

Tower Bridge – the Icon of London

One of London's Sights

Numerous sights of London attract thousands of tourists every year. Among them are the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, Trafalgar Square, Buckingham Palace, the Tower of London and, of course, the Tower Bridge.





A Special Bridge or Subway Committee was formed in 1876. Its aim was to find a solution to the river crossing problem.
There were over 50 designs.

- A subway
- A paddle wheel ferry
- A bridge

It was decided to make a bridge

The Need for the Bridge

In the second half of the 19th century the East End of London developed quickly. The city needed a new river crossing downstream of London Bridge. A traditional fixed bridge could not be built. It would not allow the ships come to the port facilities in the Pool of London.



The Design of the Bridge

The city architect Horace Jones together with John Wolfe-Barry produced the design for the Tower Bridge. It was a mixture of a bascule and suspension bridge. Construction work started in 1886 and took eight years.



Sir Horace Jones

The Structure of the Bridge

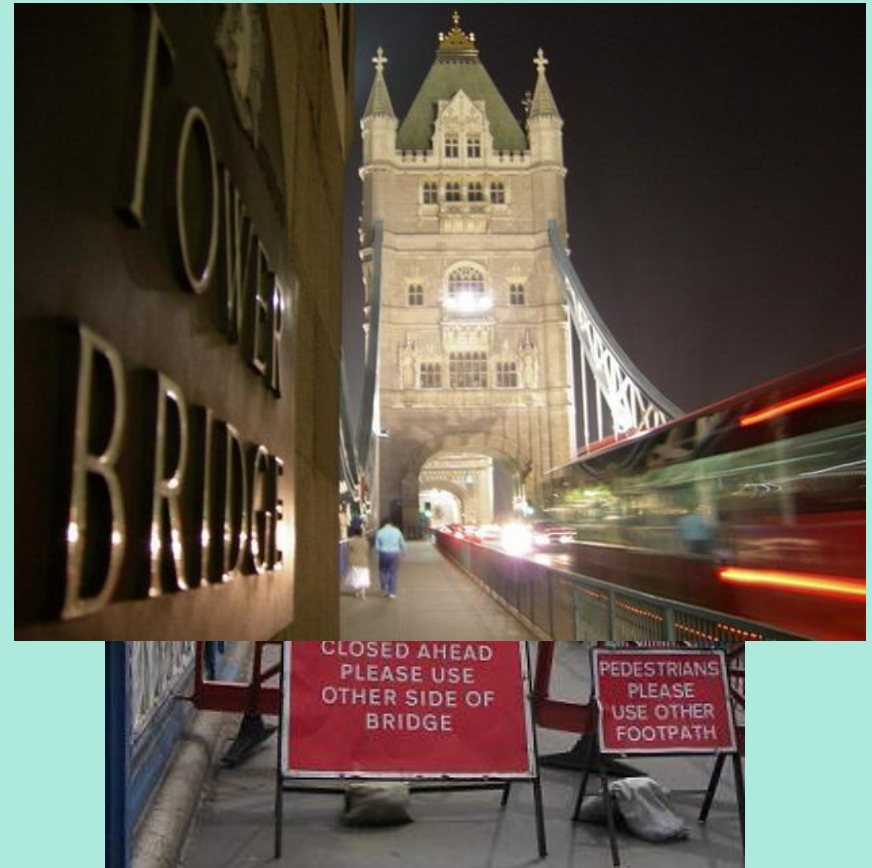
Tower Bridge is not a stone bridge. It is a steel bridge and it depends on the strength of its steel columns. The steelwork was faced with masonry. The masonry is Cornish granite and Portland stone, backed with brickwork. The bridge matches the general style of the Tower of London.



The New Bridge

The public reaction to the bridge was very unusual. Many people understood the great benefit of the bridge but some did not like its forms.

Now river traffic is not so busy. But the bridge is still very important for the road traffic of London. Pedestrians also use the bridge.



The Role of the Bridge

The Tower Bridge connects Borough to the City of London. There are several well-known London sights nearby. One of them is the world-famous Tower of London. The City Hall is on the south bank of the Thames. To the west of the bridge you can see a large battleship on the Thames. It is HMS Belfast.



A Unique Bridge

- The bridge is sometimes named a Mixture of the Middle Ages and the Iron Age
- It was chosen as one of the four Britain's architectural Best Buildings in 1930
- It was also called one of the Wonders of World Engineering



The Well-Known Symbol of London

Taking photographs of the Tower Bridge is a favorite London tourist activity, but you can also visit the upper walkways of the bridge. From there you will have a magnificent view over London.



The Tower Bridge Experience

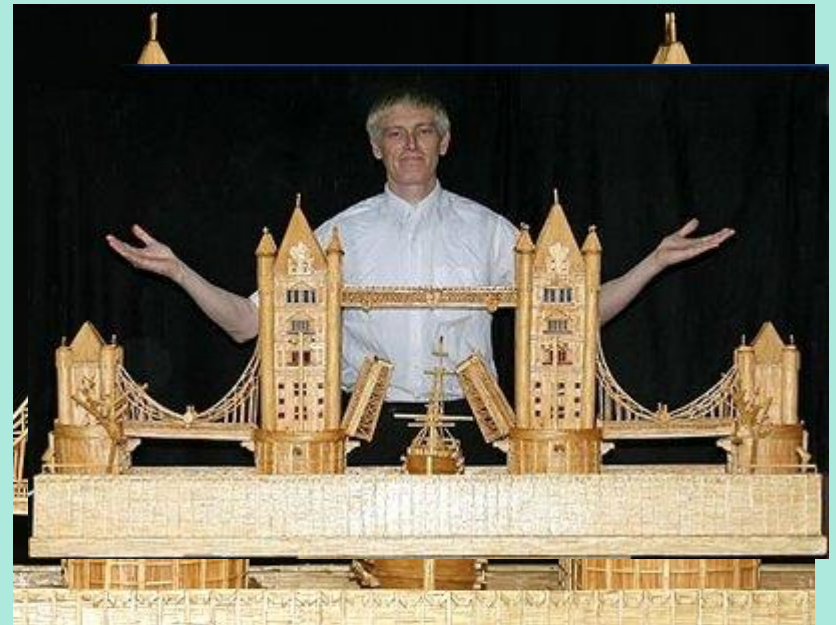
Inside the bridge is the Tower Bridge Exhibition, a display area that combines the walkway and the two famous towers. There visitors can see the Victorian engine room. They can learn about the history of the bridge thanks to photos, films, and other media.



One of the Most Featured Sights

Tower Bridge can be seen on postcards, in English course books, in feature films and videos. There are also Tower Bridge puzzles and 3-D models.

Last year an Englishman made a model of the bridge from 1.6mln matches.



Interesting Facts about the Tower Bridge

- 1952 - a London bus leapt between the opening bascules to avoid falling into the river because the bridge opened with the bus still on it.
- 1977 - for the Queen's Silver Jubilee Tower Bridge was painted red, white and blue
- 2009 – an Australian made a back flip on his motorcycle across the opened bridge.



Conclusion

The Tower Bridge is

- the most famous example of the bascule bridge. It has worked from the day it was first opened to the present perfectly
- a very unusual mixture of the Middle Ages and the Age of Steel. It has been very important for the development of the city
- one of London's great landmarks. It is the only bridge in the world which has its own museum. It attracts many thousands of visitors from the whole world every year



