

Book review

The World of Footbridges: from the Utilitarian to the Spectacular

K. Idelberger. Ernst & Sohn, Berlin, Germany, 2011, ISBN 978-3-433-02943-5, **£60, 183 pp.**

Throughout human history, footbridges of one form or another have been a fundamental part of the development of civilization. They have tended to be utilitarian, but with the recent advances in the strength of materials and sophisticated analysis techniques, designers and their clients have taken the opportunity to create some elegant and inspirational structures rather than the merely functional. This has led to a bewildering array of shapes and layouts, some of them truly remarkable and recorded in numerous technical papers, design guides and books.

Kluas Idelberger's book adds to that list of publications. It comes in a practical A4 format and has five chapters, which contain 85 studies of selected structures, from the simple and utilitarian to the more complex and spectacular, built relatively recently in Europe, Asia and Australia.

The introduction to the book contains a brief, but useful summary of the key technical parameters that need to be considered during the development of

a proposal for a new footbridge, including an important comment on oscillation. Thereafter, each of the first four chapters is devoted in turn to the most commonly adopted forms of load-bearing arrangement, namely suspension systems, cable-stayed systems, girders and arches. The final chapter is dedicated to the description of enclosed footbridges, or 'skywalks', connecting adjacent buildings, which are traditionally awkward structures to design.

A brief but informative technical description is provided for each structure, including useful details of the main structural members, the load-bearing system and, importantly, the method of construction. The text is complemented by photographs and helpful, large-scale reproductions of the original drawings and key engineering details. In some cases the construction cost of the bridge is also included.

This concise publication is a valuable and informative reference. It will provide ideas, guidance and hopefully inspiration to practising designers and students of engineering alike, and therefore it is a very commendable addition to the library.

Mike Hackney