

Script for BSL Introduction to London Canal Museum

London Canal Museum tells the story of London's inland waterways and the story of the Victorian trade in imported natural ice, for which the building was built in the 1860s. The museum is on two floors and is fully accessible to visitors with disabilities, including deaf and hearing-impaired visitors.

On the ground floor are exhibitions that introduce the visitor to our canal history, and explain something of the social history of the people who, for over a century, lived in tiny cabins to carry goods up and down our water highways. You can go inside a cabin and see the living conditions for yourself. There is a script available for the audio mini-drama that is played in the cabin.

At the rear of the museum is Battlebridge Basin, home to our tug boat Bantam IV which is the earliest surviving example of a type of tug built in London in the 1950s for canal maintenance work. It is kept in working order. There are a lot of other boats in the water here, most of which are residential.

Also on the ground floor are exhibitions of traditional "roses and castles" decorative painting, and lifting and handling equipment. You can look down into one of the two large ice wells that are preserved under the building, where ice from Norway was once stored before distribution by horse and cart. The ice trade exhibition includes a question-and-answer facility with Carlo Gatti, who had the building built for the ice trade. This has sub-titles.

On the first floor are exhibitions about the Regent's Canal, the boats, water and locks, and about the horses that were once stabled here to pull the ice carts. Of course horses used to pull the canal boats as well. There is archive film to watch, some of which was made as silent film, and some of which has sub-titles.

The museum is mostly visual, but where audio exhibits are provided a script is offered as an alternative, so we are confident that hearing-impaired visitors will enjoy discovering the fascinating past of the Capital's canals. Visit us soon!

349 words