

Left to right: Jasmine and Wesley laying out a banner for the new exhibition *Tender Machines*, Piper's social media photo for April Fool's Day, and a member of the collections volunteer team conducting an Archive Tour.



Hello from

Hannah Harte, Museum Director

We're over the moon to share some fantastic news! Thanks to your amazing support, the Museum has been awarded £2,626,277 in MEND funding from DCMS. This will help us carry out vital repairs to protect our Great Engine House and the 90 & 100" engines for the future. We couldn't have done it without you, so thank you to all our members, visitors and supporters who donated, shared, or cheered us on. You truly made a difference.

We were also proud to be chosen as the flagship site for GoDaddy's "Small Days Out" campaign, encouraging families to visit and support local museums. Museums like ours are under real financial pressure, so this national spotlight is a big boost – and a reminder of how important your visits are.

We had a busy and fun February half term with our trains theme bringing lots of families through the doors. Our monthly Steam Ups continue to be well received – and we were particularly pleased to showcase the Boulton & Watt engine running for the first time in quite a few years to great enthusiasm in February! The longer Easter break was a bit more of a challenge, but many visitors enjoyed Emerald the Dragon's Egg Hunt, which was a lovely addition to the holiday offer. If you visited, or even if you didn't, we'd love your feedback to help us keep improving.

We've also been working hard behind the scenes on something new – our first big art exhibition, *Tender Machines*, supported by the National Lottery. Created by artist Dr Jasmine Pradissitto, it explores how machines, nature and people are all connected. The artworks sit alongside our engines without taking away from their story, adding a new layer of meaning to your visit.

Looking ahead, we're getting ready for Imagineering in May half term. This will be a fun, hands-on activity week full of creativity, invention, and curiosity for the whole family.

Thank you again for being part of the Museum community. Your support helps keep our engines running and our story alive.

We look forward to welcoming you again soon.



Hello again.

It's been another full-on couple of months at the Museum, and it seems there is never rest for the wicked!

MEND

The most exciting news is that back in February we found out that our application to the Arts Council had been successful. We have been awarded £2.6m towards our project to restore the Great Engine House back to its former glory.

Following the completion of a little bit of administrative paperwork with Arts Council the project can now start in earnest, and the first job is to get our consultant team on board. This will principally focus on the Conservation Architect and Quantity Surveyor, who will work with the Museum to complete all the necessary detailed designs and contracts ready for us to approach the contractors. At the same time, we will be submitting the applications to Hounslow Borough Council for Listed Building Consent and Planning Permission, a process which should take around 8 weeks.

We will also be doing some more detailed investigation works inside the engine house. This will involve removing one of the engine's cladding sheets to expose the asbestos underneath (under full containment conditions of course!) and assess the finer details of how to remove it at a larger scale.

A full programme of render and paint sampling will be undertaken across the building, using microscope and chemical analysis techniques. This will allow us to put together a picture of how the engine houses looked back in their heyday, and how these have changed over time. If all goes well we should be able to build a reconstruction of the engine house from 1846, complete with original colours! Very cool indeed!

Heating Controls

The future is officially here, thanks to some hard work by Ben and Richard from the Thursday team we can now control the Museum heating remotely. In conjunction with some pipework alterations planned for the summer months, it will hopefully result in some significant savings to our gas bill!



The Great Engine House



Great Engine House wall finishes exposed, what else will we find?

New Doors are a Big Hit in the Café

As we wrote back in January, we were expecting our new front doors at any time. I am very pleased to say they are now in and, following some minor teething issues, working well!

There is still a little bit of work to do to tidy up the internal floor finishes, nonetheless we've already had lots of compliments on how good they're looking! Importantly it's now a lot warmer in the colder months, even with the heating turned down, and much better for those who are less mobile. We've even noticed the glass is a lot clearer than the old, thicker, glass making the café bright and airy. Many thanks to Ben, Jamie, Clive P and Richard M for their help on various bits of electrics and Clive B for his help in removing the old door set.

In addition to the doors, the Thursday gang have been helping to get the objects back onto panel A. These had been previously removed due to damp ingress, but following a very long period of drying out they've now been reinstated and are looking good!

The café servery has also had a deep clean and fresh paint ready for the arrival of the new café, and we've just purchased some additional LED lights for the steam hall to replace the life expired high-intensity discharge lights, which have almost all failed. This will brighten up this important space and reduce power consumption. We'll be doing more in these areas in the coming weeks, so watch this space!

Roof Repairs Update

I'm pleased to say that following the lead thefts we reported in our last issue, we've managed to complete repairs to the carpenter's shop chimney and skylights, which are now watertight. These have been undertaken using fibreglass dressed over plyboard panels to imitate lead as far as possible, and fingers crossed these seem to have been a success!

We're now moving over to the Forge and will commence works to the ventilators and skylights.



Clive B assisting in some demolition works



Our new and improved front entrance!



The new doors shown fully open



Panel A back bringing its A game



Richard's Roundup

Richard Albanese- Project Manager

Hello,

While many of my Kew News articles have recorded major projects completed over the last year or two, this edition focuses more on the in between jobs as we catch up on routine maintenance. Less glamorous works, but integral and necessary.

Boulton & Watt Back in Steam!

This is one achievement we are all very proud of, she's back in action!

One of our favourite engines was returned to service in January, running again after a layup of several years, to allow for air pump, basement maintenance and flooring repair works. This has been a big team effort all round and a long and slow process having to fit around other works ongoing at the Museum.

On top of this we managed to give the engine a good polish and clean and she's looking fantastic, at least to the areas we can reach safely (as time and resources allow). There is still more to do and over the next few years we hope to look for funding to allow this.

We did four test runs behind closed doors and apart from some minor adjustments to valve gear and gland packings she behaved beautifully from the moment she moved. The refurbished air pump ensures a good strong vacuum, giving steady running which makes life far easier for our engine drivers who needed some practice after so long!

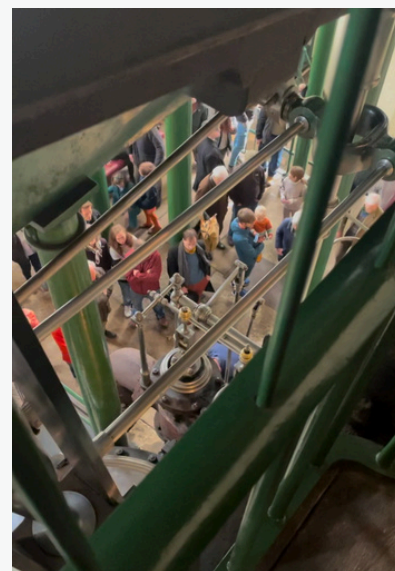
The inaugural weekend was busy with many visitors making a visit just to see the engine coming back to life, with lots of lovely comments and shows of appreciation which went down very well with the volunteer and staff team!

Please do come and see it for yourself at our next steam up (24-25 May) where we will run the engine twice along with the Bull engine over each day.

A massive thank you to the staff and volunteers who worked so hard to bring her back!



Volunteers polishing the Boulton & Watt.



Boulton and Watt Engine House full of visitors for the first run during the February Steam Up.



Richard running the Boulton & Watt at the February Steam Up Event.

Richard's Roundup

Imperial College Students Muck In!

In March, engineering students from Imperial College, London came to volunteer with us over a day.

This was not their first visit. We already know them through their historic, motor-driven, fire engine 'Jezebell', which is the college mascot vehicle they occasionally bring here on outings!

This time they were here to work and they gave the laid up Maudslay engine a much needed spit and polish up to the ground floor valve gear and feed pumps.

We are really grateful for all their hard work, particularly as the engine will form part of the backdrop to one of the art installation pieces in Tender Machines [see page 8].

Hopefully we will welcome them all back again soon!

Safety valve to low pressure steam line

We are in the process of fitting a new safety valve and vent pipe to our low pressure steam pipe main. This is a protection device needed now that we make steam at a higher pressure in our new boiler, before reducing it down to be used in our older engines and their supply pipework.

The safety valve had to be new to satisfy insurance requirements, so we are very grateful to TLV Steam Specialists who gave us a very generous discount off the purchase price.

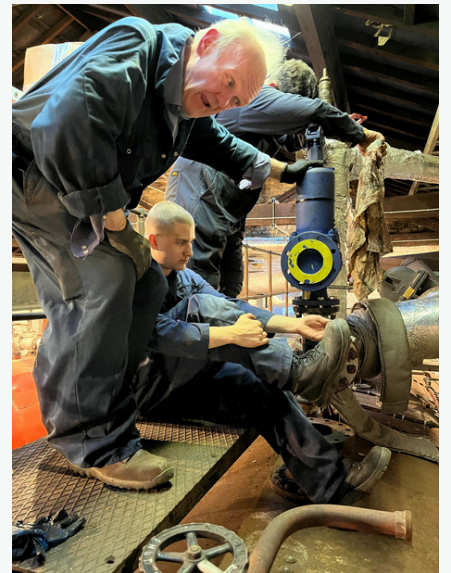
Beel boiler top walkway and railings

Some months ago, we drove down to Devon and back in a day to collect a blowdown vessel for use on our new steam boiler. This has been kindly donated by contractors working on replacing an obsolete steam boiler plant. This saved us several thousand pounds, against having to purchase one from new.

As part of the rescued items, we also brought back a walkway, floor plates, and handrails, which we have fitted to our new boiler to provide safer working access.



Imperial College Volunteers polishing the Maudslay



John, Zaki, and Richard installing the new safety valve on the boiler



Martin and Ian showing off the new walkway and rails

Richard's Roundup

Maudslay lift pump well and basements

We have been busy in the basement of the Maudslay and Bull engine houses, stripping out redundant electric centrifugal pump sets and obsolete or rust-through museum-era steel pipework. These are no longer needed for circulating the engines' condensing water.

This has meant working close to the Maudslay lift pump well, which gave us an excuse to inspect it and some of the tunnels and chambers that are too small or restricted for safe visitor access. These spaces we find fascinating, but are always a bit of a challenge to photograph!



Tunnel underneath the Maudslay engine.

David Ambler

We are sorry to report the passing of retired volunteer David Ambler who sadly died in January.

He was a Diesel House stalwart for many years at the Museum and did much to improve the dismantled Diesel and Gas powered pumping engines, which we have on partial display. He regularly demonstrated our Allen Diesel engine working for visitors and was enthusiastic about anything internal combustion – leading and sharing his knowledge with the small volunteer team he managed. He will be missed.

We hope to reopen the Diesel House to visitors and get the Allen engine working again soon, something which David would thoroughly approve of.

Rags, Rags, Rags....oh and Plastic Pots!

We can't look after or run our engines without rags, for they are as important as spanners or oil! We get through an awful lot especially on cleaning and polishing works, which are never ending here.

If you have any good-quality unwanted cotton shirts, tea and bath towels, sheets, etc, please do drop them off at our front desk. We can always make good use of them!

(Synthetics or denim though are no good to us, so don't bring them in!)

We also need plastic pots for fibreglass and painting works. Again if you have some spare please drop some in.



Glen and Richard with plastic pots and rags.

Richard's Roundup

A new exhibition - Tender Machines

As I write this we are only days away from the opening of our first large-scale art installation here at LMWS.

Exciting times for Jasmine Pradissitto, our artist-in-residence, and for us, as sculptures and amazing watercolour print wall hangings are being put in place. The works will temporarily transform the Museum spaces, but in a wonderful harmony with them and the historic machinery they house.

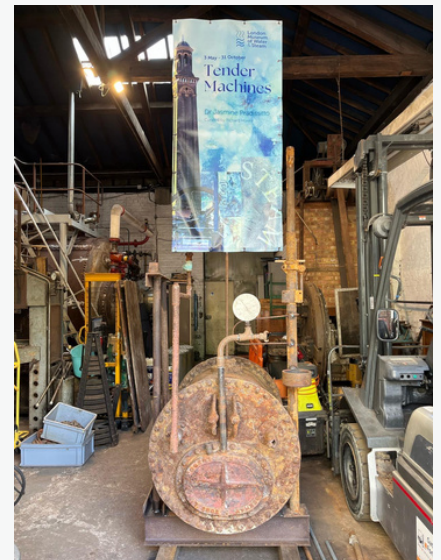
We have contributed by using our own wonderful stock of dismantled engineering artefacts, tools, equipment and rusted metal to create sustainable bases, plinths and set dressing to support her sculptures and to create some really lovely pieces.

I urge you all to come and see them once opened!

Tender Machines will be open 3 May - 31 October.



Theo and Richard making the sign holder for Tender Machines



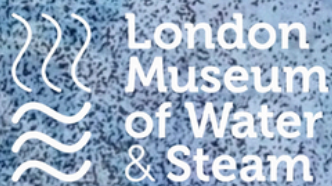
New signage for Tender Machines!



Laying out the exhibition wall hangings in the Babcock Room (left and above)

Celebrate the launch of Tender Machines at the private view on Thursday 1 May 5-8pm.

RSVP to marketing@waterandsteam.org.uk



3 May - 31 October

Tender Machines

An exhibition by Dr Jasmine Pradissitto

Included in Admission
Members go free



Curious Collections

Holly Slater - Collections Officer

Our collection includes several unusual and distinctive items, one of the most enduring being the uniquely-named and simply-designed “listening stick.”

A pumping station, such as this one, is only the first stage of supplying London’s homes with clean water. To hydrate the city effectively, a robust pipe system is required. However, even the best piping systems have leaks. These leaks waste useable water at a cost to the environment and to consumers’ bills.



Victorian
Listening Stick,
Stainless Steel
rod, wooden
listening head.



When inspecting their pioneering aqueduct system, the Romans relied on sight alone, and therefore struggled to check for leaks in regions under paving or soil. How did the Victorians, in vastly more built-up cities, deal with this issue?

The first acoustic listening devices, called topophones, were developed in 1879 by Professor Alfred Mayer, to pinpoint a sound’s location. These were large, clunky apparatuses used while navigating at sea when waves were high and visibility low. These were later simplified, resulting in the listening stick. Water leaking produces vibrations, so the listening stick was used to detect leakages in underground pipes. Sounds were amplified through the steel rod and within a hollow ear cavity (in our artefact, made of wood) to produce a distinctive resonant sound that a trained worker could listen for. Often these samples needed to be taken at night to reduce noise interference from traffic.

The idea of the listening stick dates back centuries, and due to their simplicity they are still in use today. Indeed, it is reported by United Utilities that these “Victorian sticks” have managed to save an average of 900 million litres in north-west England, the equivalent of 260 Olympic swimming pools.

Aqua-Analytics. (2022, February). Water Loss Management: A Brief History. Retrieved from Aqua Analytics: <https://aquaanalytics.com.au/water-loss-management-a-brief-history/>

Kamstrup. (2020, September 18). How Acoustic Measurements are used to Locate Water Leaks. Retrieved from Kamstrup : <https://www.kamstrup.com/en-en/insights/how-acoustic-measurements-are-used-to-locate-water-leaks>

Lancashire Post - Newsroom. (2017, February 28). Meet the “leak detectors” . . . and their wooden listening stick. Retrieved from Lancashire Post: <https://www.lep.co.uk/business/meet-the-leak-detectors-and-their-wooden-listening-stick-656032>

Water Leak Detection. (2021, May 11). The History of Water Leak Detection. Retrieved from Water Leak Detection: <https://www.waterleakdetection.net.au/history-water-leak-detection/>

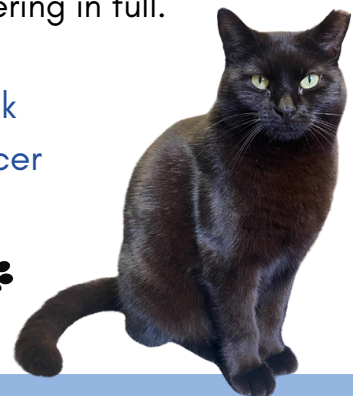
Reminder that members have access, by appointment, to the Museum library and archive.

Welcome Kirsty!



I am a chef and mum and have been coming to the museum for years with my kids. The experiences we have had at the Museum have been exceptional; seeing and hearing ginormous machines in steam, watching tadpoles grow into frogs in the garden, solving problems in the splash zone, learning about London's scourge of fatbergs and riding a steam train. There is so much to feed their curiosity and space for them to explore independently - we still haven't seen everything. I am so keen to see this Museum flourish and ensure there are some excellent revenue streams coming in - not least bringing back the café offering in full.

Kirsty Gifford Beck
Commercial Officer



Small Days Out

With news that 3 out of 5 small museums in the UK fear closure amid declining revenue and footfall, GoDaddy in partnership with Kids in Museums launched the campaign 'Small Days Out' here at the London Museum of Water & Steam.

The campaign's centrepiece - a miniature tourist kiosk complete with tiny pamphlets and posters from small museums across the UK - was on display at the Museum for February half-term.





Volunteer Update

Holly Slater - Collections Officer

It has been a very busy couple of months at the museum. Our fantastic team of volunteers have been helping with the museum's gardens and unique outdoor spaces, assisting our engineering team, offering support to our learning team, and helping with object handling events. We even introduced our new archive tours, where visitors can see parts of the museum that are usually not open to the public!

We are currently looking for volunteers in the following areas:

- Summer Programming
- Front of House Café
- Visitor Welcome



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

- Jordan Duncan
- Hannah Wyatt-Livesley
- Richard Cowan
- Hannah Wallace
- Holly Francis Maynard
- Reece Healy-Elliman
- Jenny Hajdukiewicz
- Cara Louise Morley
- Alice Yoonmyoung Cho
- Albert Campling
- Kirti Gaba
- Moulie Mahendran
- Sophia Fuller
- Maryam Sham

Upcoming Events



MAY HALF-TERM: IMAGINEERING

Saturday 24 May- Sunday 1 June

Where science, creativity & fun collide!

🌟 Dive into a week of hands-on invention and discovery:

🌊 Tower Building in the Splash Zone

Build it high – and prepare to get wet!

☀️ Cyanotype Workshops

Sunlight + science = beautiful blueprints

⚙️ Centrifugal Governor Craft

Make your own spinning marvel from the age of steam!

🚂 WAGONEERING WORKSHOP- May 26
(Paid Experience)

Build your own wagon and test it on a live 16mm model train track! Tickets on sale now!

Have a Family membership? Use code
IMAGINE for 25% off!

🎫 Included with general admission (except Wagoneering)

📍 Drop-in daily | Fun for all ages

Come imagine, invent, and get inspired this half term!

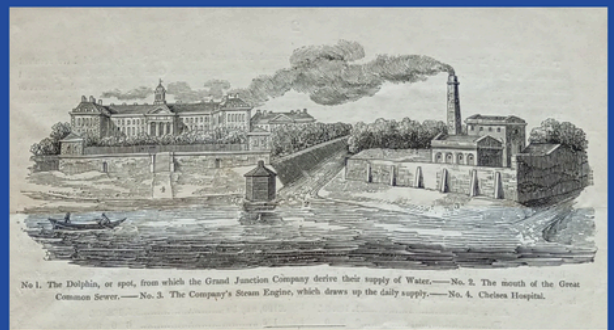
Early History of the Grand Junction Waterworks Company

June 5, 2025 6pm

A talk by LMWS tour guide Rob Casey

£3 - Members, £5 - Non Members

Tickets available now.



SUMMER HOLIDAYS

July 23- August 29

Open Wednesday to Sunday all summer long!

🌊 Summer Fun at the London Museum of Water & Steam!

🌟 Join us this summer as we celebrate all things WATER with weeks of hands-on fun! Expect crafts, experiments, activities, and lots of play – all themed around the wonderful world of water.

🌊 And of course, the Splash Zone will be open all summer long for the ultimate cool-down experience!

🎫 All activities included with admission
Perfect for families and curious kids – no booking needed, just drop in and dive into the fun!- *More information to come*

Upcoming Events



For a full list of upcoming events,
please visit:

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



@waterandsteam



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