



Left to right: Collections team with Holly Slater hosting a handling session, Train volunteer Neo carrying a sleeper, volunteers Martin and Zaki in the Boulton & Watt basement.



Hello from

Hannah Harte, Museum Director

Happy New Year 2025! The turn of the year is a great 'taking stock' time. This job can be tough sometimes. Independent charity museums are a challenge every day! That *is* what makes it interesting for us all. But if you're not careful it can seem a bit overwhelming. The antidote to this, is to notice the successes.

So, what have we done to make us feel good about 2024? The Headlines: We got our engines steaming again! We engaged many more volunteers and tempted some old faces back again, and have established a really supportive and keen team. We submitted a **massive** bid for the Great Engine House Project (still waiting to hear, so I hope all your fingers are still crossed!) We had an AMAZING response to our funding call to support that project. We wrestled the Museum from the jaws of closure - and again saw amazing support from everyone: from you (our members) and our audiences, to local Councillors, and international enthusiasts. We got the Shand Mason Trench Engine transferred into our collections (watch this space for a new and exciting fire related exhibit in 2025!). We delivered some great events with engaging partners - becoming the London Museum of Women in STEM for a single day on International Women's Day, and celebrating World Water Day with an international film festival, showcasing the Stirling Engines, and lots of 16mm small gauge railway and tramway events.

But there have also been some bumps in the road. We've had to ask you to be patient with us as we fix the front doors, (thank you so much to the Member, Michael, who gave us £500 to help towards a new set), as we fix the fun interactives, as we fixed the Boulton & Watt engine, as we fix a sink hole in the garden, as we try to deal with leaks in the roof and the heating breaking down, as thieves repeatedly stole lead from our roofs. And so many more. [cont.]

Looking forward to 2025, it's going to be another mix of triumphant successes and challenges to overcome. Right now, we're asking for your patience as we transition our café to a new model. We are very sad that our partner of the last few years, Our Barn, have needed to move on to pastures new. They have done fantastic work for young people with learning disabilities or autism and have delivered paninis, coffees, cakes and soups galore for all our visitors. We will miss them terribly, but for now we're going it alone. It's going to take us a little time to get our ducks in a line: we need training for our team, new fixtures for the food and beverages, new suppliers to get the produce to us, and new volunteers and team members to make it happen. Our aim is to have everything up and running by February Half-Term when we have some great fun offers for all the family! If you like a train you don't want to miss it!

So, to finish, if this reflection has helped to share the diversity of what we have going on, and if that's piqued your interest, why not volunteer with us? You'd be part of the most amazing, go-getting, enthusiastic, committed team I have ever worked with! We particularly need Gardeners, Museum Hosts and, of course, Front of House Café Assistants – and we'd love to have you.

All the very best for a happy, healthy 2025 from all of us at LMWS.

London Museum of Water & Steam

February Half Term

TRAINS TRAINS TRAINS

All Aboard!

Steam Locomotive Rides!

Model Railway Fun!

Make Train Crafts!

Open Daily 10-4
15-23 February

February Half Term: Trains Trains Trains

February 16-22
10am-4pm

All aboard! Next stop is half term fun. Join us every day for wonderful train themed activities including rides on our steam locomotive, crafts, and model railways.

This half-term is extra special as we will be hosting our Steam Up event on the weekend of 22-23 February.



Glen's Gazette

Glen Williams - Site and Collections Lead

New Front Doors Make a Grand Entrance

As recent visitors to the Museum will have seen, our front doors have reached the end of their life. After thirty years of use, both dramatically failed in quick succession late last year. Since then we have been struggling on with temporary wooden doors, however...

By the time the museum opens next Thursday, shiny new front doors will be installed! These will be automatic sliding doors, which will be able to operate quicker than our previous swing doors, keeping more heat in the building during the winter. The new doors are also fitted with a special feature that allows the whole assembly to fold back to allow large objects in and out of the café/shop space with relative ease.

This presents us with an exciting opportunity to relocate the Shand Mason Trench engine to the entrance space when it is not steaming, as it will now fit through the door!* Whilst the details of how exactly this will be done still need to be worked out it will allow us to have the engine on permanent public display in a heated and secure environment. Watch this space!

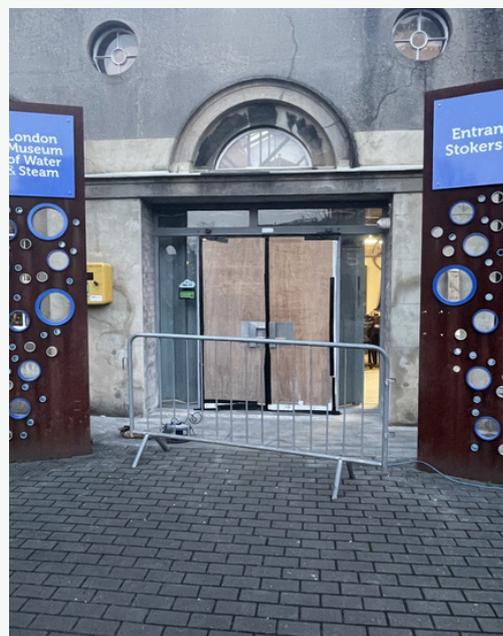
As to be expected there is a large amount of prep work to do and thanks must be given to Clive Penfold, Ben Hussey and Richard Manion of the Thursday gang who have assisted in making the electrical modifications.

Once the doors are in we have further improvements and repairs to the museum entrance planned, including better signage and lighting along with something that desperately needs doing; re-lining the car park!

* With the brake leavers and removable chimney piece taken off.

Lead Thieves Strike Again

As you may know the museum has recently been a target for lead thieves, with lead being stolen from the roofs adjoining Green Dragon Lane on three occasions over the last six months. This has caused a significant amount of water ingress into the forge and carpenters shop, both tenanted spaces, as well as consequential damage to surrounding brickwork, skylights and roofing panels. All of which now need to be repaired. Sadly the police have been unable to investigate and our insurance will not cover this type of claim, so we are having to fix it ourselves!



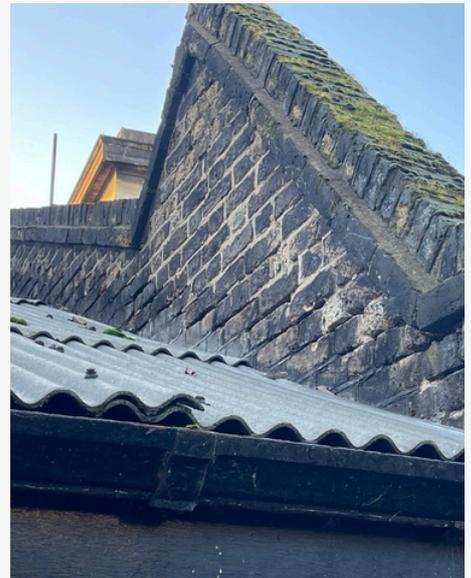
Work starting on replacing the old doors.



What remains of the roof targeted.

After temporary repairs the question turned to what to replace it with: lead again or something else? This was a difficult question to answer as finding a product that could be easily formed into complex shapes and applied by volunteers - whilst being robust and compatible with the existing corrugated panels, and in keeping with the historic character of the building - was not easy. After much thought the decision was made to proceed with lead again, but this time coated in a deterrent compound.

For a while this seemed to work and the new lead slowly made its way onto the roof, we even got our hopes up enough to think about painting the skylights! But no, even with the deterrent compound, even with the promise of more police patrols, even with temperatures of -3°C overnight, we found the newly installed lead missing on 10 January.



Damage beginning to show on the surrounding brickwork.

If thieves are willing to risk their life on a dark roof during a hard frost for £100 of stolen lead then it is clear that something different needs to be done. We're currently investigating fiberglass as an alternative, but need to make sure this will look in keeping with the building and, importantly, is fully reversible. The winter weather is not helping us, but we hope to have the building fully watertight again in the coming months.

I must offer my sincere thanks and apologies to both Neil Lemaire and Derek Pearce, our tenants, who have had to put up with consistent water coming in. Their patience and understanding cannot be understated!

Museum Licked into Shape

Dave and Richard have been doing a stellar job with their trusty paint brushes getting the Museum into shipshape. Most recently they've been focusing on the Steam Hall which was starting to look a bit tired, especially around the engines. But thanks to a touch up with some Southwold Sands it is looking much better.

They've also managed to cure the permanently flaky paint in the corner of the café, and are well on the way to rebuilding the external display board from the car park. Top job all round!



Dave, left, and Richard, right, painting in the Steam Hall.

Ben Hussey and Jamie Gosling also continue to work their magic on the interactives, most recently rebuilding the water cylinder display and repairing the sewer projector.

Boulton and Watt Windows

In conjunction with the engineering team's great work on the Boulton and Watt Engine, Clive Bradley has been giving the sash windows in the engine rooms some much needed TLC. The beam floor window in particular was in a very bad condition as the old animal glue had totally died out and the window was literally falling apart, but not anymore!

The window has been completely stripped back with the historic glass carefully removed. The frame has been re-glued and rot dealt with. The glass is going back in as I write.

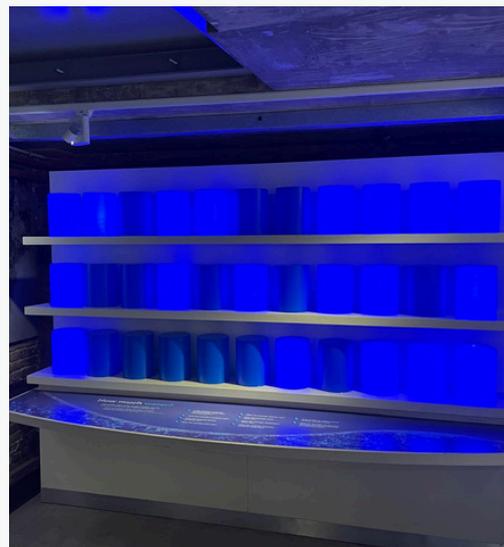
This will hopefully be the start of a rolling project to overhaul the Museum's windows, with the Bull beam floor and staircase next. Many thanks to Clive for all his hard work!

Front Lawn Looking Good

The team have been doing a lot of great work to improve the Museum's appearance on Kew Bridge Road. New illuminated poster panels, expertly mounted by Clive Bradley have been installed on the front railings. These will have greater impact on passers-by and hopefully bring more visitors into the Museum, whilst being cheaper and more sustainable than vinyl banners. Many thanks to the Thursday gang for excavating and installing the power supply cable to the panels and to Noel for wiring it all up.

Tom Traylor has also done a brilliant job tidying the front garden and removing the last bits of hedging installed by St James's Homes and clearing the area at the end of the railway. It's all looking a lot smarter and inviting for visitors and, with the hard work undertaken by Our Barn, makes a big difference.

Our plan is to move up into the upper garden and start tackling some of the larger trees and shrubs, which have got a bit too big for their boots. Check in with Holly if you fancy trying some gardening at Holly.Slater@waterandsteam.org.uk.



Water cylinder interactives in the Waterworks Gallery.



New light box posters on the railings off Kew Bridge Road.



The front garden which has been tidied.

Loco Maintenance

The loco crew have been hard at work during the winter months undertaking essential maintenance. Two sleepers have been completely replaced, fishplates have been inspected and lubricated, and the track grooves have been fully cleaned. Steam packings to Thomas Wicksteed have been attended to and the man-rider has been fully serviced and lubricated. Big thanks to the loco team.

Repairs to Alister's fuel system were also undertaken back in December following identification of a leak. This involved dismantling the fuel filter, replacing all seals and re-making one of the filter unions. Many thanks to Martin Frank for doing this in the middle of the Boulton and Watt project!



Neo carrying a sleeper. (Photo taken by Joseph).



Neo and Ed replacing a sleeper. (Photo taken by Joseph).



The new and broken filter unions.



Front left to right: Zaki, Tim, Anti
Back left to right: Neo, Ed, Joseph, Darren, Andy, Tim



Richard's Roundup

Richard Albanese- Project Manager

Boulton & Watt Works

Good news!

The Boulton & Watt engine is finally back together again and, following successful steam tests in January, is now ready for service at our next Steam Up in February!

The new timber air pump piston ring was machined up in December, but was found to be a tight fit in the air pump cylinder, which is unevenly worn and difficult to measure. Following several 'in and outs' and some gentle sanding it has since dropped in ok. With the top cover bolted back on, all the small valve gear and cataract linkages were refitted, and a final clean up to the basement tank was made, before the excitement of refilling it with water. Finally, floor grilles were put back over the top and new lights fitted to show the condenser workings beneath.

Recent inspection of the adjoining condenser lift pump well found some very rusty pipework installed in 1975 close to collapse. This had to be dismantled and lifted out in challenging confined access conditions. Yours truly had the unenviable task of being lowered through a very tight gap between various pumps and pipework to help with removal - my consumption of mince pies over Christmas hadn't been too excessive thankfully!

Test runs went well with an excellent vacuum and good steady running, though the suction well fish were less than happy with the rusty water coming out of the main pump after a layup of almost three years!

We are now giving the engine a final good going over so she looks bright and shiny again along with repacking glands and making some adjustments to valve gear.



Martin working on the new timber air pump piston ring.



Ian, John, and Martin lowering the piston into the Boulton & Watt basement.



Martin, Clive, Richard, Tim, and Chris posing in front of the Boulton & Watt.



Richard lowered underneath the engine to remove the rusty pipework (see next photo)



Rusty pipework previously installed in 1975.



Zaki and Martin in the Boulton & Watt basement.

Richard's Roundup

Waddon Repairs

The Boulton & Watt were delayed as a result of a breakdown on the Waddon Engine at our Steam Up in November, which we had to fix with some urgency. The engine suffered a total loss of condenser vacuum on the Sunday, which made safe running impossible due to one of the air pump piston valves failing in service. This was caused by long-term stress as a result of condenser tube seal leakage (another issue which we need to fix), which has been putting additional water into the exhaust side of the engine for many years. As always nothing at Kew is simple and to gain access to the broken valve, most of the air pump had to be dismantled over several days into constituent parts. The pump located in the basement isn't the easiest of items to work on or get access too!

We took the decision to replace all of the spindles on the five sprung loaded valves with new bronze ones specially made by an outside engineering firm who could do them quickly. We also reinstated two valves, which had in the past been blanked off after failure.

Repairs were fully successful and the engine is now working well again with an excellent vacuum and steady running!



The Waddon basement.



Young volunteer Theo working on the Dancer's End.



The new bronze spindles placed above the old ones.

Dancers End

This engine has had some significant maintenance. All piston and valve rod glands have been repacked and a big clean up in the basement area has seen years of sticky oil and grease scraped up and cleared away. A foul job which our younger volunteers have undertaken heroically. Steam pipe valves and traps have been stripped and serviced and new condensate drainpipes are being made.

Richard's Roundup

90 inch

22nd November 2024 was a special and emotional day as for the first time in almost ten years our 90 inch engine moved again under steam, quietly behind closed doors with only engineer volunteering teams in attendance.

Two weeks of preparatory work were carried out to ensure glands, packings, linkages and motion were able to move and were fully lubricated. Steam traps and drain pipework needed to be checked and/or unblocked. The condenser and main pump tanks had to be cleared of rust debris, inspected and refilled with water.

The engine was started slowly and very cautiously indeed, and as anticipated, took a considerable quantity of steam to get moving again, but once freed off she quickly returned to her old self over a successful half-hour run.

This was all done as part of our 'Steaming into Sustainability' project to initially make sure that the engine is kept free and maintained in working order.

The second objective was to test the engine against our recently installed Beel steam boiler to see if it could supply the volume of steam required. This it did admirably, without any loss of pressure. In fact, we found that when compared to our Bull engine, the 90 uses less steam!

Finally, in the coming months, we need to do further test runs with a meter fitted to the steam supply pipe, so that we can record the steam flows as part of longer term aims of having a correctly sized carbon neutral steam boiler plant.

Whilst we would love to run the engine regularly for the public - her current poor cosmetic condition, along with that of the building, and a steam leak on the engine's steam jacket to cylinder - prevent us from doing this safely. Hopefully future grant funding via our 'Great Engine House Project' will allow us to restore her back to former glory and safe working order.



Ian, John, and Theo in the 90 Inch basement.



Taking out the blocks that the 90 Inch weight was resting on.



Richard Albanese operating the 90 inch engine.



Curious Collections

Holly Slater - Collections Officer
and Collection and Archives Assistants Dominik Kaminski and Cosmin Grigore.

The Year of the Snake

The 29th of January marked Lunar New Year and the year of the snake for millions of people around the world. However, did you know that the snake is also an important animal for the museum?

The Crest of The Metropolitan Water Board shows an array of Ancient Greco-Roman influences. On the left of the shield is the classical figure of Hygeia, the Goddess of Health.



Roman Marble Statue of Hygeia
1st AD. State Hermitage Museum,
Saint Petersburg

Surprisingly Hygeia was not worshipped for curing illness, but for championing preventative measures. Hygeia was closely associated with the Cult of Asclepius, a cult which was open to all socio-economic groups in the Greco-Roman world. The cult used the symbol of the Aesculapian Snake as it was associated with perennial youth and healing through the shedding of its own skin.

Another interesting part of the shield is the hand which erupts from the cloud above. The eight rain droplets not only signify rainwater but also the eight water companies, one of these being The Grand Junction Waterworks Company.

The inscription at the bottom reads:
'Et plui super unam civitatem' (And I caused it to rain upon one city'). The motto also has biblical connotations, having been taken from the book of Amos (Chapter 4 Verse 7) in The Old Testament.

Therefore, the snake has greater significance for the museum than you might initially expect.

Sources: The Hermitage Museum (hermitagemuseum.org)
Kellie, S. The Lancet, The Cult of Asclepius, Volume 354. September 1999
Information courtesy of Kempton Steam Museum

Reminder that members have access, by appointment, to the Museum library and archive.

In Memory of Ron Plaster

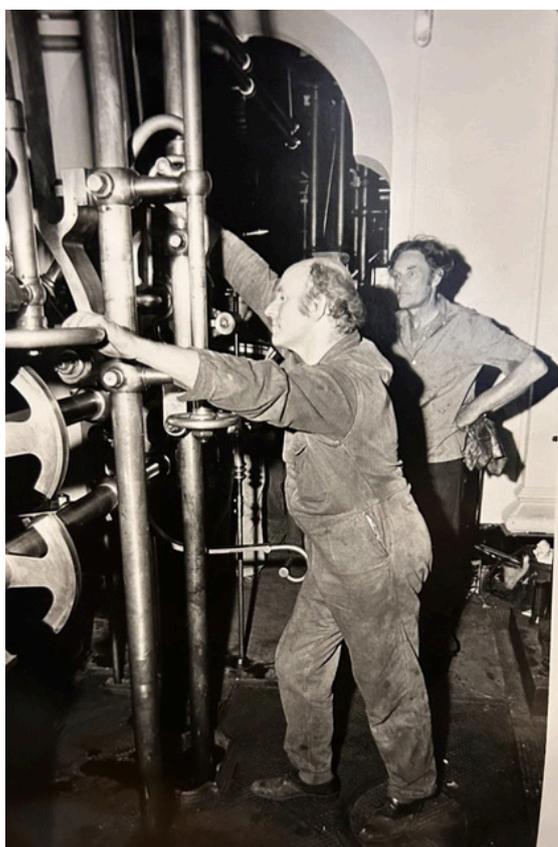
Richard Albanese

It is with deep regret that we announce the passing of 'Ron' or Ronald Edward Plaster on the 14th of December 2024, he was the former Chief Engineer and founding father of Kew Bridge Steam Museum which latterly has become the London Museum of Water and Steam. His funeral took place on the 23rd January with a wonderful celebration of his life and a big turn out at Westerleigh Crematorium.

Born in 1930, Ron started an engineering apprenticeship with the Bristol Aeroplane Company, which was interrupted by national Service with the Air Force in Northern Ireland. Later he returned to BAC and then onto Rolls Royce where he specialised in the design and building of gas turbine engines.

With a passion for steam railways and railway modelling Ron also started to take an interest in mining history on family visits to Cornwall which lead to an awareness of Cornish steam pumping engines used for mine drainage.

Consequently in 1965 he and other young volunteer engineers from Rolls Royce set out to restore two steam beam engines used to pump water for the Kennett and Avon Canal at Crofton in Wilshire, setting up a museum as a pioneering preservation project which was to set the scene for many to others to follow. The engines at Crofton are still in full working order and are regularly open to visitors to this day.



The excitement and challenges of steam restoration work began to overtake desk based responsibilities at Rolls Royce, leading Ron and others to set up the Kew Bridge Engines Trust from 1973-5 establishing the world renowned museum that we love today.

Ron became the full time Chief Engineer and was fundamental in planning and overseeing the restoration and return to working order of the Boulton & Watt engine in 1975, 90 inch engine in 1976, Easton & Amos engine in 1977-8, Dancers End in 1978-9, Hathorn Davey triple in 1980, Maudslay in 1986 and Waddon in 1990.

In conjunction Ron was to mastermind and grow the museum's heritage engineering consultancy and contracting arm 'Historic Steam Limited' which went onto bringing in much needed Museum funds through carrying out related work for other museums, private individuals and trusts based all around the UK.

In Memory

During his tenure a vast range of heritage projects were undertaken, such as removal and or restoration of stationary steam, gas, oil and other engines, workshop and factory manufacturing equipment, waterwheels and milling machinery, traction engines, steam rollers, waggons, steamboats and small locomotives.

Ron worked with clients as diverse as the Science Museum, Museum of London and London Docklands, Royal Scottish Museum, Houses of Parliament, the Royal Observatory, the National Trust at Levant, London Transport Museum and many many others.



Finally, we shouldn't forget the model engineering shows that Ron planned and organised for the Museum. Once a year the site would be packed out with working model steam and other engines of every type, brought by enthusiast exhibitors from all around the UK. These shows were some of our biggest events and brought in very large numbers of visitors.

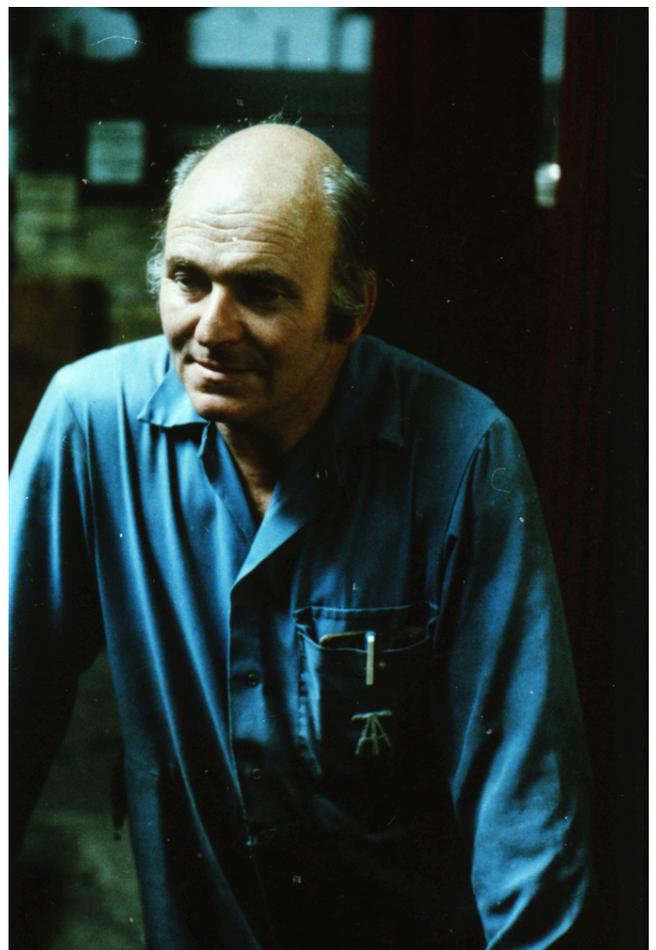
Ron's achievements over so many years were directly related to his warm personality and abundance of patience which were fundamental to carrying volunteers and staff along on the journey with him.

Always kind and friendly he made time for all, especially volunteers and visitors. His energy and commitment were powered by a legendary addiction to tea consumed in vast quantities, along with homemade cake which allowed him to regularly work until the small hours. Ron was always a night owl!

Following retirement in 1995, Ron continued busily as ever, first as a regular volunteer at Kew helping on restoration projects and driving the engines which he loved so much. He was still making the return journey from Bristol driving his own car until last year!

He also volunteered at his daughter's dance school, the Underfall yard in Bristol demonstrating historic workshop machinery, was a member of the Bristol Industrial Archaeology Society and until last year was supplying and making replica parts for steam locomotives at the Avon Valley railway out of his home workshop.

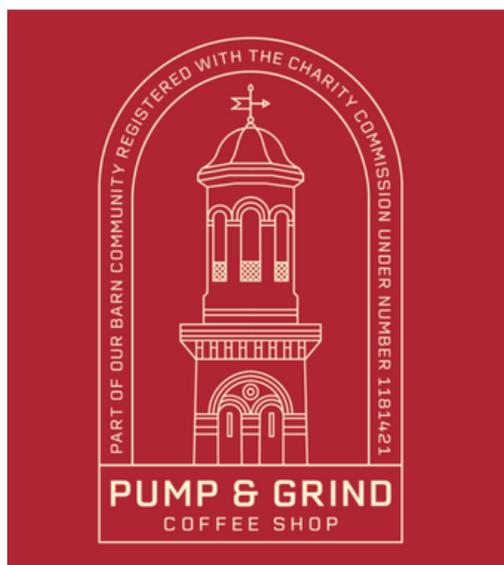
An amazing man who we will always be indebted too, Ron you will be greatly missed.



Saying Goodbye

We're bidding a fond farewell to our café partners this week. The lovely Our Barn team have been our partners at the Museum since 2021 when they set up the Pump & Grind coffee shop in our welcome area. The coffee shop was a training hub for young adults with learning difficulties and Autism, offering them the opportunity to develop work skills, confidence and independence. This is just part of the bigger Our Barn Community that offer all kinds of support and opportunities to join in if you need their support. In the time they've been with us, we have got to know everyone and they've become part of the LMWS community too! We will miss them a great deal but all of us wish Karen, David and all of the team every success in their new venture. You can find more information about Our Barn and all the plans for 2025 and beyond at www.ourbarn.org.uk or in person at their new hub in Blondin Park.

We will miss you all, come and see us any time, you really have brewed up brighter futures one cup at a time!



David, Virginia, Thomas, Karen, and Sukhraj.

STEAM Explorer

Do you know a youth with an interested in engineering?

Tell them about STEAM Explorer! A free water engineering course for youth aged 13-17. Sponsored by the Water Conservation Trust and facilitated by Museum staff.

To express interest in the May 2025 STEAM Explorer course please contact Danielle Holmes at learning@waterandsteam.org.uk





Volunteer Update

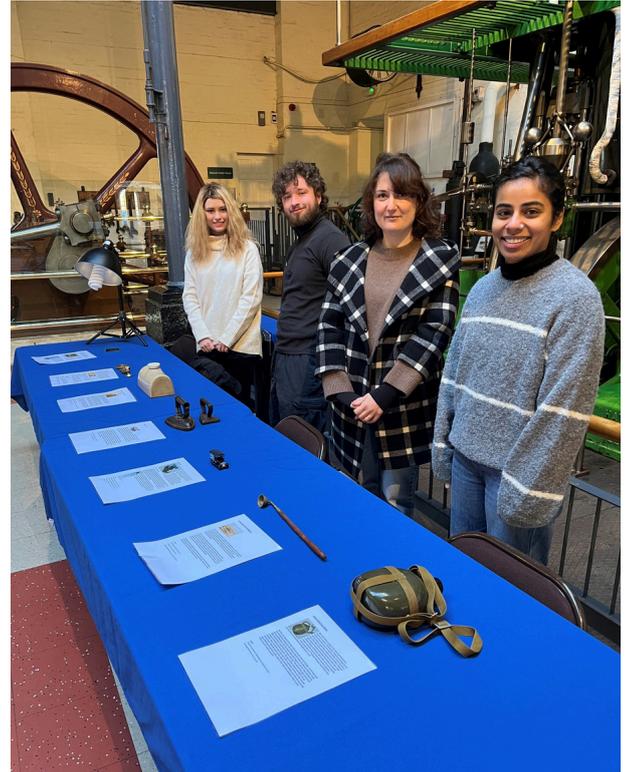
Holly Slater- Collections Officer

We have had a very busy few months with our Collections and Archive team! We created a new and exciting object handling collection which reflects the diversity of our exhibits. The eclectic mix of objects range from a potentially 100-year-old bolt that was recently removed from our Boulton and Watt Engine, to our stoneware 'Pig' Hot Water Bottle.

Object handling sessions have been running nearly every Saturday in 2025 and have been a resounding success. Our next sessions will be held Saturday 8th February and Saturday 15th February. We look forward to seeing you there!

We are currently looking for volunteers in the following areas:

- Wednesday Gardening Volunteer
- Museum Hosts
- Front of House Café Volunteers



Collections officer Holly Slater with volunteers Dominik, Liz, and Duty Manager Vishaka

If you are interested in any of our fantastic volunteering opportunities please contact holly.slater@waterandsteam.org.uk

A very warm welcome to our new volunteers

- Arden Ashelford
- Philip Bristow
- Tim Dawson
- Robert from Great Oaks College
- Cosmin Grigone
- Aneka Ogden
- Aimee Serena McDonnell
- Elsie Phythian
- Ana-Maria Rebrovic
- Summer-Ann Stonebridge
- Harry Symington-Tucker
- Joe Wilson

Shop Update

Joanna Walsh - Front of House Coordinator



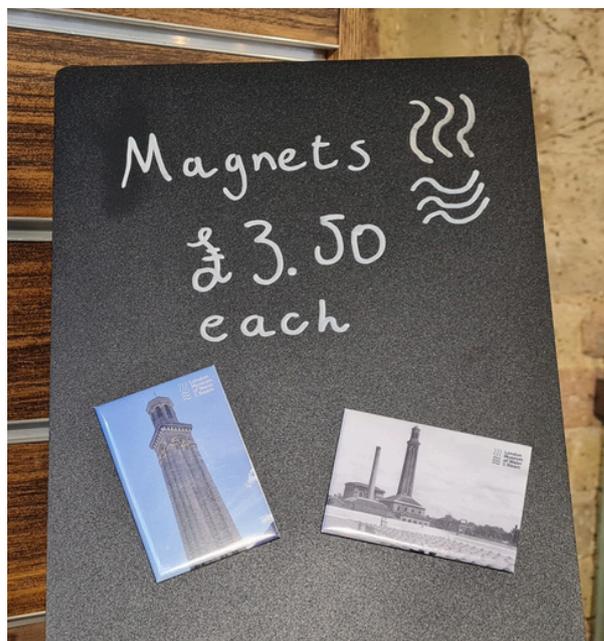
The museum is looking to further expand it's Shop range this year! Last year we introduced our branded recycled notepad and pens, with the option of three colours to choose from. We have reintroduced our branded mug and have developed two badge designs exclusive to the museum shop.

You can bring a little bit of steam heritage to your fridge with our new magnets. We decided to highlight the Standpipe Tower, a structure that has stood the test of time. The magnets are £3.50 each, so you can decide between past and present design, or get two for the price of £6.

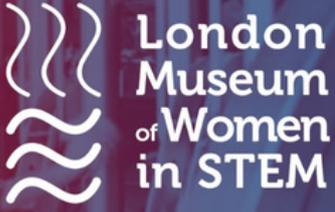
The museum shop is also in collaboration with our community partners, Speak Out's wonderfully designed greeting cards, and our tenants, Neil Lemaire's unique jewellery range.



Reminder! Museum members receive 10% off all shop items.



Upcoming Events



**London
Museum
of Women
in STEM**

International Women's Day
Saturday 8th March

International Women's Day

March 8, 2025 10am-4pm

Did you know that just over a quarter of the people working in STEM in the UK are female?

For the second year we're rebranding for the day as the London Museum of Women in STEM to celebrate International Women's Day.

Join us for a full day of activities, experiments and of course, STEaM. We're celebrating and promoting girls and women in science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics.

This event is aimed at all genders, and all ages, and might be of particular interest to secondary school students who have an interest in STEaM.

Find more information about this event, and keep an eye out for the days schedule to release, on our websites What's On. Coming soon!

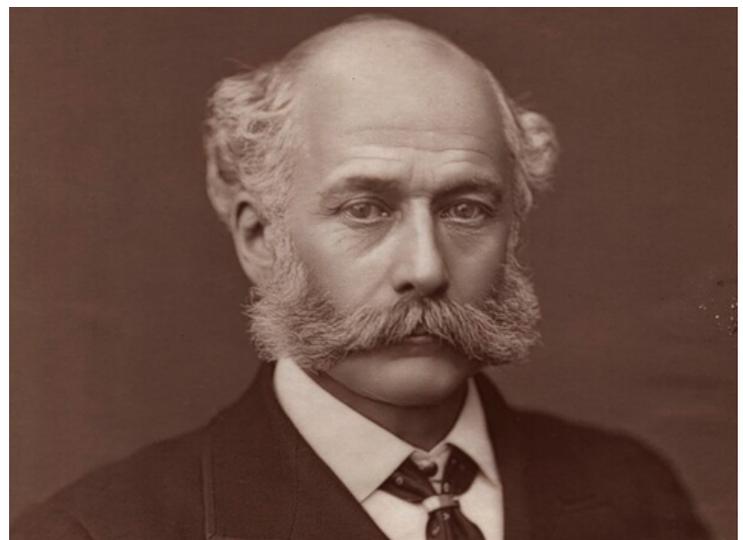
Sir Joseph Bazalgette & The Great Stink of London

March 13, 2025 6pm

A talk by Stephen Fielding from Habitats and Heritage.

£3- Members, £5- Non Members

Tickets available now.

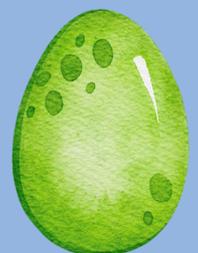


Easter Holidays Hunt the Green Dragon Eggs

5 - 20 April 2025

The Green Dragon of Green Dragon Lane has lost all her eggs around the Museum!

Help us find them all before the Green Dragon unleashes her fiery breath!



More details to be announced soon.



Upcoming Events



For a full list of upcoming events,
please visit:

<https://waterandsteam.org.uk/events>



@waterandsteam



[londonmuseumofwaterandsteam](https://www.instagram.com/londonmuseumofwaterandsteam)