

*see acknowledgements*

# The Bridges of Peebles

*A Heritage Trail*



*Published by Peebles Civic Society 40p*

# BURGH TRAIL

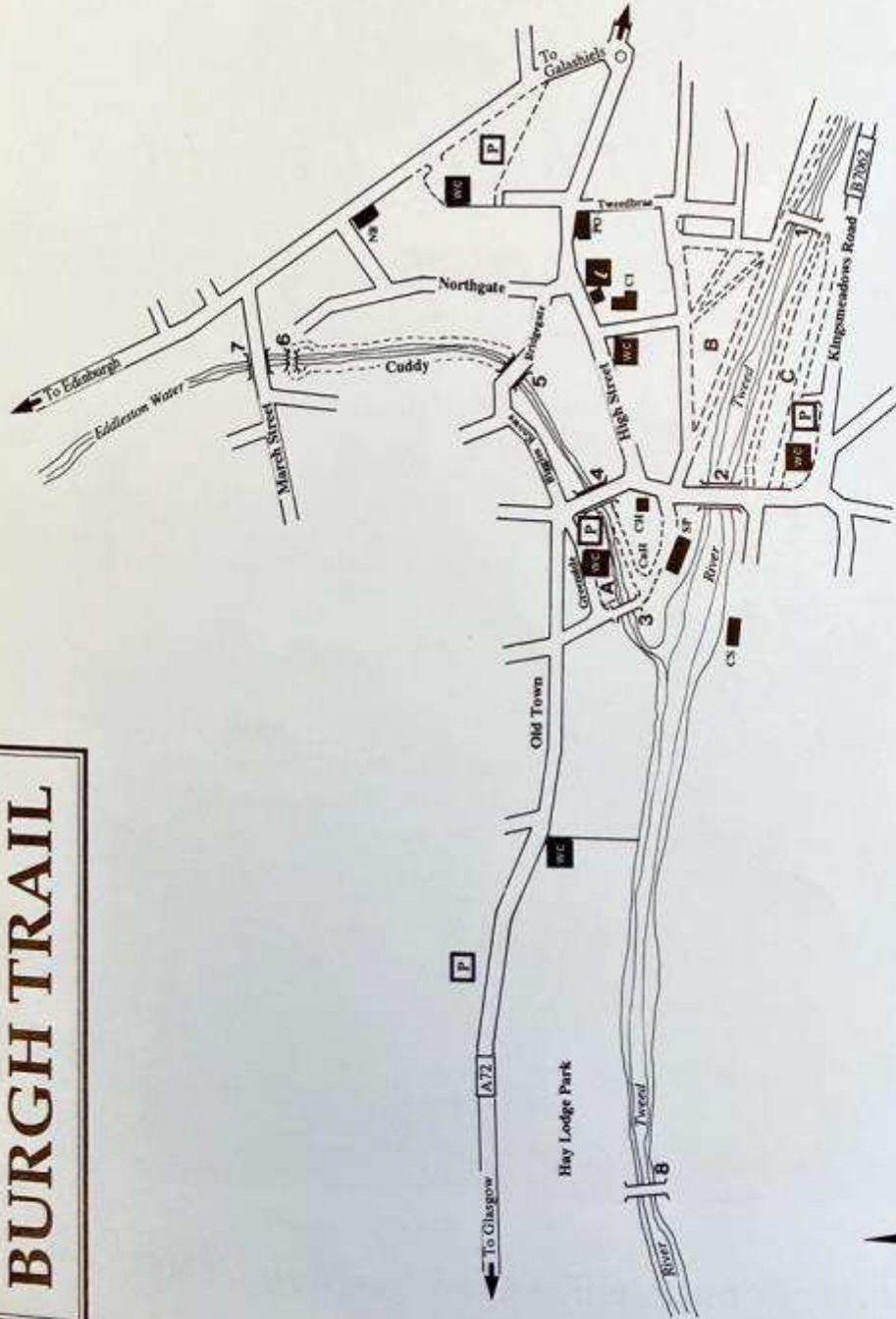
## KEY

- P** Parking
- WC** Toilets
- I** Tourist Information
- SP** Swimming Pool
- CH** Church
- PO** Post Office
- CaH** Castle Hill
- CI** Chambers Institution
- NB** Site of North British Station
- CS** Site of Caledonian Station

- A** Old Town Green
- B** Tweed Green
- C** Ninians Haugh

- 1** Priorsford Bridge
- 2** Tweed Bridge
- 3** Greenside Bridge
- 4** Cuddy Bridge
- 5** Tree Bridge
- 6** Cuddyside Iron Footbridge
- 7** March Street Bridge
- 8** Fotheringham Bridge

Not To Scale





## The Bridge Trails

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Walks around Peebles Burgh and along the Tweed are full of interest for the architect and archaeologist, the historian and naturalist, indeed for anyone who appreciates a busy, compact, country town set in a beautiful Borders valley.

This Guide offers you another focus for exploration ... the Bridges of Peebles, of which there are a surprising number.

You will find the bridge locations on the two maps: for the Burgh Trail on the page opposite and for the Riverside Trail on the centre pages.

### 1. The Burgh Trail

This will take you to as many as six bridges. The trail can be started at any part of the town convenient to you, but if you start from the Tourist Information Centre in the High Street, you might wish to try the following recommended route:

High Street, Post Office, Tweed Brae, Tweed Green, **PRIORSFORD BRIDGE**, Ninian's Haugh, **TWEED BRIDGE**, Swimming Pool, **GREENSIDE BRIDGE**, (you can either cross Greenside Bridge and go through Greenside to Cuddy Bridge or follow the path below Castle Hill along the side of the Cuddy onto Cuddy Bridge; this path is not suitable for wheelchairs), **CUDDY BRIDGE**, Biggiesknowe, **TREE BRIDGE**, Cuddyside, the **IRON FOOTBRIDGE**, down the other side of Cuddy (Eddleston Water), **TREE BRIDGE**, Bridgegate, Northgate, High Street.

This trail can be completed easily within an hour at a leisurely pace.

### 2. The Riverside Trail

Assuming a start at Tweed Bridge and going upstream, there are four river crossings, creating the possibility of four circular walks. The distance of each circular walk is given.

The crossings, in sequence from Tweed Bridge, are:

Fotheringham Bridge	1 mile	(1.6km)
Neidpath Viaduct	2.5 miles	(4.0km)
Manor Bridge and Old Manor Brig	4.5 miles	(7.2km)
Lyne Viaduct and Lyne Footbridge	7 miles	(11.3km)

No part of the trail is far away from the river bank.

Most of the bridges are described and illustrated in the guide. The others will also repay your scrutiny.

## Priorsford Bridge

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This much-used footbridge links Ninian's Haugh and Tweed Green, two of the fine, informal park areas on the banks of the Tweed.

The bridge is a picturesque late-Victorian style steel suspension bridge with lattice towers and parapets. Its main span is 96.75ft with an adjoining span on each side of 28.75ft. Clear deck width 5ft. The deck is supported by 0.75in dia. rod hangers from two main steel-strand cables of 1in dia. The lattices are formed by 1.5in x 0.75in straps.

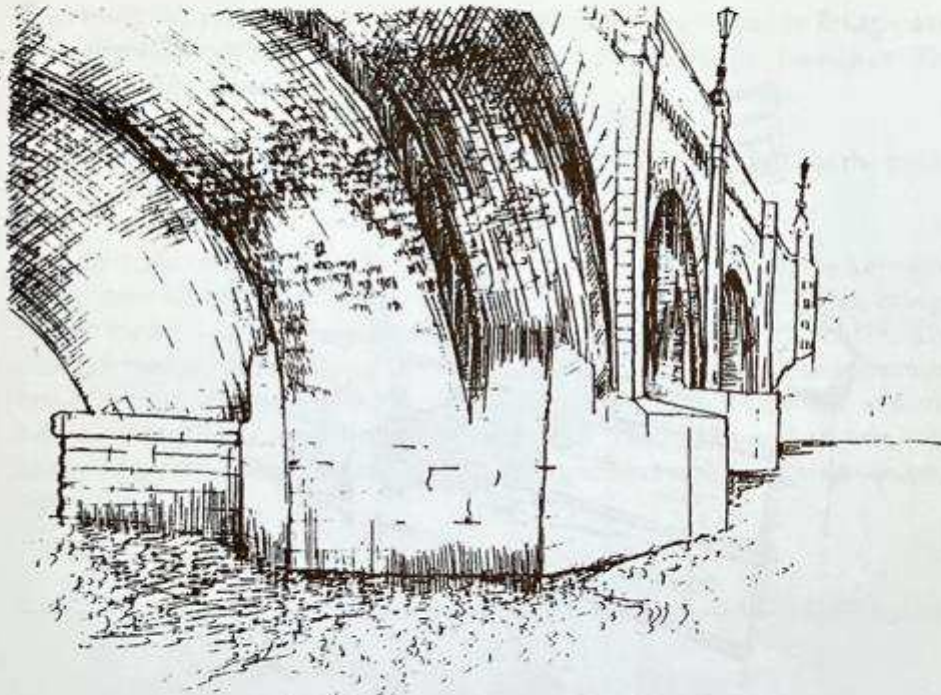
A lenticular plate, with a now rather indistinct inscription, records that the bridge was constructed in 1905; the Engineer was Robert J M Inglis, of 'Tantah', Peebles; and the Contractor was Somervail of Dalmuir.

From the bridge, the embankment of the old railway loop which joined the Caledonian and North British Stations is still very obvious to the west, and also across the river to the north-east. When the river water is low, the foundations of the railway bridge twenty yards downstream can still be clearly seen.



## Tweed Bridge

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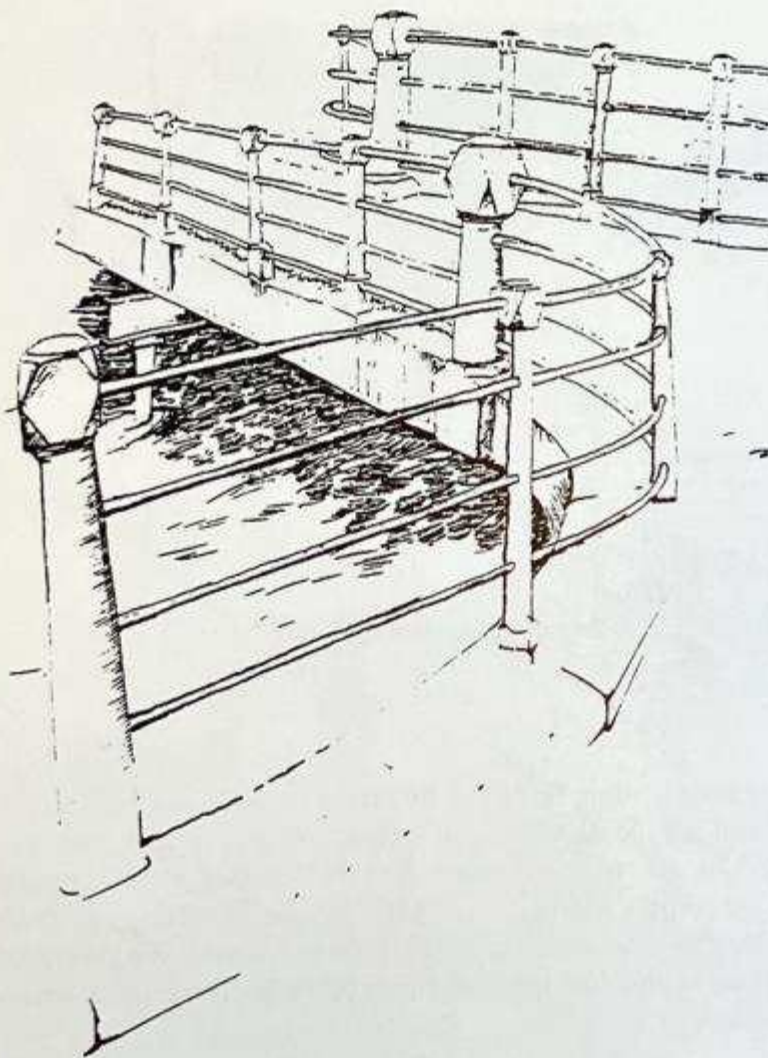
There has been a stone bridge at this river crossing since at least the 15th century, and the oldest remaining arches, still clearly seen, may date from about 1465-70. There is even a clue as to the designer of this early structure, because the Master Mason responsible for the Tay Bridge in Perth, built around the same time, was known as "John of Peebles". It is thought that the earliest stone bridge had foundations of oak logs. The original width of the bridge was 8ft.

In 1799 one or two arches were added at the south end, to be replaced in the 19th century by the square-section railway bridge which remains today. Tweed Bridge has been widened twice: in 1834 on both sides (cost around £1,000) to a width of 21ft; and again in 1900 to 40ft (£8,000). The contractor for this work was the local firm of Dickson & Clyde. Evidence of the widenings is clearly visible if you walk down Port Brae and look beneath the bridge. The dolphin lamps provide a fine decorative feature on the parapet. They were added soon after 1900, but no record has been traced of their provenance.

Until the 18th century the five-arched bridge was the only bridge spanning the Tweed above Kelso.

## Tree Bridge

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The drawing shows the bridge that was replaced in 1994, Tree Bridge is on the site of a much earlier bridge that gave its name to the Bridgegate. By this route, the Burgh was entered from the west before the construction of "Cuddy Bridge" in the 15th century.

There is uncertainty about the derivation of the name "Tree" or "Trie" but the simplest explanation may well be correct, i.e., that for centuries this bridge was constructed with tree trunks. One of the forerunners of the present bridge was destroyed by a flood in September 1891. Near the Tree Bridge, the foundations of a Toll House were excavated in the late 1980s.



## Cuddy Bridge

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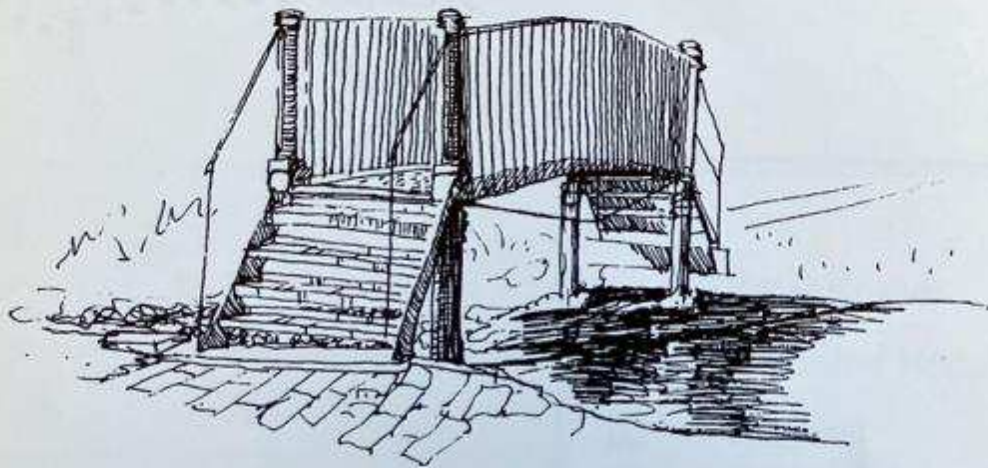
Two hundred yards downstream from the Tree Bridge is Cuddy Bridge, also spanning Eddleston Water. (This tributary of the Tweed is also known as "The Cuddy" when it reaches the Burgh.)

First erected in the 15th century, this bridge now carries the bulk of the traffic on the western approach to Peebles.

The early structure was replaced in 1857 when, on 3rd August, the keystone of the new arch bridge was laid "with full masonic honours". This bridge served for 127 years and was replaced in 1984 at a cost of around £386,000. The modern bridge was designed to continue the tradition of an arched structure but is, in fact, a single-span deck formed by pre-cast, pre-stressed concrete beams with a reinforced concrete slab on top. The masonry arch was then achieved by means of a reinforced concrete spandrel wall faced with squared whinstone.

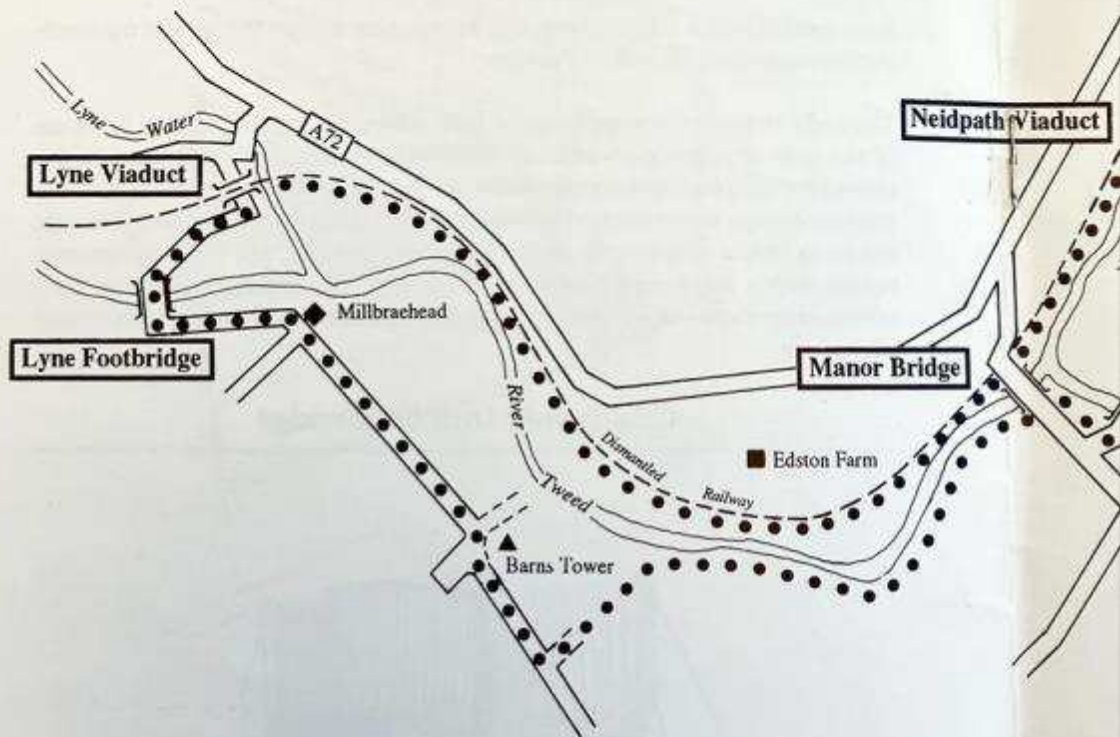
## Cuddyside Iron Footbridge

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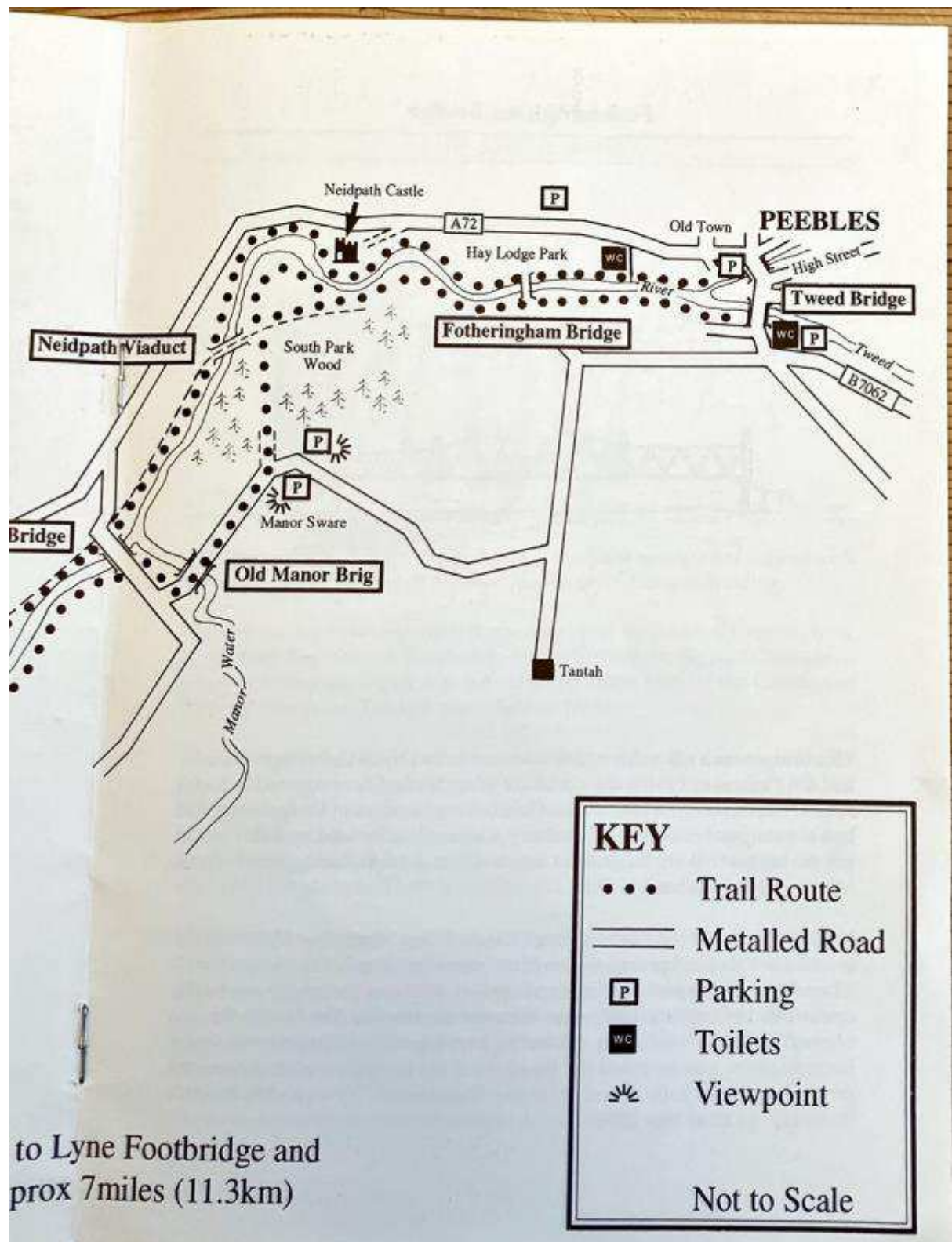
This bridge is five hundred yards upstream from Tree Bridge. Between it and the modern March Street Bridge, the old ford can still clearly be seen.

# RIVERSIDE TRAIL



The complete trail, Tweed Bridge to Lyne Footbridge and back to the centre of Peebles is approx 7 miles





## Fotheringham Bridge

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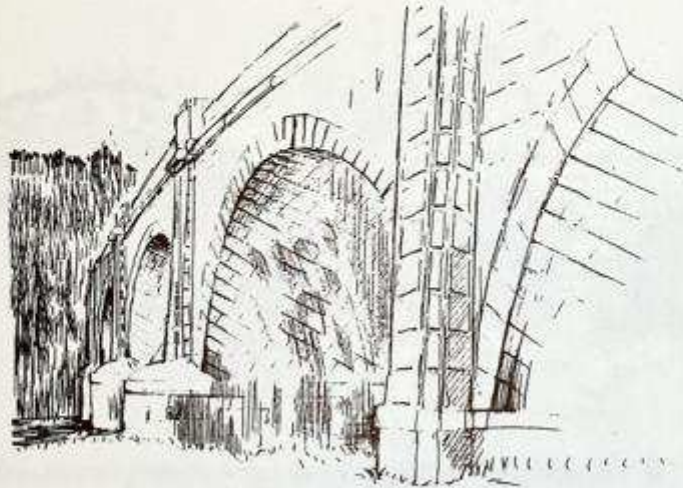
This bridge was a gift to his native town made by John S Fotheringham, who had left Peebles in 1904 at the age of six when his family emigrated to South Africa. His father, who had worked in a bakery business in Eastgate enabled him to set up bakeries in Johannesburg, and eventually John and his brother ran the biggest bakery business in South Africa. John Fotheringham became Mayor of Johannesburg in 1937.

In 1948 he offered the Peebles Burgh Council "not more than £5,000 for the erection of a footbridge somewhere in the neighbourhood of Haylodge Park". After delays due to post-war steel and cement shortages the bridge was finally opened in 1953 with a 100ft span between abutments. The contractor was Messrs A G Mansell & Co Ltd, of London. In recognition of his generosity John Fotheringham was awarded the Freedom of the burgh at a civic dinner; the proceedings were fully described in the "Peeblesshire News and St Ronan's Standard" of 22nd May 1953.



## Neidpath Viaduct (The Queen's Bridge)

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This magnificent railway bridge is one of the finest examples of skewed arch construction in Scotland. It is Listed as a Class 'B' Historic Building.

Opened on 1st February 1864, it was designed by Bruce & Cunningham, Consultant Engineers of Edinburgh, for the Symington, Biggar & Broughton Railway Company which was subsequently taken over by the Caledonian Railway Company. The line was closed in 1954.

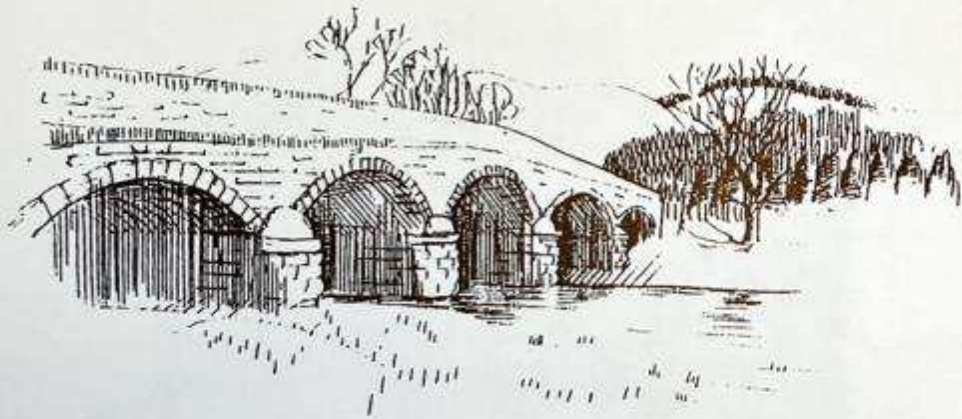
The intricate and detailed calculations for determining the dimensions of the freestone masonry and erecting the Viaduct, with its eight skewed arches of 40ft span and 15ft width on a curve of 20 chains (1320ft), were made early in 1863 by Robert Murray at Damdale, Peebles. The original specification and tender for the Viaduct have not been found, but details of the price for the adjoining 529-yd tunnel which totalled £14,431 6s 8d are on record.

The Viaduct and tunnel furnish an outstanding example of the determination of the Victorian railway engineer in overcoming great physical difficulties to achieve an alignment permitting rapid travel. It is fascinating to contrast its alignment with that of Telford's horse-drawn railway proposal of 1810 which was to follow the windings of the valley bottom as it approached Peebles from the west.

The tunnel is now dangerous and it is not advisable to enter it.

## Manor Bridge

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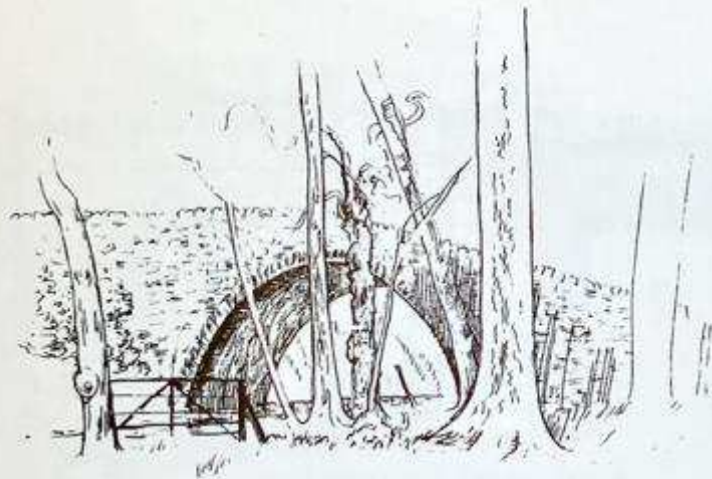
This graceful five-span, low-rise, masonry bridge with flat segmental arches and slender piers was built in 1883 to replace a ford. It was one of the last major examples of this type of construction in Peeblesshire. It is reputed to have a connection with David Kidd who made a fortune from the invention of the modern envelope. In 1873 he built "Glenternie" in the Manor Valley. The following year he died leaving the house to his sisters, the Misses Pringle and Elizabeth Kidd. These ladies, along with Miss Anderson of Hallyards, contributed to the building of the bridge.

If this river crossing is being used with the intention of walking back to Peebles on the south of the river, it is necessary to leave the river bank for the next three-quarters of a mile. After crossing Old Manor Brig and climbing the steep road of the Manor Sware, a gate on the left near the top of the rise gives access onto a forest track which leads to the Neidpath Viaduct. From this point it is possible to follow the riverside pathway or to climb the path to the east of the tunnel cutting which takes you, after a steep climb, to the top of the railway tunnel from which point it is possible to see Neidpath Castle across the river. The pathway dips down at this point to join the riverside walk.



## Old Manor Brig

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A fine, almost completely original, masonry arch bridge of 1702, built of rubble except for an arch ring facing of squared stone on each side. Clear width 9.5ft (overall 12.25ft). Span 40ft. Springing to crown 13.5ft. 6-ton weight limit.

This bridge probably obviated the use of a ford at or near the same site and, in allowing safe crossing at all times, considerably improved communication between the Manor Water valley and Peebles, even though it required a steep 260ft climb over The Sware. Anyone making this climb, even today, is rewarded with spectacular views of the town and its environs.

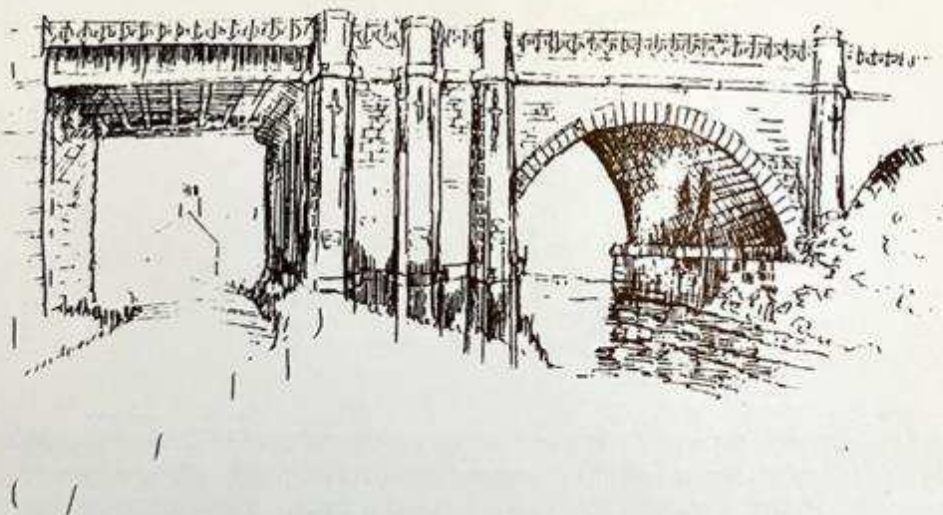
An old stone tablet on the downstream wing-wall of the bridge states that:

"WILLIAM DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY  
DESIGNED THIS WORK  
AND WILLIAM  
EARL OF MARCH  
HIS SECOND SONE  
BUILT THE SAME  
ANNO 1702"

At the time the bridge was being constructed, Manor Church was in course of reconstruction and the Charge vacant. The Privy Council therefore gave permission for the patron, The Earl of March, to defray the cost of the bridge from the vacancy stipend.

## Lyne Viaduct

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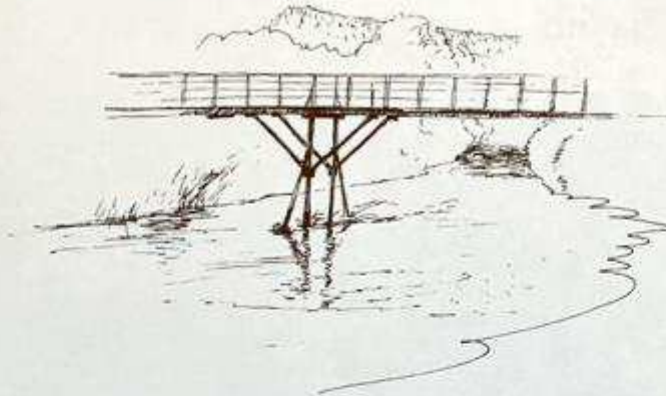
This is a fine "wee brother" to the Neidpath Viaduct and is also well worth a visit. It is about a mile and a half (2.5km) upstream from Manor Bridge, the walk between the two being along the old railway line. Thereafter, a few hundred yards of road lead to a trackway to the footbridge across the Tweed of the confluence of Lyne Water and the Tweed. The path now heads back east to join the road through the Barns House policies along a fine avenue of lime trees and past Barns Tower. A track along the edge of the field leads to the river bank and Manor Bridge.

Robert Murray, the Resident Engineer for the Neidpath Viaduct may also have made calculations for Lyne Viaduct with its three skewed arches of 29ft span to which the Caledonian Railway Company agreed in October 1863 to contribute £500, providing that construction was to the satisfaction of their Engineer.



## Lyne Footbridge

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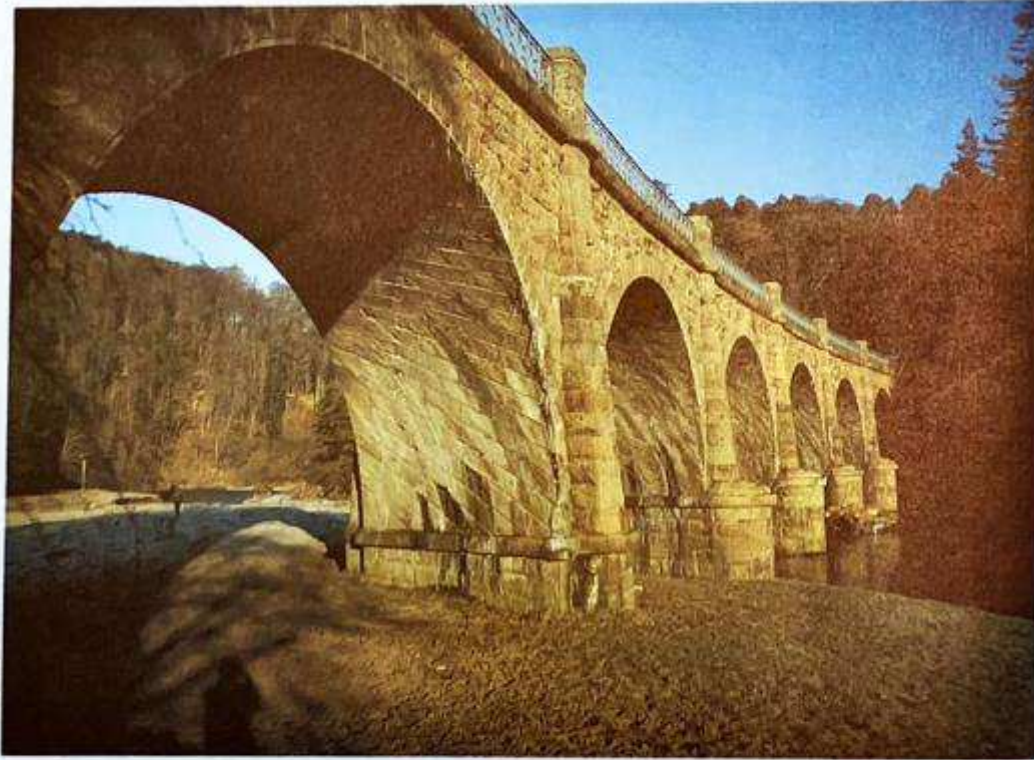
### *Useful addresses:*

*Scottish Borders Tourist Board Headquarters, Municipal Buildings, High Street, Selkirk. Tel. (0750) 20555*

*Tourist Information Centre, Chambers Institute, High Street, Peebles. Tel. (0721) 720138.*

*Borders Regional Council Countryside Ranger Service, Regional HQ, Newtown St Boswells, Melrose, TD6 0SA. Tel. (0835) 23301.*

## Neidpath Viaduct



*photo by J F Soutter*