

# ENDERBY GROUP

**Enderby House on the Greenwich riverside is where the information revolution started – and it is under threat**



A group of local people have watched the sad decline of this listed and highly significant building, Enderby House, with dismay.

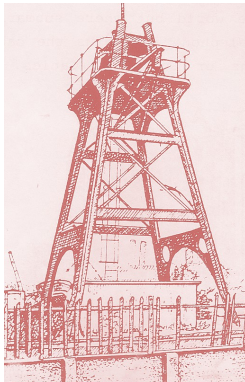
They have formed the Enderby Group and have opened discussions with developers and others about possible uses for the building.

We are talking to Alcatel-Lucent, the present inheritors of the 164 year tradition of making cable and related equipment on this site, about the future of the cable-loading equipment which survives on the jetty. We are developing ideas to link the house and the jetty and for the spaces, indoor and outdoor, needed for outreach and education activities and facilities for residents and visitors.

We now want to work with the community to save Enderby House and the loading equipment and to turn them into a secure, long-lasting centre for telling about the astonishing work done here forming the information revolution, and taking this knowledge into the future.

Please see our website and follow us on facebook and twitter.

[www.enderby.org.uk](http://www.enderby.org.uk)



# FINDING OUT

About the Enderby family:

<http://atlantic-cable.com/CableCos/EnderbysWharf/>

and at <http://www.ballastquay.com/the-eponymous-enderbys.html>

About cable making in Greenwich

[http://atlantic-cable.com/CableCos/EnderbysWharf/Enderby\\_Telcoms\\_Story.pdf](http://atlantic-cable.com/CableCos/EnderbysWharf/Enderby_Telcoms_Story.pdf)

About the Enderby Wharf Jetty: [http://](http://www.ballastquay.com/relics-of-a-glorious-history.html)

[www.ballastquay.com/relics-of-a-glorious-history.html](http://www.ballastquay.com/relics-of-a-glorious-history.html) ;

About Brunel's Great Eastern and cable, additional articles on the Enderbys, and the history of cable unloading at Enderby Wharf <http://www.ballastquay.com/isambard-kingdm-brunel.html>

Also: [atlantic-cable.com](http://atlantic-cable.com) — detailed history of the early cables and the people who built them

[greenwichpeninsulahistory.wordpress.com](http://greenwichpeninsulahistory.wordpress.com) — the history of the Greenwich Peninsula, including Enderby

[greenwichindustrialhistory.blogspot.co.uk](http://greenwichindustrialhistory.blogspot.co.uk) — Greenwich's huge contribution to our technological history

Also Mary Mills' 'Innovations on the Greenwich Peninsula' see <http://www.greenwich.co.uk/peninsula-book/>

**To contact us for more information or to offer help.** see our website [www.enderby.org.uk](http://www.enderby.org.uk), or contact through Facebook, or Twitter

Contact the local councillors for the Peninsula Ward of the Royal Borough of Greenwich: Steve Brain, Denise Scott-McDonald and Chris Lloyd, at the Town Hall, Wellington Street, London SE18 6PW

# ENDERBY HOUSE AND WHARF



**THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION STARTED HERE . The first subsea telegraph cable was made here. This should be better known**

The successor to the company that made the first subsea cable here, still makes advanced equipment for submarine cables in a factory behind Enderby House. The company sold some of its site – including Enderby House – to developers and flats are now going up there. .

So far there are no clear plans for Enderby House. The building is listed but has suffered from neglect and vandalism.

A local group believes that it should be used to show the contribution Greenwich people have made to the information revolution, and to play a part in the future of Greenwich.

**We take the internet and international telephone calls for granted.** We can talk, email, share photos and videos with friends and associates in New York, , Mumbai, Cape Town, Caracas, almost anywhere.

It started on the Greenwich riverside at Enderby Wharf, on the riverside path between the Cutty Sark pub and the O2. A technical revolution here in Greenwich 160 years ago allowed people around the world to communicate in real time.

### Why Enderby wharf matters now

For 100 years, 82% of the world's subsea cables (713,000km of cable) were made here. Production ceased in the 1970s but the factory behind the wharf still makes vital connecting and boosting equipment.

So workers at Enderby Wharf have, for over 160 years been leaders in technologies that now connect the world, from the telegraph to international telephone networks to the present day internet.

### Cable across the Channel – and the Atlantic

In 1850, after many difficulties, the first cable was laid across the English Channel to France. In 1856 the Atlantic Telegraph Company set out to provide a telegraph link between the old and the new worlds. The first attempt with cable made nearby failed. There were four attempts to lay the cable across the Atlantic and it was finally successful through the use of Brunel's vast ship— Great Eastern.



**The speed of news: 40 days reduced to seconds**



Until the first cables went into service, all international news went by ship. Sailing ships took 40 days or more to cross the Atlantic. The first paddle steamer took 18 days. When the Atlantic cable entered service people could send news from America to the UK in seconds – from the birth of a baby to grand politics.

Soon, other subsea cables, almost all of them made here in Greenwich, were laid to join up the world's telegraph networks and then, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century to connect first the world's phone networks – and then the internet.

### The information revolution

The owners and operators of Enderby Wharf and Enderby House have changed several times: from Telcon, to STC, to Alcatel to Alcatel-Lucent but this remains the oldest continually operating telecommunications factory in the world.

**It has built the information revolution we are still living through.** This site is as important to the UK's industrial history as Ironbridge Gorge or Bletchley Park – and as important to the history of Greenwich as the Royal Observatory, the Old Royal Naval College, the Maritime Museum or the Woolwich Arsenal. **It is of world importance.**

### The optical fibre revolution – and a Nobel Prize

A century after the first cables were made here in Greenwich, a young Chinese student called Charles Kao came to Woolwich Polytechnic to study electronic engineering. Then he went to work for STC at Enderby Wharf where in the 1960s he realised that hair-thin strands of glass could carry information in the form of laser light. In 2009 Sir Charles Kao, as he now is, won the Nobel Prize for the work he started in Greenwich.



### Gunpowder, steam cars – what else?

Over the centuries Enderby Wharf has seen many uses besides cable making: initially rough grazing, fowling and fishing

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the government built its official gunpowder magazine and testing depot here. Gunpowder, made in private factories, was brought here by boat, tested and then distributed to the army and navy as necessary. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the extraordinary and enterprising Enderby family came to Greenwich and set up the Wharf and the House. Later uses included Joshua Beale's, development of the rotary steam engine and the exhaustor plus other revolutionary devices, including a steam powered road vehicle. There have been many other innovative industries on neighbouring wharves and sites around the Greenwich peninsula.