

## **ANDERTON BOAT LIFT TO ACTON BRIDGE – CRUISE DURATION 1.5 HOURS**

Our cruise departs from 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.

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.

Within 10 minutes of starting the journey from the lift we will pass through Winnington Swing Bridge which is the smallest of the river’s five swing bridges, and as soon as you 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.

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.

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

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.

Once leaving the lock, the old course of the original River Weaver enters the Navigation as we head through the countryside towards Acton Bridge.

Shortly riverside cottages and holiday homes will come into view, and eventually we pass the Woodbine Caravan Park and the Riverside Inn, for many years known as the Rheingold Restaurant, before the river forks off around the back of Acton Bridge island.

Inside the island is the home of the Acton Bridge Cruising Club, and the original stone bridge which carried the A49 over the Weaver.

We then pass through the magnificent Acton Swing Bridge which dates from 1933 and 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.

Our cruise will finish here, and our transport will collect you and return you to your cars at Anderton Boat Lift.