

# Runcorn boatman's notebook

*Thanks go to Gill Gladwin for providing details from a small pocket book kept by her great-grandfather George Brown of Runcorn (1841-1914) and his son George Alfred Brown (1877-1923 - both on our website). The book has been lodged at the National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port.*

George Brown, who worked out of Runcorn in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, carried goods on the Manchester Ship Canal and kept a pocket book listing cargoes and journeys from 1889, assisted by his son, George Alfred. Entries include lists of men paying into sick relief for fellow workers, with comments about boat names and deaths of family members, including George's wife Sophia who drowned in the canal in 1900.

The lists give names of boats, their owners and masters, and some refer to payments made when crew members were laid off sick. Colleagues would club together, paying in sums from 3d to 6d each to support one another. Later pages refer to cargoes transported between Runcorn and Salford docks from 1899 to 1911. (Owners abbreviated to BNC for Bridgewater Navigation Company and MSC for Manchester Ship Canal Company, which bought them out in 1885.)

## **Boats and Masters**

Winchester, flat registered 1878 (MSC) Master: Peter Brown  
Thane of Cawdor, flat registered 1878 (BNC, MSC) Master: Henry Crompton  
Firefly, flat registered 1878 (BNC, MSC) Master: Richard Eccleston  
Cambridge, flat registered 1878 (BNC, MSC) Master: William Cheshire  
Clarence, flat registered 1878 (BNC, MSC) Master: John West  
Ohio, flat registered 1879 (MSC) Master: George Brown  
Timberfloat, flat registered 1879 (BNC, MSC) Master: Peter Brown  
Oscar, flat registered 1879 (BNC, MSC) Master: Samuel Chadwick  
Lucy, flat registered 1879 (BNC, MSC) – no master named  
Also listed without details: Thornton, York, Hudson, Lill, Thompson.

## **Crew receiving sick relief**

D Clarke, G Timperley, G Ward, J Worthington, J Garrett, W Cross, W Roberts, J Shaw, J Shakeshaft, W Ashcroft, J Done, A Done, J Houghton, Wm Shaw, James Walker, George Bate, D Clarke, J Sherlock, John Mason, W Kenyon, J Whard, R Nunerly, T Platt, J Birchall, A Cook, James Evans, A Powell, Wm Rose, J Higinson, S Lamb, J Broady.