



RUNNYMEDE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

CHERTSEY BRIDGE

Tumbling 'twixt Middlesex and Surrey land
We came where Chertseyes crooked bridge doth stand;
Which fore was made all by left-handed men
The like of it was never in my ken;

JOHN TAYLOR 1632

The present stone bridge, completed in 1785, is probably close to the point where a ferry conveyed travellers in the 14th century. It was in 1410 that King Henry IV granted the inhabitants of Chertsey a licence for the building of a bridge, however it was actually the Abbot of Chertsey who undertook to maintain it. This original timber bridge stood between 50 and 90 feet downstream of the present bridge, and was 210 feet in length with a road width of 15 feet.



During the 17th century frequent repairs were necessary due to the violence of the waters and frequent ramming by barges.

Mr Meverell of Chertsey complained to the Surrey Justices in 1661

"...the abuses and injuries that have been of late committed by diverse bargemen passing and towing their vessels through Chertsey bridge by reason of their neglect and carelessness in managing of their barges and vessels whereby the said bridge is oftentimes broken and battered"

Matters reached such a state that in 1662 the inhabitants of Chertsey petitioned for money to rebuild the bridge saying that

"Unless it be presently amended your Highness' said town is like to be utterly undone being a Market Town".

The repair programme continued through the 18th century until 1779 when the bridge was found to again be in a ruinous state despite the fact that repairs had been carried out only 12 years before. The Justices of Surrey and Middlesex met in the Swan Inn in Windsor Street and decided to obtain estimates for a new stone bridge. An architect, James Paine of Sayes Court, Addlestone, produced the plans and a tender of £7,325 was accepted from Charles Brown of Richmond, the builder of Richmond bridge. The keystone was laid on 26th June 1782.

When the original 5 arch design had been executed the bridge was found to be inaccessible from either bank, possibly due to an oversight by Paine, and a further £2,800 was needed to complete the structure by adding a further arch on either side. The bridge was opened in 1785

