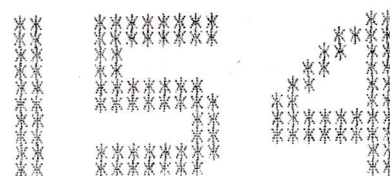


GLIAS

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NEWSLETTER



OCTOBER 1994

GREATER LONDON INDUSTRIAL ARCHEOLOGY SOCIETY

ISSN 0264-2395

Hon. Secretary: Bill Firth, 49 Woodstock Avenue, London NW11.

Hon. Newsletter Editor: Charlie Thurston, 1 Ely Gardens, Cranbrook,
Ilford, Essex. IG1 3NQ.

DIARY DATES

GLIAS EVENTS

WHEN

WHAT

- Oct. 10 GLIAS RECORDING GROUP MEETING 6.30pm at Kirkaldy Testing Museum, 99,
Mon. Southwark St., London SE1. Enter in Prices St. All are welcome.
- Oct. 19 GLIAS LECTURE: GRAVEL TO GUNS - THE IA OF GREENWICH By Chris Ford. 6.30pm
Wed. at St. Bartholomew's Medical College, Charterhouse Square, London EC1.
All are welcome. For details see separate sheet.
- Oct. 20 GLIAS RECORDING GROUP WALK in Brentford to register sites for IRIS. From
Thurs. 12noon. Meet at Kew Bridge Steam Museum, Green Dragon Lane, Brentford,
- Oct. 22 GLIAS/NEWCOMEN SOCIETY VISIT TO CHANNEL TUNNEL See booking form with this
Sat. Newsletter.
- Nov. 14 GLIAS RECORDING GROUP MEETING At 6.30pm at Kirkaldy Testing Museum.
Mon. Details as above for October 10.
- Nov. 16 GLIAS LECTURE TEMPLES OF STEAM; WATERWORKS ARCHITECTURE by James Douett.
Wed. At 6.30pm Details as above for Oct. 19.

OTHER EVENTS

- Oct. 5 NEW RIVER - FURTHER RESEARCH A talk, to be given by Elaine Harwood of
Wed. English Heritage, at 8.00 pm at St. Paul's Centre, Church Street, Enfield.
(Enfield Archaeology Society).
- Oct. 7 ROYAL MEMORABILIA A talk by Tony Shephard at 7.00 pm at the Ragged
Fri. School Museum, 46-50 Copperfield Road, Bow, E3.
- Oct. 10 P.S. WAVERLEY Final sailing from Tower Pier to Tilbury and Margate.
Mon.
- Oct. 13 A HISTORY OF ICE CREAM A talk by Robin Weir at 7.30 pm at the Canal
Thurs. Museum, New Wharf Road, Kings Cross, N1 9RT. Fee £2, concessions £1. For
details tel: 071 713 0836.
- Oct. 19 PLUGIN, ARCHITECT AND DESIGNER A talk by Clive Wainwright at 7.00 pm at
Wed. The George, 57 Liverpool Rd/Tolpuddle St, N1. (Islington Arch. & Hist.Soc)
- Oct. 20 PEPYS AND EVELYN: DIARISTS EXTRAORDINARY by Peter Gurnett, 8.15 pm,
Thurs. Camberwell College of Art, Wilson Rd Annexe, London SE5. (Peckham Society)
- Oct 22 SUBTERRANEA BRITANNICA AGM 10.00 - 16.30, Lucy Cavendish College, Lady
Sat, Margaret Road, Cambridge. £8.00 lunch & non-members extra. Tel (01734)
823456
- Nov. 9 LIMEHOUSE AND SAILING BARGES A talk by Jim Hughes at 7.00 pm at the
Wed. Ragged School Museum, 46 Copperfield Road, Bow, E3.

- Nov. 10 HISTORY OF THE RIVER THAMES A talk by Gavin Weightman, at 7.30pm at the Thurs. Canal Museum, New Wharf Road, Kings Cross, N1.
- Nov. 16 CHINESE PORCELAIN IN LONDON'S ARCHAEOLOGY A talk by Jennifer Barry at the Wed. 'George', 57 Liverpool Road/Tolpuddle Street, N1 at 7.00pm. (IAHS)
- Nov. 17 TOWER HAMLETS: COINS, MEDALS AND TOKENS by Philip Mernick, 7.30pm, Latimer Thurs. Church Hall, Ernest Street, Stepney Green, E1. Fee 50p. (East London History Society - ELHS)
- Nov. 19 WRETCHED LONDON: THE LONDON POOR A local history conference, from 10.00am - Sat. 5.00pm at the Museum of London. Fee £3.50. Details from the London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, 31 Lynton Road, Harrow, HA2 9NJ.
- Nov. 19/ LIVE STEAM MODEL RAILWAY SHOW at Kew Bridge Steam Museum, Green Dragon 20 Lane, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 0EN. For details tel: 0181-568 4757.
- Nov. 20 MEMOIRS OF A PECKHAM DOCTOR A talk by Dr. Isidore Crown at 3.00pm at Sun. Coplestone Centre, Coplestone Road, SE15 4AN.
- Dec. 1 STOKE NEWINGTON An illustrated talk by Peter Foynes at 7.30pm in Latimer Thurs. Church Hall, Ernest Street, Stepney Green, E1. Fee 50p. (ELHS)
- Dec. 8 CANAL ART AND NARROW BOAT PAINTING A talk by A.J. Lewery at 7.30pm at the Thurs. Canal Museum, New Wharf Road, Kings Cross, N1. Tel: 0171-713 0836.

COURSES

TOWNS OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION From Tuesday 20th September for two terms at Glebe School, Hayes Lane, West Wickham. West Wickham WEA. Details from Sue Hayton, tel: (01689) 852186.

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON IA COURSE began at Surbiton Hill Centre, on Tuesday September 27th until Easter 1995. For details send SAE to Miss M. Renshaw, Flat 8, Wyburn Court, 22 Ewell Rd, Surbiton, Surrey, KT6 6HX. or tel: 0181-390 2998.

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE COURSE At the City University, from October 13th until August 1995 on Thursday evenings. For details write to the City University, Northampton Square, London EC1V 0HB or tel: 0171-477 8268.

NEWCOMEN SOCIETY STUDY TOUR of West Wales Industry, from Thursday October 13th to Sunday October 16th, based in Swansea. Further information from the Executive Secretary, Newcomen Society, Science Museum, London SW7 2DD or tel: 0171-589 1793.

A THAMES WATER BROCHURE on the Thames Water Ring Main can be obtained by telephoning (01645) 200800, at local call rate.

STOKE NEWINGTON CASTLE PUMPING STATION: Hackney Borough Council has granted planning permission for change of use to an indoor climbing centre. Building work may start this year.

IRIS

IRIS or Index Record for Industrial Sites, is an initiative of the AIA (Assoc. for Industrial Archaeology) aimed at providing a record of all IA sites in England. It has been designed to link in with the National Monuments Record (NMR) of the ROMe and local Sites and Monuments Records (SMRs). IRIS is not intended, initially, to be computerised but it provides a standard approach to recording the location and principal features of a site. For this purpose a set of standard terms has been devised to enable easy access to data once IRIS is computerised. A booklet has been published by the AIA explaining IRIS and listing the standard terms. The SMR for London is run by English Heritage and contains details of sites of archaeological interest and all listed buildings.

It is used by archaeologists and planners as part of the planning process. It is hoped that the SMR can be enhanced by adding information from IRIS. In order to promote the completion of IRIS forms, the AIA are offering free affiliated membership to any society that completes 100 or more IRIS forms in the year commencing 12th September 1994. In addition, free membership of the AIA is offered to the individual who completes the single most recording forms of anyone, throughout the country, in the same period. With this incentive, GLIAS members should feel encouraged to help the society towards free affiliation to the AIA! GLIAS would particularly like those members with knowledge of specific sites, areas or industries to help in the completion of IRIS forms. If you would like to help, please send a large SAE to me at 30 Gaveston Drive, Berkhamsted, Herts, HF4 1JF.

TIM SMITH

BRADWELL ON SEA NUCLEAR POWER STATION, ESSEX (tel: (01621) 776331)

Recently I visited Bradwell Magnox nuclear power station, and can recommend a visit. Visitors are nowadays welcome at all nuclear power stations. Bradwell has two reactors and visitors are shown No. 1 re-actor. The power station is 32 years old and has recently been given a new certificate of safety to operate for another ten years. The back-up safety system has been updated. Magnox takes its name from the magnesium alloy casings which surround the uranium rods. The casings are finned to allow maximum transfer of heat to the carbon dioxide gas, which in turn transfers its heat to the steam boilers which drive the turbines.

The reactor viewing gallery is high above the pressure vessel - all that can really be seen are the two ton blocks which cover the nuclear rods and a large gantry-operated machine which handles the new and used uranium rods by remote camera control. New rods last for about five years; the spent fuel rods are lowered into a water tank where they remain to cool for about 100 days and are then sent to Sellafield for re-processing; 99% of the uranium is recovered.

The pressure vessel is a four inch thick steel sphere, all surrounded by a concrete shield. Inside the pressure vessel the fuel rods are surrounded by carbon dioxide gas at a pressure of about 120 lbs. sq. inch. which transfers its heat to the boiler in a closed cycle. Bradwell is manually controlled - both re-actors Nos. 1 and 2 are controlled from the same console in the control room. An array of dials and graphs indicates the condition of the system. In station No. 1 turbine hall are 6 Parsons turbine generators producing a maximum of 52 MW each which usually run at 42 MW at 11.8 KV transformed to 132 KV and connected to the grid at Rayleigh 20 miles away. Cooling water for the steam condensers is extracted from the River Blackwater at 227 million litres per hour and returned to the river warmer by 10 degrees C.

By contrast - nearby is probably the oldest church in England, which is the chapel of St. Peter-on-the-Wall, built circa 654 AD. by St. Cedd. The chapel is on the wall of the Roman fort of Othona and built of the stone from the fort, which originated in Kent. The local countryside is very enjoyable for picnics and the antique shop in Steeple provides very nice cream teas.

CHARLIE THURSTON

ANOTHER 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Alongside the first landing of Man on the Moon, the start of the current Irish troubles, and other notable if depressing events, 1969 also saw another happening. Accepted, it is of more local and minor significance in world history, but it merits notice here if nowhere else. 'Industrial Monuments of Greater London' was a first (and so far unrepeated) attempt at a gazetteer of the entire region's industrial archaeology.

Its genesis was with the disbanding Thames Basin Archaeological Observers' Group, whose IA section was established in the mid-1960's and can fairly be called the precursor of GLIAS. The Group put its liquidation assets into the printing of 'IMGL', and arranged for a generous share of the sales proceeds to go to GLIAS, then just founded.

Work began on the guide in 1967, when John Ashdown (now Oxford's Conservation Officer) and Paul Carter (first secretary of GLIAS) wrote to various departments in all the Greater London Borough Councils, asking them to give details of all known industrial monuments in their area. Replies varied from silence to lists with brief descriptions, and - with further contributions from numerous individuals - this material was organised into a 64-page booklet with some 360 or so site entries (of which perhaps half survive, as then described, today - has anyone ever checked?).

I became involved in 1968 through the TBAOG IA section, and particularly because I had an elderly 1950s IBM Executive electric typewriter, at the time also being used for the early GLIAS Newsletters and itself now an industrial monument. No word processors then! Most entries, organised on a borough-by-borough basis, were drafted by John or Paul, and the lot was typed out by your scribe. The sheets, with some hand-drawn illustrations and a short article on London Coal Duties boundary posts by Maurice Bawtree, were taken in the summer of 1969 to Fermaprint, a cheap but able firm of photolitho printers in Fleet Street, who also printed our early Newsletters. (100 copies of an A4 sheet of text photo-mastered and printed for £1, run-ons at 4/- or 20p per 100 sheets in 1969...) I remember going with Paul to collect the 600+ copies; it was the 11th August 1969, so says my diary, and with Leslie Matthews, the TBAOG treasurer, we paid for these around £175 in cash - say £2,000 in today's prices. John Ashdown's dramatic cover design was particularly pleasing, a silhouette of Telford's St Katharine Docks columns framing the title on a yellow ground.

The booklet was sold by post through magazine insert advertisements, and by stall sales, at 7/6 (37 1/2 pence) over the counter or 8/6 (42 1/2 pence) 'post free' as one could quote postal sale prices in those days. It quickly sold out, and has since become a collector's item. A bookseller advertising one at £5 in the 1980s told me that it went at once, and that he had had numerous enquiries for further copies as available. Reviews were favourable in various places, particularly the Daily Telegraph's 'Peterborough' column and (by J.M. Richards no less) in 'The Architectural Review'.

Plans for a new edition were in hand in 1973 when we were approached by Batsfords to write a Greater London volume in their planned national IA series. How this book is still to appear, why Batsfords abandoned the series, how Manchester University Press offered to publish 'our' volume, whether 'Industrial Monuments of Greater London' (2) will ever hit the streets - all these may interest future historians of the IA movement, and indeed the present GLIAS readership. For the meanwhile, this short account of 'the first attempt' is I hope, an adequate note of how it happened 25 years ago.

MICHAEL BUSSELL

NOTES FROM BOB CARR

TELEVISION ARCHAEOLOGY

It is now possible to get modern compact converters so as to be able to view current Television broadcasts on obsolete 405 line TV sets. There is a band of enthusiasts called the 405-Alive Group and readers interested should contact Andrew Emmerson, 71 Falcutt Way, Northampton NN2 8PH, telephone 01604 844130, fax 01604 821647.

The Friends of Alexandra Palace are involved with the organisation of visits on a regular basis to the former television studios there. They also campaign for more public awareness and funding in support of this important North London site generally. Anyone interested in the Palace or Park should contact the Friends at 74 Hillfield Avenue, London N8 7DN. Thanks are due to GLIAS member John Tritton of the Hirst Research Centre for information.

GOLDFINGER'S HOUSE

The modernist architect Erno Goldfinger (NL141/5) who died in 1987 built himself a house in Hampstead at 2 Willow Walk, one of a terrace of three. In order to do this a number of Georgian cottages were demolished which caused a local outcry at the time. We have now come full circle and Goldfinger's house has been listed grade II

and it seems likely that the National Trust will acquire it and it will be open to parties of visitors by appointment. It is said to be a perfect time capsule complete with period works of art and a campaign is being launched to secure these for display in the house. This is an important conservation breakthrough and together with the decision to retain Bankside power station marks a significant change in Establishment attitudes towards the twentieth century.

Born in Hungary in 1902, Erno Goldfinger studied in Paris and came to England in 1934. The three houses in Willow Walk dating from 1937 are his first major work.

From the outset one was intended for himself and his wife Ursula. The terrace is of ferro-concrete construction with red brick facing and the unknowing might walk straight past without a second look, so familiar has the style become through its subsequent repetition on a massive scale. Some of the original furniture in Goldfinger's home will also appear equally commonplace although it is individually made (mass production of such things came later). Sir Nikolaus Pevsner (born the same year as Goldfinger) considered the design for the facade of the Willow Walk terrace harmonised much better with Georgian Hampstead than anything built in the Victorian and Edwardian periods.

GLIAS CRUISE

On Sunday 21st August a boatload of members aboard the Sargent Brothers' working boat 'Enterprise' sailed upriver with the tide from Charlton as far as Lambeth. On the way up we nosed into St. Saviour's Dock and returning eastwards moored for ten minutes or so beside steps at Bankside close to the construction site of the new Southwark Shakespearian theatre. Before returning to Charlton a short detour was made up Bow Creek to the north of the A13 road bridge. This gave a chance to see at close quarters the various small pipe bridges and so forth south of the East India Dock Road and to inhale the fragrances from Pura Foods Ltd. The stone abutments of the Rennie iron bridge are still clearly visible.

In certain circles a popular mythology seems to have come into being that before the redevelopment of the London Dockland and the building of the Canary Wharf complex 'there was nothing there anyway'. At one time this was the World's largest Port - memories are short and unreliable.

From an industrial archaeological or maritime point of view the Thames and both its banks from Charlton to Westminster are now frightfully dead. So much has been cleared away and the remnants sterilised. Even the river bus service has finished. Lenanton's timber wharf on the west side of the Isle of Dogs is still in evidence but this survivor may not remain much longer. The only wharf with any appreciable activity is Convoy's at Deptford importing newsprint material with ro-ro vessels and there are now some prestige ship visits to the Upper Pool. About the only real ships still visiting London come to Tate & Lyle's Thames Refinery Jetty at Silvertown (just downriver of our cruise). Long may they continue.

BOB CARR

WILLIAM ELLIS SCHOOL

During the Easter school holiday, GLIAS was asked by Jill Westwood of the staff of the William Ellis School, Parliament Hill, NW5, if we could arrange a one-day programme of IA during the pre-sixth formers' activities week in mid-July. This was an attractive idea consistent with GLIAS' aims as an educational charity and potentially a source of new young blood for the society so we accepted with alacrity.

When it came to choosing a programme we did not have much difficulty in deciding on the King's Cross area with its wide variety of sites and the Canal Museum to provide a lunch spot and a final visit. So it was that at 10.30am on Wednesday 13th July four committee members, all society officers, met some 30 young people and five members of staff in the forecourt of St. Pancras station. It should be added that the staff were responsible for their pupils, GLIAS members were guides only. We

started with a visit to St. Pancras, including the view from the outer end, for which we had obtained permission, and proceeded via the GLIAS walk through the area to the north to the canal, and from there to the Granary. At this point it became apparent that we were losing the attention of the young people and we made earlier than intended for the Canal Museum. After lunch we handed over to Malcolm Tucker at the museum, and our part in the day ended. We must express our thanks to Malcolm and the staff of the museum.

Overall the day must be judged a success. Some very interesting questions were asked and there is certainly some latent interest in IA among the young people. At the same time we learned something about keeping younger people interested - experience which will be useful on another occasion - we hope the school agrees with us. We would be glad to try again next year. We have received some response from the school in the form of a scrap book of the day. We hoped to have some photographs but they have not materialised yet. Some of the pupils made some excellent sketches of St. Pancras. When term starts we hope some of this material may come in.

CROYDON - LOCAL SPEAKERS

Croydon Local Studies Forum, a grouping of Croydon local history societies, is compiling a list of speakers on local topics for use by local societies, libraries, schools and other interested bodies. If anyone wishes to be put on the list, or knows someone they think might be interested, please contact me as I have the official application forms.

BILL FIRTH

NOTES FROM DON CLOW

NOTE ON LIBERTY SHIPS

Further to the article in Newsletter 153 on Liberty ships, although these vessels constituted the most remarkable application of mass production techniques and were a key factor in enabling the UK to survive in WW2, they possessed a rather disturbing characteristic. Some 1200 of these ships developed cracks in their structure up to 10 ft. in length; 250 were rendered unserviceable and 19 ships broke in two. It did not even need rough seas to lead to disaster - the tanker SS 'Panagansett' split in two when moored at the dockside, another tanker, the SS 'Schenectady' broke its back in still water at the outfitting dock, one even fell apart before launching! The ships tended to suffer from 'brittle fracture' which has been described as 'probably the most frequently discovered of all mechanical properties'.

As the temperature falls, structural steel instead of behaving in a ductile manner becomes brittle. Nowadays, designers take care to ensure that the temperature at which this transition in properties takes place is below the lowest likely temperature the structure will experience. However, in the case of the 'Panagansett', the steel was brittle at 35 degrees C! The cracks which propagated almost explosively through these ships usually started from a point of stress concentration - often at the corner of a square hatch opening or a poor weld. Cracks certainly were not unknown in ships before the 1940s but with conventional rivetted construction a crack in one plate stopped at the boundary of the plate and did not propagate further - in a fully-welded structure like that of the Liberty ships there was no such 'stopper' for the crack and on occasion the crack would pass extremely rapidly right around the hull with disastrous consequences - GLIAS members proposing to sail on the 'Jeremiah O'Brien' may care to reflect on the above!!

EAST LONDON NOTES

1. The Docklands Golf Range is now open - its location must be unique for it is situated in what was the basement, now open to the sky, of the demolished Brunswick Wharf Power Station.

2. On 7th June 1994 a programme in the BBC2 series 'One Foot in the Past' stated that a large quantity of the stonework from the Euston Arch has been discovered. A British Waterways man said that the stone had been used to fill in a large hole in the bed of the Lea at Bromley-by-Bow.

3. 'The Thames Tunnel' 1825-43; where shield tunnelling began" is the title of an interesting and detailed paper by Sir Alan Muir Wood in the 'Civil Engineering' part of the Proc. Instn. Civ. Engrs. for August 1994, pages 130-139.

4. The Docklands Light Rail extension to Beckton, now open, is well worth an IA journey. The section from Poplar to Royal Victoria, much of which is at a high level, provides excellent vantage points for the areas around the former East India Docks and the River Lea, but the section further east is mainly remarkable for the large expanses of water and land cleared for redevelopment and a fair degree of imagination is needed to recapture the past - for once the infrastructure has precaded development! A notable activity to be seen from the Beckton Extension in recent months has been the demolition of the massive reinforced-concrete CWS Granary built between 1938 and 1944 to designs by L. G. Elkins. The most depressing view on the journey is provided by the appalling eyesore of the remnants of Beckton Gasworks near the Beckton terminus - still not cleared up.

The new official handbook to Docklands Light Rail is now available - its authors are Pearce, Jolly and Hardy, and it is published by Capital Transport at £7.95. It helps to clarify the many changes which have taken place both in structure and rolling stock as some have now entered the category of 'engineering history'.

5. Jubilee Line extension works are having a considerable impact on Docklands, most visibly at Heron Wharf with the works for the station at Canary Wharf. Another consequence has been the suspension of the North London Lines train service between Stratford and North Woolwich until next year. In the meantime, buses in North London Line colours are replacing the rail service. At present there is no DLR station at Canning Town which is rather strange, as the area must be the major source of potential passengers on the Beckton line, but a new interchange station between BR, DLR and the Jubilee Line is now being constructed.

A supplement to the 'New Civil Engineer' entitled 'The Jubilee Line Extension' was published in February 1994 at the completely unreasonable price of £20 for a 60-page booklet, but worth getting sight of especially as present-day construction in Docklands is much constrained by the past. DON CLOW

OBSCURE GAS WORKS OF EAST LONDON

If you go down the Old Kent Road and look behind the shops on the corner of Trafalgar Avenue you will find a big old house. There, in 1860, an old man died, tended by his daughter, a Mrs. Donkin. Despite his 90 years the old man had been until the previous week the active Managing Director of the oldest gas company in the world, the Gas Light & Coke.

Although this old man is not in the Dictionary of National Biography you will find his father and son mentioned there. His father was a doctor, who founded the Royal Humane Society, and his son was a politician. His name was Benjamin Hawes and he had founded what became the largest soap works in London. It was at Old Barge House, on the river bank slightly to the west of Blackfriars Bridge.

That he was the Governor of the Gas Light & Coke Company demonstrates a remarkable change of allegiances because in the 1820s Hawes' soap works had been the site of a gas works fuelled by oil. Oil gas is a whole subject, and one which I intend to describe in more detail in a future article. It is enough here to say that there had been considerable commercial rivalry between coal and oil gas manufacturers.

For a soap manufacturer to make gas from oil made a lot of sense because oils which were not used to make soap, for a number of reasons, could be used for gas. Sadly, most of the oil came from whales, but palm and coconut oil was also used. About 100 cubic foot of gas was made from one gallon of oil. The gas making apparatus had been supplied to Hawes by Taylor and Martineau (of whom more in a future article). The plant, about ten feet from the main works, was run by one man 'chosen for his regularity and sobriety'. There was a 'gasometer' in the yard. The gas was not purified in any way, or even washed. Smell did not matter; soap making was after all 'not the most savoury operation'.

The gas was made for lighting the soap works, in particular the cellar which was lit day and night. Gas was also supplied, at 45s. per 1,000 cubic feet, to neighbourhood shops and pubs via a two inch main. In Old Barge House itself gas was burnt in the bedrooms, dressing rooms, nursery, hall and stairs.

The soap works was run by another brother, William. It is described in Dodds' 'Days at the Factories'. The Hawes were an influential family. The names of Benjamin and William permeate industrial enterprises of the last century; breweries, dock companies, railways. Many of the projects which they supported were those of I. K. Brunel who was a frequent visitor to Old Barge House both before and after his sister's marriage to Benjamin Jnr.

It is not clear when the oil gas works closed and Benjamin Snr. became a leading light in the coal gas world. The family influence in gas was to continue through the engineering company into which Caroline Hawes had married: the Bryan Donkin Company Ltd. were to be leaders in the supply of gas distribution equipment.

Since writing the account of the East London Theatre Gas works I have acquired a copy of James Stevens Curl 'The Life and Works of Henry Roberts 1803-1876' (Phillimore 1983). This is a fascinating account of Roberts' life which I would very much recommend. It gives considerable detail on the Well Street Destitute Sailors Home, including the information that it was opened in 1835. This means that the fire at the East London Theatre could not possibly have been in 1836 - although the newspaper cutting from which the account was taken had that date on it. It is most likely to have been 1826.

MARY MILLS

GLIAS WALKS

The success of the 1993 Walks led to five further walks this summer. A note about the first three appeared in NL153. The final two walks took members of both GLIAS and the general public to the Regent's Canal and Hackney Wick. Charles Norrie arranged to take us from Little Venice to Camden on 13th August and for a pre-walk refreshment in the 'local' at Warwick Avenue. Some confusion arose as Time Out had mixed up our pre-publicity with a 'phone call about a paying walk which was to start at 11.00. The organiser of the 'rival' walk took the matter philosophically and joined us for a pint beforehand, commenting that he didn't very often get many takers for an 'on spec' walk. We arrived at Warwick Avenue to find seventy people who needed to be shepherded along the tow path, this led to a severe thirst attacking Charles at the end where a number of walkers adjourned to another pub!

Mary Mill's walk on 3rd September (to avoid the AIA conference) suffered somewhat from the rain which cleared up as the twenty seven walkers finished. The reputation of GLIAS' walks seemed to penetrate even the bad weather with 'regular' walkers, members and non-members turning up. As the weather cleared and the original walk had been taken at a good speed a visit to Victoria Park was agreed; the party being greeted in the open space by the return of the rain!

GLIAS must express its thanks to all those who helped; Bill Firth; David Perrett; Sue Hayton; Charles Norrie and Mary Mills. Their audiences would have been smaller without the efforts of Kathleen Gribble who brought in numbers of regular walkers. A reminder to anyone who wants to organise a walk for next year to get in touch with the Hon. Secretary.

DAN HAYTON

OPEN HOUSE DAY - Saturday 10th September

This year for the first time London was involved in the Open House programme which is a feature of many cities on the Continent. Unfortunately the 'powers that be' organised the 'Day' for the same weekend as the AIA Conference which meant that many GLIAS members would be out of London. For those that were left 'Open House Day' was an opportunity to visit more than 200 buildings in Greater London, some of which are not normally open, for free. The list of buildings which represented over a 1,000 years of history contained many buildings familiar to GLIAS members - for example the Brunel Engine House in Rotherhithe, Stoke Newington Pumping Station as well as various London Underground Stations and Bus Garages.

With such an impressive list it was difficult to decide what to concentrate on. We decided to look first at the Central Hall on Mare Street. It was built in 1926 for the Methodist Church by Gunton & Gunton and designed for multi-purpose use; the Main Hall was intended both for worship and public assembly. For many years now the hall has been closed as congregations have declined but recent refurbishment means that the Hall is once more open for use. Many of the original fittings still remain and the hall is certainly worth an inspection.

Across the road is the Hackney Town Hall built in the 20s and still containing beautiful art deco light fittings in the entrance halls and Council Chamber - a hidden jewel for most of us. Next it was on to the Stage Door of the Hackney Empire and indeed onto the stage of the theatre where we were given a brief resume of the history of the building which has seen performances by all the great music hall stars. It was surprising that the fabulous interior, by Frank Matcham, seem so small despite being one of the largest music halls. It was also the first public building in Hackney to have electric light.

On next to Hoxton Hall, in Hoxton Street, an 1867 music hall hiding behind a much later facade - another hidden jewel. A quick visit to Shoreditch Public Library in Pitfield Street was rather disappointing. War damage meant that there was little of the original interior remaining and the staff did not seem interested in visitors. The exterior of 1896 in terra cotta by H.T. Hare is always worth a look.

Needing some refreshment we hurried to Great Swan Alley in the City where the Institute of Chartered Accountants was providing much needed refreshments. The interior of this building was equally interesting as its facade with scenes from British History as well as Commerce and Science etc., designed by John Belcher in 1893 in English Baroque style. Our last visit of the day was to the German Hospital in Hackney, now being converted to housing. What was open was the 30s block off Graham Road, notable for both its architecture and also its medical ideas. Each floor had a sun deck where patients could take their ease and on the roof was an open air ward where patients in their beds could be taken. The roof provided clear views all over London - a perfect way to end the day. Thanks must be given to the organisers and to the guides from the RIBA who spent a full day explaining the architecture of so many buildings to so many Londoners. Roll on next year!

SUE HAYTON

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The first letter from GLIAS member Walter Iveson, who writes :
A short note to let you know that in Swindon we still have our 'Magic Roundabout', (See N/L 153) near Swindon Town Football Ground. Apart from striking terror in the hearts of unsuspecting visitors, it always appears to me to do a good job in keeping the traffic flowing, and as far as I know there are no plans to change it. One cannot say this with certainty because so many odd things are tried here, to alter the traffic flow, that its success could well be its downfall! Keep up the good work with the Newsletter - it is the most interesting one that I receive.

And also on Newsletter 153, Bill McNair has written :

Peter Marshall's notes of a visit to the crematorium at Manor Park were most helpful and revealing about what lies ahead for over 69% of the country's population. It seems that the former crematorium he mentioned at Aldersbrook Road was built for the City of London in 1904 and the tenth to be completed in Great Britain. The present crematorium was built 1973 and cost about £400,000 excluding the land. According to the records it is the second busiest in the Greater London area.

It is surprising to find that the Cremation Society of Great Britain was founded as long ago as 1874 by Sir Henry Thompson, 'to promote a more sanitary, reverent and inexpensive method of disposing of the dead'. The first cremation took place on 26th March 1865 at Woking, Surrey, the deceased being a Mrs Pickersgill.

The Woking Crematorium is situated in Hermitage Rd, St. John's and is owned by the London Cremation Society. Since 1885 the number of crematoria has grown to 228 at the last count in 1992, and about 51 new schemes are under consideration. The best reference source on the subject is the Directory of Crematoria, published by the Cremation Society of Great Britain. Most public libraries have a copy on their shelves.

Finally, Steven Boxall has written as follows :

Re: STEPHENSON'S VAULTS, NORTH LONDON

In September, Camden Council may decide to give planning permission for the redevelopment of 'Stephenson's Vaults'. These are brick vaults, beneath a section of the railway line between Camden and Euston, which were built in 1837 to house the standing engines which were required to power the cable system to pull trains up the incline on the final section of the track. They became redundant in 1845 when the locomotives became strong enough to tackle the gradient on their own. According to 'The Architect's Journal' the vaults were in use for such a short time that they do not appear on the OS map and were largely forgotten until the late 1980s. Does anyone have any details of these vaults? Have they appeared in past GLIAS newsletters, and is the recording group of GLIAS interested?

BOOK REVIEWS

BOURNE DOODLEBUGS. South East Surrey and the Flying Bombs. By Peter and Iris Flint, The Bourne Society, £2.35 inc. p&p.

This 24-page booklet tells the story of the VI flying bomb offensive in 1944 with especial reference to south east Surrey. Available from: Mr. J. Tyerman, The Bourne Society, 60 Onslow Gardens, Sanderstead, South Croydon, CR2 9AT.

THE FORTH BRIDGE A Picture History. ROAHMS. 112 pp. A4. HMSO. Paperback. £11.95. An impressive collection of photographs taken over seven years illustrating the construction of the Forth Bridge.

MOTOR TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS - A History of Scottish Motor Vehicle Manufacture. By George Oliver. Glasgow Museum. 112 pp. A4. HMSO, Paperback. £9.95.

THE MINES AND MINING MEN OF MENHEINIOT. Stephen Bartlett. 114pp. £15.95.

TIN STREAMS OF WENDRON Justin Brooks. 96pp. £12.95.

Two important new books covering new ground in Cornish mining history.
From: Twelveheads Press, Chy Mengleth, Twelveheads, Truro, Cornwall. TR4 8SN.

BILL FIRTH

LONDON'S UNDERGROUND STATIONS By David Leboff. Ian Allan. 1994. £7.99.

This well-produced pocket-sized book commendably tackles an unusual subject in that it provides a concise description of each of the London Underground stations. The layout, history, design, is summarised and attention drawn to any special features. The author obviously put a lot of work into this book and it makes an excellent companion to enlighten any LU journey.

DON CLOW

GUIDE TO THE HISTORY OF TECHNOLOGY IN EUROPE 1994 by Betsy Bahr, Timothy Boon, Nicholas J. Wyatt and Robert Budd, Science Museum 1994. £9.95

An updated version of the 1992 listing of researchers, institutions and other interested individuals in Europe. The listings are compiled from those who returned the forms circulated during 1993. Some notable omission amongst GLIAS members suggest we should circulate blanks with the newsletter!. The use of pre-defined categories lead to appearances under some strange headings for IA but it's very useful to be able to look up possible contacts throughout Europe from Eire to Roumania.

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

Please note that items intended for inclusion in the December Newsletter should reach the Editor by November 8th if possible.