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Press Release

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The 2005 IABSE Outstanding Structure Award presented to the The Gateshead Millennium Bridge, England

Professor Manfred Hirt, President of the International Association for Bridge and Structural Engineering (IABSE), presented the 2005 IABSE Outstanding Structure Award to the 'The Gateshead Millennium Bridge, England' on September 14, 2005. The Award Presentation took place at the Opening of the IABSE Symposium 'Structures and Extreme Events' in Lisbon, Portugal.

The Award recognises the most remarkable, innovative, creative or otherwise stimulating structures completed within the last few years. It consists of a Diploma each for the Structural Engineer, the Architect, the Contractor, and the Owner, as well as a plaque to be fixed to the winning structure, at a special ceremony.

The Gateshead Millennium Bridge, England received the Outstanding Structure Award for being an "an elegant curved pedestrian bridge with a unique concept of two interconnected arches which rotate to allow ship passage".

This unique award winning crossing has already become a landmark for Gateshead and the Tyne, linking Newcastle's thriving north bank with Gateshead Quays – the new arts and cultural quarter – to the south. The 105m long tilting bridge is the result of close collaboration between the Structural Engineer and the Architect. The design was dominated by the requirement to retain a clear channel for shipping whilst maintaining a low level crossing for pedestrians and cyclists.

The innovative and adventurous solution of a tilting bridge comprises a pair of steel arches that pivot on each side from a common springing point. One of the arches, rising to 45m above the river level, supports the other arch, which forms the deck from 18 spiral strand cables. The bridge is often being compared, in the way its rotational movement occurs, to that of a closed eye slowly opening.

The soaring arch provides an instant visual reference to the Tyne Bridge beyond, but also presents a slender profile against the skyline, interpreting and updating the structural and aesthetic order of its historic neighbour. Visually elegant both when static and in motion, the bridge offers a great spectacle during its opening operation – during the day and by night. The project was promoted by Gateshead Council and part-funded by the National Lottery. It was opened by Her Majesty the Queen in May 2002.

(Contact: Sissel Niggeler, Marketing and Communication Manager, at above address - picture on request)