

**SUBJECT TITLE: ALLOA SWING BRIDGE AT THROSK, STIRLINGSHIRE
and Banded Admiralty pier**

Subject: Piers of railway swing bridge
Former Admiralty pier with railway mounted crane and munitions depot

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| Chart No: | Lat/Long: |
| 741 Plans of the Forth (Alloa to Stirling 1:20,000) | 56 ⁰ 06' .0N 003 ⁰ 49' .8W (swing bridge) 56 ⁰ 06' .9N 003 ⁰ 50' .3W (pier) |

OS 1:50,000 sheet number Sheet 58
Grid Ref. (two letters and six figures): NS 863914 (swing bridge), NS 857931 (pier)

Subject description: Piers of the former railway bridge that had a swinging section to permit navigation^(1,2). Known as “The Other Forth Bridge”, when first built it was the lowest crossing of the Forth. The piers comprise forty columns of stone and riveted iron plate braced together in pairs with cast iron brackets, forming a half mile long viaduct standing 24ft above HW springs. The bridge was completed in 1885 and closed in 1968. In the 1970s the swinging portion and spans were removed leaving the piers and abutments. The location is a wildlife haven, numerous duck and other waterfowl inhabit the reed beds and the piers are heavily used cormorant roosts⁽³⁾.

On the next bend in the river is the extensive former Admiralty munitions depot at Banded⁽⁴⁾. The warehouses with their enclosing earth blast walls and pier with railway mounted crane remain. The pier is privately owned, in a ruinous condition and one is advised to keep off it. From this facility puffers were used to supply the fleet through two world wars via the depot’s internal railway. Much of the rail has been removed but here and there it looks out of the turf. The branch line to the site closed in 1978.

Approach by sea: Follow the FYCA Pilot Handbook.

Directions by land: Take the A905 Falkirk – Stirling road to the Eastern approach to Throsk village and park on the South side of the road just before the village road sign at NS 862849 in the small lay-by where the road crosses the track bed of the old railway. Cross the road, find a convenient place to step over the low wire fence by the first house and follow the track bed to the bridge abutments. Approach is possible on the North side of the river but entails a longer walk.

Anchoring / Mooring: Anchor mid stream, good holding in mud. Mooring alongside the pier not advised. There is little traffic but this situation will change as a result of development at Stirling and harbours down river.

Landing: Not recommended. Reeds and mud difficult to negotiate and Bandeath pier is in a dangerous condition.

Other local information: The birdlife habitat here with backdrop of the Ochils is very attractive. Binoculars are useful to take in the detail of the piers which curve away for half a mile and to observe the wildlife. From shoreside long lenses and teleconverters are useful for photographs. The valley and trees mean light tends to be on the low side except when the sun is high in the sky.

References / weblinks:

1. Alloa Railway, www.railscot.co.uk/Alloa_Railway/body.htm
2. The Railways of Fife, William Scott Bruce, Melven Press, Perth. 1980. ISBN 0 906664 03 9.
3. Forth Area Bird Report published in the Forth Naturalist and Historian, available from The Library, University of Stirling. <http://www.the-soc.fsnet.co.uk/forth-recorder.htm>
4. Catalogue of the Luftwaffe Photographs in the National Monuments Record of Scotland. Scotland from the Air 1939-45. Volume I. <http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/>

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