

KNUCKLAS VIADUCT

The viaduct was built by the Central Wales Railway Company for the construction of the railway from Knighton to Llandrindod Wells. The construction of the viaduct started in the spring of 1860 and the structure was substantially completed by the late summer of 1863.

The company's chief civil engineer, Henry Robertson (1816 –1888), is generally credited with the design of the viaduct. It is also said that the design features of the viaduct were heavily influenced by the then owner of the remains of Knucklas Castle. He insisted that if stone from the castle remains was required for use in the construction of the viaduct, then the viaduct must include some of the features of a castle. There is certainly strong evidence that some of the stone used as the viaduct's core material which was examined during maintenance works carried out in 2010 was indeed quarried from the castle remains.

In October 1864 the viaduct began carrying freight traffic and the passing of the first locomotive across it is recorded in a poem written by Thomas Corbett, a postman from Dolau near Llandrindod Wells, and which begins:

*'They started from Knucklas o'er a viaduct grand
Where the scenes of the Teme are at your command;
In the month of October in the year of Sixty-Four
An Engine they started which ne'er ran before...'*

On 10th October 1865 the railway between Knighton and Llandrindod Wells was officially opened and from that date the viaduct began carrying both passenger and freight trains.

STATISTICS

190 yards in length

Built principally of rough stone although it includes some brickwork within its piers

Thirteen arches each spanning 35 feet 9 inches

Maximum height 75 feet above the valley floor

Twin semi-circular crenellated towers each end, with a large Christian cross incised deeply in the stonework; smaller semi-square towers at its buttresses.

The viaduct, level itself, is situated on a four mile stretch of the Line where there is a gradient of 1 in 60. On the eastern approach to the viaduct, the track has the outer rail almost 6 inches (150 millimetres) higher than the inner rail at one point.

Maximum train speed is 45 mph.

The viaduct is a Grade II listed structure, and is unique in this country in terms of its design. Today, almost 150 years after its completion, this historic structure still carries trains across the Heyope Valley.

Information provided by HOWLTA