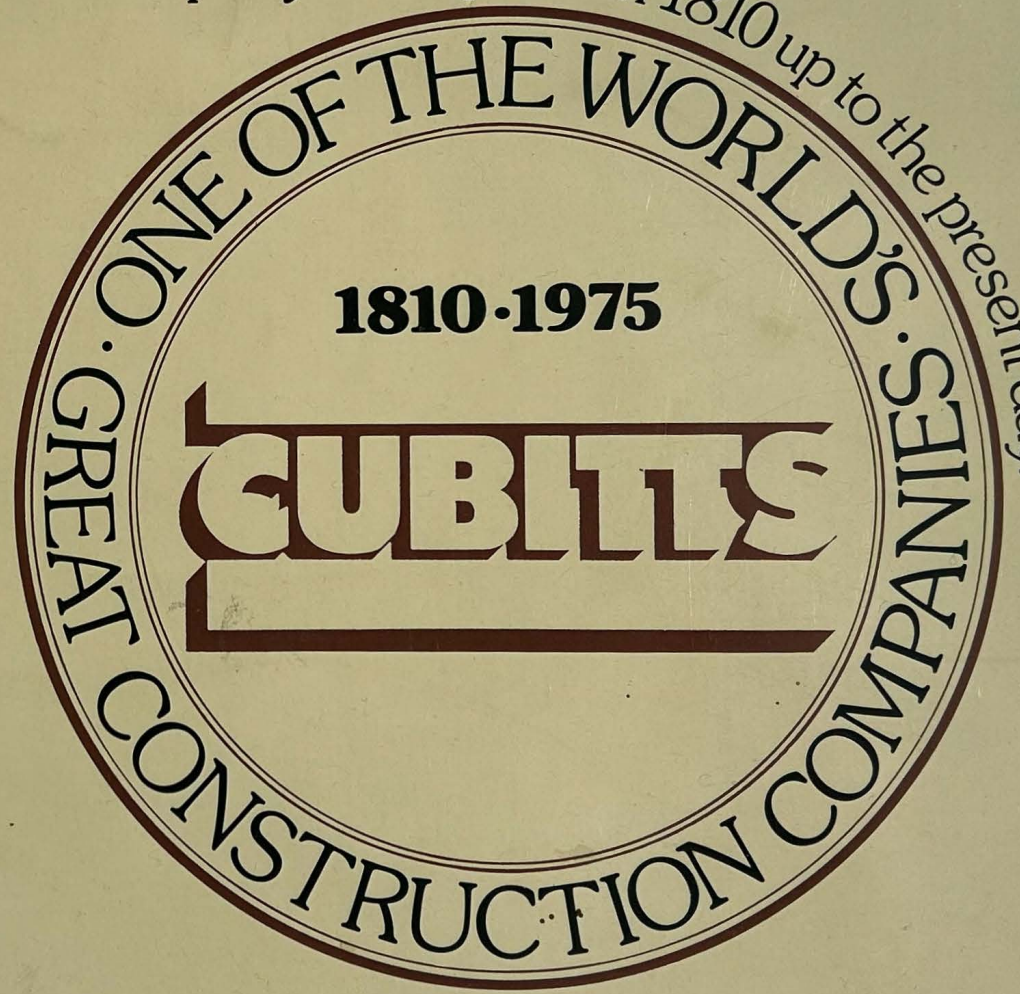


An historical survey of Cubitts, from the company's inception in 1810 up to the present day.







**The men who changed  
the map of London**



## The first master contractors

At that time it was not unusual for one master craftsman to undertake a contract for a complete building, sub-letting the work outside his own skills to others. Indeed, there were a few 'builders' who had directly employed different types of craftsmen, but it would seem only for the term of one contract.

What set Thomas and William Cubitt apart and earned them the claim to be called the first 'Master Contractors' was the fact that, not only did they employ their own team of craftsmen covering every construction skill, but they also guaranteed them continuous employment.

There were those who prophesied disaster for the young upstarts. There never had been enough building work to keep craftsmen fully occupied they said. But Thomas had other ideas. He knew that if there was to be any permanence—and profit—in this new industry they were helping to create, a continuous flow of work must be found, and the answer lay in the ever increasing demand for new housing in the rapidly expanding London.

Again, at that time it was not unusual for a 'builder' generally employed on contract work to have a few speculative houses under construction as a cushion against the leaner times of contracting. It was the ambitious scale and enterprise of Thomas's speculations that, in the years to come, were to make him the greatest developer of his time.

It is difficult to determine exactly how much each of them contributed to the firm's success and it is probably not important. It was undoubtedly a strong partnership, with Thomas contributing the flair and drive, while the more cautious William consolidated and reinforced the firm's position.

The eventual division between the contracting and the speculative side of the activities was apparent after a few years and it is significant that William's name occurs only once in connection with speculative developments, whereas from about 1823 the contracting side was almost exclusively under his control.

However, many important events were to take place before that time and Thomas's plan to include provision for three dozen houses on their new piece of land at Grays Inn Road, though insignificant by comparison with his later commitments, was an important venture for the two young Cubitt brothers.

For the next two years almost all their resources were concentrated on the London Institute contract but, by the middle of the second year, the extensive workshops in Grays Inn Road were completed. By the standards of the day they were most impressive and this, together with the high



standard of accommodation they offered, enabled Cubitts to attract workmen of the highest calibre making a further contribution to their ever growing reputation as builders.

These were years of steady expansion and there was little need to fall back on the cushion of speculative houses on the Grays Inn Road land. Only half a dozen or so had been completed and these were occupied by Thomas and William, by now both married, and by senior members of their staff.

Then, in 1820, Thomas entered into the first of a series of speculative ventures which were to shape their future dramatically.

At that time Highbury was a hamlet boasting one large house, a famous tavern and two substantial farms engaged in the traditional Islington trade of supplying milk for the London market. Here, Thomas acquired a plot of land and in the months to come his "genteel and commodious villas of modern erection" found a ready sale.

The success of this venture led him to purchase more land at Stoke Newington and Barnsbury. Already the pattern of his future success is emerging. He himself sets out the layout of squares and wide streets, designs and builds the first houses— "praiseworthy for their intrinsic goodness of construction, as well as for their materials"—and, having set the standard of the whole development, lets individual plots to other speculators and builders.

The London Institute





In these early years of the 1820's Thomas's speculative ventures multiplied rapidly and he was soon to begin work on another of London's great estates. This was Bloomsbury on the Duke of Bedford's estate where planned development had been going on for nearly two hundred years, the tide of houses slowly creeping North from Covent Garden.

The first known contract on the estate was for the rebuilding of a public house in 1821. However, for the next thirty years he was to help create an area which, in its heyday, was the home of the upper ranks of the professional classes and, more especially, of the intelligentsia. A hundred years later Cubitt's work was described as "impossible to praise too highly. In design it is scholarly and sensitively modelled. In structure its good condition today is the best testimonial of the skill and thoroughness of the Cubitt organisation. The builder and his architect brother never excelled the quality of their Bloomsbury work".

The architect brother was Lewis, the youngest of the Cubitt brothers, whom Thomas had apprenticed to an architect in 1815. In the years to come, as the scope of Thomas's speculative ventures grew, Lewis was to play an important part in their success.

In 1825, Thomas's speculative work achieved a scale and daring that was to win him an international reputation.

A few years earlier the King had decided that Buckingham House was to be the permanent London residence of the Royal family, a major extension programme had been carried out and it was restyled Buckingham Palace. Thomas realised that fashionable society would now look to the West and took steps to anticipate their requirements.

Beyond the new Palace was an area known as the Five Fields, the haunt of footpads who were the terror of travellers from London to the village of Chelsea. To previous speculators much of it had appeared to be nothing but swampland, unfit for building. Thomas discovered that beneath the surface of clay was a substratum of gravel. He removed the clay, which he used for brickmaking, drained and raised the whole level, using soil excavated for the construction of St. Katherine's Docks and, over the next thirty years, created London's most sought after residential district—Belgravia.

Following his usual practice he worked closely with the ground owners in the preparation of a comprehensive plan for the area, then undertook the building of roads, sewers and street lighting himself, all to a standard far ahead of their time. Once again plots were let on building agreements and various

## An international reputation

Thomas Cubitt's drawing for the Albion public house



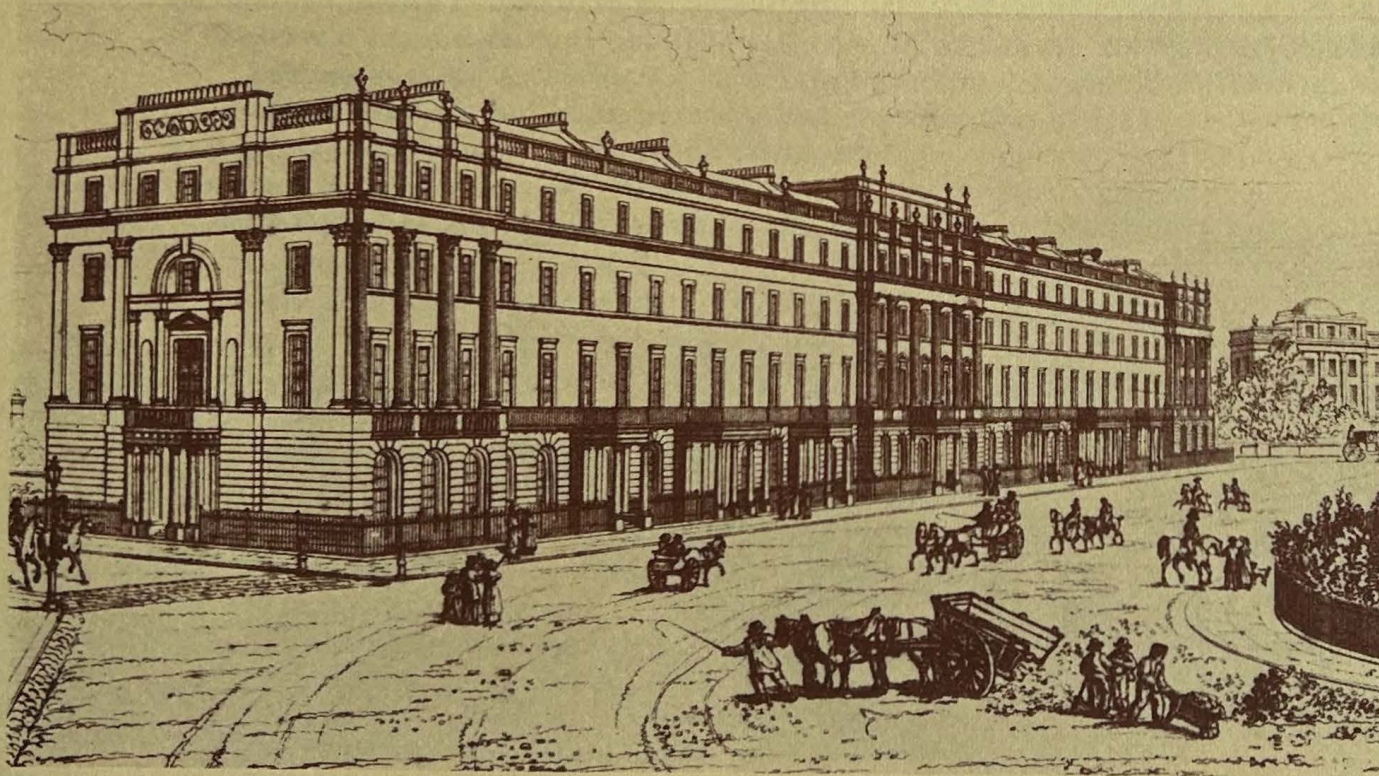


architects were involved, notably George Basevi who was responsible for the major part of Belgrave Square. Nevertheless, the contribution of Cubitt's own drawing offices, largely under the inspiration of Lewis it would appear, cannot be praised too highly, particularly in the magnificent, spacious terraces of Eaton Square and Lowndes Square which initiated a fashion in terrace design emulated by successive architects for many years to come.

However, even the breathtaking concept of Belgravia formed only part of Thomas's vision in 1825, his thirty-seventh year.

The area of the Five Fields leading South to the River was also included in his plans and on this he created what became known as 'Mr Cubitt's district'—Pimlico. Though not as spectacular either in layout or in social standing as Belgravia it perhaps gives more insight into Thomas Cubitt the man. "No other developer has had such absolute control over such a large area of London and the way in which he exercised this control pays great tribute to him as a benevolent autocrat, and to his standards as a developer".

Belgrave Square in 1827



Areas further afield added to his ever growing speculative commitments at that time. Two hundred and fifty acres in the village of Clapham four miles to the South of the City were also bought in 1825—eventually to become the first garden suburb, with detached houses standing in large plots, with over four miles of wide roads and many thousands of trees planted from his own nurseries. For many years Thomas himself was to live there.

The following year he began his only speculative venture outside London—at Brighton, where he built a total of thirty-seven houses—"the best built houses in Kemp Town".



The undertakings begun in 1825 were to demand a major proportion of Thomas's time and energies for the next twenty years. Their scope and daring were indeed breathtaking, far outstripping the concept of speculative work to cushion the leaner times of contracting.

Perhaps it was their very daring that worried the more cautious William. Perhaps it was simply the fact that Thomas required all his energies in the new ventures and that William had proved extremely capable at managing the contracting side in the previous two or three years. What is known is that from about this time they each went their own way.

The formal document splitting up the partnership was signed two years later, in 1827, and is believed to be the first legal instrument between the brothers. However, an amicable relationship continued and, for many years after, William's company carried out work for Thomas.

Unfortunately, very few records remain of the Company's contracting work carried out during those twenty years or so in which William was in sole charge. Undoubtedly the Company's reputation had grown rapidly. So had the geographical spread of its activities. Notable country houses were built in the early 1820s in Surrey and Kent and also as far afield as Gloucestershire.

The number of men had grown rapidly too. By 1828 William

employed about seven hundred on contracting work, while Thomas, whose speculative ventures were by then in full flood, had over one thousand men on his projects, including those on civil engineering work and brickmaking.

As mentioned earlier, the level of the Five Fields was raised by soil excavated for the construction of St. Katherine's Docks.

This project was a vast undertaking covering more than 23 acres, involving the demolition of an entire parish including an old hospital and the rehousing of over eleven thousand



## Separate ways

The Grays Inn Road works



people. William's Company played a major part in the new construction work, being responsible for the construction of over one million cubic feet of warehousing.

The early 1830s saw the construction of the new Fruit and Flower Market at Covent Garden and also two of London's great livery halls—the Fishmongers and the Ironmongers.

The 'railway boom' of the same period brought yet more work, culminating in the construction of Euston Station itself, where the concept of a railway platform at the same height as the carriage door was pioneered—an idea credited to William Cubitt. His Company was also responsible for the installation of the first practical electric telegraph system.

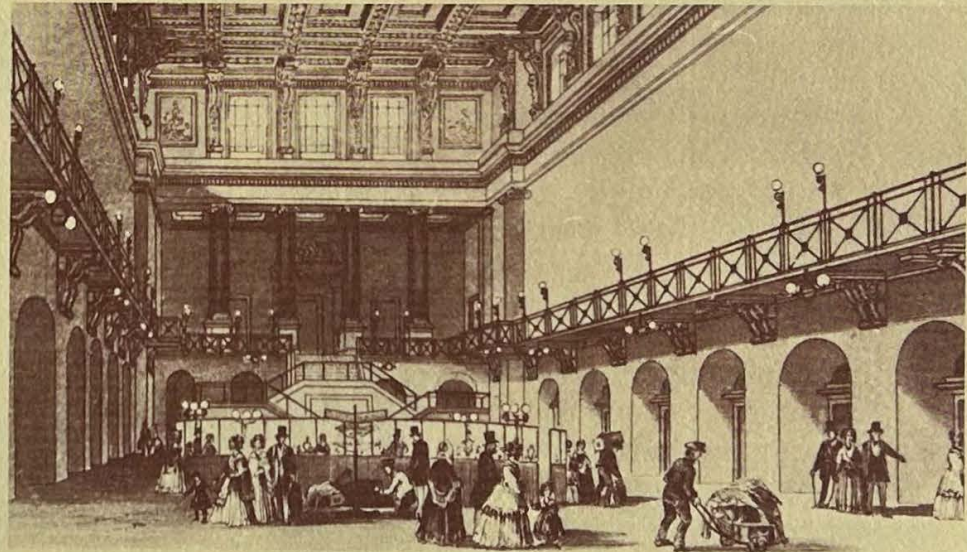
A completely new district of London—eventually to be known as Cubitt Town—came into being about this time when William's Company reclaimed the Isle of Dogs and constructed a new township, complete with churches, shops and public houses.

It was 1844 before William brought in any partners and another seven years before he retired from active participation in the Company's affairs. For over a quarter of a century he had led his Company to an undisputed position as London's leading builder and set the seal on a reputation for efficiency of performance and quality of workmanship that was to live on long after his death.

Covent Garden Market



The Great Hall at Euston Station





## Royal Patronage

In the meantime, what of Thomas?

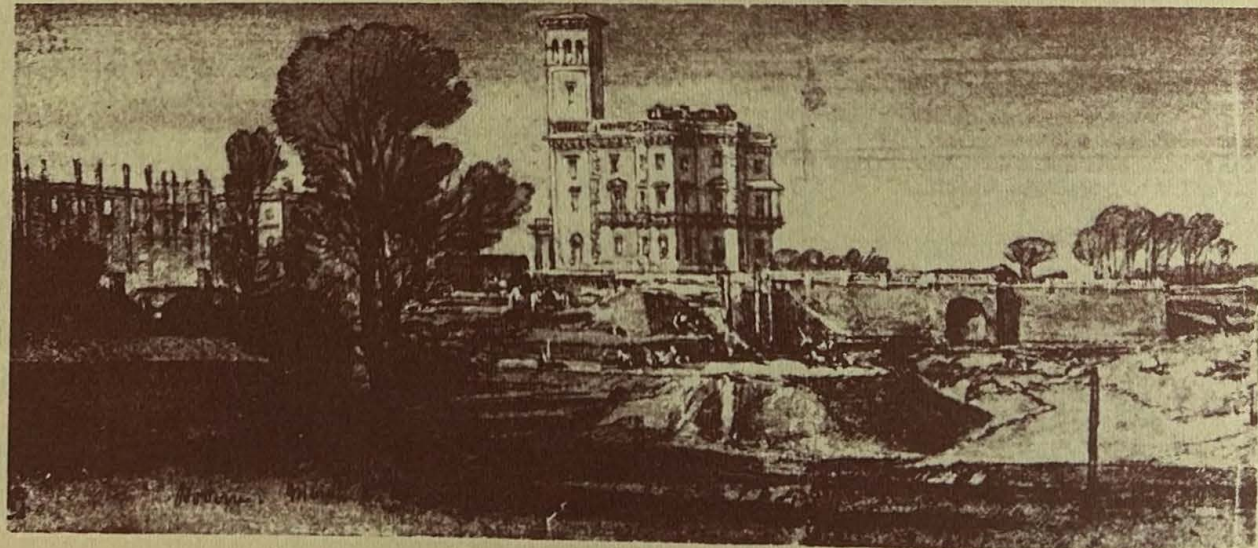
By 1840, his Belgravia and Pimlico operations were so extensive that he decided to build his own workshops close by at Millbank, although there is evidence to suggest that William's Company actually constructed it for him.

The following year saw Thomas's entry into the orbit of royal patronage when he was invited by the Prince Consort to design and build an extension to Osborne House on the Isle of Wight. Again, it appears that William's Company carried out much of the building work which was completed in 1845. Orders were then given for the demolition of the original house and construction of the new main block began. It was finished in 1849 to the delight of the royal couple and their growing family, becoming it is said their favourite home.

It was also to Thomas Cubitt that they turned when it was decided to build a new East wing at Buckingham Palace. Although it was refaced some fifty years later, in structure and proportion it is still the same today—the aspect of Buckingham Palace best known throughout the world. An interesting sidelight of this contract was that it called for the removal of Marble Arch from its position outside the Palace and its rebuilding on its present site.

The respect and affection of the royal couple is perhaps summed up by the Queen's own words. "Our dear Mr. Cubitt . . . a better, kinder hearted or more simple, unassuming man never breathed".

Osborne House under construction





## Ahead of their time

Indeed, Thomas Cubitt had become a respected national figure by his early forties, not only for his work but also as a social reformer and public benefactor. In this respect William also ranked highly. Many times in their career both brothers served on or appeared before various commissions.

Ahead of his time in so many ways, Thomas was particularly active in campaigning for both adequate sewerage for the city and for some form of 'clean air' legislation. He took great pains to eliminate smoke nuisance from his own works. He was also a passionate advocate for the provision of public open spaces and it is to his initiative and personal generosity that London is indebted for Battersea Park. Both brothers were active in the various bodies involved in improving the Thames embankment and, indeed, Thomas was directly responsible for the construction of three thousand feet at his own expense.

Thomas also played a significant part in the preparation of the Building Act of 1855 aimed at the protection of the building trade worker and eventually to become the present day Working Rule Agreement.

Both Thomas and William were liberal benefactors to churches, schools and various charities and, in particular, appear to have been benevolent employers, providing workmen's libraries, schoolrooms for workmen's children and even a subsidised canteen service. Their attitude towards their people is perhaps illustrated by Thomas's words on learning of the disastrous fire that destroyed his works in 1854. "Tell the men" he said, "that they shall be at work within a week and I will subscribe £600 towards buying them new tools". He was as good as his word.

Thomas Cubitt died sixteen months later, in December 1855.

The latter years of William's life were devoted to public affairs—he was elected MP for Andover in 1847 and was twice Lord Mayor of London. Among his philanthropic activities he inaugurated a fund for relief of the distressed cotton areas of Lancashire and, on his death in 1863, funeral sermons in his honour were preached in almost every town there and muffled peals rung in more than fifty churches.

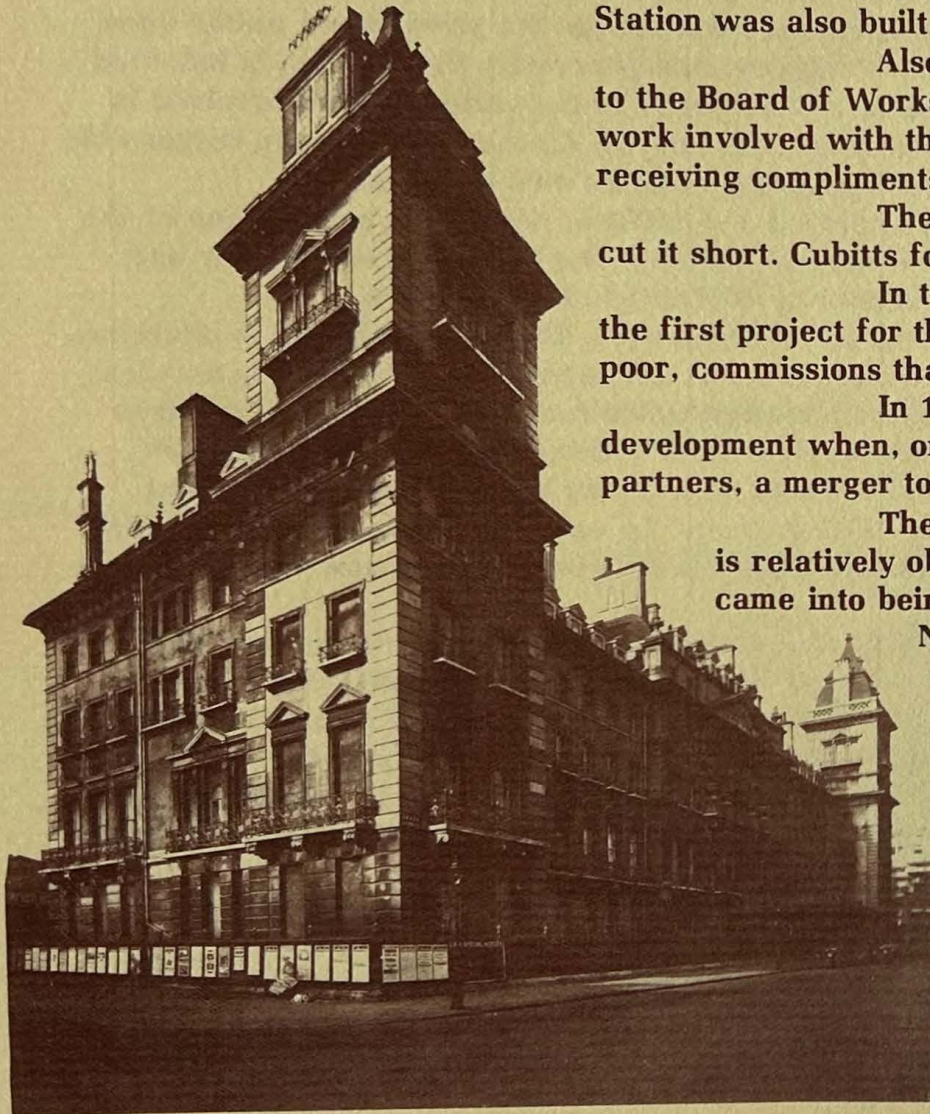
Yet there is grim humour perhaps in the fact that William Cubitt is reputed to have invented the treadmill.

Lewis Cubitt seems to have had little connection with his brothers' work from the early 1840s and pursued his career as an architect first in private practice and then as architect to the great Northern Railway, reaching a peak of success with his design of Kings Cross Station.



## William Cubitt & Co

The Great Western Hotel, Paddington



William Cubitt & Co., as his Company had become known when he first took in partners in 1844, was to continue under that name for nearly forty years, building still more on its already considerable reputation, and, at Grays Inn Road where around eight hundred men were now employed with well over two thousand on the many sites, the second half of the century began with another 'railway boom'. Broad Street and Fenchurch Street Stations were built in London and also Blackpool North Station. The Great Western Hotel at Paddington Station was also built at that time—then the largest hotel in London.

Also about this time the firm was appointed official carpenters to the Board of Works and, in consequence, was responsible for all the building work involved with the elaborate state funeral of the Duke of Wellington—receiving compliments for the decorous behaviour of their workmen.

The 'railway boom' was short lived—perhaps the Crimean War cut it short. Cubitts found themselves building huts for the army.

In the 1870s Smithfield Market was built and Cubitts also began the first project for the Peabody Trust, providing improved homes for London's poor, commissions that were to continue well into the 1900s.

In 1883 an important change took place in the Company's development when, on the retirement of the last of William Cubitt's original partners, a merger took place with the rival firm of Holland & Hannen.

The history of Holland & Hannen before its merger with Cubitts is relatively obscure and little is known beyond the fact that the Company came into being when, in the early part of the century, a certain Nicholas Winsland formed a building organisation in order to develop some of his own land in Bloomsbury.

Subsequently he was joined by a partner, Henry Holland, who eventually was succeeded by his brother Richard. On Nicholas Winsland's death, a nephew, Benjamin Hannen, came into partnership with Richard Holland and under their guidance the firm began to prosper until, by the 1870s, it was a serious rival to Cubitts.

Such was the rivalry of the two firms that, despite the merger, they continued in the fiercest competition with each other for over a quarter of a century, only ceasing to do so when they became the one company of Holland & Hannen and Cubitts Ltd in 1909.



Waring & Gillow, Oxford St.  
Cubitts' stonemasons shop about 1905



During this period of rivalry many notable London contracts were undertaken including the Prudential Head Office in High Holborn, built by Holland & Hannen and Waring & Gillow's in Oxford Street built by Cubitts.

An outstanding example of Cubitts' advanced techniques for the time was the contract for the Mount Nelson Hotel in Capetown for which joinery, decorative plaster work, completed windows and plumbing assemblies were all manufactured in the Grays Inn Road works, then dismantled, carefully packed and eventually re-assembled on site.

This contract led to more overseas work, including the new Government House in Salisbury, Rhodesia and subsequently to the setting up of a South African Company.

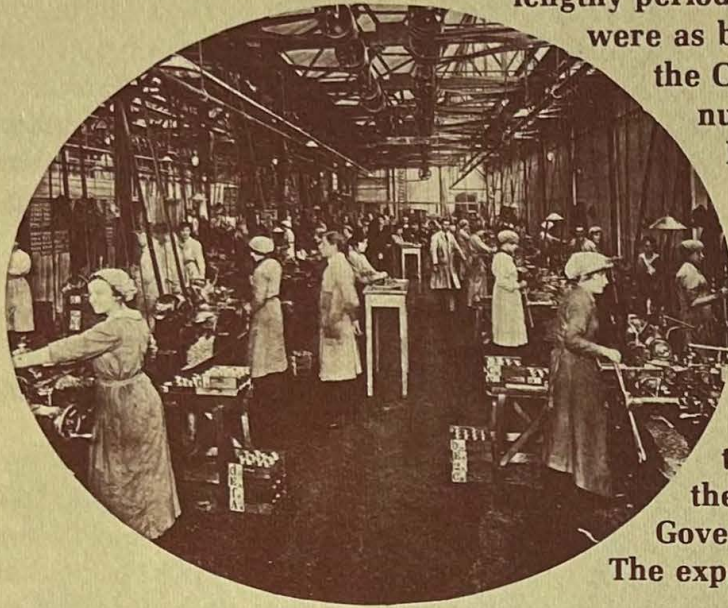
Another feature of the Company's work during this period was the provision of permanent building and maintenance staff at the British Museum, the Natural History Museum and the Bank of England.

The Company pioneered the use of reinforced concrete at this time and also played a part in a different kind of pioneering venture when responsible for the construction of two Marconi telegraph stations as well as the Marconi factory at Chelmsford.





Grays Inn Road as a munitions factory



King George V visits the Chilwell factory



In the few years leading up to the first World War, despite a lengthy period of unrest in the industry, Holland & Hannen and Cubitts were as busy as ever. One of Liverpool's Merseyside landmarks, the Cunard Building, was completed in 1913 as well as a number of other contracts in the North West. Work on London's new County Hall had just begun.

On the outbreak of war Grays Inn Road became a munitions factory, eventually to produce some twenty three million fuses. Heavy automatic machinery for the purpose was brought over from the United States entirely on the directors' own initiative.

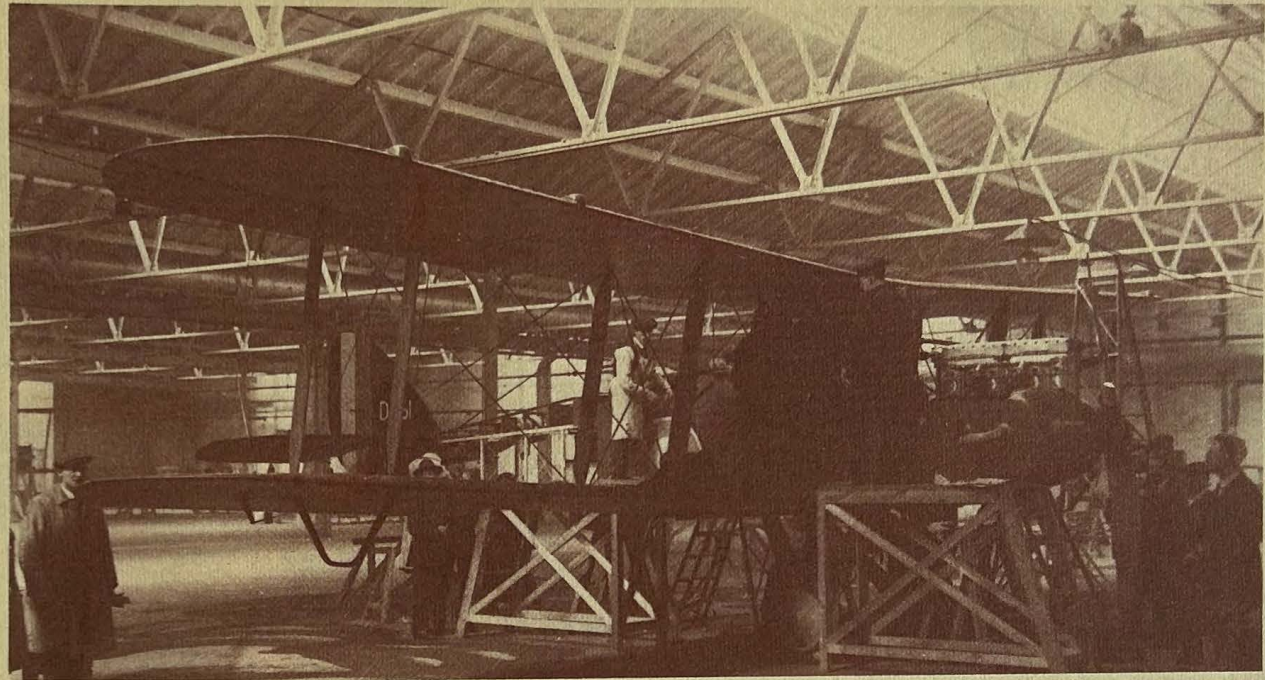
Building and civil engineering activities moved back to Holland & Hannen's old offices at Hyde Street and from there many notable wartime contracts were carried out, the Company, like most other large concerns, coming under Government control in 1916.

The expertise developed by the Company on the Mount Nelson

Hotel contract in Capetown was put to good use on a series of contracts for Admiralty wireless stations to be built in England and then shipped overseas to such remote spots as the Falkland Islands, Newfoundland, Aden and Singapore. In all, twelve such commissions were carried out and about five hundred Cubitt men went overseas to carry out the final construction.

So successful was this operation that Government contracts poured in—ranging from new stabling at the Shirehampton Remount Depot to a factory for manufacturing tanks at Chateau Roux in France. Other notable wartime contracts were the vast shell-filling factory at Chilwell, where the first completed shell was produced only twelve months after the start of the contract, and two plants for the manufacture of 'oleum'—a process new to this country—at Queensferry near Chester and at Avonmouth.



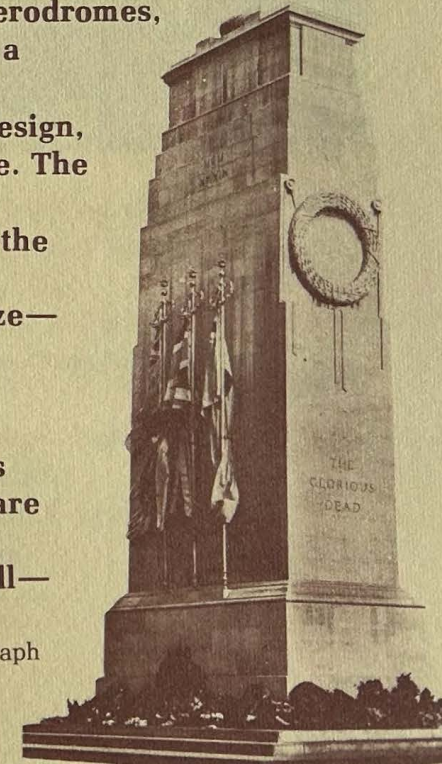


**There were many contracts for army camps and aerodromes, also for two aircraft factories—Handley Page's at Cricklewood and a completely new factory at Croydon—worthy of particular mention.**

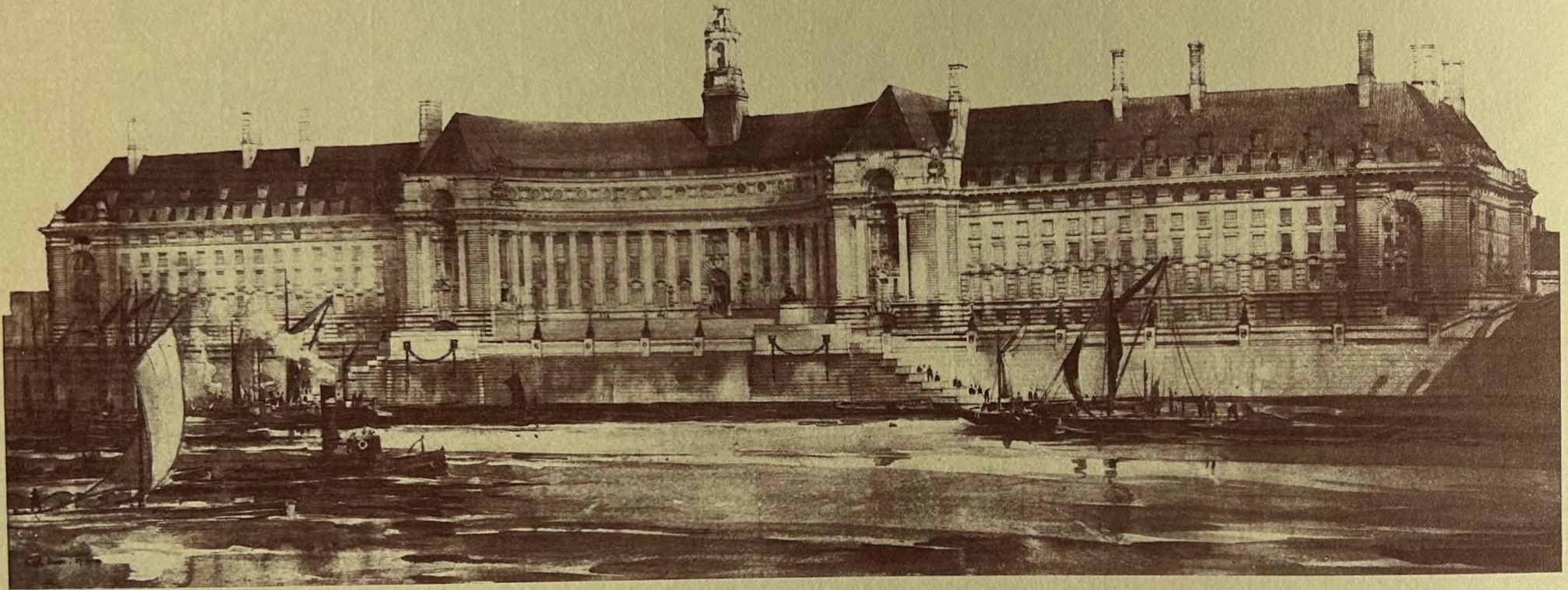
**In 1917 Cubitts were invited by the Air Board to design, build, equip and manage this factory starting with a 'greenfield' site. The site layout was approved in September, plant installation began in November and the first aircraft was delivered the following June—the first of two hundred and fifty De Havilland DH9s produced by the Company. Altogether this factory—fourteen million cubic feet in size—employed a labour force of over seven thousand and, in addition to manufacturing aircraft, produced some two thousand 'gun fire' control gears.**

**When peace finally came at the end of 1918 it was Cubitts that built the Cenotaph. The final design was approved a bare two weeks before the Peace Procession of July 1919 and for that occasion it was a wood and plaster structure that stood in Whitehall—to be replaced the following year in stone.**

The Cenotaph







County Hall

Traditional building activities had got under way again with the resumption of the County Hall contract, first started in 1913. But the war years had brought with them many changes in experience and outlook for the Company and, for the first time in their hundred years existence, Cubitts sought to expand outside the construction industry.

## Diversification

It appears that as far back as June 1916 Cubitts' board had discussed the feasibility of going into motor car production and the following year had also studied the markets for motor cycles and agricultural machinery. The experience of mass production techniques and the similarities to aircraft production swung the balance.

In October 1918 plans were drawn up for the production of the Cubitt car. It was introduced to the public six months later—in April 1919—at an





The Cubitt Car

inclusive price of £298. 'Autocar' described it as "... one of the most interesting propositions at present before the motorist. The success of the design will be desired by all, since it is a frank attempt to rival in this country the low-priced American car".

In its early days it was an undoubted success. A new factory was built for its production at Aylesbury. But difficulties arose after only four years and, in the summer of 1925, the Cubitt Engineering Company went into voluntary liquidation.

One other departure from the mainstream activities was made by Cubitts at that time—the construction of concrete boats. The first of these

was launched in February 1918, but there proved to be no real market for them and the project was eventually abandoned.

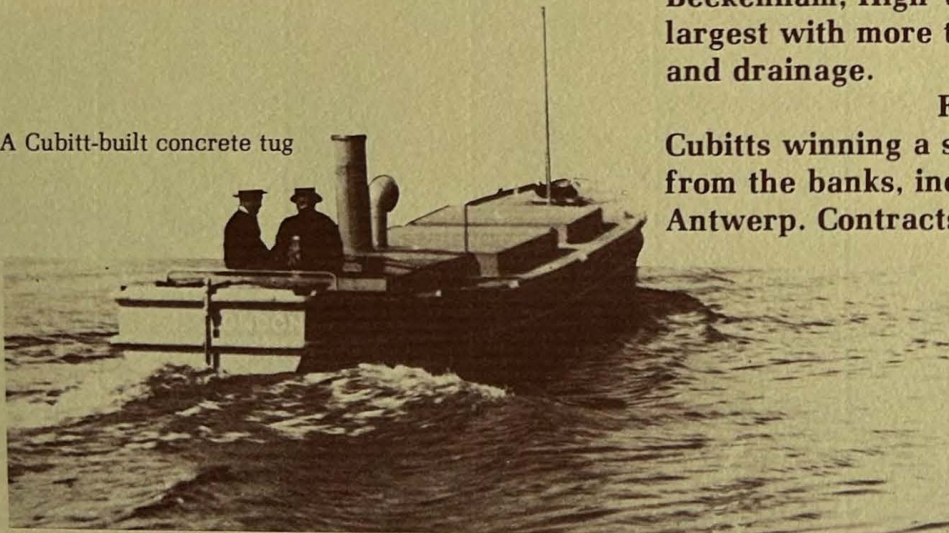
Apart from the extensive commitment at County Hall there were few prestige building contracts to be won by Cubitts, or any other contractor, in those early post-war years—certainly not in the commercial field. However the LCC provided other work for Cubitts in the shape of their new housing estates planned in and around London.

Four such contracts were carried out around 1920, at Beckenham, High Wycombe, Banbury and Downham—the latter being by far the largest with more than seven thousand houses and also churches, shops, roads and drainage.

From 1922 the market for commercial buildings picked up with Cubitts winning a sizeable share, to which could be added a steady flow of work from the banks, including an unusual contract—the Westminster Bank in Antwerp. Contracts at Guys, the Westminster and the Middlesex Hospitals were also carried out in this period, as well as the construction of the Duveen wing at the Tate Gallery.

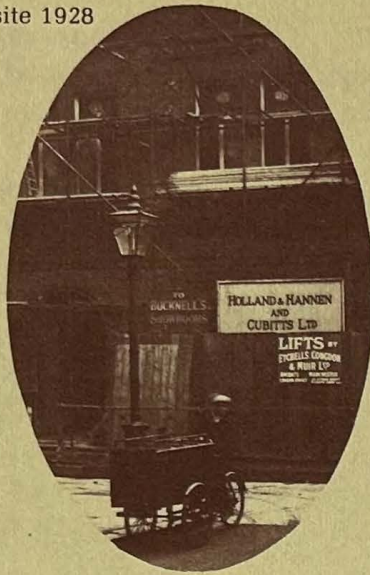
Among all these successful projects, one perhaps stands out—Ironmongers Hall. The original, an eighteenth century building, had been destroyed in 1917 and a great deal of thought had gone into creating a suitable replacement later to be described as a "gem of craftsmanship".

A Cubitt-built concrete tug





The Middlesex Hospital site 1928



The years leading up to the Second World War were difficult years. It was a time of change—and not only for the construction industry. There were labour troubles in the mid 1920s followed by the deep depression of the early 1930s and not until 1937 did the situation return to full vigour.

In the construction industry there had been a steady development in the use of iron, steel and concrete—particularly in reinforced concrete.

The wider use of heating, ventilation, lifts and escalators had brought specialist sub-contract companies into greater importance. Problems of organisation had been greatly increased too, not only by the size and complexity of contracts but also by their geographical spread.

In Cubitts too it was a time of change. Many of the specialist activities previously undertaken at Grays Inn Road were shut down. Civil engineering work was no longer undertaken and most of the heavy plant was sold. Projects of a speculative nature were undertaken in preference to tendering for work.

Many of those who had guided the Company through the difficult war years had retired and new blood was brought in. Among those who joined the board at that time was the Hon. Roland Cubitt, later Lord Ashcombe, who became chairman in 1930—the first direct Cubitt descendant to hold office since William Cubitt retired.

It was in that year also that Cubitts moved to Queen Anne's Gate which remained the Company's headquarters for the next forty four years.

Two notable contracts helped Cubitts come through the difficult times around 1930—the virtual complete reconstruction of the Middlesex Hospital which occupied the Company for many years, and the construction of Unilever House at Blackfriars. This was a vast undertaking—a steel frame building sitting on a concrete raft and containing no less than two hundred and fifty miles of electric wiring, five thousand tons of strengthening steel and four hundred miles of steel bars. It has twelve automatic lifts and houses three thousand people. For all that it took only fourteen months to complete.

Unilever House, Blackfriars





Two other notable London contracts from the same period were the Senate House of London University, built on the site of some of Thomas Cubitt's Bloomsbury undertakings, and South Africa House in Trafalgar Square.

During the years that Germany was being shaped for the war that was to come, the building industry in this country was once more beginning

to get in full stride. De Havilland's factory at Hatfield, Thames Board Mills at Purfleet and the Park Royal Brewery were all Cubitt contracts in the years up to 1939. When the war began, contracts for Thomas Hedley at West Thurrock and ICI at Holford in Cheshire were already underway, but by then so were Government contracts for a central ordnance depot at Longtown and an RAF hospital at Ely. As a whole, the construction industry was in much better heart than it had been at the start of the 1914 conflict.

Cubitts' earliest wartime contracts were for the construction of air raid shelters for Government buildings, one of the most elaborate of these being at the General Headquarters at Storey's Gate—a veritable fortress from where Winston Churchill and his staff planned and directed many historic operations. Others were built by Cubitts at Buckingham Palace, 10 Downing Street, the Admiralty, the Air Ministry, the Royal Courts of Justice, Horseguards Parade—and Wormwood Scrubs Prison.

The War Cabinet Offices



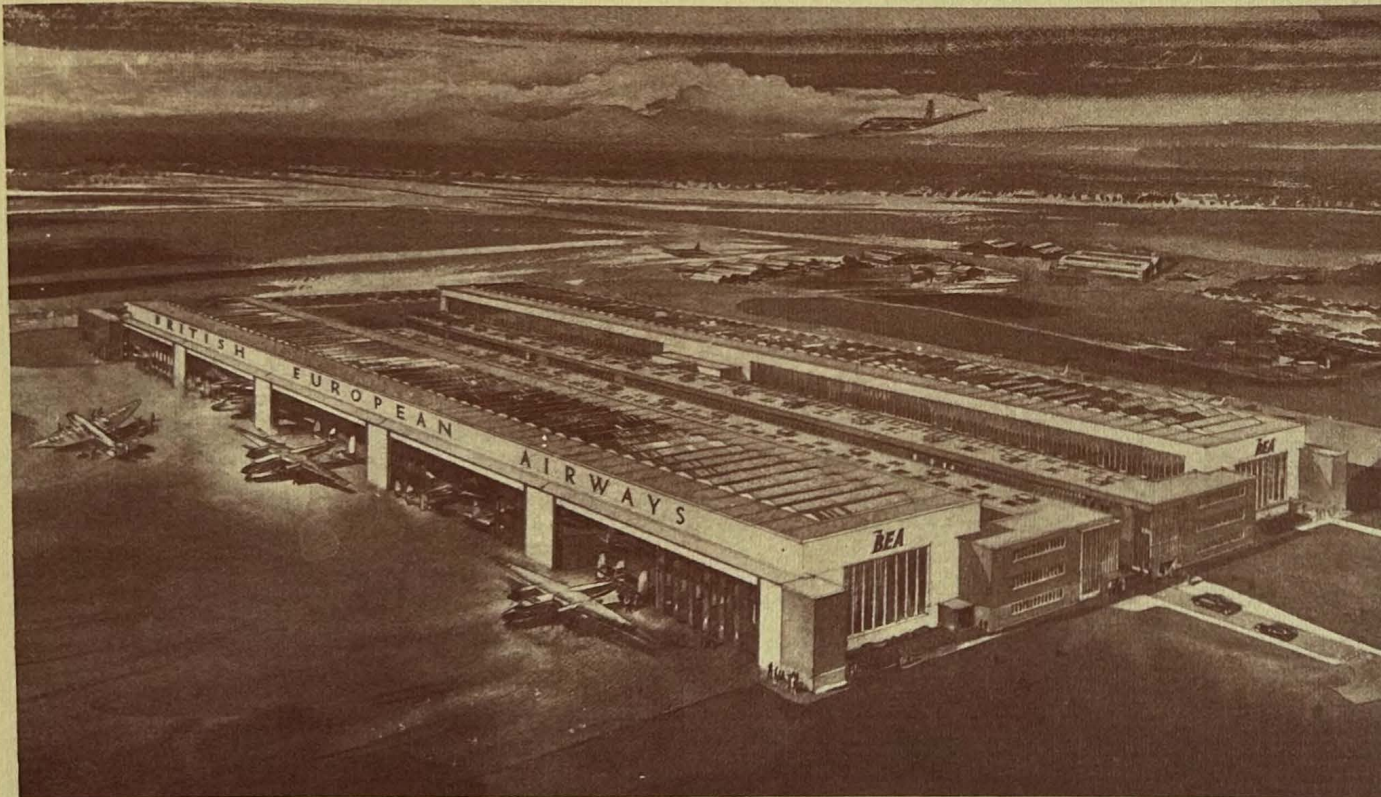


Another specialist activity—growing largely from Cubitts' wartime experience on the Mulberry Harbour project—was the development in the UK of techniques for the use of pre-stressed and post-stressed concrete.

Concrete Development Company Ltd was set up by Cubitts at Iver, Bucks, the first work undertaken being the production of structural beams and columns for part of its own factory. A number of consultants were beginning to take an interest in Cubitts' new developments and shortly afterwards the Company was awarded a contract for E S & A Robinson's factory in Bristol, to be constructed by the same technique.

This was followed shortly by an enquiry for the design and construction of a new maintenance base for BEA at London Airport. It provoked keen interest among both contractors and consultants since it envisaged for the first time the harnessing together of both the professional and commercial resources of the construction industry.

The BEA maintenance base



Cubitts submitted a design based upon the use of composite concrete construction on a scale never before used in this country, with beam spans of up to one hundred and fifty feet. This design won the contract which, since it was completed in 1952, has attracted engineers from all over the world and is generally acknowledged to have represented a considerable advance in concrete design and construction.

About this time civil engineering activities were expanding also and, following the 1953 flood disaster in the Fens district, Cubitts carried out the rebuilding of the banks of the River Great Ouse and nearby stretches of the sea wall. On another civil engineering contract—the construction of a



bridge for British Rail—the Company employed the technique of de-watering an embankment by electro-osmosis for the first time in this country.

Overseas activities in the post-war period got under way in 1948 when Cubitts carried out the rebuilding of Castries, the capital of St. Lucia in the West Indies, which had been virtually destroyed by fire the year before.

By 1952 the Company had turned its attention to the Middle

East where a number of contracts were undertaken, notably in Kuwait and, within a few years to Burma, where a major industrial project was undertaken, then to New Zealand where the massive Roxburgh Dam project was the forerunner of many more contracts to come.

By the early 1960s the UK construction industry of the present day was beginning to emerge—the major contractors playing an ever increasing part in the total construction process. Cubitts, though not in the unassailable position of their Victorian heyday, were firmly established as one of the best.

Work ranged throughout the country and across a broad spectrum of clients. In London the Bank of England New Change Building was built—the first major post-war construction project in the City. The first of many projects at the Houses of Parliament was started.

The Bank of England New Change building





The Hyde Park underpass was built, so were New Zealand House and the West London Air Terminal. Numerous commercial developments were undertaken, both in London and elsewhere—the Birmingham Post and Mail Building for example.

Industrial work was undertaken in the North West for Pilkington, Ford and I.C.I.; in Scotland and the North East for the National Coal Board. University work was carried out in Bristol, Liverpool and Birmingham. Housing still played a major part in the Company's activities. 'Design and build' contracts were carried out as varied as the Pressed Steel complex in Swindon and the Trawsfynydd Nuclear Power Station in Wales.

In the late 1960s negotiations took place with the Drake & Gorham Scull Group and, in May 1969, Cubitts joined the group, which subsequently became known as Drake & Cubitt Holdings Ltd. With a broad range of activities spanning building, civil engineering, environmental engineering, mechanical and electrical services, and property development, it became one of the largest groups of its kind in the UK, reflecting in its multi-discipline skills geared to the construction needs of its day the very principles upon which Thomas and William Cubitt first set up their business more than one hundred and sixty years ago.

To conclude this brief history of Cubitts what better way than to focus attention of just one contract—Thamesmead—the largest single contract ever awarded by a local authority.

Since 1966 Cubitts have been responsible for building the start of yet another completely new London district on what was originally mostly swampland. The preparation of the site closely follows Thomas Cubitt's work on the Five Fields.

In the first three stages of the project four thousand dwellings are included, together with schools, shops, factories and public houses. There are roads, bridges and canals, a lake for recreation, plenty of open spaces and children's playgrounds.

It is an undertaking so vast that it has already changed the map of London again. But planned as a complete environment. Constructed efficiently. To the highest standards.

Thomas and William would have approved.

