Kelvin Bridges Heritage Trail
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Introduction

From its source on the moors of the village of Banton, the River Kelvin flows for almost 22 miles (35 km) before reaching the River Clyde, at Yorkhill Basin in the City of Glasgow.

Numerous bridges span the River Kelvin, some small, but others of notable grandeur. The various styles reflect the rapid industrial and commercial development of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which made Glasgow one of the most important cities in the British Empire.

In recent years, the deindustrialisation of Glasgow together with improvements in river water quality, have made walking beside the River Kelvin a wonderful city experience, with much to observe, from the rich industrial heritage to the abundant natural habitat.

By describing the architecture and history of the bridges, this publication seeks to enhance each visitor’s experience to Glasgow.

The technical purpose of a bridge is to span a physical obstacle in order to provide passage over that obstacle. It must be designed to support its own weight and any imposed load, then transport its cargo to a safe location. Yet bridges also represent the concept of exchange, allowing people, goods and information to move quickly and freely between two separate locations. It is this interchange of ideas and culture that has made Glasgow the metropolitan city it is today.

Celebrating 200 years of civil engineering achievement

2018 marks the 200th anniversary of the founding of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

To celebrate, ICE is running a year of events and activities to demonstrate how 200 years of civil engineering have transformed the way we live. ICE also hopes to highlight the exciting range of careers that civil engineering offers.

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1/2. Garrioch Quadrant Viaducts (1896)
The viaducts, now disused, are a mix of masonry arch and steel plate girder elements.

A concrete beam deck, believed to be post-tensioned, is supported on masonry-clad, concrete abutments and wing walls.

4. Kirklee Bridge (1901)
Formed from red sandstone masonry arches and topped with polished pink granite balustrades, this imposing structure is probably one of the best examples of a stone bridge in Glasgow.

Taking its name from an unpopular toll of one halfpenny set by the owner of a previous bridge on this site, the current timber truss structure was built to maintain both the Glasgow to Milngavie cycle route and the Kelvin Walkway.

6. Botanic Gardens Footbridge (1908)
Formed from steel fabricated girders, concrete abutments and cast iron intermediate columns, decorative cast iron parapets complete the structure.

7. Queen Margaret Drive Bridge (1929)
The current bridge was designed as part of a major road improvement scheme that separated the then BBC buildings from the Botanic Gardens. Red Corncockle sandstone clads a reinforced concrete frame to mimic a solid masonry arch structure, like Kirklee Bridge. Polished red Peterhead granite parapets complete the illusion.

8. North Woodside Flint Mill
The Flint Mill is an interesting structure, described in detail on the adjacent information board. Look for the stone carvings in the wall opposite the mill.

Explore Engineering
   Constructed as part of the Kelvin Walkway scheme, this simple bridge is formed from rolled steel beams acting compositely with a reinforced concrete deck slab and supported on stone-faced abutments.

10. Belmont Street Bridge (1870)
    Built to give access to development land in the North Woodside area, this sandstone masonry arch structure is an imposing example of Victorian bridge building.

11. Great Western Bridge (1891)
    Also known as the Kelvin Bridge, the current structure is the third to be built on this site.

12. Kelvinbridge Footbridge
    The form of the bridge is similar to that of Queen Margaret Drive Bridge, but in cast iron and steel rather than reinforced concrete. The sides have fascias depicting the coats of arms of Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Hillhead.

13. Eldon Street Bridge (1895)
    A Grade B listed structure, both its form and style are similar to that of Great Western Bridge, albeit less imposing.

14. Prince Of Wales Bridge (1895)
    Comprising a single elliptical red sandstone brick and blockwork arch with carved stone balustrades, the bridge is a central feature of Kelvingrove Park. The bridge provides a popular link between the University of Glasgow and the West End with the city centre.

15. New Park Footbridge (1964)
    The form of the bridge is a reinforced concrete, three-pinned arch, inspired by the work of the renowned Swiss civil engineer Robert Maillart.

16. Kelvin Way Bridge (1914)
    The Grade B listed structure comprises a single masonry arch in red sandstone. The parapets support four bronze sculptured groups, representing Peace and War, Philosophy and Inspiration, Navigation and Shipbuilding and Commerce and Industry.

17. Dumbarton Road Bridge (Circa 1800)
    A four span masonry arch structure in cream sandstone, it now serves as a footbridge for public access to the Kelvingrove Art Galleries.

18. Partick Bridge (1878)
    Comprising a single span cast-iron arch with “rock-faced” sandstone abutments and wing walls, the bridge is similar to the Eldon Street Bridge and is another excellent example of Victorian engineering.

19. Sewer Bridge (1904)
    Originally covered by a pitched roof, the bridge comprises steel half-through lattice truss girders supported on masonry abutments, curiously featuring large circular sandstone pilasters topped with sheet-metal caps.
Want to know more about civil engineering?

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