

## CITY AND COUNTY OF SWANSEA

<b>LISTED BUILDING</b>	Viaduct at Morlais Junction East, Grovesend, Swansea
<b>Grade:-</b>	II
<b>Date of Notification:-</b>	03.02.98 amended 16.11.01
<b>National Grid Reference:-</b>	SN 5822002520
<b>O.S. 1:10,000 Sheet No.:-</b>	SN 50 SE
<b>CADW Reference No.:-</b>	25866
<b>C &amp; C of S Reference No.:-</b>	LB:333

### **Notes:-**

Cross Reference:- See record number 19452 Llanedi Community 02.03.1998

### **Location:-**

Spanning the River Loughor some tree quarter miles (1.27 kilometers) south of Hendy, on the Glamorgan – Carmarthenshire boarder.

### **History:-**

Built by the Great Western Railway as part of the Swansea District Line (also known as Swansea Avoiding Line) and opened on 14<sup>th</sup> July 1913. The rationale behind the line was partly to carry coal more easily from Amman Valley to Swansea Docks but more importantly to provide a fast link to London for passengers docking at Fishguard on the transatlantic route.

The Edwardian Period saw a rapid expansion in transatlantic passenger travel between New York and Europe. Traditionally the port of Liverpool (3017 nautical miles from New York) had dominated the North Atlantic route. But fierce competition between steamship companies led to its supremacy being challenged. The White Star Line was able to cut the journey time by opening a service on the shorter route between New York and Hollyhead (2943 miles) and this prompted Cunnard Company to go one better by opening the Fishguard transatlantic liners (2902 miles) cutting the distance still further.

The first Cunnard Liner to call at Fishguard was the Mauretania, then the largest and fastest liner afloat, which left New York at 10.00 am on 25<sup>th</sup> August 1909 and arrived at Fishguard at 1.15 p.m. on the 30<sup>th</sup>. The passengers were in London by 8 o'clock and the mail at 6.40 the same evening. Cunnard Liners continued to use Fishguard regularly until 1914 with six to eight services a month, with three or four special trains usually running to London of each boat.

The speed of the rail link was critical. The building of the viaduct at the Morlais Junction on the Swansea District Line allowed trains to avoid delays in Swansea by bypassing the city altogether, thus providing a faster and more reliable service. The economic importance of the line was, however, short-lived. With the outbreak of the war in 1914, Fishguard fell quickly into decline, to be eclipsed after 1918 by bigger ports such as Cherbourg and Southampton.

***Exterior:-***

Monumental viaduct some 200 metres long and rising over 20 metres above the surface of the River Loughor below. Built in red engineering brick (English Bond). Eleven semi circular arches, each spanning some 30 metres. The five central arches have projecting breakwaters to piers. Piers have slight batter to impost level and projecting banded course (five bricks high) below springing. Arches themselves are seven bricks deep with an upper moulded brick course (roll shaped). Wall is corbelled out in four courses below parapet. Parapet has flat stone coping and embrasures, with iron safety rails, every second arch.

***Listed:-***

Historically important monument of rail engineering which forms a very prominent landmark in the Lower Loughor Valley.

***Reference:-***

E. T. MacDermot History of the Great Western Railway London, 1931, pages 447 – 452.