

The bulk cargo boats were different, with some being owned by large coal or grain businesses, while others, particularly the manure boats, being owned by the boat's captain. Many of these boatmen would provide their own horse.

Boatmen on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal usually had their own house, and it was less common for them to live on board with their family than on the narrow canals of the Midlands. Many boatmen came from Burscough, in West Lancashire, and the village still has many houses which are recognisable as having been built for boatmen by the stables at the rear.

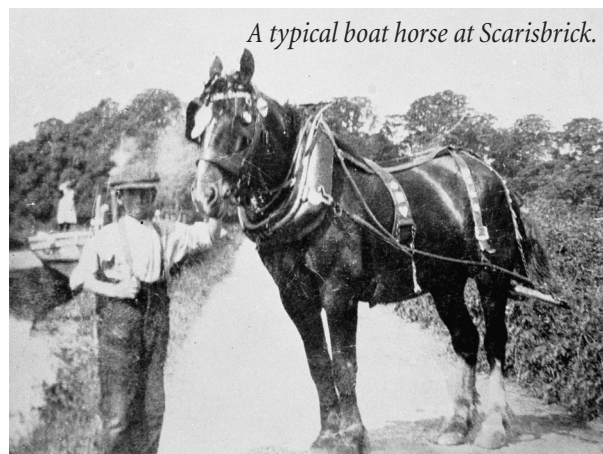


Boatmen's housing, Crabtree Lane, Burscough.

Burscough was also home to a hospital for canal company boat horses, built in the 1880s to replace an earlier one in Liverpool which was demolished when the old canal basin was remodelled. Injured horses were brought back here for treatment, and as their health improved, they were loaned to local farmers to work part time in the fields, getting them used to work once more.



The tack room at Burscough.

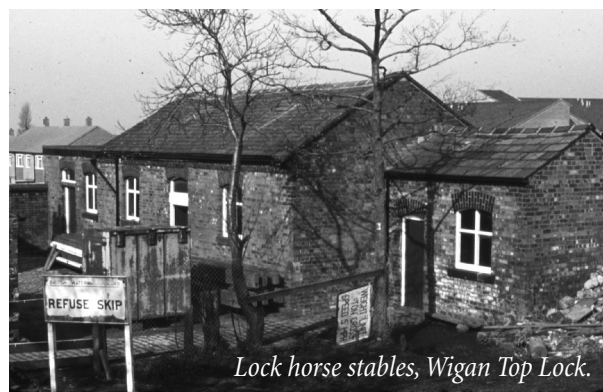


A typical boat horse at Scarisbrick.

The tackle used on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal was a little different to that used on narrow canals. The swingle tree to which the tow line was attached was similar, but the chains at the side of the horse linking it with the hames were covered with leather, rather than the wooden bobbins found in the Midlands.

From the 1880s, the way horses were used by the canal company was also completely different. A flyboat system, operating day and night, was introduced, with steam boats towing around three dumb boats on the sections of the canal in Lancashire. At the lock flights, horses were stabled just for towing these dumb boats up and down the locks, the steamer taking over towage afterwards.

In Yorkshire, the locks are more spread out, so this system would not work effectively. Instead, horse marines were



Lock horse stables, Wigan Top Lock.

Canal Company Stables, circa 1900 (135 horses, 143 dumb boats)

Station	Stables	Horses	Remarks
Bankhall	2	10	for bye traders only
Bootle	1	10	for bye traders only
Maghull	1	3	for bye traders only
Burscough	3	25	6 stalls let to Mr.Royle, rest for co.
Wigan	3	23	
Aspull	1	8	
Botany	1	8	
Johnsons Hillock	1	5	
Johnsons Hillock	1	2	for bye traders only
Nova Scotia		9	
Blackburn	3	13	
Blackburn	2	4	for bye traders only
B'burn dry dock	1	4	for bye traders only
Rishton		3	for bye traders, rented from Sutcliffe
Church	2	6	for bye traders only
Church	4	24	
Enfield	3	9	
Rose Grove	1	2	for bye traders, rented from Broughton
Burnley	5	36	
Burnley	1	10	or bye traders only
Nelson	1	2	
Nelson	2	17	let to Mr.Heap
Barrowford 4 th Lock	1	2	
Barrowford Top	1	3	
Foulridge Tunnel	1	2	
Foulridge	2	8	
Foulridge	1	2	for bye traders only
Greenberfield Top	1	3	
Greenberfield Top	1	3	for bye traders only
Banknewton	1	3	rented from Kendrick
B'newton Bottom	1	3	or bye traders only
B'newton Scarland	1	2	for bye traders only
Gargrave	1	4	
Gargrave	1	5	for bye traders only
Skipton	2	12	
Silsden	1	6	for bye traders, rented from Tempest
Silsden	1	5	
Stockbridge	1	5	
Bingley 5-rise	2	9	
Bingley W'house	1	2	partly used by company
Dowley Gap	1	3	for bye traders only
Shipleigh	2	17	
Gallows Bridge	1	2	for bye traders only
Field Lock	1	4	partly used by company
Apperley Bridge	1	4	for bye traders only
Forge Lock	1	5	partly used by company
Armley Lock	2	8	-do-, rented from Smith
Oddy Lock	1	3	-do-
Leeds	1	7	
Leeds	1	4	
Bradford	1	9	loose box for company only

THE LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL SOCIETY

The Society was founded in 1998 to help promote the canal and to encourage greater understanding and appreciation of the canal's history and environment. The Society works to ensure that the traditions and heritage of the canal are recorded and continued. A twice-yearly newsletter gives details of events and happenings on the canal as well as publishing articles on aspects of the canal and its history.

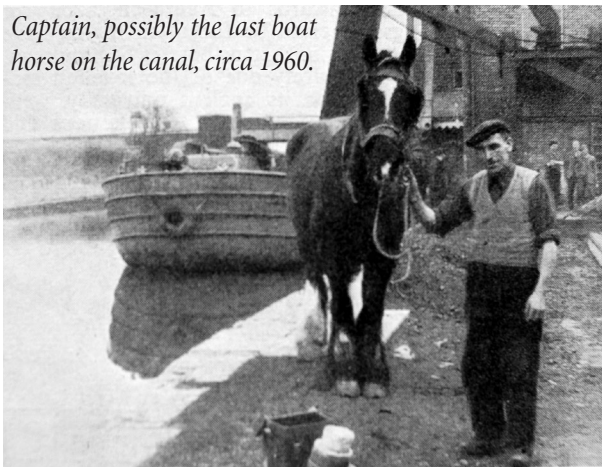


At locks, such as here at Barrowford, the horse would be given a feed as it then would stand quietly and eat whilst the boat was stationary in the lock.

employed from Foulridge. These were men who cared for the boat horses based there, and they would work with them, towing dumb boats on the canal in Yorkshire.

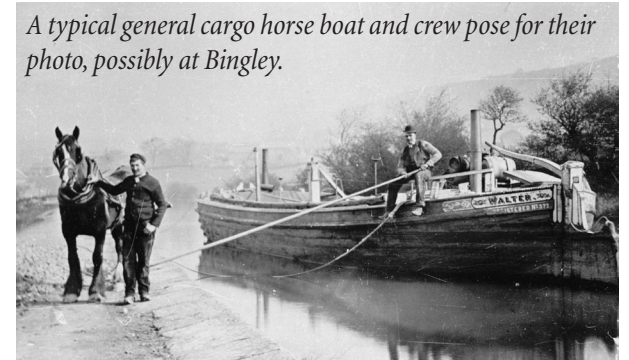
The way boats were towed was also different to narrow canals. With boats 14 feet wide, it was possible to vary the position of the tow rope to accommodate weather conditions. There was a central mast, called a lutchet, fixed to the first cross beam in the hold, with two smaller masts fitted into the corners of the hold nearest the bow. The tow line could be moved from one to the other, depending on the conditions. If it was really windy, the tow line could even be moved onto one of the 'timber heads', or bollards, used for tying up at a wharf.

Captain, possibly the last boat horse on the canal, circa 1960.



HORSE BOATING

A typical general cargo horse boat and crew pose for their photo, possibly at Bingley.



When the first sections of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal opened in 1773 and 1774, the idea of using horses for towing boats was comparatively new. On river the navigations of the early 18th century, it was usually men who towed the boats from the river banks, or even from shallow parts of the river itself. Canals put an end to that, and all canals had towing paths for the use of horses.

One difficulty which resulted was that people were unused to such things, and often tried to use the towing path as a road. On the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, the towing path was closed to the public once a year to maintain it as private property. It was called 'Halfpenny Day', as that is what members of the public were charged if they were found on the towpath.

In the early days of canal transport, it is difficult to know who exactly owned the boat horses; it could have been the boat's captain, or the company owning the boat. However, from the middle of the 19th century, it becomes easier to find out such things. On the Leeds & Liverpool Canal there were two types of boat: those carrying general cargo and those carrying bulk cargoes, such as coal or manure. The former were operated, in effect, by the canal company itself. They owned all the boats and horses, as well as horses and carts for deliveries away from the canal warehouses. The boatmen were employees and were unlikely to have their own horse.

Friends of Kennet

The Society also owns **Kennet**, one of the last unconverted boats which worked on the canal. **Friends of Kennet** help maintain and move the boat, and training sessions in boat handling and other facets of canal life are planned.

We would be delighted to hear from people who would like to sponsor work on **Kennet** or to give a donation to the **Friends of Kennet**.

Contact: friendsofkennet@gmail.com



Kennet at Armley, near Leeds, in 2010.

Produced for the Leeds & Liverpool Canal Society, whose details can be found on its website at <http://www.llcs.org.uk> or from the Secretary:

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