

## = Chiswick Bridge =

Chiswick Bridge is a reinforced concrete deck arch bridge over the River Thames in west London . One of three bridges opened in 1933 as part of an ambitious scheme to relieve traffic congestion west of London , it carries the A316 road between Chiswick on the north bank of the Thames and Mortlake on the south bank .

Built on the site of a former ferry , the bridge is 606 feet ( 185 m ) long and faced with 3 @, @ 400 tons of Portland stone . At the time of its opening its 150 @-@ foot ( 46 m ) central span was the longest concrete span over the Thames . The bridge is possibly best known today for its proximity to the end of The Championship Course , the stretch of the Thames used for the Boat Race and other rowing races .

## = = Background = =

The villages of Chiswick and Mortlake , about 6 miles ( 9 @.@ 7 km ) west of central London on the north and south banks of the River Thames , had been linked by a ferry since at least the 17th century . Both areas were sparsely populated , so there was little demand for a fixed river crossing at that point .

With the arrival of railways and the London Underground in the 19th century commuting to London became practical and affordable , and the populations of Chiswick and Mortlake grew rapidly . In 1909 the Great Chertsey Road scheme was proposed , which envisaged building a major new road from Hammersmith , then on the outskirts of London , to Chertsey , 18 miles ( 29 km ) west of central London , bypassing the towns of Kingston and Richmond . However , the scheme was abandoned due to costs and arguments between various interested parties over the exact route the road should take .

After the First World War , the population of the west London suburbs continued to grow , thanks to improved rail transport links and the growth in ownership of automobiles . In 1925 , the Ministry of Transport convened a conference between Surrey and Middlesex county councils with the aim of reaching a solution to the congestion problem , and the Great Chertsey Road scheme was revived . In 1927 , the Royal Commission on Cross @-@ River Traffic approved the scheme to relieve the by then chronic traffic congestion on the existing , mostly narrow , streets in the area , and on the narrow bridges at Richmond Bridge , Kew and Hammersmith . The Ministry of Transport agreed to pay heavy subsidies towards the cost .

A new arterial road , now the A316 road , was given Royal Assent on 3 August 1928 , and construction began in 1930 . The construction of the road required two new bridges to be built , at Twickenham and Chiswick . The proposal was authorised in 1928 and construction began in the same year . The bridge , along with the newly built Twickenham Bridge and the rebuilt Hampton Court Bridge , was opened by Edward , Prince of Wales on 3 July 1933 , and the ferry service was permanently closed .

## = = Design = =

The new bridge was designed in reinforced concrete by architect Sir Herbert Baker and engineer Alfred Dryland , with additional input from Considère Constructions , at the time Britain 's leading specialist in reinforced concrete construction .

The bridge has concrete foundations supporting a five @-@ arch cellular reinforced concrete superstructure . The deck is supported by a concealed lattice of columns and beams rising from the arched superstructure . The structure is faced with 3 @, @ 400 tons of Portland stone , except for underneath the arches . The bridge is 606 feet ( 185 m ) long , and carries two 15 @-@ foot ( 4 @.@ 6 m ) wide walkways , and a 40 @-@ foot ( 12 m ) wide road . At the time it was built , the 150 @-@ foot ( 46 m ) central span was the longest concrete span over the Thames .

Unusually for a Thames bridge , only three of Chiswick Bridge 's five spans cross the river ; the shorter spans at each end of the bridge cross the former towpaths . To allow sufficient clearance for

shipping without steep inclines , the approach roads to the bridge are elevated from some distance back from the river .

The bridge was built by the Cleveland Bridge & Engineering Company at a cost of £ 208 @, @ 284 ( about £ 13 @, @ 335 @, @ 000 in 2016 ) . Additional costs such as building the approach roads and purchasing land brought the total cost of the bridge to £ 227 @, @ 600 ( about £ 14 @, @ 572 @, @ 000 in 2016 ) . The Ministry of Transport paid 75 % of the cost , with Surrey and Middlesex county councils paying the remainder .

The bridge was generally well received . Country Life praised the design as " reflecting in its general design the eighteenth century Palladian tradition of Lord Burlington 's famous villa at Chiswick " .

= = Present @-@ day = =

Chiswick Bridge is a major transport route , and the eighth busiest of London 's 20 Thames road bridges . It is possibly best known for its proximity to the finishing line of The Championship Course , the stretch of the Thames used for the Boat Race and other rowing events . A University Boat Race Stone on the south bank , and a brightly painted blue and black marker post near the north bank of the river , 370 feet ( 110 m ) downstream of the bridge , mark the end of the course .

The towpath under the bridge on the southern bank now forms part of the Thames Path . As at 2009 the northernmost arch was used by the Tideway Scullers sculling club as storage space .