

Industrial Archaeology Review

1972-6

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FOR SEVERAL years, *the London Archaeologist* has published an annual round-up of archaeological excavations in the London area. This article is the first venture in presenting a similar review of industrial archaeological activity in Greater London, covering the period from 1972 to date.

Industrial archaeology being a fairly recent newcomer in the field of archaeology, it may be useful to outline the approach which is being developed in dealing with the capital's surviving industrial monuments. What follows is based largely on the experience of GLIAS, the Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society, which has been trying since its formation seven years ago to ensure the retention of a reasonable body of evidence of our industrial past. Most frequently this evidence will be documentary, although the preservation of certain material or structures on the ground of intrinsic importance is not ignored.

The first necessity is to locate sites. Sometimes these are self-evident (e.g. Tower Bridge), but in general a study of maps and documents, and local inquiries, will be followed by a street-by-street survey. The abundance of sites thus revealed can be daunting—some central London areas still contain more than 100 to the square mile! But this first reconnaissance is essential, as it allows priorities to be assigned for the second stage: recording.

This may include measured surveys; photography—black and white for archival use, colour slides for illustration, and cine work to explain craft processes or record the workings of machinery; tape-recording—both to capture the sounds of activity and to preserve the voices of workpeople describing their job; and excavation. In parallel with this, further documentary research will help to build up a comprehensive picture.

Publication is not neglected, although funds for publication of IA recording are not so readily available as for reports of excavations. The minimum aim at present is to ensure that copies of records are deposited for public access in a library or museum, and interested bodies informed of their location.

As regards the vexatious subject of preservation, various categories can be identified. In the first are

monuments—a limited number only—of such inherent importance as an entity as to justify in-situ and unaltered retention. Secondly are the cases where partial retention, on- or off-site (as in a museum), may be appropriate to retain a machine or structure which is significant either as a novel relic or (of no less importance) as the rare survivor of what was once typical. In another category, commonly encountered, are the cases where adaptive re-use is feasible as an alternative to destruction. The decisions in each category can be influenced by the rational opinions of the industrial archaeologist, based on knowledge of other surviving examples and comparing their respective merits.

Ideally, therefore, we need a comprehensive survey of London industrial monuments available before considering any threatened site, in order to assess its importance. This is slowly being achieved, but in the meantime GLIAS and other societies are pursuing the 'rescue recording' of sites and areas where demolition or changing technology demand urgent action, and maintaining contacts with the GLC, borough planners, museums, local societies, and other interested parties. In GLIAS this work is co-ordinated by a Recording Group, in close liaison with Borough Correspondents.

The Review

This review covers both major recording projects and preservation schemes (other than conservation and rehabilitation) undertaken since 1972. Recording is divided into two sections: general projects, and specific work carried out in particular London Boroughs. Site names are followed by grid references where necessary, the name of the group involved, and the name of the project leader(s) (in brackets). Where no group name appears, the work was undertaken by GLIAS. Specifically documentary studies, and the professional work of the GLC Historic Buildings Division and London museums, are not included.

Grateful acknowledgement is made to all those who supplied information. Further information and addresses of groups may be obtained from Robert Vickers, GLIAS Recording Group Secretary, c/o the Editor, who would also be grateful to be notified of omissions.

Recording General

Industrial Monuments Survey (R. Vickers, M. Bussell). As part of its work, the GLIAS Recording Group maintains a working register of sites on standard CBA record cards (see L.A. Vol. 1, No. 10). Over 1300 sites are currently listed for the GLC area.

Windmills (M. L. W. Salzer, Mr. L. Hopton). All known surviving windmill sites within 30 miles of central London have been visited, and a record made of the current state of the mill or its remains. All illustrated report will be published by GLIAS.

Steam Engines in London (J. Yates). A comprehensive register of surviving stationary steam engines is being prepared, for publication by GLIAS. A hand list of beam engines was recently published.

Canal Survey (M. Tucker). Most features of canals in the GLC area have been visited and noted, including reservoirs, locks, tunnels, bridges, arms and basins, cottages, winches, stables, and warehouses. A handlist for GLIAS members was published in 1973.

London Transport properties. London Transport Industrial Archaeology Group (P. London). The Group is involved in a continuing project to record the buildings and installations of London Transport, especially those threatened by demolition.

CITY

Preliminary Survey (M. Bussell). 120 sites have been located, mostly in the categories of warehousing, transport, and market trades. Some (mostly larger, non-typical structures) are already well-documented, while others may justify more thorough recording if threatened.

BARKING — No work.

BARNET

Industrial Archaeology in Barnet. Hendon & District Archaeological Society (A. Jeakins). Work progresses on the comprehensive recording of the borough's industrial monuments. These are being taken to include farms and dairies, etc., as well as the more "orthodox" industrial sites. A standard A4 summary record form has been devised; it is intended to deposit these and other records in a local archive.

BEXLEY — No work.

BRENT — No work.

BROMLEY

Crystal Palace Park. London Underground Railway Society (P. R. Davis), London Transport IA Group (P. London), and GLIAS.

Excavation to try to find remains of the experimental railway which operated for a few months during 1864 to test the possibility of using pneumatic propulsion for railways. The railway, overall length about 600 yards, ran in a tunnel for about 200 yards. Excavation was carried out in August 1975 and a tunnel was found, which though too small for the railway tunnel could well have been part of the pneumatic system. Archival research has brought information to light but no plans of the railway. Work will continue in Spring 1976.

CAMDEN

Transport survey. GLIAS and Camden History Society (D. Thomas, J. Lawson). Survey of the area north of St. Pancras and Kings Cross Stations up to Kentish Town started early 1975. Buildings studied include: the 1865 Ale Warehouse built by the Midland Railway for Messrs. Bass the brewers; the Midland Railway's engine shed and locomotive works at Kentish Town; Somers Town goods depot including coal chutes and hydraulic machinery; the

London and North Western Railway's rail/canal transfer warehouse at Camden Town; the bonded warehouse of Gilbey's wines and spirits; and stable complex also of Camden Town built and added to from about 1855 and the 1890's including 2 storey stables. Work continues on the face of rapid demolition. Results will eventually be published.

Fitzrovia (A. B. Hills). This small, densely-developed industrial area is bounded by Oxford Street, Cleveland Street, Percy Street, and Tottenham Court Road. A photographic survey is being made in advance of widespread demolition, to be supplemented by documentary studies (and detailed recording where necessary).

Piano Factory, Fitzroy Road, N.W.1. Camden History Society (A. Cooper). A measured survey was made of this structure; unfortunately, fittings had already been removed. Research and recording of the very localised piano-making industry continues (an outline history of the trade by Leslie T. Newman appeared in *Camden History Review*, No. 1).

CROYDON

Addington Well Waterworks. TQ370 627. London Transport I.A. Group (P. London). The two fine beam engines of 1888 and 1893, by Easton & Anderson, ceased work in 1975 to be replaced by electricity. A film of the engines in steam was made, with commentary by Kenneth Hudson. (A technical report on the engines had been prepared by R. Huitson, Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society). There are hopes to preserve at least one of the engines, not necessarily in-situ.

EALING — No work.

ENFIELD — No work.

GREENWICH

Woolwich Dockyard. TQ427 792. Goldsmith's College (D. Smith, K. Catford, D. Hayton). A building survey was made to complement the excavations reported in *L.A. Excavation Round-up 1972*, Vol. 2, No. 2. Attention was concentrated on the earlier 19th C. structures, notably the 1843 Sawmill, and the Smithery (attributed to Rennie), with its remarkable roof structure of cast-iron arched trusses. Part of this roof has been removed to the Iron-bridge Gorge Museum, Shropshire, for re-erection. The site is being redeveloped for housing.

SLAG — Southwark/Lewisham/Greenwich — Project. Goldsmith's College (D. Smith). Members of an extramural class are engaged in recording specific sites, mostly in these three boroughs, but elsewhere in E. and S.E. London also. Work completed includes surveys at Woolwich Dockyard (see above), and Kirkaldy's (see Southwark). A report on each site is being prepared.

HACKNEY

Shoreditch Survey — see under Tower Hamlets.

HAMMERSMITH

Riverside Wharves. London Museum (R. Fitzgerald) and GLIAS (M. Bussell). Most of the derelict wharves between Hammersmith and Putney Bridges were visited and photographed before demolition. At Crabtree (TQ234 773), records were made of a three-storey 19th C. stable block, where stalls and tethering rings remained.

Fulham Pottery. TQ244 761. Fulham & Hammersmith Hist. Soc., Arch. Section (V. R. Christophers, M. Bussell). A comprehensive inventory and building survey was conducted before demolition in 1975, for publication as part of the final archaeological report.

Wood Lane Refuse Destructor and Disinfecting Station, Shepherd's Bush. TQ236 805. (M. Tucker, R. Vickers). Survey made of patent top-fed refuse destructor of 1904,

its concrete-framed successor of 1950s, and early 20th C. disinfecting station for cleaning and decontamination of clothes, bedding, etc.

Channel Tunnel Terminal Site, White City (J. K. Macqueen). Preliminary documentary and field survey of industrial premises on this large site. Further work shelved when Tunnel construction deferred indefinitely.

HARINGEY — No work.

HARROW — No work.

HAVERING — No work.

HILLINGDON — No work.

HOUNSLOW

Brentford (D. and E. Wood). Photographic survey of the Brentford area carried out as redevelopment threatens a number of interesting buildings, including: Brentford Market built in two stages, 1893 and 1905 (Council inviting suggestions for re-use); Pier House Laundry, Strand-on-the-Green (1905-11); the canal dock area; and buildings on the Butts Farm estate for William Whiteley's Bayswater store, notably workers' housing and dormitories, chapel, and processing and packing sheds, c.1891-5. Documentary studies also proceeding.

ISLINGTON

Borough Survey. Islington Arch. and Hist. Soc. I.A. Group (M. Tucker). This recently-established group has already located 70 sites of interest in the Borough, and reconnaissance continues. Sites recorded include the former Wash House at Essex Road Baths, the former Vinegar Works in Brewery Road; and an early 19th C. warehouse on City Road Basin, used by the Staffordshire pottery firm of Davenport.

Drayton Park Railway Depot. London Transport I.A. Group (P. London). A vehicle depot and workshops for electric traction, opened in 1904 by the Great Northern & City Railway and virtually unaltered since. Closed for operational use in 1975. Extensively photographed, with supporting documentary research.

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA

W.11 Project (D. Thomas). A thorough preliminary survey revealed many sites, including a metal button-makers, a belt-driven steam laundry, and various craft workshops. Particular attention has been given to the two sites noted below.

Lancaster Road/Silchester Road Public Baths. An ornate single-storey brick building, housing four pools, slipper baths, and a laundry. The latter, in one large room, includes two rows of sinks, drying racks, belt-driven washing machines, and a foot-controlled electric spinner. Built in 1888, the building was photographed and surveyed before closure. Listed, and recently the subject of a public inquiry into application for demolition consent, the baths if retained might be used as a community centre — which function it incidentally served in its original use! Recording report to be published.

Bartle's Ironworks, Lancaster Road. GLIAS and Sir William Halcrow I.A. Group. The iron and brass foundry of James Bartle produced innumerable coal-hole covers and other items of street furniture, still to be seen. Later used as Council vehicle depot, but brick hood over hearth remained until the building, with fine cast-iron columns, was demolished in early 1976. Surveyed and photographed: report to be published when documentary work completed.

KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES — No work.

LAMBETH

Riverside and North Lambeth — see Southwark.

Clapham (D. Perrett). A general survey of industries in this area: some sites already well - documented in local library, others fast disappearing and hence the focus of present efforts.

LEWISHAM

SLAG Project — see Greenwich.

MERTON — No work.

NEWHAM

Stratford Locomotive Works. GLIAS (D. Law) and Brentwood I.A. Group. Recording has so far concentrated on the former iron foundry, the carriage repair, pant, and moulding shops. Much of the machinery has gone, but overhead cranes, wooden pattern moulds, and a hydraulic "devil" survive. Work continues.

REDBRIDGE — No work.

RICHMOND — No work.

SOUTHWARK

SLAG Project — see Greenwich.

Southwark & Lambeth Project. GLIAS (D. Thomas, R. Vickers, SLAS, et al. Intensive recording began two years ago in what has always been a heavily-industrialised part of London — the south bank of the river between Rotherhithe and north Lambeth. The major sites so far recorded are noted below.

Hibernia Wharf, Montague Close, S.E.1. Large complex of riverside warehouses built c.1836 with later additions. Construction typical of many riverside warehouses now disappearing. Cold storage system installed end 19th/early 20th century, and warehouse used for storing cheese, butter, etc. Remains of ammonia refrigeration plant.

Stevenson and Howell, Southwark Street, S.E.1. Firm of essence and flavourings manufacturers established c.1890. Built up worldwide market for their products. Moved from Southwark end 1974. GLIAS arrived too late to see most of the machinery, but managed to salvage some of firm's plans and records and get some idea of processes involved.

Bermondsey Street, S.E.1. The high street of Bermondsey which until the 2nd World War was the centre of London's leather industry. Warehouses for leather storage remain for other uses. One warehouse studied was built about 1800/1810 and had wooden columns and beams, an early form of construction.

A bakery producing individual rolls and bread was surveyed, with gas ovens. This type of bakery is becoming rare in London.

W. A. Crips, George Row, S.E.16. A complete survey of the workshop was made as this is probably the last surviving chain makers in Bermondsey. Produced chains for river lighters, and all kinds of iron work for other uses. Belt driven machinery dating from early this century. The business is unlikely to last much longer.

Tower Bridge — maintenance workshop. To ensure that the steam engines and hydraulic machinery of the Bridge could be repaired as quickly as possible, a workshop was built at the south end of the Bridge. On the ground floor a forge and carpenter's workshop; above, the machine shop with belt-driven (originally from a Tange steam engine) lathes and drills. The machinery remains, including a lathe of 1895 and other equipment of the same date. With electric motors being installed for the Bridge the workshop will no longer be required.

Bennett's Wharf, Bermondsey Wall East, S.E.16. A 6-storey brick warehouse with cast-iron columns and wooden floors was recorded before demolition in 1975. Built in the 1830s-40s, it was used as a grain mill and warehouse until the 1930s and was typical of many in this area. An illustrated report has been published.

Kirkaldy's Works, 99 Southwark Street, S.E.1 (D. Smith). David Kirkaldy was one of the pioneers of material testing, so essential in engineering, and established himself here in a 4-storey brick and stone works in 1873. Much of the original machinery survives, and its future is under discussion. Meanwhile, the building and equipment have been surveyed and photographed.

SUTTON

High Street, Sutton (I. G. Bradley). Redevelopment plans were announced for a site of several acres adjoining the High Street. A preliminary survey showed few sites were deserving of a detailed record, but a watching brief is being maintained.

TOWER HAMLETS

Commercial Road Goods Depot (T. Smith). Large range of 6-storey warehousing with rail access, built by London Tilbury & Southend Rly in 1886 for traffic from Tilbury Docks. A survey was made of the building structure, hydraulic cranes, and lifts, before demolition in 1975.

Shoreditch (D. Thomas, R. Vickers). An area containing many small workshops, especially of late 19th C. A predominance of small firms connected with furniture trade, including a chair-frame makers and upholsterer's spring makers, have been studied, also an engraver and die sinker. Report to be published.

Boundary Estate, Cookham Buildings Laundry (R. Vickers). This 1895 estate was the LCC's first high-density development to replace slums by well-built housing for working class families. A laundry was provided for tenants. Although out of use for about 7 years, this retains washing stalls, hydro extractors, and drying racks. On the first floor was a community centre with cards room, tea/coffee bar, and small stage. Original drawings survive.

WALTHAM FOREST

Essex Brewery, St. James Street, Walthamstow. GLIAS, Walthamstow Adult Education Centre, and Vestry House Museum (A. Tayler). This now demolished brewery was recorded, with special attention to a Boby malt mill and the distinctive lucan. A former engineer at the brewery, the third generation of his family to work there, has been tape-recorded describing his work and life.

WANDSWORTH — No work.

WESTMINSTER

Grosvenor Road Hydraulic Power Station. London Museum (R. Fitzgerald) and GLIAS (D. Thomas). Photographic recording was carried out before demolition. Although out of use, four pumps remained — initially steam, later converted to electricity. A well-equipped workshop was still operating. A tunnel led under Grosvenor Road to the riverside wharf from which coal supplies were once obtained. Good documentary records survive for this site, one of the five power stations of the London Hydraulic Power Co. (Only one station, on Wapping Wall, E.1, is still in use.)

Excavation Round-up 1975: late entry

BROMLEY

Lower Road/Kent Road, St. Mary Cray. TQ 470 673. Orpington and District Arch. Soc. (M. Fisher). Exploratory excavation in one corner of a 7ha development area yielded Roman pottery, mostly 2nd century, and building material. A tributary channel of the River Cray was sectioned. WC.

Poverest Road. TQ 468 676. Orpington Museum (Mrs. S. Palmer). Roman. WC.

W. T. Morrell, Short's Gardens, W. C. 2 (D. Thomas). This old-established bookbinders' in Covent Garden is one of the most interesting craft workshops to survive in the area. Photographic recording has concentrated on the men at work, their tools and techniques.

PRESERVATION

CAMDEN & WESTMINSTER

Canalside Walk, and Winch. Camden Council have opened a stretch of the Regent's Canal towpath between Hampstead Road Bridge and London Zoo, where a similar stretch opened by Westminster Council runs westwards to Maida Vale. In Camden, discreet but informative plaques have been erected to explain the function of various canal-side features. A typical lock gate winch, formerly on the Lee Navigation at Limehouse, was restored and re-erected adjoining Hampstead Road Locks (TQ287 841) by GLIAS in 1972, again with a plaque.

HARINGEY

Markfield Road Beam Engine. TQ344 888. GLIAS et al. (A. Spackman). The fine 1886 compound beam engine last pumped sewage in 1964. Restoration work has been carried out over the last few years. Not yet open to the public.

HOUNSLOW

Kew Bridge Pumping Station, Kew Bridge Road. Kew Bridge Engines Trust. Pumping station contains 4 Cornish beam engines and a unique 'Bull' engine, pumping water to London until 1944. An 1820 Boulton & Watt engine has been restored to working order and is in steam at weekends. Work has started on the other engines, and the ornamental brick standpipe tower is presently clad in scaffolding. The intention is to create a museum of London's water supply.

SOUTHWARK

Brunel Exhibition Project, Tunnel Road, Rotherhithe, S.E.16 (N. Falk). With professional advice and the support of other groups, the Project's organisers are working on the restoration of the engine house and tunnel shaft at the south end of the Thames Tunnel. Construction of this began in 1825 under Marc Brunel, later assisted by his son Isambard; the tunnel now carries the East London line of London Transport. It is planned to establish a permanent exhibition in the engine house, commemorating the achievements of the Brunels and in particular the story of the Tunnel.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this review has given some idea of the scope of industrial archaeological fieldwork in London over the last four years. Much remains to be done: in several boroughs no work has (to our knowledge) taken place, while in others the apparently extensive activities are in fact only scratching the surface. Local IA societies and groups are always in need of active assistance in recording work. Information on GLIAS may be obtained from Jill Baulch, 28 Goodwyns Vale, London, N.10; other societies may be reached at the addresses given in the societies list published in *L.A.* Vol. 2, No. 9.

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