

Local Landmarks

The bridges of Richmond

We seldom give the bridges in Richmond a second thought, but the number of bridges across the Thames marks us out from any other London Borough.

Richmond is the only London Borough to be divided by the Thames. In all, we have fourteen bridges running out of, or across the Borough, made up of seven road bridges, four railway bridges and three foot bridges.

Until 1759, when the first Kew Bridge was built, the only bridge within

or adjoining the present Borough was Kingston Bridge, built in mediaeval times. (It was rebuilt in 1828.) Surprisingly, there were no



bridges across the Thames between London Bridge and Kingston Bridge until Putney Bridge was built in 1729. To cross the Thames one had to rely on ferries.

The first Kew Bridge was made of wood but did not last long and a stone bridge was opened in 1789, designed by James Paine. The bridge has been immortalised by Turner in a painting in Tate Britain.

It was replaced in 1903 and the present bridge was built by James



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Barry, son of Sir Charles Barry, who designed the Houses of Parliament. The oldest bridge in the Borough, and probably the most famous, is Richmond Bridge, which was also designed by James Paine. It was completed in 1777. The cost was met by a “tontine” which is a loan where the last surviving subscriber takes all. Richmond Bridge was widened in 1937, but its original design was retained.

The first Hammersmith Bridge connecting Barnes with Hammersmith was designed by William Tierney Clarke and built in 1827. He built an identical bridge over the Danube to connect the towns of Buda and Pest (now the city of Budapest). When it needed updating, Sir Joseph Bazalgette (better known for building London’s drains) rebuilt Hammersmith Bridge in 1880s, but retained the original piers.

Richmond Railway Bridge, built in 1848 to bring the railway to Windsor, was one of the first railway bridges over the Thames. The three foot bridges are at Teddington, Richmond and Barnes. Richmond Foot Bridge was opened by the Duke of York, the future George V, in 1894. At Barnes, the first railway bridge became a foot bridge when a new railway bridge was built.