly rural trip with good opportunities for sightseeing and tourist attractions. 21H, 52M, 36L.



Chester.

#### 4. Weaver Ring ★

As No. 2, but at Ellesmere Port enter the Manchester Ship Canal as far as Weston Point, then up the pretty River Weaver to Winsford. Back to the Anderton Lift – one of the 'Wonders of the Waterways' – and ascend the lift to the Trent & Mersey Canal and back to Middlewich. An unusual and memorable trip. Special fees and advance notice are necessary for this cruise. 31H, 68M, 32L.

#### 5. Four Counties Ring ★★

As No. 1 to Barbridge Junction, then south through Nantwich and Market Drayton to Autherley Junction. Proceed North on the Staffs. & Worcs. Canal to Gt. Haywood and rejoin the Trent & Mersey Canal via Etruria (optional diversion to the charming little Caldon Canal. 18H, 34L extra) and Stoke-on-Trent, with an opportunity to visit the celebrated Potteries factories. Then back via the famous Harecastle Tunnel to Middlewich. A 'ring' full of contrasts between countryside and industry. 50H, 109M, 94L.



Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

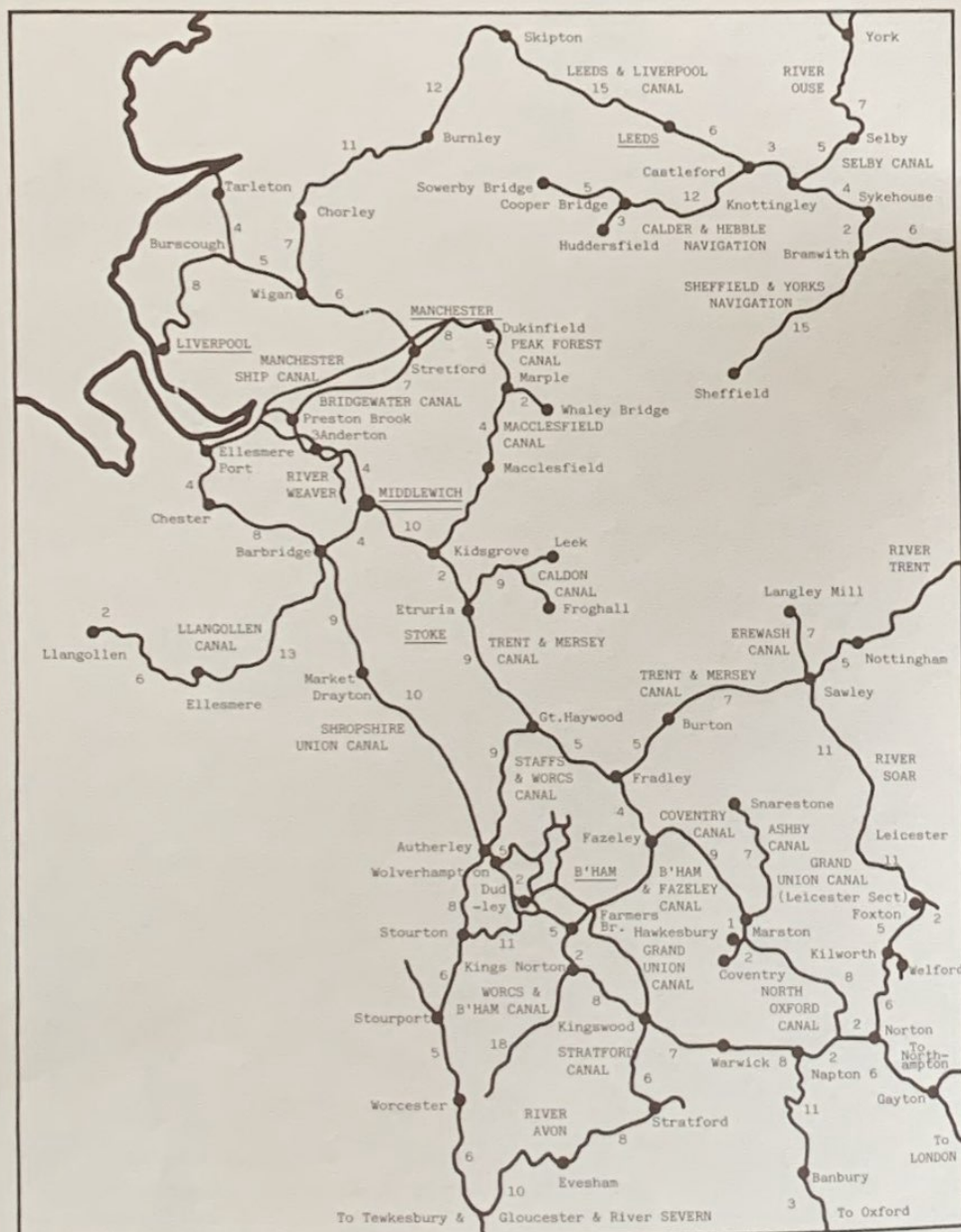
#### 3. The Cheshire Ring ★★★

North along the Trent & Mersey Canal to Preston Brook (past the amazing Anderton boat lift and through 3 tunnels) then on the Bridgewater Canal via Stretford to Manchester. Cruise underneath central Manchester (Rochdale Canal – permit required in advance) and on the Ashton and the Peak Forest Canals to the lovely Marple locks and aqueduct (optional diversion to Whaley Bridge, 4½H extra – superb scenery). Then down the pleasant Macclesfield Canal to Kids Grove, and north back to Middlewich. A very interesting route full of contrasts, though hard work in places. 48H, 100M, 92L.



Barton Swing Aqueduct.

## North West and Midlands Canal System



The figures on the map show the hours needed to cruise from place to place.

Not to Scale

### 6. Leeds & Liverpool (West Lincs. section) \*\*\*

As No. 3 to Stretford, then west over the famous Barton Swing Aqueduct to Wigan and Burscough. Then, either down the Rufford branch to Tarleton (56H, 147M, 42L) or south to the bustling City and Port of Liverpool (65H, 181M, 26L). The most historic canal trip, passing the birthplace of British canals at Worsley. Boat length limit 60 feet on the Rufford branch.

### 7. Minimum Lock Cruise \*

for the less energetic boater. As No. 3 to Manchester, turning around before the Rochdale Canal, then back to Anderton (optional diversion down the Anderton Lift to cruise the attractive River Weaver – all locks worked by keepers – 14H extra) and Middlewich. Then west along the Shropshire Union Canal to the fine old town of Nantwich, then return. 38H, 65M, 18L (10 of these at Middlewich – assistance available). An easy cruise – mainly rural.

## Two Week Cruises

### 8. Leeds & Liverpool (Main Line). \*\*\*

As No. 6 to Wigan, then north to Walton climbing over the Pennines to Bingley with its spectacular 5-lock staircase. You also pass over the famous Burnley Embankment. A unique and fascinating trip into England's industrial past combined with remote Yorkshire moorland scenery. 112H, 264M, 126L. Boat length limit 60 feet.

### 9. Birmingham Ring \*\*

As No. 5 to Autherley Junction and Farmers Bridge. North east to Salford Junction, Fazeley, Fradley, then back on the Trent & Mersey Canal to Great Haywood and as No. 5 back to Middlewich. This trip gives plenty of opportunity and spare time to explore the extensive and intriguing Birmingham canals network. 73H, 156M, 144L.

### 10. Severn Cruise \*\*

As No. 5 to Autherley Junction, then south to Stourport (Staffs. & Worcs. Canal), Worcester and Tewksbury on the great River Severn. 94H, 212M, 136L. Optional extension to Gloucester total 103H, 238M, 138L and then to Sharpness for the adventurous, experienced and quick, total 115H, 271M, 142L. A simple route covering a large geographical mileage from base, particularly rich in architectural interest.

### 11. Staffordshire & Leicestershire \*\*\*

As route No. 5 in reverse to Great Haywood, then to Fradley, Burton (for beer enthusiasts), pretty Shardlow and Sawley Junction. South on the Grand Union Canal through Leicester to Foxton (site of the famous inclined plane), continuing to Norton Junction, then west to Braunston and north to Rugby (Oxford Canal). At Hawkesbury Junction turn north again onto the Coventry Canal then continue to Fazeley, rejoining route No. 9. A busy trip with lots of work, but visiting lots of famous canal centres. The boater's trip? 118H, 266M, 210L.



Anderton Lift.



Bingley 'Five Rise' Lock Staircase.

Combinations or shortened versions of all these cruises are of course possible, and extensions for those hiring for longer periods. Remember, however, that you need a winding hole, junction or similar to turn your boat round, for which the relevant canal guides should be consulted.

## Boats – details

For a general description of the majority of our boats see the centre pages. 'Oak' has many special features, such as a boatman's cabin, pine ceiling with recessed lights, central heating, 2 w.c.s, tiled shower and other items. 'Laurel' and 'Rowan' are different and are dealt with here, along with more details of our 1985 boats and profiles and plans of the whole fleet.

**'Laurel'** This is a small fibreglass-topped narrow boat of the more conventional cruiser style ie it has a large rear deck with security rails/seats instead of the full length cabin. Very manoeuvrable and economical, yet nicely equipped and with three separate cabins, it is ideal as a beginner's boat or for young families. For this reason it is offered at a low cost to encourage such people to come boating.

**'Rowan'** This is a 12 berth camping boat, the normal front cabin being replaced by a canvas covered hold containing 10 bunk beds and tables. A dividing curtain is available here – order when booking. The cover can be removed in fine weather. A cabin encloses the galley (with cold water only), WC, engine room and a particularly roomy boatman's cabin with separate cooker. A nice civilised camping boat at little more than half the cost of the cabin boat equivalent. Incidentally, this boat is sometimes hired by couples or small groups who want a large, cheap, very traditional-looking boat.

**'Maple'** This boat was conceived and constructed as a luxurious, highly traditional style, purpose-built hire craft; a thing otherwise non-existent. It has therefore been built entirely by us, the hull lines being based on 'Little Woolwich' class working boats in order to give authentic handling characteristics – and, according to the Waterways World report, it "swims through the water like a fish and handles much more like a 'real' narrow boat."

At the rear there are proper "trad" controls – a separate gear rod and brass speed control wheel. Stepping down, you enter an authentic boatman's cabin with coal range table cupboard, side bed and cross bed etc., finished in the proper wood graining with hand painted decorations and crocheted lace hangings. Beyond the traditional engine room you pass into the 1980's and there is a toilet with fresh water flushing lavatory, then a carpeted 4 berth cabin (which can be neatly divided into 2 separate 2 berth cabins) with wardrobe and nice vanity unit. There is a second toilet plus shower, a side door, then a fully up-to-date galley with a fridge, a cooker with eye-level grill, and plenty of cupboards and work tops. There is constant hot water from the gas boiler and central heating throughout (except for the back cabin). The boat is fully insulated. Forward of this is the lounge with polished iroko floor and varnished pine walls. The L-shaped diner/settee, upholstered in dralon, can convert to a double bed or two singles. At the front is a wardrobe and a cabinet with bookshelves, containing a stereo radio/cassette player. All this furniture plus the bulkhead and door framings is in solid luan or kapir – plywood has been used as little as possible and the high craftsmanship throughout is very evident.

**'Holly'** In basic layout and in many details this is like 'Maple' with a similar boatman's cabin and then engine room, but with no bedrooms, one toilet and a shorter front cabin finished in very nice teak panelling. There is a gas stove-type heater in the front cabin.

If a boat as special as this can be said to have a unique feature, it must be the front cockpit/hold which is fitted with a demountable hand decorated cratch (front board), top plank and cloths just like on a working boat. You choose how you want it – up for sleeping (order mattresses when booking) or down for maximum viewing. The table can also be mounted in this area for easy open air meals – a most attractive feature.

**Engines.** The boats have the well-known and reliable Lister diesel engines.

**Cabins.** 'Laurel' has a double skinned fibreglass cabin, with insulated core. 'Maple' and 'Holly' have steel cabins with fibreglass insulation, lined with varnished pine ('Maple') or teak panelling ('Holly'). 'Oak' has a pine ceiling and recessed lighting. The other boats are built with the traditional oak frames and softwood planking, covered externally with a waterproof "skinning" and varnished or painted internally.

**Shower and handbasins.** Nice shower rooms are a feature of all the boats, with the exception of 'Rowan'. 'Beech' has a proper bathroom with bath! Separate handbasins are provided in most of the berth cabins.

**WC's.** Flush toilets are fitted to all boats except 'Rowan', which has a chemical toilet. They discharge into a holding tank which is pumped out when full (usually at the end of a week's holiday). 'Laurel' has a portable flush toilet that is emptied manually by the hirer. Plenty of disposal facilities are available along the canals.

**Galleys.** The boats have nicely appointed galleys, which include a sink unit, fridge and cooker and plenty of shelves, cupboards and working surfaces. 'Rowan' and 'Oak' have 2 cookers. 'Rowan' has no fridge.

**Heating.** Efficient gas heaters are provided on all boats, except 'Rowan' where a heater is available at extra charge. 'Maple' and 'Oak' have central heating. 'Maple' and 'Holly' also have solid fuel ranges.

**Electricity.** 12v to lights etc. and TV socket. 240v for shaver socket (not 'Rowan').

**Furnishings.** 4" deep foam mattresses are provided for the beds and seats, and most berths are fitted with reading lamps. Sufficient tables are provided together with stools or folding chairs and plenty of shelves and drawers. In most boats the lounge and bedroom areas are carpeted. 'Ash' has 2 armchairs.

## Boat Profiles

All boats are 2' draught; 6' 10½" beam; 6' 1" headroom.

**Oak.** 70' long, 12 berth cabin boat. Five separate cabins – 1 x twin/double berth, 2 x double berth, 1 x twin berth, 1 x 4 berth, carpeting in lounge and bedrooms, 2 WC's, central heating. Special feature – boatman's back cabin with separate cooker. Forward engine room. Recommended for family groups or party bookings.

**Beech.** 70' long, 12 berth cabin boat. Four separate cabins – 1 x twin/double berth, 2 x 4 berth, 1 x double berth. Rear engine room. Special feature – proper bath. Recommended for family groups or party bookings.

**Sycamore.** 70' long, 12 berth cabin boat. Four separate cabins – 1 x twin/double berth, 2 x 4 berth, 1 x twin (2 tier)/double berth. Carpeting in saloon. Rear engine room. Recommended particularly for party bookings.

**Ash.** 50' long, 6 berth cabin boat. Two separate cabins – 1 x double berth, 1 x 4 berth. Rear engine room. Special feature – large open front cabin/lounge area with two armchairs. Carpeting in lounge and bedroom areas. Recommended particularly for family bookings.

**Pine.** 50' long, 6 berth cabin boat. Three separate cabins – 1 x double berth, 2 x twin berth (2 tier). Rear engine room. Carpeting in Saloon and bedroom. Large front windows. Recommended for family or party bookings.

**Larch.** 50' long, 8 berth cabin boat. Three separate cabins – 1 x double berth, 1 x 4 berth, 1 x twin berth (2 tier). Rear engine room. Large front windows. Recommended particularly for party bookings.

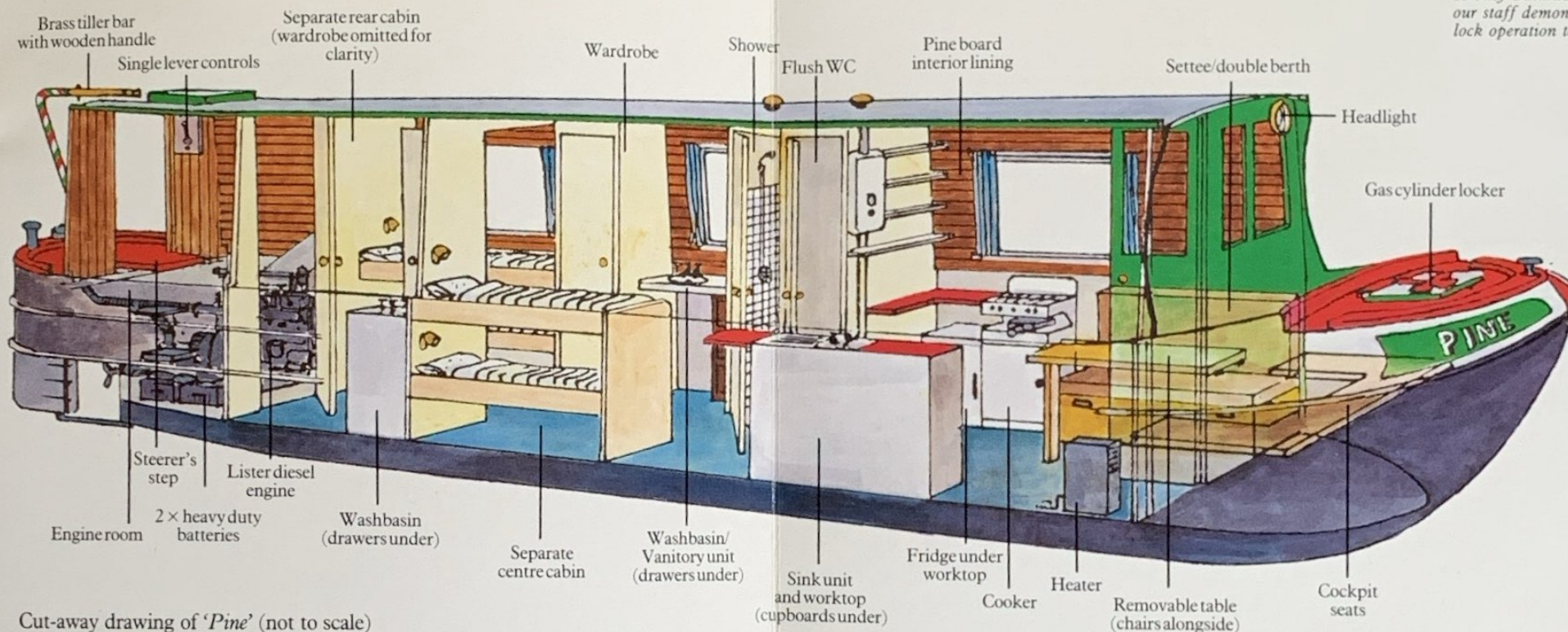
**Laurel.** 40' long, 6 berth cabin boat. Three separate cabins – 1 x double berth, 2 x twin berths (2 tier). Flushing chemical toilet. Special features – large flat rear deck with engine underneath; particularly pleasant galley area at front of boat with good forward view. Recommended for single family bookings and especially for beginners and those with small children. Not recommended for more than 4 adults.

**Rowan.** 60' long, 12 berth camping boat. Large hold containing 10 bunk beds. Chemical WC. Special feature – boatman's back cabin with cooker. Forward engine room. Recommended particularly for party groups.

**Holly.** 47' long, 4 berth cabin boat + 2 outside. 2 separate interior cabins – 1 x double berth (back cabin – 5' 8" long) + child's bed? 2 x single outside. Special features – boatman's back cabin with coal range. Forward engine room. Large front cockpit with cratch, top plank and cloths. Recommended for family bookings.

**Maple.** 60' long, 8 berth cabin boat. 4 separate cabins – 1 x twin/double berth, 2 x 2 berth, 2 x 2 berth, 1 x double berth (back cabin – 5' 8" long) + child's bed? 2 w.c's. Special features – boatman's back cabin with coal range. Forward engine room. Traditional controls. Stereo radio cassette player. Central heating. Carpeting in lounge and bedroom areas. Recommended for families or party groups.

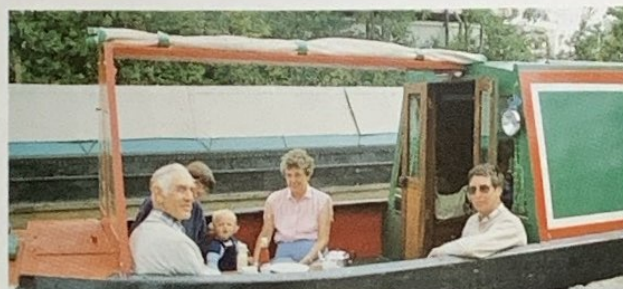
Back cover illustration:  
A busy Saturday scene –  
our staff demonstrating  
lock operation to customers.



Cut-away drawing of 'Pine' (not to scale)



'Ash' – interior showing traditional cabin construction.



'Holly' – front cockpit with table in use.

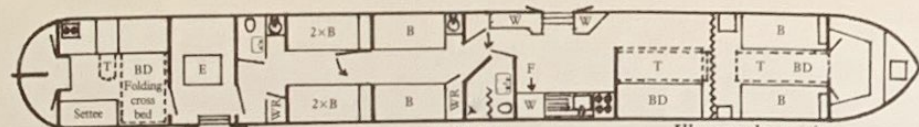


'Oak' – traditional steering position.



'Maple' – boatman's back cabin. 'Holly', 'Oak' and 'Rowan' have similar cabins. 'Laurel' – galley and dining area.



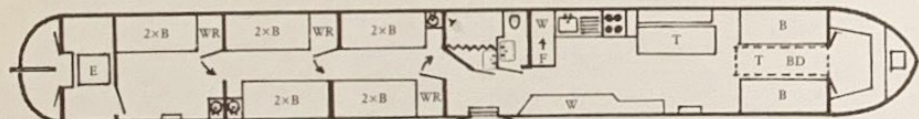


'OAK' 70'

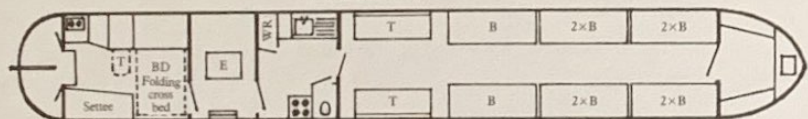
*Illustrated opposite*



'BEECH' 70'

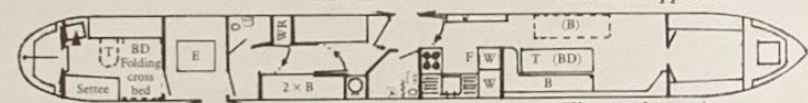


'SYCAMORE' 70'



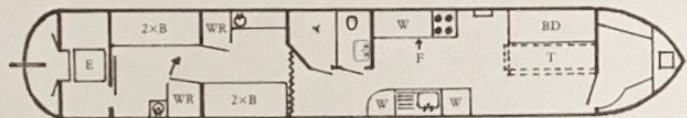
'ROWAN' 60'

*Illustrated opposite*

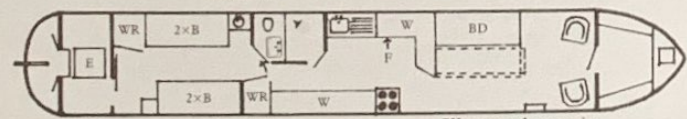


'MAPLE' 60'

*Illustrated opposite*

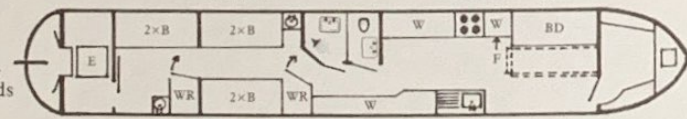


'PINE' 50'



'ASH' 50'

*Illustrated opposite*

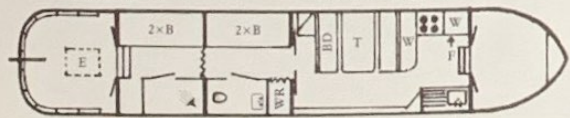


'LARCH' 50'



'HOLLY' 47'

*Illustrated opposite*



'LAUREL' 40'

*Illustrated opposite*

# Key

- B = Berth
- 2×B = Two tier berth
- BD = Double berth
- E = Engine
- F = Fridge
- T = Collapsible or folding table
- W = Working surface – fridge or cupboards underneath
- WR = Wardrobe
- ~ = Curtains
- ⊙ = Berth handbasins – drawers underneath
- = Cooker
- ⊕ = Sink
- ☂ = Shower
- = WC
- ▲ = Coal range

Loose dining chairs, stools etc. not shown.

N.B. Drawings are not to scale. All boats same width.

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**"THE BOATER'S HIRE BASE"**



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