

Rhetoric & Reality

Divided



Jan Levy BA (Hons) Fine Art

Rhetoric and Reality – “Divided”

Background

The intention of this piece is to illustrate 21 bridges that cross the River Thames giving views of London from South to North and North to South of the Thames. One of the aims is to draw attention to the unspoken social and perhaps political divide between the North and South of London. However, it is interesting to note that in depicting the divide, the joining together is revealed simultaneously.

All of the bridges are placed in a near perfect order (one bridge is deliberately out of place) and it is fascinating to note that a lot of the bridges are extremely close to each other; sometimes only 90 metres between them. Most of the bridges are road bridges, but there are two important footbridges “Golden Jubilee” and “The Millennium Bridge”. It also should be mentioned that Kew Bridge is not present as I wanted to start and end on a Royal Bridge.

The viewpoints are varied in order to give interest; however landmark buildings are apparent in many images to draw attention to the location; be it the north bank or south bank. The colour range is unrealistic. The reason for this is twofold; the viewer strives to recognise the bridges, and to give a visually aesthetic image.

Construction of the imagery is “floated” onto a board which is relevant for the concept. Each bridge is set out in order and works on its own, in terms of colour and composition; and as a whole in order to relay a stimulating image.

Tower Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”

Completed in 1894 Tower Bridge, a Grade 1 listed structure, is a combined bascule and suspension steel bridge. It consists of two towers which are tied together at the upper level by means of two horizontal walkways which are designed to withstand the horizontal forces exerted by the suspended sections of the bridge on the landward sides of the towers. The vertical components of the forces in the suspended sections and the vertical reactions of the two walkways are carried by two robust towers.

It is close to the Tower of London and on the north side is the London borough of Tower Hamlets and on the south bank Southwark. It carries traffic on the A100 on Tower Bridge Road along with pedestrians.



Tower Bridge is sometimes mistakenly referred to as London Bridge, which is the next bridge upstream. There is a popular legend that in 1968 Robert McCulloch, the purchaser of the old London Bridge which was shipped to Lake Havasu City, Arizona, believed that he was buying Tower Bridge. This was denied by McCulloch himself. On the north side Tower the London Borough of Hamlets and on the south side the London Borough of Southwark. This bridge has become an iconic symbol of London.

London Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”



The old London Bridge was sold to the Missourian entrepreneur Robert P. McCulloch of McCulloch Oil for US\$2,460,000. The bridge was reconstructed at Lake Havasu City, Arizona. The new London Bridge was opened in 1973. This bridge is constructed from prestressed concrete box girder and connects Southwark with the City of London.

London Bridge was built to be functional and long lived and therefore less decorated than other Thames bridges.

Southwark Bridge “south to north and “north to south”

Southwark Bridge opened in 1921 is an arch bridge for linking Southwark and the City of London. The south end of the bridge is near the Tate Modern, the Clink Prison Museum, Globe Theatre and Financial Times building. The north end is near Cannon Street Station.

The bridge provides access to Upper Thames Street on the north bank. This bridge was noted for having the longest cast iron span 240 feet (73m). Due to this, it has no further access to the City of London and has a reputation for being the least used bridge in London. It is sometimes known as the “car park bridge” as coach drivers used it to park their vehicles.



Blackfriars Bridge “south to north and “north to south”



Blackfriars Bridge opened in 1869 and is a Grade II listed structure. It consists of five wrought iron arches built to a design by Thomas Cubitt. Cubitt also designed the adjacent rail bridge (now demolished) and it was a condition that the spans of the two bridges be aligned. Blackfriars Bridge is a road and foot traffic bridge over the River Thames between Waterloo Bridge and Blackfriars Railway Bridge carrying the A201 road. The north end is near the Inns of Court and Temple Church and the south end is near the Tate Modern art gallery and the Oxo Tower.

Millennium Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”

The Millennium Footbridge opened in June 2000 is a steel suspension footbridge linking the Bankside with the City. It was nicknamed “the Wobbly Bridge” as participants felt an unexpected swaying motion on the first few days of opening. It was closed for almost two years while modifications were made and reopened in 2002. The southern end is near the Globe theatre and the Bankside Gallery and the Tate Modern and on the north side next to the City of London School and St Paul's Cathedral.



Waterloo Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”



Waterloo Bridge opened in 1945 and is a Grade II listed structure. The foundation stone is cut out of a stone from the old bridge and Waterloo Bridge is the first to be made with reinforced concrete beams. Being 80 ft wide and 1,250 ft long, Waterloo Bridge is the longest bridge in London. The bridge is a road and foot traffic bridge crossing the River Thames.

between Blackfriars Bridge and Hungerford Bridge. The bridge is named in memory of the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. Its location at the bend of the river, gives view of Westminster, the South Bank, and the London Eye to the west, the City of London and Canary Wharf to the east. The south end of the bridge includes the Royal Festival Hall, Waterloo Station. The north end passes above the Victoria Embankment where the road joins the Strand and Aldwych.

Golden Jubilee Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”

The Golden Jubilee Footbridge crosses the River Thames and lies between Waterloo Bridge and Westminster Bridge – flanked by two more recent, cable-stayed pedestrian bridges that share the railway bridge’s foundation piers, which are properly named the Golden Jubilee Bridges.



The north end of the bridge is Charing Cross railway station, and is near Embankment Pier and the Victoria Embankment. The south end is near Waterloo Station, County Hall and the Royal Festival Hall and the London Eye.

The new two bridges named the Golden Jubilee Bridges were made in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II’s accession, although in practise they are still referred to as the “Hungerford Footbridges. The footbridge gained a reputation for being narrow, dilapidated and dangerous. In 1999 it was the scene of a murder. A new structure was designed and completed in 2002. The structure was complicated as the need for keeping the railway lines open during construction and the problem of the Bakerloo Line tunnels passing only a few feet under the river bed as well as the potential danger of unexploded World War II bombs under the Thames mud.

This was a challenge for engineers and therefore the design of the bridges is complex. Each of the two decks is supported by inclined outward-leaning pylons. The decks are suspended from fans of slender steel rods called deck stays—there are 180 on each deck, made up of over 4 km (2.5 mi) of cable—and are held in position by other rods called back stays. Because the pylons lean, the back stays are under tension. The deck is secured in place by steel collars fitted around (although not supported by) the pillars of the railway bridge; the collars are themselves attached to the bridge’s foundations by tie-down rods. The entire structure is thus held in place by exploiting the tensions between the pylons and the various stays and struts. The bridge was a specialist category in the Royal Fine Art commission building of the Year Award in 2003 and also gained a structural achievement award commendation in 2004 and has won awards with the Civic Trust for its lighting.

Westminster Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”



The Westminster Bridge (a Grade II listed structure) opened in 1862 and is a road and footbridge over the River Thames between Westminster, Middlesex bank and Lambeth. Westminster Bridge has seven-arch wrought iron which is 827ft long and 84ft wide. It is painted predominantly green for the Commons benches of the House of Parliament. In 2005 it underwent a refurbishment which was completed in 2007. It links the Palace of Westminster on the west side of the river with County Hall and the London Eye on the east. It has been the scene for paintings by J M W Turner, poetry by William Wordsworth who wrote the sonnet “Composed upon

Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802 and more recently in popular culture in 2002 science fiction film 28 Days Later, as well as in British Science Fiction series Doctor Who, and plays a prominent role in the Monty Python’s Flying Circus sketch “Nationwide”. It has needed very little repair since it open almost 150 years ago.

Lambeth Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”

Lambeth bridge opened 19th July 1932; and is a road traffic and footbridge cross the River Thames in an east-west direction in central London; the river flows north at the crossing point. Downstream the next bridge is Westminster Bridge’ upstream the next is Vauxhall Bridge. Lambeth Bridge is painted red for the benches of the Lord’s. The current structure is a five-span steel arch.



On the east side in Lambeth are Lambeth Palace, the Albert Embankment, and St Thomas’s Hospital. On the west side, in Westminster, are Thames House, (the headquarters of M15) behind which is Horseferry House, Clelland House and Abel House *the headquarters of HM Prison Service) and Millbank Tower and Tate Britain. The Palace of Westminster is a short walk downstream to the north through the Victoria Tower Garden.

Vauxhall Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”



Vauxhall Bridge (Grade II listed) opened on 16th May 1906 and is constructed from steel and granite. It crosses the River Thames in a south-east north-west direction between Vauxhall on the south bank and Westminster on the north bank and links Pimlico to Vauxhall on the South Bank. It replaced an earlier bridge known as Regent Bridge but later renamed Vauxhall Bridge.

In 1963 it was proposed to replace the bridge with a modern development but the plans were abandoned because of costs. With the exception of alterations to the road layout and the balustrade, the design and appearance of the current bridge has remained almost unchanged since 1907. It is an important part of London’s road system and carried the A202 road across the Thames.

Chelsea Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”

Chelsea Bridge (Grade II listed structure) opened 6th May 1937 and carried the A3216. It was preceded by the Victoria Bridge 1857-1935 also known as Old Chelsea Bridge.

It is the second Chelsea Bridge as the old one was structurally unsound. The new bridge was the first self-anchored suspension bridge in Britain, and was built entirely with materials sourced from within the British Empire.

It connects Chelsea on the north bank to Battersea on the south bank. There have been two Chelsea Bridges, on the site of what was an ancient ford. The new bridge was the first self-anchored suspension bridge in Britain and was built entirely with materials sourced from within the British Empire. During the early 1950’s it became popular with motorcyclists, who staged regular races across the bridge. One such meeting in 1970 erupted into violence, resulting in the death of one man and the imprisonment of 20 others. In 2004 a smaller bridge perpendicular to the main bridge



Battersea footbridge was opened beneath the south span carrying the Thames Path underneath the main bridge.

Albert Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”



Albert Bridge opened on 23rd August 1873 and is a Grade II listed structure. It is a cable-stayed bridge with recent strengthening work in 1973 of two concrete piers. As a result of these modifications the bridge today is an unusual hybrid of three different design styles. It is a road bridge over the River Thames in West London connecting Chelsea on the north bank to Battersea on the south bank. Originally built as a toll bridge, it was commercially unsuccessful; six years after its opening it was taken into public ownership and the tolls were lifted. The tollbooths remained in place however, and are the only surviving examples of bridge tollbooths in London. Nicknamed “The Trembling Lady” because of its tendency to vibrate when large numbers of people walked over it, signs at the entrances warn troops from the nearby Chelsea Barracks to break step while crossing the bridge. Albert Bridge is one of the two Thames road bridges in central London never to have been replaced. A series of increasingly strict traffic control measures have been introduced to limit its use and thus prolong its life making it the least busy Thames road bridge in London except for the little used Southwark Bridge. The bridge’s condition is continuing to degrade however, as the result of traffic load and severe rotting of the timber deck structure caused by the urine of the many dogs using it as a route to nearby Battersea Park.

There have been several collisions with ships, and therefore at night it is illuminated by 4,000 bulbs, in order to be visible to passing ships thereby making it one of West London’s most striking landmarks.

Battersea Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”

Battersea Bridge originally opened on 21st July 1890 and was the last surviving wooden bridge on the Thames in London. The original bridge has been the subject of paintings by many significant artists such as J M W Turner, John Sell Cotman and James McNeill Whistler.

It has been replaced and is now made of cast iron and granite, and has a five-span cantilever bridge. It is situated on a sharp bend in the river and links Battersea south of the river with Chelsea to the north. The bridge replaced a ferry service that had operated near the site since at least the middle of the 16th century. Battersea Bridge carries the A3220 road.



The location on the bend in the river makes the bridge a hazard to shipping, and it has been closed many times due to collisions.

Wandsworth Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”



The present Wandsworth Bridge is an unadorned steel cantilever bridge opened in 1940 and crosses the River Thames in West London. It carries the A217 between Battersea near Wandsworth Town Station in the London borough of Wandsworth on the south of the river, and the areas of Sands

End and Parsons Green in the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham on the north side.

The first bridge on this site was a toll bridge in the expectation that the western terminus of the Hammersmith and City Railway would shortly be built on the north bank, leading to an increase in the number of people wanting to cross the river at this point. The railway terminus was not built and problems with drainage on the approach road made access to the bridge difficult for vehicles. Wandsworth Bridge was commercially unsuccessful and was taken into public ownership in 1880 and made toll-free. In 1926 a Royal Commission recommended its replacement.

Wandsworth Bridge is painted in dull shades of blue as camouflage against air raids, a colour scheme it retains today. Although Wandsworth Bridge is one of the busiest bridges in London, carrying over 50,000 vehicles daily, it has been described as “probably the least noteworthy bridge in London”.

Putney Bridge “south to north” and “north to south”

Putney bridge (Grade II listed structure) opened 1729/1886 crosses the River Thames in west London linking Putney on the south side with Fulham to the north. The first bridge opened in November 1729 became the only bridge between London Bridge and Kingston Bridge at the time. It was a toll bridge featuring tollbooths at either end of the timber-built structure.



The bridge was badly damaged by the collision of a river barge in 1870, and although part of the bridge was subsequently replaced, soon the entire bridge would be demolished and in 1886 it was replaced by the stone bridge that stands today.

The Metropolitan Board of Works purchased the bridge in 1879, discontinued the tolls in 1880, and set about its replacement. The current bridge has a five-span structure, built of stone and Cornish granite. Putney Bridge is unique in that it is the only bridge in Britain to have a church at both ends, the ancient St Mary's church, Putney is located in Putney on the south bank; All Saints church, Fulham is on the north bank and featured in the film “The Omen”.

Putney Bridge is often very busy on Saturdays when Fulham F.C. is playing at home, and this is the main way for fans to cross the river.

In March 1953, British serial killer and necrophiliac, John Christie was finally arrested on Putney Bridge.

Hammersmith Bridge “north to south” and “south to north”



Hammersmith Bridge (Grade II listed structure) is a crossing of the River Thames in west London just south of the Hammersmith town centre area of the London borough of Hammersmith and Fulham on the side side of the river. It allows road traffic and pedestrians to cross to Barnes (in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames) on the south side of the river.

Hammersmith Bridge originally opened in 1887 and was the Thames' first suspension bridge. The bridge has a clear waterway of 688 feet 8 inches (209.91m). The current suspension bridge was designed by noted civil engineer Sir Joseph Bazalgette and rests on the same pier foundations constructed for Tierney Clark's structure. The new bridge opened by the Prince of Wales on 11 June 1887. Much of the supporting structure built of wrought iron; it is 700 feet (210m) long and 43 feet (13m) wide.

Hammersmith Bridge has long suffered structural problems and has been closed for lengthy periods on several occasions, due to the weight and volume of road traffic now common in inner London which the bridge was not originally designed to support.

The bridge was refurbished in 1973 with replacement steel trusses, improvements to the mid-span hangers and new deck expansion joints. New deck timbers were installed and surfacing was changed from wooden blocks to coated plywood panels. These panels were subsequently replaced in 1987.

In February 1997 the bridge underwent further essential repairs works. The bridge re-opened in July 1998 to all road users, subject to a 7.5 long-ton (7.6t) weight restriction and with a priority measure in place for buses.

At 4.30 am on 1st June 2000 the bridge was damaged by a Real IRA bomb planted underneath the Barnes span. The blast came four years after a previous attempted bombing by the Provisional IRA but following two years of closure for repairs the bridge was reopened with further weight restrictions in place.

Chiswick Bridge (“north to south” and “south to north”

Chiswick Bridge along with the newly built Twickenham Bridge opened on 3rd July 1933 by Edward, Prince of Wales and the ferry service was permanently closed.

The bridge is made of reinforced concrete, and Portland stone. It carried the A316 traffic 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 (185m) long and faced with 3,400 tons of Portland stone.



Due to a new arterial road, now the A316, construction of two new bridges needed to be built, at Twickenham and Chiswick. This proposal was authorised in 1928 and construction began the same year

Kew Bridge “north to south” and “south to north”



Kew Bridge constructed from granite was opened in 1903 crosses the River Thames between Kew Green in Kew on the south bank and Strand-on-the-Green in Chiswick on the north bank. It is immediately adjacent to the Royal Botanic Gardens on the Kew side of the river and the former Grand Junction Waterworks Company buildings (now Kew Bridge Steam Museum) on the north.

The bridge forms the connection between the South Circular and North Circular roads to the west of London and is nearly always very congested.

It carries the A205 traffic and is the third Kew Bridge. It is 1,182 feet (360m) long and the largest of its three arches has a span of 133 feet (41m). This third bridge was completed for an official opening on 20th May 1903 by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. After the departure of the royals a huge party took place on the lawns at Kew Gardens and 1,000 children were entertained to tea in a marquee on Kew Green, an event hosted by Cuthbert Brereton.

Twickenham “south to north” and “south to north”

Twickenham Bridge crosses the River Thames in southwest London, constructed from concrete was opened on 3rd July 1933 by Edward, Prince of Wales. The bridge connects the Old Deer Park district of Richmond (Surrey)

on the south bank of the river to St Margarets (Middlesex) on the north bank, both within the London borough of Richmond upon Thames. The bridge forms part of the A316 (Chertsey Road) which links Central and West London with the M3 motorways at Sunbury.

The final design of the bridge was of three reinforced-concrete arches supported on concrete piers with Art Deco embellishments. The bridge incorporates three permanent hinges enabling the structure to adjust to changes in temperature, the first reinforced concrete bridge structure in the UK to use such an innovation. The arch springings, as well as the arch crowns, have decorative bronze cover plates. The approach viaduct and retaining walls were constructed in precast blocks that were wire brushed to create a rough finish. The balustrades and lamps were constructed of open bronze work.



Richmond Bridge “north to south” and “south to north”



Richmond Bridge opened in 1777 and is a Grade 1 listed 18th century stone arch bridge. It crosses the River Thames at Richmond connecting the two halves of the present day London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. Because the river meanders from its general west to east direction, flowing from southeast to northwest in this part of London, what would otherwise be known as the north and south banks are often referred to as the “Middlesex” (Twickenham) and “Surrey” (Richmond) banks respectively, named after the historic counties to which each side once belonged.

The bridge was built between 1774 and 1777 to the designs of James Paine and Kenton Couse as a replacement for a ferry crossing which connected Richmond town centre on the east bank with its neighbouring district of East Twickenham (St Margarets) to the west. The bridge was widened and slightly flattened in 1937-40 but otherwise still conforms to its original design. The eighth Thames Bridge to be built in what is now Greater London, and it is today the oldest surviving Thames Bridge in London.

Hampton Court Bridge “north to south” and “south to north”

Hampton Court Bridge (Grade II listed structure) opened on 3rd July 1933 is of concrete with a brick finish construction. The bridge crosses the Thames between The Hamptons, Greater London and East Molesey, Surrey. On the north bank is Hampton Court Palace, Hampton Court Park and Bushy Park. On the south bank is Hampton Court railway station, Molesey Lock and the mouth of the River Mole.



The first bridge was built in 1752-1753 and had seven wooden arches in the Chinoiserie design of the Willow pattern. It was subsequently replaced by a more sturdy wooden bridge in 1778. In 1840 this bridge had become dilapidated and the owner appealed to the City of London Corporation to support reconstruction. In 1864-66 a new bridge was built, designed by E T Murray.

The modern bridge is the fourth to be located on the site. It was designed by W P Robinson and Sir Edwin Lutyens to reflect the style of portions of Hampton Court Palace. The bridge has 3 arches and is designed to carry road traffic. The bridge connects the A308 with the A307 (Portsmouth Road). The bridge is constructed of reinforced concrete and faced with red bricks.

The bridge was opened by Edward VIII, and then Prince of Wales on 3rd July 1933 as was Chiswick Bridge and Twickenham Bridge.