A ROYAL NOON, AND A CUTTER CALLED DAISY

Opened in 1894

The Prince of Wales opened the Bridge at 12pm on 30 June. The first vessel through was Daisy.

The official About page says Tower Bridge was "Opened on 30 June 1894." The official construction timeline fills in the ceremony, and the eight years of work that came first. The architect, Sir Horace Jones, never saw that afternoon.

Date	What happened
10 February 1876	The Corporation of London asked City Bridge Foundation to establish the Special Bridge or Subway Committee.
November 1884	Sir Horace Jones unveiled three design options. With Sir John Wolfe Barry, a bascule bridge with a central opening span was accepted.
14 August 1885	The Corporation of London (Tower Bridge) Act 1885 received Royal Assent.
22 April 1886	Construction began. Barry was Chief Engineer; Henry Marc Brunel, Assistant Engineer; Edward Cruttwell, Resident Engineer. Horace Jones died one year in, and never saw the finished Bridge.
April 1894	Sir William Armstrong's engineers lowered and raised the bascules for the first time.
21 June 1894	The bascules were weight-tested with steam rollers, traction engines and loaded trollies. The walkways stand 42m above the Thames and stretch 61m between the Towers.
30 June 1894	The Prince of Wales opened the Bridge at 12pm, accompanied by Princess Alexandra and the Duke of York, the future George V. The first vessel through was the Harbour Master's cutter, Daisy.
9 and 29 July 1894	9 July: pedestrians only, 5am to 9pm; around 141,760 people crossed, and the Bridge was lifted 13 times for 15 ships. 29 July: open day and night.

Eight years, and a recorded cost

It took eight years to complete, and the Bridge House Estates committee recorded that it cost £1,184,000. Around 31 million bricks went into the work. Five major contractors, and 432 construction workers each day, built it. In the first year the Bridge opened more than 6,000 times.

A short quiz

1. On which date, and at what time, did the Prince of Wales open the Bridge?
2. What was the first vessel through?
3. How many pedestrians crossed on the pedestrians-only day of 9 July 1894?

Answers. 1. 30 June 1894, at 12pm. 2. The Harbour Master's cutter, Daisy. 3. Around 141,760.

Sources: towerbridge.org.uk, "About us," "Timeline: The construction of Tower Bridge," and "Top facts of Tower Bridge," checked 17 November 2026.
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