



THE ANDERTON LIFT TRENT & MERSEY CANAL & RIVER WEAVER NAVIGATION.

The trustees of the Weaver Navigation, with the encouragement of trading interests, determined to link their waterway with the Trent & Mersey Canal, which ran past the river at Anderton but 50ft 4in higher.

It was primarily designed in 1875 by the trustees' engineer, Leader William, who subsequently moved to the Bridgewater Canal. However, it was Edwin Clark who actually built it. The brief was to lift cargo boats from the River Weaver to the Trent & Mersey Canal.

The resulting Anderton Lift is an incredible edifice, perched on the banks of the River Weaver. It is like a giant three-storey high iron spider.

A wrought-iron aqueduct 162ft 6in long connects the upper level of the lift with the canal via a small basin.

Like all great things, the concept is simple: two huge water tanks, each with watertight sealable doors, can carry a pair of narrowboats up and down.

Electricity replaced steam in operating the whole structure in 1903, and by 1908 counterbalance weights had replaced the hydraulic system. However, the lift now works hydraulically again.

No description can adequately convey the sheer scale of this engineering feat. The lift worked until 1983 when serious deterioration of the structure was discovered. Some £7m was raised to fund the restoration, which was completed in 2002.