**12 September Ride**

**50 Points of Interest**

1. **Wanstead Flats**

Wanstead Flats was historically part of the Forest of Essex, part of the Bailiwick of Becontree and later of Leyton "Walk", as was Wanstead Park to the north east. Sometimes called the Heath, and later the Lower Forest, often referred to as a "waste", the nature of the area - apparently wild and marshy - seems to have presented a less attractive area than adjacent lands that surrounded it. The Lower Forest extended as far south as the present day Romford Road in Manor Park, which is acknowledged to be the route of a Roman Road from London to Colchester.

It seems that although this was part of a royal forest, it was less favoured by the nobility and this encouraged local people to turn out their cattle, sheep, horses and pigs to graze upon the unenclosed land. Even so, as with the forest to the north, increasingly even the Heath became threatened with enclosure by the more powerful landowners. In the mid-1800s the Crown had destroyed Hainault Forest and was selling its forest rights to the lords of manors. Cann Hall and Wanstead manor were sold in 1856. In 1851-2, Long-Wellesley (Lord Mornington) had a legal battle with the tenants of Cann Hall and other commoners before enclosing 34 acres of the Flats. It seems that although other areas of the forest had and were being enclosed, the threat to Wanstead Flats aroused particularly high levels of anger among people, even over a considerable area of east London.

In 1871 Henry Wellesley, Earl Cowley, attempted to enclose another piece of the Flats. An advertisement with the headlines "Save The Forest" encouraged working men to "Attend by Thousands" an open air meeting on Wanstead Flats on Saturday, July 8th 1871 to "Protest against the Enclosures". The meeting took place, but not initially on Wanstead Flats, where the Essex Volunteers were undertaking a review. The meeting was transferred to the grounds of West Ham Hall, a large house ([once Hamfrith House](https://www.wansteadwildlife.org.uk/index.php/en/other-locations66/manor-park-cemetery)) that stood on the site now occupied by Woodgrange School in Sebert Road. The force of feeling was so high that the meeting was adjourned to Wanstead Flats after all, with some thousands of people making their way there.

It was the fact that the Corporation of London had bought (in 1854) 200 acres of farmland at [Aldersbrook](https://www.wansteadwildlife.org.uk/index.php/en/the-study-area112/alders-brook116/aldersbrook-estate) for the provision of the [City of London Cemetery](https://www.wansteadwildlife.org.uk/index.php/en/city-of-london-cemetery71) that eventually gave rise to the passing of the Epping Forest Act. In 1876 the City of London had bought Cann Hall waste; in 1877 the Epping Forest Commission had reported that 250 acres of open space - most being on Wanstead Flats - remained in the manor of Wanstead, and 73 acres in Cann Hall manor, all on the Flats.

As owners of land adjacent to the forest, this gave the Corporation right of pasturage, and after legal proceedings lasting several years and the City of London having purchased the Forest from 19 manor owners for a little over a quarter of a million pounds, the Act of 1878 was passed leading to the preservation of Epping Forest and its continued use by ordinary people. This meant that the Park and the Flats were preserved, as well as other areas such as Bush Wood, George Green and the Eagle Pond. In 1880 the City of London bought 184 acres of Wanstead Park from Lord Cowley, which too became part of Epping Forest.  
  
During the 2nd World War, parts of the flats were used in June 1944 as a transit camp for troops preparing for the D-day invasion. Huts used for accommodation of troops (including Americans) were situated near Aldersbrook Road in the vicinity of Aldersbrook Farm. There was a P.O.W. camp situated on the Fairground Section of the flats which spread from near the Model Yacht Pond to Centre Road, which was closed to through traffic to act as an access to the camp. The last of the goal-posts erected by P.O.W.s remained near to Centre Road until about the middle of the 1990s

There were anti-aircraft defences including a gun-site near Herongate Road, and the foundations of associated military establishments - Nissen Huts\* - (including, it is said, a telephone/communications centre) can still be found within Long Wood. Other anti-aircraft defences on the flats were barrage balloons, colloquially known as "pigs". These were still used even up to the 1950's, presumably to allow for parachute-training. To prevent planes from landing, ditches with associated banks were dug all over the flats.

After the war, both East Ham and West Ham councils tried to gain some of the flats for buildings, but these were strongly opposed, particularly by the residents of the Aldersbrook estate. However, with the acute shortage of housing in the area after the war, temporary estates of pre-fabricated homes (**prefabs**) were erected. People were moving into these in 1946, and a typical rent was 18/- (about 90p) a week. Because of the layout, the streets were called "banjos". The largest "village" of these consisted of some 350 homes; these lay south of Alexandra Lake (known then as "the Sandhills", as now) and were accessed from Capel Road. The names of the roads were those WW2 military generals. These continued to be used until the beginning of the 1960's and were usually appreciated and well-kept by those who lived in them and admired by those who visited. Another group of prefabs was situated on Manor Park Flats adjacent to Forest View Road. These continued to be used slightly later, and indeed some of the fruit and ornamental trees associated with the garden plots are still in existence. The gardens were of sufficient size that some people grew flowers and vegetables, and even kept chickens and rabbits.

In 1957 the first moves were made in Parliament to have the prefabs removed and Wanstead Flats returned to its pre-war state, complete with playing-fields. The land had been authorised to be used as temporary housing under the Defence of the Realm Act, and as this was no longer in force, the prefabs had to go. The site of the plot by Capel Road was reinstated as playing fields (mainly football pitches); that on the Manor Park section of the Flats reverted to rough grassland.

1. **City of London Cemetery**

Concern for the health of the residents of the City and the state of the churchyards led to the purchase of 200 acres (c 83ha) of land from Lord Wellesley in 1853, to be laid out as a cemetery.   
  
An area of 36ha was initially enclosed for the cemetery. Aldersbrook House was demolished and a lake was drained. The cemetery was laid out in 1853-5, with the buildings and overall design by William Haywood (1821-94), surveyor and engineer to the London Commissioners of Sewers. Haywood designed the Anglican chapel, the Dissenters' chapel, the catacombs, and entrance gates and lodges. The landscaping, for which £1800 was allocated, was carried out by the landscape gardener William Davidson of Bloomsbury Street, London and formerly a gardener at Shrublands, Suffolk.  
  
In 1897 the London Commissioners of Sewers were abolished and the cemetery passed to the Corporation of the City of London, who still own and manage it. A crematorium was added in 1902, and the cemetery was further extended in 1906, 1914, 1949, and 1959.  
  
Since 1937 25 acres (c 10ha) of memorial gardens have been laid out to the north and east of the old crematorium. Since 1951 a lawn burial policy has been adopted for coffin burial in the northern part of the site. There have been over 500,000 burials since the cemetery opened and it is now the largest municipal cemetery in Europe.

The main monuments are for remains reinterred from City Cemeteries.

1. **Wanstead Park**

Wanstead Park was the site of a Roman villa and Wanstead manor house later stood on the north side of what is now the golf course, near the parish church. The house was originally a small building called Wanstead Hall but was enlarged in 1499 so that it could serve as a royal hunting lodge.

The park was formed by enclosing part of Epping Forest in the mid-16th century. Sir Richard Child (of the banking dynasty) later Viscount Castlemaine and Earl Tylney, inherited Wanstead House (as it became known) in 1715 and rebuilt it in 1722 on a magnificent scale in the Palladiian Style.

In the 1760s the grounds of the house were adorned with an elaborate grotto and a [Tuscan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuscan_order) feature originally called the Pheasant House and later known as the Temple, which was incongruously extended to provide living accommodation for the estate’s groundskeepers.

Wanstead House was demolished in 1834 after its contents had been sold to pay off the debts of the spendthrift William Pole-Wellesley, nephew of the Duke of Wellington.

The Corporation of London acquired the grounds in 1880 and opened them to the public two years later. Most of the grotto was destroyed by a fire in 1884.

1. **Little Ilford Park**

The Manor of Little Ilford is mentioned (as simply Ilford) in the Domesday Book of 1086, The name is first recorded in the [Domesday Book](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domesday_Book) of 1086 as *Ilefort* and means *ford over the Hyle*; an old name for the River Roding that means "trickling stream".

Little Ilford Park was originally two separate recreation grounds.

1. **Little Ilford Church**

St Mary's Church is a [Church of England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England) church in [Little Ilford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_Ilford), east London. Mainly 12th century, it had its chancel rebuilt and a south porch and family chapel to the Lethieullier family added in 1724. It remained a parish church until 1938, at which point it became a [chapel of ease](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chapel_of_ease) to [St Michael's Church, Romford Road](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Michael%27s_Church,_Romford_Road). It is listed at Grade I

1. **Little Ilford Temple**

Across Browning Road from Little Ilford School, the [London Sri Murugan](http://www.londonsrimurugan.org/) temple is a major centre of worship for east London’s Hindus.

1. **East Ham Town Hall**

A settlement in the area named Ham is first recorded as *Hamme* in an Anglo-Saxon charter of 958 and then in the 1086 [Domesday Book](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domesday_Book) as *Hame*. It is formed from [Old English](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_English) 'hamm' and means 'a dry area of land between rivers or marshland', referring the location of the settlement within boundaries formed by the rivers [Lea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Lea), [Thames](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Thames) and [Roding](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Roding) and their marshes.  
  
East Ham became an urban district in 1894, a borough in 1903 and a county borough in 1915.   
  
East Ham Town Hall is dated 1901 and extended after that to form a civic centre – using bright red Accrington Brick and biscuit-coloured terracotta in a carefree mixture of styles. Described in Building News of 1898 as “overwrought” and “its rococo style in questionable taste.”

1. **Central Park**

This attractive, mature park is by far the largest open space in densely built-up East Ham. Central Park won a Green Flag Award again for 2008/9

Between 1851 and 1911, East Ham’s population had grown from 1,737 to 133,487, driven by the arrival of the railways in 1858 and a search for jobs around the Royal Albert Docks, Victoria Docks and the Beckton Gasworks. In an attempt to counterbalance this urban invasion of what had formerly been grazing land, John Harvey Bethell – first mayor of East Ham Borough – united with William H. Savage, the district surveyor for East Ham, and local landowner Col. Ynyr Henry Burges, Lord of the Manor and owner of Rancliffe House, to create Central Park. Seventeen acres of land around Rancliffe house were bought for £8,500 and then another eight acres for £4,000. The development also included a large number of houses designed for clerks and skilled workers.

The park was opened on 5 July 1898. 7,000 attended the event, enjoying refreshments and speeches stressing the importance of creating resources for children to prevent ‘Jack becoming a dull boy’. The original park consisted purely of walkways and a fountain but later incorporated public baths, a sundial, a bowling green, glass houses and a putting green. Other highlights added later included the present war memorial, a small railway that carried residents round the park, and the park dances that used to take place during the Second World War and then again in 1948.

The memorial in Central Park, East Ham, was erected in 1921 to commemorate the many men of East Ham who fell during the First World War. The memorial was designed by the architect Robert Banks-Martin, who was the mayor of East Ham during the war.

The memorial stands in the south-east corner of Central Park. It is of Portland stone and takes the form of an elaborate cenotaph which stands on a three-stepped base; it is approximately 8 metres tall. The lower part of the monument is square in section, each face having a curved head topped with a faceted pinnacle. Above, four columns rise from the corners of the monument, linked at the head by round arches with pronounced keystones. From each of the keystones on the north and south sides hangs a bronze wreath. The monument is surmounted by a stone dome with a faceted pinnacle.  
  
Each face of the memorial bears a bronze plaque; the plaques are dedicated to the men of East Ham who fell during the First World War, and specifically, the men of the 32nd (S) East Ham Battalion The Royal Fusiliers and the men of the 141st (East Ham) Heavy Battery Royal Garrison Artillery. The Roll of Honour is spread between the four sides of the memorial and contains a total of 1824 names.  
  
[Beckton Creek Nature Reserve]

1. **Albert Dock (part of the Royal Docks)**  
     
   The Royal Docks are a collection of three docks, Royal Albert, George V and Royal Victoria. Despite being named after the monarchy, they are not owned by the royal family. They were completed between 1855 and 1921, by St Katherine’s docks company. Spanning over 12 miles, the docks were responsible for the majority of imports and exports to and from the city. As a result large granaries, warehouses and storehouses were built along the river.

Collectively the largest enclosed docks in the world, occupying a space the equivalent to the whole of central London from Hyde Park to Tower Hill. Victoria Dock was built 1850-5 by the Victoria Dock Co. and designed by George Parker Bidder, a civil engineer from Devon. An advance on earlier docks by virtue of its size, its own railway system and the extensive use of finger jetties to increase capacity. By 1860 the dock was taking in 850,000 tonnes of shipping per year.

The Pontoon Dock was built towards the end of the construction of the Victoria Dock and include and included a revolutionary ship lift, which lifted each ship out of the water on pontoons that were raised by hydraulic jacks. Drained of ballast water the ship could then be floated to a finger dock for repair. By 1896 the size of ships became too great for this manoeuvre. The docks usage was shifted to grain storage as most new vessels were too large to be service in the dock.

The Albert Dock was built 1875-80, which has 85 acres of water.

The Royals were taken over by the Port of London Authority in 1909. The George V Dock was one of two planned for the north and south of the Albert Dock by an1901 Act of Parliament. It was built 1912-21, and has 64 acres of water.

During the General Strike the generators of 2 Royal Navy submarines were connected to the warehouses to save 750,000 frozen carcasses.

The docks were heavily bombed during the war, it is estimated that 25,000 tons of ordinance was dropped on the Royal Docks during the Blitz. The docks remained open despite high casualties of many dockers working during air raids. Following the war the docks briefly recovered as a commercial hub, but with the advent of the far more efficient method of containerization, which allowed cargo to be transported much easier on land, the docks eventually ceased commercial activity in 1981.

Several of the granaries and mills were damage by the Silvertown explosion, in 1917. Many dockside buildings were demolished to prepare for a commercial development, Silvertown quays, which has not materialised.

1. **Royal Victoria Gardens**

Although gifted by King Edgar to a local nobleman, by 1086 East Ham, including the marshes of North Woolwich was known to be held by Westminster Abbey, as the abbey’s manor of ‘Hammarsh juxta Barking’.

It remained in religious ownership right up to 1840 when the railway proprietor, George Parker bought the land so he could extend railways to the ferry — and built North Woolwich railway station.

The gardens themselves were laid out as a Victorian pleasure garden by a hotel opposite the railway station, the Pavilion Hotel, in 1850, and although initially hugely successful, by the 1880s the gardens were losing money, and there were proposals for them to be converted into industrial use.

Fortunately, a public appeal, lead by the Duke of Westminster was able to raise the £19,000 needed to buy the land for it to be permanently laid out as a public garden and in April 1890, it was handed to the London County Council.

There is a quirk in that this patch of land north of the Thames, known as North Woolwich was, until 1965, part of Kent, not Essex. This is thought to have been a legacy of the Norman conquest when the Sheriff of Kent, Hamo Dapifer was gifted land in Essex, and he managed to somehow attach that to his estates in Kent — and tax the ferry linking the two.

However, in 1888, North Woolwich was split in half by the park itself, which became part of East Ham – leading to a peculiar peninsula of political power in this part of London. In 1965, this mess was tidied up at last, and now the entire north bank of the Thames along here is united in the Borough of Newham.

Nothing remains of the Victorian pleasure gardens, and what’s here is largely how the gardens were laid out in 1890, with a series of paths for decorative Victorian walking, and a high raised back next to the river giving a pleasant riverside walk, even if the riverside wall is a rather unpleasant concrete anti-flood necessity.

The only noticeable piece of docklands history here is a large steam hammer from a local ship repair dock. One thing which was added in later years, but is now missing is an open air swimming pool that used to sit between the bowling green and tennis courts.

The former LCC Pumping *Station - Woolwich Manor Way is a* distinctive red-brick building was built by the London County Council in 1895-97as part of a new mains drainage scheme. Although converted into residential units it retains its general character – dark red brick elevations, double height arched openings with orange-red brick arches and large keystones, circular windows each with four keystones in the pedimented gable ends and slate roofs with timber louvred clerestories. This property should be protected by both Local Listing and its inclusion within a new North Woolwich & Royal Victoria Gardens Conservation Area, forming a clearly identifiable group with The Lodge & the Gaslight & Coke Company Cottages).

1. **North Woolwich Railway Station**

Built 1854 as the terminus for the Easter counties and Thames junction Railway. Restored 1984-5 **and converted to a museum but now derelict.**

1. **Woolwich Ferry**

A ferry has operated on the Thames at Woolwich since the 14th century, and commercial crossings operated intermittently until the mid-19th. The free service opened in 1889 after tolls were abolished on bridges to the west of London.

The ferry typically carries about two million passengers a year;occupants of vehicles (including drivers) are counted as passengers.In 2012 the ferry carried around 20,000 vehicles and 50,000 passengers weekly.

Tolls cannot be levied on the ferry without changing the 1885 Act of Parliament.

1. **Brick Lane Music Hall**

Formerly St Mark’s Church. Built 1860-62, architect SS Teulon. Now sympathetically restored as the Brick Lane Music Hall. Described by Pesvner as “confident, massive, and exotically decorative, in deliberate contrast to its industrial setting.”

1. **Tate and Lyle**

The company was formed in 1921 from a merger of two rival [sugar refiners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sugar_refiner): *Henry Tate & Sons* and *Abram Lyle & Sons*. The two companies had large factories nearby each other – Henry Tate in [Silvertown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvertown) and Abram Lyle at Plaistow Wharf – so prompting the merger. Prior to the merger, which occurred after they had died, the two men were bitter business rivals, although they had never met in person.  
  
In 2006, Lyle’s Golden Syrup tin was awarded a [Guinness World Record](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinness_World_Records) as the world’s oldest branding.

In February 2008, it was announced that Tate & Lyle granulated white cane sugar would be accredited as a [Fairtrade](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairtrade) product, with all the company's other retail products to follow in 2009.   
  
Now owned by American sugar Refining.

1. **Thames Barrier and Park**   
     
   Flooding in London has been a problem since the city was first established in Roman times. In 1954 the Waverley Committee, established to investigate the serious [North Sea flood of 1953](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Sea_flood_of_1953) which affected parts of the Thames Estuary and parts of London, recommended that "*as an alternative to raising the banks, the possibility and cost of erecting a structure across the Thames which could be closed in a surge should be urgently investigated*".

The concept of the rising sector gates was devised by (Reginald) Charles Draper. In 1969, from his parents' house in Pellatt Grove, [Wood Green](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wood_Green), London, he constructed a working model. The novel rotating cylinders were based on the design of the taps on his gas cooker.

Work began at the barrier site in 1974 and progressed in two phases. The southern piers (9 to 6) were built first, with river traffic diverted to the north side, then traffic routed through the completed southern spans whilst the north side piers (1 to 5) were built. During construction of the piers, precast concrete sills were built in a [cofferdam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cofferdam) on the north side of the river and floated out and sunk between the piers to form the gate recesses, with access tunnels at the upstream and downstream ends.

The gates of the barrier were fabricated in sections at Cleveland Bridge's Darlington works and assembled at Port Clarence on the [River Tees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Tees). The gates, gate arms and rocking beams were transported from the Tees to the Thames by barge and lifted into position by two very large floating cranes operated by Neptun of Hamburg (now part of SMIT) The mechanical and hydraulic machinery was built by Davy Loewy, Henry Berry and Vickers and trial assembled in Davy's Darnall works. Delays to the civil works required changes to the construction and installation sequence, but commissioning was relatively uneventful and the first trial operation of all the gates together was carried out on 31 October 1982.

In addition to the barrier, the flood defences 18 kilometres (11 mi) down river were raised and strengthened. The barrier was officially opened on 8 May 1984 by [Queen Elizabeth II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II). The barrier cost £461 million (£1.16 billion now). Total construction cost was around £534 million (£1.6 billion at 2016 prices) with an additional £100 million for river defences.

The barrier protects central London against a storm surge, caused when a deep depression forms to the north of Scotland and progresses across the North Sea and south-easterly towards southern Scandinavia. When such a surge coincides with a high [spring tide](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spring_tide), the high winds associated with the depression can funnel the water up the Thames Estuary and cause surges of up to 3.5 metres. The planners assessed that in the absence of a barrier, such a surge could inundate 45 square miles (117 km2) of land, put hospitals, powers stations and the London Underground out of action and cause damage estimated in 1966 at £2.0 billion (about £50 billion at 2020 prices). The barrier was designed to provide a flood defence capable of resisting a once in 1000 year surge tide at a base date of 2030.

Thames Barrier Park is a 7-hectare green space located in the Royal Docks - an area in the London Borough of Newham. The park is managed by the Greater London Authority. Opened in November 2000 it was London’s largest new riverside park for over 50 years.

Thames Barrier Park was designed by landscape architect Allain Provost (Groupe Signes) of Paris and architects Patel Taylor of London. Remarkably, the park was created on a site that once housed petrochemical and acid works on the Thames riverbank. The contaminated soil was covered with a 6 foot layer of crushed concrete to protect the new soil laid on top. Since its opening the park has won design awards in the UK and USA.

One of the most eye-catching features of the park is the 'Green Dock', a 130 foot long sunken garden running diagonally through the park that is intended as a reminder of the site's dockland heritage. The 'Green Dock' provides a wind protected microclimate for a variety of plants and wildlife.

Two bridges cross the Green Dock and reveal vistas across the colourful, scented gardens. The park also boasts extensive lawns that are crossed by gravel pathways and bordered by yew and maygreen hedges.

The park is carefully tended to display variety throughout the year, and provide a welcome habitat for birds and insects.

At the Riverside is a memorial to the civilian victims of war.

1. **Silvertown Explosion Memorial**

On 19 January 1917, just before seven o'clock in the evening, London's biggest ever explosion occurred.  
  
The location was [Silvertown](http://exploringeastlondon.co.uk/eel/Silvertown/Silvertown.htm), between the Royal Docks and the Thames, and the cause was munitions work for the Great War. A former caustic soda factory on the waterfront had been taken over for the production of TNT, and on Friday 19th January 1917 it exploded. 73 people were killed and more than 400 injured, which is the kind of mess 50 tons of high explosives can make in a built-up area. So great was the blast from the [Silvertown Explosion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvertown_explosion) that 900 adjacent properties were destroyed, the windows at the Savoy Hotel were blown out, and the bang was heard as far away as Norfolk and the Sussex coast.  
  
A [memorial](https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1387182) to the disaster was erected by the company outside the factory gates, and stood until recently [under the DLR viaduct](https://www.flickr.com/photos/dgeezer/5048646606) on the North Woolwich Road. It doubled up as a war memorial, so only one of the four faces commemorates the explosion, and only employees of the company got a mention, which isn't ideal. It was also carved from limestone, so the lettering hasn't fared too well in London's polluted air and has become increasingly hard to read. Meanwhile the site of the explosion remained barren wasteland until a couple of years ago.

1. **Lyle Park**

In 1924, Sir Leonard Lyle, a grandson of Abram Lyle (the Lyle of Tate and Lyle), donated the land to the local council to be used as a park for the benefit of local residents. It contains a First World War Memorial in the form of a water fountain and the gates that stood at the entrance to the Harland and Woolf shipyard in Woolwich Manor Way. Installed here as a decorative feature in 1994.

1. **Millennium Mills**

The Millennium Mills is a derelict turn of the 20th century flour [mill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gristmill) in West [Silvertown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvertown) on the south side of the [Royal Victoria Dock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Victoria_Dock), between the [Thames Barrier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thames_Barrier) and the [ExCeL London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ExCeL_London) exhibition centre alongside the newly built Britannia village. The Mills are currently undergoing a major renovation as part of a £3.5billion redevelopment of [Silvertown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvertown).



Along with Millennium Mills, there remains a small section of the now destroyed [Rank Hovis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rank_Hovis) Premier Mill and a restored [grade II listed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grade_II_listed) grain [silo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silo), labelled the 'D’ silo. Described by the [*Evening Standard*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evening_Standard) in 2009 as a "decaying industrial anachronism standing defiant and alone in the surrounding subtopia",the Millennium Mills has become a well-loved [icon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_icon) of [post-industrial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-industrial_economy) Britain and has made its way into many aspects of popular culture, being used as a backdrop in films and television shows such as [*Ashes to Ashes*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashes_to_Ashes_(British_TV_series)), [*London's Burning*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London%27s_Burning_(TV_series)) and Derek Jarman's [*The Last of England*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_of_England_(film)). Millennium Mills is also a destination for [Urban Explorers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_Explorers) despite high security, dangers of structural weakness, ten-storey drops and asbestos, and there are many reports and internal photos of the site.  
  
After a protracted and failed redevelopment [proposal](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Proposals) in the 2000s, Newham [Council](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Council) awarded [planning permission](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Planning_permission) to The Silvertown [Partnership](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Partnership) in 2015.

According to [developer](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Developer), Sir Stuart Lipton, the 62-acre [site](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Site) will reinvent the [concept](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Concept) of the ‘atelier’ on a grand [scale](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Scale) – ‘creating a [place](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Place) where people who make things show and share them, driving new ideas and [innovation](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Innovation) on a major [scale](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Scale).’

It is hoped that Silvertown will become the first purpose-[built](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Built) [business](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Business) destination in the world, offering a canvas for entrepreneurial and exciting start-up [companies](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Company) to create ‘truly special [experiences](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Experience)’ for their [customers](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Customer). A new type of work/[life](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Life) [ecosystem](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Ecosystem) will be created that will encourage [wellbeing](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Wellbeing) and use [innovations](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Innovation) in ‘[smart building](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Smart_buildings)’ [technology](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Technology) and [collaborative working](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Collaborative_working) [spaces](https://www.designingbuildings.co.uk/wiki/Space).

1. **Crystal Building**

The Crystal was designed by [Perkins+Will](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Perkins_and_Will) (fit-out, design leader) and [Wilkinson Eyre Architects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wilkinson_Eyre_Architects) (shell and core), with [Arup Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arup_Group) who were the building and civil engineers, and [Townshend Landscape Architects](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Townshend_Landscape_Architects) who designed the public realm.[Event Communications](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Event_Communications) were the Exhibition Designers, responsible for the interpretive planning, exhibition design and creative direction, graphic design, media direction and construction management for the exhibition spaces. The building was the first to achieve the highest sustainable building accolades.

In order to save £55M for the [Greater London Authority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greater_London_Authority) over the course of five years, in June 2020, the [Mayor of London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayor_of_London) [Sadiq Khan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sadiq_Khan) announced that he was consulting on relocating the headquarters of the Greater London Authority from [City Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_Hall,_London) to The Crystal.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crystal#cite_note-london_gov-3) The decision was confirmed on 3 November 2020.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crystal#cite_note-10) Newham Borough Council gave permission for a change of use for the building in December 2020. [[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Crystal#cite_note-11) The move due to be completed by 31 December 2021.

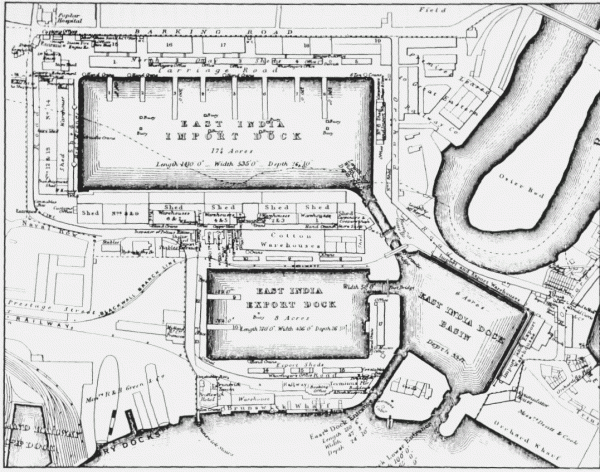
1. **East India Dock Nature Reserve**

A small nature reserve at Blackwall is all that remains of one of Dockland’s many docks that once served goods from India, and later supported the D-Day invasions.

Two docks were built by the East India Company, with approvals starting in 1803, next to the existing Brunswick Yard, a ship building site already owned by the Company.

They converted the old Brunswick Yard into a large export dock, and what is today the site of office blocks became a large import dock. The bit that remains, the East India Dock Basin was merely the entrance to the Thames for these two might docks.

The Second World War had a tremendous impact on the docks. The Import Dock was drained for the construction of Mulberry floating harbours; the Export Dock suffered such severe bomb damage that it was never reopened and sold in 1946.



The Export Dock had an interesting second life though — in that it became a large power station in a style similar to Battersea and Bankside. It closed down in 1984 though and was demolished a few years later. Today the area is a housing estate.

The nearby East India DLR station was originally going to be called Brunswick Wharf when the line was planned, but the name changed at some point before the station opened.

The import dock was also filled in, and is today a cluster of office blocks, with a few small lakes in memory of its former grandeur. However, the Basin remains, and is today a wildlife refuge for sea birds.

The basin is still connected to the Thames via a lock gate, and it is tidal, as they’ve filled in the dock to become that rare sort of central London nature reserve, a tidal lagoon with a saltmarsh and mudflats.

1. **Trinity Buoy Wharf and Thames Ironworks**

In 1803, the site began to be used by the [Elder Brethren of Trinity House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_House), now known as Corporation of Trinity House. The [seawall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seawall) was reconstructed in 1822 by George Mundy of [Old Ford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Ford). The site was used as a maintenance depot, and storage facility for the many [buoys](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buoy) that aided navigation on the Thames; and the wharf for docking and repair of [lightships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lightvessel).

The original lighthouse was built by the engineer of [Trinity House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_House), [James Walker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Walker_(engineer)), in 1852, and was demolished in the late 1920s. A second lighthouse, which survives, was built in 1864–66 by [James Douglass](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Nicholas_Douglass) for Trinity House. It was used to test lighting systems for Trinity House's lights around England and Wales. [Michael Faraday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Faraday) carried out experiments there. Both lighthouses were also used for training prospective lighthouse keepers.  
  
In December 1988, [Trinity House](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_House) closed the wharf, and the area was acquired by the [London Docklands Development Corporation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Docklands_Development_Corporation). In 1998, the LDDC set up the Trinity Buoy Wharf Trust with a 125-year lease to hold the land for the people of London. Urban Space Holdings Ltd took control of the site on a long lease. The site has been, and continues to be, developed as "a centre for the arts and cultural activities". Enhancements include studio space (including unusual architecture based on used shipping containers) and exhibition space.

Urban Space Holdings used the area to develop "[Container City](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Container_City)" in 2001, a studio and office complex made from recycled sea [shipping containers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shipping_container). The original project was made from 80% recycled material. "Container City 1" took 5 months to complete, taking 4 days to install. The Container City project proved very popular and in 2002 "Container City 2" was completed delivering a further 22 studios across 5 floors in with a brightly coloured [ziggurat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ziggurat) design. A further extension to the Container City Complex was the "Riverside Building" located next to the Thames facing [The O2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_O2_(London)) dome. This was yet another architectural design providing an additional 22 studio spaces.

In November 2005, the [University of East London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_East_London) opened Fine Art studios at the wharf; and in September 2009 the university opened two dance studios at the Institute of Performing Arts Development in The Chainstore at the wharf.

[Faraday School](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Faraday_School&action=edit&redlink=1), a not-for-profit primary school run by the [New Model School Company Limited](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=New_Model_School_Company_Limited&action=edit&redlink=1), opened in September 2009.

The wharf is also the home of Thames Clippers who have offices and base all their boats on the pier there.

In April 2013 the former Cory Environmental Thames Lighterage tug *Swiftstone* moved to Trinity Buoy Wharf from Greenwich, and Swiftstone Trust's volunteers began a full restoration of the vessel which can be seen underway at the year Thames Barge Driving event. In 2016 Trinity Buoy Wharf Trust acquired two historic tugboats, the [*Knocker White*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knocker_White) and the [*Varlet*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Varlet_(tug)&action=edit&redlink=1) from the [Museum of London Docklands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Museum_of_London_Docklands). Both vessels are listed by [National Historic Ships](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Historic_Ships) on the National Register of Historic Vessels.

The Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company, Limited was a [shipyard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shipyard) and [iron works](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iron_works) straddling the mouth of [Bow Creek](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bow_Creek_(England)) at its confluence with the [River Thames](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Thames), at [Leamouth Wharf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leamouth) (often referred to as [Blackwall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackwall,_London)) on the west side and at [Canning Town](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canning_Town) on the east side. Its main activity was [shipbuilding](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shipbuilding), but it also diversified into civil engineering, marine engines, cranes, electrical engineering and motor cars

In 1838 the Dichburn and Mare Shipbuilding Company moved to Orchard Place from Deptford taking over a defunct shipyard. This company was among the first building iron ships in the area.

In 1847, Mare (who continued the company after aft the retirement of Ditchburn, bought a site at Canning Town, with a ferry service operating between the two. He constructed a yard with furnaces and rolling mills. In 1853 the company launched the [SS Himalaya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Himalaya) for the [Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peninsular_and_Oriental_Steam_Navigation_Company), briefly the world's largest passenger ship before becoming a naval [troopship](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Troopship). In 1855 despite a full order book Ditchburn became bankrupt. The company was kept going by creditors and Mare’s father-in law, Peter Rolt and became the Thame s Ironworks and Shipbuilding and Engineering Company in 1857.



The new company was the largest shipbuilder on the Thames, its premises described by the [Mechanics' Magazine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanics%27_Magazine) in 1861 as "Leviathan Workshops". Large scale [Ordnance Survey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ordnance_Survey) maps of the 1860s show the yard occupying a large triangular site in a right-angled bend on the east bank of Bow Creek with the railway to Thames Wharf on the third side, and with a smaller site on the west bank. The main yard had a quay 1,050 feet (320m) long. To the south-east the yard occupied the north bank of the Thames east of Bow Creek, with two slips giving direct access to the main river. Today the site is crossed by the [A1020](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A1020_road)Lower Lea Crossing and the [Docklands Light Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Docklands_Light_Railway) south of [Canning Town station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canning_Town_railway_station).

By 1863 the company had the capacity to build 25,000 tons of warships and 10,000 tons of [mail steamers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mail_steamer) simultaneously. One of its first [Admiralty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Admiralty) contracts was for [HMS Warrior](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Warrior_(1860)), launched in 1860, at the time the world's largest warship and the first iron-hulled armoured [frigate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frigate). [HMS Minotaur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Minotaur_(1863)) followed in 1863, 400 feet (120 m) long and 10,690 tons displacement.

Work on vessels such as Minotaur was performed on the Canning Town side of the Lea, and this is where the Thames Ironworks expanded from less than 10 acres (4.0 ha) in 1856 to 30 acres (12 ha) by 1891. While the old site at Orchard Place was still the company's official address until 1909, its presence there was minimal, by the late 1860s the company having only a 5 acres (2.0 ha) site there.

In 1895 Managing Director and philanthopist Arnold Hills set up a football club for the works’ employees.



During its lifetime the yard produced 144 warships and numerous other vessels.

1898 launch of HMS Albion was captured on film & is available on [you tube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=me2DF4J85Ak). Tragedy struck when she was launched on 21 June 1898;[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Albion_(1898)#cite_note-3) after the [Duchess of York](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duchess_of_York) christened her, a wave created by *Albion*'s entry into the water caused a stage from which 200 people were watching to collapse into a side creek, and 34 people, mostly women and children, drowned in one of the worst peacetime disasters in Thames history.

In 1911 Hills petitioned [Winston Churchill](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winston_Churchill), then [First Lord of the Admiralty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_Commissioner_of_the_Admiralty), regarding the lack of new orders. He was unsuccessful, and the yard was forced to shut in 1912. Within two years the United Kingdom was at war with the [German Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_Empire), with the yard's last major ship taking part in the [Battle of Jutland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Jutland).

As the Docks expanded and created employment opportunities, Canning Town and the surrounding area became densely populated, but conditions of living were very poor. In 1857 Charles Dickens described the area as follows: "Canning Town is the child of the Victoria Docks. The condition of this place and of its neighbour prevents the steadier class of mechanics from residing in it. They go from their work to Stratford or to Plaistow. Many select such a dwelling place because they are already debased below the point of enmity to filth; poorer labourers live there, because they cannot afford to go farther, and there become debased. The Dock Company is surely, to a very great extent, answerable for the condition of the town they are creating. Not a few of the houses in it are built by poor and ignorant men who have saved a few hundred pounds, and are deluded by the prospect of a fatally cheap building investment.”

From the late 19th century, a large African mariner community was established in Canning Town as a result of new shipping links to the Caribbean and West Africa.

In 1917 50 tons of TNT exploded at the Brunner Mond & Co ammunition work in Silvertown, causing the largest explosion in London's history and damaging more than 70,000 buildings and killing 73 people.

1. **Bow Creek Ecology Park**The park was created by the [London Docklands Development Corporation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Docklands_Development_Corporation) (LDDC) in 1994, after a survey identified rare and unusual [plant species](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plant_species) in the area, some presumed carried in by shipping, such as [Hairy Buttercup](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ranunculus_sardous) (*Ranunculus sardous*), Walthamstow Cress, and Unreel's Wormwood.  
     
   The park was officially opened in 1996 by Eastenders actress [Michelle Collins](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michelle_Collins) for BBC Education programme "Science Zone".[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bow_Creek_Ecology_Park#cite_note-4)

The Park has won a [Green Flag Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Green_Flag_Award) for the fourth year in 2010,[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bow_Creek_Ecology_Park#cite_note-official-5) and was also nominated for the [UK Landscape Award](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=UK_Landscape_Award&action=edit&redlink=1) 2010.

1. **Thames Crossings**

A series of five bridges cross the River Lea (Bow Creek) west of Canning.The old railway bridge is the southernmost structure, followed by a bright blue Jubilee Footbridge of recent construction; an abutment to the demolished 19th century bridge can be seen to the north (right) of the footbridge; and at the top of this view the 1930s road bridge can be seen, sandwiched between two more recent additional highway bridges which both carry bus lanes.

The Jubilee Footbridge is close to the site of the famous Iron Bridge authorised by an Act of Parliament as part of the project to construct the Barking Road between the East India Docks and Barking. Prior to the 19th Century, the district was largely marshland, and accessible only by boat, or a toll bridge. The five span iron bridge was opened in 1810. It had brick abutments and a cast-iron roadway in an oak framework overlaid with concrete and tarmacadam. It can be seen in the engraving of c1825 below as viewed from the east with the East India Company’s Pepper Warehouses in the background. The bridge was designed by James Walker and Alfred Burges for the Commercial Road Turnpike Trust. This Trust was abolished in 1871 when the tolls were lifted and it became the joint responsibility of the counties of Essex and Middlesex.



This bridge was damaged when it was hit by a collier barge in March 1887 and had to be shored up. Plans were swiftly drawn up to replace it on the same site by the London County Council (which had been formed in 1889) and the corporation of West Ham and opened in 1896. It was designed by the LCC’s Chief Engineer Sir Alexander Binnie, who designed several other river crossings such as Vauxhall Bridge (now Grade II\*). It is pictured below in a watercolour and shown in the drawing of 1887.



*The former railway swing bridge*

The railway bridge is the earliest surviving bridge within this group of river crossings. It was a swing bridge built across the River Lea in 1848 by the Eastern Counties and Thames Junction Railway Company to link their line at Canning Town with their Blackwall Goods Yard just east of the Leamouth Road. This occupied the site of the old East India Company Pepper Warehouse which had been built between 1808 and 1820s.

The railway bridge can be seen on this map extract from Charles Booth’s *Poverty Map of London* compiled in 1899. To its north lies the Barking Road bridge (replaced in 1935) and then the ‘Gas Bridge’ built in 1870 to carry gas and water mains across the river.



The goods railway closed in 1967 and part of its old alignment from the eastern side of the bridge to Canning Town station is now utlised by the DLR.

*The 1935 bridge carrying the A13 arterial road*

The 1895 bridge was replaced in 1935 on a site immediately to the north as part of the Ministry of Transport’s inter-war road building programme which included the 13Southend Arterial (which bypassed the dense urban town centres of East Ham and Barking) and Silvertown Way. This bridge was designed by Rendel, Palmer & Tritton and comprised a single 195 foot skew span steel arch, 84 feet in width between the parapets.

The new bridge was authorised by Parliament in 1928 and cost £2.5 million, the new road greatly improved connections between London and the Royal Docks, Barking and South East Essex which had hitherto been dogged by numerous level crossings and swing bridges.



1. **Cody Dock/Memorial Gardens**

Originally built in the 1870’s as a dock bringing coal to the Bow Gasworks, it was developed by the Imperial Gas and Light Coke Co (later taken over by the Gas Light and Coke Company). After falling into disuse and being used as an informal dump, it was acquired by the Gasworks Dock Partnership as a Social Enterprise with a vision to provide employment, educational and cultural facilities - particularly the creative arts. Its first open day was July 2012.

The name "Cody" for the dock and the nearby road derives from the fact that "Buffalo Bill" Cody pitched his camp in the area when he was giving shows in London. It is a key site for opening up the Lower Lea Valley to walkers and cyclists. It is being re-developed as part of a community project, into a working marina, under the Cody wilds project. The project is being led by the Gasworks Dock Partnership. The aim of the development is to deliver a sustainable creative industry hub, promote community value and increase participation in the arts and access to the diverse ecology of the river Lea for local community groups.

Located in the area of the Bromley Gas Works, the Memorial Garden includes the memorial to Sir Corbet Woodall, the Governor of the Gas Light and Coke Company from 1906 to 1916. From Liverpool he followed his father into the coal gas industry working at Woolwich, Stockton-on-Tees and Vauxhall before becoming a consultant gas engineer. When he became a director of the Gas Light and Coke Company it was the largest gas company in the world. It had been founded by Royal Charter in 1812 and was the first company to supply coal gas in London, operated the first gas works in the United Kingdom and was the world's first public gas works. Its first works were located at the Royal Mint. The Company was capitalised £1 million for 80,000 shares, which approximates to 7 billion in modern currency.

The company absorbed numerous smaller companies such as the Aldgate Gas light and Coke Company, the City of London Gas light and Coke Company. It eventually ended up supplying an area from Pinner in North West London to Southend on Sea, it was nationalised in 1948 under the Gas Act and became one of twelve large regional gas boards. The gas boards were replaced by British Gas, in 1972.

Sir Corbett Woodall was famed for fostering good relations with his staff and was honorary colonel of the 12th Battalion of the London Regiment. He retired to the south of France in 1914 and died 2 years later. The statute is by George Arthur Walker. They ae accompanied by war memorials and a lit gas light.

The statue (which was moved from Beckton in 1926) and war memorial are Grade II listed.

1. **Three Mills**  
     
   The Three Mills are some of the earliest examples of a tidal mill system in Britain. They were acquired by Stratford Longthorne Abbey in the 12th century. Prior to the abbey, there is evidence in the Doomsday book of eight or nine mills situated on the same site.

During the period of dissolution of the Abbey the mills were producing flour for the bakers of Stratford-atte-bow. During the 16th century the three mills were reduced to two, the ‘House Mill’ and the ‘Clock Mill’, with production shifting to the grinding of grain used in the distillation of alcohol to produce gin. The House Mill was rebuilt in 1776 following a fire and is now a Grade 1 listed building, built for James Bisson.

The Clock Mill was rebuilt in 1815-17 by Philip Metcalfe who was a Tory MP and owner of Metcalfe and Co, a distillery based in West Ham.

The Mills would change ownership frequently until 1872 when they were purchased by distillers J & W Nicholson and Clerkenwell, and continued in operation until closure during the 2nd world war, in 1941. The mills were bombed during the war, the Millers House was totally destroyed and only rebuilt in 1995.

The Mills remain the largest tidal mills in the world, but are not in operation, the building is owned by the House Mill Trust and is one of only four Grade 1 listed buildings in Newham.

The Mills share the island with Three Mills studios, formerly known as Bow studios during the 1980s, in 2004 the London Development agency acquired 3 Mills Studios, the ownership was transferred to the LDDC in 2010. Some of the more famous films that have been produced at three mills are: Fantastic Mr Fox, Lock Stock and two smoking barrels and Made in Dagenham.

1. **Bow Bridge**Old Ford, as the name suggests, was the ancient most downstream crossing point of the [River Lea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Lea). Now crossing between Tower Hamlets and Hackney. In 1110, [Matilda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edith_of_Scotland), wife of [Henry I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_I_of_England), reputedly took a tumble at the ford on her way to [Barking Abbey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barking_Abbey) and ordered a distinctively bow-shaped three-arched bridge to be built over the [River Lea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Lea) which in 1838-39 was replaced by a bridge of one oblate arch at a cost of £11,000.

Bow Creek is situated on the final 2.5km long stretch of the river, is the final stretch of the River Lea, which rises in Luton, Bedfordshire.

As the Creek is tidal, its depth is very shallow at low tide and unnavigable at low tide. Stratford Langthorne Abbey was responsible for the maintenance of tidal waters. The earliest written evidence of the use of the river for transport and infrastructure is from an act of parliament dated 1571, that empowered the Mayor of London to make improvements to the river to allow for sufficient imports of grain.

1. **London Stadium**

The Park covers an area of 2.5sq kms. Some prehistoric settlements have been unearthed, including 4 iron age skeletons.

In creating the Park, 2m tons of soil was cleaned, 5kms of riverbank were cleaned, power cables buried underground and an EU fridge mountain ("one of Europe's most iconic eyesores") removed. 250 ha (500 acres) of parkland were created. The north part of the Park is be more like traditional parkland. The southern section is more "urban" and can be used for events.

Land preparation for the stadium began in mid-2007, with the construction officially starting on 22 May 2008. The stadium held its first public event in March 2012, serving as the finish line for a celebrity run organised by the [National Lottery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Lottery_(United_Kingdom)). Holding 80,000 for the Olympics and the Paralympics, it re-opened in July 2016 with 66,000 seats, but with capacity for football limited to 60,000 under the terms of the lease. The decision to make West Ham United the main tenants was controversial, with the initial tenancy process having to be rerun.

1. **Victoria Park**

It is the largest park in Tower Hamlets and one of London's most visited green spaces with approximately 9 million visitors every year.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Park,_London#cite_note-auto-1) The park spans 86.18 hectares (213.0 acres) of open space and opened to the public in 1845.

A mass [petition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petition) to the Queen, in support of a recommendation by epidemiologist [William Farr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Farr), led to the creation of the park.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Park,_London#cite_note-5) The [Crown Estate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crown_Estate) purchased 218 acres (88 ha) which were laid out by notable London planner and [architect](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Architect) Sir [James Pennethorne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Pennethorne) between 1842 and 1846. A part of the area was known as Bonner Fields, after [Bishop Bonner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Bonner), the last [lord of the manor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_of_the_manor) of [Stepney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stepney). Bonner's Hall, also known as Bonner's Palace, served as a residence of the [Bishops of London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishops_of_London), and was pulled down in 1845 to make way for Victoria Park.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Park,_London#cite_note-6) The land had originally been parkland, associated with the Bishop's Palace, but by the mid-1800s had been spoiled by the extraction of gravel, and clay for bricks.

The park was opened to the public in 1845. It is reminiscent of [Regent's Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regent%27s_Park), having been designed by Pennethorne's teacher [John Nash](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Nash_(architect)), and is considered by some as the finest park in the East End. It is bounded on two sides by [canals](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canal): the [Regent's Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Regent%27s_Canal) lies to the west, while its branch, once known as the [Hertford Union Canal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hertford_Union_Canal), runs along the southern edge of the park. There is a gate named after [Edmund Bonner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edmund_Bonner), and guarding the main entrance at Sewardstone Road are replica statues of the Dogs of [Alcibiades](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alcibiades), the originals of which stood here from 1912 to 2009 until vandalism led to their being removed, restored and rehoused elsewhere in the park.

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Victoria_Park_proposal_1841.jpg)

A drawing of the proposed layout published in 1841.

Two pedestrian alcoves are located at the east end of the park near the [Hackney Wick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hackney_Wick) war memorial where they were placed in 1860. They are surviving fragments of the old [London Bridge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Bridge), demolished in 1831, and were part of the 1760 refurbishment of the 600-year-old bridge, by [Sir Robert Taylor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Taylor_(architect)) and [George Dance the Younger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Dance_the_Younger). They provided protection for pedestrians on the narrow carriageway. The insignia of the Bridge Association can be seen inside these alcoves, which have been [Grade II listed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listed_buildings) since 1951.

The [Lido](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lido_(swimming_pool)) opened in 1936 and reopened in 1952 following damage during the Second World War; it was closed in 1986 and demolished in 1990.

In the latter half of the 19th Century, Victoria Park became an essential amenity for the working classes of the [East End](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_End_of_London). For some East End children in the 1880s, this may have been the only large stretch of uninterrupted greenery they ever encountered. Facilities like the Bathing Pond (picture right) —later superseded by the park lido—would have introduced many to swimming in an era when many public baths (like that at [Shacklewell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shacklewell)) were still simply communal washing facilities.

Victoria Park's reputation as the 'People's Park' grew as it became a centre for political meetings and rallies of all stripes, perhaps exceeding in importance the more well-known [Hyde Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hyde_Park,_London) in this regard. The park occupies the interface between [Tower Hamlets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Tower_Hamlets) — sunk in poverty in the 19th century and with a strong tradition of [socialist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist) and revolutionary agitation — and [Hackney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Hackney), more genteel, but heir to a centuries-old legacy of religious dissent and [non-conformism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonconformist_(Protestantism)) that led to its own fierce brand of [reformism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reformism). So it should come as no surprise that the scene at the numerous [Speaker's Corners](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speaker%27s_Corner) was a lively one.

Although any one could set up their own soapbox, the biggest crowds were usually drawn to 'star' socialist speakers such as [William Morris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Morris) and [Annie Besant](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_Besant).

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Victoria_Park_fountain.jpg)

[Grade II\* listed](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listed_building) drinking fountain in Victoria Park erected by [Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angela_Georgina_Burdett-Coutts) in 1862.

This description by J. H. Rosney, correspondent for [*Harper's Magazine*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harper%27s_Magazine) (February 1888) evokes a scene:  
  
On the big central lawn are scattered numerous groups, some of which are very closely packed. Almost all the religious sects of England and all the political and social parties are preaching their ideas and disputing [...] On this lawn the listener, as his fancy prompts him, may assist on [Malthusianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malthusianism), atheism, agnosticism, secularism, [Calvinism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism), [socialism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialism), [anarchism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchism), [Salvationism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salvation_Army), Darwinism, and even, in exceptional cases, [Swedenborgianism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swedenborgianism) and [Mormonism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mormonism). I once heard there a prophet, a man who professed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost; but this prophet ended by being locked up in an asylum, where he will have to convert the doctor before he can recover his liberty.

The tradition of public speaking in the park continued until well after the Second World War, and was still later reflected in politically oriented rock concerts, such as those held by [Rock Against Racism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_Against_Racism) and the [Anti-Nazi League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-Nazi_League) in the 1970s and 1980s. And it is still not uncommon for marches or demonstrations to begin or end in Victoria Park.

On 26 June 2014, a campaign to revive the Speakers' Corner at Victoria Park was launched at a democratic theatre event held in [Shoreditch Town Hall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shoreditch_Town_Hall). Hosted by [The People Speak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_People_Speak),[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Park,_London#cite_note-13) a participatory campaign and events group, 66 audience members deliberated over how to use the pooled cash revenue from their tickets, and eventually voted to recreate the well-known tradition of free speech and debate in Hyde Park in East London's Victoria Park. The campaign was to formally launch in July 2014.

During the [Second World War](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Second_World_War), Victoria Park was largely closed to the public and effectively became one huge [Ack-Ack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-aircraft_warfare) (anti-aircraft) site. The gun emplacements conveniently straddled the path of German [Luftwaffe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luftwaffe) bombers looping north west after [attacking the docks and warehouses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Blitz) further south in what is now [Tower Hamlets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Tower_Hamlets), and so the park was of some strategic importance.

Prisoner of war camps were erected along the north eastern edge parallel to Victoria Park Road and were used to house both Germans and Italians. An air raid shelter was built underground just inside St Marks Gate. On 15 October 1940 a bomb made a direct hit, trapping around a hundred inside and killing fifteen. Much of the park was taken to be used as part of the war effort, which much of the earth being used for allotments, military stations and barrage balloon sites, even the park railings were melted down to be re-used.

More controversially, anti-aircraft activity in the park has been implicated in the crowd panic that caused the [Bethnal Green tube disaster](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethnal_Green_tube_station) of 1943. Some eyewitness accounts have led to the suggestion that, after several air raid alerts, the panic run for shelter was caused by a gigantic explosion of noise from the direction of the park. A BBC documentary on the event suggests that this was due to the first firing of the new [Z-Battery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Z_battery) anti-aircraft rockets. The UK Ministry of Defence, however, disputes this account.

The war destroyed many of the park's beautiful early features: three lodges including the Bonner Lodge were completely reduced to rubble, the palm house was shattered, St Augustine's Church collapsed in on itself and the pagoda, moorish shelter and lido were all damaged. With finances tight after the war ended, most were torn down rather than repaired.

In 2010 the National Lottery [Big Lottery Fund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Lottery_Fund) awarded the London Borough of Tower Hamlets a £4.5 million grant towards a £12 million programme of major improvements to Victoria Park.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Park,_London#cite_note-Tiesto-19)[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victoria_Park,_London#cite_note-21) Plans included a new building, the Eastern Hub, comprising a cafe, public toilets, community rooms and adult play facilities to promote healthy living.

1. **Copper Box**

The Handball Arena during the Olympic Games, this venue was designed by MAKE architects and uses recycled copper for its cladding. Now a leisure centre, run, like the Aquatic Centre by Greenwich Leisure. It has seating for up to 7,000 and is the new home of the London Lions Basketball Team. It also hosts a Grand Prix Badminton tournament.

1. **Velodrome**

A hyperbolic paraboloid-shaped steel framed structure sits on a 360 degree glazed concourse, the whole being clad in timber to allow natural ventilation. Designed by Hopkins architects it was the first completed venue for the Olympics, it had seating for 6000 during the Games. Now the centrepiece of cycling facilities including outside road, BMX and mountain bike courses and has been taken over by the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority.

1. **Hackney Marshes**

An area of open space in London's [Lower Lea Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lower_Lea_Valley), lying on the western bank of the [River Lea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Lea). It takes its name from its position on the eastern boundary of [Hackney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hackney,_London), the principal part of the [London Borough of Hackney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Borough_of_Hackney), and from its origin as an area of true [marsh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marsh).

The marshes were extensively drained from [Medieval](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval) times onwards, and rubble was dumped here from buildings damaged by air raids during [World War II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II), raising the level of the ground.

Hackney Marsh is one of the largest areas of common land in Greater London, with 136.01 hectares (336.1 acres) of protected commons.

The future of marshes were preserved by the [London County Council](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_County_Council) in 1890, by purchasing the rights and landowners' interests for £75,000. They opened to the public in 1893 by the Chairman of the LCC, [Sir John Hutton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_John_Hutton) and were formally dedicated in 1894.

In 1881, men from [Homerton College](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homerton_College), then still in the London area, founded the Glyn Cricket Club. Members of the cricket club then decided to form a football section to keep fit during the winter months, this football section was to become the famous Clapton Orient Football Club which for thirty years played its home games at Millfields Road Stadium (1900–1930). In 1946 the Club was renamed [Leyton Orient](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leyton_Orient_F.C.)   
  
The marshes provide many pleasant walks, in reach of the inner city, but the most famous use of Hackney Marshes is for [Sunday league football](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sunday_league_football),[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hackney_Marshes#cite_note-9) with 88 full-size [football](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Football_(soccer)) pitches marked out. On a typical Sunday, over 100 matches are played by amateur teams in several local leagues.

1. **Middlesex Beds Nature Reserve**

The River Lea or Lee formerly marked the border between Middlesex and Essex; according to medieval chronicles King Alfred pursued the Danes up the river, which was also possibly used by the Romans. In 1830 the East London Waterworks Co., which had been established at Old Ford in Bow in 1807, bought Hackney Waterworks and cut a canal between Lea Bridge and Old Ford across the Hackney Marshes. There was a serious cholera outbreak in 1849 and the need for provision of clean and safe water led to the Company's construction in 1852/3 of the 6 Middlesex Filter Beds at Lea Bridge to supply purified water to the surrounding area. An additional 19 filter beds were later constructed, 7 of which were the Essex Filter Beds, now the Waterworks Nature Reserve. The Company also created new reservoirs at Walthamstow in 1861. In the early 1900s the East London Waterworks Company was taken over by the Metropolitan Water Board.

By 1969 more modern facilities for water treatment were needed and the Middlesex Filter Beds were replaced by the Coppermills Water Treatment Works in Walthamstow. As a result the unused filter beds here became overgrown and a haven for wildlife. Thames Water, which had owned the site from 1974, leased it in 1988 to Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA), which had taken over tracts of land and water including the Walthamstow Marshes in 1972.

1. **Wetlands Centre**

Walthamstow Wetlands is a 211 ha (520 acres; 2.11 km2) nature reserve in [Walthamstow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walthamstow), [east](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_London) [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London), adjacent to the [historic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historic_counties_of_England) [Essex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Essex)-[Middlesex](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middlesex) border on the [River Lea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Lea). It is focused on the Walthamstow Reservoirs, built by the [East London Waterworks Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_London_Waterworks_Company) between 1853 and 1904 as part of the [Lee Valley Reservoir Chain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Valley_Reservoir_Chain). The site is one of the largest urban wetland nature reserves in Europe, and is particularly important for wildlife due to its position within the [Lee Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Valley_Park); a byway for migrating, wintering and breeding birds. Visitors can freely access the site's natural, industrial and social heritage in one of the capital's most densely populated urban areas.[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walthamstow_Wetlands#cite_note-englishnature-1)

The reservoirs, under the ownership of [Thames Water](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thames_Water), also form part of a larger [Site of Metropolitan Importance for Nature Conservation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Site_of_Metropolitan_Importance_for_Nature_Conservation), noted for the mixture of aquatic and terrestrial habitats on site, and for their London-wide importance (especially for birds).

The Wetlands, and the rest of the [Lee Valley Reservoir Chain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Valley_Reservoir_Chain) are part of the [Lee Valley Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lee_Valley_Park), an area stretching from [Ware](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ware,_Hertfordshire) in [Hertfordshire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hertfordshire) (9 miles north of London) to the confluence of the Lea and [Thames](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Thames) at [Blackwall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackwall,_London).

The Walthamstow reservoirs were built on [marshland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marshland) adjoining the [River Lea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Lea) over fifty years between 1853 and 1904 by the [East London Waterworks Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_London_Waterworks_Company), growing in scale and height as the needs of [London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London) grew. The company was one of eight private water companies in London absorbed by the [Metropolitan Water Board](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan_Water_Board_(London)) in 1904, which was subsequently abolished in 1974. Control was then transferred to the Thames Water Authority, now Thames Water.

There are two significant Victorian industrial buildings still standing on the site, the Coppermill and the Marine Engine House.

Several of the reservoirs were damaged during the [Blitz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Blitz), and the level of the (raised) Lockwood Reservoir was lowered in order to mitigate potential damage if its banks were breached by bombs.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walthamstow_Wetlands#cite_note-2)

Historically the reservoirs were used and maintained purely as an element in the supply of water to London's homes, businesses and industries, but in recent decades, the site has been justifiably recognised for its ecological, landscape and amenity value.

The reservoirs have been developed as a public nature reserve, the Walthamstow Wetlands project, by [London Wildlife Trust](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Wildlife_Trust), in partnership with Thames Water and [London Borough of Waltham Forest](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waltham_Forest_London_Borough_Council). The site opened to the public in October 2017.

1. **Orbit**

A 376 feet tall sculpture come observation tower, designed by Turner prize winning sculptor Sir Anish Kapoor and engineer Cecil Balmond . It is said to be inspired by the Tower of Babel. As a late addition to the Olympic Park, it was mostly paid for by Lakshmi Mittal.

1. **Stratford Waterfront**

The ambitious project will bring together some of the world's most exciting education and cultural organisations, including the BBC, Sadler’s Wells, UAL’s London College of Fashion, University College London and the Victoria and Albert Museum in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution. 

1. **Olympic Pool**

Designed by Zaha Hadid Architects. Zaha Hadid was a Bagdad born and London trained architect of world repute, but who has completed few UK buildings. Another is the recent extension to the Serpentine Gallery. The Aquatic Centre uses her trademark curves, and is said to be inspired by water in motion. Whatever its inspiration the roof presented an engineering challenge. The building was in fact designed before the Olympic bid was successful and therefore had to have extra seating wings added for the Games. Reputedly the Centre cost £50m more than the original budget of £249m. It has been funded to be run by Greenwich Leisure.

1. **Theatre Square**

The theatre was designed by architect James George Buckle, who was commissioned by the actor-manager [Charles Dillon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dillon_(actor-manager)) in 1884. It is the architect's only surviving work, built on the site of a wheelwright's shop on Salway Road, close to the junction with Angel Lane. It opened on 17 December 1884 with a revival of [*Richelieu*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richelieu_(play)) by [Edward Bulwer-Lytton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_Bulwer-Lytton,_1st_Baron_Lytton). Two years later, Dillon sold it to Albert O'Leary Fredericks, his sister's brother-in-law and one of the original backers of the scheme.

In 1887 the theatre was renamed Theatre Royal and Palace of Varieties and side extensions were added in 1887. The stage was enlarged in 1891, by the original architect. In 1902, [Frank Matcham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frank_Matcham) undertook minor improvements to the entrance and foyer. The Theatre reverted to its Theatre Royal Stratford East ('TRSE') name in 1914. A fire on the stage on August Bank Holiday Monday of 1921 did considerable damage to the rear of the theatre. Thankfully the fire happened at midnight, with the safety curtain lowered, saving the auditorium which retains many of its original features to this day. The theatre was closed until January 1922.

The Fredericks family continued to manage the theatre until 1932, although after the [World War I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_I), the theatre fell into financial difficulties, opening only irregularly after 1926. The proscenium is surmounted by the letters "FF", commemorating the association with the Fredericks – possibly Frederick Fredericks, the husband of Dillon's sister, and a successful actor in his own right. Theatre superstition has it that should the letters ever be removed, the theatre will crumble.

TRSE closed in 1938 and remained closed until 1943. Revues were then briefly tried, but failed, and again the theatre was closed until October 1946. Taken over by [David Horne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Horne_(actor)), it briefly became a successful playhouse including the legendary premiere of [Patrick Hamilton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patrick_Hamilton_(writer))'s [*Gaslight*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaslight_(play)), with [Sybil Thorndike](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sybil_Thorndike) and [Derek Bond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derek_Bond) – which ran for six months and was the theatre's first transfer to the West End. The theatre closed again in December 1949.

In late 1950, a touring company presented the Christmas [pantomime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pantomime), *Alice in Wonderland*. Highly experimental, its success was by no means guaranteed or uniform throughout the tour. "They'll lynch us", recalls Sven Stahl. "I still have nightmares about Alice in Wonderland at Barnsley and the miners throwing pennies at John Blanshard."[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_Royal_Stratford_East#cite_note-7) The company were to return, as the [Theatre Workshop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_Workshop) in 1953, with artistic director [Joan Littlewood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Littlewood) and take over the theatre.

The theatre came under threat with the construction of the Stratford shopping centre in the 1970s, but was saved by a public campaign and protected in June 1972 by [English Heritage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Heritage) with a [Grade II\* listing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Listed_building). Money remained short, and the manager, Gerry Raffles, only managed redecoration and replacements as cash became available. In 2001, following a successful [Heritage Lottery Fund](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heritage_Lottery_Fund) bid, all of the theatre's front of house and backstage areas were refurbished as part of the Olympiad's [Stratford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stratford,_London) Cultural Quarter project.

The Theatre Royal became famous under the management of Gerry Raffles (1928–1975), who worked with director [Joan Littlewood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joan_Littlewood) on such productions as [*A Taste of Honey*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Taste_of_Honey) and [*Oh, What a Lovely War!*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oh,_What_a_Lovely_War!). In 1975, her collaborator and partner, Gerry Raffles died of [diabetes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diabetes), and in 1979, a devastated Joan Littlewood moved to France, never to direct again.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theatre_Royal_Stratford_East#cite_note-12) Notable names to get their break at TRSE include [Richard Harris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Harris), [Murray Melvin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray_Melvin), [Barbara Windsor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbara_Windsor), [Victor Spinetti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victor_Spinetti), [Brian Murphy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Murphy_(actor)), [Avis Bunnage](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Avis_Bunnage), [Harry H Corbett](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_H._Corbett), [Yootha Joyce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yootha_Joyce), composer/lyricist [Lionel Bart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lionel_Bart), and writer [Shelagh Delaney](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shelagh_Delaney).

[Michael Caine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Caine) was famously told by Littlewood: "P\*ss off to Shaftesbury Avenue. You will only ever be a star.

Stratford Circus is a contemporary performing arts venue in Stratford in the London Borough of Newham, east London. It was designed by Levitt Bernstein architects and built with funding from the National Lottery, and has been operated by the Stratford Arts Trust charity from 2011 to 2021. It has now ben wound up and the site is going to be used for educational purposes.

On the site of a previous magistrates court University Square is a joint venture between University of East London and Birkbeck University of London has resulted in a major new campus for 3,400 students in central Stratford.

1. **Stratford Town Hall**

West Ham underwent rapid growth from 1844 following the [Metropolitan Building Act](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolitan_Building_Act). The Act restricted dangerous and noxious industries from operating in the metropolitan area, the eastern boundary of which was the [River Lea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Lea). Consequently, many of these activities were relocated to the other side of the river and to West Ham, then a parish in Essex centred on [All Saints Church, West Ham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/All_Saints_Church,_West_Ham). As a result, West Ham became one of Victorian Britain's major manufacturing centres for pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and processed foods. This rapid growth earned it the name "London over the border".[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Borough_of_West_Ham#cite_note-charter-5) The growth of the town was summarised by [*The Times*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Times) in 1886:

*"Factory after factory was erected on the marshy wastes of Stratford and Plaistow, and it only required the construction at Canning Town of the*[*Victoria and Albert Docks*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Docks)*to make the once desolate parish* of *West Ham a manufacturing and commercial centre of the first importance and to bring upon it a teeming and an industrious population."*[]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_Borough_of_West_Ham#cite_note-charter-5)

Many workers lived in slum conditions close to where they worked, leading to periodic outbreaks of contagious diseases and severe poverty. It had become apparent that local government in the parish of West Ham was not adequate to meet the needs of the area which was divided between the parish vestry, [highway board](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highway_district) and the Havering and Dagenham Commissioners of Sewers. Problems centred on provision of adequate paving, water supply, fire fighting and control of development. In 1853 a group of ratepayers initiated moves to improve local administration. This led to a public enquiry by [Charles Dickens](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Dickens)' brother Alfred, a medical officer, who published a report in 1855 severely critical of conditions in the slum areas

Accordingly, the [Public Health Act 1848](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_board_of_health#Public_Health_Act_1848) was applied to the parish, and a [local board of health](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_board_of_health) was formed in 1856. The board had 15 members: 12 elected and 3 nominated by the Commissioners of Sewers.

The [Local Government Act 1888](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_Government_Act_1888) created elected [county councils](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_council) to administer services throughout England and Wales. Where a municipal borough had a population of more than 50,000 at the 1881 [Census](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Census_in_the_United_Kingdom) it was created a [county borough](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/County_borough), with the powers and duties of both a borough and county council.

As West Ham had an 1881 population of 128,953 it duly became a county borough on 1 April 1889.

West Ham, with East ham and North Woolwich became the London Borough of Newham in 1965

West Ham Town Hall was built in 1867-8 and descvribed by Pesvner thus: “The style is a confidently Victorian version of arched Cinquecento… carried off with considerable panache.” Like East ham Town Hall it is part of a complex of municipal buildings.

Alice Billings House, part of this complex has received funding to create 30 studios and is sdeen as a complement to the cultural buildings on Stratford Waterfront.

Much early industrialization along the Lea valley occurred due to the use of water mills such as the Waltham Abby Gunpowder mills from as early as the 17th century. Temple Mills, at the north east corner of the Park, is named after the Knights Templar who owned two water mills in the 12 century.

Part of the Bow China Factory pottery lay under the apartments known as Central House at the north east corner of the Bow flyover. This factory played a big role in the history of English porcelain. In 1744, Thomas Frye (1710-1762) and Edward Heyleyn patented a method of producing china of equal quality to that imported from the Chinese. The factory was sometimes known as "New Canton".

Due to the Metropolitan Building Act of 1844 noxious trades were banned from within the city limits of London, forcing factories to be set up just outside. While air quality was poor, the industrialisation provided lots of work opportunities, but work was tough and dangerous. Local residents were issued gas masks such was the poor quality of the air.

In the Stratford area were Yardley’s (making soap) Berger’s (paint) and Clarnico’s sweet factory and towards the very end the notorious EU fridge mountain. Below is a photo of the Art Deco building of Yardley’s.



1. **Channelsea Path**

The Channelsea Path follows the route of a long gone waterway, once a part of the [Bow Back Rivers](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Bow_Back_Rivers).

Bow Back Rivers or Stratford Back Rivers is a complex of waterways between Bow and Stratford in east London, which connect the River Lea to the [River Thames](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/River_Thames). Starting in the twelfth century, works were carried out to drain Stratford Marshes and several of the waterways were constructed to power watermills. [Bow Creek](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Bow_Creek) provided the final outfall to the Thames, and the other channels were called [Abbey Creek](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Abbey_Creek), [Channelsea River](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Channelsea_River), [City Mill River](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/City_Mill_River), [Prescott Channel](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Prescott_Channel), [Pudding Mill River](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Pudding_Mill_River), [Three Mills Back River](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Three_Mills_Back_River), [Three Mills Wall River](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Three_Mills_Wall_River) and [Waterworks River](https://london.wikia.org/wiki/Waterworks_River).

The rivers have been subject to change over centuries, with Alfred the Great diverting the river in 896 to create a second channel, and Queen Matilda bridging both channels around 1110. Because the river system was tidal as far as Hackney Wick, several of the mills were tide mills, including those at Abbey Mills and those at Three Mills, one of which survives. Construction of the New River in the seventeenth century to supply drinking water to London, with subsequent extraction by waterworks companies, led to a lowering of water levels, and the river was gradually canalised to maintain navigation. Significant changes occurred with the creation of the Lee Navigation in 1767, which resulted in the construction of the Hackney Cut and the Limehouse Cut, allowing barges to bypass most of the back rivers. A major reconstruction of the rivers took place in the 1930s, authorised by the River Lee (Flood Relief) Act, but by the 1960s, commercial usage of the waterways had largely ceased. Deteriorating infrastructure led to the rivers dwindling to little more than tidal creeks and they were categorised in 1968 as having no economic or long term future.

1. **Abbey Gardens**

In 1135 William de Montfitchet, successor to Robert Gernon, founded the Cistercian abbey of Stratford Langthorne about ½ m. south of what is now Stratford High Street. At the time, Stratford was then part of Essex. This Cistercian monastery was also often called West Ham Abbey after the parish in which it was located. 

Among the abbey's earliest endowments was Woodgrange, an outlying farm on the edge of the forest, first mentioned in 1189. Stratford became a rich and important house, often visited by royalty, especially in the 13th and 14th centuries, and probably used as an administrative centre for south-west Essex. It steadily enlarged its estates in West Ham, and by the 15th century controlled most of the parish. The abbey precincts, beside the Channelsea, included a few industrial buildings and private dwellings as well as the conventual buildings; but the Cistercian tradition of isolation was not without effect, for Stratford Abbey, unlike those of Barking and Waltham Holy Cross, did not attract settlement outside its walls.

By the times of Henry VIII, Stratford Langthorne was reputed to be the fifth largest abbey in the entire country, making it a prime target during the dissolution of the monasteries.

The Abbey was supressed in 1538. The deed of surrender of the Abbey, which still exists in the Public Record Office in London, was executed in the Chapter House of the Abbey on the 18th March 1538, it was signed by William Huddleston, the last of the Abbots, the Chanter, the Sacrist and eleven monks.

Over the years, the Abbey buildings were dismantled and their materials used to build other structures in the area. You can therefore only see some remains of the **12th century abbey gatehouse** in West Ham at [Abbey Gardens](http://www.abbeygardens.org/). The gardens surround part of the abbey ruins. The Victorians used the site for part of the North Woolwich railway track and built factories on the free space.

Since the 1970s, there have been periodic archaeological digs on the site, usually during redevelopment projects in the area. These digs have helped archaeologists better understand the layout of the abbey. A series of over 600 burial excavations at Stratford Langthorne is thought to be the largest example from a Cistercian monastery in all of Europe.

Among the abbey remains uncovered during the excavations were parts of the great drain, a foundation and a grave on the site of the church, a cellar or a small fishpond and possibly part of the infirmary, while planting pits provided evidence for monastic gardens on the eastern edge of the abbey precinct. However, the archaeological highlight was undoubtedly a community excavation carried out by local residents on an overgrown plot of wasteland on the north side of Bakers Row (now Abbey Gardens). The dig was organized by [Newham Council](http://www.newham.gov.uk/Pages/index.aspx)and Museum of London Archaeology with the aim of uncovering the remains of a medieval stone building first discovered by archaeologists in the early 1970s, but then reburied for their protection. It was hoped that after consolidation, the masonry would be robust enough for permanent display.

When first discovered, the building was thought to be the abbey gatehouse or Great Gate, which after the Dissolution was converted into a dwelling and survived until about 1825. However, the building was soon reinterpreted as an abbey guesthouse, for it appeared to be too small to be the gatehouse, and in any case it did not seem to straddle the access road to the abbey (perpetuated today by Bakers Row).



Work in a previously unexcavated strip on the south side of the medieval building revealed stone walls extending out towards Bakers Row. From this it was clear that the building was much larger than had been thought, and that it had been constructed in two phases. It was also evident that the building would have crossed the line of the access road to the abbey precinct. So it was the gatehouse after all.

After the Dissolution the gatehouse was further extended and modified for use as a secular dwelling. Brick cesspits were built next to it in the 16th/mid-17th century and the mid-17th/18th century. A stretch of the great drain was rebuilt on a smaller scale, possibly in the late 16th or 17th century, and continued in use into the 19th century. Other post-medieval features included several 16th- to 18th-century pits, the remains of a 17th-century brick building, garden walls, a possible well, moat fills and a late 18th-century/early 19th-century brick cesspit possibly associated with the converted gatehouse. The latest features were the remains of Victorian terraced houses fronting onto Bakers Row.

**All Saints West Ham Parish Church**displays a stone window and a carving from the original monastery. You can also see an example of the abbey’s coat of arms in Stratford on the Old Court House doorway.

1. **Abbey Mills**

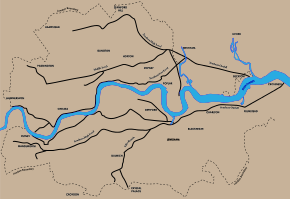
The Greenway was constructed on the Northern Outfall sewer, which itself was built as a response to the ‘Great Stink’ of July and August 1858 which had been preceded by outbreaks of cholera. By June that year the stench from the river had become so bad that business in [Parliament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palace_of_Westminster) was affected, and the curtains on the river side of the building were soaked in lime chloride to overcome the smell. The Great stink was a result of the increasing pollution of London’s rivers including by the introduction of flush toilets, over filling the drainage system that was only designed to keep rainwater.

It was built by Joseph Balgazette, part of a 1,300 mile network of sewage pipeline as 5 interceptor sewers, three of which were built by Balgazette. The Greenway lies on top of this network which is 7.1 kilometres long, or 4.4 miles from Victoria Park to Beckton.

Abbey Mills Pumping station was designed by Joseph Bazalgette with architect Charles Driver in a cruciform Byzantine style, "the cathedral to sewage" was built in1868. It is a Grade II listed building. From here sewage was pumped between two low level sewers and the Northern Outfall Sewer. It contains electric pumps now to back up the modern facility.

The modern pumping station was designed by Allies and Morrison.

During the Second World War, two A/A guns were positioned on the sewer bank, and a pillbox, which still remains.



1. Bazalgette’s sewer system for London
2. **West Ham Memorial Ground (West Ham United)**

West Ham station was opened in 1901 and on the Fenchurch St – Barking line, opened in 1858. The station was renovated in 1999 and 2006, the station was renovated extensively for the London Olympics.

In 1855, the Thames Ironworks company had more than 3000 employees.

The 1895? FA Cup Final before 42,560 spectators created a sensation and David Taylor, the foreman of the shipbuilding department of [Thames Ironworks](http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.59/Thames-Ironworks.html), suggested to [Arnold Hills](http://spartacus-educational.com/WHhillsA.htm), that maybe the company should form its own football club. On 29th June, 1895, Hills announced in his newspaper, the Thames Ironworks Gazette, that he intended to establish a football club. Mr. Hills' initial concept was for a purely amateur team for the benefit of works employees. Each who wished to take part paid an initial annual stipend of 2s/6d.

e site of the 1st Ground (Hermit Road in Canning Town) 1895-1896  
Thames Ironworks had taken over the tenancy of a ground in Hermit Road in the summer of 1895 from Old Castle Swifts F.C., who were the first professional football club in Essex. The Hermit Road ground had been described as a 'cinder' heap' and 'barren waste'. It was surrounded by a moat.  
  
Thames Ironworks played their first ever fixture of the 1895-96 season against Royal Ordnance reserves in September 1895, the game ending 0-0. In Thames' first competitive game, they took on Chatham in a preliminary qualifying round of the FA Cup. The match had to be played at Chatham's ground in Kent as they had rated the Irons' Hermit Road Ground as unsuitable.

They joined the [London League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_League_%28football%29) in 1896, finishing runners-up after only gaining entrance due to the withdrawal of the [Royal Ordnance Factories F.C.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Ordnance_Factories_F.C.).  
  
The early years saw an experimental 'floodlit friendly' in Thames' first encounter with Woolwich Arsenal. The pitch was surrounded by light bulbs attached to poles. The football was dipped in pails of whitewash to make it easier to see.   
  
The last game at Hermit Road was in October 1896, when Thames Ironworks beat 1st Scots Guards 1-0. Later that month they were handed an eviction notice from Hermit Road by their landlords. The club had violated their tenancy agreement by charging admission fees and building a perimeter fence and pavilion. Thames Ironworks had to play their next four fixtures at the grounds of their opponents, until a new home could be found.

At the turn of 1897,  the club managed to lease a temporary piece of land for the team, located in Browning Road, East Ham but this was only for a couple of months. The new situation was not ideal, so Hills earmarked a large section of land in [Canning Town](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canning_Town) for a new stadium to be built upon. The new home cost [£](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pound_sterling)20,000 of [Arnold Hills](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold_Hills)' own money to build.

The Memorial Grounds was opened on Jubilee Day, 22 June 1897, to coincide with the sixtieth anniversary of [Queen Victoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Victoria)'s [coronation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coronation). Aside from a football pitch, the stadium contained a cycle track, a cinder running track, tennis courts and one of the largest outdoor swimming pools in [England](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England). It was said at the time that the grounds, with a capacity of 100,000 spectators, were "good enough to stage an English Cup Final."

On 11 September 1897, in their first game at their new ground, Thames beat [Brentford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brentford_F.C.) 1-0. In West Ham United's first game at the grounds in front of 2,000 spectators, in the [Southern League](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Southern_Football_League) on 1 September 1900, they won 7-0 against, [Gravesend United](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gravesend_United_F.C.), with [Billy Grassam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billy_Grassam) scoring four.

It was becoming increasingly difficult to persuade men to play for the team. A major problem was the fear of an injury that would result in them being unable to work for the [Thames Iron Works Company](http://www.portcities.org.uk/london/server/show/ConNarrative.59/Thames-Ironworks.html). The club committee therefore decided to insure the players against loss of wages that might follow an injury sustained during league and cup fixtures. However, the club committee issued the players with a warning that anyone who had been injured in a match had to be home by 8.p.m. every evening.

They were obviously concerned that they did not try to ease the pain by spending their time drinking in the local public houses.

In November 1897 [Arnold Hills](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold_Hills) secured an agreement with [London, Tilbury and Southend Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London,_Tilbury_and_Southend_Railway) (LT&SR) to build a station at Manor Road. The LT&SR board approved this in February 1898 and Mowlem's was given the contract to build a four platform station, allowing for the proposed quadrupling of the line. The station was completed in May 1900 but did not open until 1 February 1901 as [West Ham](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Ham_station)

In June 1900, Thames Ironworks was wound up but was immediately relaunched on 5 July 1900 as West Ham United Football Club,

The reborn club played their games at the [Memorial Ground](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memorial_Grounds) (rented at favourable terms by Arnold Hills who was a major shareholder in the new club). In the 1901–02 season, the team did well on the field and made a small profit. In the 1902–03 season, the directors were shocked by a loss of £151 that was caused by a wage bill that had gone up by 50 percent. The 1903–04 season saw an even greater loss, at £793, caused by the loss of season ticket income from supporters because the club had become more distant from the workers at the ironworks and with fewer local players being employed. At the beginning of the 1904–05 season, the directors were looking to move to the Boleyn Castle, a site of a Catholic school surrounded by small shops and residential streets, everything the Memorial Grounds did not have.

1. **East Ham Church and Nature Reserve**

The churchyard was officially closed for burials in 1974 and was a wilderness until its value as a wildlife reserve was realised in around 1977. In 1981 hedges were planted, a copse of Scots pines was planted and the Visitors Centre was built. It is now managed as East Ham Nature reserve, which is an important teaching resource for Newham schools.

St Mary Magdalene Church was built in around 1130 and is one of the oldest in the country, its 9 acre churchyard one of the largest in London. The ancient parish church indicates where the medieval settlement of East Ham was centred; it is also near the site of a Roman cemetery discovered in 1864. The church is remarkable in retaining its original Norman form complete and has a number of medieval features.

1. **UEL**

The University of East London is based at three campuses in [Stratford](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stratford,_London) and [Docklands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Docklands), following the opening of University Square Stratford in September 2013. The university's roots can be traced back to 1892 when the **West Ham Technical Institute** was established. It gained university status in 1992.

In February 2019, it had more than 17,000 students from 135 countries.

The [Docklands Campus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_East_London_Docklands_Campus), opened in 1999, is the largest of the three campuses, It is in the redeveloped [Docklands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Docklands) area of east London, at the [Royal Albert Dock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Albert_Dock,_London), closed to commercial shipping since the 1980s and now largely used as a water sports centre and rowing course, for example for the [London Regatta Centre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Regatta_Centre).

The campus was shortlisted for the [Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors'](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RICS) *Building of the Year* in 2001.

New student accommodation opened in 2008 and the campus now has 1,200 student rooms, together with shops, cafés and a restaurant, launderettes and an open-air fitness suite. SportsDock, a £21 million sports and academic centre, opened in March 2012. SportsDock served as the High-Performance Training Centre for [Team USA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Team_USA) during the London 2012 Olympic Games. The campus library is housed in the Royal Docks Business School building.

1. **London City Airport**

The airport was developed by the engineering company [Mowlem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mowlem) in 1986–87. In 2016 it was bought by a Canadian-led [consortium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consortium) of [Alberta Investment Management Corporation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberta_Investment_Management_Corporation) (AIMCo), [OMERS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OMERS), the [Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontario_Teachers%27_Pension_Plan) and Wren House Infrastructure Management of the [Kuwait Investment Authority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuwait_Investment_Authority).

London City Airport has a single 1,508-metre (4,948 ft) long runway, and a [CAA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_Aviation_Authority_(United_Kingdom)) Public Use Aerodrome Licence (Number P728) that allows flights for the public transport of passengers or for flight training (but only for training necessary for the operation of aircraft at the airport). Only multi-engine, fixed-wing aircraft up to [Airbus A318](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airbus_A318) size with special aircraft and aircrew certification to fly 5.5° approaches are allowed to conduct operations at London City Airport.

Passenger numbers at London City Airport saw rapid growth between 2003 and 2008, doubling from around 1.5 million per year to over 3 million. Totals declined in 2009 and 2010, but have since recovered and in 2019 over 5,1 million passengers passed through London City.

1. **Excel Centre**

The centre was designed by Moxley Architects and built by [Sir Robert McAlpine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sir_Robert_McAlpine). It opened in November 2000. In May 2008 it was acquired by [Abu Dhabi National Exhibitions Company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Abu_Dhabi_National_Exhibitions_Company). Phase II of development, which included building London's first International Convention Centre (ICC) and creating an "eastern arrival experience", was completed on 1 May 2010. In 2015 ExCeL announced the opening of CentrEd at ExCeL, a dedicated training and meeting space located close to the western entrance of the venue overlooking Royal Victoria Dock, adding to ExCeL's wide range of flexible spaces.

The Royal Victoria Dock closed to commercial traffic in 1981, but it is still accessible to shipping. The Centre's waterfront location allows visiting vessels to moor alongside the Centre. For example, the 2005 [London Boat Show](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Boat_Show) was visited by [HMS *Sutherland*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Sutherland_(F81)).

The exhibition building itself consists of two column-free, rectangular, subdivisible halls of approximately 479,493 square feet (approximately 44,546 m²) each, on either side of a central boulevard containing catering facilities and information points. There are also three sets of function rooms, one overlooking the water, another above the western end of the central boulevard, and the third on the north side of the building. These are used for smaller meetings, seminars, presentations and corporate hospitality. There are six hotels, more than 30 bars and restaurants, and 3,700 parking spaces on the campus.

ExCeL London has hosted numerous consumer and trade, private and public events, including exhibitions, conferences, concerts, weddings and religious events. Among these have been [WorldSkills London 2011](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WorldSkills_London_2011), the [London Boat Show](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Boat_Show), the [British International Motor Show](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_International_Motor_Show), [Grand Designs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Designs) Live, the Carole Nash MCN Motorcycle Show, [MCM London Comic Con](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MCM_London_Comic_Con), the London International Music Show, [Star Wars Celebration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Star_Wars_Celebration) Europe, [London Marathon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Marathon) registration, the [World Travel Market](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=World_Travel_Market&action=edit&redlink=1), [The Clothes Show](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Clothes_Show) London, [Defence Security and Equipment International (DSEi)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DSEi), The Dive Show, the [Global Peace and Unity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Global_Peace_and_Unity) Event, the [2009 G-20 London Summit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2009_G-20_London_Summit), [IP Expo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IP_Expo) Europe and Summer in the City.

In 2011 ExCeL London was awarded the Business Superbrand.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ExCeL_London#cite_note-8) The site welcomed its 20 millionth visitor on 18 June 2014. ExCeL has also been awarded 'Venue of the Year' on several occasions at various industry ceremonies. In 2012 ExCeL hosted several events for the [Olympics and Paralympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Summer_Olympics). It has since erected a "legacy wall" featuring the handprints of athletes who won Gold at the venue and the former Mayor of London [Boris Johnson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boris_Johnson).

In 2014 ExCeL hosted the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict, chaired by American actress and UN Special Envoy [Angelina Jolie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelina_Jolie) and attended by 79 ministers from 123 country delegations.

From 1 to 8 July 2019, 150 events took place as part of London Climate Action Week 2019.

It was announced on 24 March 2020 that the centre was to be temporarily converted into the 4,000-bed [NHS Nightingale Hospital](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NHS_Nightingale_Hospital) as part of the response to the [2020 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_in_the_United_Kingdom). Military engineers and contractors supported the erection of the facility, and army medics assisted the NHS nurses, doctors and other staff.[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ExCeL_London#cite_note-13)  The Nightingale was opened on 3 April 2020 by [Charles, Prince of Wales](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles,_Prince_of_Wales) via videolink.

1. **British Garden**

Renowned garden designer Sarah Price worked from a brief set by two amateur horticulturalists, Rachel Read and Hannah Clegg, winners of a competition by the Royal Horticultural Society to design this beautiful corner of the Park.

The Great British Garden intermingles rich and varied new planting designed for the London 2012 Games with existing trees that had crowded the banks of the canal for decades.  These trees (mostly Sycamore) now form a natural barrier between the tranquil gardens and the hustle and bustle of the Stadium which sits over the water.

The Garden is designed to take visitors on a journey of discovery through three gardens themed on the colours of Olympic medals: Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The bronze section features reds, oranges and other fiery tones; the silver section features a human sized sundial set within an area of silver coloured paving, and in the gold section, spiral planting led visitors to a stately oak tree.  One of the oak trees in this gardens was grown in Kew Gardens from an acorn collected from the tree that Baron Pierre De Coubertin planted in 1894 to thank the citizens of Much Wenlock for inspiring the founding of the modern Olympic Games.  Beyond this large oak is one of the parks four frog ponds providing valuable habitat and beautiful backdrop to the garden.

During the Games, archways that link the sections of the Great British Garden together were covered with good luck messages for athletes which visitors had threaded into the foliage.