Tower Bridge under construction in 1892

The two road decks (bascules) were raised by hydraulic pressure at up to 750 lb per square inch to allow the passage of shipping. Two steam pumping engines fed from Lancashire boilers operated the hydraulic pumps which supplied water under pressure to be stored in six accumulators. The system was extensively revised in the 1970’s and now electric motors drive high pressure oil pumps to operate the bascules.

Above and next two illustrations “Tower Bridge,” Honor Godfrey, 1988
(CIBSE Heritage Group Collection)
Elevations of the east and west fronts of the main towers
Machinery of Tower Bridge in the engine house and piers

Two of the six Lancashire coal-fired boilers which operated at 75 psi

This and following illustrations from “London Revealed,” John Freeman, 1989 (CIBSE Heritage Group Collection)
Steam-driven hydraulic pumping engine
The accumulator tower where water was stored under high pressure