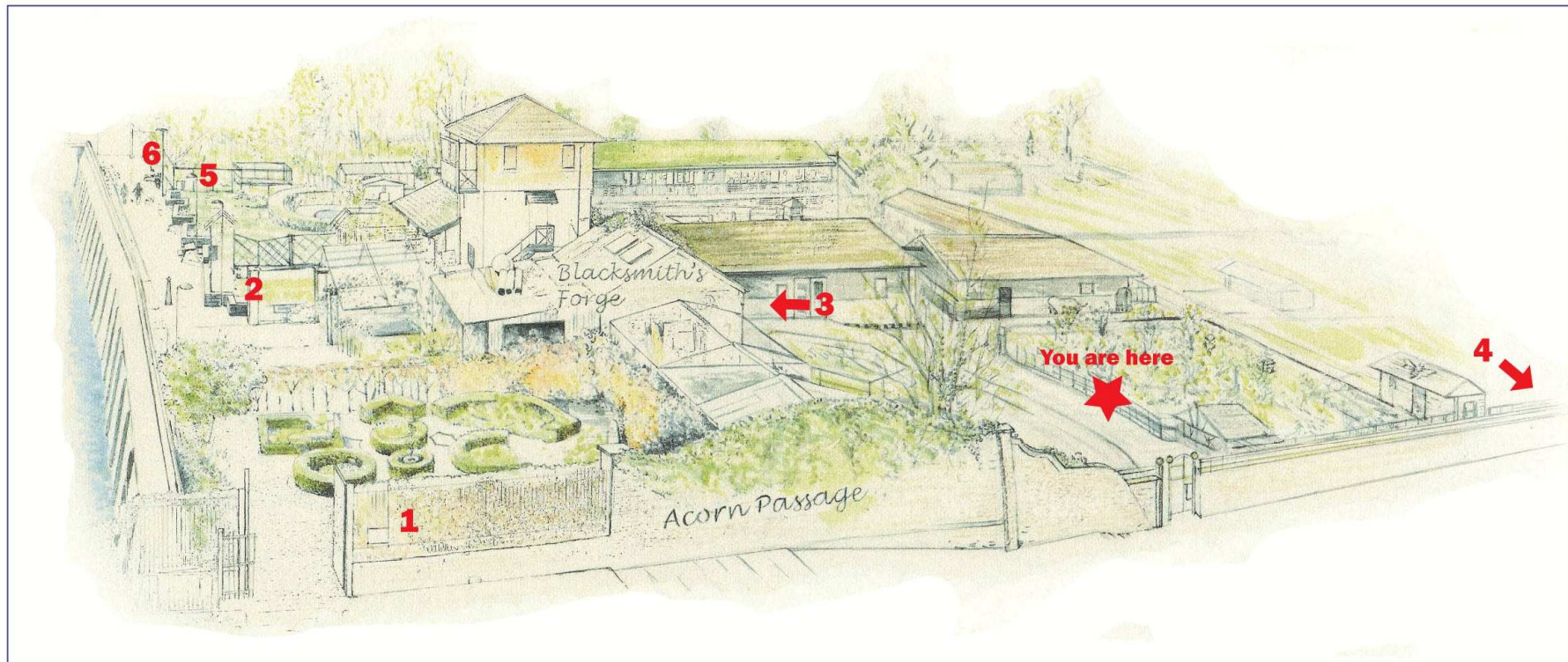


Surrey Docks Farm History Trail

SCHOOLS PACK – TEACHERS' GUIDE



Illustration by Sandra Doyle



Use this site plan to help find the history trail locations.

1. THE SHIPYARD

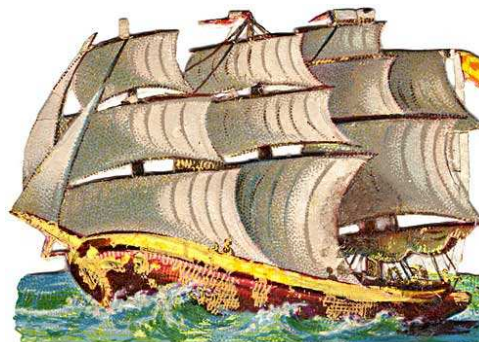
Go to location 1 on the site plan – the easiest way to get there is to go out of the Farm’s main entrance gate, then turn immediately right and follow Acorn Passage alongside the brick wall. Just before you reach the Farm’s side gate and the river, you’ll see the history trail panel on the railings.

This panel tells about the shipyard that was once on this site. In the lower left is a story about the ship *Carcass* which was built here, illustrated in the painting *Nelson and the Bear*.

Nelson served on this ship on an expedition to the Arctic when he was just 14 years old. The story goes that he recklessly set off on the ice to stalk a polar bear, which he wanted to shoot so he could take home a bear skin. However his gun misfired, so he tried to hit the bear with the butt end of the gun. Luckily, he was saved from being harmed by the bear by a gap in the ice between them. The ship also fired a cannon to try and scare off the bear.

USE ACTIVITY SHEET 1:

Tell pupils the above story of Nelson’s adventure with the bear. Pupils can use activity sheet 1 to draw the rest of the scene, imagining what might have happened next. They can add the figure of Nelson, the ship with its three masts and many sails, perhaps with its cannon firing, and anything else that adds to the story. Did Nelson make another attempt to capture the bear, did he wisely run away, or did something else happen?



2. THE TIMBER WHARF

Now enter the Farm's riverside gate.

USE ACTIVITY SHEET 2:

Pupils should use the illustration to find the remains of the crane along the Farm's riverside*.

They can then think about what the crane might have been used for, and how it was used. They can add to the picture to show the crane being used – perhaps drawing someone turning the handle on the right, and showing a load at the end of the hook.

**It's the black column in the middle of the riverside path, about halfway along the Farm's riverside frontage – the part coloured in solid black in the illustration.*

In the 1800s this site became a timber wharf. Wood was delivered here by boat, and stacked up in high piles on the ground. There were two of these small cranes on the riverside for loading and unloading timber from barges in the river. These were hand-operated cranes - in this picture you can see the handle that would be turned to make the wheel go around, which would wind the chain to lift or lower the hook at the end.

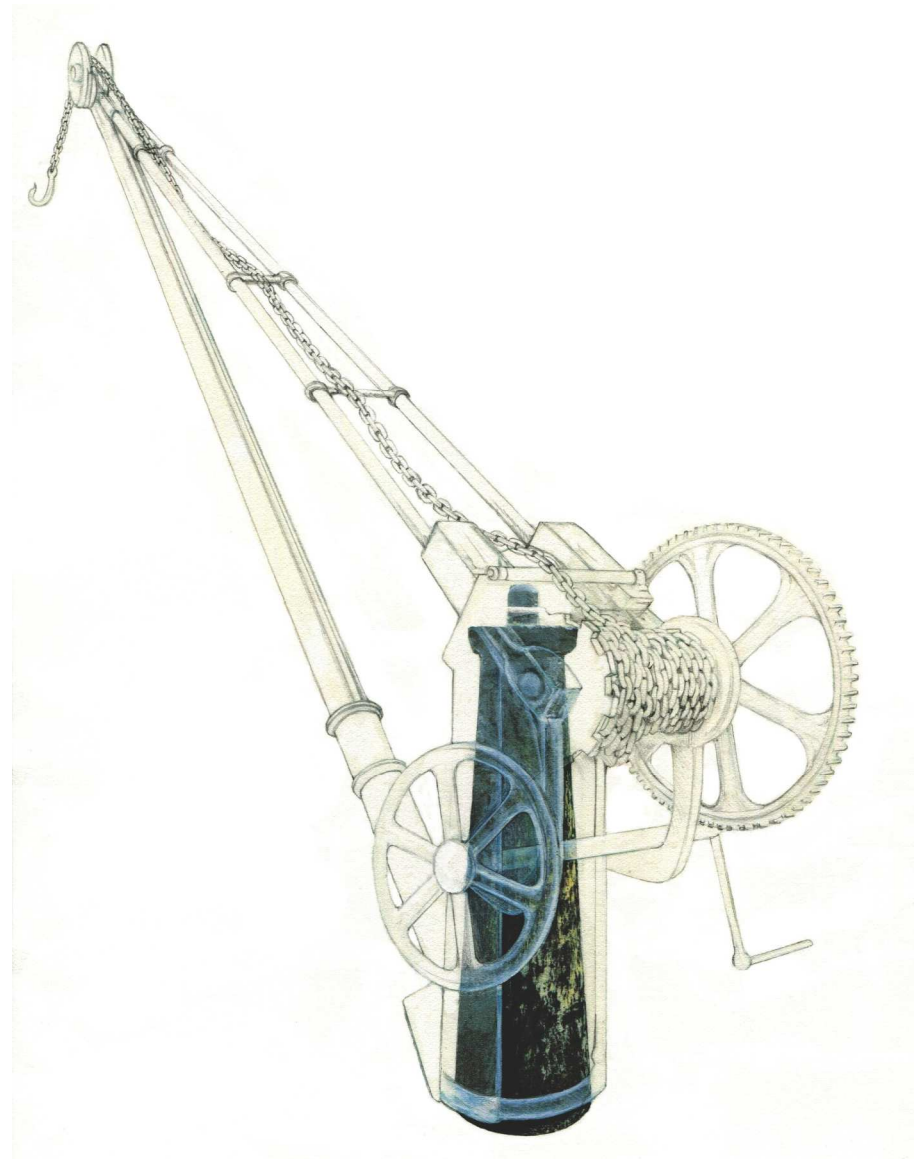


Illustration by Sandra Doyle

3. THE RIVER AMBULANCE SERVICE

Now go to the blacksmith's forge. From the riverside path, if facing the Farm's two-story square tower, the forge is the building just to the right of it. There is a clear view of the forge from its opposite side, where there is also a history trail panel about the River Ambulance Service.

The building which is now the forge was originally built in 1902 as an open-sided shelter where ambulances would arrive to deliver smallpox patients. The patients would be taken into the adjacent examination rooms and then be put onto boats which were waiting at the end of the long pier that was once here. The boats would transport them down the Thames to isolation hospitals, many miles downriver.

This structure looks very different today, having had brick walls and a corrugated iron roof added much later. Since 1991 it has been the blacksmith's forge.

USE ACTIVITY SHEET 3:

Ask pupils to try to spot the features circled in the photos on their activity sheets.

- **On the outside of the forge, they should be able to see:**
 - **the iron columns at the corners of the forge, with the decorative shaping at the top of each.**
 - **the square granite blocks on the ground into which these iron columns are set**
 - **the long steel beam that links the tops of the columns**
- **If the forge door is open, they can glance from the path outside to see the flooring of square bricks inside the forge.**

4. SOUTH WHARF RECEIVING STATION

You can skip the next panel in the history trail, but may like to tell pupils a bit about smallpox and the isolation hospitals and show these photos.



Smallpox was once a serious disease, but is now completely eradicated after intensive vaccination campaigns all around the world.

The photo of this boy suffering with smallpox shows the red spots characteristic of the disease. Most patients recovered, but were usually left with scars where the spots had been. Others were left blind, and some died from the severe effects of the disease.

Because smallpox was highly infectious, patients needed to be kept isolated from the public, so they were transported by river to isolation hospitals in the Thames Estuary.

The photo on the right shows children in one of the paddle steamers which took them from the pier at this site down the Thames to the isolation hospitals.



*Both photos this page courtesy of Francine Payne,
www.dartfordhospitalhistories.org.uk*

At first, they used old ships as hospitals – this photo shows what the hospital ships looked like:



Photo courtesy of Francine Payne, www.dartfordhospitalhistories.org.uk

The ship on the left was an old warship, and it housed the male patients. The ship in the middle was for the staff, administration and stores. The strange-looking ship on the right was for the female patients.

They used these ships as smallpox isolation hospitals until 1902. After that, they used purpose-built hospitals on the land nearby, which was still far away from towns or where other people lived.

5. WORLD WAR II and the FIRE SERVICE RIVER STATION

Now return to the riverside, and go to the opposite end of the riverside path from where you started, towards the bronze animal sculptures. There is a path to the right just before you reach the animal sculptures, alongside the wildlife garden. On the wooden lattice fence on this path, you'll find the next history trail panel.

Look at the picture on this history trail panel of the bomb damage map. The different colours of the buildings on this map tell you how badly each building was damaged by the bombs and fires in World War Two.



During the war, enemy planes dropped hundreds of bombs here and over other parts of East London where all the docks were. They deliberately tried to destroy the docks, so that food and supplies couldn't be brought into London.

QUESTION: Now stand by the riverwall, where you can see the buildings on either side of the Farm, and also all the buildings across the river. All of these areas were once part of London's docks. Ask pupils if they can spot any old buildings, or if they see mainly newer buildings. Ask them why they think there are mainly new buildings in these areas which were once docks.

6. THE URBAN FARM

Now go to the bronze animal sculptures, at the end of the Farm's riverside path.

The farm moved here in 1986. Originally the farm was at a different site, about 10 minutes walk down the Thames from here. When the farm moved, all the animals were led by the farm workers through the streets and along the river from their old home to their new one.

These animal sculptures are a reminder of how the animals walked to their new farm on this site.

USE ACTIVITY SHEET 4:

Pupils should identify and write down the names of the different types of animals depicted in these sculptures. If they have already explored the Farm, they can then put a tick next to all the animals they've seen for real. If they haven't looked around the Farm yet, they can then explore the Farm to find all the animals and tick them off as they go.

Note: they should be able to find all of the farm animals. They're not expected to find the fox (though this can sometimes be seen during the day!) One of the Farm's cats can usually be found, most often around the building which houses the Café and the Farm Shop.