

IMMORTAL BRIDGE:

Seven centuries is a long time for a bridge to stand - and when it's lasted that long, it's worth a bit of trouble to keep it standing. St. Trinita, over the Arno, is the most famous bridge in Florence; Nazi units blew it up in 1944, but the Florentines have rebuilt it exactly as it was.

The bridge is re-opened in the presence of Prime Minister Zeli. St. Trinita bridge was first built by Dominican Friars in 1269, and when floods swept it away nearly 300 years later, Michelangelo took part in its rebuilding. It withstood the floods for another 387 years - and it took the Nazis to think of deliberately destroying it. Architect Ghisulich was responsible for the restoration. It cost £170,000 - but the people of Florence are proud of their immortal bridge, and they contributed a fifth of the money themselves.