

Bennerley Viaduct

About the Structure

1. Bennerley Viaduct is a **local and national treasure**. It is protected by its grade 2* listed status.
2. There is **only one other viaduct of its type** left in the country (Meldon Viaduct in Devon) but Bennerley is considerably longer. It has been largely unaltered since its construction in 1877.
3. The viaduct is over **quarter of a mile long** straddling the Erewash Valley between Ilkeston (Derbyshire) and Awsworth (Nottinghamshire).
4. The wrought iron components for Bennerley were prefabricated in Derby by Eastwood and Swinger. The parts were transported to Bennerley and assembled using cotterpins and **over half a million rivets**.
5. The viaduct was **designed by Richard Johnson and Samuel Abbott** as part of the Great Northern Railway's Derby and Staffordshire Extension (also known as the Friargate Line).
6. It was **designed to be light and flexible** due to the unstable ground beneath the viaduct. It took eighteen months to build opening in 1878.
7. The viaduct is not physically attached to the ground. It sits on cast iron baseplates which rest on brick piers. **It is held in place by gravity**.
8. The viaduct was built to carry coal but it also carried other goods and passengers. The last passenger train crossed in 1964. The last goods train crossed in 1968. The line closed following the Beeching Report after **90 years of use**.
9. The viaduct **survived bombing by Zeppelins** in January 1916. Sadly, the nearby signal box was not as fortunate.
10. British Rail attempted to demolish the viaduct but were **thwarted by local people**, councils and special interest groups who considered the viaduct was **an invaluable part of our industrial and railway heritage**.



Images of Bennerley Viaduct.



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