

1750

79% of cargo carried down the road from Middlewich to the River Weaver was salt. Land transport was difficult on poor roads and river improvements were failing to meet demand.

1758

The theory of linking Preston Brook on the Mersey and Derwent Mouth on the River Trent at Shadlow was the idea of canal engineer James Brindley, who surveyed the route of the canal.

1766

Bridgewater's bill passed. From this date to 1767, the construction of the Trent and Mersey Canal began running from Congleton to Northwich. William Seaman, a landowner and gentleman of Middlewich wrote to Josiah Wedgwood for a meeting to bring the canal path to Middlewich.

William and other business men of the time contributed a fund to get a bill passed for the canal to be cut.

1772

James Brindley dies; Hugh Henshall becomes the engineer in charge of the Trent & Mersey.

1775

The canal builders reached Middlewich. Josiah Wedgwood wrote to William Seaman of Middlewich, about the Canal system connecting to Middlewich Town.

1776

The Bridgewater Canal was completed.

First sod of earth was cut by potteries industrialist Josiah Wedgwood in July 1766 at Middleport. Work commenced in Middlewich

1777

The Trent and Mersey Canal opened in May with over 70 locks and five tunnels built along its stretch, along with Croxton aqueduct.

1829

Completion of the Shropshire Union Canal, even though a plan to construct a canal between Chester and Middlewich was conceived as far back as 1772 when the Chester Canal Company wished to take advantage of the lucrative salt and pottery trades. Because of the company rivalry between the Chester Canal Company and Trent & Mersey Canal Company the Middlewich Branch terminated 30m short of the Trent & Mersey Canal, at Sutton Lane in Middlewich. The Trent & Mersey directors refused to allow connection to take place.

1833

1st September, completion of the Wardle Canal connection between the Shropshire Union and Trent & Mersey, after agreements between the companies was reached.

1840

Railway networks begin to be expanded within Britain

1857

The Trent & Mersey Canal Company is taken over by the North Staffordshire Railway Company. The new owners continued to make improvements to the canal network as commercial interest continued.

1868

The railway network reaches Middlewich.

1875

The Anderton boatlift was installed, which connected the Trent & Mersey Canal with the River Weaver. Middlewich Salt proprietors working with the Trent and Mersey Canal and Weaver Trustees needed a way to trans-ship goods from the canal to the River Weaver; ideally at Anderton or Barnton.

Anderton was the preferred option and Middlewich gave £500 for the enterprise to work. This area became the Anderton Boat Lift.

1888

Boats using the locks via Wardle Canal were charged a toll depending on the type of cargo carried, the toll was unpopular and as the economic conditions changed, the toll was finally abolished.

1947

The Trent & Mersey Canal along with the remaining British Canal network was nationalised. Although the canal still carried salt, coal and other minerals, road freight became a more convenient and faster way to transport goods and the canals fell into commercial decline.