

# Glimpses of the Past

by George Toms

## No. 21 Building 24 Shop

A few issues ago turbines and the old Turbine Shop were described in Glimpses of the Past. At the time I knew that old photographs existed showing 24 Shop being built, but quite where they were was a mystery. Since then they have come to light due to the efforts of Alan Stephens, and it is now an opportune moment to afford them wide publication through BEM News. Previously they were talked about, but rarely seen.

Early in 1920 clearance started on the site where the new shop was to be. Various buildings for the storage of timber and other activities had to be demolished. Photograph No. 2980, dated 17th February 1920, shows the site before clearance, but with the first preparatory work already started and some bricks delivered. The photographer took the photograph on the corner adjacent to today's Central Laboratories, looking across to 24 Shop Annexe (just below the two tall chimneys). Across the centre of the photograph can be seen 11 Shop and on the left is a building soon to be demolished.

Photograph No. 3066 shows almost the same angle on 28th October 1920, but with a different scene. All the old buildings have gone and the builders have moved in with a vengeance. Note 24 Shop Annexe and the impressive domed tower at the end, together with Burder Street across the railway.

Photograph No. 3067, taken on the same day but at the other end of the site, shows the side of 24 Shop Annexe, with the new works railway access lines in the foreground. By December the side of the annexe was being prepared for integration with the new shop and already the steel framework is being installed at the other end (No. 3086). Of note for railway enthusiasts is the steam crane dimly seen in profile beyond the awning on the left of the latter photograph.

Photograph No. 3105 of 15th February 1921 compares well with previous views taken from the same vantage point, the 'Cathedral' is taking shape. No. 3106 of the same day shows that the foundations have reached the railway end.

On 21st March the photographer was out again to record progress and this time a team of workmen line the 'battlements' of the shop (No. 3137). Note that the framework to support the building of an arch, seen in No. 3105, did not result in one! A change in plan? No. 3106 records progress at the other end and one can clearly see how the new structure dwarfs the older buildings.

Perhaps one of the most evocative views is that of No. 3150, taken on 14th April 1921, and viewed from the railway end. Through the framework one can see the Main Offices. The notice affixed to the trusses is for the benefit of passing rail travellers. The old railway access to the works is seen in the foreground and remained as a shop access for decades.

The impressive end of the shop adjacent to the railway can be seen in photograph No. 3417, taken in September 1922. The balance of style and shape blending into an almost neo-classical design shows unusual taste for industrial buildings of the time. The other end does not quite match as No. 3418 shows; an ideal spot the differences subject!

By the time photograph No. 3598 was taken in March 1923 the interior was being fitted out. The foreground is now occupied by HEP Test.



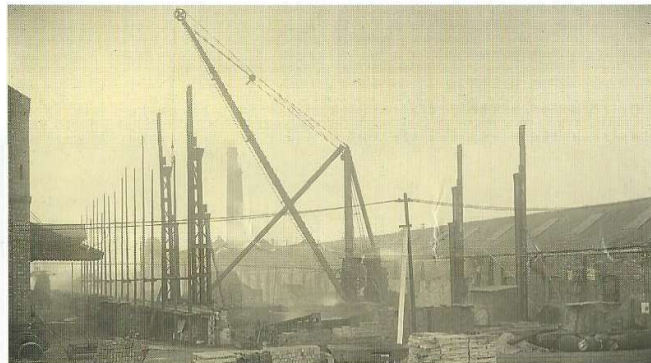
2980



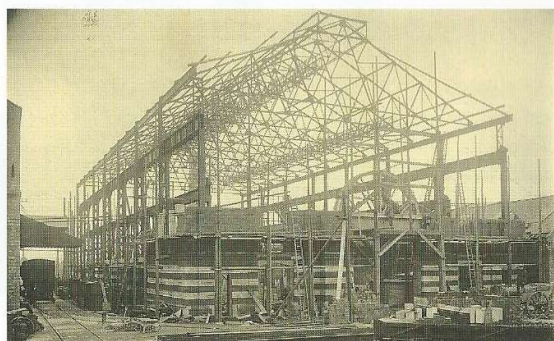
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3067



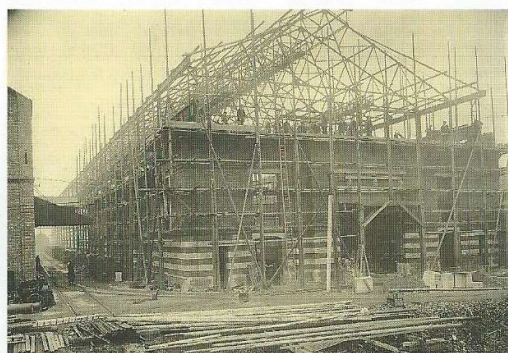
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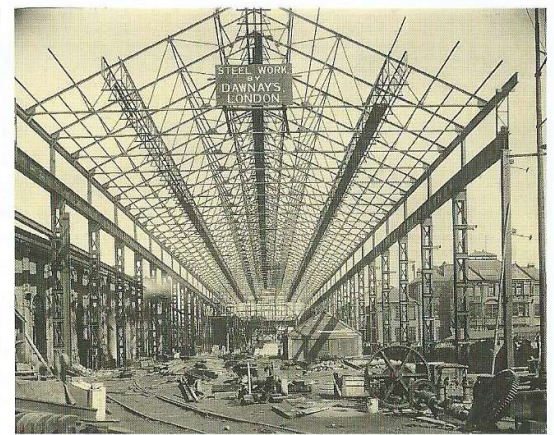
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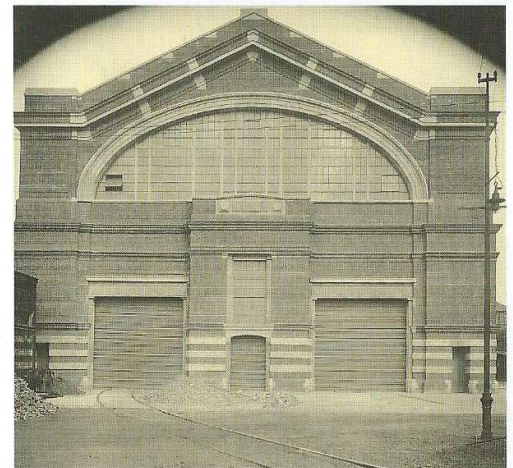
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3137



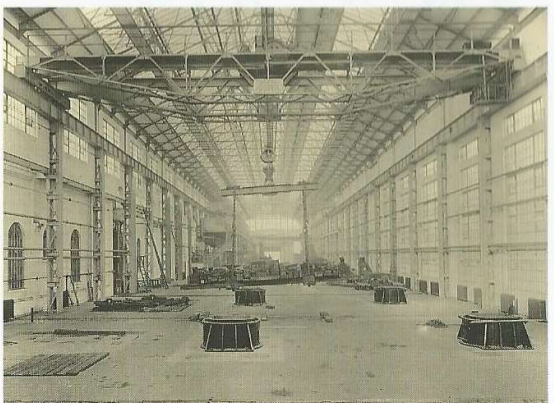
3150



3177



3418



3598

24 Shop today – a recent photograph for comparison, with its workforce after the latest refurbishments.

