



Footbridge over the River Thames in Henley-on-Thames

Goals:

- Learn about how the design process of a bridge takes place.
- Produce a preliminary design (a concept) for a footbridge over the Thames.
- Promote enrichment through the presentation and discussion of the preliminary ideas for the design of a footbridge.

Materials:

- Brought by the attendants: Rulers, laptop (advised but not compulsory).
- Provided by the organisation: A3 paper, pencils, eraser, and scanner.

Workshop development:

- Creation of groups: 10'
- Description of the task: 20'
- Proposals preparation: 90'
- Presentation, discussion and debate: 60'

Task:

The exercise would be the (very) preliminary design of a footbridge over the River Thames in Henley (a beautiful town of circa 12000 inhabitants in South East England, 7 miles (11 km) northeast of Reading). The town is mostly located on the right bank of the river and there is a single bridge (Grade I listed, built in 1786) spanning its waters. The river width varies between 70m and 90m in the area.

The place is famous for the Henley Royal Regatta, a rowing event established on 1839 and held annually (during 5 days over the first weekend in July) on the Thames by the town centre. The event attracts thousands of visitors, the existing bridge being a pinch point due to the high crossing demand. The regatta course is approximately 2.1km long and 25m wide, starting circa 300m north of the existing bridge.

Outcome:

Sketches (maybe defining some rules to make them easily comparable even with other workshops) directed to explain the ideas more than to sell a design. What matters is not the quality of the drawings but the development of ideas and the discussion.

Notes:

The exercise simulates the earlier steps of the design of a footbridge, focusing on choosing an appropriate location, a horizontal and vertical alignment, a span arrangement, and bridge basic appearance/type.

There will be a short presentation (and a slightly more detailed statement) outlining the main constraints to be considered when designing a footbridge such as:

- Historic, cultural, and social context.
- Crossing needs.
- Area where the bridge could be located (around 3.5km to include aspects of crossing problem definition/planning).
- Hydraulics (flood reference level).
- Navigational requirements, both day to day and during the exceptional regatta events.