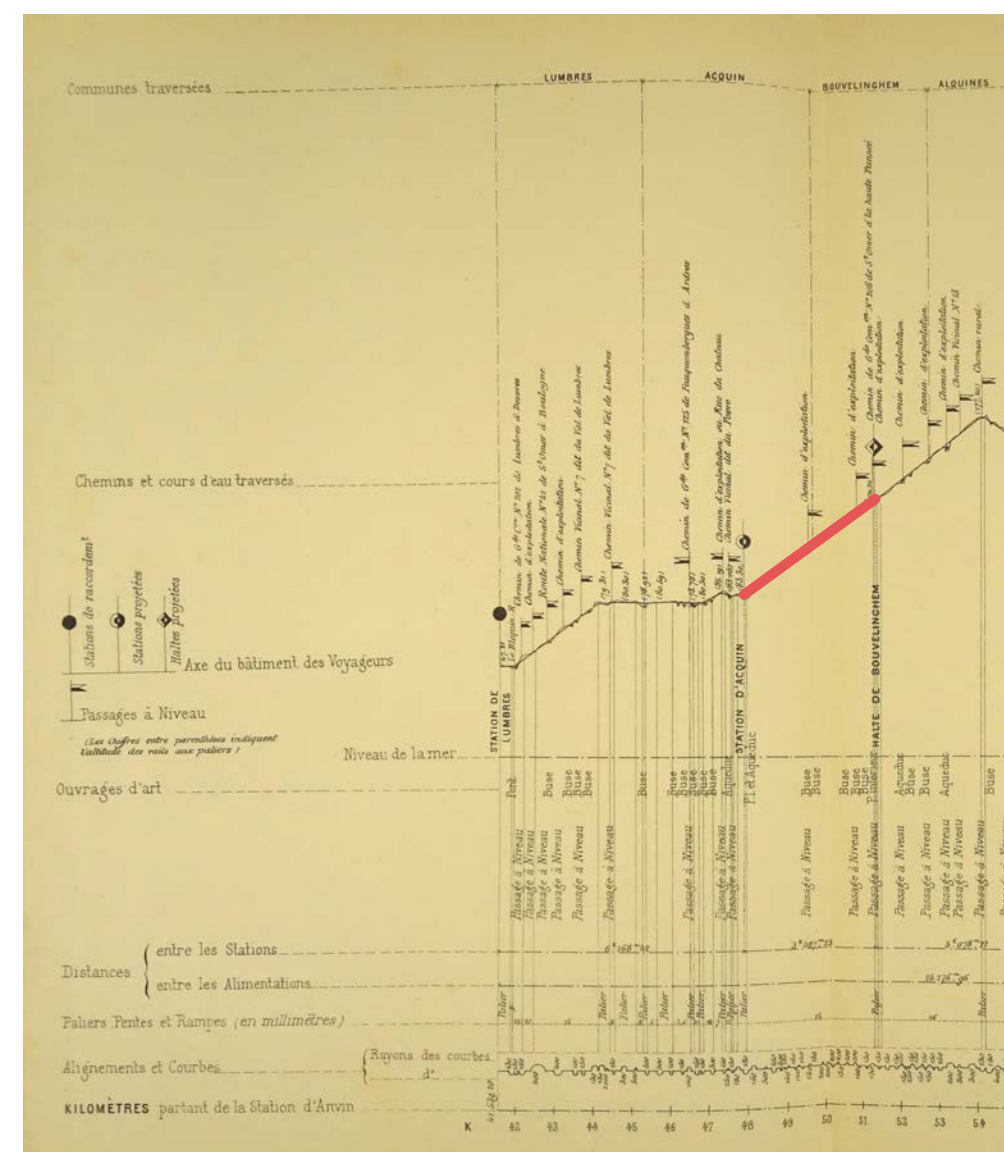


# 10

# The railway bridge

## Overcoming natural obstacles

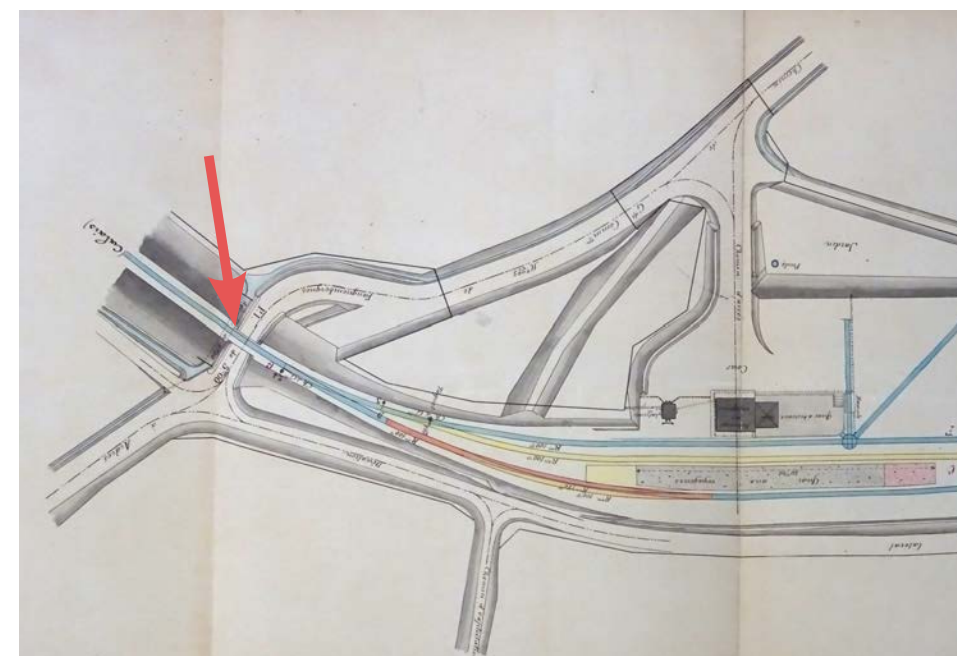
This stone and brick-built structure is a vestige of the railway that used to run through Acquin. It was part of a **bridge built over the Westbécourt-Bouvelinghem road** and the river that meanders through the valley. This was because **the little train that used to run on that line wasn't powerful enough** to tackle the uphill stretches to the next stops. This is what remains of the right-hand side of the wall. The bridge wasn't perfectly perpendicular to the road, but at a slight angle.



Elevation of the Lumbres-Balinghem section of the railway line, showing (in red) the gradient from Acquin to Bouvelinghem (AD62, 3 966).

## Facilitating access to local infrastructures

When a cement factory was going to be built near Lumbres railway station, it was necessary to **make the area more accessible**. The work carried out previously at Verchin to reduce train delays served as a model. In a letter to the prefet dated 2 April 1889, Emile Level, director of the railway company, explained that these modifications would reduce the manoeuvres the trains had to make in this section, and thus **save time**.



Plan of the proposed modification to the track at Acquin station in 1889: the arrow shows the location of the bridge (ANMT, 2000 024 3761).



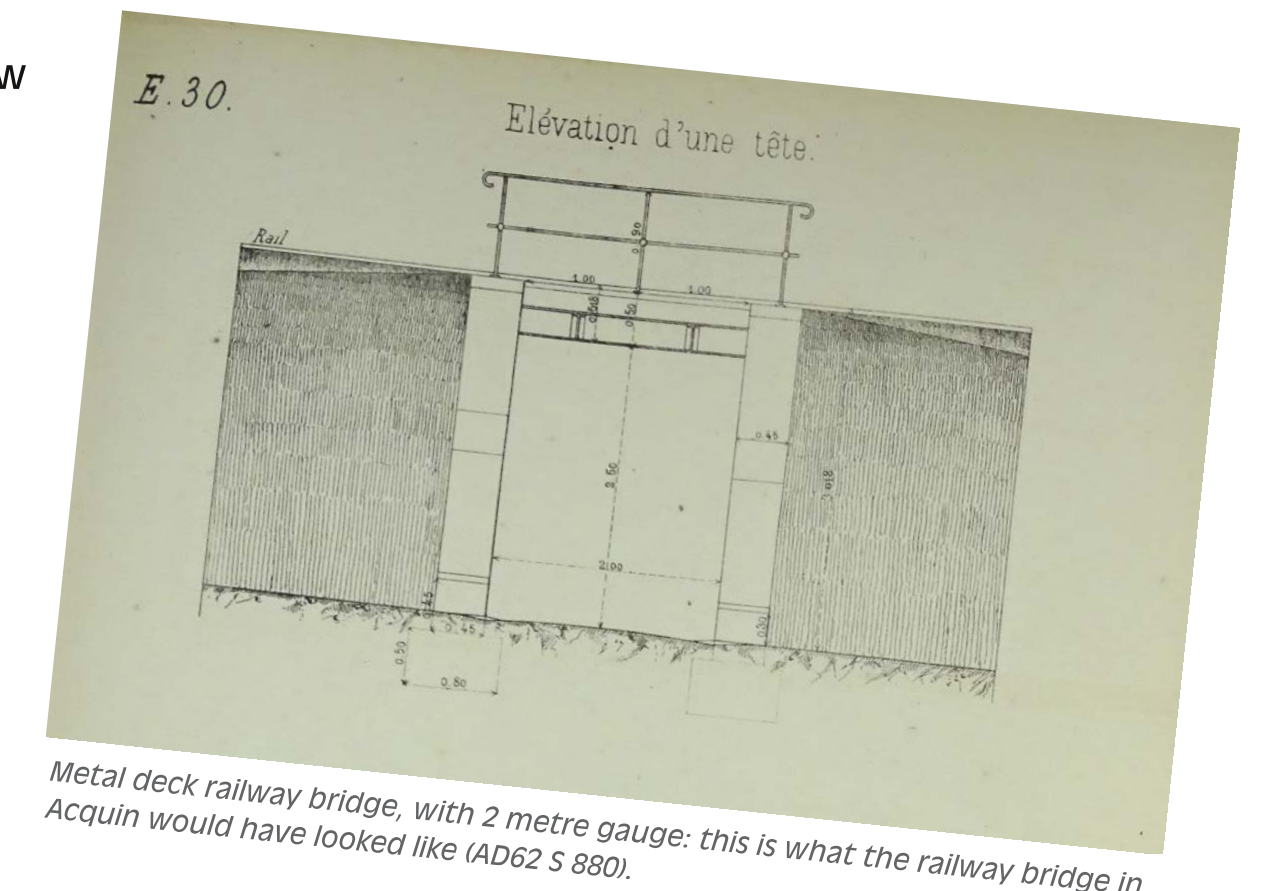
Recent aerial view: The dotted line shows the former location of the bridge, and the station is circled (Géoportail, 2021).



Paulette Héricourt walking on the metal deck of the bridge in 1957 (coll. Paulette Héricourt).

## A very narrow bridge!

Not only **was the bridge very low, but it was very narrow**, just like the road that ran below it. Mr Dubois, who settled in Acquin, recalls that it was only wide enough for one car at a time. As farm tractors became wider and more sophisticated (with a cab), the bridge **became an obstacle to agricultural development**. After the railway line was closed in 1955, and new, more practical means of transport appeared, the bridge **was demolished in the early 1960s**. In its place, a road to the school was built. You can see the slight difference in level of this street resulting from these changes. The railway bridge in Bouvelinghem, which is much higher than the one in Acquin, was kept.



Metal deck railway bridge, with 2 metre gauge: this is what the railway bridge in Acquin would have looked like (AD62 S 880).

Impr. Desvres impression. 03 21 83 35 67. Textes et conception : Mathilde Duval et Sophie Léger, CHHP 2022.