

South Dock

During the Second World War the South Dock was drained and used for the construction of Mulberry harbours as used in the D-Day landings. It is now a marina for private boats and yachts.

Royal Victoria Victualling Yard

Immediately to the north of the Royal Docks the Victualling Yards were created in 1788 to feed and water the Royal Navy. In 1858, it was renamed the Royal Victoria Victualling Yard. It was the largest supply depot of its type in the service and the warehouses covered 14 hectares. It closed in 1961.

Top: The former Rum Stores by the Thames. Left: The Victualling Yard gates on Grove Street (marked here) plus bovine skull detail. Below: The Olympia Warehouse, former shipbuilding sheds, now awaiting redevelopment with its location shown right. Below right: Sayes Park

Convoys Wharf

Most of the docks and shipyards, built between 1500 and 1900, that lined the banks of the Thames in Deptford have been removed or destroyed. Only the Olympia Warehouse (opened in 1846) has survived. Some of the docks have been filled in and could be excavated. The area was renamed Convoys Wharf, a newsprint import depot with some of the land being used to build houses. The redevelopment of the remaining derelict area is currently under discussion.

ON THE
OTHER
BANK
Burrell
Wharf
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Deptford Royal Dockyard

In 1513, on the instructions of Henry VIII, the existing dockyard was enlarged. During Henry's reign 40 warships were built here to bolster the English navy in case of attack by France or Spain. For 350 years these docks remained one of the Royal Navy's main yards.

Ships built here would see action against the Spanish Armada in 1588 and at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. Its royal associations became further embedded when in 1581 Queen Elizabeth I knighted Frances Drake on the Golden Hinde, moored by what is now known as Drake's Steps, on his return from circumnavigating the globe. The Russian Czar, Peter the Great, lived at Sayes Court in 1698 in a house belonging to writer and diarist, John Evelyn. The Czar worked incognito in the dockyards to learn about shipbuilding. James Cook's HMS Endeavour was

The restored and converted Payne's Paper Wharf

refitted here, in 1768 prior to his voyage to 'discover' Australia and New Zealand.

The dockyard's location would ultimately be its downfall as larger vessels could not reach the shallower waters of the Thames. The Royal Naval docks at Portsmouth and Chatham, with deeper channels, were able to build and service larger vessels. The Royal Docks closed in 1869 and became the Foreign Cattle Market. Prior to refrigeration, animals had to be kept alive during transit. The cattle were slaughtered on the quayside and processed before being moved on to market.

DEPTFORD

Greenland Dock – Deptford Creek 3,110m

Along this stretch of riverside, now adorned with residential housing and wasteland, was once a great powerhouse of Royal Navy shipbuilding. Very little remains of five hundred years of maritime history.

Memorial to
Czar Peter the Great

Deptford Power Station

The world's first large scale electrical power generating station, created by Sebastian di Ferranti, was built on this site in 1889. It produced high voltage alternating current, the system universally in use today. Like other power stations on the river it had access to supplies of coal by ship and water for cooling. It ceased generating in 1983.

Deptford Creek

The creek forms the mouth of the River Ravensbourne and site of Roman and Saxon settlements. A series of food mills, factories and a gin distillery used to line its banks.

The former
Deptford Power
Station. It was
demolished in
1992