

Cample



Bridge of the Month No51, March 2015 Cample Water, GSW



Back in SW Scotland and some old photographs. [This bridge over the Cample water](#) in Dumfriesshire is spectacular mainly for its three large skew spans.



The bridge is skewed to accommodate a river. The road through the middle span barely qualifies as such and must have been little more than a track when the bridge was built. Notice this span is photographed roughly normal to the skew span and the shape doesn't look quite like a circle.

Then next pic just turns sideways to show the other three spans and to look down the line of the road. Note the bite taken out of the acute corner by a high (and presumably hard) vehicle.

Photo three is taken square to the spandrel and shows that this way the arch is truly circular.



Looking a little closer shows the water stained soffit. Rationalising the stations is hard in a skew bridge but we can be reasonably confident that, as with most of John Miller's bridges, this has solid backing at the bottom (roughly to the top of the water stains) then internal walls and slab covers with the walls passing right over the crown



A close look at the skewbacks is interesting. Quite a complex lump of stone, or two, or three.



This picture below, perhaps closer to square than the previous one, also shows a line of stain on the spandrel indicating the top of the solid backing.



Now I want to look at the working of the stone. The voussoirs are smooth finished with deep V joints. The spandrel faces are smooth at the joints and pecked between. The string course is ashlar and below that the stone is course and fitted rusticated. Note also how the courses get thinner towards the top giving emphasis to the height. Lets look at some other bridges on the same line.

Ballochmyle is vastly bigger and the spandrel walls are rusticated, presumably to break up the massive appearance. There is a string course around the top of the V jointed ring. The huge pilaster (or buttress) and the borders of the spandrels are ashlar, adding further texture.



At Crawick viaduct, the voussoirs feature a series of parallel chisel marks creating longitudinal lines. The spandrel is moderately rusticated but V jointed.



Menock has an ashlar pilaster and smooth pecked spandrels. Note also that the bullnose string course has been almost completely removed.



At Enterkinburn (I think) the piers are rusticated but have V joints with smooth borders.



This bridge has a string round the ring, rusticated spandrels and piers, a bullnose string course and NO PARAPET?



And here, the spandrels are smooth jointed flat stone cut in a herringbone pattern. And the voussoirs stand out from the spandrels and have V'ed joints right round.



The point I am making is that these bridges all came from the hand of John Miller but show very different finish. Closer inspection will show that there are details (like the bull nose drip/string course) that were drawn and others that were left to the masons. It is important, in railway bridges, to separate engineering details that are significant to the structure and details of finish that were left to the mason and which have little consequence for either structural or weathering performance.