



Great Western Railway and Brunel in Maidenhead (KS 1 and 2)

The Sounding Arch

In 1838 Isambard Kingdom Brunel built a record breaking bridge across the Thames at Maidenhead and brought the Great Western Railway to our town, changing it forever.

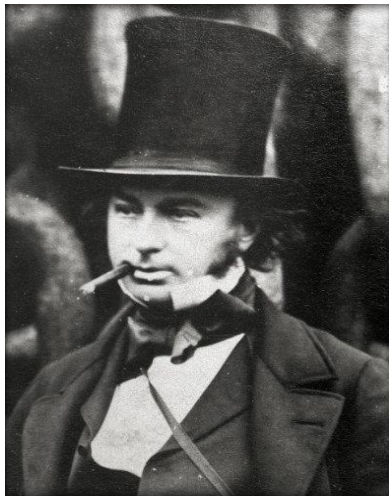
He thought steam trains were brilliant and much faster and safer than travelling by horse and cart. Brunel didn't want the trains to have to slow down when they were going over the bridge so he used his maths and science knowledge to build a wide, flat bridge using the widest, flattest arches of any bridge in the world.



Activity idea

Can you build a bridge with lego, wooden blocks or re-cycled materials?

Have you visited Brunel's bridge before, it's known as **The sounding arch**. If you go, make sure you shout very loudly or clap underneath it and you could hear your echo as many as 8 times!



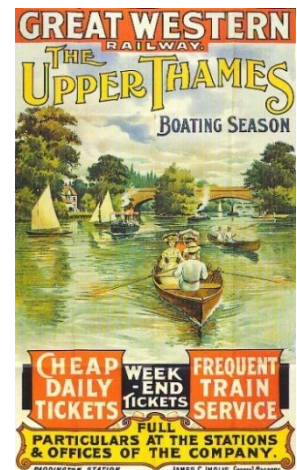
Brunel the Engineer

Brunel lived in the Victorian times, there were no cars, computers, electricity, telephones and travelling was very slow and dangerous. He thought the Great Western railway was brilliant as it meant people could travel straight to London quickly and safely. The problem was the railway needed to cross the River Thames. As an engineer, Brunel used his maths and science skills to solve this problem by designing and building his bridge. Some people were worried about the safety of the railway and others worried that too many people would come to live in Maidenhead.

Activity idea

Make a poster to persuade people that a railway in Maidenhead would help the town become more affluent and successful.

This poster is advertising cheap daily tickets to Maidenhead to have fun on the river.



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This is a photo outside Maidenhead Station in the Victorian era. Is there anything you recognise?

The clock tower? (this was built in 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee)



Have you seen a steam train or perhaps you've travelled on one?