

well as doing any other towing or carrying jobs that the society requires. Also her cabin has been decorated in the style of her heyday and volunteers show visitors around so they can appreciate the living conditions of the working families at that time. Some volunteers have taken time and effort to dress the part too!



Invitation to tea!

How you can join in or help us,
find more information
or contact us

The Wooden Canal Boat Society always needs more volunteers and one of the jobs is to learn about life as it would have been lived aboard Forget-Me-Not / Sarah and explain to visitors to our boats at Portland Basin in Ashton-under-Lyne.

If you feel you'd like to do this, or any other volunteering see below for our contact

details.

- Come on a monthly **RECYCLING TRIP** from Portland Basin
- Become a **member or Trustee**.
- **Contact us via our Website:**
wcbs.org.uk
- **or Email:** general@wcbs.org.uk
- **Find us on Facebook** - search on 'Wooden Canal Boat' for the main page then link to the project or shop pages
- **Visit our shop:** 173 Stamford Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 7PS
- **Phone us:** 0161 330 8422

THANK YOU - hope to see you soon



The Wooden Canal Boat Society
173 Stamford Street Central
Ashton-under-Lyne
OL6 7PS

Registered Charity No 1069820

OUR BOATS

Forget-Me-Not



WOODEN CANAL BOAT SOCIETY

Forget-Me-Not was built in 1927 at Lees & Atkins boatyard at Polesworth, Warwickshire, for Number 1 (owner boatman) Henry Grantham. The Number Ones were something of an elite among boat people and Henry Grantham seems to have been relatively well off, owning a house at Whilton and having a new boat built about every two years. He always ran two boats and so each craft stayed about four years in his ownership before being sold. The boats were always named *Forget-Me-Not* and *Sarah Jane*.

Along with many other Number Ones, Henry Grantham's main job was carrying coal from pits near Coventry to Aspley paper mill near Hemel Hempstead

In 1929 Mr. Grantham decided to have *Forget-Me-Not* motorised. She was fitted with a 9hp Bolinder semi-diesel engine at Nurser Bros. Boatyard at Braunston, Northamptonshire. The shape of the boat was not altered but the cabin was extended to house the engine and simple cavitation plates were fitted to prevent air being drawn in by the propeller.

The original motorisation was not ideal for towing a butty. There is evidence that *Sarah Jane* was also motorised and so it is possible that both boats ran as single motors for a while. *Forget-Me-Not* was eventually fitted with counter stern and a 20hp Bolinder for towing a butty. A new *Sarah Jane*, Henry Grantham's last new boat, was built by Lees & Atkins about 1933.

In 1941 Henry Grantham retired and sold his boats to the Samuel Barlow Coal Company. They decided to divide up the butty's name so that *Forget-Me-Not* became *Sarah* and the butty

plain *Jane*. It was intended that Henry Grantham's son, also called Henry, would join Barlows to operate the boats. Instead he tried to join the Navy, but they sent him back because boating was a reserved occupation.

He went to work for the Grand Union Canal Carrying Company and eventually became lock keeper on the Buckby flight. Enoch Winlock became *Sarah*'s skipper.

In 1945 *Sarah* starred in the film "Painted Boats" playing the parts of two different boats. She carried on working for Barlows, carrying coal from the Coventry coalfield to various industrial premises, until, in 1959, she was sold for conversion to a pleasure boat. Her last skipper as a working boat was George Phipps.



Forget-Me-Not returning from Braunston at Colwich on the T&M 13th July 1995.

The butty *Jane* was retired at about the same time but we don't know what happened to her. At that time the canal carrying trade was in rapid decline as a result of the government policy to build new

roads for motor lorries. Many boats were being burned or simply left to sink

For several years *Sarah* was a houseboat near Reading but every couple of years she made a journey to Charity Dock on the Coventry Canal for maintenance. By the mid 1970s she had moved to the North West and was deteriorating rapidly. She underwent a cosmetic restoration but soon was on the bottom of the canal.



Forget-Me-Not is painted with the traditional Roses-themed canal art.

In 1977 *Sarah* was purchased by someone who wanted to see wooden boats back at work. Ten years later, the Wooden Canal Craft Trust (now the wooden Canal Boat Society) was set up to organise the restoration. All but three planks had to be renewed.

The boat reverted to her original name and was launched in 1995. *Forget-Me-Not* now works with Liliith on the Society's regular recycling trips as