

GREATER LONDON INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

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GLIAS was founded in 1969 to record relics of London's industrial history, to deposit records with museums and archives, and to advise on the restoration and preservation of historic industrial buildings and machinery

Membership of GLIAS is open to all. The membership year runs from April and subscriptions are due before the AGM in May

Subscription rates

Individual £14
Family £17
Associated Group £20

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DIARY DATES

GLIAS WALKS

A series of free Saturday afternoon guided walks looking at the industrial and social heritage of London. The walks start at 2.30pm and non-members are welcome. There are a limited number of places available and pre-booking is required. To book places on any of the walks, please email walks@glias.org.uk. Anyone without email can text or call 07835 260176 and leave a message.

15 October CITY GEOLOGY, led by Allan Wheeler

GLIAS EVENT

16 Nov PUB EVENING. 6:30pm at The Sekforde, 34 Sekforde Street, EC1R 0HA

22 April SERIAC. TBC

OTHER EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 1 Sat EIAG INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE FAIR. Silver End Village Hall. 9am-5pm for stands, 10am-4pm for visitors. Free for visitors, £15 for stands. For further information email essexiag@gmail.com
- 1-2 LONDON TRANSPORT WEEKEND. An Epping Ongar Railway special event. Web: www.eorailway.co.uk
- 8 Sat THE WEST END OF LONDON. A Brewery History Society urban walk by Ken Smith. Contact: knsmi522@aol.com Web: www.breweryhistory.com
- 11 Tue TREE-RING DATING AND WHAT IT TELLS US ABOUT THE OLD BARNET SHOP. A Hendon and District Archaeological Society talk by Dr Martin Bridge. 7.45 for 8pm in the Drawing Room, Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley N3 3QE. Visitors £2. Web: www.hadas.org.uk
- 15-16 KEMPTON PARK STEAMING WEEKEND. The museum will be open and the 'Sir William Prescott Engine' is expected to be in operation. Web: <https://kemptonsteam.org/visit-us/prices-opening-times/>
- 23 Sun TRANSPORTFEST. Special event at the London Bus Museum at Brooklands. Cobham Hall, Brooklands Road, Weybridge KT13 0QS. Web: www.londonbusmuseum.com

NOVEMBER

- 6 Sun CROYDON AIRPORT OPEN DAY - TBC. Croydon Airport Visitor Centre, Airport House, Purley Way, Croydon CR0 0XZ. Open on the first Sunday of the month, every month, throughout the year. Web: www.historiccroydonairport.org.uk

- 6 Sun LONDON TO BRIGHTON VETERAN CAR RUN. 'Old Crocks' run, London to Brighton. Starts from The Serpentine, Hyde Park. Web: www.veterancarrun.com
- 8 Tue BUILDING THE NESS OF BRODGAR. A Hendon and District Archaeological Society talk by Nick Card. 7.45 for 8pm in the Drawing Room, Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley N3 3QE. Visitors £2. Web: www.hadas.org.uk
- 19-20 KEMPTON PARK STEAMING WEEKEND. The museum will be open and the 'Sir William Prescott Engine' is expected to be in operation. Web: <https://kemptonsteam.org/visit-us/prices-opening-times/>

DECEMBER

- 4 Sun CROYDON AIRPORT OPEN DAY - TBC. Croydon Airport Visitor Centre, Airport House, Purley Way, Croydon CR0 0XZ. Open on the first Sunday of the month, every month, throughout the year. Web: www.historiccroydonairport.org.uk

GLIAS is happy to publicise events by other societies that may be of interest to our members. If you are a not-for-profit organisation and would like us to list your event, please contact the newsletter editor via email at newsletter@glias.org.uk

NEWS AND NOTES

FROM THE CHAIR

The Society has been getting on with its usual summer activities with the walks being well attended and information being sought and given on matters of interest.

We're also looking forward to the autumn series of events including the Newcomen Society's Evening Lectures in London on 12 October, 'Learning Through Archaeology The Rocket Project' by Michael Bailey and 9 November, 'Newcomen Engine illustrations' by (our own) David Perrett.

Our own event in November will be the Pub Evening at The Sekforde, 34 Sekforde St, Farringdon, London EC1R 0HA. Starting at 6:30pm the evening will consist of presentations by members, beer and food, if required. Anyone wishing to contribute should email chairman@glias.org.uk.

The summer has been one of contrast between heat and rain and the events and changes of the last couple of weeks have marked the end of the Second Elizabethan Era which saw many changes including the decline of London's industries and the increasing difficulty of getting into sites. There has, in contrast, been an increase in industrial-themed museum sites which, through many difficulties, are still surviving.

The Society recognises, with sympathy, the loss, personal, national and international of Queen Elizabeth and looks forward to the future under King Charles III. *Dan Hayton*

PROPOSED WILD SWIMMING AT LEA BRIDGE

On 20 August an article in The Guardian newspaper reported that there is now growing interest in the idea of two ponds for outdoor swimming on the Clancy-Docwra site by the Lea Bridge Road (TQ 358 866) which would emulate the famous Highgate ponds in North London (see GLIAS Newsletter 307, pp7-8).

The article claims that £210,000 has already been promised so there is now a possibility that this development might actually go ahead. There are buildings and structures of industrial archaeological interest on the site, surviving from the previous waterworks, which would need to be safeguarded but the promoters appear to be in favour of this. *Bob Carr*

THE VIEW AT BARNES BRIDGE

The original Barnes Bridge, which has been closed since 1895, could be reimagined as a landscaped green space open to the public.

'The View at Barnes Bridge' is inspired by similar projects such as the New York High Line, the Promenade Plantée in Paris and the Camden Highline (GLIAS Newsletter 310, p4).

The cast-iron Grade II-listed bridge was built in 1849 and became redundant when a new railway bridge was built alongside. This is still in use today for the Hounslow Loop Line.

www.theviewatbarnesbridge.org/history

CROSSNESS PUMPING STATION IN MAY 1970

Crossness Pumping Station is a significant building in industrial archaeology and has been extensively

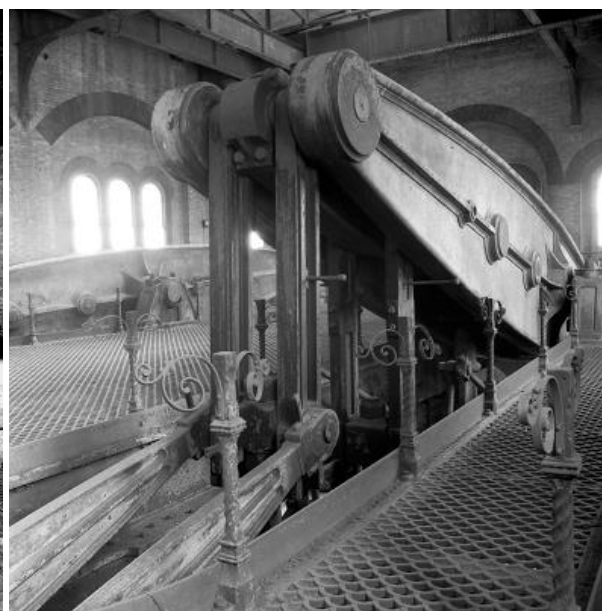
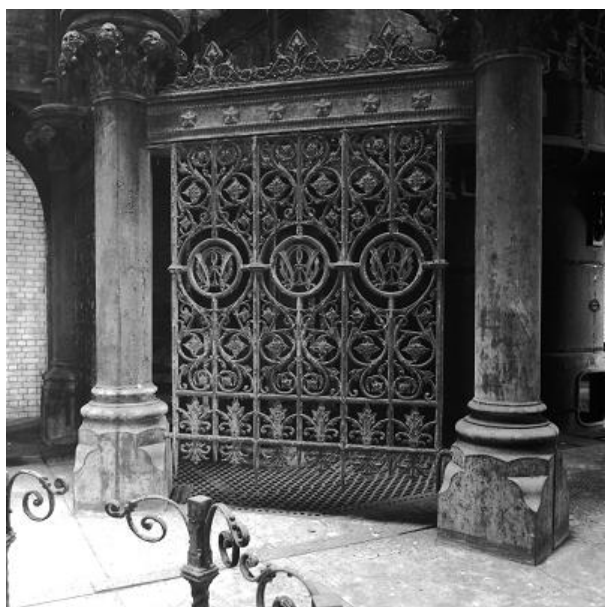
documented, recorded and restored. A visit on one of its open days is highly recommended.

The building was opened in 1865 and its purpose was to raise sewage from the sewers to the River Thames. It was equipped with four rotative beam engines with 52 ton flywheels and 47 ton beams. The Crossness Engines Trust renovated the engine named Prince Consort in 2003.

The station was decommissioned in 1953 and left to deteriorate with many of the fittings and metals removed. Finally, it was listed Grade I in 1970 and restoration begun.

In May 1970, a visit was made by a GLIAS Recording Group and photographs taken of the derelict interior and machinery as well as the highly decorative ironwork. Photographic conditions were difficult with the film technology of the time. A selection of images is shown here and may be compared with the current magnificent restoration. *Sidney Ray*

All photos by the author. More photos will appear on the website version of this article

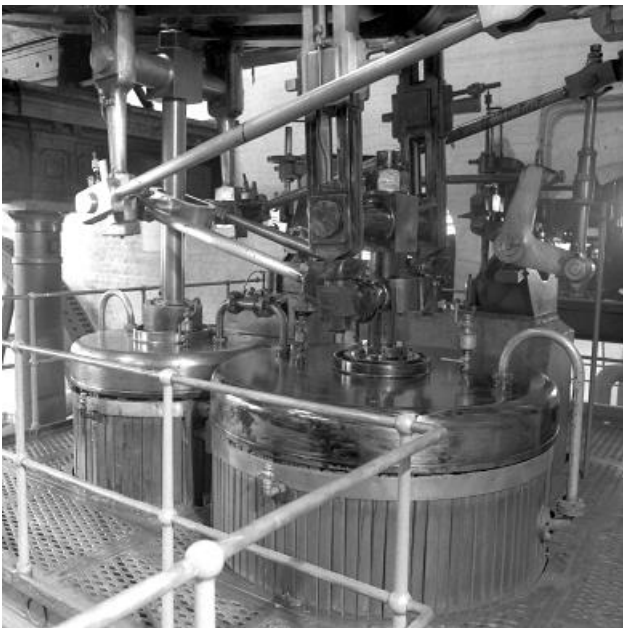


WEST HAM PUMPING STATION VISIT JANUARY 1972

The famous and iconic Abbey Mills Pumping Station is preserved in Stratford, East London. Closely adjacent and much less well known is the former West Ham Pumping Station. This was completed in 1897 and equipped with Lilleshall Company (Engineers) beam engines to pump waste water from West Ham to the Northern Outfall sewers. The station was closed in 1972 and in the following years the machinery was progressively scrapped and removed. Now nothing is left except the building which is Grade II listed and the spaces are let out as light industrial premises.

On 28 January 1972, while all the machinery was intact, a visit was paid by the GLIAS Recording Group. Photography was difficult, requiring fast film, tripod and several minutes exposure. This selection of photos tries to convey the working environment of the times. *Sidney Ray*

All photos by the author. More photos will appear on the website version of this article. Please contact sidney.ray@btopenworld.com if you would like copies of these photos and others for reasonable IA purposes



THE SURREY DOCKS & CANADA WATER

Redevelopment of most of the former London Dockland area has now progressed to such an extent that readers may think that there is little left in this part of East London to interest them. However, on the south bank of the Thames at the Surrey Docks there are still surviving remains of industrial archaeological interest. Canada Water is an example that is considered here.

The last 60 years

In the 1960s these docks, known as the Surrey Commercial Docks, were dominated by the timber trade. Russian timber ships were ubiquitous. The dock area extended northwards from Greenland Dock and eastwards from Canada Dock almost as far as the River Thames.

In the 1980s when it came to redevelopment here the policy at the Surrey Docks, which was still partly the responsibility of the London Borough of Southwark, was rather different from that which was adopted for the dock estates north of the Thames.

At odds with present-day attitudes, the LDDC architect Edward Hollamby espoused an enlightened policy where reminders of the dock estates working life were to be retained to remind new residents where they had moved to and give them a sense of place.

This enabled the LDDC conservation officer Edward Sargent to do some excellent work at the Surrey Docks. Some of this survives and you may find hydraulic jiggers, a hydraulic capstan, swing bridges and a few bollards even now.



This contrasts with the redevelopment of most of the larger commercial docks in the United Kingdom where from the surviving remains it is now almost impossible to understand how such docks functioned in the first half of the 20th century.

At the Surrey Commercial Docks the majority of the basins deep enough to take seagoing ships, and shallow timber ponds for seasoning wood, have disappeared. Greenland Dock and a small dock to the south are still in use, mainly by pleasure craft. Canada Dock does not survive as such; there is only a fragment at the north end remaining. This is Canada Water. The water here is fresh, drawn from an artesian well by a wind pump. The landscape architect Fraser Borwick was largely responsible for this initiative (see <https://fraserborwick.com/canada-water/>).



A dramatic library by the architect Piers Gough has been built close to Surreys Quays station. See photograph (above), looking north-west over Canada Water towards Canada Water Library. The octagonal brick chimney to the left of the library is at the London Hydraulic Power Company Pumping Station in Renforth Street (see <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101385816-london-hydraulic-power-company-former-pumping-station-rotherhithe-ward>).

Surrey Water to the north of here is another survival. *Bob Carr*

References

- The building of Canada Dock and a dry dock for the repair of lighters — Surrey Commercial Docks. London's Industrial Archaeology No.3, 1984, pp32-40.
- The dry dock was the Albion Dry Dock. It was used for Thames sailing barges as well as lighters.
- Docklands History Survey, Greater London Council Historic Buildings Division 1984, ISBN 978-0716813293. See pp54-57.
- GLIAS database – gazetteer of several sites

RAPIDES OVER LONDON

Dragon Rapide biplanes designed in the early-1930s are flying over London on a regular basis (GLIAS Newsletter 316, pp10-11). A Rapide flies over central London most Wednesdays and Sundays at about 12.30pm, flying at roughly 2,000 feet and being the only biplane in the sky they are easy to recognise – cloud cover permitting. The sound of their Gipsy Queen engines is also quite characteristic.

As well as flights on Wednesday and Sunday there have been others. On Saturday 20 August a Rapide was noted at about 12.30pm and a second one at about 2.20pm. On Sunday 28 August a Rapide flew over at 3.15pm. *Bob Carr*



CASH AND PARCEL SYSTEM AT DIDCOT

Previous newsletters have described the use of overhead wire cash carriers in shops (GLIAS Newsletters 56, 68) which have now all disappeared. These were installed in retail shops so that all customer payments could be dealt with by one trusted cashier or cash office.

Didcot Railway Centre has recently restored a rare Lamson Cash Railway which was originally installed in a department store in Kansas City. It was shipped over to the UK as a box of rusted parts and can now be seen in their gift shop. Only eight of these are known to exist and this is the only one in the UK.

Lamson Store Service Co. Ltd. had their premises in Britain at 1 Charlotte Street, London.

www.cashrailway.co.uk/lamsons-uk.htm

60 FARRINGDON ROAD: A RARE SURVIVAL

The rather handsome yellow-brick property known as 60 Farringdon Road in Clerkenwell was recently advertised as to let, described as a 'converted Victorian warehouse originally constructed in 1875'. The date was correct – but then it does appear on the front gable. The rest was wrong. 60 Farringdon Road never was a warehouse; rather it is, at least externally, a rare survival – a purpose-built wheelworks. It is a building type which has almost totally disappeared from London, and indeed elsewhere. But when road transport by definition involved wheels and horses, it was a crucial part of the system which kept the city and its economy moving.

It was not a small sector. London had over 330 wheelwright businesses in 1871, 320 in 1891 (and even 160 in 1921), with over 20 firms in Clerkenwell. Wheelwrights not only made and maintained wheels; they made vehicles too, carts and wagons, many of them of specialist types. Coachbuilders and makers, mainly producing carriages of many types but some in commercial vehicle production too, numbered well over 200 in the later decades of the Victorian period. Numbers employed were substantial; at the peak there were well over 10,000 workers in the wheelwright and carriage-making sectors in London, and that figure does not include ancillary trades such as blacksmithing, harness making and painting. Over time, with the introduction of motor vehicles, the sectors inevitably declined – though perhaps not as fast as is often assumed – and many businesses, including 60 Farringdon Road, shifted into motor vehicle building and repair.

The works were commissioned by Thomas Charles Robson, one of a large multi-generational family of, mainly, wheelwrights. His business, employing around 40 men – so a large one by contemporary standards – had been based in Laystall Street and in Liquorpond Street, now Clerkenwell Road, but was forced to move when the Metropolitan Railway was built. Like most wheelwrights Robson built entire vans and carts as well as their wheels – hence the two large vehicle entries onto the street. The new shop had the most up-to-date kit for its day: four forges, iron binding machines, drilling machines, a furnace for making iron tyres, a sinking platform

for shrinking the red-hot tyres onto wooden wheels and numerous cranes. All of this was hand-worked (Robson failed to get the premises classed as a 'manufactory', and hence liable for lower rates, as there was no steam working). As motor vehicles ousted – over a long period – the market for horse-drawn vehicles, the Robsons turned to building bespoke bodies for motor vans instead. The business survived until 1969, when much of the original kit was still in place. It disappeared as the building was re-used as a film and recording studio and then as The Guardian's archives centre. From 2009 it housed numerous organisations concerned with literature and preventing censorship, but sadly the charity running the centre gave up during the pandemic. So it awaits yet another new purpose. *Valerie Bayliss*



ROYAL ARSENAL NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY APPEAL

The Royal Arsenal Narrow Gauge (RANG) railway at Crossness Engines Trust has launched an appeal to raise £10,000 to repair its loco 'Bazalgette'.

The loco, a Severn-Lamb diesel-powered unit, has suffered a major mechanical problem to its hydraulic drive motors and primary pump.

Bazalgette, originally called Busy Basil, came into service in 1986 at the Stoke-on-Trent Garden Festival and moved to Bygones Village Museum in Norfolk in 1988. From 2003 until 2017 it was in storage until it was purchased by Crossness Engines.

The railway (GLIAS Newsletter 287), completed in November 2021, transports visitors to and from Crossness Pumping Station on Open Days.

A crowd-funding web page has been set up at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/rangrailway

BECKTON SEWAGE TREATMENT WORKS CHIMNEY

I work for Thames Water as their archaeologist and wanted to get in touch to let you know about a restoration project we are currently undertaken which may be of interest to the society.

You may already be aware that the Bazalgette-designed chimney at Beckton Sewage Treatment Works has been dismantled in order to facilitate works to the Lee Tunnel. The works have now been completed and we are in a position to begin the process of re-erecting the chimney. As part of this process we are looking into potentially relocating the chimney to an alternative location on the site to enable it to be more fully appreciated/accessible.

We are very much at the early consultation stage so there are no firm plans at present. *Dr Victoria Reeve*

- The chimney is grade-II listed for the following reasons:
 - architecturally special for its elegant tapering form and Egyptian-style cap;
 - designed by Sir Joseph Bazalgette as part of improvements to the Northern Outfall of his London drainage network in 1887, in response to public health concerns;
 - it identifies Beckton as a Victorian industrial site;
 - a striking landmark in the landscape of East London, where the distinctive Greenway embankment (the original main drain) runs from the Grade II*-listed Abbey Mills pumping station to Beckton Sewage Works.

BATTERSEA POWER STATION

Battersea Power Station will open its doors to the public on Friday, 14 October.

The area around the iconic building is already buzzing with shops and restaurants. Inside the first of over 100 shops, bars, restaurants, office space and leisure venues will be opening. A 24,000 sq ft Food Hall is due to open in 2023.



NEXT ISSUE

GLIAS welcomes articles for publication in the newsletter. These should be about 500 words or less. Longer articles may be more suitable for the GLIAS Journal.

Please send any contributions for the December newsletter by 15 November.