

Scottish Engineer Thomas Telford

Thomas Telford was born in Glendinning, Dumfriesshire in 1757. He left school, aged 14, to become an apprentice stonemason. Thomas wanted to learn as much as he could about the building trade. He later moved on to work in Edinburgh, London and Portsmouth. Throughout this time, Thomas was learning more and more about construction; from the materials used, to the designing and managing of projects.



In 1786, Sir William Pulteney was so impressed with Telford's work, he found work for him on building projects in England. Sir William was also a director of the British Fisheries Society. The Society asked Thomas to design the town of Ullapool on the west coast of Scotland. In 1788, built to Thomas Telford's plan, Ullapool was established as a herring fishing station.

In 1792, Thomas designed the Montford stone bridge over the River Severn. The construction of this three-arched span bridge saw Thomas become known as one of Britain's greatest engineers. Telford went on to be among the first to use iron in bridge construction.



In 1793, Thomas built the Ellesmere Canal and the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct. This aqueduct involved a canal being built in the air. The aqueduct took ten years to complete. When it was finished, it was the tallest canal boat crossing in the world. It is around 38m high, supporting an iron trough that carries the canal over the river below. The aqueduct has

19 arches, each spanning 14 metres.

In 1801, the Government asked Thomas Telford to survey the roads across Scotland. Thomas Telford went on to build over nine hundred and twenty miles of road and one hundred and twenty bridges in the Highlands. During this time, he also built many harbours and jetties, as well as the Caledonian Canal which is sixty miles long.

