

SOCIETY OUTING

St. Katharine Docks and Brick Lane Music Hall

12th SEPTEMBER 2013

St. Katharine Docks

Patricia Hooper-Sherratt

We arrived at St. Katharine Docks before going on to the music hall. What a surprise, we were not prepared for the magnificent display of boats. The Queen's Rowbarge the *Gloriana*, which was used for the Golden Jubilee in 2012, and a selection of Dunkirk little ships. This was due to the Thames Festival week-end which coincided with the Mayor's Thames Festival.

The docks were officially opened on 25th October 1828. Although well used, they were not a great commercial success and were unable to accommodate large ships. They were amalgamated in 1864 with the neighbouring London docks. In 1909, the Port of London Authority took over the management of almost all of the Thames docks, including the St. Katharine.

They were badly damaged by German bombing during the Second World War. All the warehouses around the eastern basin were destroyed, and the site they had occupied remained derelict until the 1990s.

They were closed in 1968 and were sold to the Greater London Council. The site was

leased to developers and most of the original warehouses around the western basin were demolished and replaced by modern commercial buildings in the early 1970s, the docks themselves becoming a marina. The development has often been cited as a model example of successful urban redevelopment.

The area now features offices, social and private housing, a large hotel, shops and restaurants, a pub, (The Dickens Inn, a former brewery dating back to the 18th century), a yachting marina and other recreational facilities.

The east dock is now dominated by the City Quay residential development, comprising more than 200 privately owned flats overlooking the marina. The south side of the each dock is surrounded by the South Quay Estate



The Queen on board Gloriana at Windsor

which was originally social housing. The dock is still used by small to medium sized boats on a daily basis.

The Royal Rowbarge Gloriana is an all wood structure of British oak, iroko, sweet chestnut and marine ply and is 88 feet long and 11 feet wide. The hull is clinker built and has electric propulsion. Overall the vessel weighs 9 tons and is wheel chair friendly. There is a rowing crew of 18 with 3 deck crew and it can carry 30 passengers. The saloon or coach interior is 20 feet by 10 feet 6 inches with a clear headroom of 7 feet. The fine Regency-style decoration is fully gilded in gold leaf and includes 16 crests representing the Realms of the Commonwealth. Editor



Gloriana at Henley Royal Regatta

Brick Lane Music Hall

Sheila Farrell

I had no idea of the splendour of this Victorian "Music Hall". The founder Vincent Hayes loved music halls, and saw them disappearing. He decided to create his own in 1992 in the former Truman's Brewery building in Brick Lane. After a move to larger premises in Shoreditch, the Music Hall finally settled in Silvertown, in the Royal Docks, next to London City Airport. The building where the Music Hall is now housed is the former church of St Mark's built in the 1870's by Samuel Sanders Teulon. The building is of historic interest for its unique Gothic brick exterior and the grace of its interior design. It is now a Grade II* listed building. People from many areas came, disabled were especially welcomed.

We were entertained with slap-stick comedy which brought the house down with laughter, jokes, sketches and cockney sing-songs. The staff were most



helpful. During the interval we were served freshly prepared sandwiches, cakes, tea and coffee, equal to the "Ritz". The bar was available if required, from 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm.

Thank you Dover Society for a magical afternoon. We enjoyed it so much and look forward to another visit.