

For week beginning 7th March 2011

Press Release

Greenwich 'Party on the Pier'
sees start of historic boat pier access for London
Free event Saturday 12th March 10.00 – 16.00

Surprisingly London has no pier access for visiting historic ships but all this will change if a volunteer group's plans succeed. The Greenwich Historical Ships Harbour (GSHS) project aims to make East Greenwich Coaling Jetty (Mudlarks Boulevard, off John Harrison Way) a public heritage facility enabling historic ships to visit, and dock in London with facilities for restoration and conservation projects, skill training, education, research and opportunities for the public and local community to participate.

One of the project's volunteers, Alan Boakes of Bexley Borough, commented, "It is rather surprising that an historic city like London that largely grew because it was a port, and today has a healthy tourist sector, does not have any river access point for visiting historic ships." There is no facility

This is not a whimsical venture as if something is not done then Londoners collectively could lose a real asset without their realising it. The barrenness of the pier and its future is bleak if it is not put to a use that is relevant to the community. If left the East Greenwich Coaling Jetty would most likely end up as a private commercial scheme. The jetty's fate is critical given that London does not have any facilities for visiting, non-commercial historic ships. Yet the jetty could enable a wide range of classic craft to visit London and be an attraction for tourists as well as enable crews to visit Greenwich. There is also the possibility of developing related facilities such as providing rigging and other specialist repairs and so provide some employment.

The jetty was originally built after WWII for coal deliveries to a then new power station that was on the Greenwich peninsula until the late 1980s.

The GHSH will be sharing their aspirations with the public at a free 'Party on the Pier' on Saturday 12th March. At the party there will be a number of local groups and a small tented exhibition on the history project and proposals for the pier, with handouts by the boat crews and the opportunity to sign up as a supporter.

It is hoped that at the end of the Greenwich Party on the Pier there will be a legacy left for the local community to share that will include an information CD, pictures photographs and film, together with a Jetty Exhibition.

'Party on the Pier' itself is a national event organised as part of British Tourism Week 2011. 'Party on the Pier' will kick off British Tourism Week 2011 on Saturday 12th March, it will be a national celebration of Britain's piers and their heritage, and the biggest nationwide event on Britain's piers since Year of the Pier in 1996. Piers have entered our collective psyche as an integral part of the authentic British experience, and, for example, the recent outcry over the tragic fire at Hastings is a clear sign of the esteem in which these icons are still held.

---- Ends ----

Further details local event: Alan Boakes (personal phone) 0796 2204289

Further details of the national 'Party on the Pier':-

http://www.britishtourismweek.com/root/siteZone/public_zone/globalNav/home_area/localNav/pierparty_page_1/default.aspx

and also

http://www.thames.org.uk/thames_pages/ghsh.htm