Peter of Colechurch Encyclopedia Article

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1150-1205

English engineer who directed the building of the first London bridge. Construction on the bridge began in 1176 and continued past the time of his death 29 years later. The resulting stone structure was an impressive achievement, including 19 pointed arches and a drawbridge. Because its piers were so wide, the 900-ft (274.3-m) waterway beneath was reduced to less than a third of its original width. In later years, Londoners built houses and shops on the bridge that overhung its sides. The medieval London Bridge was replaced in 1831, more than six centuries after its construction. By contrast, the 1831 bridge lasted only until 1973, when it was moved to Lake Havasu in Arizona, and a new London Bridge was built.