

PRESS RELEASE

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BRITAIN'S HIGHEST, LONGEST AQUEDUCT, PONTCYSYLLTE, CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF WORLD HERITAGE STATUS

The Canal & River Trust charity in Wales, Glandŵr Cymru, this year celebrates the 10th anniversary of the World Heritage Site designation of Britain's highest, longest navigable aqueduct, the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and 11 miles of the beautiful Llangollen Canal in North Wales.

Back in 2009, the 200-year-old aqueduct, built by famous canal engineers Thomas Telford and William Jessop, joined the elite club of 1,000 UNESCO World Heritage Sites which includes such iconic structures as Stonehenge and the Pyramids.

The enhanced profile provided by the special heritage status has made the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct a 'Must Do' destination for thousands of international tourists. Visitor numbers have quadrupled over the decade, with nearly half a million people viewing the 'Stream in the Sky' and the Trevor Basin Visitor Centre last year, providing a major boost for the local economy.

Visitors come from all over the world, with Australians and Japanese heading the international league table. Signing the centre's visitor book last year were tourists from 52 countries from faraway places such as Zambia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and the Philippines, as well as most European nations.

The aqueduct has also become a regular media star. Last year alone, the Canal & River Trust hosted TV programmes *Bargain Hunt*, *Antiques Road Trip*, *Lost Railway Walks*, *Escape to the Country*, CBBC and several news broadcasts.

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Patron: H.R.H. The Prince of Wales. Canal & River Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales with company number 7807276 and registered charity number 1146792, registered office address: First Floor North, Station House, 500 Elder Gate, Milton Keynes MK9 1BB

Celebrations

Over the coming year, the Trust, which looks after 2,000 miles of waterways, will be working closely with Wrexham, Denbighshire and Shropshire councils and Cadw, the Welsh Government's historic environment organisation, to organise 12 months of celebrations and events to mark this important milestone.

A new photography competition, a specially-brewed beer, spectacular luminaire structure lighting, 'Under the Arches' celebration and a wide range of community and cultural events and workshops are due to take place.

Lynda Slater, Trevor Basin visitor centre manager with the Canal & River Trust, said: "The World Heritage Status has made a world of difference to this spectacular structure and the 11 miles of Llangollen Canal which surround it. The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct has gone from being a national treasure to a tourist destination of international significance.

"During the main summer season we get coach loads of tourists from dozens of different countries, mixing with thousands of British holiday makers, walkers, boaters and cyclists. A café boat was installed in 2017 and last year we opened new car parks to provide extra capacity during the peak summer months which has helped.

"The challenge for the future is how to offer people more on-site facilities which will mean they spend more time here, have a better experience and hopefully spend more money in the local economy. Working with Wrexham County Borough Council, landowners Solutia and a range of partners, we are currently part way through a strategic masterplan process to identify how to provide better visitor facilities and what they might look like.

"Guided by extensive community engagement, we are considering several ideas to bring new and extended attractions to Trevor Basin and the surrounding area, along with possible sources of funding."

The Llangollen Canal is one of the most popular canals in the country with hire boaters. With the opportunity to cruise over two stunning aqueducts at Pontcysyllte and Chirk, and meander through the beautiful Welsh countryside, it is a hot favourite with people wanting to spend their week's holiday on the waterways.

But sightseers don't have to hire a boat to enjoy the thrill of sailing in the sky. Two trip boat companies, Jones the Boats and Llangollen Boats provide regular short trips over the Pontcysyllte, and Anglo Welsh, operating from nearby Trevor Basin, offers day boat hire.

Call for volunteers

An army of volunteers keeps the World Heritage Site in top class condition for visitors. The Canal & River Trust is currently recruiting more people to join the team for the 2019 season. They need destination assistants to work in the free visitor centre; aqueduct, towpath and litter rangers; and volunteers to take part in the towpath taskforce. For more information, please email trevorvisitor.centre@crt.org.uk.

About the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and 11 mile Llangollen World Heritage Site
(Pronounced - '*pont-cuss-ull-teh*' meaning '*the bridge that joins*')

Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Llangollen Canal became a World Heritage Site on 27 June, 2009. The Pontcysyllte is a grade one listed building, a scheduled ancient monument and forms the centrepiece of the 11 mile World Heritage Site.

- The Pontcysyllte Aqueduct was constructed by Thomas Telford and William Jessop between 1796 and 1805 during the Industrial Revolution to enable slate and limestone to be moved from quarries in North Wales to the Midlands and beyond.
- The aqueduct measures a record-breaking 1,000 ft (307m) long and at its highest point it is 126 ft (38.4m) above the River Dee.
- A cast iron trough, which holds 330,000 gallons (1.5 million litres) of water, is 11ft wide and 5ft 3ins deep. It is emptied by pulling out a giant plug in the centre and takes two hours to drain.
- There are 19 elegant arches and 18 slender sandstone piers, each with a 45ft span.
- To keep the aqueduct as light as possible, the slender masonry piers are partly hollow and taper at their summit.

For more information about visiting the Pontcysyllte and Llangollen Canal World Heritage, special events or supporting these 200-year-old heritage structures by donating or volunteering with the Canal & River Trust, please go to www.canalrivertrust.org.uk. Find out about special events on the Pontcysyllte at its dedicated Facebook page or through Twitter or Instagram.

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Notes to editors

For further media requests please contact:

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Notes to Editors

The Canal & River Trust cares for and brings to life 2,000 miles of canals and rivers across England & Wales. We believe waterways have the power to make a difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to make a difference to their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

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