

Chiswick Pier Trust newsletter - January 2018

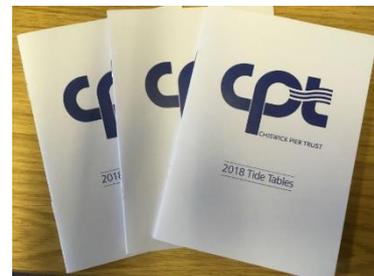
Happy New Year and welcome to our January Newsletter!

This month we have a fantastic talk about planning schemes that *didn't* get planning permission by the Londonist's Matt Brown. The talk is based on one of the most popular articles that ever appeared on the site, and Matt has updated it for us...

Why not give January blues the boot with a walk along the river? Exercise in general has been proven to improve mental health as well as helping with fitness and weight management – and we've had some gloriously sunny days in between the major storms. It's also a great way to spot wildlife along the shore and in the river. We'd love to see anything that you enjoy in your walks along the river – just tweet us a picture @chiswickpier – we are very interested in unusual wildlife or plants that are found on our banks.

The Tide is In.....

Chiswick Pier Trust Tide Timetables 2018 available now. Free to members, £1 to non-members. Available



Upcoming Events

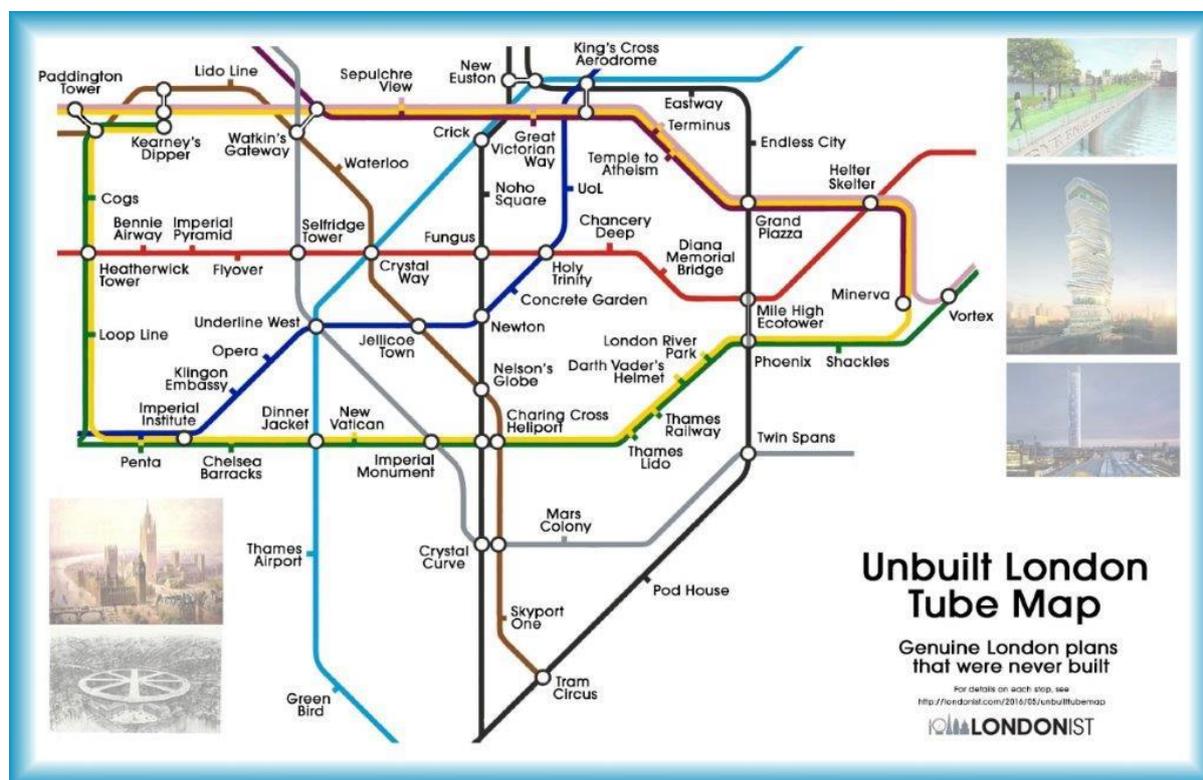
Tuesday 30th January at 19.30

[Unbuilt London, by Matt Brown](#)

Tuesday 27th February at 19.30

[Bridges that Built London, by Chris Roberts](#)

from the office.



Upcoming events

Unbuilt London – Talk on the Thames

Tuesday January 30th at 7.30 pm at Chiswick Pier Trust

Imagine the Vatican relocated to London, or a Mars colony on the Jubilee line, or a fungus farm under Tottenham Court Road. Joke? No. These are all ideas for London that have been considered over the years.

Author and journalist Matt Brown will be talking about the madcap building schemes and dreams that didn't get past the planners. The idea is based on one of the most popular articles ever run on the Londonist site about Unbuilt London. Matt will be reviewing what London could have been like had these plans come to fruition – including several schemes relating to the Thames - and promises some newly discovered gems...

Matt has been writing professionally about the capital since 2005. He's served as first editor, then editor-at-large of Londonist, a web site dedicated to the history and culture of London. His recent books include London Night and Day and Everything You Know About London Is Wrong. Matt likes to dip into the hidden histories of London, unearthing long-lost stories from newspaper archives, or exploring the parts of the capital not normally accessible, such as sewers, rooftops

and basements.

The talk will highlight some of the lesser known plans for London, including forgotten towers and monuments and a plan to move the Thames a mile to the south.

Past event

A warm reception for the Frost Fairs Talk

‘The great singularity of London is the Thames,’ said Hazel Forsyth, senior curator at the Museum of London, in her November talk about Frost Fairs at Chiswick Pier Trust. Using maps, engravings and commentaries from the times, she gave us an extraordinary insight into the entrepreneurialism, enthusiasms and idiosyncrasies of Londoners as they took advantage of the fairly regular freezing of the Thames from the 17 century until the 19 century.

The topography of the Thames has altered over the years. Of particular significance to Frost Fairs was the position of the medieval London Bridge and its piers. They were set close together which meant that sheets of ice could build up, and support the freezing of the Thames. And it was cold. In 1683 - the coldest winter on record - boats were described as being crushed by ice and trees split as if by lightning.

Using current information about ice produced by the Canadians, Hazel could establish the sort of weight bearing the frozen river might allow, as well as at what stage the freeze was most safe (reminding us there is no such thing as safe ice). Of course, this information wasn’t available to Londoners in the 1600 and onwards – which meant that a number of luckless people fell in and drowned both at the beginning of the freeze and the during the thaw. But a gambling spirit prevailed, in one instance with people driving coach and horses across the river to test the ice for a wager.

John Gay, librettist of the Beggar’s Opera, talked about ‘all varieties of shows and humours on the ice’ in his 1716 Trivia. Printing booths, engravers and copper presses sold souvenirs, there was gambling and wildfowl hunting– Queen Elizabeth was said to have shot on the ice - people rode horses, and – somewhat counter-intuitively – cooked on open fires. Spit roasted sheep, known as ‘Lapland Mutton’, was sold, and coffee houses and taverns had a busy trade. There were descriptions of sailboats on wheels, and an image of a woman having her teeth drawn.

The popularity of the Fairs can be tracked by the earnings of the Watermen, who charged 2-3 pence per person and were taking home approximately £3 per day.

Illustrating the hazards of enjoying the Fairs too much, Hazel told a story about three men who one evening drifted down Thames when the ice started to break up during the

thaw. Fortunately, they were rescued. It was noted that of three, two men were insensible. All ended well - they were taken to a public house where received 'every attention they needed'.

And finally.....

Last year Catherine Day came to talk to us about the Swift Project. If you want to hear about latest developments and find out ways to support the work around swift conservation, come to the winter meeting of the Chiswick Swift Project.

Upstairs at the George IV pub on Chiswick High Road, Monday 5th February 2018 at 7.30 pm

And...

Gather up your foodie friends and visit [Rick Stein, Barnes](#) in January for a special charity lunch in support of [RNLI Chiswick](#). They are offering a 3 course menu for £17.50. plus a £2.50 cover charge that goes directly to the charity. Available Wednesday 3rd – Saturday 20th January.
