

Choosing the Route

This 1766 map may have been the first one drawn up by John Longbothom, the canal's earliest Engineer. The line **aa** is described as a canal from Foulridge to Liverpool. The route was initially supposed to start from the Ribble Estuary, though Liverpool was already seen as important, and became increasingly so as the plans developed.

Ab Ortu, Ad Occasum on the L&LC Crest can be translated as *From East to West, or From Sunrise to Sunset.*

The canal was to be from Irish Sea to the North Sea.







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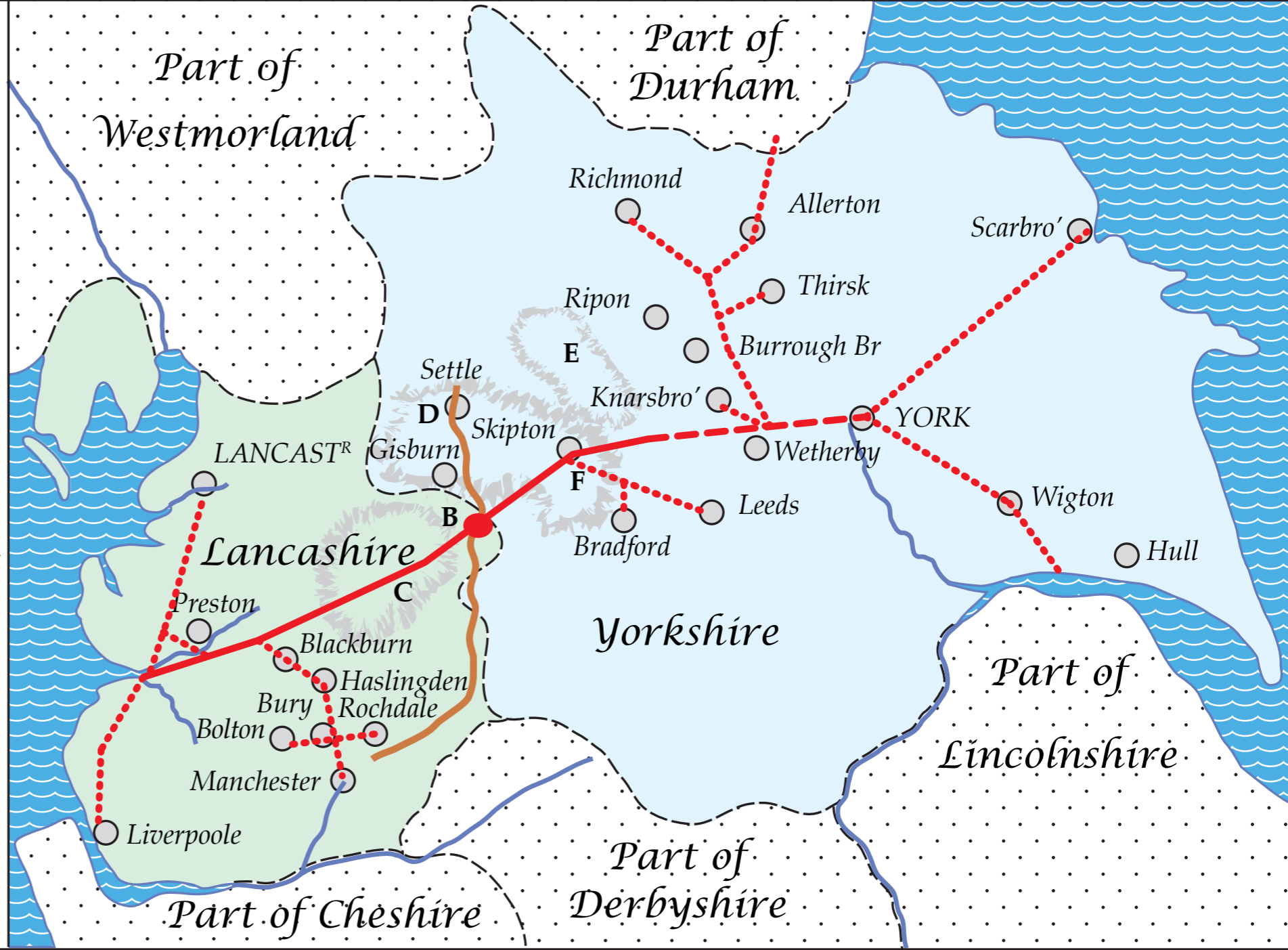
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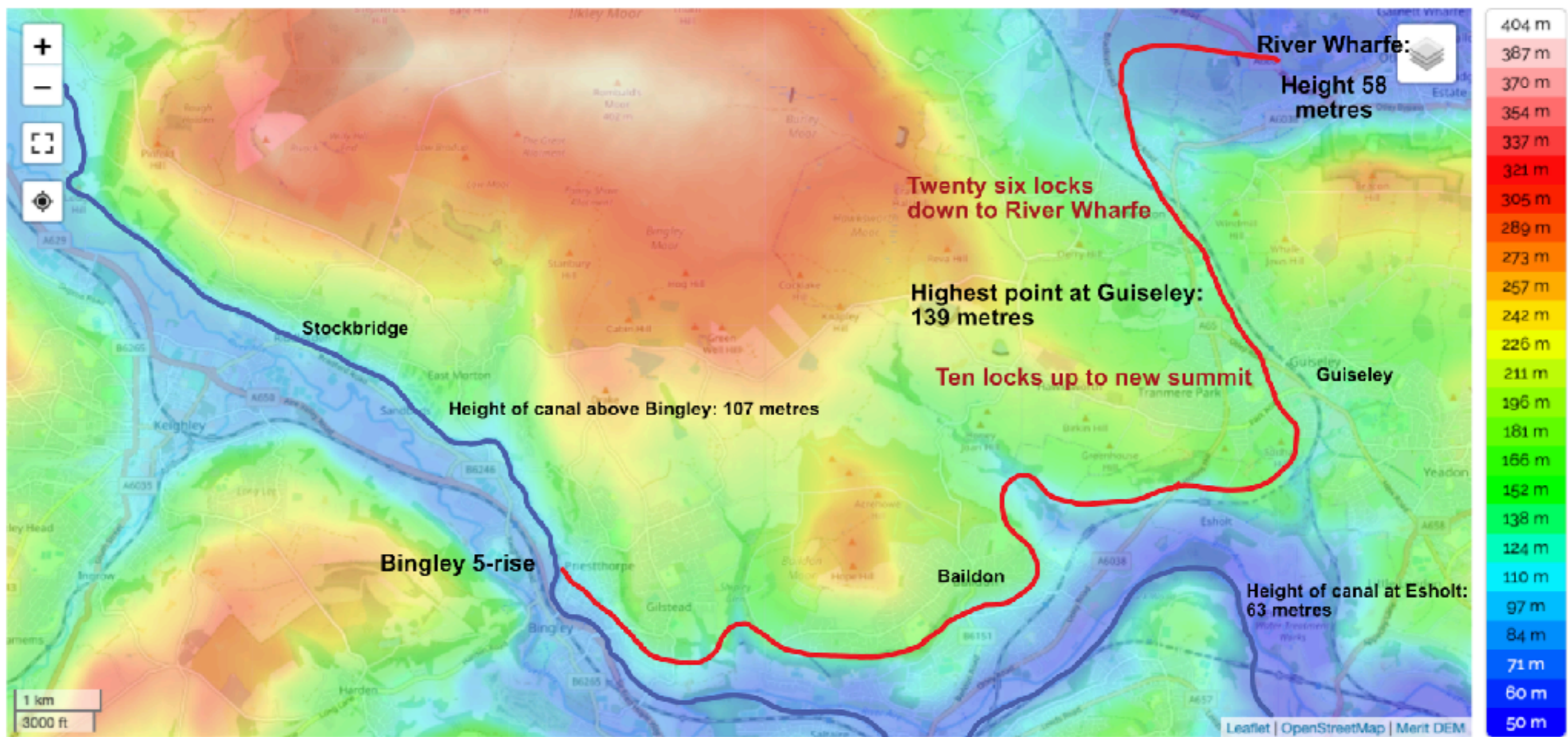
J. Longbotham. 1766.

A Plan of an intended Navigable Canal thro' Craven to the East and West Seas

-  *General Canal of 60 tons burthen regularly surveyed and estimated.*
-  *General Canal not regularly surveyed.*
-  *Colateral Canals that may with ease be brought into ye General one.*
- B** *the Bason ... C Collieries ... D Lime Rocks ... E Lead mines ... F Allum Rocks*
-  *An intended Canal, extending from the Coal mines behind Rochdale, to the Lime Rocks nigh Salterforth, and crossing the center part of this Canal.*



This is Longbothom's plan for a through route between the Irish Sea and the North Sea, independent of the Aire & Calder Navigation. The Lancashire section was very similar to the previous map, while in Yorkshire the canal would have run into Wharfedale and then up the Derwent valley, before crossing the narrow ridge to Scarborough and the North Sea. Leeds and Bradford were on branches, and there was a possible connection northwards to the Durham coalfield.



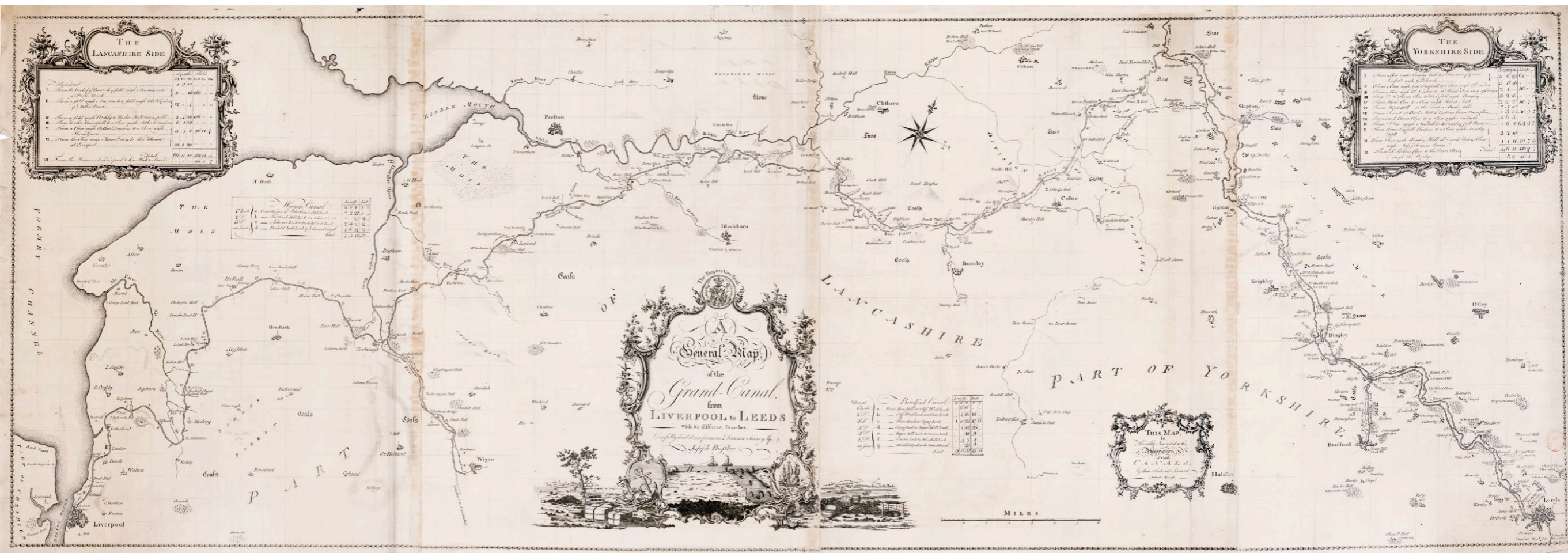
West Yorkshire, Yorkshire and the Humber, England, United Kingdom (53.74143 -1.72020)

This contour map shows how the canal would have reached Wharfedale. It would have used the line of the present canal to Bingley, and then continued at the same level through Baidon to Guiseley, where it would have climbed by around ten locks to a new summit level, before descending into Wharfedale. Water for the summit could have been supplied by a reservoir fed by streams coming down from Ilkley Moor.

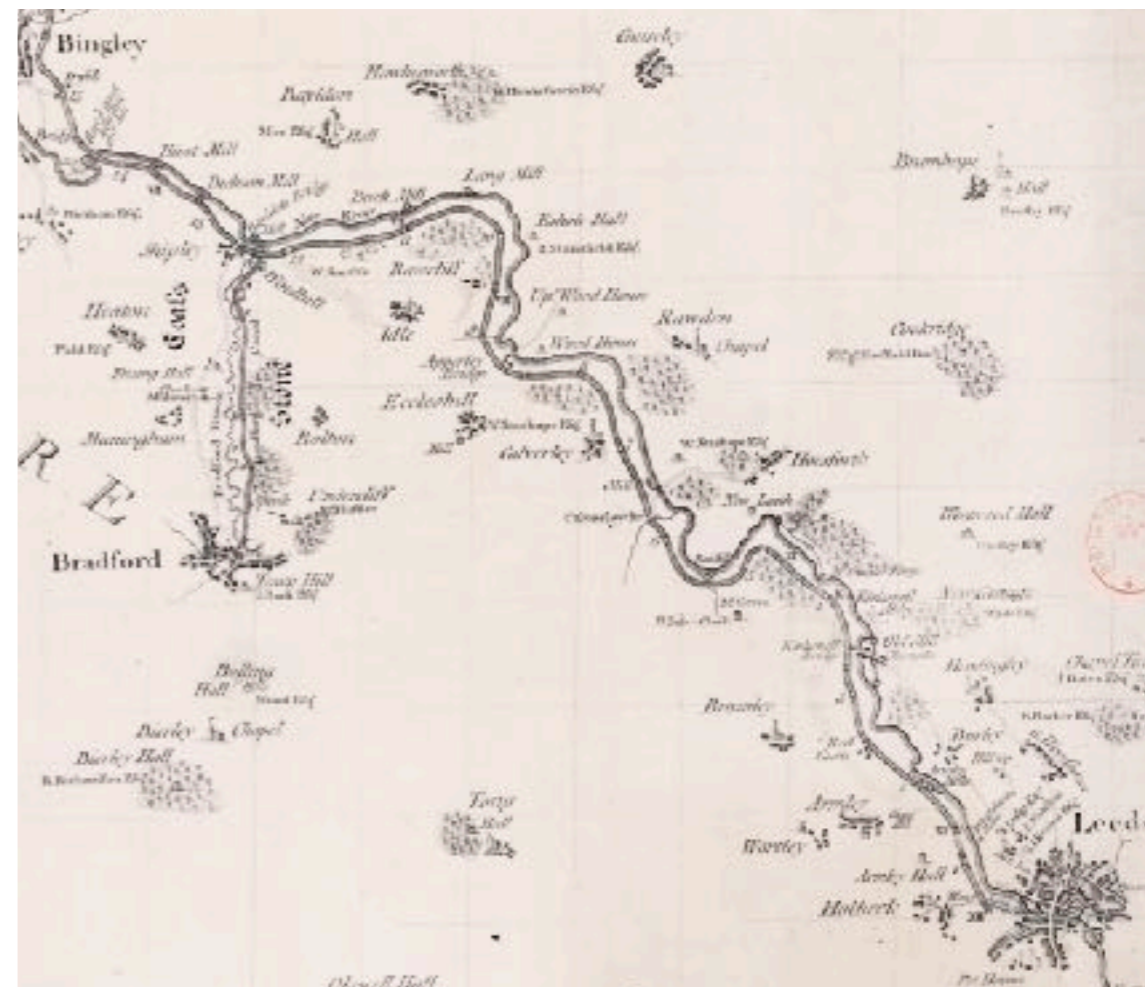


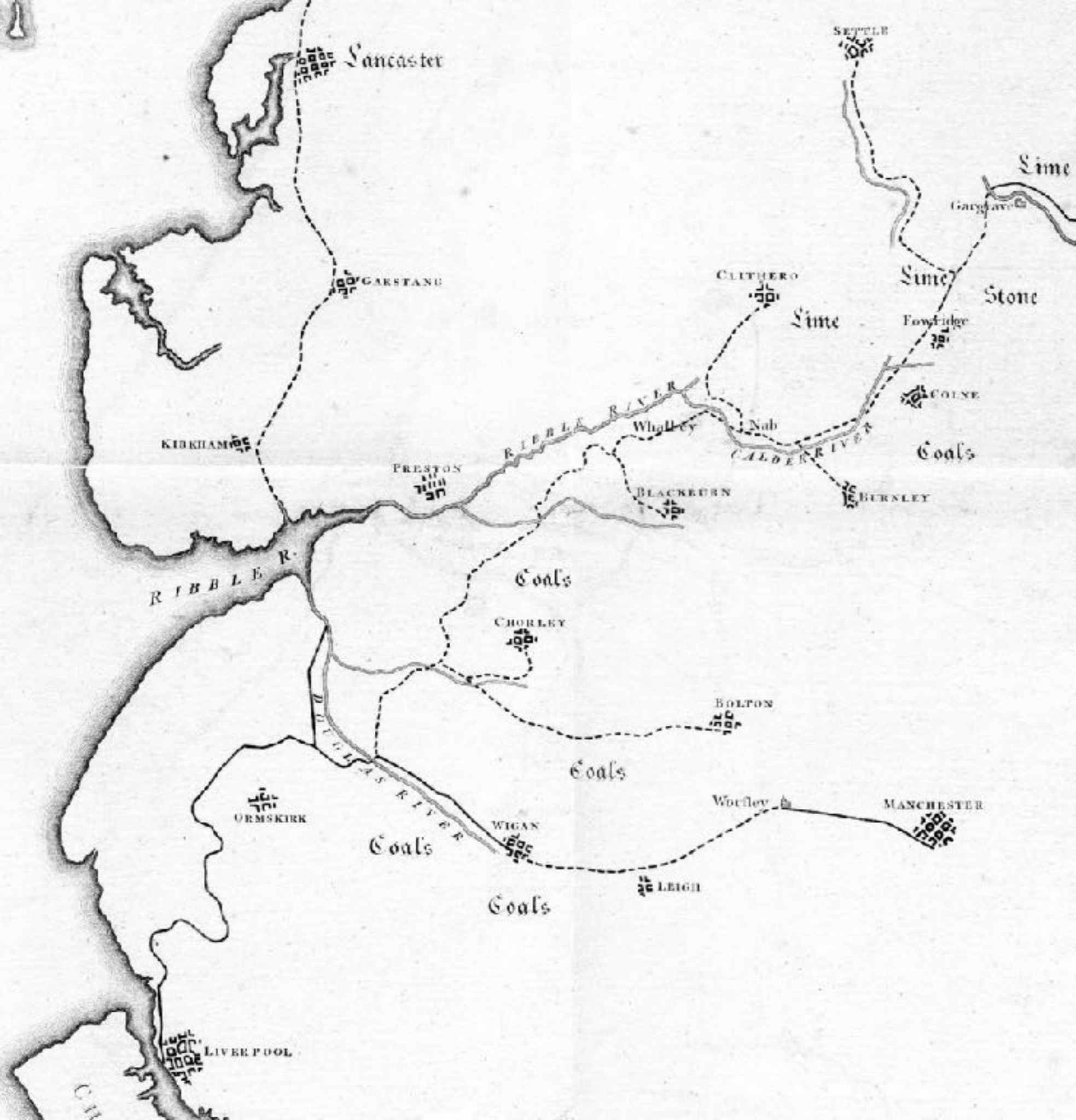
Plan of the Intended

By the time this map was produced, around 1769, it had been realised that the initial plan was too expensive, and a scheme simply to join Leeds and Liverpool had been decided upon as more realistic. Major towns were to be served by branches, and this map shows ones to Settle and Burnley, as well as the one to Bradford.



This was the plan as approved by Parliament in 1770. To reduce costs, all the branches had been left to local people to build, and the canal was simply a route from Leeds to Liverpool. However, the Bradford branch is shown. This was financed and built by L&LC proprietors in Bradford, and they had little difficulty in raising the necessary finance. The other branches had less success as there was often considerable opposition to their construction.

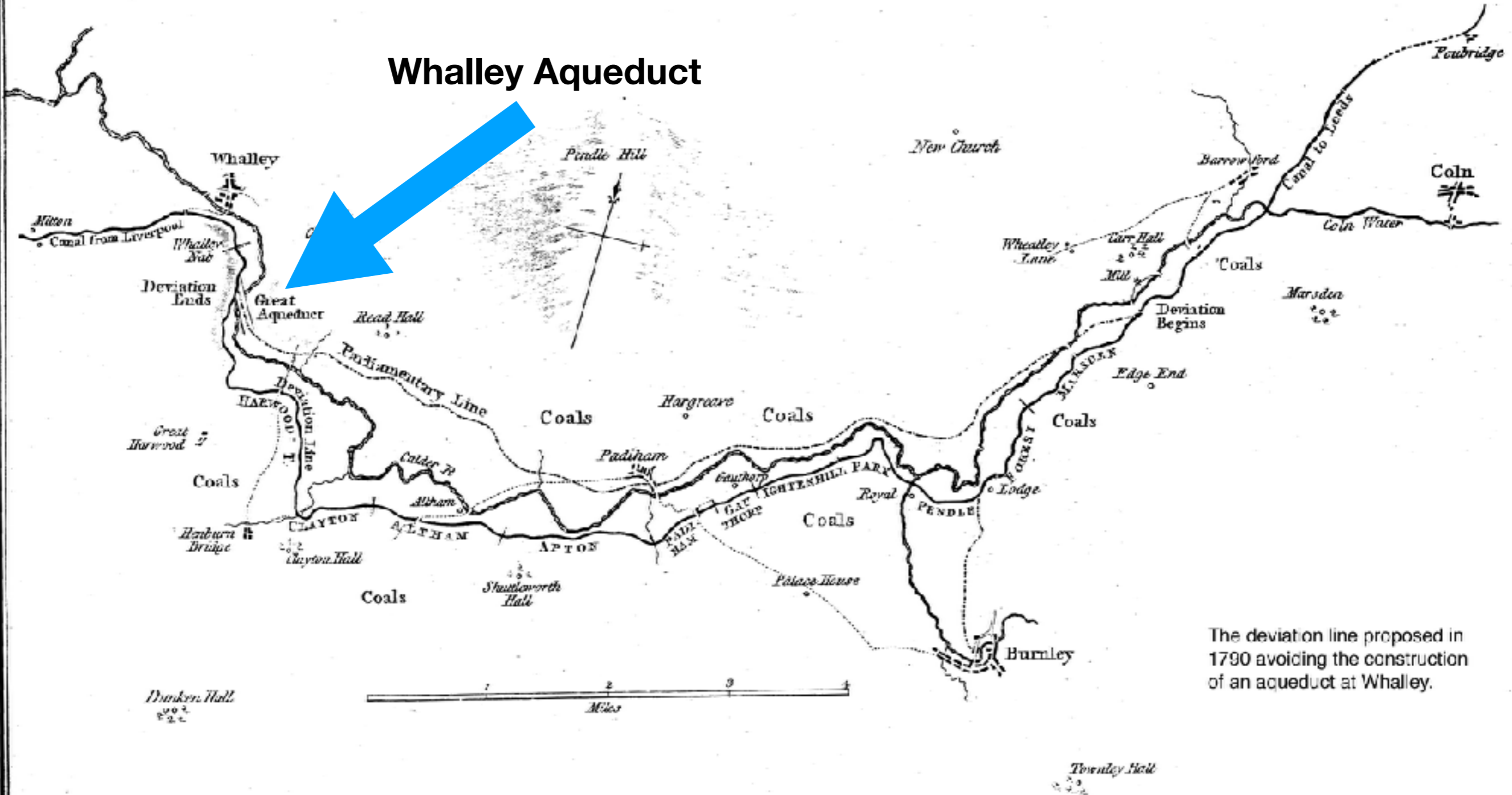




By the time of this map, around 1780, the canal was open from Liverpool to Wigan, and from Leeds up to Gargrave. The idea of serving larger towns by branches still remained, whilst an early proposal for a Lancaster Canal, from the Ribble northwards, has been added.

A PLAN of the intended DEVIATION in the LINE of the LEEDS and LIVERPOOL CANAL.

Whalley Aqueduct



The deviation line proposed in 1790 avoiding the construction of an aqueduct at Whalley.

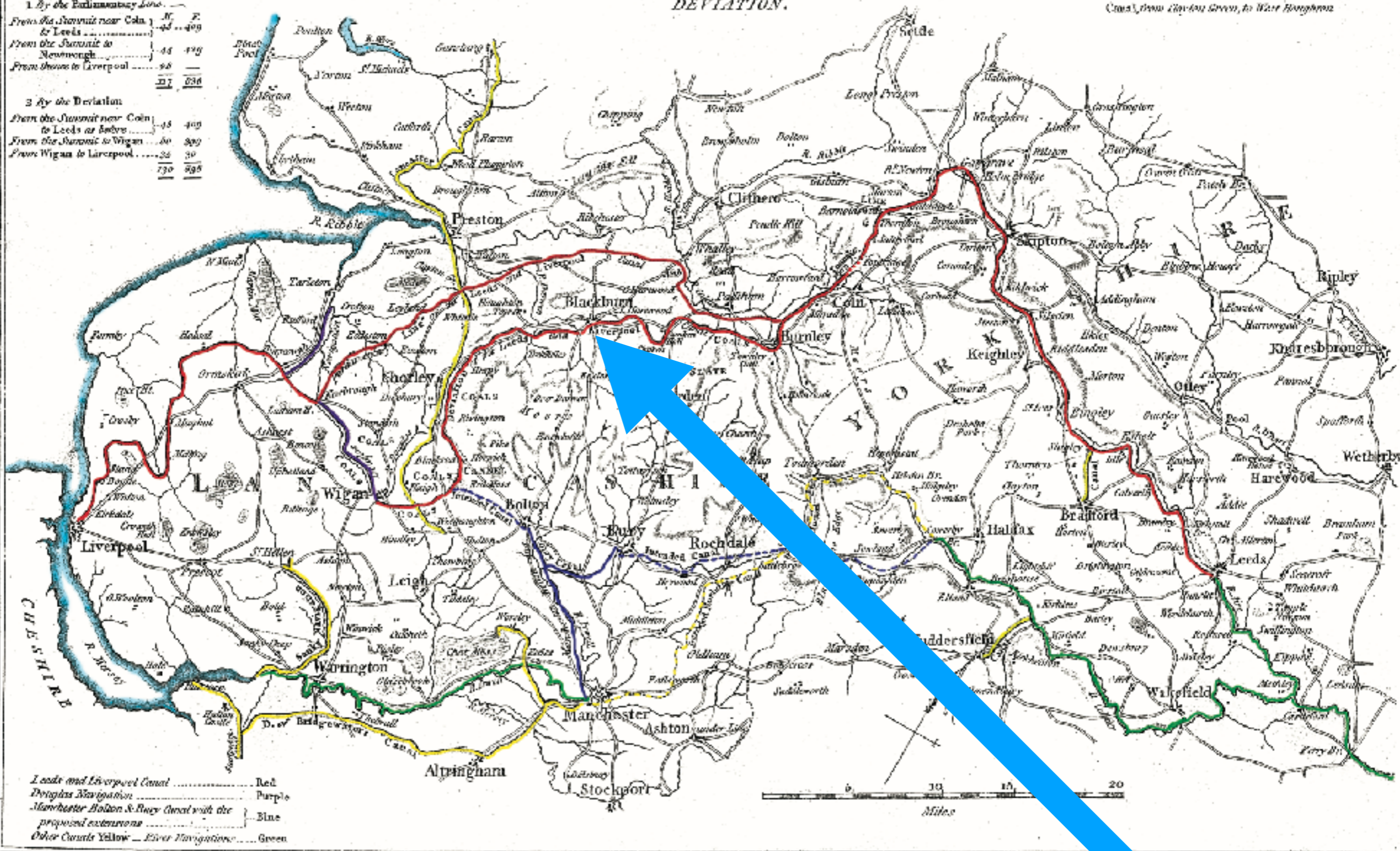
1790 brought the first major review of the route, with the line being moved to the south of the River Calder in East Lancashire, to avoid a long high aqueduct at Whalley.

A Plan of the **LEEDS and LIVERPOOL Canal** *with the proposed*
DEVLIATION.

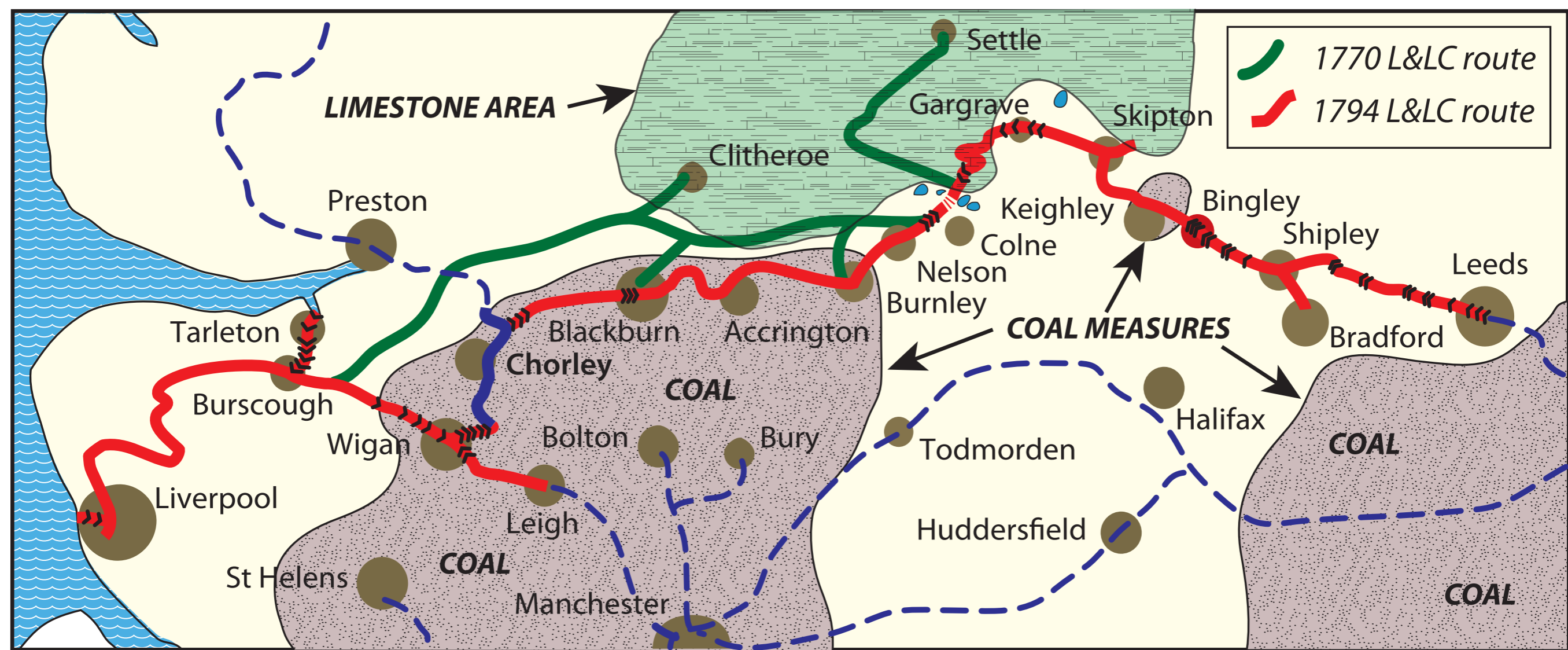
33. *The Line of Deviation of the L. & L. Canal from Blackburn to Red Mars, is 10 feet above the Level of the Lancaster Canal, from Clayton Green, to West Hougham*

Lengths and Levels on the L. and L. Canal

1. <i>By the Endimontary Line.</i>		
<i>From the Summit near Coln to Leeds</i>	N.	F.
.....	45	409
<i>From the Summit to Newnough</i>	45	499
<i>From thence to Liverpool</i>	98	—
	<u>217</u>	<u>908</u>
2. <i>By the Deviation</i>		
<i>From the Summit near Coln to Leeds as before</i>	45	409
<i>From the Summit to Wigan</i>	60	309
<i>From Wigan to Liverpool</i>	28	30
	<u>133</u>	<u>748</u>

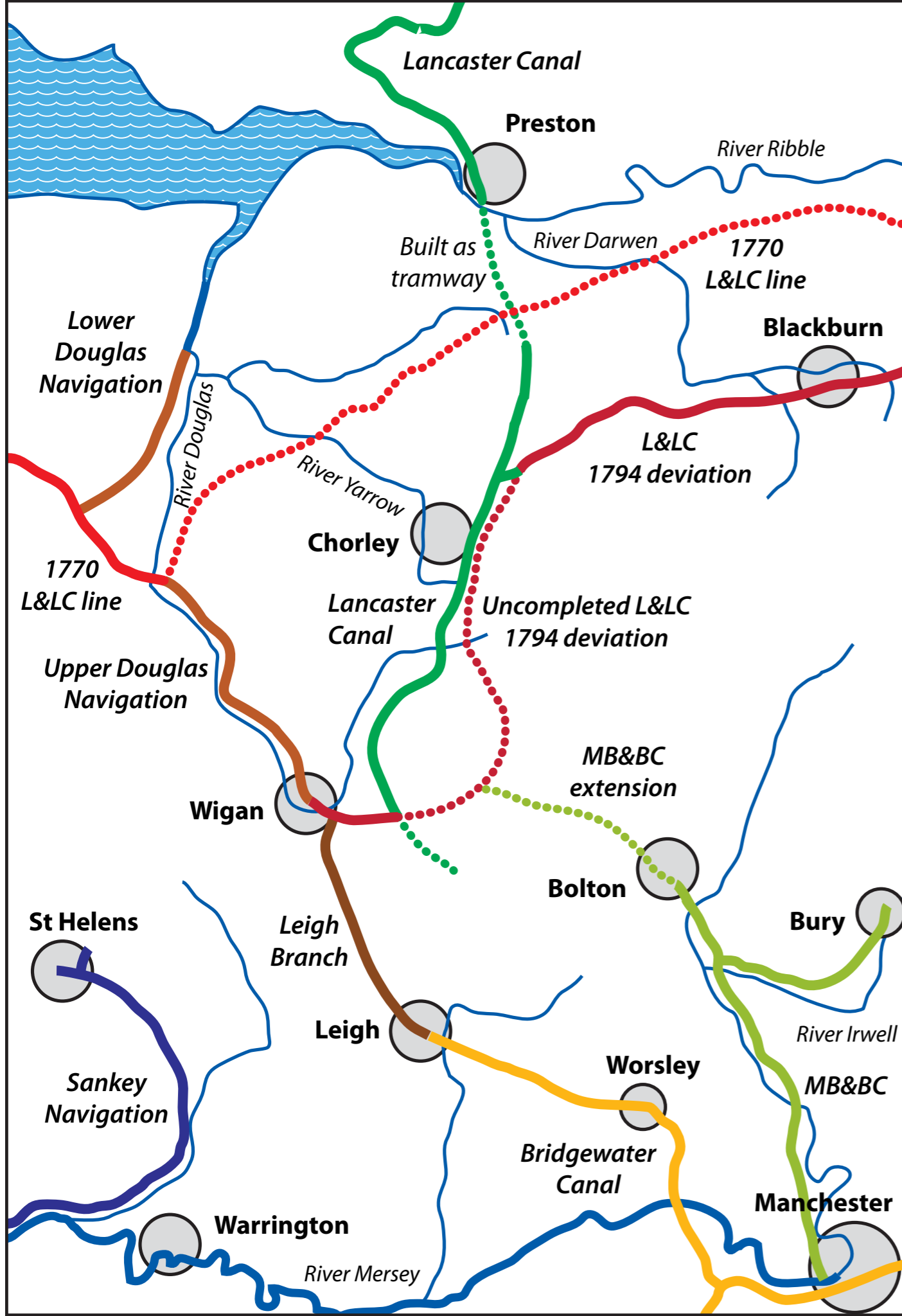


By 1793, ideas had changed again as canal construction increased across Lancashire and West Yorkshire, with the L&LC route being moved southwards through Blackburn.



When the canal was proposed in 1770, limestone was considered to be the most important cargo which was expected to be carried. The original route, in green, would have kept to the limestone area.

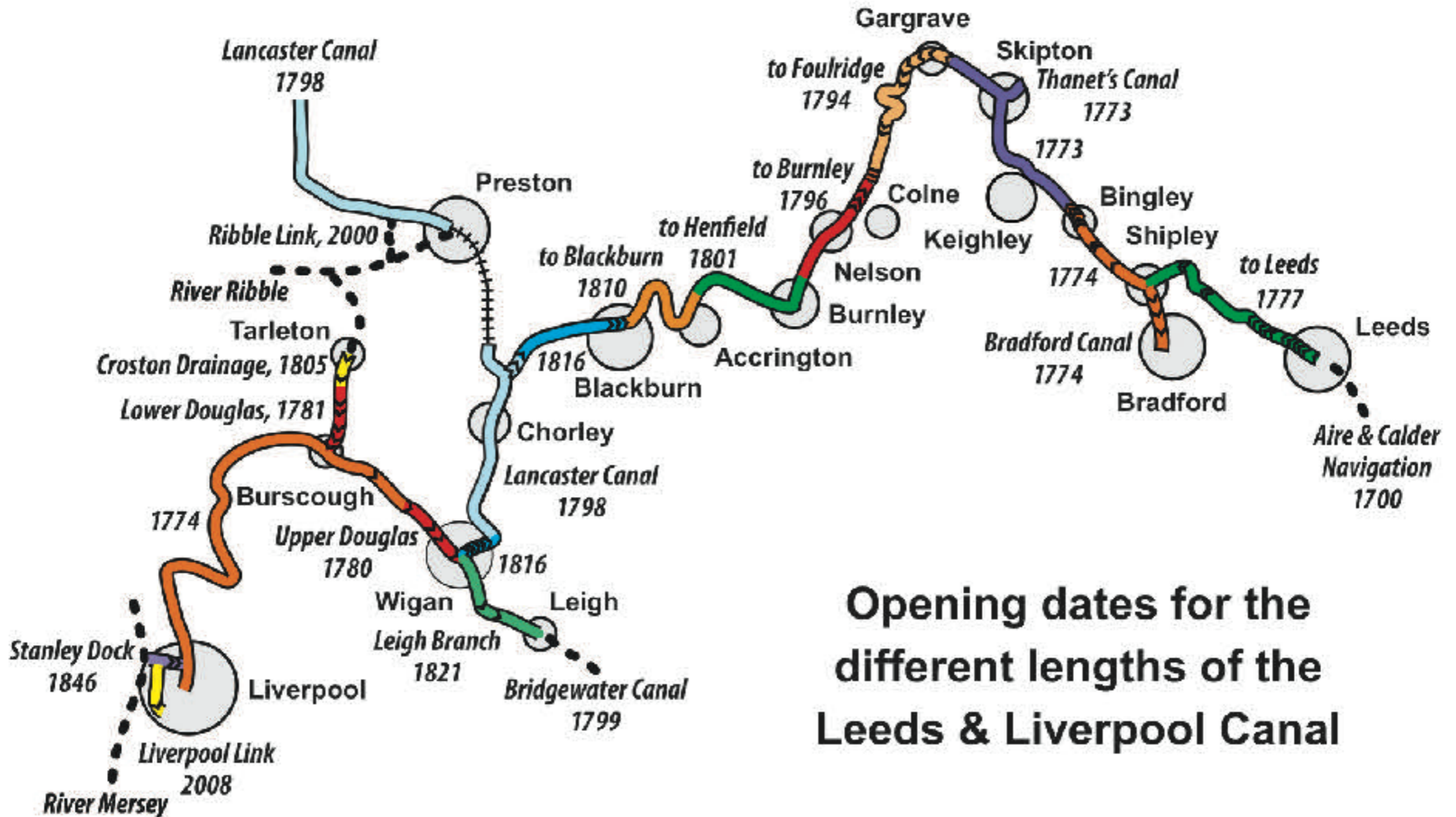
Twenty years later, coal had become a much more important cargo, and the route of the canal in East Lancashire was changed, moving from close to the limestone area around Clitheroe, southwards into the coal measures between Wigan and Burnley.



The construction of the Lancaster Canal was the last major influence on the canal's route. The Lancaster obtained its Act in 1793, the day before the new L&LC Bill was introduced to Parliament, so the Lancaster took the best route southwards to Wigan.

The L&LC changed its route proposals between Blackburn and Wigan, obtaining its deviation Act in 1794.

Having two routes so close together was obviously a waste of money, and the L&LC came to an agreement with the Lancaster to use their canal between Johnsons Hillock and Aspull, Wigan, much to the annoyance of the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal, who had hoped to join the L&LC by an extension from Bolton.



Opening dates for the different lengths of the Leeds & Liverpool Canal

The last sections of the L&LC main line were opened in 1816, some 46 years after the first Act for the canal had been passed. The Leigh branch was opened five years later, but it was only with the opening of the Stanley Dock branch in 1846 that the original idea of a canal between the Irish and North Seas was achieved.

Since 2012, ***Kennet*** has been attending events along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. She is owned by the L&LC Society, who rely upon donations and sponsorship to preserve her for future generations.



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If you have enjoyed your visit, please give a donation to support the Society so we can continue to maintain ***Kennet*** and open her to the public.