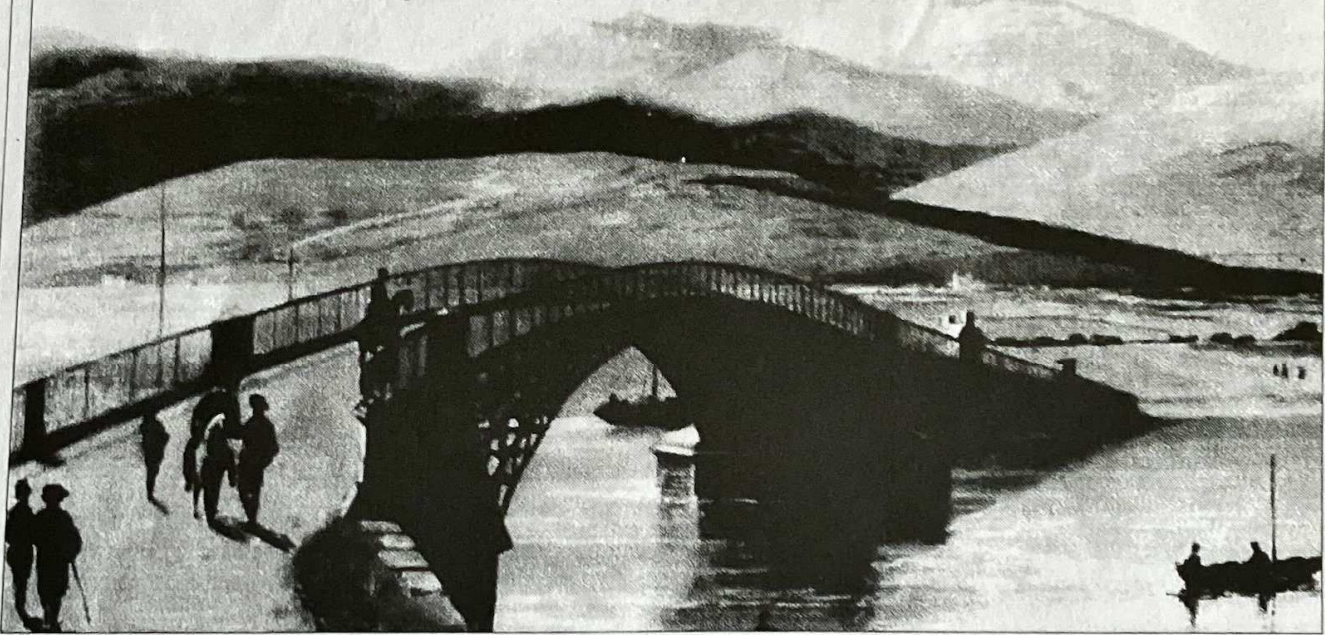


Masterpiece: Telford's Bonar Bridge used "strong" cast iron



TELFORD

Who says Telford's plan wouldn't have worked!

The BBC documentary *Telford – the Man that Built Britain* on 12 August was generally well-crafted and enjoyable. But viewers were told by the programme that Telford's proposed 600ft span iron arch replacement for old London Bridge over the Thames in the first decade of the 19th century would have collapsed and been a failure.

This is an assumption too far. Telford's design concept

was based on sound structural principles. Had it developed into a working design as a larger version of his light-weight arch masterpieces at Bonar Bridge and Tewkesbury, made and erected by William Hazledine using "strong" cast iron, it is not inconceivable, technically, that it could have been achieved.

We shall never know for certain, but Telford's initial designs

for Pont Cysyllte Aqueduct and Menai Bridge landmark structures, were much improved in the as-built versions which still exist.

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