

Press release

22 February 2002

Millennium Bridge Reopens

The Millennium Bridge reopened to the public on Friday 22 February 2002 at 10 am.

The bridge was designed as the result of a collaboration between the architects, Foster and Partners, the British sculptor, Sir Anthony Caro and the consulting engineers, Arup.

The bridge originally opened on 10 June 2000 but was closed three days later as the result of the excessive movement of the structure in certain conditions. Over 160,000 people crossed the bridge during its opening weekend.

In September 2000, following an intensive research programme, including three university studies and extensive consultation with experts around the world, the engineers Arup submitted a report recommending a solution to the problem of excessive movement.

In February 2001, the Millennium Bridge Trust announced that it had raised the 5 million needed to carry out the recommended modifications to the bridge and the remedial work started in May 2001.

The modifications involved the installation of a series of dampers designed to reduce the movement of the bridge to acceptable levels. A combination of 37 viscous dampers, similar to car shock absorbers, made in America by Taylor Devices, and 54 tuned mass dampers, made in Germany by Gerb, were installed. The majority of the dampers are located underneath the bridge deck and none compromise the overall design.

The work was completed in January 2002 and a series of tests were carried out to ensure that the movement had been reduced. The test results were analysed by Arup and independent experts.

The total cost of constructing the bridge was 18.2 million, including funding from the Millennium Commission of 7.1 million, The Corporation of London's Bridge House Estates Trust of 4.2 million, HSBC Holdings plc of 3 million, and the Cross River Partnership of 2.175 million, as well as contributions from private individuals and trusts.

The bridge is the capital's first dedicated pedestrian bridge and the first new river crossing in central London for more than 100 years, since the opening of Tower Bridge in 1894. It links St Paul's Cathedral and the City of London on the north bank with Tate Modern and the reconstruction of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre on the south.

Lord Foster:

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I am delighted that the Millennium Bridge has reopened. We have worked with Arups engineers over the last twenty months to develop a solution to the wobble that does not compromise but rather enhances the original concept.

Now that this has been achieved the bridge will form a vital part of Londons pedestrian infrastructure. Every year millions of people will use it to cross the river or simply to enjoy a totally new perspective of London and the Thames. It is a place to promenade - a new public connection - away from the tyranny of the citys traffic.

The bridge links the City and Southwark north and south commerce and culture. It will have a social and economic impact on both sides of the river, creating new routes into Southwark - thus contributing to its regeneration - and encouraging new life on the embankment alongside St Pauls. This first solely pedestrian bridge across the Thames in London is truly a bridge for everyone.

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