



Lancaster Canal and Lune Aqueduct

Family 'Time Slip Trip'

Planning your route

The walk from Basin Bridge to the Lune Aqueduct is two miles (allow about 1.5 hours to follow the trail then an hour to walk back).

If you fancy a longer walk, or a cycle ride, take the extension route to the Maritime Museum.

You can join the walk at any of the stop points – use the map and bridge numbers to work out where you are.

Waterbus

A waterbus service runs along the canal from May to October.

www.budgettransport.co.uk

Water warning

Canals are fun places, but remember: Stay **SAFE – Stay Away From the Edge**. For information on water safety go to: www.canalriverexplorers.org.uk

Access

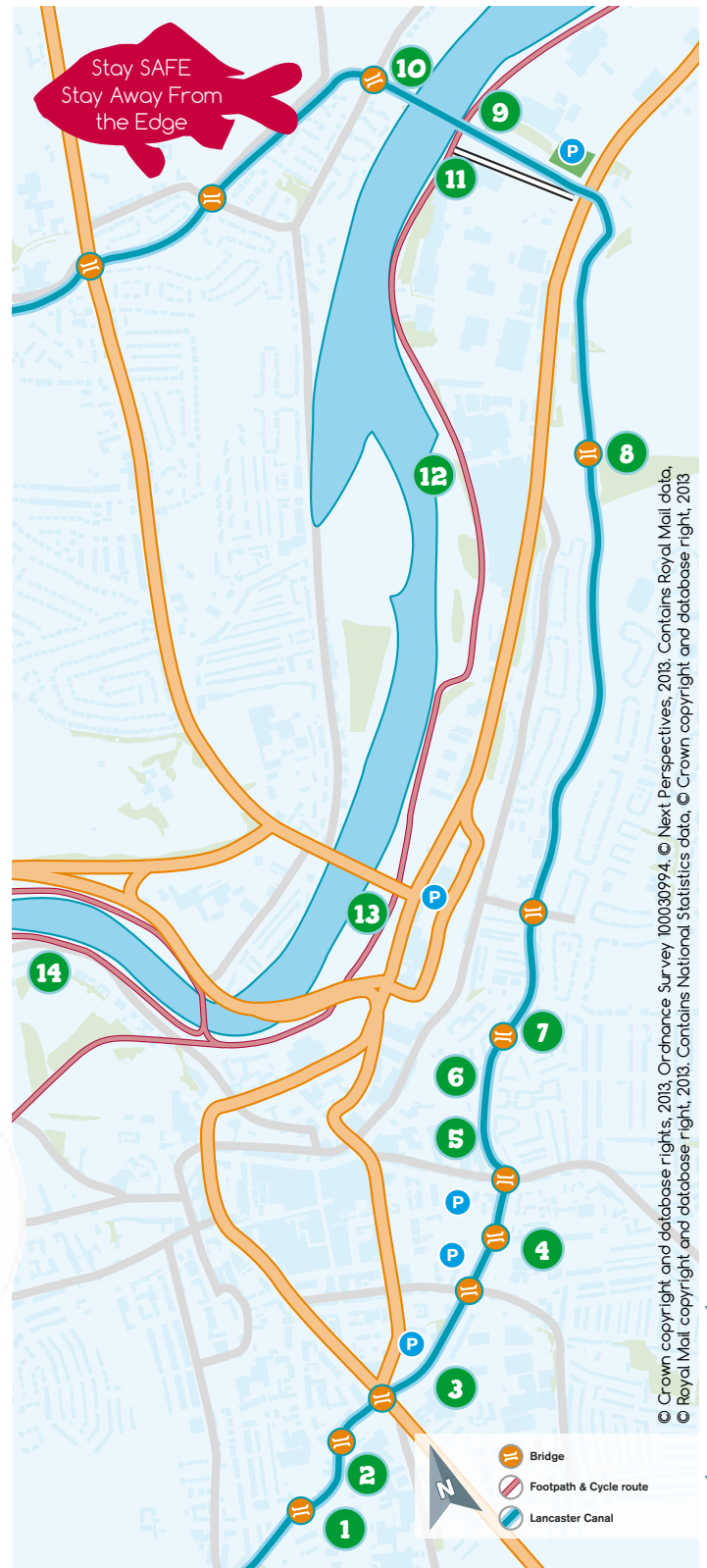
This stretch of the canal towpath is accessible for pushchairs and wheelchairs. There is a ramp from the canal to the bottom of the aqueduct.

Listen!

All along the canal are signs with pictures by local school children. Here you can listen to audio clips of people's memories of the canal.



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All aboard for a trip back in time!

Are you ready for some time travelling? Then jump on board our canal time slip trip and journey back 200 years.



Cool canal facts

Here are a few things you might like to know:

- They started building the canal in 1792
- It took 27 years to build the whole canal
- It stretched from Preston to Kendal (57 miles)
- The Lune Aqueduct carries the canal over the river

Ok, now you're ready to go...

1. Basin Bridge

98

Brainy idea for a bridge!

The canal hasn't been open long, but it's already a very busy place. Lots of horses are plodding along the towpath pulling boats. Whole families are working on the boats, even children.

Slow or speedy?

The canal boats might look slow to you, but 200 years ago they were the quickest way of delivering things.

Turnover bridge

Sometimes the towpath changes to the other side of the canal. So the horse had to cross a bridge.

But unless the horse was unhitched - OOPS! The towrope would get tangled round the bridge and snap.

That's why 'turnover bridges' like this were invented. The horse could cross without being unhitched.

Try it!

Pretend you are a horse crossing the bridge - where does your towrope go?



Directions: The next stop is the Water Witch pub, where you'll find out about the speediest boats on the canal...

2. The Water Witch Pub

Watch out for the witch!

Several boats are stopping here and the horses are being unhitched. The hot, sweaty animals are led away...then new fresh looking horses are brought out.

What do you think is going on? Find out below.



Witch on the canal!

The canal's packet boat service was the fastest way to travel. The 'Water Witch' was the speediest boat of them all. Pulled by two galloping horses, she could travel at 10mph (the old boats did a puny 4½ mph).

A boy rode one of the packet boat horses, sounding a horn to warn everyone to get out of the way!

All change!

The horses soon became very tired and hungry. So the packet boats stopped at stables and changed horses. This pub used to be a stable block.

Think!

Guess what speed you'll travel at today? Will you be as fast as the 10mph Water Witch horses? (*see below)

Directions: Continue under Water Witch Bridge (98a) and Penny Street Bridge (99). Stop at the huge White Cross Mill on your right.



You can climb aboard a model of the Water Witch at Lancaster Maritime Museum.

*The average strolling speed is 3mph, and a leisurely cycle is 10mph.

3. White Cross Mill Pub

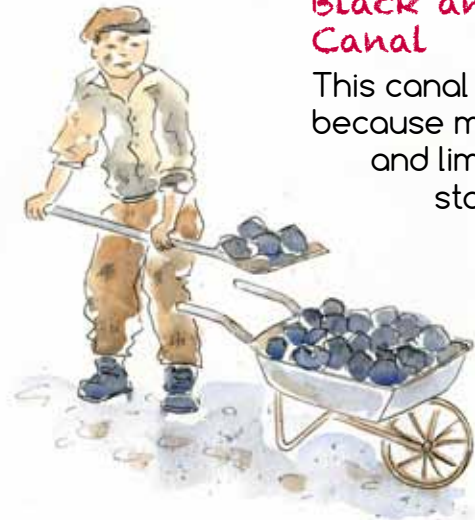
The dirtiest job!

You are outside White Cross Mill. Just opened, it's the first cotton mill in Lancaster. Canal boats are stopping here to drop off coal for the steam engines, and bales of raw cotton for spinning.



Black and White Canal

This canal was called the Black and White Canal because many of the boats transported coal (black) and limestone (white). Coal was used for fires, stoves and engines. Limestone was used for building bridges and houses.



Think!

Which would you rather carry on your boat? Coal was the dirtiest – and the people who loaded it were always filthy. Limestone was clean, but very heavy to lift.



Directions: Walk on past the White Cross pub, then over Friarage Bridge (100). Continue until you reach Clayton Bridge (101).

4. Clayton Bridge 101

Groovy bridge!

Lots of horses and carriages are going over the top of this bridge. They are travelling on the main road into Lancaster. The town has become really busy thanks to the mills.

Look!

In 1876, the bridge was widened to carry bigger carriages. Look underneath and you'll see the iron supports that were added to make it wider. The iron came from a Lancaster foundry run by Joseph Clayton.

Feel the groove!

Under the bridge, look for deep grooves in the walls. This is where the horses' towropes wore away the stone. How thick do you think the rope was?



Echoes of the past

Stand under the bridge and shout orders as if you are steering your boat through. Listen for the echoing voices of the boating families over 150 years ago.

Directions: Continue and go under Moor Lane Bridge (102). Stop at the large mill on your left.



5. Moor Lane (South) Mill

A looming nightmare!

You are inside this huge cotton weaving and spinning mill. It's so hot you can hardly breathe, and the air is filled with cotton dust. COUGH! COUGH! The machinery is roaring, groaning and clanking.



Harsh Life

People worked very long hours in the mills. Some went deaf from the noise, or died from lung disease caused by the cotton dust. But children often did the most dangerous jobs - made to squeeze under moving machines where adults couldn't get.

Look!

The tall building was the spinning mill, where cotton fibres were spun to make yarn. The three sheds on the far side were weaving mills where yarn was woven into fabric.



Boys working in cotton mill © Universal History Archive/UIG/SSPL

Directions: Walk on, but keep looking to your left. Who can be first to spot the castle?

6. Lancaster Castle

Groovy bridge!

OH NO! You've landed in prison at Lancaster Castle! It's crowded with men, women and children. You suddenly hear crowds of people cheering outside - but they're not here to save you. They are waiting to watch the next public hanging...

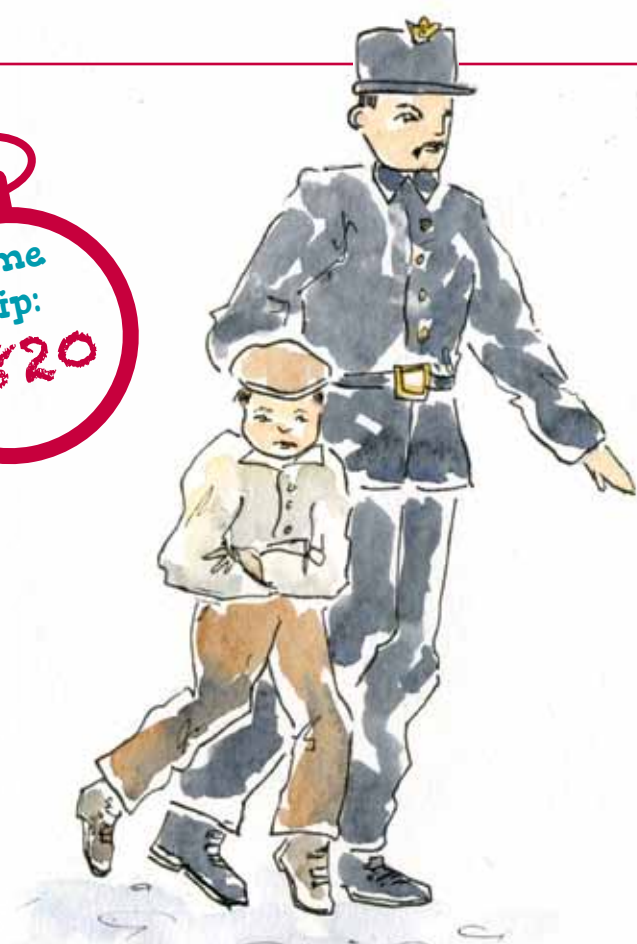


Prison and punishment!

The castle has loomed high on the hillside for over 1,000 years. When the canal was being built, the castle was a prison. The last public hanging there was in 1865.

Find out more on www.lancastercastle.com.

Directions: Continue along the towpath. Stop before you go under Shaw Street Bridge (103).





7. Shaw Street Bridge **103**

Weary workers

You are standing on the bridge in the evening. Suddenly the doors of a mill open, and hundreds of weary workers come pouring out. They are white with cotton dust and covered with sweat. YUK!

Hard work but easy walk

Look to your left and you'll see rows of small cottages where mill workers lived. The footbridge was built in 1882 so the workers could get from their houses to the mill.

Walk that way!

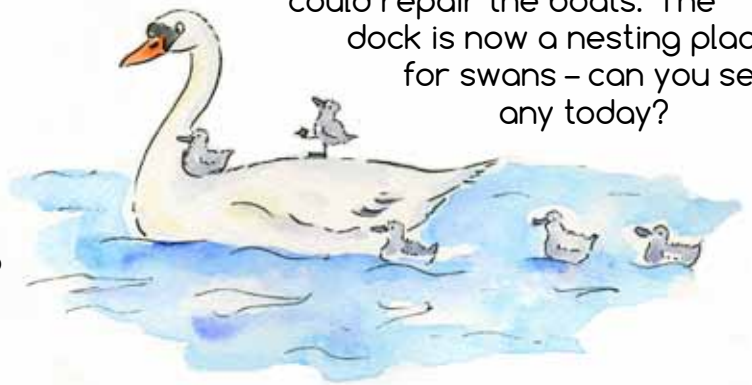
Go onto the bridge. Pretend you are a weary worker plodding home.

Directions: Walk on to Ridge Lane Bridge (104), then continue for about 15 minutes to Dolphinlee Bridge (105).



What's wet and dry?

As you walk on, look for the dry dock on the other side of the canal. Boats were steered in, then the water was drained out so men could repair the boats. The dock is now a nesting place for swans – can you see any today?



8. Dolphinlee Bridge **105**

Life as a canal child

A family invites you onto their boat. The parents and four young children all live on board in the narrow cabin. What a SQUEEZE! The cabin has tiny beds, a table and a stove for cooking. There are no televisions, mobile phones or music gadgets.

Time for school

Until 1877, boat children didn't go to school. Then the government introduced new laws called the Canal Act. One rule was that girls under 12 and boys under 14 now had to go to school.

Think!

Which would children prefer - going to school or working on the boat all day?

Directions: Continue along the towpath. Now you'll see fields either side of you. Start looking for wildlife – but you'll need to be quiet or you'll scare everything away!



Speaking stones!

Parents were always on the move, so canal children now had to live in lodgings during the week. They met up with their families at weekends, usually at bridges. Parents left messages under stones to say if they couldn't get there.



Cool canal creatures

Very fishy!

Perch - black and white stripes, orange fins.

Pike - the scariest fish in the canal! Long body and sharp teeth.

Dazzling dragons

Dragonflies - big and powerful, shimmering colours.

Damselflies - like dragonflies but more slender and delicate.

Bird bonanza

Moorhen - black with a red stripe on its head. Shy and gentle.

Coot - black with a white head. Noisy and aggressive.



Listen!

For the plop of a frog, the call of a bird or the buzzing of a bumble bee.



Directions: Follow the towpath until it turns left. Cross Bulk Aqueduct (106), and continue to the Lune Aqueduct.

9. Lune Aqueduct

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Amazing aqueduct

You are in a queue of canal boats, all waiting to cross the new aqueduct. Some of the boats are filled with sight-seers. WOW! No-one has ever seen a bridge as grand as this....

Hard work and a bit of magic

The aqueduct was designed by Scottish engineer, John Rennie. Work started on the aqueduct in 1792, and it took three years to build. The stonework was held together by a mortar (cement) which had a magic ingredient - ash from a volcano which made the mortar harden underwater. Look over the side carefully - the River Lune is a dizzying 16 metres below.

Think!

Over the years, the stonework of the aqueduct began to crumble, so it had to be restored. Can you see where some of the old pillars have been replaced?



Directions: Walk across the aqueduct and stop just before the next bridge.





10. Halton Road Bridge 108

Pulling the plug!

What happens when repairs need to be done to the aqueduct? The answer is that someone pulls the plug on it – it's true!

Dams made of clay are put at either end of the aqueduct, then a sluice gate is opened. And WOOSH! The water drains down a channel into the river. Can you see the drainage channel across the canal to the right?



Look!

The wide area on the other side of the canal is called a basin. Boats once pulled in here to unload supplies for the nearby village of Halton – such as food, animal feed and coal.

Directions: Go back across the aqueduct, then down the steps to right. If you have a wheelchair or pram, continue back past the steps and you'll find a ramp.

11. Lune Aqueduct (from below)

The height of fashion

You are looking at the aqueduct at sunset, when the pink and golden sky is reflected in the water. Tourists are admiring the view, while artists sit quietly capturing the scene on canvas.



Smart souvenirs!

The aqueduct was the height of fashion, attracting artists who sold paintings to sight-seers as souvenirs. But SPLASH! Pictures could easily get wet on the return boat journey. So some clever artists did their paintings on copper rather than paper.

Amazing facts

- The five stone arches of the aqueduct are supported by 60 tree trunks.
- The trees haven't rotted in 200 years. Why? Because they are always underwater and wood only rots when exposed to air.

Look!

This picture of the aqueduct by Robert Salmon (1790s) perfectly frames the castle in an arch. Is such a view even possible?



Congratulations!

You've finished your time slip trip! You can go back the same way, or follow the extension to the Maritime Museum.

Directions: To return, retrace your steps along the towpath. To continue to the Maritime Museum, follow the track along the river. After about 650m (five minutes), start listening for the sound of rushing water. Look out for the path right to Skirton Weir.

12. Skerton Weir

Leaping fish and deadly birds

Skirton Weir is a series of dams built to control the water flow to the mills. But there was a problem. Salmon need to swim upstream to lay eggs, and the weir was blocking their way. So some steps were built, called a fish ladder.

But the fish in the river need to watch out – because there are some expert fisher-birds on the weir:

Heron - playing statues

The heron's secret is to stay as still as a statue by the waterside. When a fish passes, it strikes like lightning with its sharp beak.

Cormorant - underwater raider

The cormorant can swim fast underwater to catch fish. Watch for the cormorant stretching out its wings to dry in the sun.

Kingfisher - deadly drop

The kingfisher perches above the river. When it sees a fish, it drops straight down like an arrow, spearing its prey with a sharp beak.



Listen!

Close your eyes and listen. Can you describe the sounds of the water? How many different bird cries can you hear?

Directions: Continue along the riverside track until you come to Skirton Bridge.

13. Skirton Bridge and Green Ayre Station

Beautiful bridge but smutty station!

Just like the aqueduct, this bridge was designed to impress people. It was built by Thomas Harrison between 1783-88, to look like a similar bridge he had seen in Italy.



Look!

On sunny days, the reflections in the water make the semi-circular arches look like circles.

Ghostly traces of Green Ayre Station

The track you've been following was once a railway line which transported passengers and coal. The station was to your left, marked by the crane. Can you see the old platform?



Directions: Keep following the riverside track. The Maritime Museum is on the quay, past the Millennium Bridge.

14. Lancaster Maritime Museum

All aboard the Water Witch!

To find out more about the canal, visit Lancaster Maritime Museum. You can even sit inside a replica of Water Witch and see its trusty horses.

www.lancashire.gov.uk/acs/sites/museums/lancastermaritime

Photo: Courtesy of Lancaster Maritime Museum part of Lancashire Museums

