

PRESS RELEASE

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NANTWICH CANAL HISTORY REVEALED IN NEW INTERPRETATION PANELS AT HISTORIC AQUEDUCT

Nantwich's fascinating canal history is now revealed in new interpretation panels installed next to Thomas Telford's historic aqueduct, known as 'The Gateway to Nantwich', recently restored by the Canal & River Trust charity.



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The Trust, which cares for 2,000 miles of canals, has been joined by Nantwich Museum and Nantwich Partnership to create the panels, which tell the story of the Shropshire Union Canal and Telford's iconic aqueduct, which carries the canal over the A534 Nantwich to Chester Road.

Constructed in 1828, the famous cast iron trough aqueduct is designated a Grade II* listed structure. In 2015 it was secured for the next generation after a major £200,000 restoration funded by the Canal & River Trust, Cheshire East Council, Nantwich Town Council, Acton, Edleston & Henhull Parish Council and Nantwich Partnership. Restoration work involved repairs to the supporting masonry and cast iron parapet railings, brickwork repairs and repointing. The structure was also repainted.

This new interpretation panel, coupled with recent improvements to a nearby canalside playground, are part of a partnership initiative to promote tourism and boost investment in the picturesque Cheshire market town.

Sarah Lalieu, enterprise manager with the Canal & River Trust, said: "We hope local residents and visitors alike will enjoy discovering more about the fascinating history behind Thomas Telford and his engineering masterpiece in Nantwich.

"The aqueduct is a perfect example of that golden age of canal-building during the Industrial Revolution. History is all around us here and visitors will even be able to find rope marks left in the ironwork by the hundreds of horse-drawn boats who once plied their trade along 'The Shroppie'.

"Today our wonderful waterways provide new opportunities for leisure and keeping active and healthy. Research proves people feel happier by water, so we want to encourage everyone to come and discover Cheshire's inspiring combination of heritage and the great outdoors here in Nantwich."

Jeff Stubbs, Nantwich Partnership chairman, is delighted with what has been achieved. He added: "This is the product of some successful partnership and cooperation between local groups,

volunteers, our councils under the leadership of the Canal & River Trust, who have involved the community all the way, especially the invaluable expertise from Nantwich Museum's Local History Group."

The construction of the Shropshire Union Canal between Nantwich and Atherley (formerly the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal) was Telford's final canal-building project. He was in poor health at the end of his life and died in 1834, a year before it was officially opened.

Nantwich Aqueduct was one of several cast iron aqueducts in the area. Similar Telford structures can be seen further south on the Shropshire Union Canal at Stretton and in Congleton on the Macclesfield Canal. Earlier Telford-designed iron trough aqueducts can also be found at Longdon-on-Tern near Shrewsbury (completed 1797), Pontcysyllte (1805) and Chirk (1801).

For more information about becoming a Friend of the Canal & River Trust or supporting canal restoration, go online at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk or phone 0303 040 4040.

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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 real difference to people's lives and that spending time by water can make us all healthier and happier. By bringing communities together to transform their local waterway, we are creating places and spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, every day.

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