

Our Vanishing Heritage

An article by **Bob Stevens**

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Did you know that the recently demolished Stewarts & Lloyds tube works on the side of Mucklows Hill near Halesowen was first opened in 1860? Built on wooded parkland (Coombswood) owned by Lord Lyttleton of Frankley, the works were located alongside the Dudley No 2 Canal which opened even earlier, in 1798 and went on to serve Lapel and Selly Oak.

The first proprietor of the works was Abraham Barnsley, a Patent Tube Manufacturer for gas, water, steam and bedstead purposes. The works passed through several ownerships before coming into the hands of Lloyd & Lloyd in 1870. In 1903 Lloyd & Lloyd merged with A & J Stewart & Menzies of Glasgow and the firm was known as Stewart & Lloyds for the next sixty-four years.

During both the first and second World War the works manufactured shell and mortar casings. A design team from this steelworks manufactured and installed the greater part of PLUTO (the Pipe Line Under The Ocean) laid on the bottom of the English Channel to fuel the "D" Day landings taking place on the 5th June, 1944.

While the site will doubtless be landscaped with grass and trees it is still another bit of Britain's engineering past that has gone to make way for yet more warehouses full of foreign imports!

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