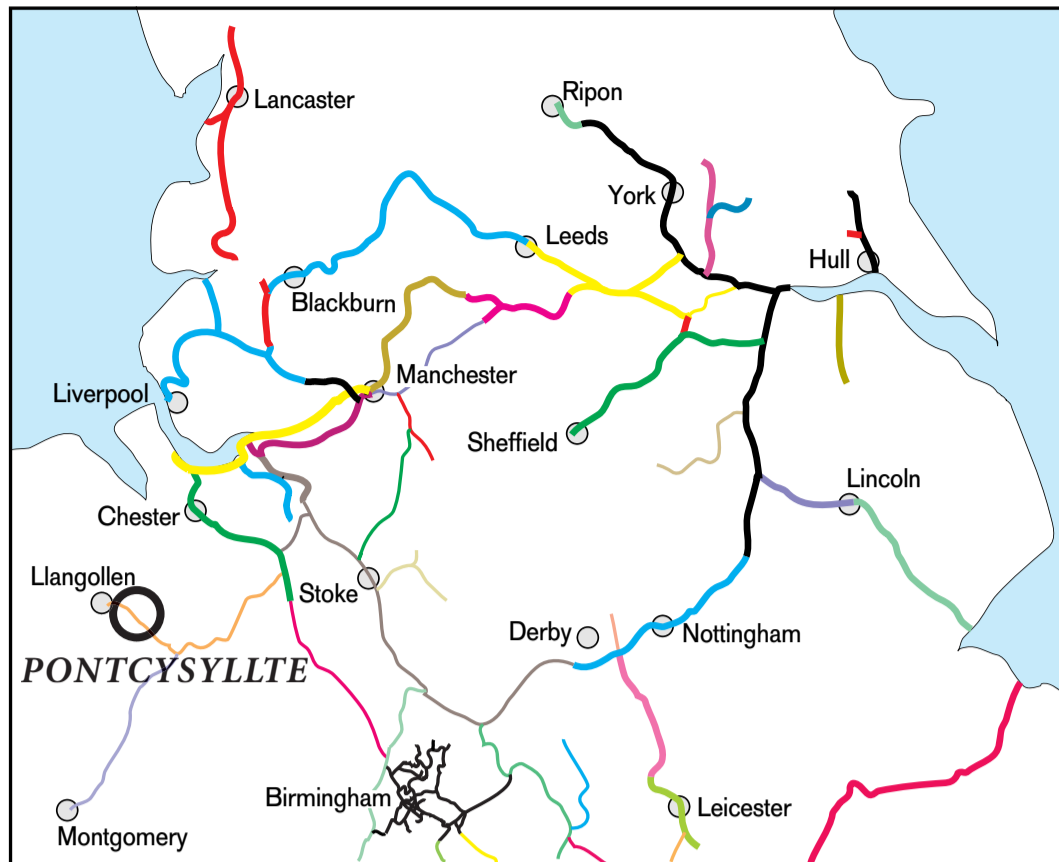


PONTCYSYLTE

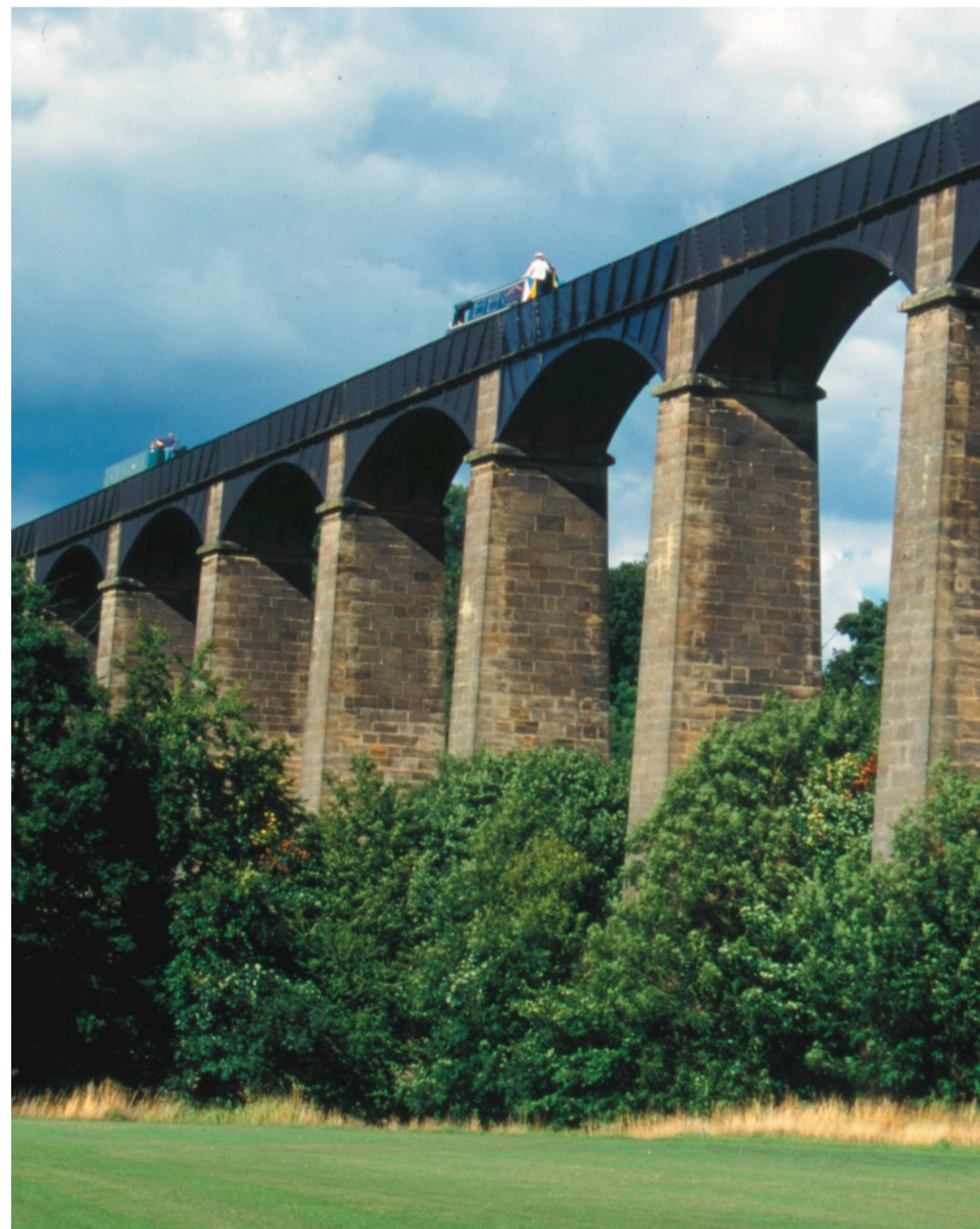
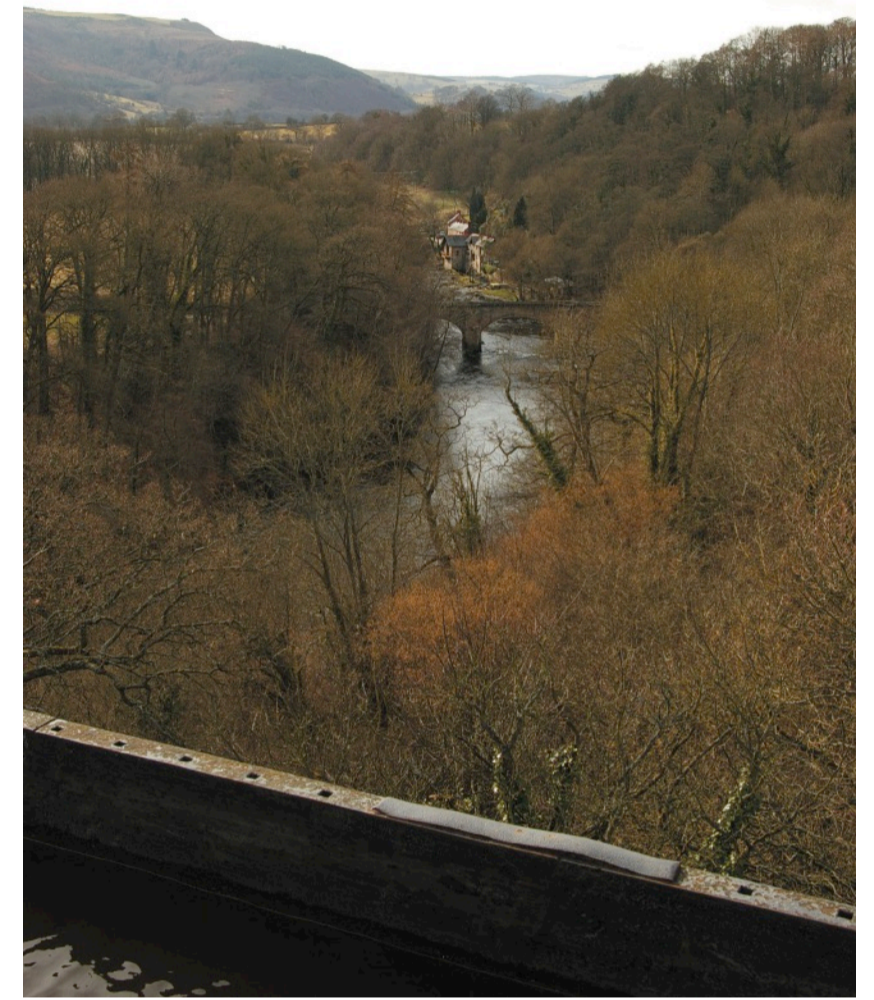
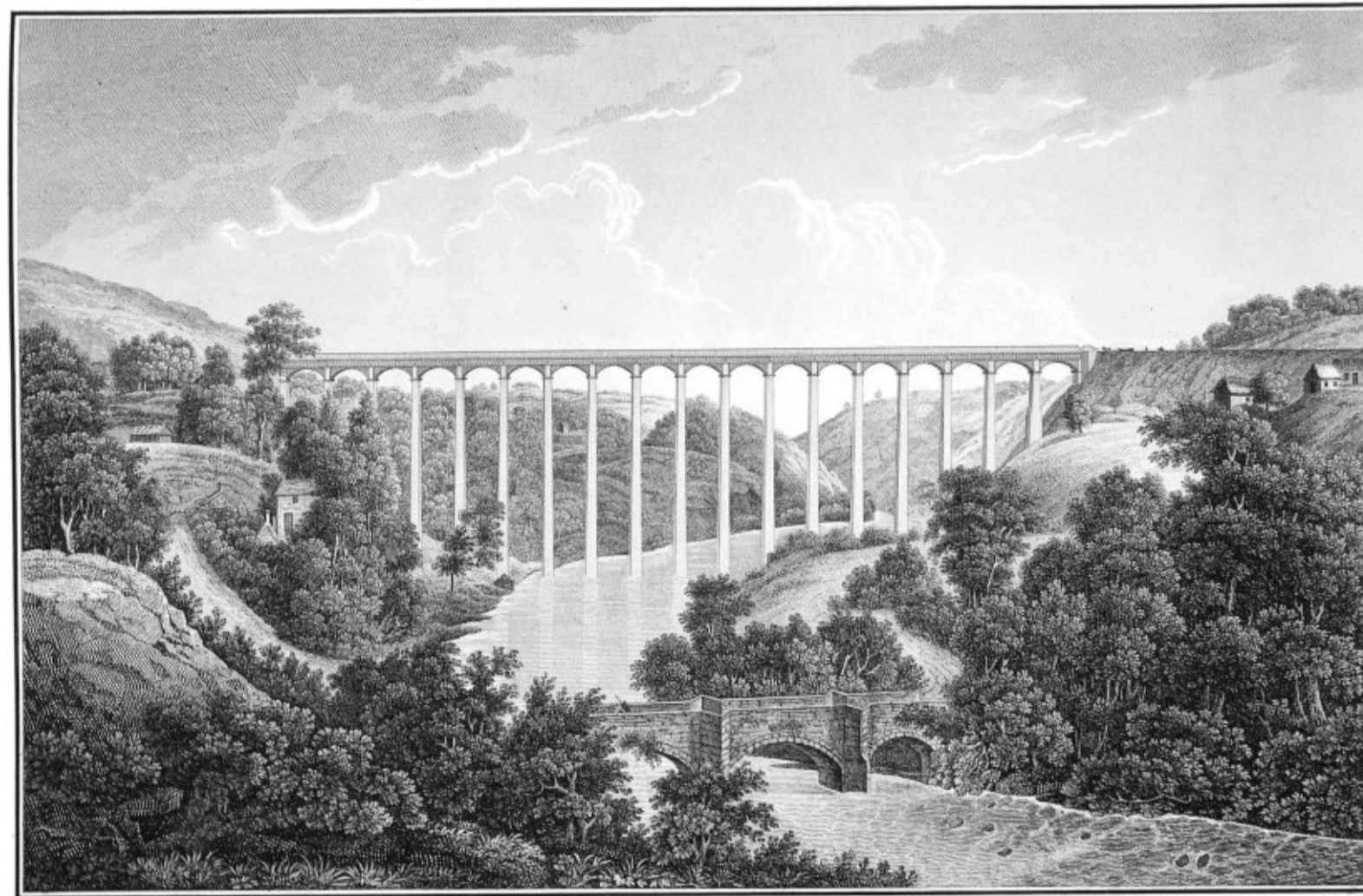


Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and canal consists of a continuous group of civil-engineering features from the heroic phase of transport improvement during the British Industrial Revolution. The canal brought cargoes from the English lowlands into the rugged Welsh uplands, using innovative techniques to cross two major river valleys and the ridge between them. It was built between 1795 and 1808 by two outstanding figures in the development of civil engineering: Thomas Telford and William Jessop. Through their dynamic relationship the canal became a testing-ground for new ideas that were used subsequently by engineers internationally.



Almost all views of the aqueduct are impressive, whether taken from above, below, or from the towpath.

AQUEDUC DE PONT Y CYSYLTE DANS LE PAYS DE GALLES. PL. XV



Pontcysyllte aqueduct and canal are monuments of the Canal Age — from the 1760s until the 1830s. Canal-building reached its zenith after 1790, during the so-called 'Canal Mania' that saw 1,180 miles/1,900 kilometres of new waterway completed in just twenty years. Canals provided transport for raw materials and goods, creating a new phase in the history of inland navigation. It was a fundamental factor in the Industrial Revolution, allowing rapid economic growth, regional specialisation and urbanisation. It contributed to wider developments in business organisation, capital mobilisation and engineering technology which were applied to construction projects all over the world.



At the centre of the site is Pontcysyllte Aqueduct, which crosses the Dee Valley on nineteen cast-iron spans at a height of 126 feet/38.4 metres, is a masterpiece of waterways engineering and a pioneering example of iron construction. The canal exemplifies the new approaches developed in Britain, taken up in subsequent waterway, railway and road construction throughout the world. After completion, this length of canal was described as 'composed of works more difficult of execution than can perhaps be found anywhere within an equal distance of canal navigation'. It combined vigour of engineering with what today seems sensitivity to its impact on the landscape.



Three other aqueducts using cast iron: the first, at Longden-on-Tern; at Cosgrave, north of London; and at Briare, in France.



Poncysyllte, showing the narrow fenced towpath, while those on boats look down from the safety of their boat.

All of the features that were to become characteristic of highly-engineered transport routes can be seen here, including tunnels, cuttings, aqueducts and embankments, together with bridges, culverts, weirs and associated features. The whole site has remained in use continuously for two hundred years — for some 130 years by traffic in coal, iron, slate, limestone and general goods, and in more recent times to carry pleasure boats and convey drinking water. It is widely valued for its historical importance, beautiful environment and breathtaking structures, and attracts some 200,000 visitors a year.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1303>
http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/heritage/pontcysyllte_aqueduct/

WORLD HERITAGE WATERWAY SITES