

Broughton Tolbooth 1582–1829

BROUGHTON HISTORY SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

New Series Number **14**

New Year 2023

A Happy New Year to all. This issue contains the report on Bridgescapes, our last talk of 2022, and the two sets of quiz questions and answers from the soiree for the record and also for the benefit of those who were not able to attend. A quick reminder that the first talk of 2023, Jane Corrie on Carl Linnaeus is on Monday 9th January at 6.30 in the McDonald Road Library.

Bridgescapes by Bruce Keith 7th November 2022

In November Bruce Keith took us on a journey celebrating the contribution that bridges have made to Scotland and further afield. His interest was fuelled as a child by accompanying his father, who was a Civil Engineer, on bridge inspections. He used the following quotes to emphasize why bridges were important to man's wellbeing and success.

"The bridge...is a symbol of man's conquest of nature...History -social, economic and military -clusters-more thickly about bridges than about towns and citadels" John Buchan

"There can be little doubt that in many ways the story of bridge building is the story of civilisation. By it we can readily measure an important part of a people's progress".

Franklin D Roosevelt 1931.

He first showed us an early photograph of 1871 of the opening of Boatbridge over the river Esk at Langholm taken just at the point where one of the chains broke causing the

bridge to collapse.

Next he looked at some of the earliest surviving bridges in Scotland, Brig o' Balgownie the oldest single arched bridge,



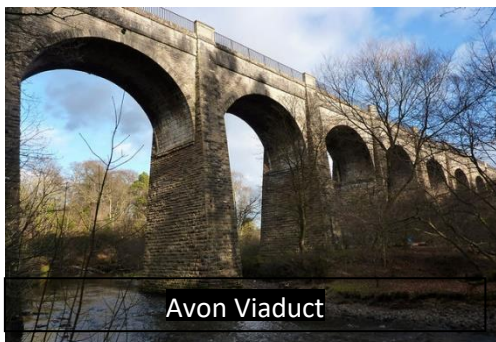
Laigh Milton Viaduct, oldest railway viaduct, Craigellachie, oldest cast iron bridge and Union Chain Bridge, oldest vehicle carrying suspension bridge. These were followed by Tongland Bridge over the River Dee near Kirkcudbright, Telford's earliest large span arch bridge and the first to carry a road on internal spine walls rising from arch rings. Two of the longest/largest bridges were next; the Forth Bridge, a steel cantilever bridge and

the largest when opened in 1890 and the current Bonar Bridge, 1973, the first tied bowstring-arch bridge in Scotland.

He then took us to Aberfeldy and to General Wade's splendid bridge over the River Tay, built 1733-34 as part of a system of military roads in Scotland. Most of the other military bridges were smaller single arch bridges. In total contrast was the nearby suspension stayed bridge on Aberfeldy golf course constructed from glass reinforced fibre plastic which was erected in 1992.

These were followed by Pease Bridge over a steep gorge at Cockburnspath built in 1786 by local architect and stone mason David Henderson. It was the highest bridge in the world when built. Then Ballochmyle Viaduct 1848 over the water of Ayr, whose centre arch was the tallest masonry arch when constructed. The engineer for the viaduct was John Miller who was also the designer of the 36 arch Almond Viaduct on the Edinburgh & Glasgow Railway 1838-42. Along with Thomas Grainger who he went into partnership with in 1825 he was responsible for much of Scotland's early railway infrastructure. They had two apprentices James Pugh Kirkwood and James Laurie who both went to America to build bridges.

The next picture was of the longest and tallest aqueduct in Scotland and the second in Britain over the river Avon near Linlithgow on the Union Canal. The water is contained in a cast iron trough which also is strong enough to resist the pressure of the water and allowed the structure to be more slender than a masonry arch using puddled clay to contain



the water.

He included two other viaducts of interest the original Tay Bridge 1877 an iron railway viaduct which was the longest when opened but which collapsed in December 1879. The replacement iron viaduct 1887 is the longest in Britain. The other was Loch nan Uamh Viaduct one of the mass concrete viaducts on the West Highland line built by Robert McAlpine "Concrete Bob".

Moving now to the twentieth century and road transport came Norman Foster's Erskine Bridge 1971, the longest cable-stayed bridge in the world when opened and the prototype for the Millau viaduct in France. The Kessock Bridge, also a cable-stayed bridge was built in 1982. Since it is situated on the Great Glen fault line it incorporated seismic buffers to absorb any geological shock waves.

Finally arrived in the twenty first century and the only three tower cable-stayed bridge in the world the Queensferry Crossing which opened on 30th August 2017.

Bruce's talk took us on a journey through Scotland's bridge heritage and development of new technologies sharing his wide knowledge with enthusiasm. It has been difficult to try and put this on paper without the excellent illustrations from his talk. He has written a book entitled "Bridgescapes A personal journey through history celebrating Scotland's bridge building heritage"

ISBN No 978 09566387 3 1; copies of which were available at the talk. A tour de force which I think everyone enjoyed.

Sandra Purves

BHS Talks 2022 : Jim Eunson

January NTS Archives - Ian Riches

1. The NTS was founded in 1931 in order that a Scottish property could be preserved. What property was it?
2. Ian also talked of documents held by the Irvine family at their home (since 1323) including a charter from King Robert 1 (the Bruce) Where is this?

February The Dog Trust -Una Race

3. The Dog Trust is a fairly new name for a much older organisation, what was it previously called?
4. Una spoke about the Dog Trust's Scottish Centre, where she works I think. Where is it?

March Scottish Story-Telling Donald Smith

5. (and 6) Donald Smith of the Scottish Story-telling Centre spoke of two 19C collectors of oral material, one for the Gaelic tradition, and one for the Scots tradition. Who were they?

April Linen Stories - John Ennis

7. John talked of the 1746 founding of the British Linen Company in Edinburgh. Where was the HQ?
8. He also spoke of a town in what is now the Netherlands where the Scots had preferred trading status. Where?
9. Perhaps a bit easier, where in Edinburgh did the French Linen weavers settle, it is not far from here.

May Union Canal - Sandra Purves

10. When was the Union Canal opened?
11. The Forth and Clyde Canal is a different canal. When was it opened?
12. What was the original terminus of the Union Canal in Edinburgh called?

September Boswell & Johnson – David Purdie

13. Boswell's father Alexander was Lord Auchinleck, a law Lord but also Laird of Auchinleck, but where is it?
14. In what year did Johnson and Boswell undertake their famous Journey to the Western Isles?

October John Hope/Indian Botanic Gardens - James Simpson

15. Why was a memorial to Williamson erected by Hunter?
16. What is now the J C Bose Indian Botanic Garden lies on which river in Kolkata (Calcutta)?

November Bridgescapes - Bruce Keith

17. The oldest bridge in Scotland is from the late 13th C. What and where is it?
18. 19,20 There are 3 'Forth Bridges' at Queensferry. The 3 dates please?

ANSWERS

1. It was Crookston Castle in Renfrewshire
2. In Drum Castle in Aberdeenshire
3. The National Canine Defence League (NCDL)
4. West Calder
5. *Gaelic* John Francis Campbell (1821-1885)
6. *Scots* Robert Chambers (1802-1871) who with his brother William formed W & R Chambers.
7. In Moray House.
8. Veere (or Verre or even Campvere)
9. In Picardy Place, named after their native region.
10. 1822 – that's easy!
11. 1790 – before the Union Canal by quite a few years.
12. Port Hopetoun
13. In Ayrshire, near Cumnock.
14. In 1773
15. Because Williamson was murdered and Hope wanted to commemorate him. (He had another job as exciseman which was how he was murdered, not for botanical reasons!)
16. The Hooghly
17. The Brig o' Balgownie in Aberdeen- the lower part is 13C
18. Forth Bridge opened in 1890
19. Forth Road Bridge in 1964
20. Queensferry Crossing in 2017

Bridges in and around Broughton :Sandra Purves. The questions were all the same more or less. The answers and the bridge pictures are shown below.

St Marks Bridge



Rustic Bridge
(question
was what
was title of
previous
bridge here)



Rodney Street
Tunnel



Remains of the
Great Lade



Canonmills
Bridge



Broughton
Burn



Regent Arch or
Regent Bridge



Warriston
Road Viaduct



The Rumbling Bridge
(again the question
was what was
previous bridge
called)



Warriston Cemetery Bridge



Standard Life built the
bridge



Newhaven Road goes
above

