

## Victoria Baths: a BBC Restoration Winner

The Grade II listed Victoria Baths in Manchester shot to prominence when they won the first series of BBC2's Restoration programme in 2003.

The 102-year old baths in Hathersage Road were designed for the poor of inner city Manchester by the city's first architect, Henry Price, and opened in 1906. The complex includes private baths, a laundry, jacuzzi, three swimming pools and Turkish baths.

Work on the complete restoration project, set to cost an estimated £18m, began in 2006 and Dorothea has been closely involved in this first phase.

Our team was commissioned by the Bath's Trustees and architects Lloyd Evans Pritchard to work on phase one of the restoration works, covering the front block of the building.

The first part of our work was to restore the prominent external railings around the building. These wrought and cast iron features were entirely dismantled and taken to our workshop where they were repaired.

They were then reinstalled on site.

In addition to this work, we have also restored a number of cast iron pavement lights, including fitting new cast glass blocks.



Victoria Baths walkway with new glass blocks.

## St. Martin-in-the-Fields School, Tulse Hill, London

Having recently completed work on the massive railings project at St. Martin-in-the-Fields Church in Trafalgar Square, Dorothea is now working on the school of the same name in Tulse Hill.

St. Martin-in-the-Fields High School for Girls was founded in 1699, and has close ties to the church of the same name.

The school was originally based on Charing Cross Road. But at the beginning of the 20th Century it needed more space, so moved to Tulse Hill into a larger, Georgian house with more extensive grounds.

Dorothea Restorations was contracted to restore the original cast iron roof light that sits above the entrance area of the school.

It had been poorly repaired at some point in the past, when the light's original glasswork had been replaced with plastic that had become discoloured.

Furthermore, there were problems with water ingress.

The roof light was dismantled and transferred to our workshop for cleaning, repair and redecoration.

At the same time, it was decided to tackle other associated problems in the light well, including the design of a better fixing system for the dome.

Works have progressed well to date and the dome is currently being re-installed.

With its new glass panes it should bring new levels of light to the school's entrance.



Fixing the dome of the roof light at St Martin-in-the-Fields School.

## Hewell Grange

Dorothea has just completed a second piece of work on Hewell Grange near Redditch, once a grand country house, and today part of a prison.

We were first called in to restore an original iron bridge in the grounds of the house. The bridge had been discovered when work began to clear scrub and wasteland around the estate.

Our second phase of work has involved consultancy advice on the repair of a larger, cast-iron bridge, badly damaged by an American tracked vehicle during World War II, when the house was requisitioned by the military.

Our experts were called in for advice on how to stabilise and then restore the bridge.

We provided recommendations on de-stressing the bridge structure and renovating it, as well as restoring stonework on one of the abutments which had also been badly damaged.

This is typical of the kind of consultancy provided by Dorothea Restorations to clients both at home and overseas.

Our consultancy work is designed to help the client and professional team ensure their project runs smoothly from start to finish, with services including condition surveys, feasibility studies, conservation reports, repairs specifications, project costing and project management.

## Work completed on 13th century building in Bristol

Dorothea craftsmen, working alongside colleagues from parent company Linford Group, have completed the transformation of 13th Century buildings at Quakers Friars, Bristol.

The project, on which Linford was the main contractor, involved transforming a Grade I listed former Quaker Meeting House into a Raymond Blanc 'Brasserie Blanc'.

Our workshops were involved in the extensive repair and sympathetic restoration of guttering, windows, and other pieces of historic detailing.

We also manufactured new wrought iron railings, working to a new design as part of a new entrance by Alec French Architects.

Working on the windows at Quakers Friars



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Architectural & Engineering Metalwork Conservation

# ironworks

News from Dorothea Restorations – Issue 3

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## All projects great and small

Welcome to the third edition of Ironworks, the regular update from Dorothea Restorations.

Reflecting on the projects which are profiled in this issue, I am struck by the sheer breadth and range of activities in which our craftsmen are typically involved.

From cannons to casements, schools to theatrical stages, balustrades to bridges; from relatively modest repairs on cast iron pavement lights to the largest scale engineering projects, our teams have been widely engaged, right across the country.

Whatever the size and nature of the project, however, all share the same principles: traditional craft skills, an understanding of iron and how it interacts with other materials, and genuine engineering know-how.

This means that wherever we are, and whatever we are doing, we can be sure that the same care, precision and eye for detail will be common to each and every project.

For information on all of our services, and even more project studies, please visit our website at [www.dorothearestorations.com](http://www.dorothearestorations.com), or call us on 0117 941 5010.

Peter Meehan – Director

## Sebastopol Cannon, Maidstone

Never ones to shy away from unusual projects and artefacts, Dorothea has recently been involved with the restoration of not one, but three cannons, two from Sandhurst college, and the third a very well-known feature from Maidstone town centre.

The cannon, made at Alexandrovski near St Petersburg, was captured at Sebastopol and presented to Maidstone after the Crimean War.

Dorothea Restorations was employed by the local authority to refurbish the cannon, and in particular to carry out a series of repairs to the cast iron carriage on which the gun barrel sits.

Repair sections were made in cast iron and then fitted into place, and a series of cracks were repaired by stitching and discrete plating.

The cannon was cleaned and repainted prior to being returned to its original plinth in Maidstone town centre.

The cannons join a long list of unusual historic artefacts and features restored by Dorothea over the years – artefacts such as a large, gilded grasshopper weather vane high on the roof tops of London, and a ‘Tin Turtle’ (actually a type of locomotive used to ferry men and munitions to the Front during WWI).



## Dorothea Conservation Award to ‘Bull’ engine enthusiasts

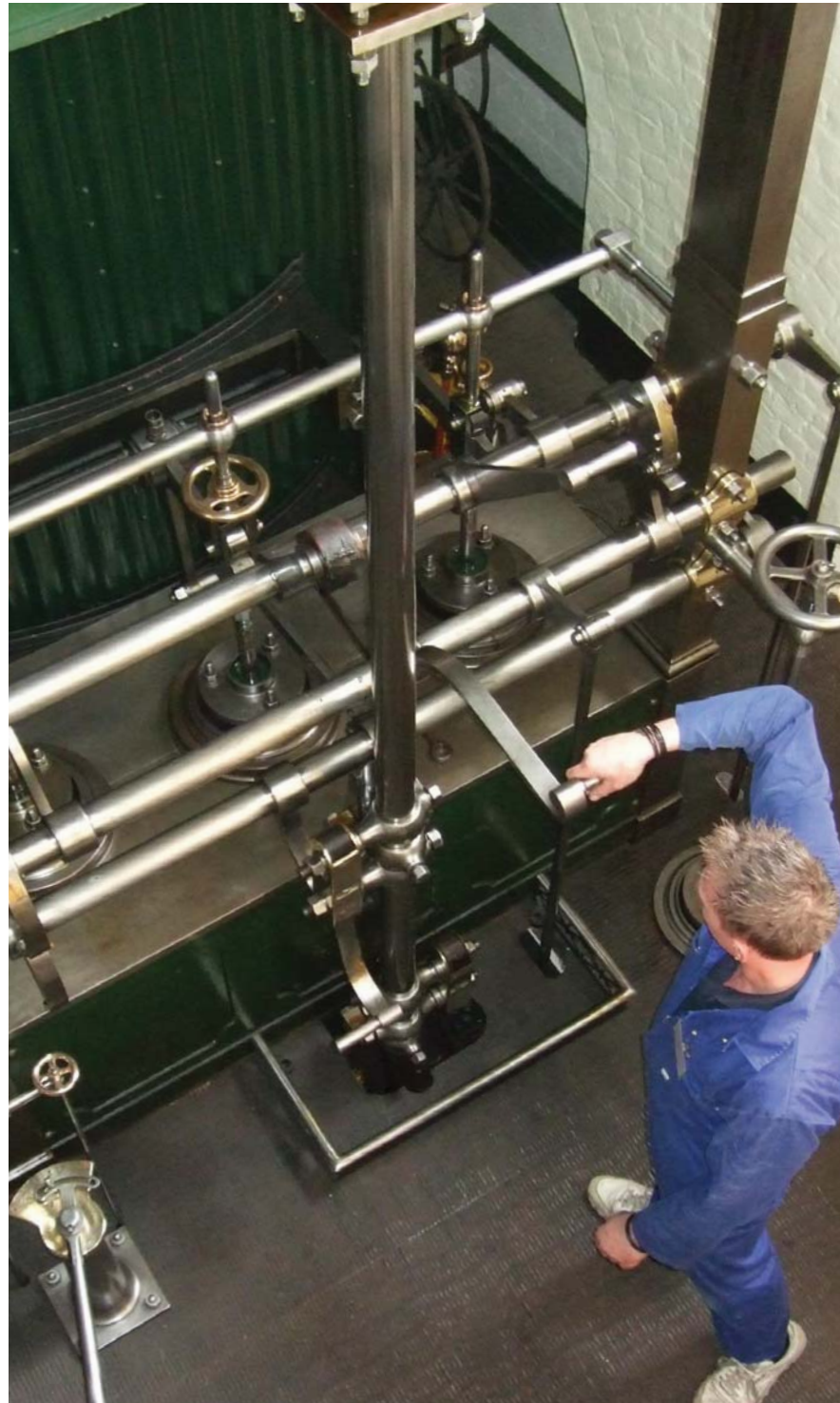
The Dorothea Award for Conservation has gone to a team of volunteers who spent more than seven years restoring the ‘Bull’ steam engine at Kew Bridge Pumping Station in West London.

The giant steam-powered water pump was designed by Edward Bull and went into service in 1856, it had been out of action for close to 60 years, and simply left to rust away.

Now, thanks to 7,000 hours of voluntary work and at a cost of about £45,000, the engine has been fully restored. It is the largest engine of its type in existence and the only working model in the world.

Dorothea Restorations has sponsored the annual Dorothea Conservation Award since 1984. It is adjudicated independently by the Association for Industrial Archaeology.

The award-winning Bull engine restoration project.



# New stairs for Bristol school

Dorothea's craftsmen were sub-contracted to create a new wrought iron balustrade for a Bristol school, matching the original balustrade which is believed to be several hundred years old.

When Bristol Grammar School commissioned architects Stubbs Rich of Bath to alter their existing main staircase, the architect decided to reconfigure the layout. This meant alterations were required to the original wrought and cast iron balustrade, as well as the brass handrails.

Our team had to manufacture some new balustrades – a complex process as they had to turn 360° whilst rising up the stairway. The brass handrail is also of an unusual construction and is proving to be a real challenge to replicate as it is made of a shaped hollow tube that few companies are able to reproduce.

The refurbished and new sections of balustrade are to be fixed into position in April 2009.



Dorothea craftsmen working the wrought iron balustrades.

## Dorothea Restorations puts on a show

Dorothea Restorations has completed the restoration of a unique piece of theatrical history in London's West End.

Our engineering experts have restored and successfully re-commissioned Victorian hydraulic stage bridges at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.

The hydraulic system was installed in 1897 to speed up changes in scenery.

The system was originally powered by high pressure water, however, the stages had fallen into disuse and the bridges had not moved for more than two decades.

Working in a tight window between productions, the team designed, manufactured, and installed a new hydraulic pump system, as well as servicing and repairing the original machinery.

Dorothea Restorations director Peter Meehan said: "As far as we know, these stage lifts are unique to the Theatre Royal, so there were no plans or previous projects to draw from."

"The original survey was carried out before the recent production of Lord of the Rings, and then all the work on site was carried out in the six weeks immediately after that show closed."

Drury Lane Theatre's hydraulic stage bridges.



"To see this century-old piece of theatre history back in full working order is a very satisfying achievement."



## Chester Town Hall

Dorothea has been working on the restoration of Chester Town Hall, a splendid Gothic-style building of red and grey sandstone in the heart of the town.

Originally completed in 1869, the building has changed little in appearance over the years. However, a combination of time and weather damage made a wide range of repairs necessary, and Dorothea was sub-contracted by the roofing contractor to carry out specialised work on the architectural metalwork.

Dorothea teams restored and repaired various elements of the building, including a wide variety of window styles such as sash windows, leaded casements and stained glass windows.

A major part of the works involved repairs to the ornate wrought and cast iron ridge cresting and the wrought iron finials, all of which had succumbed to corrosion.

These were labelled and removed from the roof, and taken to our workshop where our blacksmiths undertook repairs and reformed missing wrought iron sections using genuine recycled wrought iron.

Damaged cast iron sections were repaired or, in the case of the ridge plates, replaced if badly corroded.

The restored ironwork was re-fitted to the roof once the main contractor had finished the roof repairs.