

Students get lowdown on how old gasworks – bombed in Blitz and used as Vietnam War movie location – is being given a new lease of life

National Grid gives students from University of Greenwich and Queen Mary University School of Engineering tour of disused Beckton Gas Works.

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University students got to see firsthand how National Grid is helping to bring disused industrial land back to life with a visit to the former Beckton Gasworks site in East London.

National Grid recently hosted a visit from 15 students from the University of Greenwich's Property Development and Management undergraduate programme and 14 students from Queen Mary University's School of Engineering and Materials Science.

The three disused gasholders at Beckton are currently being dismantled. Changes in gas storage technology mean they are no longer required and they have all been decommissioned. National Grid is cleaning up the land so it can be bought back into beneficial use.

The site has an interesting past. Originally used to manufacture town gas made from coal, Beckton was once the largest gasworks in Europe. One of the gasholders currently being dismantled was bombed during the Blitz in World War Two.

Production of town gas at Beckton ended in the 1960s with the discovery of natural gas in the North Sea. However the site soon became a sought after film location. It famously stood in for war torn Vietnam, when Stanley Kubrick shot scenes for his 1987 movie, Full Metal Jacket. Other films shot at the site included 1981 James Bond adventure For Your Eyes Only and 1975 police thriller Brannigan starring American tough guy actor John Wayne.

Professor Mark Daley, Academic Portfolio Leader for Property Management, at Greenwich, joined his students for the tour.

He said: "The talks given were very interesting and informative. The students learned a great deal. These events are highly valued by the students as it allows a unique insight into some critical aspects of the work within their chosen career path. It is something that we would highly recommend for any group of students studying in property, construction and engineering."

Crawford Blagden, Industrial Experience Manager at the School of Engineering and Materials Science, at Queen Mary University, joined his students for the tour.

He said: "These visits are great opportunities for our students to engage with the areas they may in the future be looking to gain employment in and to learn more about the general activities of the industrial world beyond university. For many students it is their first opportunity to do so and in general offer a great learning experience for all involved."

National Grid is committed to encouraging a new generation of budding engineers and property professionals by showing them firsthand the work that it does not only connecting people to safe and reliable energy supplies, but also regenerating disused sites like Beckton.

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Notes for editors

About Beckton Gasworks

Beckton Gasworks was one of the largest gasworks in Europe. "Beckton" gets its name from the Company's Governor (1860-1976) and gas industrialist, Simon Adams Beck. In 1870, the Gas Light and Coke Company opened the Beckton Gasworks eventually supplying gas to most of London north of the River Thames. Gas was made by heating coal throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

The discovery of natural North Sea gas in 1970 meant that town gas production through traditional gasworks was no longer necessary. This led to the closure of gasworks across the country. Beckton Gasworks ceased production of town gas in 1969.

The site was decommissioned in 1970 and much of it has now been remediated, sold off for commercial development, and brought back into use as shops, offices and warehouses. Parts of the former Beckton Gasworks are now home to the Gallions Reach Shopping Centre, the Docklands Light Railway Depot, and other businesses.

Today, National Grid still owns a significant landholding at Beckton including the three gasholders currently being dismantled. The site sits across from the Gallions Reach Shopping Centre and beside the Docklands Light Railway Depot.

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500

kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.

- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.
- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

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