

Welcome to this edition of Heritage News it contains news about our next two meetings and the latest item on Historic Deptford.

### **Friday 26th June Professor Caroline Derry - Legal precedents derived from cases that occurred in Deptford.**

Caroline is an experienced and entertaining speaker being Professor of Feminism, Law and History at the Open University.



Deptford has a rich history, but one of the less well-known aspects is its contribution to the history of criminal law. This talk explores two criminal cases from the early twentieth century which provide rich insight into the lives of a range of Deptford residents. It considers what the records tell us about social history, forensic science, and the law of homicide itself. These two cases each set precedents that are still valid today.

We meet as usual in the Bowls Room at Horn Park at 10:15 with refreshments being available for £1. No need to book just turn up, you may also bring guests who might be considering joining our U3A or perhaps just have an interest in the Law. See [Horn Park - South East London](#)

### **Friday July 31<sup>st</sup> Four Ten Minute Talks**

This will be a varied meeting with something of interest to all members. This will be the last meeting before our summer break.

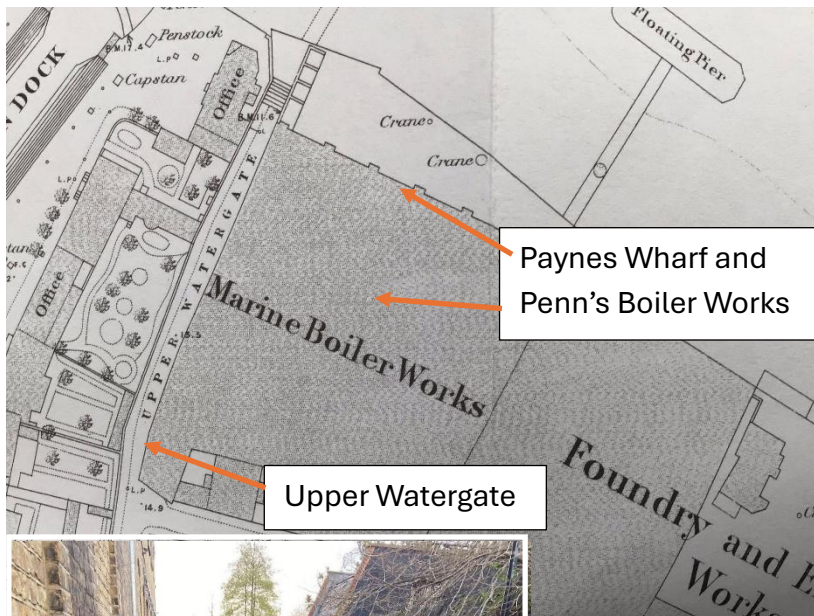
Priscilla Macpherson will present a couple of 10-minute talks. The first will be entitled “Perspectives of American Soldiers in Britain during WW II”, based on the 200 GIs who were stationed locally at Hall Place, working on Signals Intelligence between 1943 - 4. The second will be a “Family History” style talk about, Austin Staples, an American soldier’s experiences and impressions of England in wartime, told through his letters and postcards.

Alongside these two talks Roger will present a talk on the “The City Canal - a shortcut to chaos”. Most of you will remember the talk Roger presented about the Isle of Dogs and this item about the canal was omitted so that the original talk did not overrun, however it is an interesting talk in its own right and can neatly be slotted in here.



Roger's second item is a "magic lantern" style show using photographs from the Spurgeon collection showing characters seen on the streets of Greenwich in the mid 1880's.

## Exploring Deptford - Paynes Wharf and Watergate Street



We are moving close to the river for this latest article about Historic Deptford. The road down to the river frontage from Evelyn Street is called Upper Watergate Street. When you look at the road surface you will see it is made of rough-hewn stones. It is said to be the oldest metaled road in London.



On the righthand side is the old Deptford Royal Dockyard wall, behind which stands the Master Shipwrights House, sometimes the gate is open, and you can have a peek or perhaps pay a visit on an Open House Day.

Once you get to the end there are some uneven steps down to the river. These steps were used by watermen to ferry passengers across to Burrells Wharf on the Isle of Dogs and fish was often unloaded leading to complaints about the smell. The steps were constructed in 1842 by the Deptford Pier and Improvement Company, whose slogan was “Making Deptford Herself Again” Needless to say they did not succeed. This was part of an agreement with watermen who had lost the use of Deptford Pier.



Alongside the river to the East is Paynes Wharf, where apart from the frontage there is nothing left of the original grade II listed building. It is thought that the building was originally constructed in 1835 by London and Greenwich Railway as an interchange station for passengers to travel onwards by boat.



The Railway company collapsed in the early 1840's and the building then became the marine boiler works for the John Penn company. The tall arches allowed the movement of the boilers onto ships in the river. Among the ships fitted with boilers here was the famous HMS Warrior and the Dreadnought series of

battleships. The location next to their main customer the Royal Dockyard was ideal.



Their main works at the time were on Cold Bath Street near Blackheath Hill, where Wickes is currently situated but there was no easy access to the river hence the second works on Paynes Wharf. Production by John Penn stopped in 1911 and the wharf was taken over

by Paynes the Paper factors. At the main site Penns built cars, but that might be the start of another article.



Back in Deptford at Paynes Wharf, on the southwest corner of the building on Borthwick Street there is a steel bollard inscribed John Penn one of the few tangible signs anywhere of the famous marine engineers.

At the end of Watergate Street there is a short wooden stair that takes



you up to the riverside walk along the front of Paynes Wharf, right at the eastern end is the Sienna café and ideal place for coffee and cake (Shut on Sunday)

PS . I have had a fair number of positive comments about this series of items about Deptford, and there is one more to come. If you missed the first two articles, they are still available on our webpage at [Heritage Group - South East London](#)

I wonder if anyone else would like to write something for future Heritage News Editions? If so, please get in touch so we can talk it over.

Roger Mead [rogermead2021@gmail.com](mailto:rogermead2021@gmail.com) 07771936215