

Welcome to this edition of Heritage News it contains news about our next meeting and the latest item on Historic Deptford. We do not meet in August and start again on the 25th September with John Price talking about the Ragged School.

A couple of speakers that we wanted to book don't do Fridays so I am wondering if we could occasionally hold meetings on another day. I would still want to stick to mornings as the hall becomes intolerably hot in the afternoons, so my suggestions are either Wednesday or Thursday. Rather than you reply by email we will have a short survey form available on the check in desk at the next meeting. This month's article about Deptford was going to be about the John Penn engineering works but I changed my mind and will save that for another occasion or maybe a 10 minute talk. So instead we have a short piece about the meat trade.

Can you help?

I am finding it more difficult to organise the Heritage Group and wonder if anyone else could help out. Perhaps a couple of people could help with bookings and looking after speakers please get in touch by email if you can help. rogermead2021@gmail.com

Friday July 31st Ten Minute Talks 10:30 start

We still have room for one more talk so if you would like to volunteer, please get in touch in the next few days. It does not need to be a formal talk perhaps even just a chat about a stately home or museum you have visited this year.

Please note we will be having the refreshment break in the middle of the meeting rather than at the start.

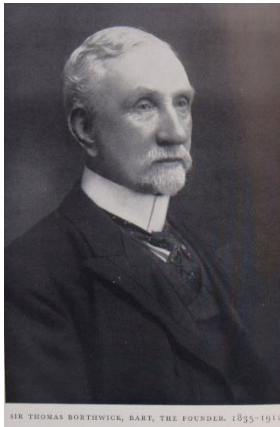
Priscilla Macpherson will present a 15-minute talk. This will be a "Family History" style talk about Austin Staples, an American soldier's experiences and impressions of England in wartime, told through his letters and postcards.

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.

Deptford History Butchers Row and Borthwick Street

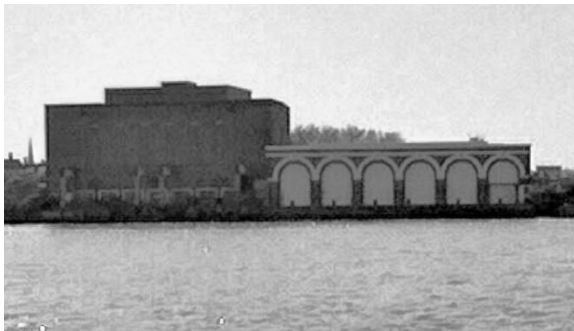


Butchers Row was the street that runs through Deptford along the side of what was a Deptford Strond (see earlier article) and the riverside at Paynes Wharf. It has since been renamed as Borthwick Street.

There are some streets that now seem insignificant, but which have a rich history, Butchers Row is one such street. In 1604 at one end of the street was the East India Company at Stone Wharf where the company launched its first two ships – the "Trades Increase" and the "Peppercorn". We have in previous articles looked at the Boiler Works of John Penn which was based on

Paynes Wharf. For this article we will look at the meat trade which started here in the reign of Henry VIII with his slaughterhouses based alongside the road.

We will however concentrate on the more recent history. In 1934 just downstream from Paynes Wharf was a massive cold store built for Thomas Borthwick and used for the



importation of meat from the antipodes. This was built on the site of Humphrey and Tennant Marine engineering works. It was designed by a "proper Architect" Sir Edwin Cooper. The building was very imposing brick built and had a "stately presence" on the riverbank.

It contained some 22 miles of cold piping maintaining a temperature well below freezing at 16° F. The warehouse could store some 300,000 carcasses mainly brought from the southern hemisphere.

The ships were loaded at various ports like Brisbane in Australia and Auckland and Wellington in New Zealand and then sailed to the UK via the Suez Canal. Most of these ships were purpose built for the trade such as the MV Limerick and other similar refrigerated cargo motor ships.

One of the first shipping lines was the Shaw, Savill and Albion Line which chartered the SS Dunedin in 1882 to prove that they could ship frozen New Zealand Lamb to the UK . Prior to this the trade was in live animals which then had to be slaughtered within 14 days of arrival. This was carried out at the Foreign Cattle Market (1872- 1913) near the site of the historic former royal dockyard. This 23-acre facility had 70 slaughterhouses and could hold 8,500 cattle and 20,000 sheep. It was estimated that this one facility supplied more than 50% of all fresh meat eaten in London. As the trade in live animals was phased out Thomas Borthwick & Sons anchored their massive importing business to the trade in frozen meat and the Cold store was the result of that transition.

The frozen carcasses were off loaded in Tilbury on to refrigerated lighter barges and taken upstream to Deptford, then off loaded under a canopy at the cold store. They could unload four lighters at a time shielded from the weather and more importantly the sun. On the other side of the building were 14 loading bays for the lorry distribution of the meat throughout the UK. An idea of the size of this operation is the number on the Commer vehicle in the picture is 187. It was estimated that by 1954 this cold store was moving roughly £324,000 worth of Australian and New Zealand meat each year.



In the present day the cold store has been replaced by a housing development alongside the beautiful frontage of Paynes Wharf. Thomas Borthwick are still trading with abattoirs in Bakers Creek Queensland Australia. They have also transitioned to dealing in wine and other agricultural products in the Wairarapa region of New Zealand.



Paynes Wharf showing the new tower block which replaced the Borthwick Cold Store. The café is under the last arch.

As a legacy of the Borthwick company Butchers Row has been renamed Borthwick Street and it still winds its way just back from the Thames River front through Deptford. Needless to say, there are no information boards or signs of its history much in line with the way the rest of the history of Deptford has been forgotten. However, you can walk along Borthwick Street and detour along the front of Paynes Wharf and down Watergate Street with a smug expression as you will be one of the few visitors that know its history.