

LLOYD'S

*Administrative Headquarters
at Chatham*

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This booklet commemorates the official opening of Lloyd's Administrative Headquarters at Gun Wharf, Chatham by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother.

This is the third occasion that Lloyd's has been honoured by Her Majesty. In 1957, with H.R.H. The Princess Margaret, she opened Lloyd's building in Lime Street and she returned in 1974 following her election as the first Honorary Lady Member of Lloyd's.



The story of Lloyd's of London began in the 17th century when the coffee-house run by Mr Edward Lloyd became the favourite resort for underwriters concerned with marine insurance. Since those days Lloyd's has gone far beyond its original marine tradition to become a unique and world-famous institution. It has been said that you can insure anything at Lloyd's, and the risks covered in the market today range from jumbo jets and North Sea oilrigs to satellite insurance.

The requirements of the early underwriters were very simple. Basically they depended on Edward Lloyd and his staff to provide them with quill pens, ink and shipping information. Today the services required by Lloyd's underwriters are a great deal more comprehensive and often highly technical. The role once played by the waiters in the coffee-house has now been taken over by the 2000 members of the staff of the Corporation of Lloyd's.

In 1972 the Committee of Lloyd's set up a working party to look at the possibility of moving a large part of this administrative body

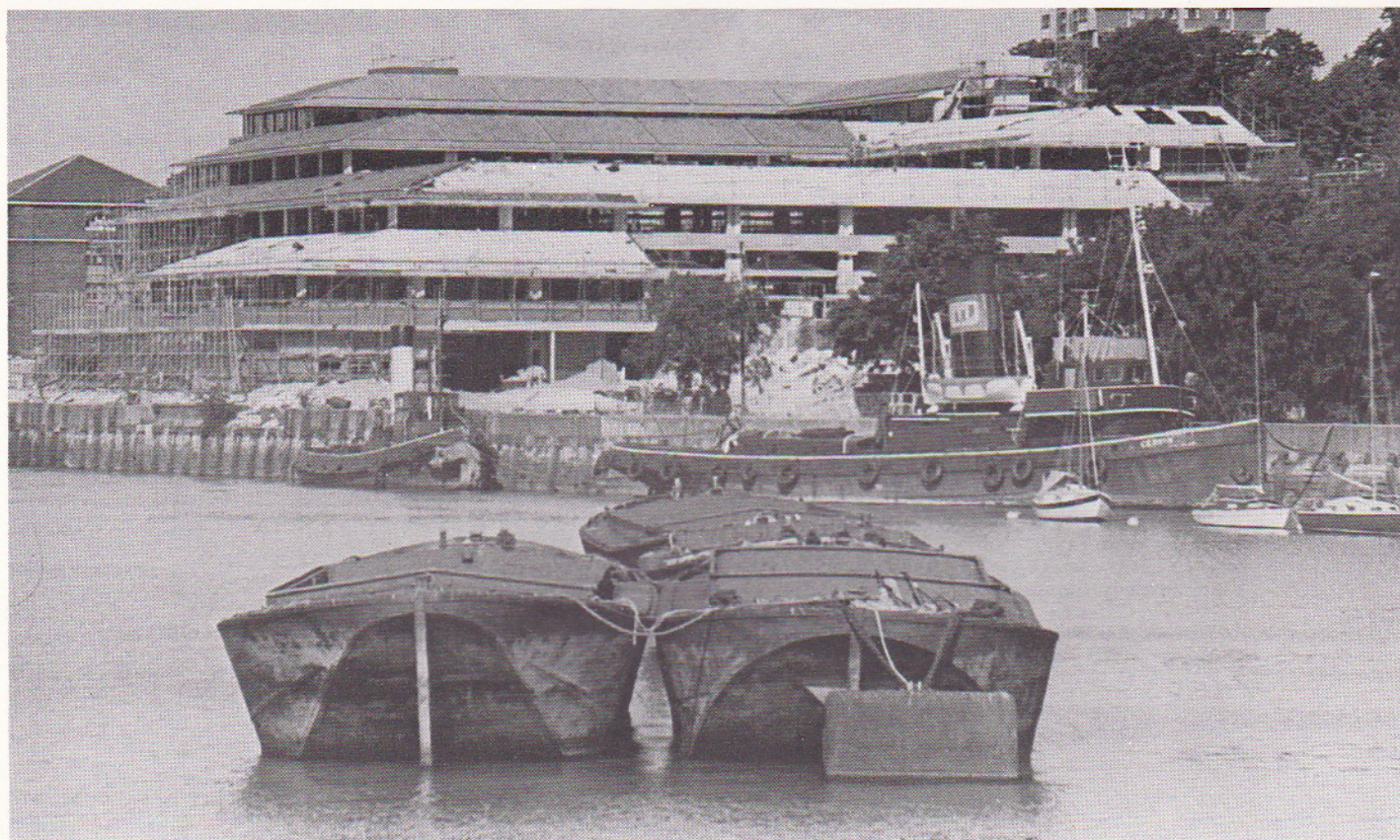


Three centuries of change.



out of London. The working party concluded that it would be desirable to do so – partly because rents in the City were rising sharply, and also because of the difficulties of recruiting staff at a time when many people were becoming less inclined to commute to London. Once the Committee of Lloyd's had adopted the working party's recommendation to relocate part of the staff, the next move was to search for a suitable site. After over a hundred had been considered, the working party chose Gun Wharf at Chatham, a sloping area of seven acres close to the Naval Dockyard and beside the River Medway.

The site was especially suitable for an organisation with Lloyd's long maritime tradition. Gun Wharf had been the original Chatham naval dockyard in the 15th century. Two hundred years later, when the dockyard was moved to its present site, this narrow strip of land beside the river became an ordnance depot – hence the name Gun Wharf. Another change of role came in Nelson's time, when the Royal Marines' barracks were built here.



Gun Wharf was acquired by Lloyd's in 1973. Arup Associates were appointed as architects, commissioned with the task of building offices to accommodate nearly a thousand of the Corporation staff whose work could be done outside London. Bovis Construction Ltd., were appointed as management contractors. The building was completed on schedule in the summer of 1978.

It has been Lloyd's aim from the beginning of this project to be good neighbours. Great care has been taken to see that the new building merged with its historic setting, and a notable feature of Arups' design is the way in which the lines of the building following those of the nearby Ropery – where ropes are still made for the Royal Navy – make a remarkable blend between a modern and an 18th century building. Another aspect of good neighbourliness has been in terms of people: a large number of local staff have been recruited, while many others have moved to Chatham from the London suburbs, and in the whole operation invaluable assistance has been forthcoming both from civic authorities and from businessmen in Chatham.

An unusual feature of the site is that there is a drop of over 40 feet from Dock Road to the river. This has been taken up by three terraces, approximately equal in width and depth, and the architects have sought to exploit such features as the riverside setting, the distant views of Rochester, and the existing trees and landscape. Advantage has also been taken of the three distinct levels to produce a comparatively low building. Lifts are a less

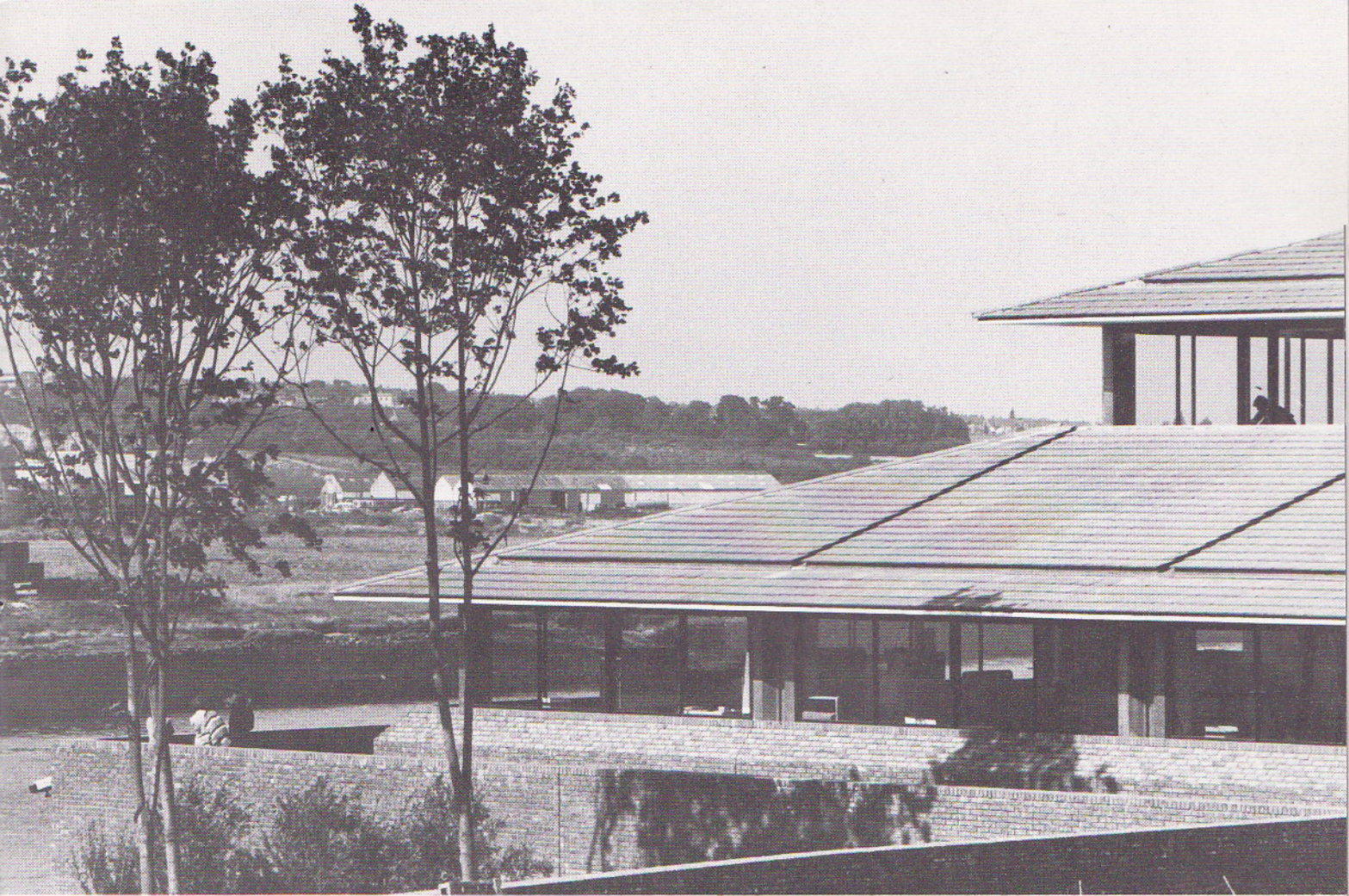
Building in progress "The building was completed on schedule in the summer of 1978".

View of the building from St. Mary's Church.

The veranda on Level 2 leading on to the lawns of the middle terrace.

The walkway from the middle terrace to the west entrance.

The view from Dock Road.





obvious requirement than in the average modern office block: anyone entering by the main entrance in Dock Road can reach any part of the building by going up or down only two floors.

The outside walls are of russet-coloured bricks and the roofs are slate-coloured – the intention being to blend with the tones of the dockyard. The roofs are pitched, and comprise a series of gentle slopes towards the terraces at the south end of the building. The windows are shaded by an overhang on the roofs which minimises glare.

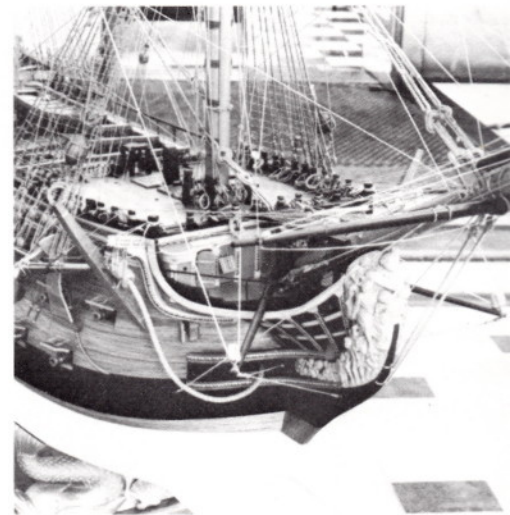
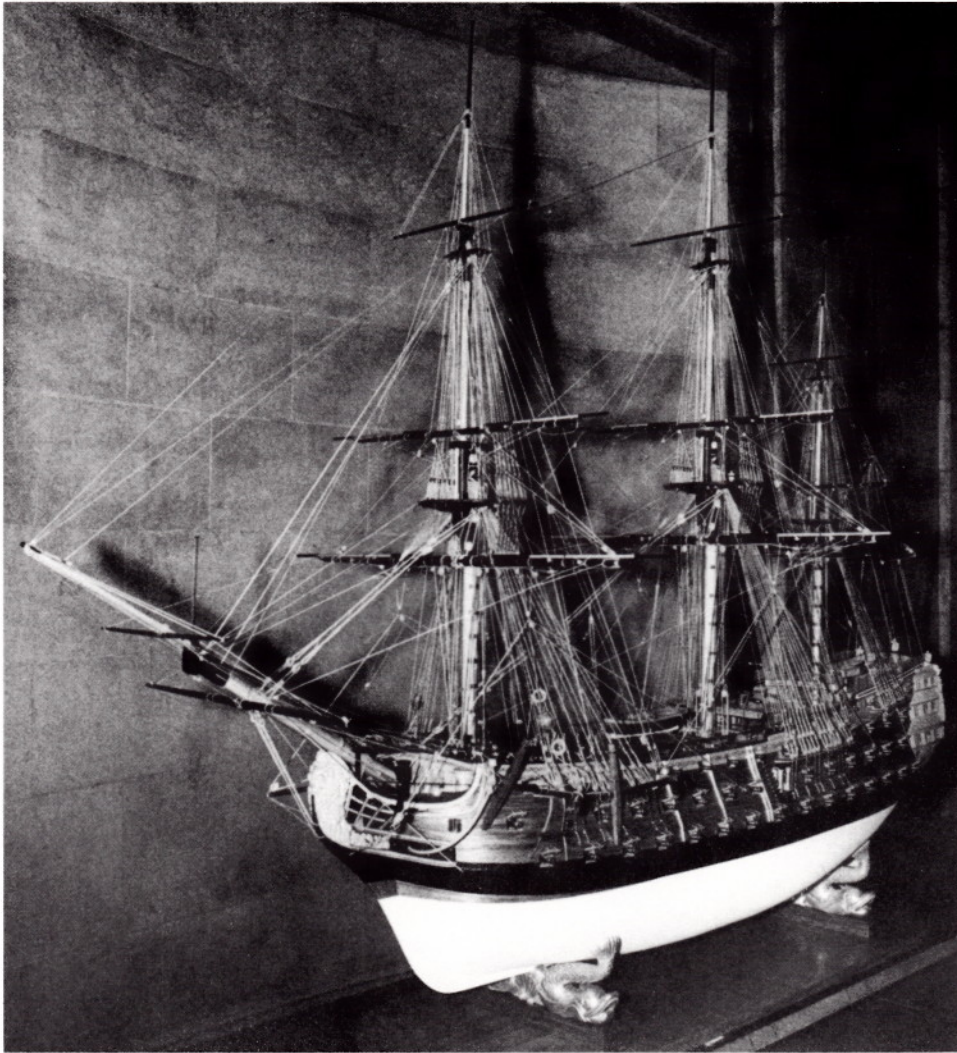
But perhaps the main feature of the design is the stress laid on making conditions pleasant for just on 1000 people who will work here. The aim has been that as many as possible should feel close to natural daylight, and the result of this careful planning is that almost nobody works more than 30 feet from a window. Many have a view across the river to Rochester Cathedral and the Castle, while others look down into one of two internal courtyards, one containing flowering shrubs and plants, the other silver birch trees.

Most managers and assistant managers work in enclosed offices, but otherwise the design is open plan. Here the architects have been at pains to avoid the sometimes oppressive effect of a vast flat ceiling. In order to create variety, they have used a novel form

The northern courtyard as seen from the reception hall.

Interior aspects of the building showing the impression of spaciousness combined with functional design.



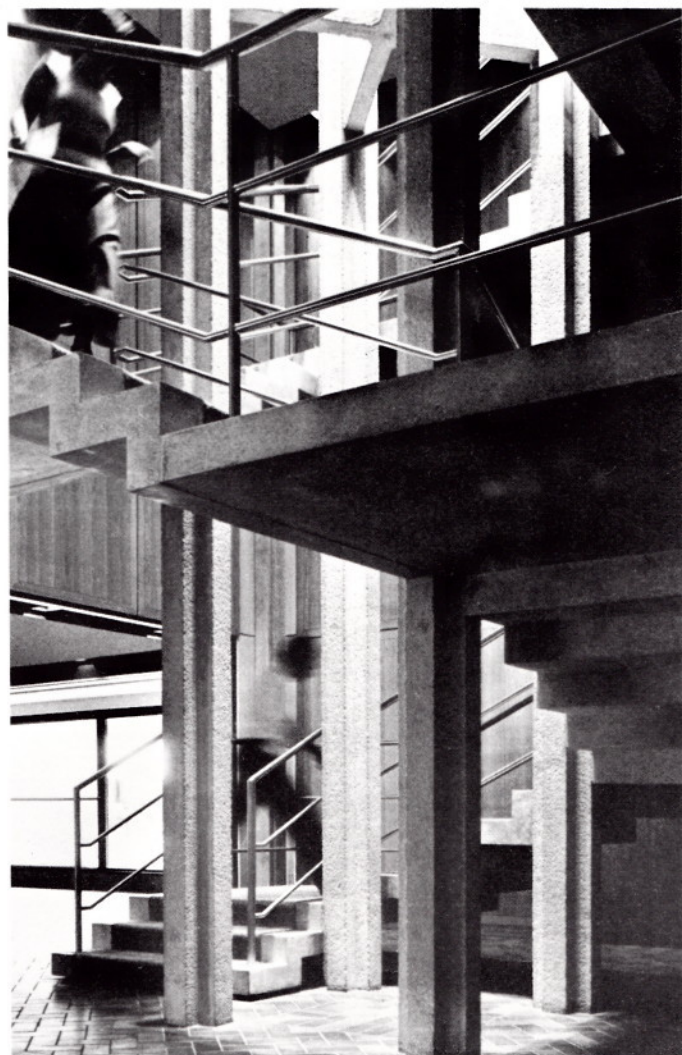


of modular construction incorporating a pyramidal ceiling. The modules break up the large expanse of ceiling and form natural grouping areas. Not the least advantage of this system is its flexibility – alterations to the power and telephone connections may be made by using the space between the ceiling and the floor above, without disturbing the staff or involving the moving of furniture. For extra quiet in the office areas, all floors are carpeted, and ceilings covered by a material which is sound-absorbent. Where walls are necessary, they are covered with white hessian material, and decorated with pictures and tapestries.

Gun Wharf's freedom from pollution and noise contributed to a decision not to make the building fully air-conditioned. Here the aim was not merely to keep running costs down, but to avoid vulnerability to interruptions of the energy supply. The building is naturally ventilated by its numerous windows, though some areas with special needs are either mechanically ventilated or air conditioned.

The main entrance to the offices is from Dock Road. It is approached by a pathway leading through the car park to a portico which embodies the modular form used elsewhere in the building.

On display in the reception hall is a scale model of H.M.S. *Victory* made from the original *Victory* timbers.



Above
Reception Hall.

Southern Courtyard from the main stairs.

Right
An architectural feature of the building is the cantilevered staircase from the reception hall to Level 4.

The first thing the visitor sees in the entrance hall is the superb model of HMS Victory presented by Lloyd's insurance brokers — a particularly fitting gift not only because of Nelson's many associations with Lloyd's, but because the Victory herself was built within a few hundred yards of Gun Wharf. Another historic memento in the entrance hall is a side drum presented by the Royal Marines, in commemoration of their long association with the site of the new building.

Floors are known as 'levels' because — in a building which can be approached from different heights — there is nothing precisely corresponding to a ground floor. The reception floor, or third level, contains most of the welfare, social and recreational features. Close to the reception hall is a medical suite, sited here to allow easy access from every quarter. Further along at the north end is the staff restaurant, which uses the self-service method. Here the colour scheme follows the autumnal theme: tables are of light oak, in keeping with the panelling throughout the building. The carpet is chequer-patterned in rust and brown. Part of it can be removed, when needed, to disclose a dance floor. Adjoining the restaurant is a licensed snack bar, opening to the paved northern courtyard.

Overleaf
Staff Restaurant, Bar and unlicensed "Pop Shop" for snacks.

Southern Courtyard — showing open aspect provided for the offices.







Part of the kitchen area which caters for 1000 staff.

The levels above the reception area are entirely devoted to office space: among the Lloyd's departments using them are the Policy Signing Office, Accounts and Personnel. The Membership Department and Telex Room are situated on Level 3, while, working downwards from the reception area, Level 2 includes the Training Department's lecture and conference rooms, and an unlicensed snack bar with modern decor where younger members of the staff can obtain snacks and non-alcoholic drinks while listening to a juke-box. At the north end of this level is the goods entrance with its loading bay where all documents, mail and stores are delivered and despatched to their various destinations in the building. The loading bay is also served by a large goods lift, and the remaining space in this area is taken up by kitchens, conveniently sited immediately below the restaurant.

Also on this level is the Computer Room, where the Management Service Group's facilities include two IBM 370 148s and two DEC 1170s. An essential feature of modern underwriting methods, the computers provide 40,000 advice cards a day for Lloyd's underwriters, and record the basic information relating to all the transactions of the insurance market. Another aspect of modern communication is the sophisticated key-dialling telephone system, which allows calls to be made faster and with less chance of error. The link installed between Chatham and London carries up to 60 telephone, data transmission and telegraph/telex communications simultaneously.

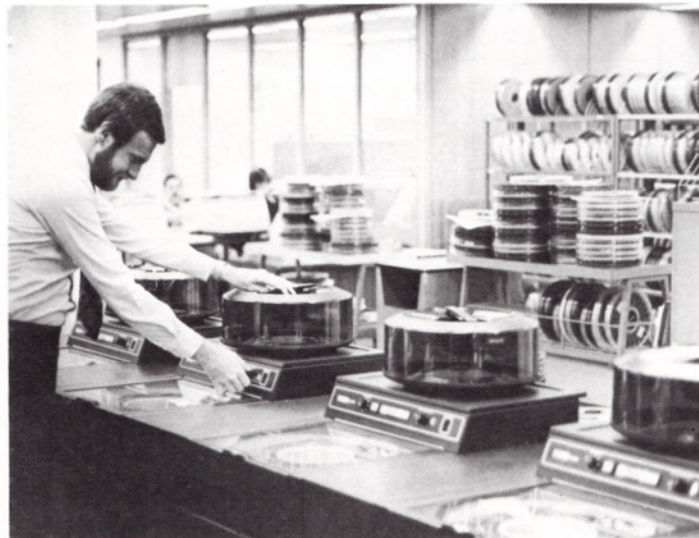
Level One houses those services without which — though they are usually unseen — a building of this size could not function. These include, plant, maintenance workshops, stores and archives. In the plant room, electricity supplied at 11,000 volts is reduced to the required voltage for operating the plant, lighting and equipment. There are three emergency generators to provide enough electricity to enable work to continue in the event of a power failure. The level also contains three gas-fired boilers which



One of the telephone switchboards providing a vital link in the Lloyd's communications system.

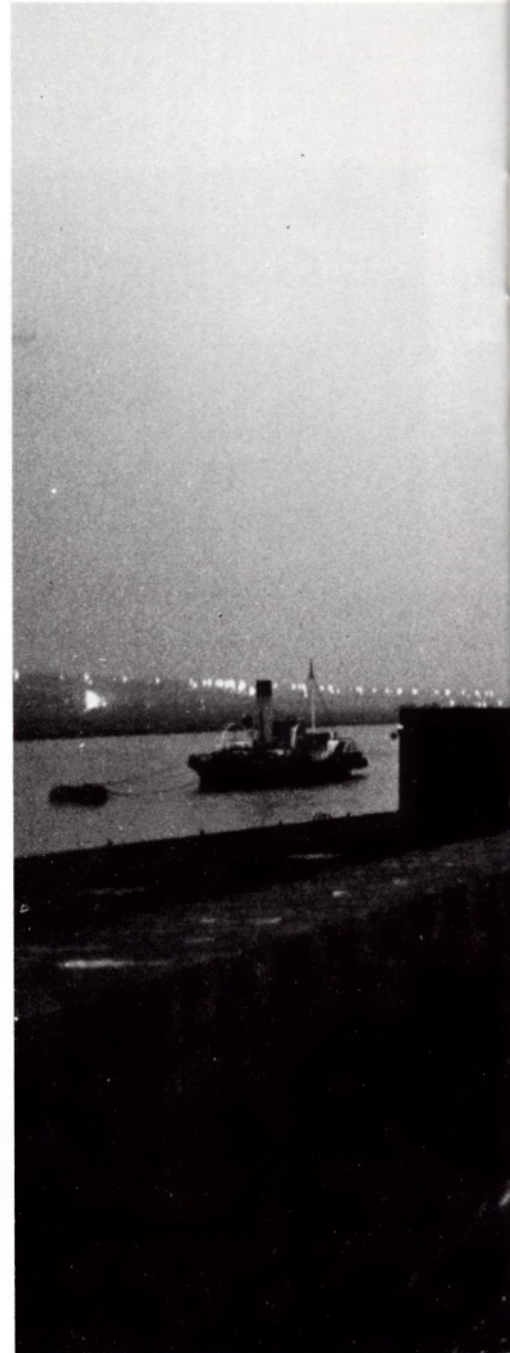
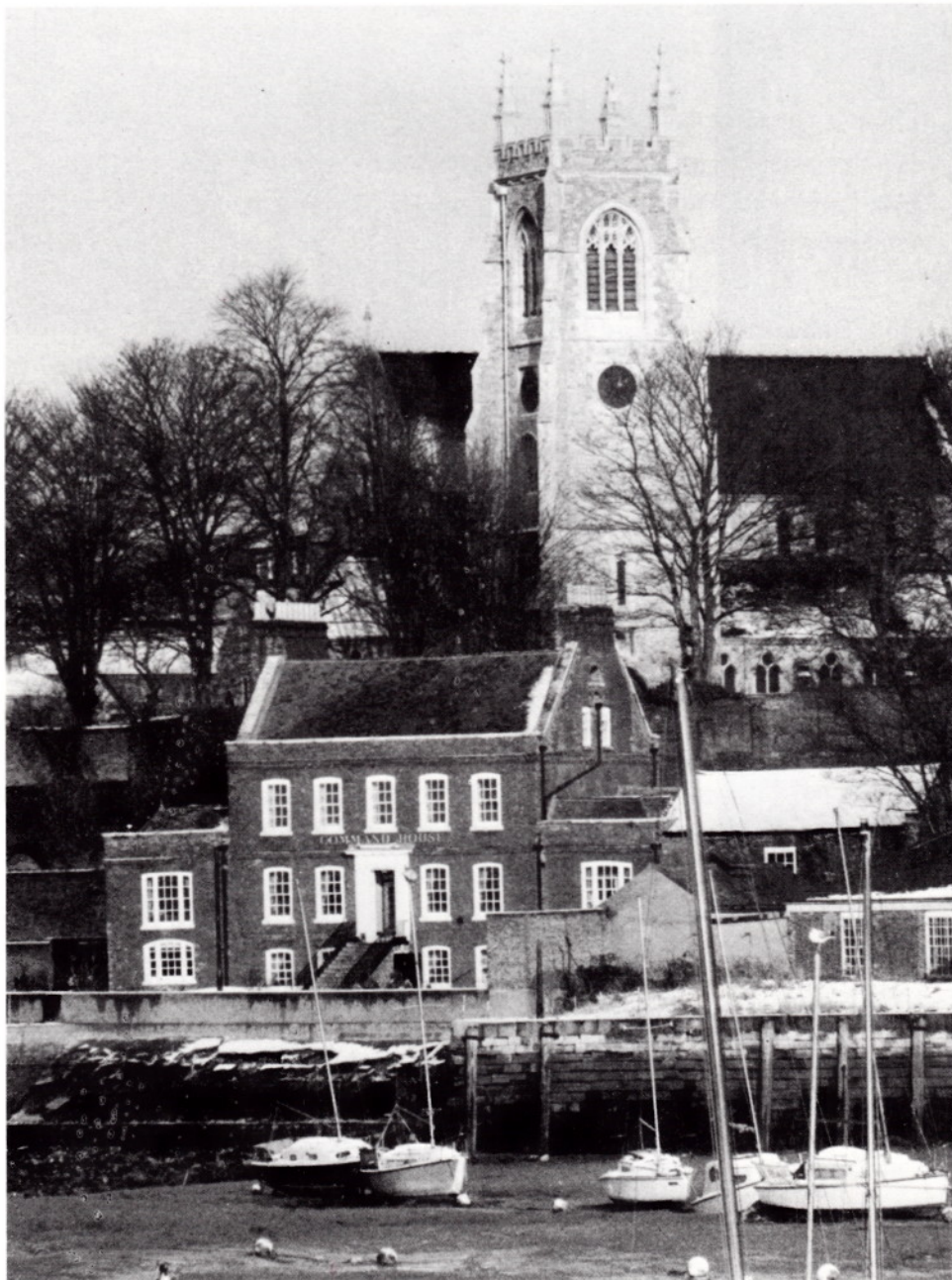
Opposite

The computer installation at Gun Wharf, amongst other services, facilitates the issuing of policies and the accounting between Lloyd's Underwriters and Brokers by means of direct data entry through visual display units in conjunction with other up-to-date computer equipment.



produce hot water to heat the building, and for the kitchens and toilets. The whole system is controlled automatically with fail-safe protection, so that no watchkeepers are needed.

For those accustomed to working in the City, the space around the building is an overwhelming natural asset. Lawns divide the building from the Riverside Walk along the Medway, where staff formerly confined to City streets have now an endlessly changing panorama on their doorstep. The middle terrace is also grass, and includes facilities for crown bowls and putting. The southern end of the site will contain a new sports centre, with courts for tennis, squash and badminton. Gun Wharf has even its own pub, for a former naval building at the southern end of the site has been leased to Bass Charrington, who have made it a licensed premises under its traditional name of The Command House.



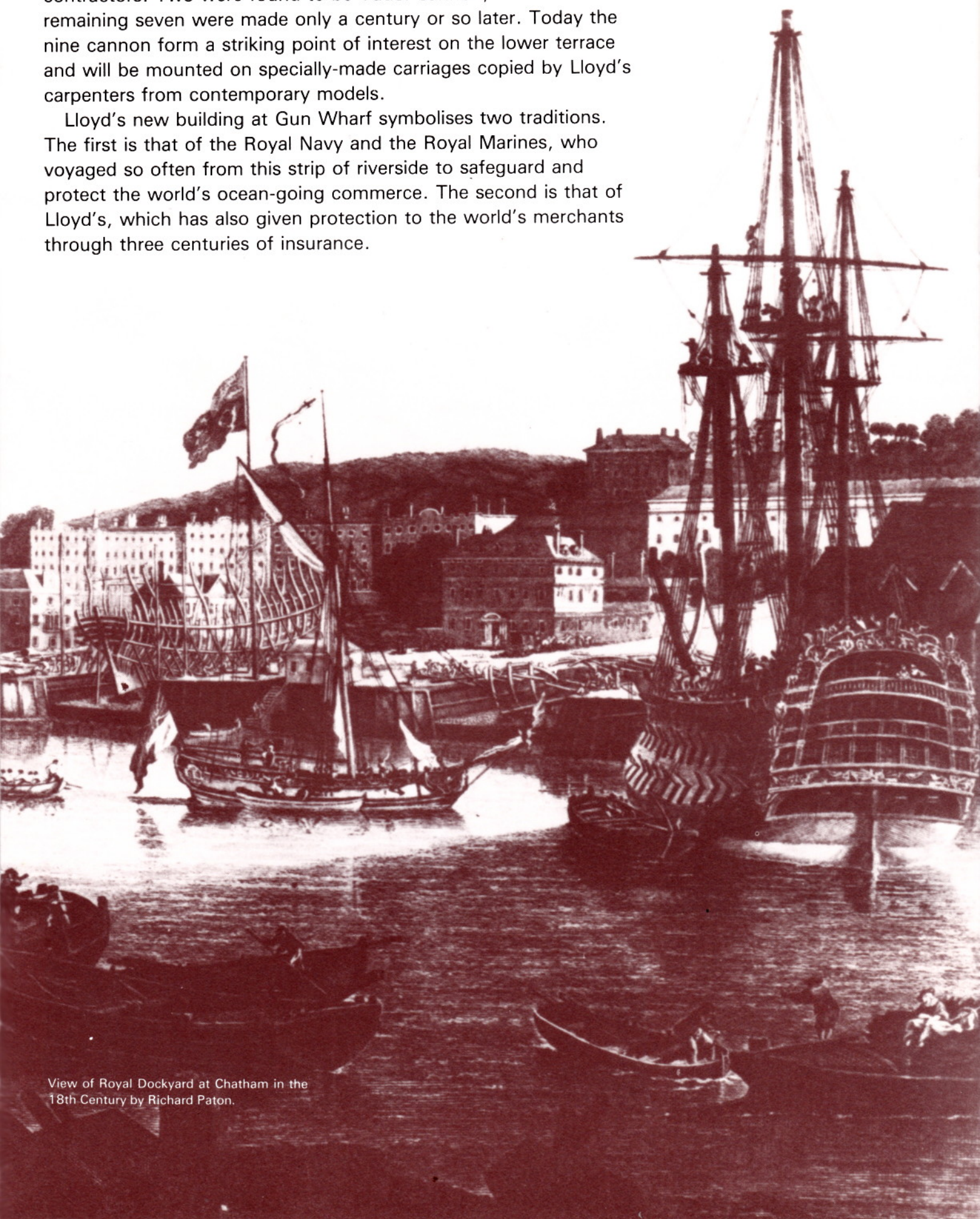
Gun Wharf at night.

"The Command House" — a derelict scheduled building on the site, now leased by Lloyd's to Bass Charrington Ltd., has been converted into a public house with its traditional name.



A link with Gun Wharf's past was found during the excavations when nine very ancient cannon were dug up by the site contractors. Two were found to be Tudor cannon, while the remaining seven were made only a century or so later. Today the nine cannon form a striking point of interest on the lower terrace and will be mounted on specially-made carriages copied by Lloyd's carpenters from contemporary models.

Lloyd's new building at Gun Wharf symbolises two traditions. The first is that of the Royal Navy and the Royal Marines, who voyaged so often from this strip of riverside to safeguard and protect the world's ocean-going commerce. The second is that of Lloyd's, which has also given protection to the world's merchants through three centuries of insurance.



View of Royal Dockyard at Chatham in the 18th Century by Richard Paton.

