

# TALES OF THE RIVERMAN 148

Proved right at Polmadie.



In Tales 23 I told stories of Polmadie Bridge. The rebuilding went on to prove exiting.

We had rain, rain, rain, and a terrible flood was coming downriver, the three weir gates were out of the water at high and low tide for a few days, there was a lot of water coming downriver. I had said that the pontoons around the bridge, stood no chance against this weight of water, and sure enough they were all swept away. Work was going on at the Albert Bridge downriver with scaffolding being just above water level. If the pontoons swept away from Polmadie piled up against the scaffolding, the whole lot could be swept away and there were workmen on it. I raced in my car, to the Saltmarket entrance to the Glasgow Green then ran onto the Albert Bridge. Shouting to the foreman on the deck what was happening, he instantly used some pre-arranged system, and all the men working below the deck, on the scaffolding, came up onto the deck. We watched as large sections of pontoon from Polmadie, came thundering through the weir and sailed off downriver, mostly through the north arch of the Albert Bridge which fortunately had not been scaffolded. What went through the other arches had lost its superstructure, and sailed under the scaffolding.

Two points to make here.

Due to the first bend above the weir being right angled, the major current, and so the debris (in this case, the pontoons), came round the outside of the bend and down the north bank.

The second point was that the firm renovating the Albert Bridge, had listened to advice and were only doing two arches at a time, leaving one arch without scaffolding.

Polmadie was a disaster. I would not like to guess how much money was involved in what was lost. I had told this international firm that the pontoons would not withstand our winter floods, but they knew better. I could write a fair story of the work carried out for the council, the firm and the river users at this time, but suffice to say, that it is now all "water

under the Bridge”. The river flows under a new bridge, on the old pillars, and everyone seems happy.

One firm listened and there were no problems, the other did not and the result was a great financial loss, and extra months of problems on the river. There was one piece of advice not listened to at the Albert Bridge, but that’s another story.



Much work organising safe usage of the river during demolition and build



The deck of the old bridge was removed and the second phase started



Large Plastic pontoons craned onto the river and moored. I thought and said, no chance if there are floods, which were prevalent at this time.





Rain and floods came, the river showed its power, pontoons broke away.



For a time arches of the Kings Bridge were blocked by broken pontoons.



Luckily superstructure came off as pontoons went below the weir gates.



And even luckier that the debris passed through the north arch of the Albert Bridge, and did not pile up on the scaffolding, centre and south.



Work recommenced, plans adapted, weather played ball and we have a new bridge. I had input into the safety railing which has proved excellent, both here, and at other bridges.

The time span of the build would have been less, equipment and new structures would not have been lost, if local advice had been listened to. At least no one was injured, or worse. Listen and learn.