**Local History 3 Visit to Trinity Buoy Wharf**

On Wednesday 10th May, Local History 3 travelled via Lewisham and the DLR to Canning Town station. Crossing the bridge, walked through City Island, saw the new building developments and visited a small Art Gallery.

On leaving the Island, we followed the signs to Trinity Buoy Wharf. This is an interesting area with its historical buildings alongside new container cities. Along the road leading to the Wharf were lots of information boards about the history of the area.

Trinity House was granted a charter by Henry 8th in 1514 and the authority to erect and maintain beacons, marks and signs of the sea in order to improve navigation of the water. In 1798, the headquarters of Trinity House was in the city however, Trinity Buoy Wharf was to become its workshop and was established in 1803.

Trinity Buoy Wharf stands on the Orchard Peninsula, where the River Lea meets the Thames. The first wooden buoys and seamarks were made and stored at the wharf. There were originally two lighthouses. The first built in 1854 was demolished during the 1920s. The second, existing today, was built in 1864. The lighthouses were never used for navigation on the Thames, but used to develop lighting equipment for the Trinity House lighthouses, lightships and buoys. It was also used to train lighthouse keepers prior to their taking up their posts.

Michael Faraday worked at Trinity buoy work carrying out optical experiments. He shone lights across the Thames to an observation point in Severndroog Castle on Shooters Hill. This allowed him to study and measure the intensity of the light. Initially, electricity could not produce as bright a light as oil. A small hut, on the site, serves as a museum to his work.

By 1910, Trinity Buoy Wharf was a major employer of 150 in the area, maintaining the navigation buoys, lightships and lighthouses between Southwold in Suffolk and Dungerness in Kent. It was modernised and partially rebuilt, following bomb damage, between 1947 and 1966. However, the development of container shipping during the 1970s and the reduction of use of coal led to its decline. It closed on 3rd December 1988.

The London Docklands Development Corporation took ownership of the area and a competition for the Future of Trinity Buoy Wharf was held in 1996. It was won my Urban Space Management and has become a centre for arts and crafts.

After a visit to the cafe, we walked back along the river passing what remains of the East India Dock basin. We were lucky to have a lovely dry day for our visit.

Lynn Plumer (Group Leader)