



## Bridge of the Month No67, July 2016 Písek Kamenný most



A word of warning. I will be in New Zealand for most of November (as usual). In the mean time, in case you missed it, we have a new version of Archie released. For this and other Archie related news, please sign up at - <https://www.getdrip.com/forms/23335126/submissions/new>. This is a new mailing list for anyone who uses, supports, or is simply interested in Archie-M and masonry bridge assessment.

I had a very welcome break in early July travelling, for various reasons, to Hull, Cambridge, Prague and Warwick. Only the Prague trip turned up stone bridges but then it was to a conference on Medieval bridges. It's always the way of the world that things stack up and overlap. The Henderson Colloquium in Cambridge is an invitation not to be passed up but with that on 7/8 and Prague on 8/9/10 July I missed the first day of visits so my first Czech bridge was [Písek](#).



This is the oldest bridge in the republic, probably late C13th, though like any old structure it has seen many rounds of repair. The most recent serious damage was 2002 and a board alongside told that story. This photo shows the scale of the flood<sup>1</sup>.



This took away much of the parapets and several statues, one of which had to be remade.

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<sup>1</sup> By Jenik - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=2007565>

Looking from downstream on a very sunny day, the extent of centuries of repair is clearly visible. Perhaps most significant is the nearest span where the arch is obviously higher and wider than the others.



The same span from upstream is obviously of lower quality work altogether and is also somewhat distorted. It is less than 2 spans and a pier wide so presumably the channel was widened a little at some stage





Those of us who live in a gentle climate will be unfamiliar with the ice braking deflectors upstream. I wonder whether their presence helps to reduce the danger of scour under the piers. These ones are not just wood but are built of stone beneath and has railway lines as well as timber on top.

They certainly haven't prevented all damage, though. These iron cramps are not original so there must have been some serious damage to contend with.





The extent of the cramps is spectacular.



The coursing at bottom right in this photo is definitely not true, suggesting that there has been some serious erosion at some point.



Getting a decent square shot is difficult and this is cropped from a much bigger photo. It is included here for the additional signs of change, which almost necessarily means damage. Notice how the ring is doubled in the middle one of these spans. In the left hand one some voussoirs are cramped up to the spandrel wall as though they were in danger of falling out. That same span is also a mess downstream, to the right of the angel in this pic. Notice how uneven the coursing is above the arch.



Looking at the two sides of the wider span, there are a lot of indications of trauma, starting with the misshapen upstream profile.



But the structure of the spandrel wall changes at the link as well, and again at a similar point to the right. The water chute is at roughly the right distance from the pier for a normal span and the spandrel near it could well be original. The new stone in the parapet is presumably replacement after the flood and is present both upstream and down.





I wonder what that corbel under the parapet is about. Presumably it was rebuilt and lined through. Strange, though.

Two final pictures before I have to move on.



This, from the notice board shows the extent of the damage as the flood receded. Note the huge vortex at the near cutwater as the water is drawn underneath. The suction must have done considerable damage to the pointing.

And finally a view from the end.



For its age, this is a very wide bridge. At 6.25m there is more than ample room for two carriages to pass. The curve here is quite pronounced, though not noticeable in the other photos.

Next month, on to Prague itself and the Charles IV Bridge.