



Victoria Embankment Foreshore Hoarding Commission

1 Introduction

‘The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts’, 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway

This is a temporary commission located on the Thames Tideway Tunnel construction site hoardings at Victoria Embankment, 2017-19. Responding to the rich heritage of the Victoria Embankment, Simon Roberts has created a metaphorical ‘cabinet of curiosities’ along two 25-metre foreshore hoardings.

Roberts describes his approach as an ‘aesthetic excavation of the area’, creating an artwork that reflects the literal and metaphorical layering of the landscape, in which objects from the past and present are juxtaposed to evoke new meanings. Monumental statues are placed alongside items that are more ordinary; diverse elements, both man-made and natural, co-exist in new ways. All these components symbolise the landscape’s complex history, culture, geology, and development.

Credits

Artist: Simon Roberts

Images: details from ‘The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts’ © Simon Roberts, 2017. Archival images: © Copyright Museum of London; Courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum; Wellcome Library, London; © Imperial War Museums (COM 548); Courtesy the Parliamentary Archives, London.

Special thanks due to

Luke Brown, Demian Gozzelino (Simon Roberts Studio); staff at the Museum of London, British Museum, Houses of Parliament, Parliamentary Archives, Parliamentary Art Collection, Wellcome Trust, and Thames21; and Flowers Gallery London.



About the Artist

Simon Roberts (b.1974) is a British photographic artist whose work deals with our relationship to landscape and notions of identity and belonging. He predominantly takes large format photographs with great technical precision, frequently from elevated positions. For his Tideway commission, Roberts has altered his approach by collating a range of archive material and new photographs. However, all his work relates to an abiding interest in examining contemporary economic, cultural, and political landscapes.

www.simoncroberts.com

2 The Collection

East Hoarding Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts' 2017.



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017



Background of east hoarding: Proposed Thames Embankment Map, 1862.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

The map, which forms the backdrop to this side of the artwork, depicts a detailed section of the proposed Embankment development, both the north and south sides of the River Thames. Colour has been used to indicate the railway lines, proposed land reclamation, a bridge from Temple to Southwark, and new streets, primarily what would become Victoria Embankment. The map was originally drawn and engraved on linen from authentic documents by B. R. Davies, a cartographer based at 16 George Street, Euston Square.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: A24706)

Objects from left to right:

Wreath and bust detail from Sir Bazalgette Memorial statue, by George Blackall Simonds, 1890.

These details are from a monument to Sir Joseph Bazalgette. The complete statue was erected in the form of a bronze portrait bust with cartouche, an ornate inscription. It was originally presented within a sculpted white marble aedicule, a small ancient Roman religious shrine, and set in a granite block. Sir Joseph Bazalgette was the visionary designer of Victoria Embankment and London's entire sewer system, which contributed to the development of the city's infrastructure. The memorial also contributes to the group value of heritage assets within the wider historic environment of the Whitehall Conservation Area.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Water samples from the River Thames, collected by Thames21, 2017.

Thames21's Thames River Watch project aims to capture and understand crucial information on water quality issues in the Thames. The river faces increasing challenges from the enormous amounts of litter dumped and tonnes of raw sewage discharged into it. Project volunteers captured specimens from the river and seen here are images of the green and orange samples. The green measures the pH, or how acid or alkaline the water is, whilst the orange tests for dissolved oxygen levels. On a winters day the results proved the Thames to be neutral with oxygenated water, and therefore reasonably healthy.

Photographs © Simon Roberts, 2017

'Monster Soup, commonly called Thames Water', by William Heath, 1828.

This detail is taken from a satirical engraving depicting a fashionably dressed woman looking through a microscope at a drop of Thames water. Upon discovering the swimming 'monsters',

she drops her teacup in horror. In the 1820s it was uncovered that London sewers emptied into the Thames, the same source from which Londoners obtained their drinking water. Following the London Water Supply commission, contamination was not resolved until the 1860s, when London's present sewage system was created by the Metropolitan Board of Works and engineered by Joseph Bazalgette. Within this period, the city endured cholera outbreaks killing 40,000 Londoners.

Courtesy Wellcome Library, London.



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017

Objects from left to right:

Found laptop and objects from the River Thames foreshore, collected during mudlarking, 2017.

In the 18th and 19th centuries, many of London's poor searched the riverbanks for trinkets that had been dropped in the water, and cargo that had fallen off passing boats, to sell. A Mudlark was a recognized occupation until the early 20th century, but mudlarking these days is more like beachcombing or treasure hunting for those interested in London's history. From Boudicca to



the Blitz, through Roman, Tudor and medieval times, human beings have been losing their possessions and dumping their rubbish in the Thames, making it one of the longest and most varied archaeological sites in the world.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Wireless Equipment, PRM 4180 Portable High Speed Data Station, 1970s.

<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/30005322>

A British H/F, or high-frequency, radio system designed in the 1970s by Racal and MI6, officially known as the Secret Intelligence Service, the foreign intelligence agency of the British Government. Formally based in what is now the Royal Horseguards Hotel, overlooking the Victoria Embankment site. The suitcase radio was also affectionately known as the 'Tithe', a tax, levy or obligation of a tenth part of one's salary or produce. It was easy to use, secure, reliable, and could withstand a nuclear weapons detonation pulse.

© Imperial War Museums (COM 548)

An Act to alter and amend the Metropolis Local Management Act (1855), and to extend the Powers of the Metropolitan Board of Works, 1858.

<http://www.parliament.uk/archives>

During the summer of 1858, levels of pollution in the River Thames reached record highs and the incident became known widely as the 'Great Stink'. This posed a serious threat to public health, and the smell from the river was so bad that Parliamentary business was affected. That August Benjamin Disraeli, later to become British Prime Minister, tabled a bill to address the problem. The subsequent Act of Parliament amended an earlier Act, and extended the powers of the Metropolitan Board of Works to improve and purify London's drainage system, and prevent sewage from passing into the River Thames.

Courtesy the Parliamentary Archives, London (HL/PO/PU/1/1858/21&22V1n249)

Detail of a Catenary Lamp Standard, around 1900.

The 34 lamp standards were installed as one of the earliest electric street lighting schemes in the Capital. They feature Art Nouveau decorative elements and share a cohesive identity together with the Sturgeon lamp standards, the Sphinx benches, and other street furnishings along Victoria Embankment. The lamps have a unique design which comprises a rectangular base with four decorated panels, topped with four dolphins whose tails appear to support the

shaft of the post. They are related to the original Sturgeon lamp standards, introduced to this area in the 1860s during the construction of Sir Joseph Bazalgette's sewerage system.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017

Objects from left to right:

Protest placard from an Anti-Austerity march, 30th November 2011.

An example of a slogan used during the biggest strike of a generation, which took place across Britain, and in London concluded on Victoria Embankment. Organised by various unions and the anti-austerity movement in the United Kingdom, protesters marched to protect their pensions and sixty years-worth of social welfare advances. The strike amassed up to two million public employees, from teachers and nurses to dinner ladies and rubbish collectors, the majority never having been on a strike before. A significant number of English and Scottish schools closed for the day, whilst an estimated 6000 hospital operations were cancelled.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017



Ticket of admission to the Hyde Park demonstration, Sunday 21st June 1908.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

The actual ticket is tiny at 30 by 58 millimeters, yet sports colourful stripes of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) and features the procession details from Victoria Embankment. As the Suffragists (which are general members of the suffrage movement) had failed to gain votes for women through peaceful means, a more militant method was adopted by a group of women known as Suffragettes. Founded by Emmeline Pankhurst in 1903, together with her daughters Christabel and Sylvia, the WSPU acted under the motto, 'Deeds not words'. After extreme protesting measures, women were eventually given limited voting rights in 1918.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: 78.167/2e)

The Imperial Camel Corps Brigade Memorial, by Major Cecil Brown, 1921.

The statue, located in Victoria Embankment Gardens, commemorates members of the Imperial Camel Corps Brigade, a camel-mounted infantry during the First World War, in which Cecil Brown served. The bronze elements were cast by A.B. Burton of Thames Ditton Foundry, Surrey. They feature the names of all 346 men from Australia, Britain, India and New Zealand, who fell in action or died of wounds and disease in Egypt, Sinai and Palestine, between 1916 and 1918. The statue includes a dedicated inscription which reads in part; To the Glorious and Immortal, Memory of the Officers, Non Commissioned Officers and Men.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

A Yucca plant from Whitehall Gardens, 2017.

Whitehall Gardens were laid out in 1875 by George John Vulliamy, an English architect who also designed the Sturgeon lamp standards and elements of Cleopatra's Needle. The site is mainly ornamental containing a framework of planted shrubbery, grassland and scattered specimen trees, an unusual or impressive plant or tree grown as a focus of interest. The gardens are a designated Site of Importance for Natural Conservation for its contribution to wildlife. Indeed a wide variety of birds can be spotted here, including dunnocks, house sparrows, starlings, blackbirds and carrion crows.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Cleopatra's Needle obelisk, 1450BC

Originally erected in Heliopolis, an area of Cairo, by Pharaoh Thutmose III in 1450BC, Cleopatra's Needle obelisk was gifted to England by Egypt's then ruler, Muhammed Ali. It commemorates the victories of Lord Nelson and Sir Ralph Abercromby in the Battle of the Nile

in 1798, and the Battle of Alexandria in 1801. The obelisk was transported in an iron cylinder, nicknamed The Cleopatra, and towed by ship during a perilous voyage, which killed six crewmen and threatened the survival of the monolith. It finally arrived in England and was erected on the Victoria Embankment in 1878.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017

Objects from left to right:

One of two Sphinxes at the base of Cleopatra's Needle, by George John Vulliamy, 1881.

Designed by George John Vulliamy, the architect of Whitehall Gardens, the pair of sphinxes were fabricated by the Ecclestone Iron Works in Pimlico, London. Flanking Cleopatra's Needle on Victoria Embankment, the sphinxes were installed soon after the obelisk's treacherous journey from Egypt. They were almost destroyed in 1917 after a German bomb landed nearby and damaged the obelisk base, the West Sphinx itself and the pedestals, evidenced by scars from fragments of the airstrike. The sphinxes feature an inscription in hieroglyphs, reading, The good god, Thuthmosis III given life.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017



A Roman copper-alloy dodecahedron, 1860s.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

A dodecahedron is a hollow geometrical shape with twelve flat faces. Each face is a pentagon, a five-sided shape, and is embellished with knobs on each corner. The incomplete example you see was found on the Thames Embankment, and possibly recovered in the 1860s during construction works for Sir Joseph Bazalgette's sewerage system. The Roman dodecahedron is something of a mystery, as no documentation from the time of their creation exists. Their precise function remains unknown, although many theories on their purpose have been proposed, possibly a mathematical tool, a candlestick holder or a toy.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: C996)

Found bones from the River Thames foreshore, collected during mudlarking, 2017.

Mudlarking was a genuine occupation up until the early 20th century, and to this day, people still scour the foreshores in the hope of finding historic treasure. Twice a day the Thames recedes with the tide and reveals the riverbanks, so the artist, Simon Roberts decided to undertake some mudlarking of his own and see what emerged from the mud. Along with a laptop and various domestic detritus, Roberts also uncovered this collection of bones, believed to be the remains of butchered animals, possibly cast into the river long ago.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

D'Oyly Carte equatorial armillary sphere, by Christopher St. J. H. Daniel, 1989.

This sundial memorial is located at Savoy Place, near Victoria Embankment, and was erected in celebration of the Savoy's centenary. It honours Richard D'Oyly Carte, proprietor of the Savoy Theatre, and founder and chairman of the Savoy Hotel, along with his trusted team. Theatre impresario D'Oyly Carte was credited with reuniting the dramatist W.S Gilbert and composer Arthur Sullivan to create a comic opera, *Trial by Jury*. Further works were commissioned from the pair, and after much sensation the trio forged a new partnership, the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Through its international successes, the Savoy Theatre opened in 1881.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Wreath detail from Sir Joseph Bazalgette's Memorial statue, 1890.

A detail taken from the original statue, used to frame each end of this hoarding work. For further details, please see the information relating to the main image of the Bazalgette's Memorial.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

West Hoarding Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts' 2017.



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017

Background to west hoarding: Photograph from a glass plate negative by Christina Broom, 1911

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

Considered the first female press photographer in the UK, Christina Broom photographed royalty and the Household Division. She also documented suffrage-related events, attested by this image, captured on 17 June 1911, as nurses and midwives prepared to march in the Women's Coronation Procession. Formed on the Embankment between Charing Cross Station and Horse Guards Avenue, the procession was organised by the Women's Social and Political Union. Held one week before the coronation of George V, it intended to enlist the new King's support in getting the Conciliation Bill of 1911 (a Bill to extend voting rights for woman) through Parliament.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: IN1346)



Objects from left to right:

Weeping Muse of Music detail, Sir Arthur Sullivan memorial, by Sir William Goscombe John, 1903.

The monument to legendary composer Sir Arthur Sullivan is situated in Victoria Embankment Gardens, looking toward the Savoy Hotel. Sullivan, and frequent collaborator, W.S Gilbert, had close links to the Savoy Theatre, built by their producer Richard D'Oyly Carte to show their comic operas. The memorial itself consists of a bust of Sullivan atop a plinth, against which leans, distressed and weeping, the Muse of Music. Head resting on her outstretched arm, she is the picture of despondency and sorrow. The memorial to W.S Gilbert is situated on the retaining river wall, not far away. For further details, please see information for the Sheet music, a Mandolin and mask of Pan image.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Cravat pin, made from a chip of Cleopatra's needle, 1878.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

This cravat or scarf pin, contains a polished fragment of pink and grey granite in a silver collet, inscribed around the rim; Chip of Cleopatra's Obelisk 1878. Cleopatra's Needle is a granite obelisk nearly 60 feet high, which stands now on Victoria Embankment. For centuries the obelisk, which was cut from quarries in Aswan in about 1475 BC, stood in Alexandria, northern Egypt. By the 19th century it had toppled into the sand, and in 1819 the Ottoman pasha and viceroy of Egypt, presented it to the British. For further details, please see the information for Cleopatra's Needle Obelisk.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: 77.87/124)

Contemporary key ring souvenir featuring Houses of Parliament, 2017.

This ubiquitous London souvenir is sold from the street seller situated just outside Embankment underground station. He claims it is his most popular selling tourist gift, and according to a Rajya Sabha Procurement and Sales Report, 19,527 key chains were sold at counters around the Houses of Parliament in 2015. In the same year, the Capital welcomed a record 5.1 million international visitors in the spring, a six per cent increase upon the previous spring. Over half of these international visitors to the UK were to London, according to the Office for National Statistics International Passenger Survey.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

An Act for the Preservation of the River of Thames, 27 Henry VIII, c. 18, 1535

<http://www.parliament.uk/archives>

This Act, from the reign of Henry VIII, recognised the importance of the river, which at that time suffered from people throwing rubbish into it and damaging its banks. The Act levied a penalty



on those found guilty of such vandalism, and states; 'If any Person do ... to the annoying of the Stream of the River of Thames ... by ... digging casting of Dung Rubbish ... to the Hurt, Impairing or Damage of the Said Banks or Walls, he shall forfeit for every Time of offending C.s. to the King, and to the Mayor and Commonalty of London...'.
Courtesy the Parliamentary Archives, London (HL/PO/PU/1/1535/27H8n16)

A Pilgrim badge, in honour of St Thomas Becket, 14th Century.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

Found on the Thames foreshore at Temple Stairs, the badge is from the shrine of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral, where he was made Archbishop in 1162. Following his death, he was made a saint. Four years later, King Henry II walked barefoot to Canterbury to atone for his part in Becket's murder. Born in Cheapside, Londoners flocked to the martyr's shrine, from where pilgrim souvenirs could be purchased. The pilgrim badge's design makes clever use of the Lombardic 'T' for Thomas, as a decorative frame for two figures identified as Henry II (left) and Thomas Becket (right).

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: A26156)

Gold crown of Philip II, for the Duchy of Brabant, Flanders, late 1500s.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

Found in 1916, on the site of Victoria Embankment Gardens, this gold crown is from the reign of Philip II. In the 1500s, Philip II was King to many regions and countries within Europe, including being Lord of the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands. During his marriage to Queen Mary I, he was also King of England and Ireland. The principle side of the coin includes the crowned shield with the Arms of Spain and Brabant, Flanders, from where it was issued. Its reverse bears a cross fleury with the golden fleece and lion of Flanders in the angles.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: A17679)



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017

Objects from left to right:

Seagull flying over the Thames, 2017.

Seagull's high-pitched call is now increasingly being heard in towns and cities, far from the coast, and many have given up living near water entirely. However, large gulls still use the Thames and the river foreshore for roosting, a place for resting. Here is an extract from David Hamilton's poem, 'Across Westminster Bridge':

*Above helicopters and aeroplanes cruise and seagulls
Wheel, screeching and squawking, they fly and drop for
Food cast by tourists, thrown from the bridge, as they
Wing back to land to eat, waddle along the bank, drink
From puddles.*

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Figures from the Plimsoll Memorial, 1929, and the Plimsoll Line, 1890.

The bronze statue by F.V. Blundstone of South Kensington was erected by the members of the National Union of Seamen, in grateful recognition of Plimsoll's services to the men of the sea of all nations. By the mid 1800s, the overloading of cargo ships had become a major problem with



an increased number of shipwrecks. Samuel Plimsoll was fiercely influential in the passing of the Merchant Shipping Act, which gave powers of inspection to the Board of Trade, and established the Plimsoll mark or line, a peculiar symbol, which indicates the safe limit to which a ship may be loaded.

Photographs © Simon Roberts, 2017

Funnel from the PS Tattershall Castle, 1934.

The PS Tattershall Castle is moored permanently on the River Thames at Embankment. She was built in 1934 by William Gray & Company for the London and North Eastern Railway, as a passenger ferry on the River Humber. One of the first civilian vessels to be equipped with radar, the steamer served as a tether barge for barrage balloons, and ferried troops and munitions during the Second World War. Before opening on the Thames as a floating art gallery, she underwent extensive remodeling when various windows and a bridge were introduced, and in 1982 became a pub and restaurant.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Festoon lighting, 1950s.

Previously powered by gas, Victoria Embankment became the first street in Britain to be permanently lit by electricity in 1878. The light was provided by twenty Yablochkov candles, a type of electric carbon arc lamp, and powered by a Gramme DC generator, the first to produce power on a commercial scale for industry. The system extended to forty and then fifty-five lamps the following year. This festoon lighting, still a feature of Victoria Embankment, links lamp standards dating from the Festival of Britain in 1951.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017

Objects from left to right:

Trunk of an old tree in Whitehall Gardens, 2017.

This ancient Indian Bean Tree, or *Catalpa Bignonioides*, its lower limbs supported by wooden props, provides a focal point on the northern lawn of the gardens. The name 'Indian' is a reference to North American native Indians. Whitehall Gardens is just one of the gardens that form the Victoria Embankment Gardens, created from 1864, following the construction of the embankment by Sir Joseph Bazalgette. It offers a hidden oasis enclosed within elaborate railings, themselves reproduced from Bazalgette's own designs. The garden is also a designated Site of Importance for Natural Conservation for its contribution to wildlife.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Timber watchman's hut in Victoria Embankment Gardens.

Night watchmen had been on the streets of England's towns and cities since medieval times. A familiar character to the inhabitants of Georgian cities and towns, their job was to literally keep an eye on their designated section of roadway, as a defence against the common perils of crime and fire. In addition, they had the job of calling out the time and describing the weather. The costs of the watch were passed on to householders through parish rates. The system of night watchmen in central London ended in 1829, with the creation of the Metropolitan Police.



Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Sheet music, a Mandolin and mask of Pan detail, Sir Arthur Sullivan memorial, by Sir William Goscombe John, 1903.

The memorial to Sir Arthur Sullivan, half of musical duo Gilbert and Sullivan, stands in Victoria Embankment Gardens. The monument is topped with a bust of Sullivan, whilst below a weeping muse leans against the plinth. At the base of the pedestal is a mask of Pan, the satirical god of shepherds, music and pleasure; sheet music from *The Yeoman of the Guard*, the darkest of the Savoy operas, yet the finest of Sullivan's scores, according to the critics; and a mandolin inscribed with W Goscombe John A.R.A.1903, the sculptor, who was an Associate Member of the Royal Academy. For further details, please see the information on the Weeping Muse of Music image.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Dagger, 'late 1500s'.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

Recovered on the Thames foreshore, near Temple Stairs, this 16th century dagger measures 370 by 75 millimetres. Whilst the grip is missing, it has a double-edged blade of lozenge or diamond shape. The heavy cross-guard, or quillons, a bar of metal at right angles to the blade for the protection of the wielder's hand and knuckles, curves sharply to a point. It is boldly segmented and ends in 'wrythen knops', or spiralled ornamental knobs, like those of contemporary spoons. A similar, but larger knob forms the pommel, a rounded knob on the handle of a sword, dagger, or old-fashioned gun.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: 7554)

Axe, late Bronze Age.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

Found during the construction of the Thames Embankment between 1865 and 1870, this copper-alloy socketed axe, dates back to the late Bronze Age, 1000 BC – 700 BC. During this time, stone axes began giving way to axes with a head made of copper and bronze. The bronze axe head was cast in a mould, allowing the design to be copied and mass-produced. The socketed axe, or Celt, was a wedge-shaped axe head with no shaft hole. The handle is instead fixed into a socket at the butt end. This axe is looped, with a sub-square section and a plain blade.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: 29.175/2)



Anelace blade, 1500 – 1600s.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

This anelace, a short civilian sword or dagger, was unearthed opposite the City Gas Works, in 1869 during the construction of the Thames Embankment. At 390 millimeters long, it was carried horizontally in the back of the belt, and positioned to facilitate quick removal by the wearer. Although its form is mostly consistent, the design varies greatly from blade to blade. In the prologue to the Canterbury Tales, Chaucer references the anelace in his description of the Country Gentleman; An anelace and a gipciere all of silk, Hung at his girdle, white as morwe milk.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: A10437)

Dagger, 16th century.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

In 1517, the Cutlers' Company, established to maintain the standards and quality of London manufactured cutlery and steel, decreed that all daggers should bear the maker's personal mark, so that yt maybe knowen who makeyth good & perfite blads. The marks were recorded in a ledger book held by the City. Daggers were carried by almost everyone, and well-dressed Londoners acquired beautifully decorated weapons from Italy, Germany and Spain to express their wealth and status. During the 16th century daggers were designed with specific defensive features, including quillons, to parry the opponent's blade and protect the user's hand and knuckles.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: A26277)

Spearhead, found on the Thames Foreshore, Saxon – early Medieval.

<https://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/collections>

Recovered near Temple Stairs, this Saxon or Medieval narrow leaf-shaped spear blade has a tubular socket. Large numbers of daggers and fighting knives have been recovered from the River, and it is believed these are mostly accidental losses as Londoners stepped on or off vessels. The spear is often viewed as one of mankind's earliest tools and weapons. Originally designed as a hunting implement, as it extended reach and allowed a man to kill with greater efficiency from a greater range. Eventually, this feature found a use in war, and the spear became a common weapon chosen by whole armies.

© Copyright Museum of London. (ref: 7758)



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017

Objects from left to right:

Statutes of the Realm, 1509-1624

<http://www.parliament.uk/archives>

Statutes of the Realm was a revolutionary publication released in the early 1800s. For the first time in history it brought together an authorised collection of Acts of the Parliament of England, from the 1200s, including various iterations of the Magna Carta, to the Union of the Parliaments in 1707, and Acts of the Parliament of Great Britain passed up to the death of Queen Anne in 1714. There were eleven volumes in all, and the three you see include the text of the Act of 1535 concerning the River Thames.

Courtesy the Parliamentary Archives, London (BOOK/1065)



Foot of Robert Burns memorial statue, by Sir John Robert Steell, 1884.

This monument to Robert Burns, known in Scotland simply as the Bard, stands in Victoria Embankment Gardens. Burns wears clothes of a Scottish peasant and is caught whilst writing a poem. The statue is mounted on a base of red granite, and part inscribed as: ROBERT BURNS, 1759-1796. The poetic genius of my Country found me at the Plough, and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue; I tuned my wild, artless notes as She inspired.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

A plaque relating to the William Tyndale statue, by Sir Edgar Boehm, 1884.

This plaque repeats the inscription taken from the original bronze statue representing a full standing figure, atop a Portland stone. The monument honours William Tyndale, the first translator of the New Testament into English from Greek. Unveiled in 1884 to mark the eightieth anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the 400th anniversary of Tyndale's birth in 1484. Martyred in Belgium in 1536, his last words were; 'Lord! Open the King of England's eyes', and allegedly, within a year, a bible was placed in every parish church by the King's command.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017

Core soil and clay samples taken by Tideway Geotechnical Team, from the geological formations of London Clay, Lambeth Group and Thanet Sand, 2016

These samples represent original geological specimens from southern England, first deposited approximately 52 to 56 million years ago. At that time, England was located over ten degrees further south, when climates were sub-tropical, vegetation cover plentiful, and temperatures high. The role of the Geotechnical Engineer at Tideway is to characterise the different soil types for shaft and tunnel excavation. For example, the Victoria Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) shaft will be constructed through the London Clay level, roughly 7 to forty meters below the riverbed. As part of the design process, ground investigations are essential to mitigate potential hazards.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017



Detail from 'The Thames Wunderkammer: Tales from Victoria Embankment in Two Parts', 2017, by Simon Roberts, commissioned by Tideway. © Simon Roberts, 2017

Objects from left to right:

Core soil and clay samples taken by Tideway Geotechnical Team, from the geological formations of London Clay, Lambeth Group and Thanet Sand, 2016

These samples represent original geological specimens from southern England, first deposited approximately 52 to 56 million years ago. At that time, England was located over ten degrees further south, when climates were sub-tropical, vegetation cover plentiful, and temperatures high. The role of the Geotechnical Engineer at Tideway is to characterise the different soil types for shaft and tunnel excavation. For example, the Victoria Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) shaft will be constructed through the London Clay level, roughly 7 to forty meters below the riverbed. As part of the design process, ground investigations are essential to mitigate potential hazards.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017



The Waterloo Helmet, Iron Age.

http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1362722&partId=1

Dredged from the Thames at Waterloo Bridge in the 1860s, this unique bronze helmet was made around 200–100 BC. It features two hollow, pointed horns, and is decorated in an art style known as 'La Tène'. Some of the details were once picked out with studs of red glass. The swirling curvilinear designs are part of the family of styles that today we call 'Celtic art'. The helmet could have been worn in battle, but the thin bronze plates would not have provided much protection against heavy weapons. It may instead have been used in religious ceremonies.

Courtesy the Trustees of the British Museum (1988,1004.1)

Plans for the Thames Embankment (North Side), 1863.

External link: <http://www.parliament.uk/archives>

These plans, deposited in the House of Lords, are connected to an Act of Parliament passed in 1863 which authorised the construction of a new street from Blackfriars to Mansion House in the City of London. The plans also include the introduction of an embankment on the north side of the River. The plans were drawn up and signed by Sir Joseph Bazalgette, who after the passing of the Metropolis Local Management Amendment Act in 1858, was responsible for designing a new sewerage system for London, including the integration of three embankments along the Thames, an integral part of this vision.

Courtesy the Parliamentary Archives, London (HL/PO/PB/3/plan1863/T4)

The Battle of Britain Monument, by Paul Day 2005.

Located along Victoria Embankment, the monument commemorates the British military personnel who took part in the Battle of Britain during the Second World War. It was unveiled in September 2005, the 65th anniversary of the Battle, in the presence of many of the surviving airmen known collectively as *The Few*, a term coined by Winston Churchill. The detail you see, is the centrepiece and features a life-sized sculpture of airmen scrambling for their aircraft during the battle. The monument's granite structure was originally designed as a smoke outlet for underground trains when they were powered by steam engines.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017



Foliage from Victoria Embankment Gardens. 2017.

Victoria Embankment Gardens were designed by Alexander McKenzie and built between 1870 and 1875 on reclaimed land alongside Victoria Embankment. McKenzie created four sections: the Temple Garden to the east, the Main Gardens to the west (originally 'the Adelphi Gardens'), and two other sections to the south. The Gardens include memorial statues for Sir Arthur Sullivan, Robert Burns, and Sir Wilfred Lawson. The Main Gardens contain a variety of trees including London Plane, Thorn, Catalpa, and Metasequoia together with lawns, wooden benches (often provided as memorials) and flower beds. The Gardens provide a welcome retreat from the busy Embankment and bustling Villiers Street.

Photograph © Simon Roberts, 2017