

# **Historical Hits, Bits and Titbits**

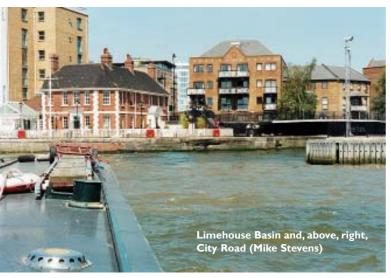
ondon has always used water as a means of transport. The River Thames was most notable for the carriage of cargoes to and from countries all around the world.

Canal enthusiasts will know that there is what's known the **London Ring** of waterways, the watery equivalent, (and sometimes even faster!) than the M25.

The accompanying map shows the primary 'navigable' waterways (both natural and 'man made'). Before the canals it was of course the Thames that carried cargo into, through and out of the Capital.

Londonium, as it used to be called, was established as a port by the invading Romans in AD43, at the highest point the Thames tide reached at that time.

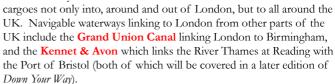
Today, the Thames through London is tidal as far east as



### **Teddington Lock**.

Where man-made or navigable waterways or adapted rivers meet the Thames, locks are required to raise or lower boats to the same height as the current state of the tide.

The canals were built to convey



An intricate web of waterways also weaves in and around Greater London including the **Regent's Canal**, probably the most famous of London's canals.

The Regent's Canal and Dock Company constructed the Regent's Canal Dock, also known as the Limehouse Basin, to connect the industrial trade from the Midlands to the City of London. It was originally constructed as a barge basin to be linked to the Grand Union (then Grand Junction) Canal.

The Regent's Canal opened in 1801, finally linking the Grand Union the Thames at Limehouse. Now known as Limehouse Basin, this basin could also admit sea-going vessels. Goods could be transferred to and from lighters or canal boats. By 1835 three-quarters of the traffic on the Regent's Canal came from the Thames.

City Road Basin in Islington was the most important traffic centre on the Regent's Canal. It handled mainly incoming inland freight.

## **Little Venice**

ittle Venice is described as 'an oasis of leafy calm', and considering that it's at the heart of the Capital City. For an 'inner city' waterway it's unusual in so much that all the grand terraced houses look out over the pool at Little Venice.

Little Venice, so named after the famous poet Robert Browning moved here from Venice for part of his life. The island in the centre is named after him.

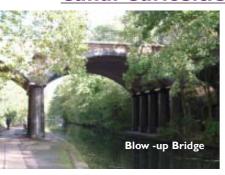
At Little Venice itself you will find the Puppet Theatre Barge, the Cascade Floating Art Gallery, the Waterside Cafe and the excellent Warwick Castle pub. About half a mile east towards Camden - perched above the mouth of Maida Vale Tunnel - there is the picturesque Cafe Laville.

Each Mayday, holiday weekend, a major Canalway Cavalcade takes place here, usually attracting over 200,000 people and up to 200

It really is a remarkable event, well worth visiting and details of the 2006 gathering will be published in WebWatcher's column in the May edition of Canals & Rivers.



## **Canal Curiosities**



### **BLOW UP BRIDGE**

There are many curiosities to be found in and around the canals of London. One such is the unusually named **Blow-up** Bridge near Regent's Park Zoo. It was so-named after the narrow boat Tilbury exploded with its' cargo of gunpowder on 2 October 1874. During the reconstruction, the pillars were reinstalled the other way round to

offer a new, smoother surface for the tow ropes, and so the original 'pre-1874' grooves now appear on the towpath side of the pillars.

### PADDINGTON ARMERS

A short arm springs off Little Venice towards Paddington. Although only a short arm, it has a fascinating history. Here, prostitutes would ply their trade to boatmen. These prostitutes became known as Paddington Armers' to the boatmen, who used the big lamp on the front of their narrow boats to dazzle any lurking policemen, thus preventing the 'bobby' from being able to identify the boatman at the helm. This gave rise to the name Bobby



scale to rival London's Docklands. (See feature on page 32 of this issue)

Dazzler'! Currently, Paddington Basin, is being redeveloped on a



### PUPPET THEATRE BARGE

During the summer the puppet theatre barge tours the Thames, but from now until March is moored for performances in Little Venice.

The barge opened in 1982 and is unique. Described as one of London's more elusive treasures, it is an established 50 seat theatre with comfortable seating and all modern facilities, fully heated in the winter and cooled in the summer. Rich in atmosphere, it provides the ideal setting for the imaginative shows produced by this company. The theatre presents marionette and rod puppet spectacles throughout the year, spending the winter in central London, and the summer on the River Thames.

Mr Rabbit meets Brer Santa: In the current production, the mischievous wit of Brer Rabbit features in this Christmas adventure full of fun and surprises. A very special seasonal delight for both young and old. Performances: Dec 19 to 23 daily at 3pm. Dec 27 to Jan 3 daily at 3pm. Jan 7 & 8 at 3pm, Jan 14 &15 at 3pm, Jan 21 &22 at 3pm.

The Flight of Babuscha Baboon: The story of a baboon who wants to fly to the moon in a hot air balloon! Performances: Jan 28 & 29 at 3pm, Feb 4 & 5 at 3pm, Feb 11 to 19 at 3pm, Feb 25 & 26, Mar 4 & 5, 11 & 12, 18 & 19, 25 & 26 at 3pm.

## **Alex Prowse - Artist Illustrator**

oored in Little Venice is the restored Regents Canal barge Crook, home, studio and gallery of the artist and illustrator Alex Prowse. His open studio featured in the Channel 4 Television series Water Stories. Winner of the Manya Igel Fine Art Award in 1995 and the Frank Herring Award, 2000, Alex's one man shows have been seen in London, Mexico, Venezuela, and the US. His work may be found in a large number of collections including that of



Lord and Lady Sainsbury, The Saddlers Wells Theatre, London, and The Hotel de Ville, Paris.

He is perhaps more famous in the world of waterway enthusiasts and crime fiction enthusiasts for the book covers he created for the Leo McNeir novels including Death in Little Venice, Devil in the Detail, Getaway with Murder and Kiss and Tell.



The watercolour shown here is by Alex and is of his own barge Crook.

## **Comedy Cuts** If you fancy a comedy night out by the cut? Here are two famous venues:

### JONGLEURS (Camden)

This venue is situated in the heart of Camden's famous market in a splendid waterfront location.

### **CANAL CAFE THEATRE** (Little Venice)

Early in their evolution *The League of Gentlemen* held a weekly residency at the Canal Café Theatre. (Royston Vasey). This venue



hosts the satirical spirit of some of Britain's best. The Canal Café Theatre is located in Little Venice, one of the most beautiful parts of

London. The theatre is above the **Bridge House** pub, on the corner of Delamere Terrace and
Westbourne Terrace Bridge Road. Some huge comic and cabaret talent can be seen here. The longrunning **NewsRevue** is a topical song and sketch show on every night from Thursday to Sunday.

Little Venice, Paddington, London 020 7289 6056. (see **CUTOUTS** for more information).



## **Eats And Treats**

few hundred years ago, cockneys were more likely to be eating stewed pears, curds and whey, and even swans or turtles than the eclectic mix of cuisine choices available today. Back in 1544, sugar was still a novel and prized delicacy. It was imported from Morocco but, largely, prepared in the sugar refineries just to the east of the City in Spitalfields. Banqueting tables would be decorated with sugar sculptures.

The 1600's saw the rise in popularity of that Christmas staple, the turkey. They were walked in their thousands from Norfolk to the East End, where they were slaughtered.

According to *Epicure's Almanac*. "The East End, boasted dozens (of restaurants), sprinkled along the Thames from Wapping, through Limehouse and all the way to Blackwall."

The first mechanical vending machine, 'the curious mathematical fountain', was set up in the Black Horse Tavern, Smithfield at the end of the 17th century. It dispensed tea, coffee, whisky, raspberry and cherry brandy, and punch.

In the early 1900's, the East London Federation of Suffragettes' setup a Cost Price Restaurant at 440 Old Ford Road, allowing poor mothers with young children a cooked meal at lunchtime and hot soup in the evening.

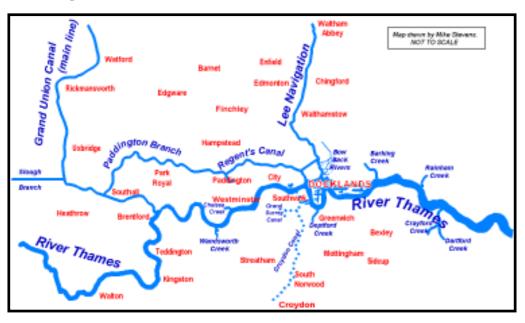
### LONDON'S TRADITIONAL 'TUCK'

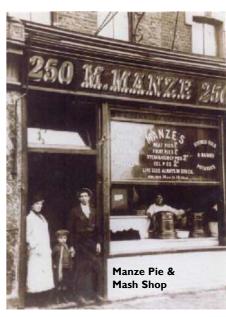
Most areas of the UK have their traditional regional 'speciality'. Cornwall has its Cornish Pasty, The Potteries, Oat Cakes, and Wales, Bara Bryth (a Welsh Fruit Loaf). London's speciality is 'eel and pie' shops.

Eels are considered very healthy to eat as they contain the omega oils which help to reduce cholesterol. Eels are also meant to have aphrodisiac properties!

The first dated record of an Eel and Pie shop was recorded around 1850. These shops would have stalls outside, selling live eels for families to take home and cook. Inside was kitted out with marble floors and tables together with pictures and mirrors which hung on the walls, the floors would be covered with sawdust, to gather up the eel bones that were spat out. Today, the floors of these establishments are spotless!

Although far fewer that the hundred or so 'eel and pie' shops that had sprung up by World War II, there are still quite a few remaining that retain the authenticity of traditional 'eel and pie' shops. Here you can still tuck into steaming plates of meat pie or eel served with mashed potatoes and green parsley 'liquor'. The parsley liquor is a green sauce sometimes, although not always, made with the eel juice left over from cooking eels, jellied eels being another much-loved cockney food.





The oldest surviving pie and mash shop is **M. Manze** at 87 Tower Bridge Road. (it has been there since 1891).

### TWO TO TRY!

M. Manze, 87 Tower Bridge Road, SE1.

The Cockney Pie & Mash Shop, 314, Portobello Road, London, W10

### **PEA SOUP**

Green pea soup or 'London Particular' gave its name to the fog that once enveloped London so intensely. It was Charles Dickens who, in *Bleak House*, first named London's famous fog after the particularly thick soup. Another London soup is Water Souchet - a fish soup, thought to originate from the Dutch dish 'waterzootje'.

#### ICE CREAM

In 1847, a man called Carlo Gatti arrived in from the Italian speaking area of Switzerland and began selling refreshments from his own stall. Historical documents show that Mr Gatti bought ice cut from the Regent's Canal under the terms of a contract with the Regents Canal Company.

Mr Gatti also owned ice wells (sometimes referred to as ice houses) where ice and other food items were stored. He was registered as an ice merchant during the 1860's when his first shipment of 400 tons of ice from Norway was recorded. The readily available ice stored in his ice wells allowed Mr Gatti to make ice cream in larger quantities and he was also thought to be the first ice cream maker to sell to the ordinary man and woman who had previously been unable to afford such a luxury. Few of these London ice wells remain – but the most well known are New Wharf Road near Kings Cross station, a former ice warehouse built in the early 1860's for Carlo Gatti. This is now home to the London Canal Museum which features many exhibits showing the history of ice cream making and selling in Victorian London. (see London Canal Museum).



### LONDON ALE

## Young's the oldest!

Traditional draught beer has been produced on the site of the **Young's Brewery** in Wandsworth, South London since 1581, which makes the Ram Brewery the oldest site in Britain on which beer has been brewed continuously.

In 1581 beer brewer Humphrey Langridge was brewing at the sign of the *Ram*, a prominent Wandsworth inn since 1533. It is now the site of the Brewery Tap and present day tun room. Humphrey Langridge not only provided beer for the *Ram Inn's* own customers, stabling for horses and beds for travellers, but casks of beer for other local pubs and private houses. The modern brewery takes its name and trademark from the sign of this ancient inn - a ram traditionally denotes pugnacity and bravery. Look out for Young's beers at pubs throughout London.

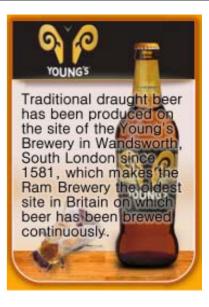
Young's Special: A classic bitter that has gained cult status among cask ale drinkers. Amber in colour, Young's Special has a fruity, slightly estery nose with a good hop aroma and full round flavour, a fine

# The famous poet John Burns once said the Thames was full of liquid history.

balance between malt and hops. 100% malt brew: Maris Otter and crystal malt together with Fuggle and Golding hops.

### Young's Waggle Dance:

Unusual name, unusual beer. The Waggle Dance is a movement a bee performs to alert the hive of a source of nectar. Waggle Dance is brewed with a touch of honey which gives it a taste of summer no matter when you raise a glass. This is balanced by a healthy does of hops to provide the bitterness that gives a wonderfully delicate flavour. The brewers claim that: "The overall result is beautifully balanced and sneakily seductive." Pale ale and crystal malt, Fuggle and Golding hops together with South American honey create this



delicious golden ale with a superb honey aroma.

Young's beers are available at very many London Pubs, but if you want to stay near water, try the **Boathouse**, 32 Brewhouse Lane, Putney, London SW15 2JX.

### SPOILT FOR CHOICE?

There are literally thousands of eating establishments all over London. Here is a small selection of canal, riverside or floating restaurants. Lock 17: A multi purpose venue containing bar/restautants, premier live music and comedy club. S et in the heart of Camden Town adjacent to the tranquil Regent's Canal.

Feng Shang Floating Restaurant: Cumberland Basin, Prince Albert Road, NW1.

The Lotus Chinese Floating Restaurant: 38 Limeharbour, Inner Millwall Dock E14 9RH.

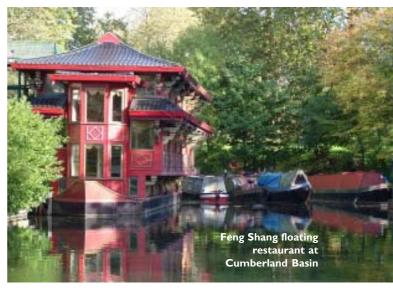
All Bar One: (Canary Wharf), Mackenzie Walk, London, E14 5EH. Canal 125: Bar & Restaurant. 125 Caledonian Road, London, N1 9RG.

### STILL HUNGRY FOR MORE?

**Time Out London Eating and Drinking Guide:** Time Out Publications. ISBN: 0903446553.

Time Out Cheap Eats in London 2005/6: Time Out Publications. ISBN: 1904978401.

www.london-eating.co.uk



## DOWN YOUR WAY - london

# **Shop till you Drop**

ention London and shopping in the same line and what springs to mind? Harrods? There are literally thousands of shops in London, but some of the more interesting ones are the markets dotted around the city.

The biggest and most well known is Camden Market (right). There are a number of markets to visit in Camden, and you could literally spend days checking them out. Camden Lock Market is down by the canal and sells all sorts of things, not just the crafts for which it became famous. Camden Stables Market sells clothes, and you can pick up bargains too at the Buck Street and Inverness Street Markets. These are all open seven days a week. Plus there's the lively Camden Canal Market, open Friday to Sunday each week, and the Electric Ballroom, open on Sundays. And this is all in the heart of Camden Town, a throbbing centre of shops, bars, restaurants, clubs, theatres and cinemas. If you're a visitor to London, Camden Town should be on your list. Other famous London markets in London include Portobello Road, Covent Garden and Greenwich.



SIGHTS

Museum of London: London Wall. London EC2Y 5HN.

**Tel:** Recorded information line: 0870 444 3851. **Tel:** Automated information line: 020 7600 0807.

Web: www.museumoflondon.org.uk

Tube: St. Paul's

Museum in Docklands: No. 1 Warehouse, West India Quay,

Hertsmere Road, London E14 4AL.

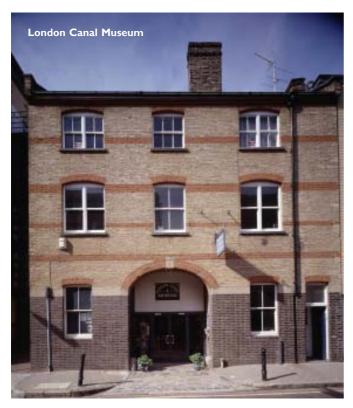
Tel: Recorded information line: 0870 444 3856

**Tel:** Main switchboard: 0870 444 3857

Tel: 0870 444 3858

Web: www.museumindocklands.org.uk

DLR: West India Quay Tube: Canary Wharf





### LONDON CANAL MUSEUM

At the London Canal Museum you can see inside a narrow boat cabin, learn about the history of London's canals, about the cargoes carried, the people who lived and worked on the waterways, and the horses that pulled their boats. The museum is home of unique historical and huge Victorian ice wells used to store ice imported from Norway and brought by ship and canal boat to be stored. The two ice wells are circular, underground brick lined wells about 30 feet in diameter. Originally some 40 feet deep, today the floor is about 20 feet below the level of the ground floor. (see also Ice Cream).

**Tel:** 020 7713 0836

Web: www.canalmuseum.org.uk

**Tube Kings Cross** 

SITES

**British Waterways** 

www.britishwaterways.co.uk

Waterscape

www.waterscape.com

National Cycling Network

Tel: 0845 113 0065

www.sustrans.org.uk Ramblers Association Tel: 020 7339 8500

www.ramblers.org.uk



# It's a wind-up!

At various locations along the canal, you'll find these 'wind-up' narrative signs. Great fun and fascinating tales.

## Notes for Boats Navigating the Tidal Thames

Although it is usually larger craft which navigate the tidal Thames, it is perfectly possible for small craft such as narrow boats to travel along the Thames, but with experience and extreme caution. A leaflet *The Tidal Thames – A Guide to users of Recreational Craft* is available from the Port of London Authority (see **CUTOUTS** for contact details.)

# CUTOUTS RESOURCES













## Cut or tear out this page for filing and future reference

### **COMEDY CUTS**

 $\textbf{\textit{Jongleurs}} \ \mathsf{Middle} \ \mathsf{Yard}, \ \mathsf{Camden} \ \mathsf{Lock}, \ \mathsf{Chalk} \ \mathsf{Farm} \ \mathsf{Road}, \ \mathsf{London} \ \mathsf{NWI}$ 

8AB

Tel: Box Office: 0870 787 0707 Web: www.jongleurs.com Tube: Camden Town

Canal Café Theatre. Delamere Terrace, Little Venice, London W2 6ND Tel: Box Office 020 7289 6054. General Enquiries 020 7289 6056

Web: www.canalcafetheatre.com

Tube: Warwick Avenue

### **EATS AND TREATS**

M. Manze (Eel and Pie Shop) 87 Tower Bridge Road, SEI.

Tel: 020 7407 2985 Web: www.manze.co.uk

Tube: and Mainline: London Bridge

Cockney Pie & Mash Shop. 314, Portobello Rd, London, W10. (Walking distance from Regents Canal at Kensal Green)

Tel: 020 8960 9409 Tube: Westbourne Park

Lock 17. 11 East Yard, Camden Lock, London, NWI 8AB

Tel: 0207 4280 010
Web: www.lock17.com
Tube: Camden Town

Feng Shang Floating Restaurant. Cumberland Basin, Prince Albert

Road, NWI 7SS **Tel:** 020 7485 8137

**Tube: Great Portland Street** 

The Lotus Chinese Floating Restaurant. 38 Limeharbour, Inner

Millwall Dock. E14 9RH **Tel:** 020 7515 6445

Tube: Crossharbour & London Arena

All Bar One (Canary Wharf). Mackenzie Walk, London, E14 5EH

Tel: 020 7513 0911 DLR: Heron Quay

Canal 125 Bar & Restaurant. 125 Caledonian Road, London, NI 9RG

Tel: 020 7837 1924

Tube: Kings Cross or Caledonian Road

Boathouse (for Young's Beer) 32 Brewhouse Lane, Putney, London, SW15

2|X

Tel: 020 8789 0476

Web: www.boathouseputney.co.uk

Tube: Putney Bridge. Mainline: Putney Station

Little Venice Canalway Cavalcade 2006

E-mail Mike Stevens: michael.stevens@which.net

Puppet Theatre Barge. Little Venice, Blomfield Road, London W9

Tel: Box Office 020 7249 6876 Web: www.puppetbarge.com

Alex Prowse Artist Illustrator. Canal barge 'Crook', Little Venice,

London W9 **Tel:** 020 7289 7050

Web: www.alexprowse.com

### **TELEVISION INFORMATION**

### Terrestial Television in London

The main transmitter for the London region is at Crystal Palace. To aid canal cruisers to retune their televisions when moored in London, here are the Channel Numbers: BBCI - 26, BBC2 - 33, ITVI - 23, Channel 4 - 30, Channel 5 - 37.

### Satellite - London TV

London has it's own satellite television station called London TV which is broadcast 24 hours a day on Sky Channel 244. You can also find it in many hotels, cabs, buses, trains and planes.

### Satellia cruisers

All domestic BBC TV and radio services, along with all of ITV's channels are broadcast from the Astra 2D satellite positioned at 28.2deg east. Cruisers may need to re-position their satellite dishes and if necessary re-tune their satellite receiver to London regional channels. A useful source of advice

can be found online at: **Web: www.stevelarkins.freeuk.com** (see 'DDT Helo' section).

### TRANSPORT INFORMATION

Transport for London Web: www.tfl.gov.uk

Tel: London Travel Information ? 020 7222 1234

Tel: London Tube Information ? 0845 330 9880 (open 7 days a week, 8am -

8pm)

### **TOURIST INFORMATION**

**London Tourist Board Tel:** 020 7932 2020

Web: www.visitlondon.com

### **LONDON CANAL BOOKS**

#### **Fiction**

**Death in Little Venice** by Leo McNeir. Enigma Publishing. ISBN:

095240527

 $\textbf{Devil in the Detail} \ \ \text{by Leo McNeir.} \ \ \text{Enigma Publishing.} \ \ \text{ISBN: } 0953174220$ 

**Getaway with Murder** by Leo McNeir. Enigma Publishing. ISBN: 0952405261

0952405261

Kiss and Tell by Leo McNeir. Enigma Publishing. ISBN: 0953174212

### **Factual**

The Regent's Canal: London's Hidden Waterway by Alan Faulkner.

ISBN: 1870002598

London's Lost Route to Basingstoke: Story of the Basingstoke Canal

by PAL Vine. Sutton Publishing. ISBN: 0750903597

London's Canal: History of the Regent's Canal by Herbert Spencer.

Publisher: Lund Humphries. ISBN: 0853313873

Grand Union Canal (South): A Towpath Guide by Nick Corble.

Tempus Publishing Ltd. ISBN: 0752435396

### **VIDEO (VHS - PAL)**

**Destination London.** Produced by Travel Television. ASIN: B00004CLP7 **The Canals And Canal Boats.** Presented and narrated by Brian Glover. Produced by W.H.Smith Exclusive Video. ASIN: B00004CO06

## **OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES**

Inland Waterways Association (London Region)
Web: www.waterways.org.uk/region/london\_web

### **PORT OF LONDON AUTHORITY**

Tel: General Enquiries: 020 7743 7900
Tel: Port Control Centre: 01474 560 311
Web: www.portoflondon.co.uk

## **MARITIME & COASTGUARD AGENCY (MCA)**

Tel: General enquiries 0870 600 6505

Tel: London Coastguard (routine enquiries) 020 8312 7380 Tel: Thames Coastguard (routine enquiries) 01255 675518

Web: www.mcga.gov.uk

### **BRITISH WATERWAYS**

Tel: General Enquiries 01923 201200

Tel: London Regional Office 020 7286 6101

**Tel:** Bow Lock 020 7308 9930

Tel: Brentford Creek Tidal Lock 020 8568 2779

**Tel:** Brentford Lock 020 8560 1120 **Tel:** Limehouse Lock 020 7308 9930

**Tel:** West India Dock Entrance 020 7987 7260 **Web:** www.britishwaterways.co.uk

## **ENVIRONMENT AGENC**

Tel: General Enquiries 08708 506500

Tel: Thames Region (Reading) 08708 506506

Tel: Emergency Hotline (pollution etc) 0800 80 70 6

Tel: Teddington Lock 020 8940 872

Tel: Shepperton 01276 4549 Tel: Floodline 0845 988 1188

Tel: Floodline 0845 988 1188
Web: nent-a

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