

Thames Flood Barrier



The Thames Flood Barrier is one of the most effective flood preventives in the world. In case of floods it will withstand them. The elaborate technology regulates the daily boat traffic but in an emergency, it serves the life of millions of people.

"The Thames Barrier has been described as the eighth wonder of the world. It is certainly a very impressive work of engineering. High water level at London Bridge has risen about two and a half feet per century, due to the melting of the polar ice caps and the activities of Man. However, the main possible cause of flooding in the London area is surge tides. [...] Quotation from the <http://wwp.greenwichengland.com/> site.

The Thames Barrier in general

For the London government flood prevention was a major concern, because the capital has been sensible by exceptionally strong tides and storms and the fact is that England is sinking 30 centimetres a century. Furthermore in 1928 in a Thames flood fourteen people died. The last great flood on the Thames was in 1953, where hundreds of people died. Consequently came the idea of a flood barrier. In 1974 the Thames Flood Barrier, which was designed by Rendel, Palmer and Tritton, started to be built and was completed in 1982. However, the first opening was on 8 May 1984 by Queen Elizabeth the II. The Thames Flood Barrier is the second largest movable flood barrier in the world, after the Oosterscheldekering in the Netherlands.

Nowadays the Barrier stretches between Silvertown and Woolwich. Around 10 steel gates are built across the river, which allow shipping to pass the river up and downstream. If heavy tides are forecast, the gates can be raised to stop the tide.

Besides, the barrier is a total of 520 metres wide and its main gates are 40 metres high and 60 metres wide. Silvercoloured gates makes it possible to reflect the sunlight, and to avoid glare.

Al together the construction cost was around five million pounds.

Progress:

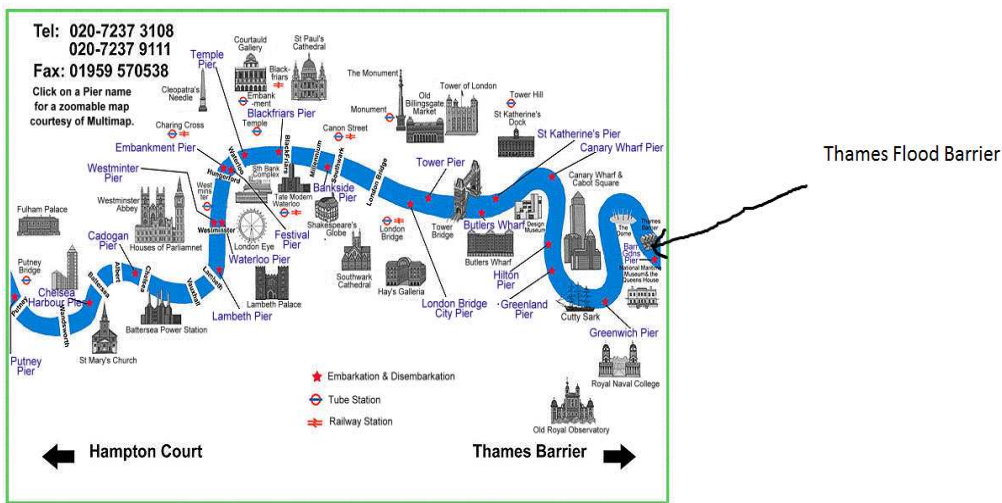
Today nine hours before a high tide reaches the barrier a great technical flood defence sends a message to stop river traffic immediately, close the subordinated gates and alarm other river

users, but only if the river traffic has been stopped and all subordinated gates are closed, can the Thames Flood Barrier be closed itself. Firstly the smaller gates are closed, after that the main gates follows.

Normally when the steel gates lie down on the riverbed, it is a signal that the Barrier is open. Furthermore if the gates are upraised in a closed position the gates have the possibility to shape a protective barrier across the River.

Every month the gates are closed and then re-opened to make sure that they are in good working order.

To conclude, the Thames Flood Barrier is one of the best invention for the UK. The future will show if a big flood can be prevented.



Map of London



The Picture shows the Thames Flood Barrier from Woolwich by Night.

Vocabulary:

withstand : standhalten

elaborate : umständlich

concern: Angelegenheit

exceptionally: außergewöhnlich

tides: Gezeiten

shape: formen

thereof: davon

Sources: Wikipedia.com and Shakespeare's Globe information, Museum of Docklands and Museum of London.