



GREATER LONDON INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER 315 • ISSN 0264-2395 • AUGUST 2021

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 January 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 different areas in London. The walks all start at 2.30pm and non-members are welcome. There are a limited number of places available on each walk 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. All walks will be subject to any COVID restrictions that may be in place on the day.

- 7 August Sat SURREY DOCKS, led by Andrew Turner
11 September Sat WHITE CITY IN THE 21st CENTURY, led by John Goodier
2 October Sat KENSAL NEW TOWN, led by Peter Finch

OTHER EVENTS

AUGUST

- 1 Sun CROYDON AIRPORT OPEN DAY. 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
- 1 Sun KIRKALDY TESTING MUSEUM OPEN DAY. 99 Southwark Street, SE1 0JF. Web: www.testingworks.org.uk
- 15 Sun CENTRAL PECKHAM WALK. A Peckham Society walk led by Peter Frost (duration 1½ hours). Meet at Peckham Rye Station, SE15 4RX at 2pm. Web: www.peckhamsociety.org.uk
- 19-26 AIA 2021 ANNUAL CONFERENCE. The conference will be a series of virtual events delivered via Zoom. Web: <https://industrial-archaeology.org/conferences/annual-conference/>
- 29 Sun EPPING ONGAR RAILWAY CLASSIC CAR RALLY. Epping Ongar Railway special event. Web: www.eorailway.co.uk

SEPTEMBER

- 2 Thur EXPLORING THAMES CREEKS. A London Canal Museum talk by Simon Judge. Talks will resume in the museum when possible. In the meantime, talks will be held online using Zoom. Web: www.canalmuseum.org.uk
- 4 Sat NUNHEAD CEMETERY OPEN DAY. 11am - 5pm, guided tours throughout the day. Web: www.fonc.org.uk
- 4-5 OPEN HOUSE WEEKEND. Web: <https://open-city.org.uk/open-house>
- 5 Sun ONE TREE HILL WALK. A Peckham Society walk led by Peter Frost (duration 1 hour). Meet at St Augustine's Church SE23 3LE 2pm. Web: www.peckhamsociety.org.uk

- 5 Sun KIRKALDY TESTING MUSEUM OPEN DAY. 99 Southwark Street, SE1 0JF. Web: www.testingworks.org.uk
- 9-12 INDUSTRIAL EXPLORER WEEKEND – WEST YORKSHIRE. Details from Heritage of Industry Ltd, The Gables, 20 Main Road, East Hagbourne, Oxon OX11 9LN UK. Tel: 01235 352275 (9am - 5.30pm GMT) Email: info@heritageofindustry.co.uk Web: www.heritageofindustry.co.uk
- 11-12 EPPING ONGAR RAILWAY STEAM GALA. Epping Ongar Railway special event. Web: www.eorailway.co.uk
- 18-19 KEMPTON GREAT ENGINES STEAMING WEEKEND. (Provisional and dependant on government guidelines allowing the museum to reopen to the public). 10.30am-4pm. Adults £7, concessions £6, Children (to 16) free. Feltham Hill Road, Hanworth, Middlesex TW13 6XH. Web: www.kemptonsteam.org
- 20 Mon WHAT A LOAD OF RUBBISH – THE HISTORY AND INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY OF SOLID WASTES MANAGEMENT. A Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group Zoom meeting and talk by Peter Daniel (Somerset IA Society). 7.30pm. Web: <http://biag.org.uk/event/load-rubbish-history-industrial-archaeology-solid-wastes-management/>

OCTOBER

- 7 Thur BRAUNSTON – CANAL AGE TRANSPORT HUB. A London Canal Museum talk by John Pomfret. Talks will resume in the museum when possible. In the meantime, talks will be held online using Zoom. Web: www.canalmuseum.org.uk
- 16-17 KEMPTON GREAT ENGINES STEAMING WEEKEND. (Provisional and dependant on government guidelines allowing the museum to reopen to the public). 10.30am-4pm. Adults £7, concessions £6, Children (to 16) free. Feltham Hill Road, Hanworth, Middlesex TW13 6XH. Web: www.kemptonsteam.org
- 24 Sun TRANSPORTFEST 2021. London Bus Museum end-of-season event for all road transport vehicles. Web: www.londonbusmuseum.com

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 GLIAS walks season started with the Quintons, Mike and Kate, leading a Covid Conscious group, Finding Things in Finsbury starting at the Angel.

Kate commented: 'We had two GLIAS moments – a kind resident let us into the Metropolitan Water Board HQ at the New River Head and we saw a magnificent hall. At Bevin Court a lady who was doing her garden let us into the entrance hall so we were able to admire the staircase. Various people on the walk told us things we didn't know, so I have added to my notes.'

This Newsletter has been produced under a new regime with Mike Wither taking over the membership database using up-to-date software. The Society was using a package last updated in November 1995; we are interested in History but it would be unlikely to survive Windows 11!

GLIAS has taken a step into Social Media with a Facebook Group, 'GLIAS (Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society)'. So far we have 57 members.

Does anyone have expertise in or views on Social Media? Do get in touch with chairman@glias.org.uk.

Looking forward to seeing some of you at the GLIAS walks over the summer. *Dan Hayton*

PAUL WENNING SOWAN BSC FRGS FGS FLS, APRIL 1940 TO JUNE 4, 2021

News has reached us of the death of Paul Sowan, aged 81, who was a long-time member of many Industrial History related organisations including GLIAS, the Newcomen Society, Association for Industrial Archaeology, and Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society. His primary interest being man-made underground structures, he joined Subterranea Britannica in 1975. He chaired Sub Brit for nearly a quarter of a century, He was elected CNHSS secretary in 1963 and was its President twice then permanent Honorary Librarian and Archivist until his death.

He was educated at Selhurst Grammar School followed by a science degree in London. He taught sciences in Croydon Secondary Schools until retirement.

Paul spoke to GLIAS on a number of occasions. The first one was given at Barts Medical School in March 1985 on Archaeology Underground, that was followed by the visit described here.

I remember a GLIAS visit being led, by Paul, down a 'manhole' near the north end of the M23 on the A22 on 30 October 1986 to explore part of the Godstone mine where hearthstone was extracted. Paul was in his element making his way through 'squeezes' into areas where I dared not try to fit.

Paul represented CNHSS on the organising committee of SERIAC from its earliest days. He spoke about quarrying at SERIAC in 1988 and led a tour of the Betchworth chalk pits and kilns the following day. He was joint organiser with GLIAS of the SERIAC conference held at the Royal Russell School on his patch in Croydon in 2014. A notable reunion occurred when the chef in charge of catering recognised his 'old' teacher, who was looking for his vegetarian lunch.

Paul was a Fellow of the Geographical Society and the Geological Society and has an impressive list of publications below and above ground. Paul was not one for 'new technology' only answering his telephone at set times and eschewing the internet entirely so 'snail mail' was the way to get in touch.



(left) Paul in white just visible getting the hole ready for GLIAS to descend (photo D. Perrett); (right) © "Inside Croydon"

David and Olwyn Perrett represented GLIAS at Paul's funeral, on 1 July, which reflected his national and international connections with contributions from his sister in law, CNHSS, the chair of Sub Brit, and a written contribution from a mining friend in Holland. *David Perrett and Danny Hayton*

A WELCOME RETURN TO GLIAS WALKS: FINDING THINGS IN FINSBURY

The first GLIAS walk of the season, and the first since 2019, took place on 3 July.

A dozen people met at Angel Underground Station. We spent a short time looking at the station entrances, both new and old, before proceeding along St John Street and entering Chadwell Street.

Here it was much quieter and we were able to look at Sadler's Wells and at buildings and artifacts of the New River Head. Much remains on this site, including the engine house, the laboratory building and a small pond. Members of the group were able to add various interesting details, for example, the apartments now in the laboratory building have retained their original laboratory style glass cabinets.

When we reached the Metropolitan Water Board headquarters, where there are also now flats, we had a 'GLIAS moment'. A resident invited us in to look at the grand and spacious hall with its domed ceiling.

We then passed Finsbury Town Hall and continued up Amwell Street to see a different aspect of the New River Head. Further on there are numerous small shops and other details such as the remains of signs to air raid shelters. Close to Pentonville Road is the covered upper reservoir, which is still in use by Thames Water.

Our second 'GLIAS moment' was at Bevin Court, where a resident who was working in her garden, saw our interest and let us into the entrance hall to see the stunning Lubetkin staircase.

We viewed a blue plaque to Lenin in Percy Circus, the remains of a tram shed just off King's Cross Road and Derby Buildings, an interesting example of social housing built in 1864 and based on ideas from the Great Exhibition of 1851.

We crossed the bridge over Thameslink, where there is a ventilator, and the Metropolitan and Circle lines.

From Wicklow Street, if one is tall enough, it is possible to see the remains of the old King's Cross Station platforms. The walk ended on Gray's Inn Road opposite the site of Herbert & Sons weighing machine factory. As leaders we learnt quite a few things we didn't know about the area. I am sure that other GLIAS members have their own favourite parts of London that they could share with the group in future walks.

Kate and Mike Quinton

DISAPPEARING GASHOLDERS

It was mentioned in Stop Press at the very end of the April 2021 GLIAS Newsletter (No. 313 – see version on the GLIAS website) that the Colonel at Kensal Green was being demolished.

Very probably all gasholders there have now gone.

The Colonel was a large holder built in 1891 with a capacity of 7.5 million cubic feet. There is a photograph of this holder in London's Industrial Archaeology number 2 on page 18; taken by David Hamilton in 1980 it shows the holder in use with the lifts inflated. The Kensal Green gasworks are notable in that modern all-gas flats designed by Maxwell Fry were built here in the 1930s. These are listed grade II* and have survived.

The photograph shown here (below left) was taken by Robin Wilson on 17 March this year and shows the start of demolition of the Colonel's guide frame.



The holder near the North Circular Road at TQ 290 919 (above right) has also gone. This was a relatively recent gasholder built in 1912 which had decorative finials giving it a 19th-century appearance. An attractive feature of the local skyline it could be seen from far away including from tube trains on the Piccadilly line. This gasholder, the last at New Southgate, was decommissioned in 2001 and demolished in September 2020. The photograph shows the holder looking north-west in January 2016. *Bob Carr*

KING'S CROSS REWIRING AND THE EAST COAST MAINLINE UPGRADE

The overhead wires at King's Cross suburban station have been renewed. You could see many hundred yards of bright shiny copper overhead – shining in the sunshine the wires made quite a remarkable sight. Hundreds of miles of overhead traction wires must represent a major capital investment for Network Rail. Fortunately this copper is protected by a 25 kV electric shock. After a few days the new copper had become dull and it was soon no longer apparent that there was any copper overhead.

For high speed, trains require about ten tonnes of copper per kilometre of track. Powerful electric locomotives each contain over eight tonnes of copper. Using adequate conductor cross sections saves energy in rail transport and increases the reliability of existing rail infrastructures.

Just north of King's Cross station a third bore of Gasworks Tunnel, closed in 1977, has been reopened adding two extra tracks to the station approach. The trackwork immediately beyond the station has been substantially re-laid and the control of the signalling system between London and Peterborough transferred from the King's Cross signal box to the Railway Operations Centre in York. The signal box at King's Cross will be demolished. More than 6km of new track has been laid, 30 new sets of points and 50 new signals installed and over 20km of new overhead wires put up.

All this work necessitated the closure of the line. The route northwards from King's Cross was closed from Friday 4 June through to the following Monday. Towards the end of the week beginning 31 May passengers

were being handed a commemorative travel pack. The two photographs show the pack and its contents.



Gasworks Tunnel consists of three bores, the two-track tunnel on the east side was built 1874-8 and was the second of the three bores to be constructed. It is this tunnel that has been brought back into use. The central tunnel dates from 1852 and that on the western side was built in 1889-92. Thanks are due to Malcolm Tucker for these dates. *Bob Carr*

FROM BARDON HILL TO THE THAMES AT CHARLTON

When waiting for a train at a railway station in South London you might sometimes be surprised by a freight train passing through without stopping. Perhaps you think that this goods train is fairly local – if you knew where it came from and where it is going to you could be surprised?

As an example here is a freight train that ran between Bardon Hill Quarry in Leicestershire and Angerstein Wharf on the River Thames at Charlton. The train in question left Bardon Hill at 23.20 on Sunday evening and the journey to London was not just southwards down the Midland Mainline. It turned north through Leicester to Syston, and then travelled through Melton Mowbray, Oakham, Corby, and thence to Kettering where it was due at 2.10 am. From then on the journey was straightforward, south down the Midland Mainline to Cricklewood.

It then turned off to the west passing through Acton Central, Chiswick, and Barnes Bridge. Then on through Wandsworth Town, Denmark Hill, Peckham Rye, Hither Green, Sidcup, Crayford, Slade Green, Erith, Plumstead, Woolwich Dockyard, and Charlton to Angerstein Wharf – due at 6.37am on Monday.

This train which probably only ran once at these times was pulled by a 3,300 bhp diesel-electric locomotive, most of which were made in London Ontario. The load was 2,000 tonnes and the maximum speed 60 mph. It would very likely have consisted of twenty 100 ton bogie wagons. From a railway platform you cannot see if hopper wagons of this type are loaded or empty.

Several freight trains bring aggregate from Bardon Hill quarry to Charlton each week. It is fairly certain that the load is granite chippings which at Charlton are mixed with tar to make Tarmac, used for road surfacing.

The train which ran to Charlton overnight was probably diverted via Oakham and Corby because of engineering work. Most trains from Bardon Hill take a more straightforward route to London.

Throughout the day other freight trains thread their tortuous ways through Greater London. Quite a few of them come from well away from London and go to destinations which are also in another part of the country. *Bob Carr*

GLIAS VISIT TO KENSINGTON PUBLIC BATHS, MARCH 1974

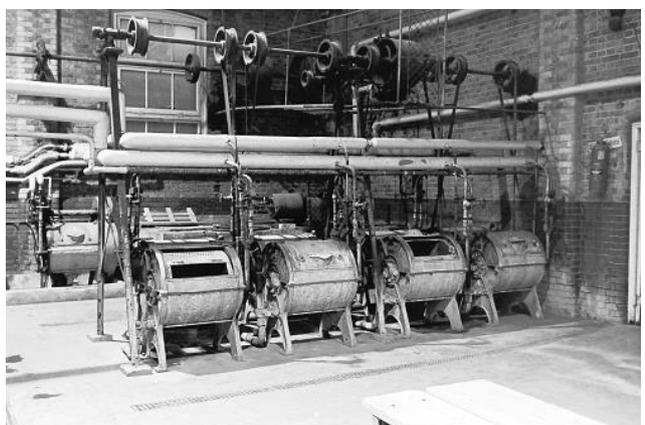
For many decades the sooty and foggy atmosphere of London prevailed and most housing had few facilities for personal hygiene and laundry. The building of public baths and wash houses was an important step forward in general health and cleanliness.

Kensington Public Baths was one such example. Built in 1888 on the junction of Silchester Road and Lancaster Road in London W11, it provided 1st and 2nd class swimming baths for men and ladies as well as individual slipper baths and a public laundry, all accessed through a number of entrances.

The advent of indoor sanitation, hot water and washing machines later replaced these vital social amenities. Threatened with closure, in March 1974 an evening visit was arranged by GLIAS to record the timeworn and rather dilapidated features.

The Baths were later demolished and housing covers the site. Very few such Baths remain today but one fine example is in Prince of Wales Road, Kentish Town. *Sidney Ray*

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



WALKS WEBSITE

GLIAS member Kevin Abbey has produced a London walks website based on years of research visiting the capital from his home in Bristol.

Kevin says: 'Whilst I'm not a Londoner and I'm not an 'industrial archaeologist', I've always been fascinated with London and its history including its many industrial aspects.

'My fascination with London began as a teenager, when my 'liberal' parents allowed me to take a train from Bristol to London as I was desperate to visit the capital. (I am 74 – not sure many parents would be so liberal these days!).

'Since those days I have visited hundreds of times, exploring different aspects and areas of the city, and when I finally retired I started to take notes as I walked and with the aid of further research made them up into actual walks. The persuasion of friends to photocopy these walks for them so they could use them when they visited London, led me to more recently put these walks onto a website.'

These self-guided walks are free and completely 'non commercial' and can be seen at www.mylondonwalks.com

STEAM TO WINDSOR

This summer London has a regular steam train service – maybe for the first time since the late 1960s.

Rail tour operator Steam Dreams is running two trains on Tuesdays until mid September from Victoria station. Departures are 11.22 and 14.23, following different routes to Windsor and Eton Riverside. Dave Thomas says the morning service follows the more interesting route.

The rostered loco is LNER B1 Mayflower which will be towed back on the return journey by a diesel.

Further details at: www.royalwindsorsteamexpress.co.uk

STRATFORD LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

On a cold, wet day in November 1974 a short visit was made by the GLIAS Recording Group to the former Stratford Locomotive Works in East London (GLIAS Newsletter 35).

There has been railway works on this site from the 1840s, both building locomotives and repairing them and carriages.

The Great Eastern Railway/LNER operated the site from the 1860s to 1948, then by British Rail until 1991 and has been well documented and recorded.

In the 1970s part of the site became the Stratford London International Freight Terminal. Further demolition and building took place in the 1990s and it then became the new Stratford International Station and the Westfield Stratford City shopping centre which opened in 2011.

Recording conditions were difficult and restricted by time limitations to the basics of exteriors, interiors and details. *Sidney Ray*

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



HYDRAULIC STAGE MACHINERY IN THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE

In last month's Newsletter the very informative article on hydraulics in theatreland by Paul Sadler of Delstar Engineering added to the survey of hydraulic power in London by Tim Smith in LIA18. Paul mentions the hydraulic machinery under the stage in the Theatre Royal and I can update readers on the position there.

Originally the stage consisted of four front lifting and tilting platforms, some 40ft long and 6ft wide, that were independently driven from the LHP mains. The main rams and their control levers were under the stage. When lowered they were flush with the stage but could rise by about 8ft carrying theatre props and actors. Working together they would create suitable illusions for spectacular scenes. At some point two of the stages (also called bridges) were removed. These details are taken from a full description of the theatre in the 1910 Stage Year Book. The remaining system was restored to full working order in about 2000 by Geoff Wallis and his team from Dorothea Restoration Engineers.

In January 2019 Geoff contacted me to say that the theatre had been stripped out in preparation for a £60m refurbishment and the hydraulic stage was to be removed. There was to be a final run of the hydraulic systems in a couple of weeks for limited number of theatre historians plus a few others interested in machines and did I want to go. Silly question!



So, on 26 January, having been admitted by the security guards, Ollie and I entered the theatre's magnificent foyer. We then walked into the empty stalls to be greeted with a superb breakfast buffet provided by Andrew Lloyd Webber, who owned the theatre. We ate and mixed with the theatre historians, who numbered about 70, chatted with Sir Neil Cossons, who along with Geoff seemed to be about the only other IA persons there. Then

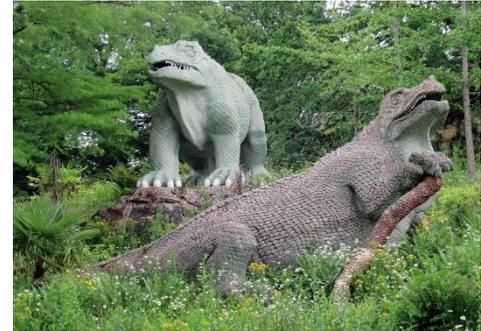
we were told to watch the stage, which started to move and a light show with music, smoke started their performance. Geoff and his son were controlling the hydraulics of the two stages. The show lasted for some 10 minutes then visitors were allowed on the stage and down into the machinery hall. Trying to work the control levers myself I found very difficult. After all this a champagne lunchtime reception was on offer. Since no museum had shown interest, the hydraulics were all removed the following week and scrapped. A sad end for an amazing system.

My photographs show the start of the show and the hydraulic rams below stage. I did film the event and thought about loading it on the GLIAS website but then came across the following video of the day. It's well worth watching: www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Ghogrhv_x4On

David Perrett

FACIAL SURGERY FOR CRYSTAL PALACE MEGALOSAURUS COMPLETED

In February 2020 Historic England announced that the 30+ Grade I-listed sculptures that make up the Crystal Palace Dinosaurs have been put on the 'At Risk' Register (GLIAS Newsletter 312). The replicas were installed on their island at the time of move of the 1851 Crystal Palace from Hyde Park to Sydenham Heights in 1853-1855. They were the first ever attempt to model full-scale replicas of extinct animals. Many of dinosaurs have cracks in their concrete skin and it is believed that vandals may have got onto the island and broke off the nose of the Megalosaurus. An A&E mission was made possible thanks to a grant from the Culture Recovery Fund, dedicated fundraising by the Friends of Crystal Palace Dinosaurs and the commitment of Bromley Council, together with support and advice from HE.



The dinosaur has had an emergency 'face-op' with 22 new teeth, a new nose and lightweight 'prosthetic' jaw completed just in time for lockdown restrictions easing. The repaired Megalosaurus is the one at the back in my photograph taken this July. *David Perrett*

For a fuller story see <https://cpdinosaurs.org/>

MISSING PERSON

GLIAS received a family subscription from a new member Paul O'Hara, O HARA P A from the bank statement, on 26 June but I've received no more details by post or email. Does anyone know Paul? *Dan Hayton*

BOOKS

• 'The East End Canal Tales', by Carolyn Clark

146 pages. Price £9.95. Buy from London Canal Museum bookshop (actual and on-line) or the author's website: shoreditchtales.com

One of the anniversaries that was lost in last year's pandemic lockdowns was the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Regent's Canal. The majority of events to celebrate the occasion were cancelled including the formal launch of this book. Knowing of the publication coming out I had asked Carolyn to speak at what was planned to be GLIAS's 50th anniversary SERIAC conference but that had to go too. So here is a somewhat delayed review.

Although the canal runs for 8.6 miles from near Paddington Basin to the Limehouse Basin Carolyn's book concentrates on the canal's section from near Islington to the Thames, and focuses on the people who worked on the canal and the industries that lined the banks and basins. She has tracked down many canal folks and workers to tell their stories. The largest section details the many industries that were alongside the canal. These ranged from the obvious such as gasworks, breweries and furniture makers to unusual trades such as ice makers and confectionery manufacturers. Each section is copiously illustrated with both often unpublished photographs and Victorian line illustrations, often from trade literature. Tales of life by the canal I found fascinating but not sure that I would like to have gone swimming in the canal in the 1950s! This is a comprehensive study but it is not an academic tome – it is well written and an easy read. *David Perrett*

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 October newsletter by 15 September.