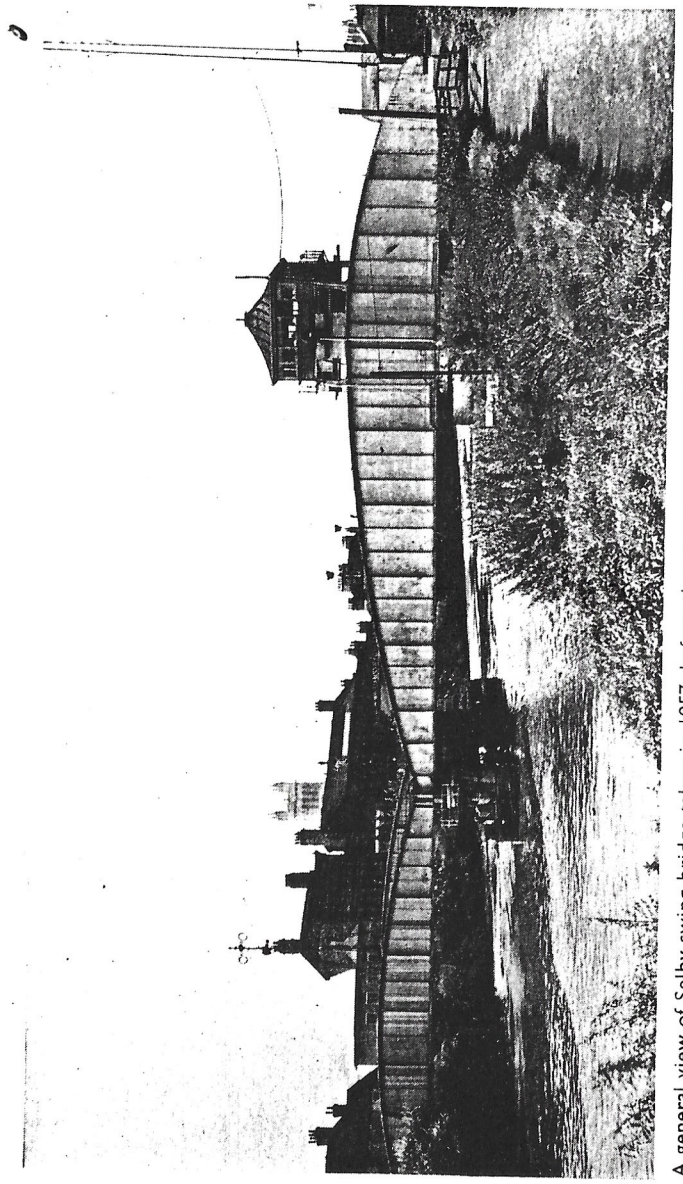

A general view of Selby swing bridge taken in 1957, before the structure was modernised. The opening span is the one nearest the camera, with the control cabin mounted above the girders, clear of the running lines. [*British Railways*

Selby Swing Bridge, 1891

Selby, Yorkshire
Map ref.: 97—618324

The Hull & Selby Railway originally crossed the Ouse at Selby by a cast iron bascule bridge of two spans, which was opened to traffic on February 13, 1840. It had a total length of 191 ft. 6 ins. One of the spans was fixed and the other was formed by the two equal bascule leaves; when these were lowered for rail traffic, both spans looked identical.(1)

In 1888, however, a contract was let by the North Eastern Railway Company for a new bridge to be built alongside the old one, which had by then become obsolete. This is the bridge which is there today, and it has a swing opening span instead of the old bascule arrangement. It is built on cast iron cylindrical piers, sunk through the mud to firm ground; the moveable part of the bridge is carried on a cluster of nine cylinders, made up of a central one, 7 ft. in diameter, surrounded by a ring of eight cylinders 6 ft. in diameter. There is a fixed span of 110 ft. and an opening portion of 130 ft. overall length. This is pivotted off-centre to give a clear opening to the river of 60 ft. These river spans are both made with wrought iron plate girders having curved upper flanges. The bridge is opened and closed hydraulically, and is controlled from the cabin set above the rails on the opening span. The bridge movements are interlocked electrically with the adjoining signal boxes.(2)

By a clause in the original company's Act, river traffic takes precedence over rail, and this is still in force. The cabin is therefore manned constantly, and in hot weather the opening span is kept cool with water to prevent the possibility of its seizing.

Recent engineering work has been done which has involved raising the cabin to allow clearance for overhead electrification, and to enable the tracks to be raised somewhat. By this means it has been possible to increase the thickness of the timber bed between the tracks and the cross girders, and improve the resilience of the road.

(1) W. W. Tomlinson, *The North Eastern Railway*, 1915.
(2) Proceedings Inst.C.E., Vol. 127, pp. 207 et seq.

Leading Particulars: Selby Swing Bridge

Date of opening:	February 1891
Designer:	A. Copperthwaite
Contractors:	
General:	Nelson & Co. (York)
Ironwork:	Cleveland Bridge & Engineering Co.
Original owners:	North Eastern Rly.
Structural type:	Beam
Materials:	Wrought iron, cast iron
No. of spans:	2
Span dimensions:	110 ft. fixed span, 130 ft. opening span
Total length:	240 ft.
No. of tracks:	2