



Michael, Megan and Merlin

OUR FIRST BOAT WAS ST MICHAEL.THE BUILD TOOK PLACE DURING 1982/3 AND SHE WAS LAUNCHED IN JANUARY 1984. RENAMED MICHAEL IN 1986.

WITH THE PROJECT GOING LONDON WIDE IT WAS DECIDED WE NEEDED A SECOND BOAT TO MEET INCREASED DEMAND AND FUNDS WERE RAISED TO BUILD MEGAN IN 1986, DULY LAUNCHED IN 1987.

MERLIN FOLLOWED IN 1991, ORIGINALLY BUILT TO ACCOMODATE THE PARTIALLY SIGHTED.





Commissioning of Boats

MICHAEL

Built 1984

Colecraft

M E Braine & Project

Index No: 71288

Hull and Superstructure

Fitting Out

MEGAN

Built 1987

Colecraft

Delta Marine Services

Index No: 73911

Hull and Superstructure

Fitting Out

MERLIN

Built 1991

Dave Thomas Braunston Boat Builder

Union Canal Carriers Ltd

Index No: 51128

Hull & Superstructure

Fitting Out



Chris Woodward recalls:

“It was built, or maybe just fitted out, I believe in Deptford in South East London under the government's "Job Creation Programme". I understand that it was all young people that worked on it, like an apprentice scheme.

“I only went on it for a week when I helped take it to London for a hand over when we sold it. From memory it looked very amateur inside; I don't think a ruler or plumb line had been used anywhere on it. Cupboard doors whilst they opened and shut didn't have straight edges - that sort of thing.

"Megan" who was our second boat. She had the same layout as "Michael" but was fitted out professionally. Michael was eventually renamed as "Theo" (pronounced TEYow) who was a donor to the project that bought her off us. I think it was Tideway Adventurers. They work with Hillingdon Narrow Boats and she is now due for another refurbishment. Incidentally Megan was sold to [Nottingham Boat Project](#) the year after we brought Lancelot and Guinevere on stream. She still operates there.

“Our third boat "Merlin" had a lot of design features to assist the partially sighted. Each cabin was a vivid colour bright red, blue or green. Light switches were red - apparently partially sighted people can see them better than plain white ones. (being red/green colour blind I could never find the light switches).

“Merlin is now with Tideway Adventurers/Hillingdon Narrow Boats and the last I heard from Mike Wilton-Caley a couple of years ago she is in a sorry state and needing refurbishing - I hope that has been done now”.



DESPITE A LOT OF TENDER LOVE AND CARE OVER THE YEARS IT WAS DECIDED THAT OUR AGEING OLD LADIES NEEDED REPLACING. MICHAEL AND MEGAN WERE SOLD ON BECAUSE WE COULDN'T REFIT THEM AS WE WANTED. MEGAN WAS SOLD AS WE DID NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT BOOKINGS (THEN, AT LEAST!) TO FILL THREE BOATS.

WITH THAT IT WAS AGREED IN 2000 TO RAISE FUNDS TO BUILD TWO NEW BOATS WITH THE AIM OF PASSING ON THE OLD BOATS TO OTHER SIMILARLY MINDED ORGANISATIONS. THEY ARE KNOWN TO STILL BE IN SERVICE ALBEIT NOT TO THE STANDARD OF OUR CURRENT BOATS.

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