

On This Day – 1st October 1885

Alloa Swing Bridge opens



Piers of the bridge. Photo: Nicholas Reid

The Alloa Swing Bridge, the former rail bridge which crossed the Forth near Throsk, was commissioned in 1879 and opened 6 years later, connecting South Alloa with the main part of the town, and from there the bigger train lines to Stirling and Dunfermline. It was the first rail bridge to cross the river, predating the more famous crossing at Queensferry by five years.

South Alloa was, at the time, a busy port where pit props from the Baltics would be delivered (it was reported that, in the 1800s, timber was delivered from the Baltics to be used in the construction of pre-fab buildings, which were then exported to Australia, where the gold mining industry was booming). The bridge was single track, and swung open, driven by a steam engine at the centre of the bridge, to allow

larger ships up to Stirling. A decline in traffic meant the bridge was closed and the railway lines and deck lifted by 1971, leaving only the piers which dot across the Forth, which are still there today.

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