

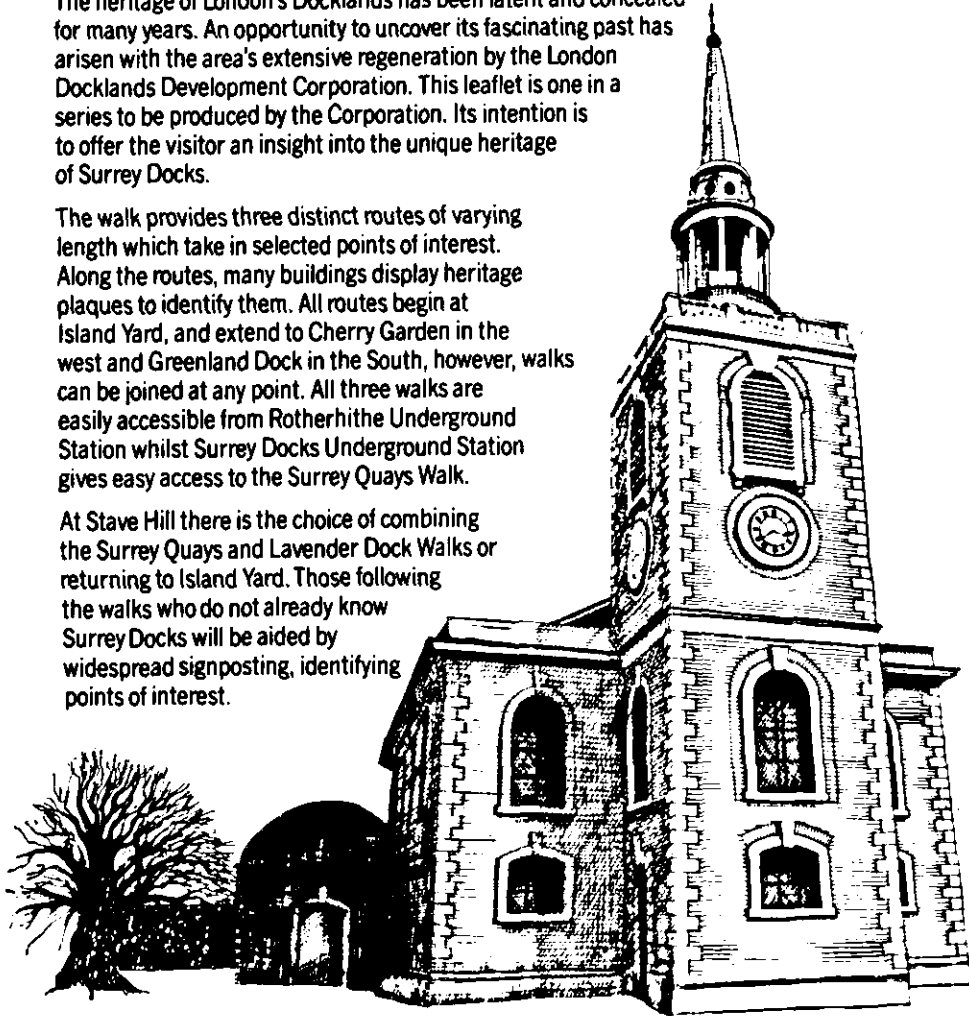
London Docklands

HERITAGE WALKS SURREY DOCKS

The heritage of London's Docklands has been latent and concealed for many years. An opportunity to uncover its fascinating past has arisen with the area's extensive regeneration by the London Docklands Development Corporation. This leaflet is one in a series to be produced by the Corporation. Its intention is to offer the visitor an insight into the unique heritage of Surrey Docks.

The walk provides three distinct routes of varying length which take in selected points of interest. Along the routes, many buildings display heritage plaques to identify them. All routes begin at Island Yard, and extend to Cherry Garden in the west and Greenland Dock in the South, however, walks can be joined at any point. All three walks are easily accessible from Rotherhithe Underground Station whilst Surrey Docks Underground Station gives easy access to the Surrey Quays Walk.

At Stave Hill there is the choice of combining the Surrey Quays and Lavender Dock Walks or returning to Island Yard. Those following the walks who do not already know Surrey Docks will be aided by widespread signposting, identifying points of interest.



BUS SERVICES

FROM CENTRAL LONDON

Departing:

Victoria (70)

Liverpool Street (47)

Aldgate (47A)

Trafalgar Square (1)

Monument (70A)

Euston (188)

FROM SOUTH LONDON

Departing:

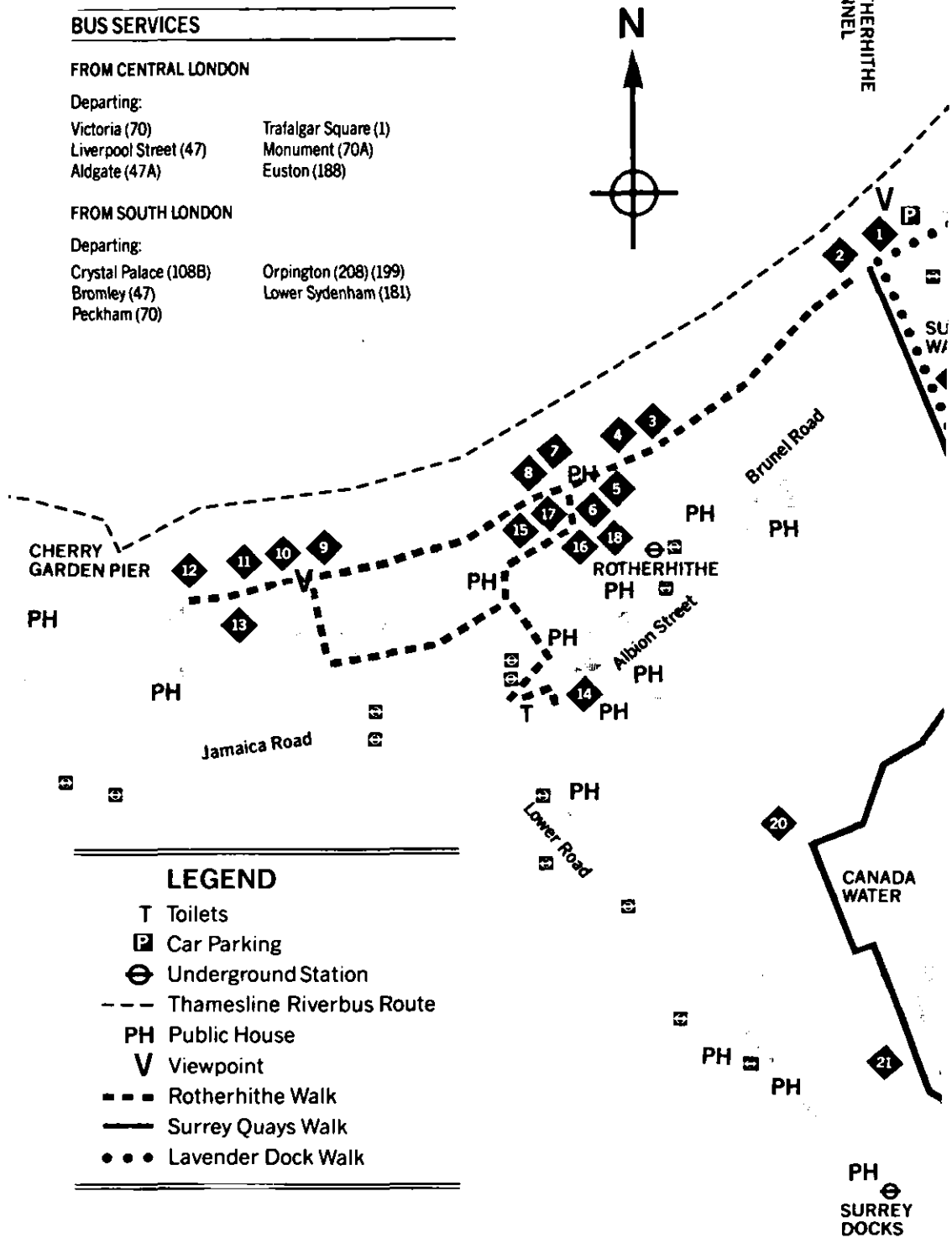
Crystal Palace (108B)

Bromley (47)

Peckham (70)

Orpington (208) (199)

Lower Sydenham (181)



LEGEND

T Toilets

P Car Parking

⊖ Underground Station

--- Thamesline Riverbus Route

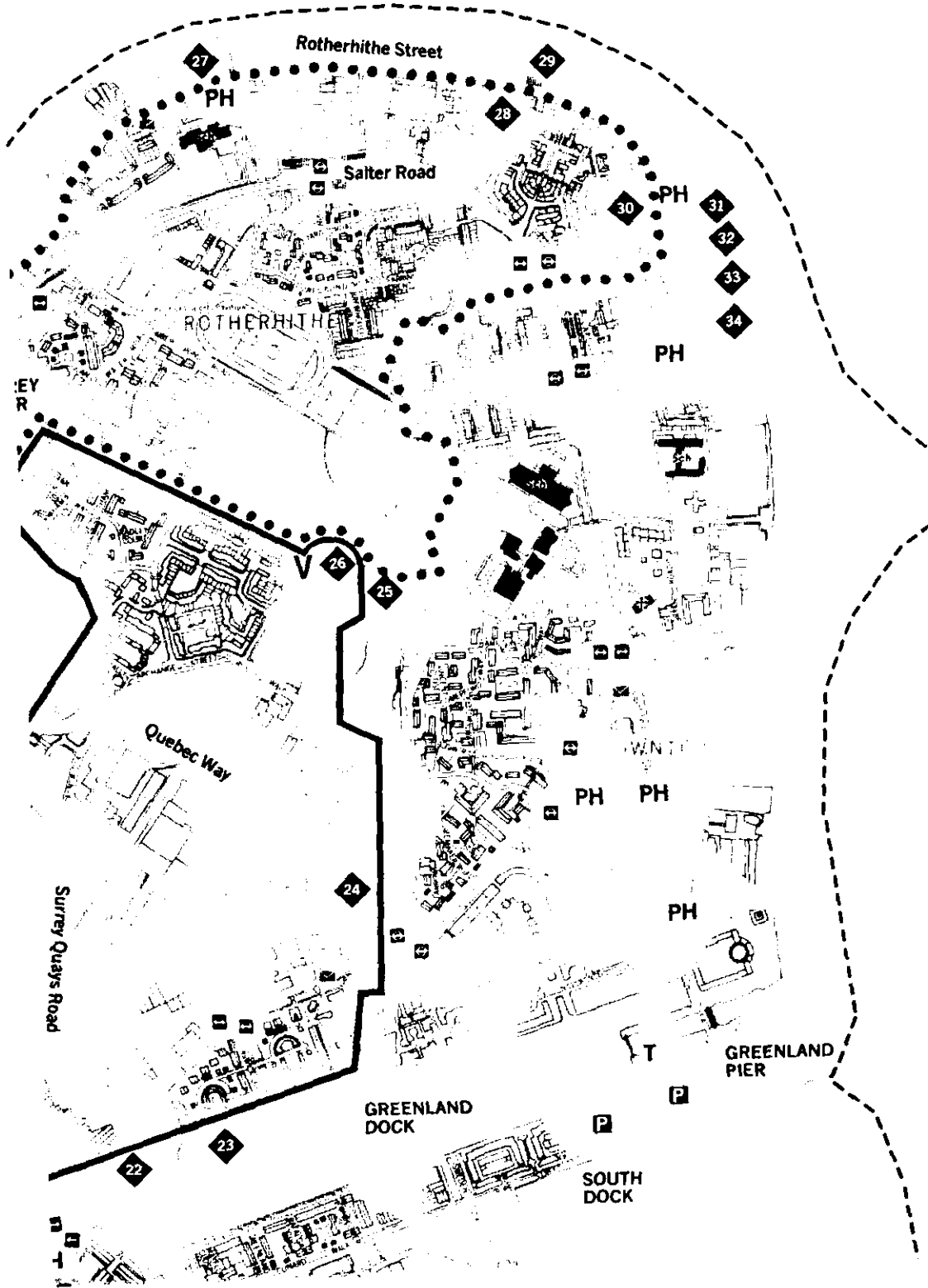
PH Public House

V Viewpoint

... Rotherhithe Walk

— Surrey Quays Walk

... Lavender Dock Walk



Rotherhithe Street

Saiter Road

ROTHERRITHE

Quebec Way

Surrey Quays Road

GREENLAND DOCK

SOUTH DOCK

GREENLAND PIER

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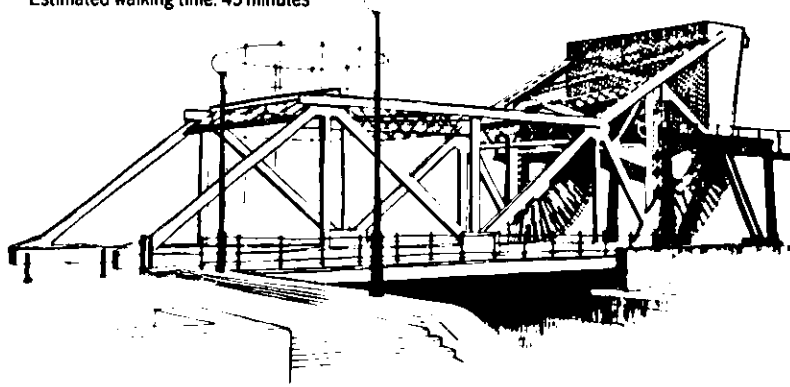
KEY

Rotherhithe Walk

(Numbers 1 to 18 on the map)

Running to Cherry Garden along Rotherhithe Street and passing through historic Rotherhithe with St. Mary's Church as its centrepiece. Cherry Garden, also on the route, is the setting for Edward III's 14th Century moated manor house.

Estimated walking time: 45 minutes



Surrey Quays Walk

(Numbers 19 to 26 on the map)

Following a route south alongside the Albion Link Channel, which joins Surrey Water and Canada Water, the route passes the Surrey Quays Retail Centre, and Greenland Dock, the largest remaining water area in Surrey Docks. This walk returns to Island Yard through Russia Dock Woodland and Stave Hill.

Estimated walking time: 50 minutes

Estimated walking time for the combined Surrey Quays and Lavender Dock Walks: 75 minutes

Lavender Dock Walk



(Numbers 27 to 34 on the map)

Running eastwards along Rotherhithe Street, this walk takes in historic buildings such as Globe Wharf, Rotherhithe Fire Station and Nelson House and Dry Dock. The walk continues through Russia Dock Woodland to Stave Hill, an important vantage point, and along the vista of Dock Hill Avenue to Surrey Water.

Estimated walking time: 45 minutes

Rotherhithe Walk

Historical Origins

Rotherhithe's place name 'Aethelredes hythe' meaning a landing place where cattle are shipped, was first mentioned in an Anglo-Saxon charter of AD 898. Originally a marshland with water courses leading to the river, flooding was common at extra high tides. Rotherhithe Street acted as a defensive wall against the Thames. Most buildings were located along the street, on the higher ground.

It is thought that King Canute made use of Rotherhithe's ditches and streams. In 1016, he sailed up the Thames to attack London. On reaching Greenwich, in order to avoid the heavily defended London Bridge, he sank a deep ditch through which the Danes towed their ships round to the west side of the bridge. It is probable that 'Canute's Ditch' may have been cut where Greenland Dock was later built and cut across Rotherhithe linking existing ditches and streams.

1 BASCULE BRIDGE/SURREY LOCK

This was formerly the entrance to Lavender Pond from the river.

Surrey Lock dates from 1850 and was formerly the entrance to Surrey Commercial Docks. It was originally hydraulically powered and is a good example of lock design at the second period of dock expansion, forming an interesting group with the bascule bridge crossing it and the Road Tunnel airshaft. The lock and bridge acted as the main point of entry into Surrey Commercial Docks from the River Thames and it was at this point that the Grand Surrey Canal reached the river.

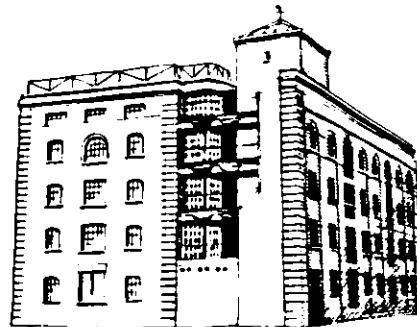
From Island Yard and the Bascule Bridge follow signs for 'ROTHERHITHE'.

2 ROTHERHITHE TUNNEL AIRSHAFT

This is one of two airshafts for the Road Tunnel constructed between 1904 and 1908 and was engineered by Sir Maurice Fitzmaurice for London County Council. Fitzmaurice employed the same tunnelling techniques that had been pioneered by Brunel some 75 years earlier. Half of the Cutting Shield used in construction stands over the entrance at each end of the tunnel. The original purpose of this was to prevent carts which were too high from entering the tunnel.

3 135 ROTHERHITHE STREET

This is a mid 19th Century building which is a rare survival of a barge building and repair works. It is occupied by Charles Hay and Son, barge builders and repairers, established in 1789.



4 BRANDRAM'S WHARF

This 1870-80 building is a substantial riverside warehouse which was restored and converted to rented flats between 1985 and 1987 by Brandrams Wharf Housing Co-operative.



5

BRUNEL ENGINE HOUSE

This building houses the pumps for Brunel's famous Thames Tunnel. Adjacent is the shaft to the tunnel which incorporated the base of the former entrance building. A company was formed in 1823 to build a double tunnel linking Rotherhithe Street with Wapping, the world's first subaqueous tunnel. Marc Brunel and his son Isambard supervised construction which began in 1825.

Brunel pioneered the use of a tunnelling shield which he had patented in 1818. It consisted of 12 rectangular cast iron frames placed side by side which supported three working platforms and the roof. In each cell, earth was excavated and the whole shield moved forward, with the brickwork of the permanent structure completed at the same slow rate behind.

During its construction, five major inundations threatened the tunnel's completion, but were countered by depositing clay on the river bed.

Work was suspended between 1828 and 1835 due to lack of finance and it was only through government assistance and remarkable perseverance that the tunnel was opened in 1843.

Because of the shortage of finance, the intended spiral access ramps for carriages were never constructed and it remained a foot tunnel until its conversion for the newly formed underground railway in 1865-9.

6

GRICES GRANARY

Currently used as a film studio, this former granary dates from the late 18th Century with a southern extension of 1880.

A gantry walkway links the granary to Grices Wharf, a four storey stock brick building, dating from around 1859, which has recently been converted for residential use.



7

MAYFLOWER INN

Formerly known as the Spread Eagle this pub which dates back in part to the 16th Century, was re-named after the ship which left Rotherhithe in 1620 and carried the Pilgrim Fathers, a group of Brownist separatists, on their voyage to America. The master of the Mayflower, Christopher Jones, is buried in St. Mary's Churchyard and many of the crew were probably local men.

The pub is licensed to sell both American and British postage stamps, which allowed sailors to post letters on arriving on land at odd times due to the tides.

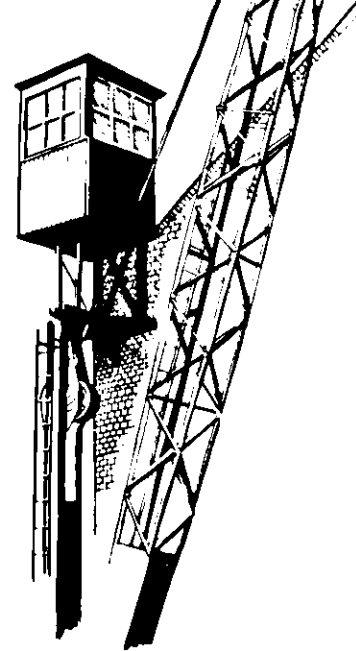
The Mayflower Inn is a good place to stop for refreshment on the Rotherhithe Walk.



8 EAST INDIA WHARF

Throughout St. Mary's Conservation Area, something of the atmosphere of Victorian Rotherhithe has been retained. This is derived from the tall mainly mid-19th Century warehouses huddled around the church spire, a clustering effect which is pronounced by the way the riverside buildings rise sheer from the quay. A series of once common but now rare gantry gangways link the riverside warehouses with those across Rotherhithe Street.

The surviving warehouse buildings are mainly made up of four-storey former granaries centred around East India Wharf (itself built in 1850). This group is the earliest surviving group of warehouses in Docklands, the oldest example dating from the 1790's. They display characteristic features such as small openings and inwardly opening timber shutters.



9 41 ROTHERHITHE STREET

This solitary remaining building once one of a terrace lining the River Thames between the Angel P.H. and Rotherhithe is occupied by Braithwaite & Dean, one of the few remaining lightermen still in operation on the river. Once a common occupation in Rotherhithe, lightermen carried cargoes from larger ships in dock by lighter or barge for storage in riverside warehouses. A seven year apprenticeship was necessary before a licence as a Freeman of the Watermen and Lightermen Company was awarded.

10 KING STAIRS GARDENS

Land has been acquired to link the Southwark Park with King Stairs Gardens, to provide a continuous stretch of open space down to the riverside.

King Stairs Gardens displays a piece of stone from the former Surrey Commercial Docks which was unveiled in 1977 by Her Majesty the Queen. Previously, all along the riverfront, rights of way leading to the water's edge existed. Although most are now disused, King Stairs, adjacent to 41 Rotherhithe Street can still be seen.

The site was once occupied by a continuous line of buildings stretching from Princes Iron Works, formerly a barge repair works, to the Angel Public House.

River walls in this area are mainly of brick construction and were built as part of a land reclamation scheme some 200 years ago.



11 THE ANGEL PUBLIC HOUSE

The present building dates from the early 19th Century, although a public house has existed on the site for 300 years.

Fine views of the river can be seen from the weather boarded back gallery overhanging the river.



12 CHERRY GARDEN

Cherry Garden was a place for public recreation during Stuart times and was occasionally visited by Samuel Pepys en route to Greenwich.

It is thought that Cherry Garden Pier was where Turner painted the 'Fighting Temeraire', a scene of the ship used in the Battle of Trafalgar being towed to Rotherhithe for breaking.

It is intended that a public open space will be created on the riverside, incorporating the planting of cherry trees, recreating the Cherry Garden of old. These works are to be funded by the LDDC.

13 PLATFORM WHARF

This site was due to be redeveloped when excavations revealed the remains of Edward III's 14th Century moated manor house in 1985. It comprises an Inner Court of stone buildings which were the Royal Apartments, enclosing an open courtyard and surrounded by a moat. To the south of the moat was an outer court, constructed of less substantial structures which housed servants quarters, stables, stores etc.

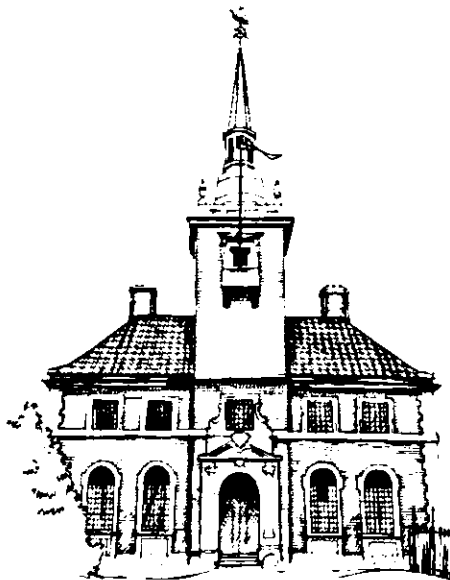
A 17th Century pottery factory producing tin glazed earthenware known as English Delft later occupied the site.

The LDDC is arranging for the artefacts found to be preserved and displayed.

**14 ST. OLAF'S CHURCH
(NORGE KIRKE)**

Designed by John Seaton Dahl and built in 1927, the Norwegian Seamen's Church of St. Olaf stands near the entrance to the Rotherhithe Tunnel. In days gone by it could easily be identified by incoming sailors from its distinctive Scandinavian type spire topped by a model of a Viking Ship.

During World War Two, the church was a focus for Norwegians forced into exile and the King of Norway attended services here.



15 HOPE SUFFERANCE WHARF

This restored and converted warehouse built in the late 18th/early 19th Century now houses craft workshops. Its internal timber construction comprises timber posts, at least one of which is a re-used ship's mast.

Its name stems from the days when all ships were required to unload their cargo at the custom house. Resulting congestion meant that ships were 'suffered', that is, given permission to unload cargoes at other designated quays.

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16 AMICABLE SCHOOL HOUSE

This delightful 18th Century three storey three bay house once housed a school founded in 1613 by Peter Hills, a Rotherhithe seafarer, for poor seamen's children. Figures on the outside of the building depict a boy and girl in school uniform of 200 years ago. The building still has its original timber throughout.

17 ST. MARY'S CHURCH

At the heart of Rotherhithe a church is thought to have stood on the site of the present church from Saxon times. The first rector on record is John de Toqueville in 1310. The present church dates from 1715. Five years earlier, the people of Rotherhithe requested financial help from Parliament to rebuild the church which had been flooded and was in danger of collapse. No parliamentary aid was forthcoming so they set about raising the money and building the church themselves. The remains of the tower of the medieval church were incorporated into the 18th Century church which is in brick with a stone trim. This was crowned by an octagonal obelisk collared by thin columns, which was later rebuilt in 1861.

Inside the church, a wooden framed barrel roof stands on four massive pillars which are in fact tree trunks encased in a plaster shell.

The communion table is of wood from the 'Temeraire' (depicted in Turner's famous painting), a ninety-eight gun three decker ship used in the Battle of Trafalgar and broken up in 1838 at Beatson's yard in Rotherhithe Street.

It was in this medieval church that the captain and crew of the 'Mayflower' worshipped and in which her captain and part owner, Christopher Jones was buried. Although when the church was rebuilt, Christopher Jones's grave disappeared along with many others, the present church contains his monument, erected in 1965.

St. Mary's Churchyard also houses a memorial to Prince Lee Boo, son of Abba Thule, one time ruler of the Pelew Islands. Lee Boo, affectionately known to local people as 'The Black Prince', was brought back to Rotherhithe with Henry Wilson, a local sea captain whose ship was wrecked whilst on a voyage for the honourable East India Company. Sadly, Prince Lee Boo contracted smallpox at the age of 20 and died in 1784.

18 WATCH HOUSE/FIRE HOUSE

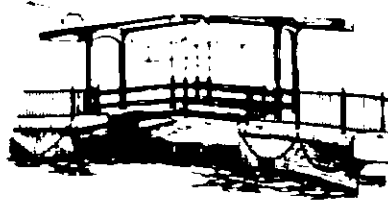
Adjacent to the school house at the entrance to the gardens which were once part of the burial ground, are the watch house and fire house for Victorian Rotherhithe, both constructed in 1821.

The watchmen who kept order in the village prior to the establishment of the Metropolitan Police occupied the watch house, whilst the fire house was for the village fire engine.



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Surrey Quays Walk



19 SURREY WATER: SURREY COMMERCIAL DOCKS

Surrey Commercial Docks ceased to function in 1970. An extensive infilling programme beginning in 1967 and progressing until 1981 has meant that little of the original Dock network remains today. Surrey Water and Canada Water have been retained however, and are linked by a newly constructed canal running through Surrey Quays marking the position of the former Albion Dock. The quay edge has been preserved and Albion Dry Dock also remains.

From the beginning of the 19th Century Surrey Commercial Docks grew in an irregular fashion, unlike the growth of the dock system north of the river. Their development initially took place under four separate companies who combined in 1865 to form the Surrey Commercial Dock Company. After an Act of Parliament, the Docks became part of the operational land of the Port of London Authority.

Previously, increasing congestion on the river coupled with widespread pilferage and organised theft had led to the establishment of the enclosed dock system. Its expansion proceeded, until eventually 460 acres of land and water were covered. Ten docks were in use by the mid 20th Century. Quebec Dock, a deep water dock of 1923-6 was the final dock to be constructed in London.

Rotherhithe became the centre of the timber trade for London. There was a growing demand for timber for housebuilding in the 19th Century which prompted the expansion of the dock network. Dock names, such as Canada Dock, Finland Quay, Norway Dock, Quebec Dock reflect the area's past trade connections.

From Surrey Water follows signs for 'SURREY QUAYS RETAIL CENTRE'

20 DEAL PORTERS LODGE

Before the onset of mechanisation, strength and skill were essential requirements for dock labour. Deal Porters' work was especially hard and dangerous. They were a special class of docker virtually confined to Surrey Docks who carried loose, sawn timber on their heads and shoulders. By using temporary narrow timber walkways, they could run up timber stacks, sometimes 50 feet high. This building was the former mess room for such dockers.

21 SURREY QUAYS RETAIL CENTRE

This major new shopping complex, developed by Tesco includes over thirty shops and provides an opportunity, for the walker to break and purchase some refreshments or sundries. It is built on the site of the former Canada Dock which once stretched from Canada Water, the only remaining part of the old dock, to Greenland Dock.

Canada Water is unique in Docklands for its fresh water ecology which is maintained and replenished by an inflow of excess water from Surrey Docks underground station.

The bascule bridge formerly allowed ships access to Surrey Commercial Docks from Greenland Dock. When this and its twin bridge at Island Yard were raised, the Surrey Docks Peninsula became isolated, which necessitated the building of the fire station at Pageant Stairs (no. 29). The bascule bridge now provides a viewing platform giving excellent views of Greenland Dock.

One of the first great docks on the river, it was originally known as the Howland Great Wet Dock, built on land belonging to the Howland family, whose manor house stood on Howland Quay. The dock was dug out of the river bank in open countryside in 1693 and measured 1070 feet (326m) by 500 feet (152m) with a depth of 17 feet (5.2m). For a century, it was the largest commercial dock in the western world, able to take 120 merchant ships against the quays.

The dock, was constructed to provide a secure haven for shipping against winter gales, and river ice which was problematic to wooden hulled vessels at that time. The enclosed dock also reduced the opportunities for theft of cargoes.

In 1763 the dock was renamed 'Greenland' when it began to be used for the whaling trade. Two very different forms of whaling were carried out here in the 18th and early 19th Centuries. Originally, ships sailed north in search of the Greenland Whale. Appalling conditions and the short season made this trade difficult and the near extinction through gross overfishing of the Greenland Whale meant that the emphasis moved to 'South sea' sperm whale fishery in later years. These whale hunts took place in the tropics and sub-tropics and could last for three or four years. Greenland Dock remained London's principal whaling base until past the turn of the century and the South Sea sperm whale trade was active until the 1840's.

As with the rest of Surrey Docks, Greenland Dock was operated by the P.L.A. from 1909. Millions of tons of grain and timber passed through it in its years of operation. However, with the onset of modified cargo handling techniques and larger vessels, the docks transferred down stream to Tilbury. Greenland Dock ceased commercial operations in 1970.



24 **RUSSIA DOCK WOODLAND**

Russia Dock Woodland is a pleasant open area created out of the dock basin of the former Russia Dock by London Borough of Southwark in 1979. Rotherhithe's dock history has been recalled by retaining features such as the original quay which still has in place, some of the metal tracks used by the cranes to move along it. The semi natural woodland includes a variety of species and a central flowing watercourse.

To the west the large steel-clad and glass building is the newly constructed Mail Newspapers printing plant.

Shortly before reaching Stave Hill, there is the choice of continuing with the Surrey Quays Walk or of joining the northbound Lavender Dock Walk. If you decide to take the Lavender Dock Walk follow the signs for 'NELSON DOCK', turn to no. 35 on this leaflet and walk in the reverse direction from that described.

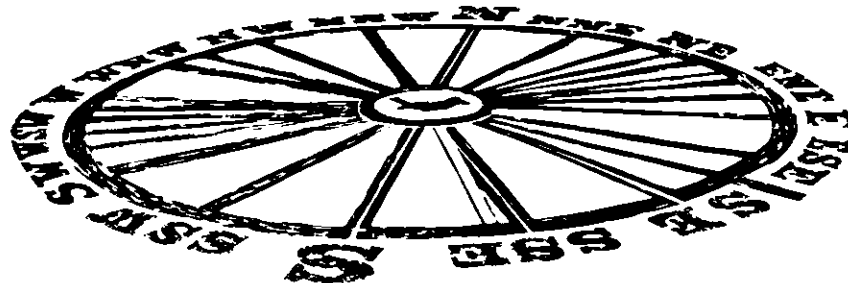
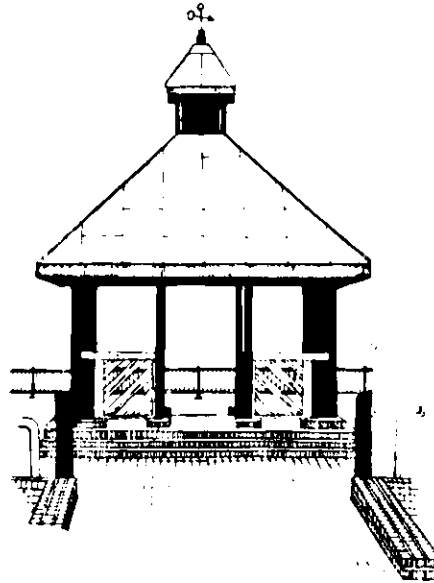
25 **ECOLOGICAL PARK**

The Ecological Park or City Nature Park was established by the Trust for Urban Ecology in 1987, when the William Curtis Ecological Park was relocated from its original site at Hays Wharf. The park shelters a variety of terrestrial ecology and offers a useful practical opportunity for the education of local children.

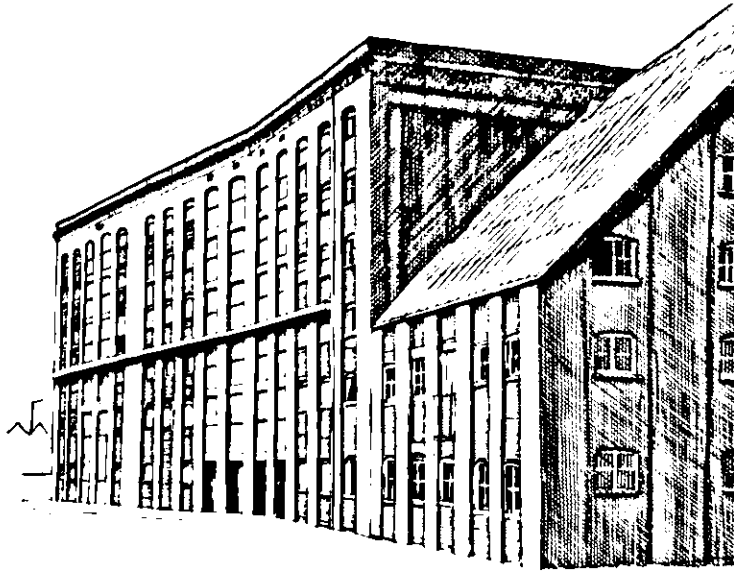
26 **STAVE HILL**

Stave Hill is an artificial landscape feature created by the LDDC in 1985 from which striking views of the surrounding area can be enjoyed.

From Stave Hill follow signs for 'SURREY WATER' and 'ISLAND YARD' to complete the Surrey Quays Walk.



Lavender Dock Walk



Although confined to the street at present the walk will eventually transfer to the riverside as sites are redeveloped and a new walkway is constructed.

Starting at Island Yard set off along Rotherhithe Street following signs for 'NELSON DOCK'.

27 GLOBE WHARF

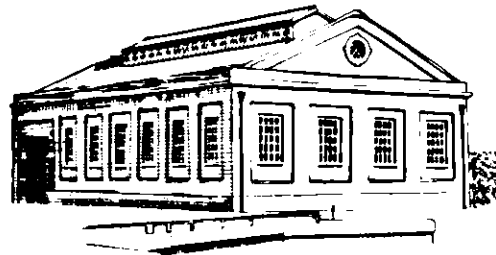
Constructed in 1883, Globe Wharf is one of the finest listed warehouses south of the Thames. It is a vast six storey block, originally built as a grain warehouse and later used as a rice mill. It is currently undergoing conversion for residential use.

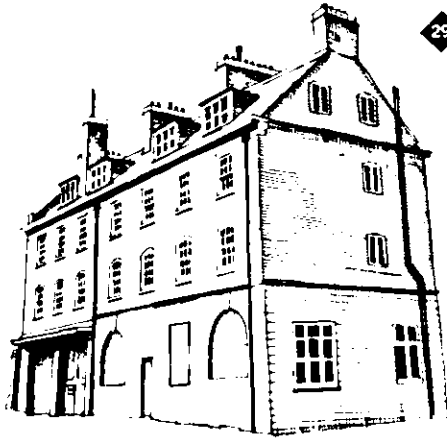
28 LAVENDER LOCK AND PUMPHOUSE

Lavender Lock was constructed in 1863 and provided access to Lavender Pond. Ponds were used extensively throughout Surrey Docks as shallower stretches of water for floating timber. This form of storage stopped softwoods from drying out and cracking.

An area of Lavender Pond behind Lavender Dock Pumping Station has been retained. Rotherhithe Street now separates Lavender Lock from the Pumphouse where originally a small drawbridge existed. The Pumphouse itself was constructed in 1920.

The Pumphouse's operation enabled water levels in the Surrey Docks to be regulated for the first time. Previously, levels in the dock system fell by 4ft at neap tides.





29

FIRE STATION, PAGEANTS' WHARF

Constructed in 1902-3 by London County Council, this former fire station provided stables at the rear and was designed to house horses and horse-drawn vehicles.

It was one of London's busiest fire stations during the blitz. Rotherhithe suffered its heaviest night's bombing on 7th September 1940 when 300 enemy bombers poured incendiary and high explosive onto stored timber in the docks and ponds, leaving an unbroken wall of flame which is said to have been visible as far away as Guildford. 350,000 tons of timber was destroyed in one night and only bulk timbers stored in Lady and Lavender Docks survived.

30

ACORN WALK

Acorn Walk is one of the most interesting of the inter-war Downtown Estates in Rotherhithe. Built by the Bermondsey Borough Council it is a flat crescent of seven four storey blocks of brick and render.

After falling into a state of disrepair in recent years, its refurbishment was completed in 1987 for a mixture of rental and owner occupation accommodation. This is part of a programme initiated by the LDDC for the refurbishment of former local authority housing estates.

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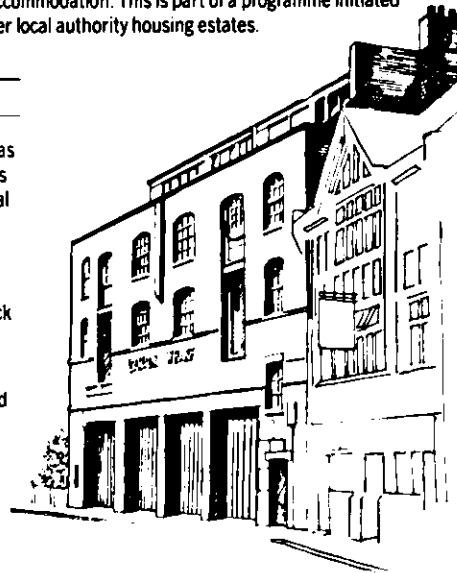
NELSON DOCK

From the 17th Century, Nelson Dockyard was used for shipbuilding until 1870 when it was used solely for ship repair. It was operational until its closure in 1968.

Between the 1790's and 1821, Nelson Dock belonged to Randell & Brent together with two other yards flanking the Greenland Dock entrance.

They became pioneer steamship builders notably constructing the 'Diana' of 1817 and the 'Rising Star', ordered by Lord Cochrane for the Chilean Navy in 1821. From 1851 to 1866 Bilbe and Perry built composite hull clippers here for the China trade. Thomas Bilbe & Co were responsible for developing some of the most advanced methods of construction during this period.

Earlier, John Taylor had begun the tradition when he built the 50 gun warship 'Portland' at the yard in 1652 and a further seven warships there until 1762. It was reckoned to be the largest private shipyard in the world during the 18th Century.



32 NELSON DOCK HOUSE

A mid 18th Century Grade II listed building, Nelson House was built for one of the shipyard owners. The house's function demonstrably relates to the shipyard, with the grand entrance to the rear providing direct access to the yard. The building is complemented by an elegant octagonal cupola on its roof, providing fine views of the river.

33 NELSON DRY DOCK

Probably built around 1790, the dry dock is associated with Randell and Brent or Bilbe and Perry's ownership of Nelson Dock. It is the last remaining dry dock on the Thames between Battersea and Woolwich.

34 ENGINE HOUSE AND DRAW DOCK

This two and three storey brick engine house for Nelson Dock was constructed in 1850. The 'patent slip' which extended 149 feet into the river was installed by Thomas Bilbe in 1855. This had a carriage by which a ship could be hauled out of the river for repair. The engine house provided hydraulic power for this operation. The present machinery dating from about 1900, is still intact and is one of the most impressive pieces of dock-related machinery surviving in Docklands.



From Nelson Dock follow signs to 'STAVE HILL AND ECOLOGICAL PARK'. At Stave Hill there is a choice of continuing on the Lavender Dock Walk (for description see nos. 24 to 26 of the Surrey Quays Walk) or of taking the Surrey Quays Walk southbound to 'GREENLAND DOCK'. If you choose the latter follow the notes overleaf in reverse order from no. 24. The Surrey Quays Walk will return you to Island Yard.

