

# History

All children – regardless of gender, starting point or background – will have the opportunity to engage with a high-quality history education. They will be equipped with the knowledge, skills and vocabulary to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgement, to provide an understanding of chronology, knowledge of significant individuals and events. We intend to inspire a sense of enjoyment and curiosity about history.

## Local British History (The Shropshire Union Canal)

Spring 1

### Igniting Prior Knowledge:

The Roman Empire made its mark on Britain.

### New Knowledge:

- The present Shropshire Union Canal network did not take this title until 1846 when the constituent canals were amalgamated and run by the Shropshire Union Railways & Canal Company before being bought out by the London North Western Railway Company.
- The earliest part of the system was the Chester Canal which ran from Chester to Nantwich and was constructed under an Act of Parliament in 1772. Some 21 years later an Act of 1793 saw the length from Ellesmere Port to Chester being built.
- The canal was intended to transport lime for agricultural use and coal to fire the lime kilns. It was originally hoped to build a northern extension of this canal from Trevor to Chester as part of a grandiose scheme to link Liverpool and Bristol by canal.
- The Montgomeryshire Canal was built under another Act of Parliament of 1794 and ran from Carreghofa to the Newtown Basin and was used principally for the carrying of lime for agricultural use.
- The present Llangollen Canal, known then as the Ellesmere Canal, was started in 1797 by the Ellesmere Canal Company under the direction of Telford. This was to be built from a connection with the Montgomery Canal at Frankton to Whitchurch but the difficulties of the route meant that it had only reached Tilstone Park by 1804.
- The main difficulty on this route was to get the canal across Whixall Moss. In order to do this the water level of the Moss was lowered by 5 to 6 feet and the canal built across on a floating bed in much the same way that Stevenson used later on the railways. Continued peat extraction has caused constant subsidence problems and up to the 1960s British Waterways employed a Moss gang to continuously raise the canal banks to maintain the free board. This has now been superseded by underpinning with steel piling.
- A branch was started with the intention of reaching Prees Higher Heath but by 1806 this had only reached Quina Brook where lime kilns were built. The canal was intended to transport lime for agricultural use and coal to fire the lime kilns.
- It was originally hoped to build a northern extension of this canal from Trevor to Chester as part of a grandiose scheme to link Liverpool and Bristol by canal. It was with this in mind that the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct was constructed by Telford in 1805 but efforts to extend north from Newtown came to nothing. The line from Tilstone to Hurlston was finally completed in March 1805. By this time the Middlewich Arm had been completed to connect the Chester Canal to the Trent and Mersey Canal, thus opening up a huge new area to canal traffic from Wales via Whixall and making the canal a very profitable operation. This was a complete contrast to the former use of the Ellesmere and Montgomery Canals which until then were a closed system. Eventually, in 1813, the Ellesmere Canal Company and Chester Canal Company merged to form the Ellesmere and Chester Canal Company

### Where does it fit in?

