

BRECON AND MONMOUTHSHIRE CANAL MONUMENTS RECORD CARD		Monument Number: MB 122 GILWERN
Monument Name:	Bridge 102.	
Map Reference:	325366 214521	
Official Status:	Listed Grade II (Reference: 23827)	
Description: List description from Historic Wales website:		
History Built 1802-05 by Thomas Cartwright, engineer. In 1792, the Act for the Monmouthshire Canal was passed: in the same year, the promoters of the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal were proposing a canal to run separately, from Brecon to Newbridge. By October 1792 it was resolved to link directly to the proposed Monmouthshire Canal rather than the river Usk, and Thomas Dadford, engineer, was asked to survey a suitable route from Pontypool to Brecon. Work began early in 1797 with the aqueduct and embankment at Gilwern, and by November 1797, the eight-and-a-half mile (13.7 kilometre) section from Gilwern to Llangynidr was open. A further twelve mile (19.3 kilometre) section to Talybont was open by February 1799, and on Christmas Eve 1800, the final link to Brecon was opened. After 1798, Thomas Dadford was replaced with Thomas Cartwright, who engineered the extension of the canal from Gilwern to Llanfoist 1802-05, including Bridge 102. By February 1812 the canal had connected to the Monmouthshire Canal at Ponymoile, and the wharves at Brecon and Gilwern had been extended. The engineer for this section was William Crosley. After, when the Newport and Pontypool Railway was promoted, the canals were in decline. The Brecknock and Abergavenny Company made several unsuccessful overtures to various railway companies, but by 1865 had sold out to the Monmouthshire Canal Company. The last toll on the canal was taken in February 1933.		
Exterior Rubble sandstone construction. Semi-elliptical arch with stone voussoirs; projecting keystone. Vault of bridge has four parallel iron strap-rails to prevent collapse. Humped parapet splayed out to square piers; slab copings. NE sloping revetment wall for footpath, with stone-slab stile towards end.		
Reason for Listing Listed as a significant element of the engineering works associated with the Brecknock and Abergavenny Canal.		
The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Historic Environment Record notes:		

This bridge however, has become unstable and iron rails (possibly tramrails) have been bolted underneath the arch to reinforce it. On the southern side, the buttress appears to have been incorporated into the fabric of the present A465. On the northern side the parapet wall splays onto the nearby path forming a wall. This wall must at one time have extended along this length of the canal since it incorporates a stone foot-stile indicating the need to protect livestock from the water. To the west of the bridge are two slots cut into both banks of the canal, which were used to hold a water-gate for isolating stretches of canal during repair. This site was evaluated in September 1996. Two trenches were excavated across the southern and eastern extent of the bridge structure. Trench 1 uncovered, in plan, the southern extent of the bridge and extensive modern disturbance resulting from the construction of the A 465 during the early 1960s. Also recorded in plan was the original cobbled surface of the bridge. A west facing elevation drawing of the bridge was also completed."

Other writers suggest that the eccentric shape of the arch is deliberate to give headroom over the towpath.

The bridge measure 5600 along the towpath.

Two vertical posts using railway rails remain but the GWR weight restriction plates (see MB114) have been removed.

Images:





Condition:
Repair required to parapets. There has been a substantial collapse on the south side.

References:
C. Hadfield The Canals of South Wales and the Border 1977 D.D. & J.M. Gladwin The Canals of the Welsh Valleys and their Tramroads 1991 Information from the R.C.A.H.M.W. Information from the Buildings of Wales Office, Penguin Books, London
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