

Roses and Castles

When the first narrow boats travelled the canals, men worked on the boats while their wives and children lived in houses. There were no pictures on the boats.

Later, when the railways began, trains took much of the carrying trade away from the boats. The boat owners could not charge so much to carry things, and could not pay their men so much money. The boat men and their families lost money, and could not afford to pay rent on their houses, so they all moved and lived on the boats full time instead. When the wives moved onto the boats, they wanted to make them look beautiful, and the paintings began.

Sometimes they painted the picture themselves, or they paid someone at the boat yard to paint it for them. Very few painters were artists; they were mostly just clever boat builders!

No-one really knows why they chose flowers & castles to paint.



Find the case on the ground floor where the painted objects are kept. How many different things can you see in there? What do you think they were used for? Have a chat with your friends and see what answers you come up with!

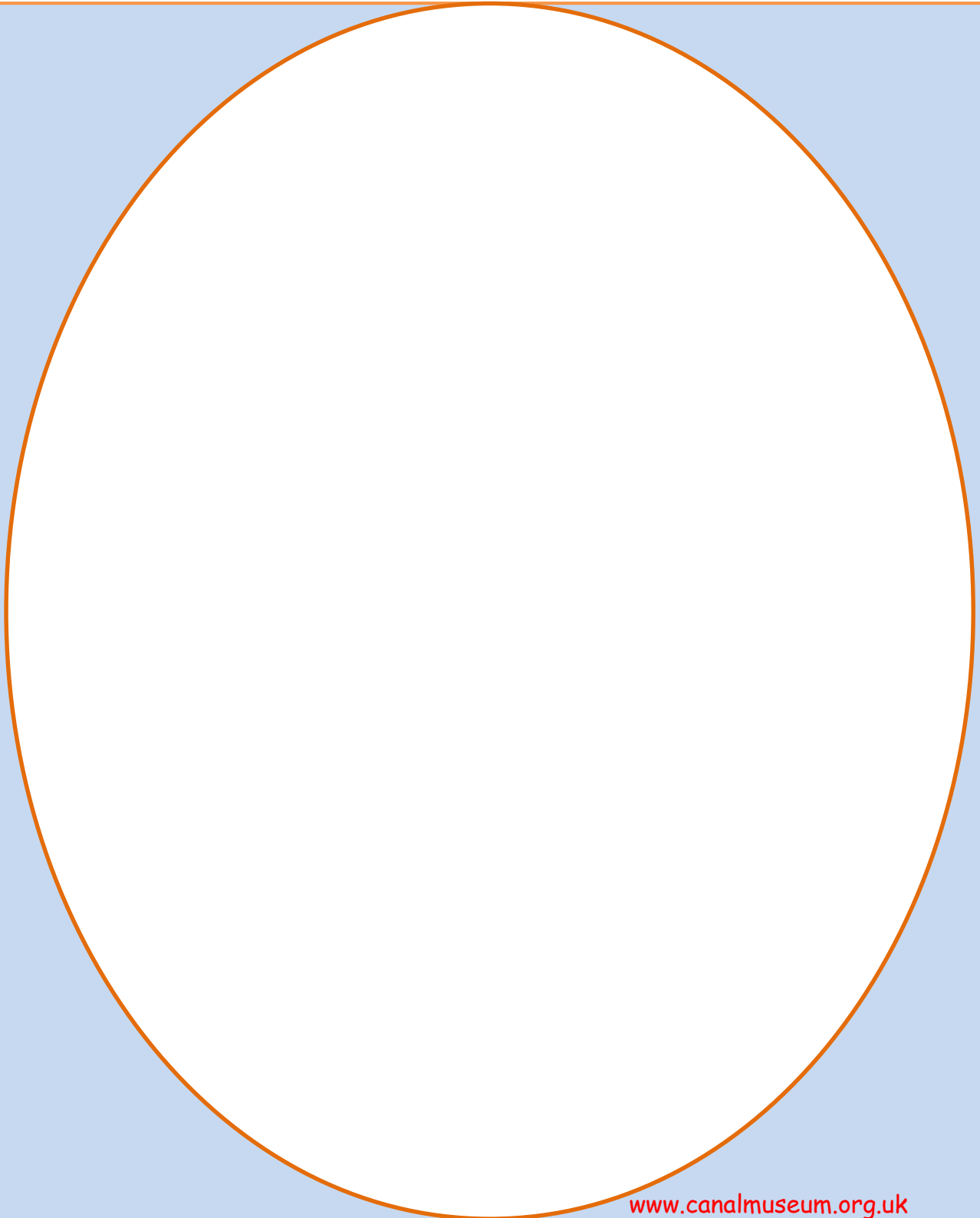
Choose the one that you like best, and look carefully at it. What is in the painting? In your sketchbook draw the object, focusing on the decoration.

If you can, colour your sketch with pencil or crayon. Make the colours the same as the real picture. If you have no colours to use, write on your sketch to remind you what colours you saw – this is called ‘annotation’.



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Imagine that this oval is on a door. Draw your own castle or mountain scene inside the frame.





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Canal boats had names, which were painted on their long sides. Sometimes, the name of the owner was written, too. The painters used capital letters.

This is your canal boat! Think of a name for her, and write it very carefully on the top half of the boat, beside the window. Will you write it in a curved or straight line? Look at the boats outside for some ideas.

