Isambard Kingdom Brunel Encyclopedia Article

Isambard Kingdom Brunel

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Isambard Kingdom Brunel

1806-1859

English engineer who designed England's Great Western Railway and built several of the era's great steamships. Brunel began his career as an engineer on the Thames River Tunnel project, headed by his father, Marc Brunel. Isambard Brunel went on to design the River Avon suspension bridge, still in use today. One of Brunel's greatest achievements was the design and construction of the London-to-Bristol rail line, better known as the Great Western Railway, distinguished by its low-arch bridges and two-mile tunnels. His innovations in rail gauges helped reform England's locomotive industry. Brunel was also a pioneer in steam navigation, and he designed three of the world's great steamships—the *Great Western* (1838), the *Great Britain* (1845) and the *Great Eastern* (1858), the largest steam vessel of its time.