



These notes
are designed to
support teachers
accompanying visits
to George as part of
George's Journey.

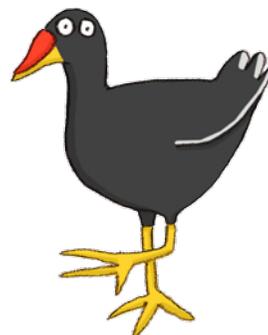
George's Journey

George is a
Leeds & Liverpool
short boat

George is the
only one left of
her kind!

George in the
wide lock at
Ellesmere Port

About George



George was built in Wigan in 1910. She is 62 ft long and 14 ft wide. This means she can fit through all the locks on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal which are 10 ft shorter than standard locks.

George was **skipped** (steered) by a **Captain** and a **Mate** (his assistant). She was built of wood with a square shaped **stern** (back of the boat) so that she could carry more coal.

Rescued!

After *George* finished carrying coal in 1971, she was abandoned and eventually sunk. Later, she was rescued by volunteers, restored, repainted and finally brought to the National Waterways Museum.

George is abandoned

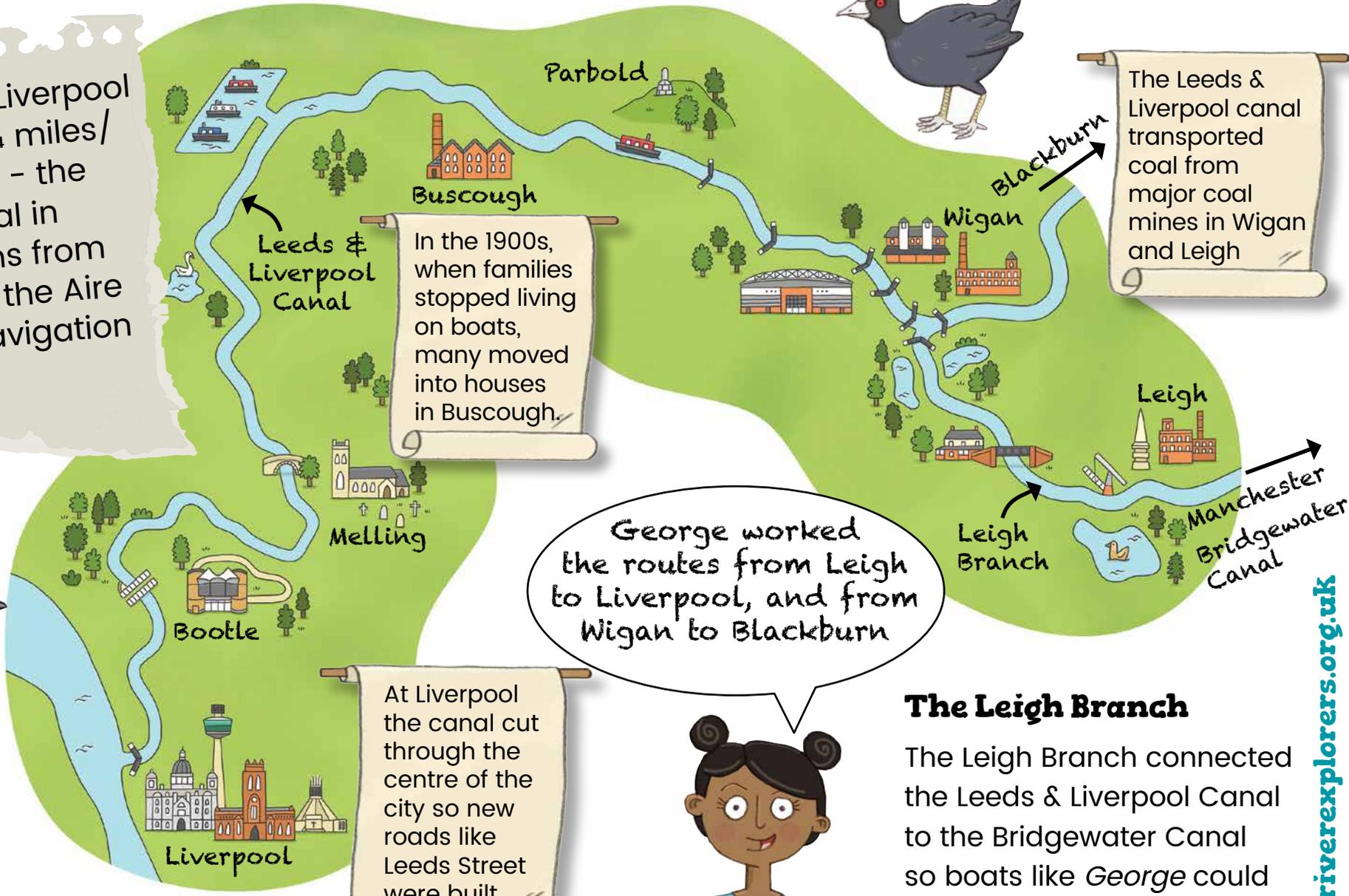


George being rebuilt

George's routes



The Leeds & Liverpool Canal is 127¼ miles / 205 km long - the longest canal in Britain. It runs from Liverpool to the Aire & Calder Navigation at Leeds.



The Leeds & Liverpool canal transported coal from major coal mines in Wigan and Leigh

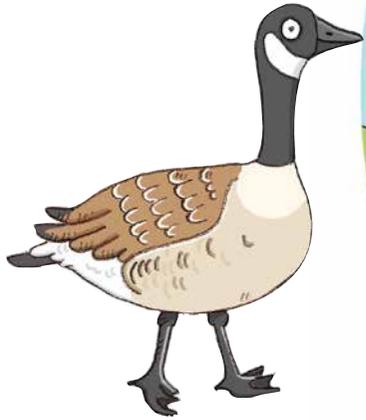
In the 1900s, when families stopped living on boats, many moved into houses in Buscough.

George worked the routes from Leigh to Liverpool, and from Wigan to Blackburn

At Liverpool the canal cut through the centre of the city so new roads like Leeds Street were built.

The Leigh Branch

The Leigh Branch connected the Leeds & Liverpool Canal to the Bridgewater Canal so boats like *George* could deliver coal into Manchester.

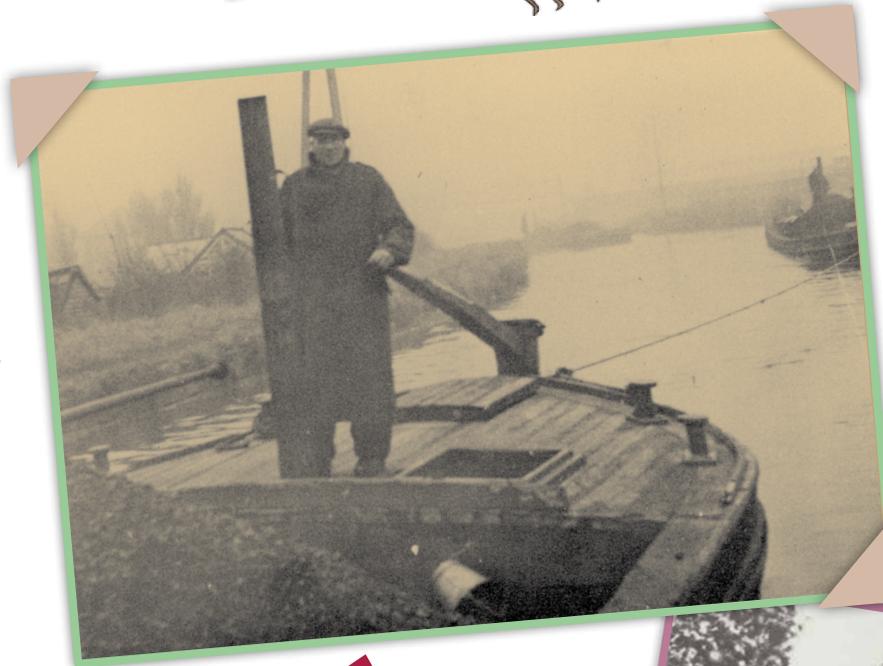


Dumb barge George



George is a 'dumb barge'. This means that she doesn't have an engine and has to be **towed** (pulled) along the canal by a horse or another boat.

Boatmen steering dumb barges cracked whips before going into blind tunnels so that boats on the other side knew they were coming.

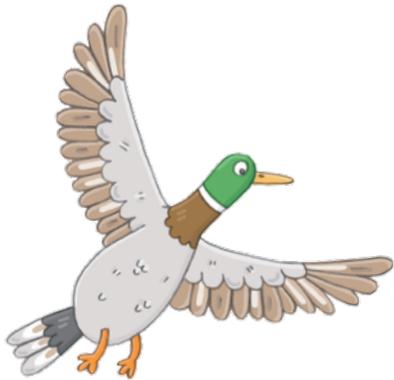


A barge tows a dumb barge

Boat horses were important members of the boat family. They were even fed before their owners! A boatman whose horse couldn't work meant no money!



The men who looked after boat horses for canal companies were called **horse marines**





George in World War II



In wartime, canals moved troops, machinery and cargo around the country. Some canals like the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, were used as barriers (**stop lines**) against possible invasion.



Boats like George took people on canal trips



A ticket for a canal cruise from Wigan in wartime

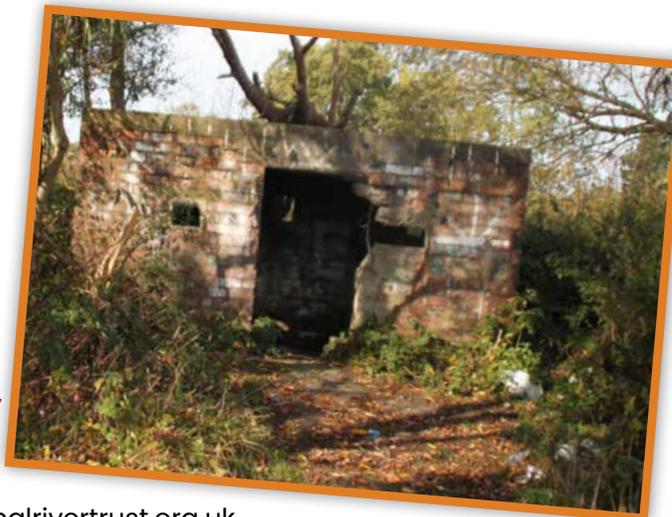
Home sweet home

During the war people were encouraged to 'holiday at home' so that the roads and railways could be kept clear for the army.

Women who volunteered to work on canals during the war wore IW badges (Inland Waterways). Boatmen nicknamed them 'Idle Women'.

Pill boxes, small concrete buildings defended by soldiers, were built along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal to help stop invaders.

A pill box



Shove off!
We work just as hard as you!



Idle women!
Idle women!

King Coal and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal



Coal was one of the most important cargos carried on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. It was used for everything from heating homes to powering factories. Barges like *George* would fill up with coal and transport it to places along the canal.

Crumbling bank

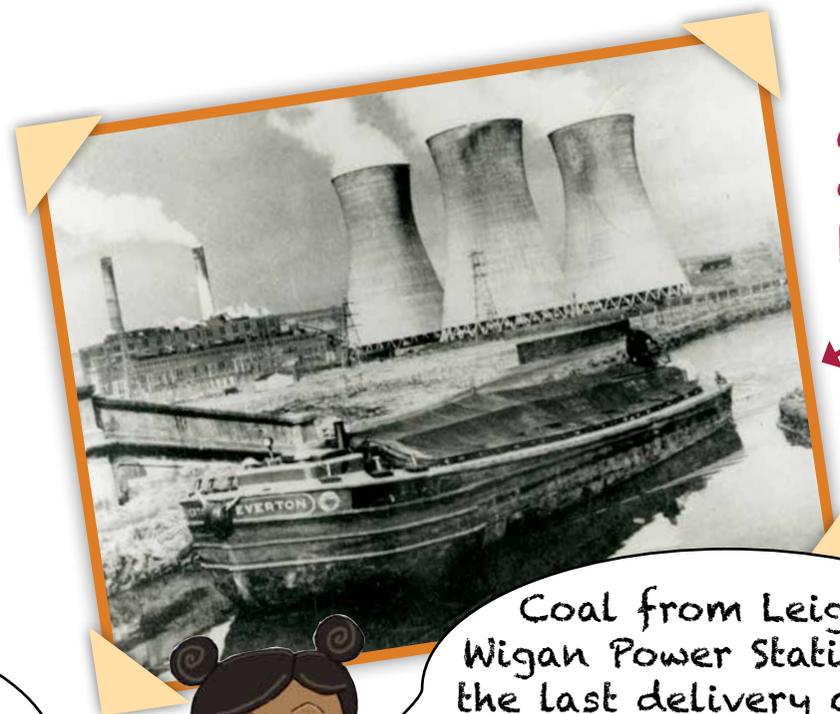
Power stations, which used coal to generate power, were often built next to canal banks. They often caused the banks to **subside** (crumble away).

The National Coal Board

After World War II, the government took over the coal industry to make it safer and fairer for workers. The government called it the **National Coal Board**. Boats on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal continued to carry coal for the Coal Board in the 1950s and 60s.



Coal boats were often overloaded. One man remembers boats loaded with 60-75 tonnes of coal (4-5 lorry loads!)



Coal boats and a power station



Coal from Leigh to Wigan Power Station was the last delivery of coal on the canal in 1972