

= Chester Canal =

The Chester Canal was an English canal linking the south Cheshire town of Nantwich with the River Dee at Chester . It was intended to link Chester to Middlewich , with a branch to Nantwich , but the Trent and Mersey Canal were unco @-@ operative about a junction at Middlewich , and so the route to Nantwich was opened in 1779 . There were also difficulties negotiating with the River Dee Company , and with no possibility of through traffic , the canal was uneconomic . Part of it was closed in 1787 , when Beeston staircase locks collapsed , and there was no money to fund repairs . When the Ellesmere Canal was proposed in 1790 , the company saw it as a ray of hope , and somehow managed to keep the struggling canal open . The Ellesmere Canal provided a link to the River Mersey at Ellesmere Port from 1797 , and the fortunes of the Chester Canal began to improve .

The Ellesmere Canal was also building branches in North Wales , which were intended to link up to the River Dee at Chester , but eventually linked to the Chester Canal at Hurleston Junction , just to the north of Nantwich , in 1805 . The canal then became the middle section of a much longer and more profitable canal . The two companies merged in 1813 , becoming the Ellesmere and Chester Canal . When the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal was proposed in 1826 , which would provide a link from Nantwich to Wolverhampton and the Birmingham canal system , the company saw it as an opportunity to build the Middlewich Branch , which would provide a connection to Manchester and the Potteries . The branch opened in 1833 , and the Junction Canal opened in 1835 . Amalgamation followed in 1845 , with the new company retaining the name of the Ellesmere and Chester Canal . The following year , the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company was formed from the Ellesmere and Chester company , which also took over a number of canals which joined theirs . Plans to convert some of the canals to railways were put on hold in the 1847 , when the canal company was leased to the London and North Western Railway . Under railway control , the canals continued to operate successfully , but decline set in during the 20th century , and when many of the adjoining canals were closed in 1944 , the sections which had been the Ellesmere and Chester Canal and the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal , together with the Middlewich Branch , were retained .

The canals were nationalised in 1948 , and long @-@ distance commercial traffic had all but ended by 1958 . In 1963 , the British Waterways Board was formed and the canal ceased to be operated by railway interests for the first time in over 100 years . It was designated as a cruising waterway in the Transport Act 1968 , with potential for leisure use , and since then , it has been enjoyed by recreational boaters , by walkers and by fishermen . In 1997 , the Chester Canal Heritage Trust was formed and has worked to promote the canal and its heritage . Responsibility for the canal passed from British Waterways to the newly formed Canal & River Trust in 2012 .

= = History = =

In 1771 , the people of Chester , fearing that the construction of the Trent and Mersey Canal would divert trade away from their city to Liverpool , announced in the Press that they would be applying to build a canal between Middlewich , on the Trent and Mersey , and Chester . The city was at the time served by the River Dee , and the River Dee Company had recently spent £ 80 @,@ 000 on improvements to the river , but they realised that without a connection to the growing canal network , there was little future for the river or the Port of Chester . The idea had first been raised three years earlier , when merchants suggested a line from the Trent and Mersey to near Runcorn . There were no objections from the Corporation of Liverpool , but the canal company was non @-@ committal . By 1770 , the plans were a little clearer , with a main line from Chester to Middlewich and a branch to Nantwich . Although the Corporation of Chester subscribed £ 100 towards the scheme , and the Societies and Clubs of Chester put up another £ 2 @,@ 000 , there was little enthusiasm for it . Neither the Weaver Navigation nor the Trent and Mersey were supportive , as both might have lost some trade if the canal were built , and when the Duke of Bridgewater was approached for support , he replied that provided the canal did not physically link with the Trent and Mersey at Middlewich ,

he would not oppose the plans . Despite attempts at flattery , the Duke would not alter his position , and so the Company promoting the bill in parliament began with a serious disadvantage .

The bill became an Act of Parliament on 1 April 1772 , authorising the construction of a canal to run " from the River Dee , within the liberties of the city of Chester , to or near Middlewich and Nantwich " . The Act allowed the company to raise £ 42 @, @ 000 by issuing £ 100 shares , and an additional £ 20 @, @ 000 if necessary . Of this , only £ 28 @, @ 000 had been subscribed at the time of the Act , but construction began near Chester , with Samuel Weston acting as engineer and John Lawton working as his assistant . Weston had previously worked as a surveyor , and had been involved in excavating canals as a contractor , but had no experience of managing a major engineering project . The Mayor of Chester cut the first sod at the end of April . There were concerns that while the canal was being constructed past Northgate Gardens , prisoners from Northgate Prison might escape , and the company had to give a bond against this possibility . The canal was conceived as a broad canal , designed with locks which were 80 feet (24 m) by 14 feet 9 inches (4 @. @ 50 m) suitable for broad @- @ beam barges . Most of the Trent and Mersey Canal north of the proposed junction was suitable for barges which were 14 feet (4 @. @ 3 m) wide , but the final three locks in Middlewich , and all of those south of the junction , are only suitable for 7 @- @ foot (2 @. @ 1 m) narrow @- @ beam barges .

The project was hampered by financial and engineering problems , and so progress was slow . At the Chester end , the River Dee Company had managed to insert a clause into the Act which restricted the width of the final lock into the river to 7 feet (2 @. @ 1 m) . Although the lock was built , and some narrow boats capable of using it were constructed , agreement was reached on a wider connection after four years of argument . The solution adopted was a single pair of gates , which provided a 15 @- @ foot @- @ wide (4 @. @ 6 m) entrance into a basin from which the canal rose to the Northgate level . The land on which the basin was built was owned by the River Dee Company , who therefore charged tolls on all traffic using it . In 1774 , part of an aqueduct collapsed , and had to be dismantled and repaired .

Soon afterwards , Weston left the project , and Thomas Morris was recalled from Ireland to take over . He had previous experience building the extension of the Bridgewater Canal to Runcorn . Under his direction , the canal opened from Chester to Huxley Aqueduct on 16 January 1775 , and to Beeston in June . Morris was sacked in September , to be replaced by Josiah Clowes . He too was sacked , and was followed by Moon , who had previously acted as assistant to Morris . The canal was completed under the direction of Joseph Taylor . In September 1776 , the junction with the Dee was opened , but the project was now in financial difficulties . By late 1777 , they had spent all of the share capital of £ 42 @, @ 000 and another £ 19 @, @ 000 , which had been raised as a loan guaranteed by Samuel Egerton of Tatton . He was a shareholder in the company and related to the Duke of Bridgewater . They applied for another Act of Parliament , which allowed them to raise another £ 25 @, @ 000 , by additional calls on existing shareholders , and to borrow £ 30 @, @ 000 as a mortgage . They succeeded in raising £ 6 @, @ 000 by making additional calls , and borrowed £ 4 @, @ 000 from Richard Reynolds , an ironmaster from Ketley , who was responsible for several of the East Shropshire Canals , including the Wombridge Canal and the Ketley Canal .

The money was used to complete the line to Nantwich , and to build a reservoir at Bunbury Heath . The work was completed in August 1779 , and the company hoped to raise enough money to then build the line to Middlewich . They proposed building it with narrow locks , to reduce the cost , but the shareholders were not prepared to support them ; instead they concentrated on trying to generate traffic on the line that had been built . They attempted to mine salt at Nantwich , but failed to find any , and tried running boats on the Trent and Mersey , from which goods were carried over land to Nantwich , for onward carriage to Liverpool . They also ran boats for cargo and passengers on the canal itself . By the end of 1781 , the company had no money and was unable to meet interest payments on the loans . They decided to forfeit the canal to Egerton , the main mortgagee , but he did not respond to their offer . Angry landowners who had not been paid drained Bunbury reservoir in March 1782 , but somehow the committee managed to keep the canal open , by selling boats and land . Disaster struck in November 1787 , when Beeston Staircase Locks collapsed , and there was no money to fund repairs .

= = = The impact of the Ellesmere Canal = = =

In 1790 the plans for the Ellesmere Canal were published , and the directors of the Chester canal saw this as a chance to make the canal profitable again , and to build the Middlewich branch . Following the chairman 's report to a meeting of the shareholders , they resolved to try to raise some money to carry out repairs , any by the end of the year reported that the canal was " nearly filled with water and business begins to stir . " The Ellesmere scheme was extensive , with a line from the River Mersey at Netherpool (later renamed Ellesmere Port) to the River Dee near Chester , to give access to the Chester Canal , and branches to Shrewsbury , Ruabon , Llangollen , Bersham , Llanymynech and maybe Whitchurch and Wem . Although William Jessop estimated that the cost would be £ 196 @, @ 898 , it was the time of the Canal Mania , and 1 @, @ 234 subscribers offered £ 967 @, @ 700 . Applications were scaled down and the company accepted £ 246 @, @ 500 . A rival group were proposing canals to the east , which resulted in the first group proposing a direct link with the Chester Canal from their Whitchurch Branch , and in February 1793 , the two groups amalgamated . On 30 April they obtained an Act of Parliament authorising them to raise £ 400 @, @ 00 with an additional £ 100 @, @ 000 if necessary . Jessop was assisted by John Duncombe , Thomas Denson and William Turner , and from 30 October , Thomas Telford was appointed to set out the line and oversee the construction .

Work began on the Wirral line from Ellesmere Port to Chester in November 1793 , and packet boats began using most of it on 1 July 1795 . The locks connecting it to the River Mersey were completed early the following year , and the connection to the Chester Canal opened in January 1797 . The 8 @. @ 75 miles (14 @. @ 08 km) line was supplied with water from the Chester Canal , supplemented by a steam engine at Ellesmere Port which pumped water from the Mersey . Passenger boats along the canal proved very popular , with connections from Ellesmere Port to Liverpool provided by larger boats , although passenger services from Chester to Nantwich lasted for less than a year . Commercial traffic also grew steadily , helped by the construction of new basins at Chester and the provision of a tide lock into the Dee , which made access into the lower basin possible at all times , and helped to keep it free from silt .

The Ellesmere Canal company had been constructing canals to the west , linking Llangollen to Frankton , but the route from there to Chester had not been decided . In 1796 , they obtained an Act of Parliament , authorising a line from near the great aqueduct at Pontcysyllte running roughly northwards through Ruabon , Bersham , Gwersyllt and Pulford to join the River Dee opposite the canal basin at Chester . The Chester company , who were trying to put their financial affairs into order , noticed that the 1796 Act failed to mention a connection with their canal . They decided to obtain an Act to enforce a connection , and to stop supplying water to the Wirral line . The Ellesmere company responded quickly , agreeing to make changes to their Act , and the Chester company continued to supply water . On the strength of this , they were also able to raise some money to put the canal into good order and to repay some of their debts . The Ellesmere company extended their canal eastwards from Frankton to Whitchurch , and in 1802 , the two companies reached agreement on a line from near Whitchurch to Hurleston Junction , just to the north of Nantwich . It opened on 25 March 1805 , and water supply was enhanced by the construction of a navigable feeder through Llangollen to Horseshoe Falls on the River Dee at Llantysilio .

In 1804 , the Ellesmere company offered to buy out the Chester Canal for 1 @, @ 000 of their shares , and to take over debts up to £ 4 @, @ 000 . The Chester Canal held out for more , and the negotiations failed . Three years later , the financial position of the Chester Canal was better , and they began paying off their debts . Finally in 1813 , they agreed to amalgamate , and the action was authorised by a further Act of Parliament . The Ellesmere company paid just half of their 1804 offer , and the 500 Ellesmere shares were distributed between the various Chester shareholders . The Ellesmere and Chester Canal Company took over on 1 July 1813 . A new section of canal and an iron lock were built at Beeston in 1827 , to resolve continual problems with leakage there .

= = = A new route to the south = = =

In 1826 , the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal was authorised by an Act of Parliament , to construct a canal from Nantwich to a junction with the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal at Autherley in the Midlands . With the prospect of being part of a link between Liverpool and the Midlands , the joint company had again pressed for the construction of the Middlewich branch , which would give them an outlet to Manchester and the Potteries industrial centre around Stoke @-@ on @-@ Trent . The Trent and Mersey Canal refused to sanction the idea of a canal which would effectively reduce their income until the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal was authorised . Once it was , the Ellesmere and Chester company obtained an Act of Parliament in 1827 , but the Trent and Mersey insisted that they build a short connecting canal , the Wardle Canal , consisting of a lock and not much more , the tolls for which were exorbitant . The 1827 Act repealed all previous legislation for the Ellesmere and Chester Canals and consolidated their position . The branch was built as a narrow canal , and cost £ 129 @,@ 000 . It opened on 1 September 1833 , but was little used until the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal was completed . It finally opened on 2 March 1835 , having suffered from engineering problems during construction . Again , it was a narrow canal , suitable for boats which were 7 feet (2 @.@ 1 m) wide .

The two canal companies worked together from the start , in a bid to ensure that both remained profitable despite competition from the railways . This came soon , for the Grand Junction Railway from Warrington to Birmingham had been authorised before the canal opened , and was carrying goods by January 1838 . Tolls on the canals were considerably lower than had been envisaged when the route was promoted . Experiments with steam tugs to haul trains of narrow boats were carried out in 1842 , and a report in 1844 indicated that they were then used extensively . By the following year , however , the Ellesmere and Chester company were thinking about converting the canal to a railway , and argued that steam tugs were no cheaper than locomotive haulage on a railway . A merger with the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal was discussed in 1844 , and was authorised on 8 May 1845 , the new company retaining the name of the Ellesmere and Chester Canal .

= = = Part of the Shropshire Union = = =

Almost immediately , the company began looking at the possibility of converting all or part of the system into railways . W A Pavis , their engineer , was convinced that railways could be built along the routes at around half the cost of building a new line . The move was opposed by the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal who argued that closing bits of the inland waterways system would have serious repercussions on the parts left . Robert Stephenson suggested that a number of railways and canals should amalgamate , to reduce competition when bills were presented to Parliament . The canals to join the Ellesmere and Chester Company were the eastern and western branches of the Montgomeryshire Canal , the Shrewsbury Canal and the Shropshire Canal . Although some would be converted to railways , the route from Ellesmere Port to Middlewich via Barbridge Junction was part of the system that would be retained as a waterway , on which salt was a major source of revenue . The plans resulted in the formation of the Shropshire Union Railways and Canal Company in 1846 . The new company could raise £ 3 @.@ 3 million of new capital , in addition to that already in existence , with another £ 1 @.@ 1 million if necessary . They prompted new railways , but before any of the existing canals were converted , the company was leased to the London and North Western Railway , who took control in June 1847 . They allowed the Shropshire Union to continue to operate fairly independently , and by 1849 , the idea of conversion had been dropped , as the canals could still operate profitably .

Profitability was maintained , with the result then when most of the Shropshire Union network of canals were abandoned in 1944 , the sections which had originally been the Chester Canal , the Ellesmere Canal , the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal and the Middlewich Branch were all retained . The only other section which was not abandoned was the Llangollen branch ; this was kept because of its function as a water supply channel , rather than for navigation .

= = Leisure era = =

In common with many operational canals , the remains of the Shropshire Union system , including what had been the Chester Canal , were nationalised on 1 January 1948 , and became the responsibility of the Docks and Inland Waterways Executive , which was part of the British Transport Commission . At the time , the function of canals was still viewed as commercial . An official reply to the Inland Waterways Association in 1947 stated that the Ministry of Transport " ... do not look very favourably upon any scheme for pleasure craft on the canals at the present time . " Despite such official attitudes , Eric Wilson , who produced the first edition of Inland Waterways of Great Britain in 1939 , noted that those wishing to use the Shropshire Union for leisure cruising should apply to the Agent at Chester . He advised that application should be made well in advance , in case there were problems due to the condition of the waterway and its locks .

Control of the canal passed to the British Waterways Board on 1 January 1963 , and for the first time in over 100 years , it was managed by an organisation which was not under railway control . The Transport Act 1968 classified all waterways under the jurisdiction of British Waterways into commercial , cruising and remainder waterways . All of the remaining Shropshire Union network was designated as cruising waterway , with the potential for leisure use . By that time there was little commercial traffic . The branch to the River Dee at Chester had been unused since 1932 ? 34 , with the demise of steel traffic from Shotton steelworks to Ellesmere Port , and long distance carrying of tar from Ellesmere Port to the Midlands had ended in 1957 ? 58 .

The canal is popular with pleasure boaters , as much of it is pleasantly rural , with added interest provided by the city of Chester and Ellesmere Port with its waterways museum . The towpath through Chester provides an attractive route for walkers . The canal is well connected , with links to the Trent and Mersey Canal via the Middlewich Branch to the east , the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal via the former Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal to the south , and provides a route to the Llangollen Canal , from which the Montgomeryshire Canal , which is the subject of an ongoing restoration scheme , can be accessed . Boaters can also access the River Dee at Chester , although advance notice must be given , and the river is only accessible for four hours either side of high tide . At Ellesmere Port , the canal has connected to the Manchester Ship Canal since its opening in 1894 . For many leisure cruisers , the requirements of the ship canal company for taking small boats onto a large commercial waterway are too daunting , and Ellesmere Port acts as the end of their journey .

The Chester Canal Heritage Trust was set up in 1997 to promote the canal and its heritage . Among other projects , they have received funding from the Local History Initiative and the Nationwide Building Society , which has allowed them to research the history of the canal and publish the results as a book . In 2012 , responsibility for the canal passed from British Waterways to the newly formed Canal & River Trust .

= = Traffic = =

Although the Chester Canal was not a success as traffic was sparse , this changed once it was connected to the Ellesmere Canal . The Ellesmere company expected to carry limestone from the quarries at Llanymynech and Trevor , iron from the ironworks at Ruabon and Bersham , and coal from mines at Chirk , Ruabon and Wrexham to Chester , Liverpool and Shrewsbury . The canal to Bersham and Wrexham was not built , and that to Shrewsbury was built much later on , but trade in coal , limestone , lime and building materials developed within the network of canals , and traffic between the canals and Liverpool increased steadily , much of it passing along the former Chester Canal . Receipts for the Ellesmere Canal were £ 12 @, @ 568 in 1807 and £ 15 @, @ 707 just two years later .

In 1836 , a review of trade on the canals showed that limestone from Llanymynech and coal from Chirk was used to produce lime at a number of locations along the canals . Coal from Chirk for industrial and household use was carried , although there was a competing trade in coal from

Flintshire , which travelled along the River Dee and entered the canal system at Chester . There was trade in iron from Ruabon to Chester , but the tolls were very low , as the canal route was 58 miles (93 km) long , whereas the land journey was only 20 miles (32 km) . In 1838 , the canals carried 60 @, @ 406 tons of iron bound for Liverpool , most of it manufactured goods , of which 38 @, @ 758 tons came from Staffordshire , 11 @, @ 687 tons from North Wales and 9 @, @ 961 tons from Shropshire . An additional 10 @, @ 370 tons , most of which originated in North Wales , passed along the Middlewich Branch , bound for Manchester .

The canal company carried goods in their own boats , and produced a report on the four years from August 1846 to June 1850 in 1851 . This showed an income of £ 180 @, @ 746 from tolls , and identified six main types of traffic . These included iron goods from the Wolverhampton area to Liverpool ; limestone from Trevor and Crickheath to Nantwich or Wappenshall on the Shrewsbury Canal , with a back trade in iron ore from near Burslem ; general merchandise , which was carried between Chester and Liverpool ; and general merchandise for Shropshire and North Wales . All of these were profitable . The carriage of general goods from Birmingham to Liverpool and the Chester coal trade both made a small loss .

Once the canals were owned by the London and North Western Railway , restrictions were imposed on what they could carry , and the canals failed to make sufficient money to cover the interest on mortgages . However , they made a substantial operating profit for some years . Around 1850 , the average annual income was £ 104 @, @ 638 , which yielded a surplus of £ 45 @, @ 885 . Most of the income was from carrying , and by 1870 , income had risen to £ 143 @, @ 976 , although this only yielded a surplus of £ 11 @, @ 727 . Total traffic was 855 @, @ 462 tons in 1858 , but this had dropped to 742 @, @ 315 tons in 1868 . The carrying business was expanded in the 1870s , but although turnover increased , operating profits fell dramatically , to just £ 1 @, @ 568 in 1876 . By 1905 , total traffic was 469 @, @ 950 tons , nearly all of it in boats owned by the company , and between the 1870s and the onset of the First World War the company sometimes made a small operating profit and sometimes a loss . Following the end of the war , working hours were cut , wages increased , and the cost of materials increased . Losses escalated , to £ 153 @, @ 318 on an income of £ 227 @, @ 845 in 1920 , and carriage by the company ceased in 1921 , in an attempt to reduce losses . 433 @, @ 230 tons of goods carried in 1929 had dropped to 151 @, @ 144 tons in 1940 , by which time income from tolls was £ 17 @, @ 763 , and total income was £ 40 @, @ 985 .

= = Route = =

The River Dee branch heads eastwards from the river , and passes through two locks before turning to the north . Another two locks raise its level to that of the Ellesmere Canal , and the junction was the site of a historic boatyard . Originally , the branch continued eastwards after the first two locks , and another two brought it up to the level of the Chester Canal main line . From the junction , the Ellesmere main line headed south , to another right @-@ angled bend where it joined the Chester Canal . There are moorings at Tower Wharf , just before the bend . To the south of the canal is the old city , one of the few English cities which retains nearly all of its city walls , the cathedral much of which dates from 1092 , and the King Charles ' Tower , which overshadows the canal . After rising 33 feet (10 m) through the Northgate Staircase locks , which were cut out of solid rock , the canal enters a steep @-@ sided rock cutting . After several bridges , the first of five locks which raise the level of the canal by another 43 @. @ 3 feet (13 @. @ 2 m) is reached . Between the fourth and fifth locks , the North Wales Coast railway line to Crewe crosses under the canal in a tunnel .

The canal passes along the south @-@ western edge of Christleton , and through the centre of Waverton , where there is a large grade II listed mill building , which was once steam powered and includes bays in the right gable from which boats were loaded . The parish church is some distance from the main centre of population , on the edge of the flat Cheshire plain . The tall tower dates from the 16th century , and the roof of the nave is of hammer @-@ beam construction , dating from 1635 . There are several accommodation bridges on this section , all dating from the time of the construction of the canal , including Davies Bridge , Salmon 's Bridge , and Faulkners Bridge , all

built in orange brick and grade II listed structures . The railway line to Crewe follows the same general alignment as the canal , but a little further to the south , as both follow the valley of the River Gowy . The canal crosses from the south bank of the river to the north bank on an aqueduct and continues eastwards , passing the massive ruined remains of Beeston Castle , which was built in the 1220s by the Earl of Chester on top of a steep hill , and dominates the countryside .

The castle is opposite Wharton 's Lock , which is followed by the village of Tiverton on the north bank . Immediately after a bridge carrying the A49 road over the canal is the first of the two Beeston locks . The first is called Beeston Iron Lock , and was built from cast iron plates in 1828 by Telford . Cast iron was used because of problems with running sand under the original stone locks . It is both a grade II * listed structure and a scheduled ancient monument , and is unique in England . Shortly afterwards is Beeston Stone Lock , also a listed structure , but dating from the construction of the canal and using conventional materials .

The next lock is Tilston Lock , situated about 1 mile (1 @. @ 6 km) to the north of Bunbury . The railway crosses to the north side of the canal near Bunbury Staircase Locks , a staircase of two locks which share the intermediate gates . These are the last locks before the end of the Chester canal , and are the last locks which wide @- @ beam boats can use when travelling south . As the canal approaches Barbridge Junction , the railway turns away , heading east , and the canal turns towards the south . The junction is the start of the Middlewich Branch , which descends through four locks to reach the Trent and Mersey Canal at Middlewich . After another 1 @. @ 3 miles (2 @. @ 1 km) , the Llangollen Canal turns off at Hurleston Junction immediately rising through four locks . Soon , Nantwich Basin is reached , which was the historic terminus of the Chester Canal . Telford 's original plan was to terminate the Birmingham and Liverpool Junction Canal by running it across Dorfold Park and joining the basin end @- @ on , but the owner objected , and an embankment had to be built around the edge of the park . This crossed the road on Nantwich Aqueduct , and joined the canal just to the north of the basin . Dorfold Hall , to the west of the basin , is a grade I listed mansion , built in 1616 for Ralph Wilbraham .

= = = Boat sizes = = =

As built , the locks on the Chester Canal were originally 80 by 14 @. @ 75 feet (24 @. @ 38 by 4 @. @ 50 m) . Over the years the maximum size for vessels using the canal has altered . By 1985 , it had been reduced to 72 by 13 @. @ 25 feet (21 @. @ 95 by 4 @. @ 04 m) , and in 2009 , sizes were quoted as 72 by 9 feet (21 @. @ 9 by 2 @. @ 7 m) .

= = Points of interest = =