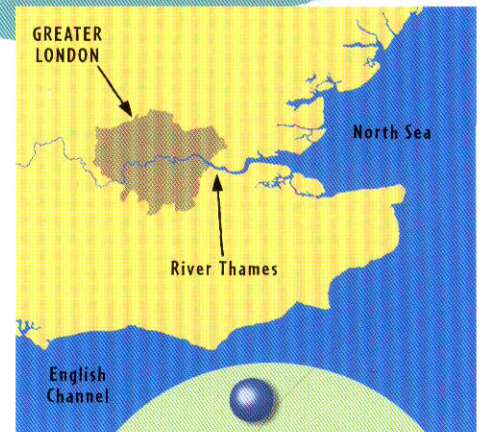


A River Crossing

Almost 2,000 years ago, the invading armies of Ancient Rome landed on the south-east coast of Britain and started to make their way north. They intended to conquer Ancient Britain and make it part of the Roman Empire. Before long, they came to a wide, deep river that stretched from the east coast far inland to the west. They couldn't wade across it and they couldn't go around it. They had to build a bridge.

They followed the river inland until they found a spot where the ground was firm on both sides and the river a little narrower. Here they stopped and built first a bridge and then a settlement.

They called the settlement *Londinium* – today, it is known as LONDON.



The River Thames is the longest river in England. It flows 338 kilometres from its source near Cirencester (in the Cotswold Hills to the west of England), all the way to the North Sea.



London Bridge

London Bridge has been near the same site since Roman times. The present bridge (below) was built in 1973. Until 1750, central London had only one bridge. Today, there are 18 road bridges, two foot bridges and nine railway bridges over the Thames between Tower Bridge and Richmond Bridge.

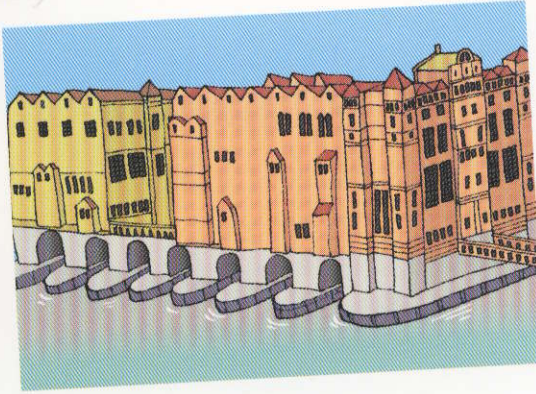
Building Bridges

- ★ For hundreds of years the only other bridge to cross the Thames anywhere near London was Kingston Bridge. The first Kingston Bridge was built of wood in 1219.
- ★ The second bridge to be built in central London was Westminster Bridge. Completed in 1750, it was rebuilt in 1862. It is painted the same colour green as the benches in the House of Commons.
- ★ Lambeth Bridge (first built in 1862), to the south of Westminster, is painted the same colour red as the benches in the House of Lords.
- ★ The prettiest bridge in London is Albert Bridge. Opened in 1873, it looks as if it is made of icing sugar.

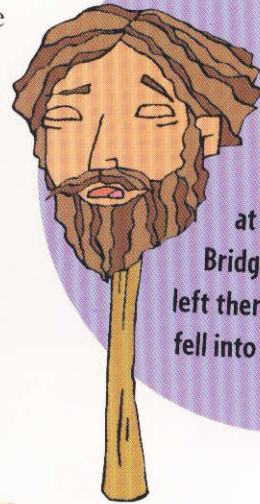
LONDON BRIDGE
BUSES: See page 59
TUBES: London Bridge
RAIL: London Bridge Station

A Heavy Load

The first London Bridge was built of wood – and then rebuilt time and time again. Finally, in the 1200s a stone bridge with 19 arches was constructed. Its designer, a priest, was buried in a chapel built over the middle of the bridge. By the 1350s there were nearly 200 houses and shops packed on top of the bridge, and the roadway across it was so narrow it was permanently jammed with carts, carriages, horses and pedestrians.



I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT!



In the Middle Ages, the heads of traitors were stuck on spikes above the gatehouses at either end of London Bridge. The heads were left there to rot until they fell into the river.

Tower Power

Tower Bridge (below) was built in 1894, when large ships still came upriver. To allow ships to pass under the bridge the roadway was divided in two and a footbridge built above it. Huge weights, hidden in the towers, swing the roadway up out of the way.

Visit the Tower Bridge Exhibition in the north tower.

TOWER BRIDGE

BUSES: See page 59

TUBES: Tower Hill

RAIL: Tower Gateway DLR

THERE ARE NEARLY 300 STEPS TO THE TOP OF THE TOWERS IN TOWER BRIDGE.

YOU MEAN THERE ISN'T AN ESCALATOR?

