



Calshot Castle

**Calshot and the Mulberry Harbours, see page 5**



Lepe Caisson construction site today

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## SIHG Newsletter No 225 February 2020

Enquires to Programme Co-ordinator Bob Bryson: 01483 577809, [meetings@sihg.org.uk](mailto:meetings@sihg.org.uk).

### The 44th season of SIHG

#### Industrial Archaeology Lectures at Guildford

Church House Guildford, 20 Alan Turing Road, Guildford GU2 7YF

mainly alternate Tuesdays, 19:30-21:30 (map: [www.sihg.org.uk](http://www.sihg.org.uk)) Single lectures at £5, payable on the night, are open to all.

#### February - March 2020

- 4 Feb **The History of Westland Aircraft & Reminiscences of an Apprentice**  
*Bill McNaught, retired aerospace & defence industry managing director*
- 18 Feb **Industrial History at the Mills Archive**  
*Ron & Mildred Cookson, The Mills Archive Trust*
- 3 Mar **Sentinels of the Sea - The Amazing History of Light Houses**  
*Mark Lewis, Member of the Association of Lighthouse Keepers*

### SIHG Lectures in Leatherhead Spring 2020

Thursday Mornings 10:00-12:00

Room G6 The Institute, 67 High Street Leatherhead KT22 8AH

Non-member full fee £50 SIHG member £45. Single lectures at £5, payable on the day, are open to all.

#### February - March 2020

- 6 Feb **The Industrial Archaeology of Brooklands** / *Julian Temple*
- 13 Feb **Royal Trains** / *Graeme Payne*
- 20 Feb **HALF TERM**
- 27 Feb **Britain's Military Railways** / *Geoff Roles*
- 5 Mar **Surrey Iron Railway** / *Eric Shaw, Wandle Industrial Museum*
- 12 Mar **Royal Navy Hydrographic Surveying** / *John Partington*
- 19 Mar **Members' Talks**

A full Events Diary is no longer included  
in the Newsletter, as the information is easily available online  
via the LINKS on our website, [www.sihg.org.uk](http://www.sihg.org.uk)

# SERIAC2020

Goldsmiths College, New Cross, London

Saturday 2 May 2020 09:15 - 17:00

*SERIAC is being organised this year  
by Greater London Industrial Archaeology Society  
as part of GLIAS's 50th anniversary celebrations*

Talks include:

Bicentenary of the Regents Canal  
150 years of the Victoria Embankment  
Baron Marks of Woolwich & his Cliff Railways  
Greenwich & other Timeballs  
SE London & the Global Telecoms Industry  
Brunel's Tunnel & its Future Direction

Programme enclosed

**A fantastic day out for only £14**

(NB Early May Bank Holiday is on Friday 8 May)

## Venues, & Contacts of Other Organizations

- Amberley Museum & Heritage Centre:**  
Amberley Railway Station BN18 9L;  
[www.amberleymuseum.co.uk](http://www.amberleymuseum.co.uk); 01798 831370.
- Ancient Technology Centre :** Damerham Road, Cranborne,  
Dorset BH21 5RP; 01725 517618,  
[www.ancienttechnologycentre.co.uk](http://www.ancienttechnologycentre.co.uk),
- Anne of Cleves House:** 52 Southover High St, Lewes,  
Sussex BN7 1JA; 01273 474610.
- AIA, Association for Industrial Archaeology :**  
[www.industrial-archaeology.org/](http://www.industrial-archaeology.org/).
- Basingstoke Canal, Surrey & Hants Canal Society:**  
the Pavilion, Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham  
GU24 8AZ; [www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk](http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk).
- Basingstoke Canal Society:** 20:00; Parish Pavilion,  
Recreation Ground, Station Road, Chobham, GU24 8AJ;  
[www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/](http://www.basingstoke-canal.org.uk/), contact - Malcolm  
Brickwood, [corona1066@yahoo.com](mailto:corona1066@yahoo.com), 07437 200021.
- BIAG, Berkshire Industrial Archaeology Group:** 19:30; £2-  
50; St Mary's Church Hall, Castle Street, Reading, RG1  
7RD; [www.biag.org.uk](http://www.biag.org.uk).
- Bluebell Railway:** Sheffield Park Station, East Sussex  
TN22 3QL; [www.bluebell-railway.com](http://www.bluebell-railway.com); 01825 720800 .
- British Postal Museum Store:** Unit 7, Imprimo Park,  
Debden Ind Est, Lenthall Rd, Loughton IG10 3UE;  
[www.postalheritage.org.uk](http://www.postalheritage.org.uk); 020 7239 2570.
- Brixton Windmill:** Windmill Gardens, West end of Blenheim  
Gardens, Off Brixton Hill, London SW2 5EU;  
[www.brixtonwindmill.org](http://www.brixtonwindmill.org).
- Brooklands:** Brooklands Rd, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 0QN;  
[www.brooklandsmuseum.com](http://www.brooklandsmuseum.com); 01932 857381.
- Brunel Museum:** Railway Avenue, Rotherhithe, London SE16  
4LF; [www.brunel-museum.org.uk](http://www.brunel-museum.org.uk); 020 7231 3840.
- Bursledon Brickworks:** Coal Park Lane, Swanwick, South-  
ampton SO31 7GW; [www.bursledonbrickworks.org.uk](http://www.bursledonbrickworks.org.uk);  
01489 576248.
- Chatham Historic Dockyard:** Kent ME4 4TZ;  
[www.thedockyard.co.uk](http://www.thedockyard.co.uk); 01634 823800.
- Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron & Darby Houses:**  
Dale Road, Ironbridge, Shropshire, TF8 7DQ,  
[www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk), 01952 433424,.
- CKA, Council for Kentish Archaeology:**  
7, Sandy Ridge, Borrough Green, TN15 8HP.
- CNHSS, Croydon Natural History & Scientific Society:** UR  
Church Hall, Addiscombe Grove, E Croydon CR0 5LP;  
<http://cnhss.co.uk>; 0208 668 1431.
- Crofton Beam Engines:** Crofton, Marlborough, Wiltshire SN8  
3DW; [www.croftonbeamengines.org](http://www.croftonbeamengines.org).
- Crossness Engines:** The Old Works, Crossness STW,  
Belvedere Road, Abbey Wood, London SE2 9AQ;  
[www.crossness.org.uk](http://www.crossness.org.uk); 020 8311 3711.
- Croydon Airport Society:** Airport House, Purley Way,  
Croydon CR0 0XZ; [www.historiccroydonairport.org.uk/](http://www.historiccroydonairport.org.uk/)
- DBRG, Domestic Buildings Research Group (Surrey):**  
East Horsley Village Hall, Kingston Avenue, East Horsley,  
Surrey KT24 6QT (O.S. ref TQ091542); [www.dbrg.org.uk](http://www.dbrg.org.uk).
- Didcot Railway Centre:** Didcot Parkway railway station,  
Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 7NJ;  
[www.didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk](http://www.didcotrailwaycentre.org.uk); 01235-817200.
- Docklands History Group:** Museum of London Docklands,  
No 1 Warehouse, West India Quay, Hertsmere Rd,  
Canary Wharf, London E14 4AL;  
[www.docklandshistorygroup.org.uk](http://www.docklandshistorygroup.org.uk); 01689 851982.
- Fetcham U3A Industrial Heritage Group:** Fetcham Village  
Hall; [www.fetchamu3a.org.uk/industrialheritage1.htm](http://www.fetchamu3a.org.uk/industrialheritage1.htm).
- Gatwick Aviation Museum:** Vallance-Byways, Lowfield  
Heath Road, Charlwood RH6 0BT;  
[www.gatwick-aviation-museum.co.uk](http://www.gatwick-aviation-museum.co.uk); 01293 862417.
- GLIAS, Greater London Industrial History Society:** The  
Gallery, Alan Baxter Associates, 75 Cowcross Street,  
Farringdon, EC1; [www.glias.org.uk](http://www.glias.org.uk); [www.glias.org.uk](http://www.glias.org.uk).
- Greenwich Industrial History:** Old Bakehouse, rear of Age  
Exchange Centre, opp Blackheath Station, Bennett Park,  
11 Blackheath Village, SE3 9LA; [http://](http://greenwichindustrialhistory.blogspot.com)  
[greenwichindustrialhistory.blogspot.com](http://greenwichindustrialhistory.blogspot.com).
- Guildford Museum:** Castle Arch, Guildford, Surrey GU1  
3SX; [www.guildford.gov.uk/museum](http://www.guildford.gov.uk/museum), 01483 444751.
- Hampshire Industrial Archaeology Society (HIAS):**  
Underhill Centre, St. John's Road, Hedge End, Hants  
SO30 4AF; [www.hias.org.uk](http://www.hias.org.uk); 01962 855200.
- Haslemere Educational Museum:**  
78 High Street, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2LA;  
[www.haslemeremuseum.co.uk](http://www.haslemeremuseum.co.uk); 01428 642112
- Kirkaldy Testing Station :** 99 Southwark Street, SE1 0JF.  
[www.testingmuseum.org.uk](http://www.testingmuseum.org.uk)
- Honeywood Museum:**  
Honeywood Walk, Carshalton SM6 3NX.
- IWA, Inland Waterways Association:**  
[www.waterways.org.uk](http://www.waterways.org.uk); 0203 612 9624.
- Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Enginuity:** Ironbridge, Sat Nav  
TF8 7DQ, [www.ironbridge.org.uk](http://www.ironbridge.org.uk), 01952 433424
- IWIAS, Isle of Wight Industrial Archaeology Society:**  
[www.iwias.org.uk](http://www.iwias.org.uk).
- Kempton Steam Museum:** Snakey Lane, off elevated section  
of A316, Hanworth, Middx; entrance TW13 7ND;  
[www.kemptonsteam.org](http://www.kemptonsteam.org); 01932 765328.
- KAS, Kent Archaeological Society:**  
[www.kentarchaeology.org.uk](http://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk).
- Key Bridge Steam Museum:**  
see London Museum of Water and Steam.
- LDLHS, Leatherhead & District Local History Society:**  
The Institute, 67 High Street, Leatherhead KT22 8AH;  
[www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk](http://www.leatherheadlocalhistory.org.uk). Leatherhead  
Museum: Hampton Cottage, 64 Church Street,  
Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 8DP; 01372 386348.
- London Bus Museum:** see Brooklands.
- London Canal Museum:** 12/13 New Wharf Road, London  
N1 9RT; [www.canalmuseum.org.uk](http://www.canalmuseum.org.uk); 0207 713 0836.
- London Museum of Water and Steam:**  
Green Dragon Lane, Brentford, Middx TW8 0EN;  
[www.waterandsteam.org.uk](http://www.waterandsteam.org.uk); 020 8568 4757.
- Lowfield Heath Windmill:** Russ Hill, Charlwood RH6 0EL  
(TQ 235 408). [www.ockleywindmill.co.uk/](http://www.ockleywindmill.co.uk/)  
[lowfieldheathwindmill.htm](http://lowfieldheathwindmill.htm), 01403 272664.
- Mapledurham, Watermill:** Mapledurham, Reading RG4 7TR;  
[www.mapledurhamwatermill.co.uk](http://www.mapledurhamwatermill.co.uk); 07843 742833,  
[www.mapledurhamwatermill.co.uk](http://www.mapledurhamwatermill.co.uk)
- MERL, Museum of English Rural Life:** Redlands Road,  
Reading, Berkshire RG1 5EX,  
[www.reading.ac.uk/merl/](http://www.reading.ac.uk/merl/); 0118 378 8660.
- Michelham Priory Watermill:** Upper Dicker, Hailsham, E Sus-  
sex BN27 3QS; 01323 844224.
- Morden Hall Park:** Morden Hall Road, Morden, London  
SM4 5JD; [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/morden-hall-park);  
020 8545 6850;
- Museum of London:** 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN;  
020 7001 9844, [www.museumoflondon.org.uk](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk).
- Museum of London Docklands:** no.1 Warehouse, West India  
Quay, London E14 4AL; [www.museumoflondon.org.uk/](http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/docklands)  
[docklands](http://docklands); 020 7001 9844
- National Trust:** Wey Navigations Office and Dapdune Wharf,  
Wharf Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 4RR;  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk), 01483 561389.
- Newcomen Society London:** Dana Studio, 165 Queen's Gate,  
Kensington, London SW7 5HD; <http://newcomen.com>.
- Newcomen Society Portsmouth:** Portland Building,  
University of Portsmouth, Saint James's Street,  
Portsmouth PO1; <http://newcomen.com>.
- Old Kiln Light Railway:** see Rural Life Centre.
- Painshill Park:** Between Streets, Cobham, Surrey KT11 1JE;  
01932 868 113, [www.painshill.co.uk/](http://www.painshill.co.uk/).
- Portsmouth Historic Dockyard :**  
HM Naval Base, Portsmouth PO1 3LJ;  
[www.historicdockyard.co.uk](http://www.historicdockyard.co.uk); 02392 728060.
- Railway and Canal Historical Society :**The Rugby Tavern,  
Rugby Street, London WC1N 3ES; [www.rchs.org.uk](http://www.rchs.org.uk).
- Reigate Caves:** see Wealden Cave & Mine Society.
- River Thames Society (Teddington to Old Windsor):** St  
Nicholas Parish Hall, Shepperton Square; 0208 824 1643.
- Royal Gunpowder Mills:** Beaulieu Drive, Waltham Abbey,  
Essex, EN9 1JY; [www.royalgunpowdermills.com/](http://www.royalgunpowdermills.com/).
- Rural Life Centre:** Old Kiln Museum, Reeds Rd, Tilford,  
Famham, GU10 2DL; [www.rural-life.org.uk](http://www.rural-life.org.uk); 01252 795571.

**Saddlescombe:** always viewable, 2 m N of A27 Brighton ring road & 1 m S of A281; TQ273115.

**Shirley Windmill:** Postmill Close, Shirley, Croydon CR0 5DY, [www.shirleywindmill.org.uk](http://www.shirleywindmill.org.uk)

**SPAB Mills Section:** [www.spab.org.uk/spab-mills/](http://www.spab.org.uk/spab-mills/)

**STEAM - Museum of the Great Western Railway:** Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2TA; 01793 466 646; [www.steam-museum.org.uk](http://www.steam-museum.org.uk).

**Subterranea Britannica:** [www.subbrit.org.uk](http://www.subbrit.org.uk).

**Surrey History Centre:** 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking, Surrey GU21 6ND, 01483 518737; [www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyhistorycentre).

**SIAS, Sussex Industrial Archaeological Society :** [www.sussexias.co.uk](http://www.sussexias.co.uk).

**Southwark and Lambeth Archaeological Society:** 106 The Cut, London, SE1 8LN; [www.london-se1.co.uk/groups/southwark-lambeth-archaeological-society](http://www.london-se1.co.uk/groups/southwark-lambeth-archaeological-society).

**Twyford Waterworks:** Hazeley Rd, Twyford, Hants SO21 1QA; [www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk](http://www.twyfordwaterworks.co.uk); 01962 714716.

**U3A Fetcham:** Fetcham Village Hall; [www.fetchamu3a.org.uk/industrial.heritage1](http://www.fetchamu3a.org.uk/industrial.heritage1).

**Vale and Downland Museum (Wantage):** Church Street, Wantage, Oxfordshire OX12 8BL; <http://wantage-museum.com>; 01235 771447.

**WACT, Wey & Arun Canal Trust:** The Granary, Fritchfold Farm, Loxwood, Billingshurst West Sussex, RH14 0RH; 01403 752403, [office@weyandarun.co.uk](mailto:office@weyandarun.co.uk).

**Wandle Industrial Museum:** Vestry Hall Annex, London Road, Mitcham, CR4 3UD; [www.wandle.org](http://www.wandle.org), 020 8648 0127.

**Walking Tours of Guildford:** [www.guildfordwalks.org.uk](http://www.guildfordwalks.org.uk).

**Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum:** 10 South Access Rd, Walthamstow, London E17 8AX; 020 8521 1766; [www.walthamstowpumphousemuseum.org.uk](http://www.walthamstowpumphousemuseum.org.uk),

**Wanborough Barn:** Wanborough, Surrey; SU997493; [www.wanboroughgreatbarn.co.uk](http://www.wanboroughgreatbarn.co.uk).

**Watercress Line, Mid Hants Railway:** Station Rd, Alresford, Hants SO24 9JG; [www.watercressline.co.uk](http://www.watercressline.co.uk); 01962 733810.

**Weald & Downland Living Museum,** Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex PO18 0EU; [www.wealddown.co.uk](http://www.wealddown.co.uk); 01243 811348.

**Wealden Cave & Mine Society:** Reigate Caves in Tunnel off High Street, Reigate; [www.wcms.org.uk](http://www.wcms.org.uk).

**Wealden Iron Research Group (WIRG):** [www.wealdeniron.org.uk](http://www.wealdeniron.org.uk)

**Westcott Local History Group:** Westcott Reading Room, Institute Rd, Westcott, RH4 3NP; [www.westcotthistory.org.uk](http://www.westcotthistory.org.uk).

**Wey & Arun Canal Trust:** The Granary, Fritchfold Farm, Loxwood, Billingshurst West Sussex, RH14 0RH; [www.weyandarun.co.uk](http://www.weyandarun.co.uk); 01403 752403

**Whitchurch Silk Mill:** 28 Winchester Street, Whitchurch, Hampshire RG28 7AL; [www.whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk](http://www.whitchurchsilkmill.org.uk), 01256 892065.

## The Advance of Technology (continued)

by John Caton

Some observations on Bob Bryson's stimulating review in SIHG Newsletter No 223 August 2019

**Electric Traction** – I read somewhere (I think a Shire booklet) that the withdrawal of trams (and trolleybuses) was heavily due to the nationalisation of the electricity industry (and, by implication, poor previous accounting practice). Thus, trams were usually run by the local council. They were also providers of street lighting and ran the electricity generation that served both services. Before electricity nationalisation the local authorities seem not to have charged the trams for their electricity. Suddenly, the separate bills presented for running the trams revealed how expensive they really were. Motorway construction and integration into passenger transport executives didn't help.

**Street Lighting** – Apparently, in the early days Weybridge was lit by gas then it changed to electric lighting then back to gas! (Details from Elmbridge Museum.) A generating station was built in 1889 in Church Walk (still in existence as flats and an office) by the Weybridge Electricity Supply Company, who were given a Provisional Lighting Order in 1891. This continued until 1896 when the Council decided against renewing the contract, partly due to local opposition to a 'new-fangled' system and the untidy appearance of over-ground cables strung between wooden poles, and partly due to the fact that gas was cheaper. The reversion to gas continued until 1900, when the Urban Electricity Supply

Company secured a contract to provide electric light once again. This company constructed a generating works on Thames Street, (no longer in existence). Work was completed and supply commenced in 1902, and the company continued to supply electricity until 1922, when contracts were granted elsewhere.

**Bicycles** – I suggest they have usually had two roles – as cheap transport and as sport. When I started work at BAC Weybridge in 1969 I was informed that in 1953 11,000 pushbikes would leave the works (then Vickers) at knocking off time. This gives an indication of past role and scale! They have since been predominantly recreational but are now becoming strongly transport again. I believe the "Rover" was initially known as the "safety bicycle". The Raleigh collection is currently in the Brooklands Museum.

**The Future of Oil** – On the point of the replacement of petrol driven cars by electric cars there is the complication that some commentators consider the particulate emissions like those from tyres, brakes and road surfaces to be more serious than petrol exhaust gases. If so, their levels relate to weight of vehicle and electric cars weigh more than petrol cars. That suggests that electric cars are not a good prospect. Perhaps we should be thinking more in terms of infrastructure like trams. ☐

The deadline for **submitting copy** for the next Newsletter is

**20 April 2020**

*Submissions are accepted in typescript, on a disc, or by email to [news@sihg.org.uk](mailto:news@sihg.org.uk).*

**Anything related to IA will be considered. Priority will be given to Surrey-based or topical articles.**

*Contributions will be published as soon as space is available.*

*Readers are advised that the views of contributors are not necessarily the views of SIHG.*

Website: [www.sihg.org.uk](http://www.sihg.org.uk)

## A Walk Along the Beach by the Solent - Calshot and the Mulberry Harbours

by R Bryson

In mid-October, 2019, my wife and I went with some friends to walk their dog on the gravel beach at Lepe Country Park. The Country Park is situated at Stanswood Bay near where Southampton Water comes out to join The Solent, virtually opposite Cowes on the Isle of Wight. Walking along the beach for a few hundred yards we came across the remains of a site where caissons for the Mulberry harbours were built. Although 75 years have elapsed and the pebbles have shifted slightly it was still possible to pick out a number of key features.

During the planning stage of the Normandy landings it was realised that the allies may not have access to a port until some days after the D day landings. The solution to this problem was to construct two floating harbours that could be towed across the Channel and assembled on the beaches. One of these so called Mulberry harbours was to be erected on Omaha beach in the American sector, while the other was built at Arromanches on the British Gold beach. Unfortunately a large storm caused the American harbour to be abandoned only a fortnight after D day. The elements of the harbour that survived were incorporated into the British harbour which became known as Port Winston. By October, when the harbour was official closed, over 220,000 men and 39,000 vehicles had been landed at the port.

Each Mulberry harbour was made up of a number of elements as well as the huge concrete "Phoenix" caissons that could be towed out to the beaches and sunk to create a breakwater. Other sections were connected together to make a large pontoon type of bridge. Concrete boats called "Beetles" supported steel roadway sections called "Whales" which were laid over the top to form the bridge. Old ships sunk as additional breakwaters were called "Gooseberries" and sections of floating breakwaters were called "Bombarons". Six "Phoenix" caissons were built at Lepe and fourteen at nearby Stoke bay. All were built at the same time on the beach and launched into the sea by May 1944. They were then towed up Southampton Water to be finished.

In the summer of 1942 a large slipway was built at Lepe, initially to help ferry military supplies to the Isle of Wight. Lepe became a major embarkation point for the D day invasion of 6 June 1944. Two types of assault vessels: Landing Craft Tank (LCTs) and Landing Ship Tank (LST) were embarked from the site. There is now a memorial to the Royal Dragoon Guards who crewed the Duplex Drive Sherman tanks that left from Lepe bound for Gold Beach in Normandy. These specially adapted tanks were fitted with flotation screens to enable them to swim ashore.



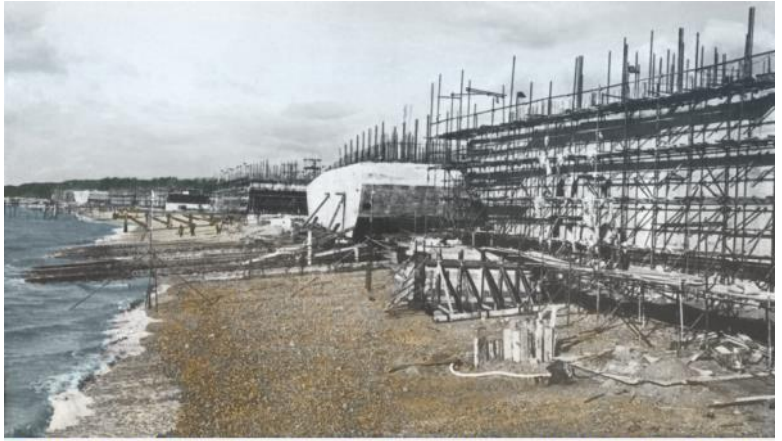
Mulberry harbour showing Beetles and Whales

The remains of the “Phoenix” caisson construction platforms can be seen at the site together with concrete slipways and the base of a water tower. Parts of beach-hardening mats, laid out to take the weight of the tanks are also visible. Two dolphins that formed part of the pier head, together with steel bollards used to tie up ships being loaded for the invasion are also visible on the foreshore. Not all the caissons made it to Normandy and remains of one such caisson that developed a fatal crack can be seen to this day abandoned on Sinah sands in Langstone harbour.

Walking further along we came to Calshot. As well as having been a significant base for military sea planes and flying boats there is a small castle dating back to the reign of Henry VIII on the headland. Those of you that have heard some of Colin van Geffen’s talks will have heard him mention Calshot on several occasions.

The castle was built between 1539-40 to protect Southampton Water against an invasion from France and the Holy Roman Empire. It has a keep and is surrounded by a moat and a curtain wall. Initially it had a garrison of 16 men and 36 artillery guns. The castle continued in military use until the start of the 19th century after which it was used by the coastguard. At the start of the 20th century the castle reverted to military use. A new coastal battery was constructed alongside the castle together with a boom across Southampton Water controlled from the castle.

During WWI Calshot was an important base for seaplanes and went on to host the Schneider trophy in the UK winning years of 1929 and 1931. The former officers mess now carries a plaque commemorating Lady Houston who funded the team in the final year. During WWII, RAF Calshot as it was known became primarily responsible for the repair and maintenance of Shorts Sunderland flying boats. The former flying boat hanger is now used as a sports centre complete with a climbing wall and a velodrome. □



PHOENIX CAISSONS FOR THE D-DAY MULBERRY HARBOURS, UNDER CONSTRUCTION ON THE BEACH NORTHEAST OF STANSORE POINT, LEPE, HAMPSHIRE. This particular type seems to have inclined surfaces, fore and aft, unlike the preserved examples which are rectangular in shape. The view is towards Stansore Point and the Dolphin structures can be seen in the middle distance at the far left edge of the picture. Image, modified after Tute et al., 1974. Ian West © 2017.

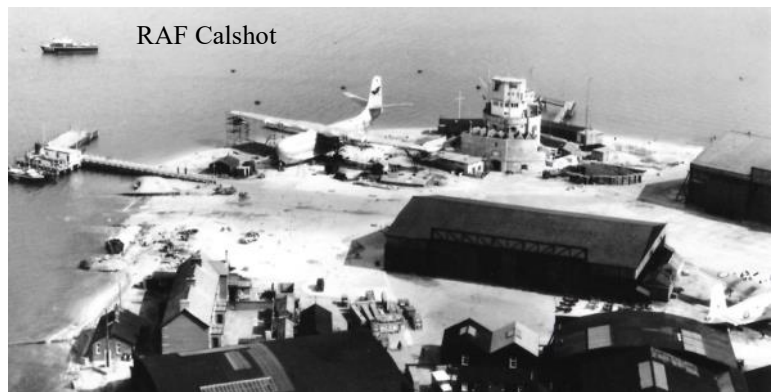
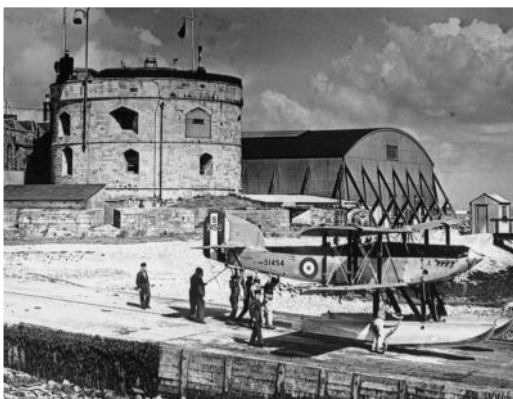
Caisson under construction



Broken Caisson in Langstone Harbour



Construction Site showing remains of two dolphins



RAF Calshot

## One Thames or Two? The Archaeology of London's River

by Jon Cotton, Surrey Archaeological Society

report by Celia Gregory

This was a fascinating talk. Jon Cotton had divided the Thames into two parts; non-tidal, upstream of Teddington, and tidal, downstream to the Thames Estuary. He started by outlining all the functions of the Thames, from pre-history to the 21st century, and then expanded on each one in turn.

The river has always been used for performance; such as processions of royalty, firework displays and celebration of special events; but also for protest. It has split Londoners into North v South, exemplified by the rivalry between the football fans of Woolwich Arsenal and Tottenham Hotspurs. Taxi drivers even prefer to stay their side of the Thames.

Because the Thames is ever moving, it has shaped the landscape of London over the centuries. When digging a lock in 1665, the remains of a forest drowned five thousand years ago were discovered. The river level can rise alarmingly. In Lambeth in 1928 fourteen thousand homes were flooded. Shepperton was under water in 2014. The river can be dangerous; in 1878 the passenger paddle steamer *SS Princess Alice* was hit by a collier and sank. Over six hundred bodies were recovered. In 1989 the *Marchioness* pleasure boat was in collision with a dredger and fifty-one people lost their lives.

The Thames has many resources that can be utilized. Up until the 1950s the river was dead, killed by industrial waste pollution, but it now supports 130 species of fish. A pre-historic site at Runnymede revealed the bones of a giant pike, but only pike bones have ever been found, no other fish. Before the Romans came, fish evidently did not feature in the indigenous population's diet. The conquerors loved oysters, which flourished in the estuary near the River Medway, and they used fish in a special sauce.

Thick gravel deposits from exposed river beds were exploited in Kensington in 1810, and dug by hand until the late 1920s. Trafalgar Square was built on a flat gravel river bed, the National Gallery on an adjoining higher terrace.

The city of London thrived because the Thames was primarily an artery of communication. By being tidal at that point, the Pool of London was able to accommodate merchant shipping arriving with goods from around the world. The Romans were believed to have forded the river when Julius Caesar came in 54 BC, but the actual site is open to speculation.

Marine navigation had to be constantly maintained by dredging. A 'spoon and bucket' method lifted gravel by hand, until replaced by steam dredging buckets on a continuous chain dumping the material into a stand-by lighter. The dredged gravel was transferred to the empty holds of colliers returning to Newcastle. Any pickings of saleable objects could be kept by the men and sold to antique collectors. One, Thomas Leyton, a coal merchant, was so secretly acquisitive, that he not only filled his house with antiquities, but also thirty-one garden sheds which were not discovered until after his demise!

Collecting is done by licensed 'mudlarks' who go onto the foreshore of the Thames at low tide. They are allowed to use metal detectors but not to excavate, only to pick up what they can see. Over the years substantial finds have been made, some of which are so valuable it is thought they were placed in the river as votive offerings. Nowadays Hindu offerings are made as the Thames is recognized as a sacred river for that faith.

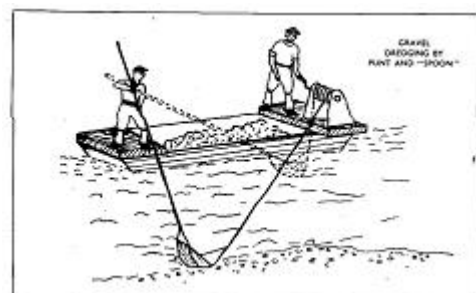
Mention was also made of the Thames Barrier, and how much more frequently it has to be raised than in previous years. Altogether this was a most comprehensive talk, with accompanying illustrations. □

The Battersea Shield Iron Age, 350-50 BC, was dredged from the bed of the River Thames in 1857.



See also: Sandsuckers - <http://sandsuckers.blogspot.com/2017/01/>

Both aggregate and maintenance dredging was by way of "spoon and bag" (or "spoon and bucket") which is likely to have been introduced in western Europe and Britain by the Phoenicians or Romans.



## Potteries, Brickworks and Potters of Kingston upon Thames and Environs *by Norma Cox*

Viewing the 1895 O/S Surrey Series maps 1:2,500 of New Malden on the old-maps website I saw the site of Norbiton Pottery. The pottery was situated between Blagdon Road and Burlington Road<sup>(1)</sup>. I didn't know anything about Norbiton Pottery, so I decided to research it. In doing the research I also found out that Kingston upon Thames had been important in the production of pottery in medieval times. In addition I discovered that the famous potter Denise Wren had started her work in Kingston upon Thames.

Kingston Museum has a display featuring a reproduction of a circular kiln found in Eden Street in 1995. The display showed that pottery was made in Kingston on Thames during the medieval period<sup>(2)</sup>. From the thirteenth century, Surrey was known for pottery which was called Surrey Whiteware and it was made from white-firing clay from the Reading beds, which ran through Farnham and Tongham<sup>(3)</sup>. Surrey Whiteware was decorated with a translucent green lead glaze. The earliest find of Surrey Whiteware was in London and was dated c.1250. This pottery was similar to pottery found from a late medieval kiln excavated at 70-72 Eden Street, Kingston on Thames<sup>(4)</sup>.

The pottery found in Kingston upon Thames was given the name Kingston-type ware. The bases of the Kingston-type ware pots were thick, and thumb marks were common on these pots. Illustrations of Kingston-type ware are seen in Pearce and Vine's book which is in the Kingston History Centre<sup>(4)</sup>. Waster deposits were also found in Eden Street and at the Knapp Drewett site in Union Street, Kingston upon Thames<sup>(5)</sup>. In the late 14th century distinctive Surrey Whiteware products, which included Kingston-type ware, were baluster jugs, small rounded and biconical jugs, lobed and plain cups of the type found at the Knapp Drewett site<sup>(5)</sup>. The Kingston-type ware was produced in workshops along the south bank of the Thames from Kingston upon Thames to Southwark<sup>(6)</sup>. The Pottery Industry was at its peak in the 13th and 14th century in Kingston upon Thames and the industry supplied pottery for the Royal Palace at Westminster. At the end of the 14th century the industry ceased. Kingston upon Thames potteries had been the first in the country to use imported clay. This came about in response to demand for fine whiteware vessels stimulated by French imports. The distance from the source of the Reading Beds may have been the reason for the industry's decline in Kingston upon Thames<sup>(7)</sup>. Redwares were being made in Kingston upon Thames in the late 15th and 16th century.



Figure 1: 70- 72 Eden Street, Kingston upon Thames the site of medieval kilns, which today is a Primark store.

### Brickworks

There was a brickworks in Kingston upon Thames belonging to a Mr Looker and his name was published in 1856 when "Mr Looker's Brickworks in Kingston upon Thames allowed people to view his process for making bricks with holes in them"<sup>(8)</sup>. Local Coombe and Malden historian Robin Gill recorded "In 1876 Benjamin Looker built his pottery and brick works on 14 acres of Blagdon

Farmland in New Malden as the clay on his Kingston Hill Brick Works had run out. Mr Looker died in 1892". Mr Gill also recorded "The new owners of the New Malden Pottery and Brickworks Ltd used a traction engine to move the clay and this caused problems with the local people because of noise and smell. The company was taken to court". Mr Gill concluded "A new company, the Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks Ltd operated by the Johnson family continued to make bricks and in 1924 the business received clay from the London Underground works at Morden"<sup>(9)</sup>. Two

red bricks from the Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks, each marked 'MALDEN', one with holes, were unearthed from an allotment in Blagdon Road next to the Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks site and these bricks can be seen on the internet<sup>(10)</sup>. In the Phillipsons Almanac and Directory for 1899 the Norbiton Pottery was listed as Pottery and Brick Works, with W Kent shown as the proprietor at the Blagden Road site<sup>(11)</sup>. Also listed in Phillipsons Almanac and Directory 1899 was T H Phillips a Mosaic Worker at Burlington Road<sup>(11)</sup>. Mosaics are works of art made by using small pieces of pottery, stone or glass to make a picture. The small pieces of pottery, stone or glass are known as tesserae. A mosaic may be crafted to decorate a piece of furniture or a work of architecture or it may be as a picture for pleasure<sup>(12)</sup>. Mr Phillips the mosaic worker may have obtained pottery from Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks. In 1909 the address of Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks was given as Burlington Road in the Kelly's Commercial Directory<sup>(13)</sup>. From the 1954-55 O/S Plan 1:2,500 the Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks were shown as disused and the land adjacent to the works had changed from a cricket ground to allotment gardens<sup>(14)</sup>. The 1969-75 O/S Plan 1:1,250 showed that an adult training centre had been built on the allotment garden site<sup>(15)</sup>. Today the adult training centre is called the 'Malden Centre' and it offers a gym, a swimming-pool, a sports-hall and adult education facilities. There is also a grassed area with a children's play area at the rear of the centre.



**Potters in Kingston upon Thames**

The famous potter Denise Wren nee Tuckfield attended the Kingston School of Art during the years 1907-1912. The Tuckfield family had moved to East Molesy in 1900. Denise, who was born in Lake View Albany, Western Australia on 7 January 1891, studied under Archibald Knox and she learned to throw pots on the wheel, at the local Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks, instructed by Mr Mercer an employee at the Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks. Mr Mercer also fired her ceramics in his kiln and this included a tile with a flying fish Motif feature in 1909. In 1912 following criticism of his teaching methods, Archibald Knox quit Kingston School of Art. As a result, Denise and her sister Winifred Brown-Morrison together with other students of their class joined Knox who had founded the Knox Guild of Design and Craft<sup>(16)</sup>. In 1915 Denise married Henry Wren

a freelance writer and assistant theatrical manager. Denise and Henry Wren moved to Oxshott where they designed and built their home and workshop called Potters Croft and established in 1920 the Oxshott Pottery. Mr Mercer of the Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks had built a traditional flower-pot kiln at Oxshott for Denise Wren but the kiln had proved laborious to stoke and it was unable to reach the temperatures needed to fire stoneware; as a result Denise Wren devised alternative kilns. Details about her life and her work while she was in Kingston upon Thames, were given in a programme which came from an exhibition on show in Bath in 1984. The programme has details of six exhibits which relate to her time in Kingston upon Thames, the first three exhibits were made during her time at Kingston School of Art and exhibits four to six were made while she was at the Knox Guild of Design and Craft Kingston upon Thames<sup>(17)</sup>.

The first exhibit was the Encaustic tile dated 1909 of plaster inlaid with flying fish motif in coloured slip. It was unmarked. This was illustrated in *The Studio*. The second exhibit was a Capital dated 1910. It was of unglazed buff earthenware. Cast in a press-mould from a modelled original.

Mark: KINGSTON ON THAMES School of Art incised on reverse. An examination label dated 1910 was attached, also a 'commended' label. The third exhibit was Pot with lugs dated 1910-12. Unglazed buff earthenware decorated with birds in low relief: cast in a press

-mould from a coiled and modelled original. It was unmarked. Kingston Museum has an image of the second exhibit.

During her time at the Knox Guild of Design and Craft, Kingston upon Thames, Denise Wren made the following exhibits numbered four to six. The fourth exhibit was a flower pot (fragment) dated 1914 of unglazed red earthenware.

MARK: KNOX GUILD OF DESIGN AND CRAFT KINGSTON D K T 1914 incised around the base. The pot was probably thrown by Mr Mercer of Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks. The fifth exhibit was a cylindrical jar 1912-14. Unglazed red earthenware incised with abstract Celtic design. It was unmarked. This was probably thrown by Mr Mercer of Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks. The sixth exhibit was a pot dated 1913. White earthenware covered in brown slip and incised with a motif of a child fishing. Mark: DKT

1913, incised. This was illustrated in *Pottery: the Finger-built Methods* by D K and H Wren (1932) p 87. The exhibits numbered four and five from the Knox Guild exhibits are held in Kingston Museum which has a very good display of Denise Wren's pottery. The sixth exhibit from the Knox Guild is in the V & A Museum.

In the trade directories for the late nineteenth to early twentieth century there were two surnames listed of people who were connected with the pottery and brickwork industry in the Kingston upon Thames area. From Phillipson's Kingston Directory 1898 Kingston and District, Commercial Directory Mercer J was listed as a 'Potter' at Washington Road and Hampden Road, Norbiton. In addition there was the name Looker Brothers as 'Brickmakers' at Cambridge Road<sup>(18)</sup>. In 1913 the details in the Commercial Directory of Kelly's Directory was 'Hampden Road Norbiton. Mercer, Frank (Hampden House), Kingston Potteries (F H Mercer)<sup>(19)</sup>. Mr Frank Mercer may have been the potter who had helped Denise Wren. In the 1925 Kelly's Kingston, Surbiton, Esher and District Directory there was no mention of Kingston Potteries or Looker Brothers. There was an entry for Mercer, Frank Herbert of Hampden House,

Hampden Road Norbiton in the Private Residents Section<sup>(20)</sup>.

This research has shown that the Kingston upon Thames area had a significant role in the industrial history of pottery and brickmaking in Surrey.



Figure 2: The rear of the Malden Centre and the grassed area which was the site of Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks.



Denise Wren - Flowerpot Fragment.

**Thanks to:**

Robin Gill for sending me a copy of his paper “Pottery to Pottery” and images of Norbiton Pottery and Brickworks.

Charlotte Samuels of Kingston Museum, for sending me images of exhibits 2 and 4. (See image of exhibit 4 on previous page.)

**Photographs** by Norma Cox. 28 December 2019.

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