

Warkworth Bridges



There are two bridges over the River Coquet at the north end of the village at Warkworth. The first is the old medieval bridge which was built in the last quarter of the 14th century (it is suggested that the actual date of construction was 1379). It has two 60 feet (18.28m) span segmental stone arches each with double arch-rings, and four ribs.

The gatehouse is located at the south end of the bridge and the road surface of the bridge is cobbled. The central bridge support is hexagonal in shape with large pointed cutwaters to the 21 feet (6.4m) thick pier to parapet retreats. The width between the parapets is 11 feet (3.35m). Until 1830 a pillar or cross with the coat of arms of the Percy family stood on the bridge.



The bridge is one of only two fortified medieval bridges in Britain (the other is in Monmouth) and it is a Scheduled Monument and a Grade II Listed Building. In 1859 the bridge was described as being founded on both rock and wooden platforms with the north abutment being built on stone and the south on a timber platform.

Warkworth Bridge Tower is a rare example of a late 14th century stone gatehouse, built to fortify the bridge. It is built of stone and a round headed gate-passage runs through the square lower storey but unfortunately the upper storey is in ruins. In the 19th century the tower became the local gaol. In the 18th century the parapets were rebuilt and as mentioned above, in 1830 a pillar bearing the Percy coat of arms was

removed from the east recess. In 1936 it is thought that the bridge was reinforced with concrete.

Until relatively recently (1960's) the bridge carried the main A1068 road through the village. There is a definite 'hump' in the middle of the bridge and at first the right of way belonged to the first vehicle to the top of the bridge! There is a legend about a local man who was driving over the bridge and had driven more than half way over the top when he came face to face with a 'United Bus'. The bus driver rudely ordered him to reverse his car so that he could continue his journey. The local man refused, got out of his car, locked it and began to walk away saying 'I'm in no hurry – what about you?' The bus driver soon gave way and reversed!!

This system was replaced by traffic lights (unless they broke down when the original system came back into use) until the ever- increasing traffic became too much for the bridge to handle and the old bridge became for pedestrians only.



A new bridge was built to the east of the original one in 1965 to carry the A1068 towards Alnwick in the north and through the village towards Amble to the south.