

ACTON BRIDGE – ANDERTON BOAT LIFT– DURATION APPROX 1.5 HOURS

Our transport will collect you from Anderton Boat Lift car park and transfer you to the Danny on our berth below the magnificent Acton Swing Bridge, which dates from 1933 and as you will see swings on a pontoon on the island. Built at a cost of £52,000, when the bridge swings most of the weight is borne on a floating pontoon on the island and a motor of only four horsepower is required to swing the bridge.

At this point on the river, The Trent & Mersey Canal is only 300 metres away passing through the hamlet of Bartington, while Acton Bridge village is around one mile up on Acton Hill.

The river forks off around the back of Acton Bridge island which is the home of the Acton Bridge Cruising Club, and the original stone bridge which carried the A49 over the Weaver.

Shortly we will pass the Woodbine Caravan Park and the Riverside Inn, for many years known as the Rheingold Restaurant and then riverside cottages and holiday homes will come into view and then we eventually arrive at Saltersford Locks. The current locks date from around 1874 and the original lock chamber can still be seen and is now used as a sluice way for flood control.

We head into the idyllic tree lined Weaver Valley countryside heading towards Barnton. Shortly after that we leave the industrial landscape behind and pass Barnton Sluice and Weir.

We then pass the berths at the site of the former soda ash plant which has recently been demolished to make way for housing. If you look carefully on the berth you will see the names of some of the old ships that used the berth years ago, painted on by their crews.

With approximately 10 minutes to go to the lift we will pass through Winnington Swing Bridge which is the smallest of the river's five swing bridges, and just before we pass through the bridge look out in the undergrowth for what looks like an old dry dock, but is actually an ice weir built to remove large floating chunks of ice from the river to keep it clear for traffic in the days when the river used to regularly freeze over.

Anderton Basin is a reminder of the Weaver's industrial past when barges and ocean-going ships lined the berths loading and unloading cargo, predominantly for the chemical industry. Although the Tatter Chemical Plant is still operational, the last commercial cargo ship to use the river was The Saint Keiran back in 1998.

Our cruise finishes at our berth below the Anderton Boat Lift, also known as 'The Cathedral of the Canals'. This magnificent structure was built in 1875 to elevate narrow boats, laden with cargo, 50ft between the River Weaver and The Trent & Mersey Canal.

The lift was designed by the River Weaver trustees chief engineer Edward Leader Williams with Edwin Clark as the principal designer.

The structure is designated as a scheduled monument and is included in the National Heritage list for England. Today it is an award-winning visitor destination offering leisure boaters a link between the two waterways and an informative visitor centre, café and children's play area.