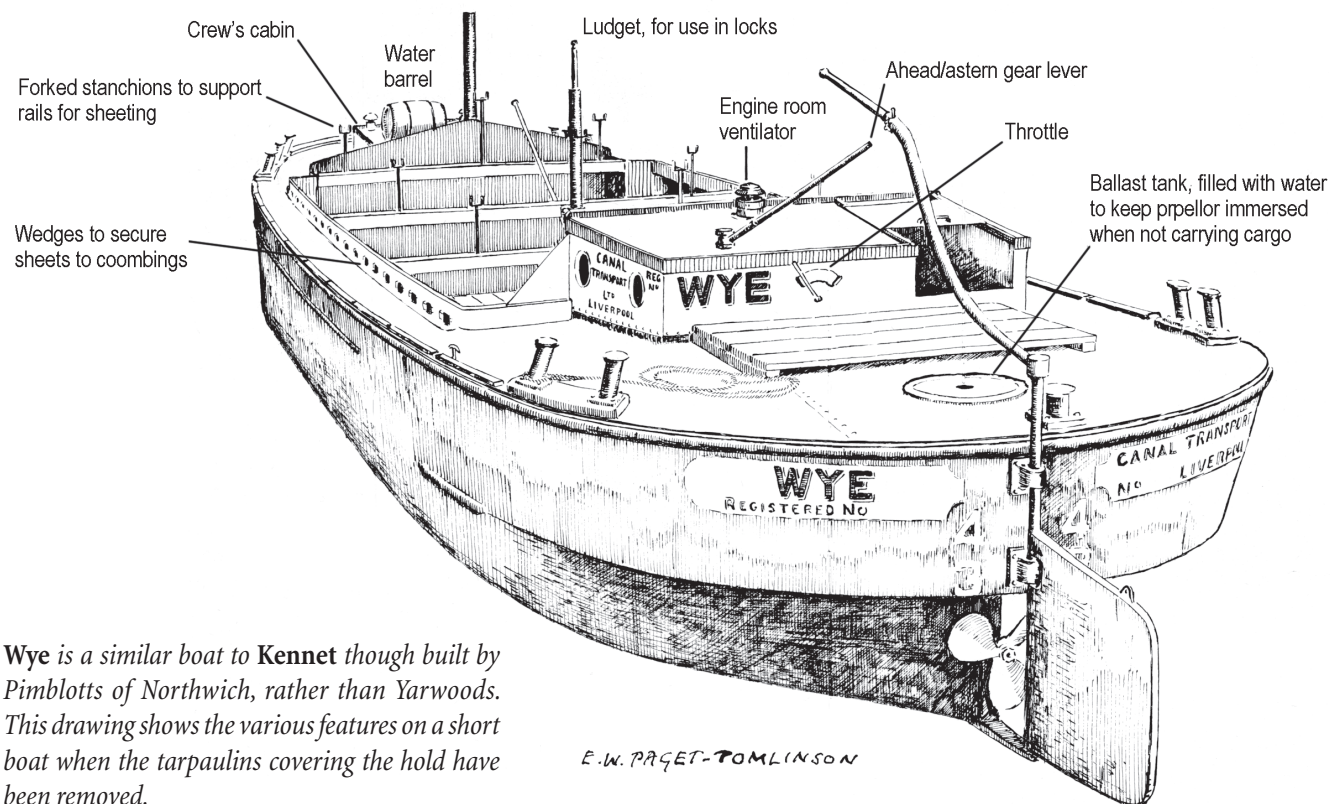


canvas sheets for covering goods in the hold, such bulk cargoes were not common. Coal was usually carried by boats with open holds. Traffic declined rapidly during the 1950s, and the boats were slowly transferred to the maintenance fleet, where **Kennet** worked in the Wigan area until the mid-1980s.

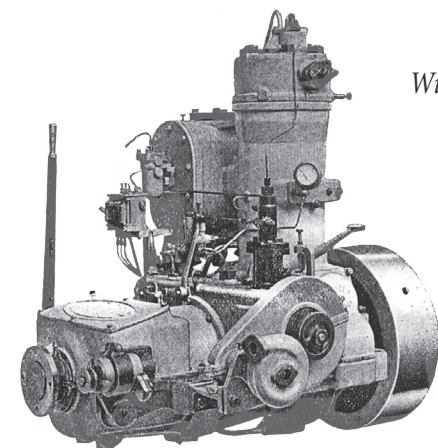
Her first captain was Tommy Baybutt from 41 New Lane, Burscough. He had been born in 1908, and was single. Richard Gregson from Wheat Lane, Lathom, born 1900 and married, was his mate. Their weekly wages in 1947 varied from £2.1s.7d. to £3.1s.8d., and they were probably regarded as very reliable boatmen to be allowed to take over a new boat.



Kennet at Wigan in the 1950s, when still in use as a general cargo boat. She is moored by Pottery Road Bridge, where the old stables on the other side of the canal had been converted into a supply depot for boats in the carrying trade. Ropes, sheets, and other consumables were provided here.

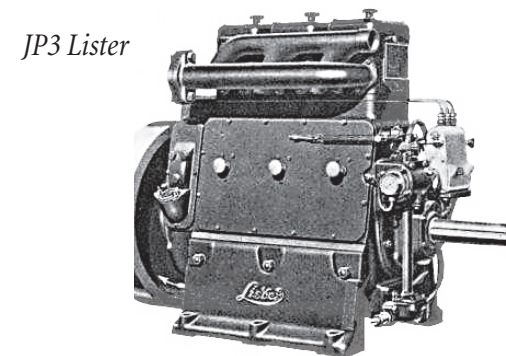


Wye is a similar boat to **Kennet** though built by Pimblotts of Northwich, rather than Yarwoods. This drawing shows the various features on a short boat when the tarpaulins covering the hold have been removed.



Widdop

Diesel engines were used on Leeds & Liverpool Canal boats from the 1920s. The most common engine was the Widdop, built at Keighley. They were hot-bulb diesel engines requiring the cylinder head to be heated by a blow-lamp prior to starting, though later engines used cartridges which had to be set alight and inserted into the cylinder head to start the combustion process. The engines were single or twin cylinder, and were very prone to vibration — boatmen did not need a spoon to stir their tea if they had a Widdop! This was one reason that they were taken out and replaced by engines of more modern design. **Kennet** now has a Lister JP3, not that much younger than the original Widdop, but much smoother and with an electric starter motor.



JP3 Lister

THE LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1998 to help promote the canal and to encourage greater understanding and appreciation of the canal's history and environment. The Society works to ensure that the traditions and heritage of the canal are recorded and continued. A twice-yearly newsletter gives details of events and happenings on the canal as well as publishing articles on aspects of the canal and its history.

Heritage boat *Kennet*

The Society also looks after *Kennet*, one of the last unconverted boats which worked on the canal. **Friends of Kennet** help maintain and move the boat, and training sessions in boat handling and other facets of canal life are planned.

We would be delighted to hear from people who would like to help with *Kennet* or to give a donation to her maintenance and operation.

Contact: friendsofkennet@btinternet.com



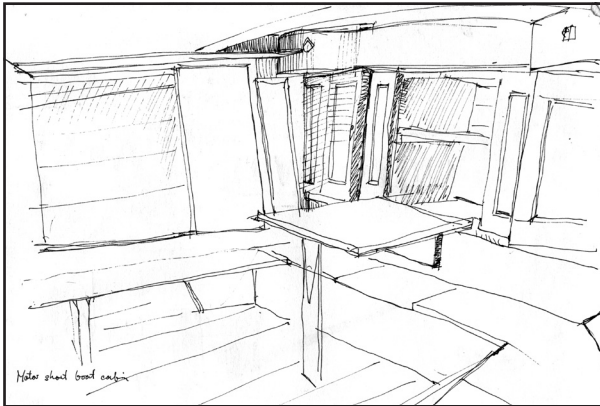
Kennet near Leeds in 2010, before refurbishment.

Produced for the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society, whose details can be found on its website at <http://www.llcs.org.uk> or by email from the Secretary:

leeds.liverpool.canal.soc@gmail.com

May 2015

Kennet was restored by British Waterways as an exhibition boat in 1985. The two beams across the hold were removed, and a frame for supporting the sheets fitted. The original supports can still be seen at the front of the hold. The Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society have owned *Kennet* since 2011, and have made extensive improvements funded by a Heritage Lottery Grant. Routine maintenance is carried out by volunteers, and more funding is always required to improve the displays and educational material. Volunteers also move *Kennet* to events and staff her when open to the public, or for private visits and schools days.



The boatmen's cabin is in the bow, and has a bed-hole on either side, one for each of the crew of two, usually both male. A cast iron stove stands next to the bulkhead between cabin and hold for heating and cooking. A bench seat surrounds three sides of the inside of the cabin, and a table cupboard, for keeping food and utensils, is built in across the bow. On either side of the table cupboard are small cupboards for personal items. Clothes were kept on a shelf in the bed-hole, and water was stored in a barrel on the deck. All access is through a 'scuttle hole' in the deck, though there is a door to the hold, which was not normally in use when carrying a cargo.

KENNET



Kennet passing the Manchester Road warehouses whilst attending the Burnley Waterway Festival in 2012.

Kennet was one of three boats built at Yarwoods, Northwich, in 1947 for Canal Transport Limited, the general cargo carrier operating on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal from 1930 to 1964. *Kennet* was followed by a further six boats in the early 1950s. The company had a fleet of around 70 wooden boats when it was formed in 1930, and a further 26 steel boats and 36 wooden boats were built later. Many of the steel boats have survived, though often converted to pleasure boats.

Canal Transport Ltd carried goods on the canal into the early 1960s, with some of the boats also being used on the River Weaver and around Nottingham. The main traffics were imported wool for Keighley and Shipley, sugar to warehouses along the canal from Tate & Lyle's in Liverpool, Earle's cement from Leeds to warehouses along the canal, grain from Birkenhead to Blackburn, and textile machinery for export from Keighley, Church and Blackburn. Coal was also carried, but as *Kennet* had