



WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

BULLETIN



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WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

Founded in 1983

PRESIDENT
Harry Gallery

TRUSTEES
Chairman: Rev. Andrew
Wakefield
Secretary: Nicholas Hart

OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
Alison Cousins
Eric Shaw
Roger Steele
Michael Taylor

GUEST EDITOR
Michael Taylor

Editorial

Recently we have written to the local Guardian over our continued frustration of seeing it quoted that William Morris was at Merton Abbey Mills. He was never there. Merton Abbey Mills is the former home of Littler & Co and then Liberty's. Morris had his works downstream where Trellis House and the Sainsbury's/M&S complex now stand. I hope that Merton Council will get the locations of both works correct with their plans for Colliers Wood. I have to say I am not hopeful after seeing the centre piece in the last copy of 'My Merton'.

Sadly David Sarra who produced our last edition of the Bulletin has left us to focus on his art work. He currently has some of his work on display at Merton Abbey Mills along with other artists. He certainly brought some new ideas and new thinking to our approach at the museum in the short time he was with us. We wish him all the best for the future and hope he may return at some point.

So here is our latest offering for you. We hope you enjoy it and as always we are happy to take your feedback.

Mick Taylor

Cover Picture: The Ops Team with cheque from the Morden Fun Day.

Operations Team Report

The team has formal meetings every month on average, and without an administrator, we all currently share duties such as school and group bookings, all general administration, organising meetings etc. If anyone feels they could take on some of this work, no matter how little, it would mean that we could gradually get back to our original roles in the museum. At present, many long-term objectives are just not being met because we have to prioritise day-to-day administration.

Out and About

We supported the **Morden Fun Day** on June 19th in Morden Park. Despite high winds we managed to batten down the exhibits and do a few prints. We later received a donation of £50 from S.E. Events, as a thank-you. See the front cover for a picture of the Ops Team with the cheque.



On July 9th we had a stall to support an evening talk on **Liberty Fabrics**, at Mitcham Lane Baptist Church. (see separate report) We also took part in the **Mitcham Cricket Club and Green** evening on July 29th on the Cricket Green. All was well until the heavens opened.

On behalf of the museum Mick Taylor attended a meeting of the **West London Museums Group** at Fulham Palace on September 8th. This group has not met for some time and there was a timely move to develop a volunteer website. Two days later, Alison Cousins took part in the second meeting of the new South & East London Network at Greenwich Heritage Centre. The theme was disaster planning and featured an illustrated talk on the huge fire at the Cuming museum in Southwark.

Walks and Talks

At the start of August Eric gave a talk on the **Surrey Iron Railway** in Morden Library during one of their weekly coffee mornings.

Alison Cousins gave her ubiquitous talk on **Lavender** at West Barnes Library on August 18th – Mary Hart's lavender bags were a sell-out.

Mick Taylor has given a series of talks on **Mills of the River Wandle** to four separate groups of the **Friends in St. Helier** during September.

Mick gave a similar talk for participants in Merton's **Celebrating Age** programme who visited the museum on September 23rd. Following this, Eric Shaw also talked to them about the Surrey Iron Railway. Both talks were much appreciated.

Mick took the members of the **Aperture Purley Photography Club** on a second walk along the Wandle. This time from St Mary's Church, Beddington to The Water Tower at Carshalton.

Visits

Sheila Harris has kindly agreed to take a group to the **Liberty in Fashion** exhibition at the Fashion and Textile Museum in Bermondsey in November. We have also lent a temporary donation on behalf of one of our members for this.

A visit is also planned next Spring to **Parkstead House** (formerly Manresa House) in Roehampton.

School Outreach

Despite this being the school holidays, a Heritage Workshop was held at Benedict School on 25th August for several local schools, organised by Communities First.

Mick Taylor and Roger Steele ran our printing session for 23 pupils.

Jackie Tucker had already provided a detailed paper for them for their planned trip around Ravensbury Park.

Volunteers

We held an evening meeting on July 15th so that volunteers who would never normally meet could do so. Ten people attended, which was encouraging, but our main problem remains getting cover for Sunday opening, and we were recently unable to open one Sunday because of this. We welcomed Charles MacDonald as a front of house assistant who has also been a real asset with his DIY skills.

Sadly, we have now said farewell to David Sarra Chueca who has helped us with the summer exhibition, and given us so many great ideas to improve our displays.

He has recently had some of his art work featured at Merton Abbey Mills so we wish him all the best in the pursuit of his career.

Research

Jacqui Tucker has been helping the Buist family with information for their biography of James Wagland , who was a master silk printer at Garratt Print works.

AGM

This will be held on Thursday 12th November at 7.30 pm, with light refreshments available from 7pm. It will take place in the meeting room of the Merton Tenants & Residents Association, which is next to the Citizens' Advice office about 100 yards up London Road from the museum, just before the bus stop outside Glebe Court.

Wandle Trail Map

At long last we have produced the second edition of our map. Due to so many changes currently in progress along the trail, we decided not to do a major print run, but to have a print on demand option and to make it available via our website. Print copies are available at £1.50 from the museum shop.



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There are three versions on the website. These can be found in The Wandle>The Wandle Trial section.

There is a single sided A4 version, a double sided A5 version (this is the one we sell at the museum) and a mobile device friendly version.

Any comments and feedback on the map are very welcome.

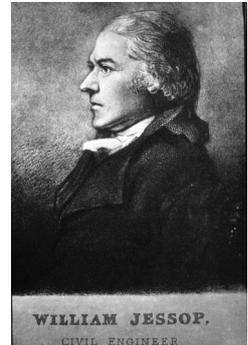
Our Website (wandle.org)

You may be noticing some changes to the website. We hope you like them. We try to update the Home Page at least monthly. So make sure you always check it. We are considering a members only section which may include the Peter McGow mills information and his Surrey Iron Railway research along with photographs from our archive. What do think? Please let us know.

Surrey Iron Railway

This is a summary of a talk to be given by Eric Shaw at the Heritage Centre, Morden Library on July 7th 2015.

William Jessop, a leading canal engineer, was consulted by some businessmen about building a canal along the Wandle Valley to carry goods to the Thames at Wandsworth. After his investigation, he suggested that a railway be built instead, to save using the river water to feed a canal, in his report on 9th December 1799.



After submission to Parliament, it was authorised on 21st May 1801, and was the first transport act authorised. The last one under the same procedure was the Croydon Tramlink Bill, on 21st July 1994. Now schemes fall under the Transport and Works Act of 1992.

The Surrey Iron Railway was not the first public railway, there were others, but it was the first authorised by Parliament, which makes it unique. It was officially opened on 26th July 1803 but complete construction had not been finished and two more acts were needed to raise sufficient money to complete the project, one on 12th March 1805, and another on 3rd July 1806.



A model of the Surrey Iron Railway at the museum.

There was a branch near Earlsfield to the Garratt Oil Mills, and another at Mitcham to the Shepley Mills at Hackbridge. There was also a connection to the Croydon canal basin at what is now West Croydon bus station, via the canal tramway at Pitlake. So at that time the town of Croydon was also unique in that it was connected to other places by road, by canal, and by rail.

One other connection at Pitlake was to the Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Railway, which never went to Godstone. None of these projects were a success: the Croydon canal finished in 1836, the Croydon, Merstham and Godstone Railway in 1839, and the Surrey Iron Railway in 1846. Parts of the routes of all three were subsequently taken over by the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway.

I often wonder how many people who travel on Tramlink between Mitcham and Waddon Marsh realise that they are on part of the route of the Surrey Iron Railway. Not many I suspect.



A picture of the type of track used by the SIR. Very different to that used by the trams today.

Some years ago, Ray Leyden approached Merton Council, before Merantun Way was built, to see if they would erect a silhouette of a horse and wagons on some spare land in Christchurch Road, but was unsuccessful. The Council use an outline of a waterwheel as their logo. Waterwheels, unlike the Surrey iron Railway, are not unique. I suppose an outline of a waterwheel is simpler to reproduce.

Eric Shaw

Thank You

The museum was very pleased to receive the following message from the Mayor of Merton following the opening of our new exhibition.

Copy of message to be inserted.

Liberty Fabrics



On July 9th, we were invited to a talk given by Roger Wates of the furnishings and upholstery shop E & A Wates, in Streatham. The location was the Mitcham Lane Baptist Church and the event linked in with the Streatham Festival Arts Trail.

We took a sample of our printing blocks, fabrics, a mall and a selection of merchandise for a small stall on the stage, and joined David Luff's personal Liberty memorabilia, and Mary Hart's scarves, blocks and samples. We had also loaned our model of the Liberty Silk Mills and the Liberty coat of arms.

Roger's talk covered the history of the shop and the Liberty dynasty and of course the Merton connections. There were then presentations by two members of staff from Liberty's on the

development of the latest Liberty Art Fabrics collection with some stunning images of both the new and traditional designs.

In the back rooms, Wates had also laid on all the new samples of wallpapers and furnishing fabrics, along with some items of furniture upholstered with the new designs.

It was a very useful event for us as it was aimed at a very distinctive audience, and we were able to provide an insight to the printing techniques which preceded those in use for Liberty's today.

Alison Cousins

Photo by Nicholas Hart

Gunpowder and the River Wandle

One of the items that Roger looked at for our new exhibition 'A Time of Anniversaries' was gunpowder and if it had been produced by the mills on the River Wandle at the time of the Battle of Waterloo. Sadly it had not. A quick check of David Saxby's 'Mills of the River Wandle' showed that mills on the river had produced gunpowder in the period from the early 1650s until 1727. So what conflicts was the gunpowder produced for?

Well we were certainly not without conflicts during this period. The English Civil War had just finished in 1651. Oliver Cromwell began his rule in 1653 and was to remain in power until 1659. In 1652 we had the First Dutch War which lasted until 1654. Then in 1660 Charles II took the throne and during his reign was the Great Fire of London in 1666.



Picture from Snipview.com

Sixteen barrels of gunpowder from Hackbridge Mills were used to create the fire-break that stopped the fire spreading. In 1665 the Second War had started and this lasted until 1667. This was followed by the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-1674) which was part of the larger Franco Dutch War of 1672-1678. In 1688 The Glorious Revolution took

place with the overthrow of King James II of England by William III (William of Orange). Things get wrapped up with the gunpowder industry on the Wandle with the War of the Spanish Succession that took place 1701-1714. Britain took control of Gibraltar in 1704 and it became our territory with the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Gunpowder was also supplied to the colonies in 1672 where the English had control. The American Revolution (better known as the American War of Independence) didn't start until 1775. To end this history piece the Treaty of the Union took effect on 1st May 1707. This joined England, Scotland and Wales into what we today know as Great Britain.

I am not going to go into a long piece on the mills and gunpowder production on the river. Most of the gunpowder produced by the mills on the river was made at Hackbridge Mills and Garrett Mill, Wandsworth. Wimbledon Mill in Copper Mill Lane was used from around 1672 to produce gunpowder. The gunpowder production started at Hackbridge Mills was of very poor quality. Things did improve and gunpowder production by the mills was very successful from 1656. Most of the gunpowder produced was used by the admiralty. No surprise given our wars against the Dutch. The most successful gunpowder producer was Josiah Dewye and to a lesser degree Abel Richardson. He had been at Hackbridge Mill when the poor quality gunpowder was produced but went on to build Garrett Mill and be a successful producer of gunpowder. If you wish to know more please take a look at Peter McGow's notes about the mills on our web site (<http://www.wandle.org/mills/millsindex.html>) or visit the museum to see them in our archive.

Mick Taylor

Blogs and the Wandle

By now most will have heard of blogs. According to the Oxford Dictionary a blog is:

‘A regularly updated website or web page, typically one ran by an individual or small group, that is written in an informal or conversational style.’

There are blogs that inform us of work that involves the River Wandle. The following is a couple of them:

The Building Exploratory (<http://buildingexploratory.blogspot.co.uk/>)

They have been working on the Wandle Treasures Map which is now completed. This is can be seen on their 2nd October 2015 entry. There are also a number of other items on the river.

Wandle Trust

(<http://www.wandletrust.org/>)

Gives updates of work taking place along the river.

Then after these blogs posted by a company or organisation there is those posted by individuals:

Weekend Notes by Bryony Harrison

<http://www.weekendnotes.co.uk/wandle-industrial-museum/>

Diverting Journeys by Jessica Jovie

<https://divertingjourneys.wordpress.com/2013/05/01/london-wandle-industrial-museum/>

Sy's prints and Stuff by Sy (one issue with some blogs that you never get to know the name of the person!)

<http://sysprints.blogspot.co.uk/2014/09/wandle-industrial-museum.html>

Individual blogs are based on someone's opinion. Saying that they can include points that organisations should take on even us. Of course none of this is of use if you are not 'online' or 'have access to the web'. Maybe you are better off? For those of us who do have access they make an interesting read.



Dates for the Diary

- 16th October Closing date for Wandle Valley Photographic Competition. For further information go to:
<http://www.wandlephoto.com/> Or pick up a flyer at the museum.
- 25th October Volunteers Meeting from 1pm at the museum.
- 12th November Annual General Meeting. See the Operations Team Report on page 3 for details.
- November 2015 Members and Volunteers outing to the **Liberty in Fashion** exhibition. Exact date to be confirmed. If you would like to attend then please let us know.
- January 2016 Members and Volunteers New Year lunch. No details yet but bear it in mind!



Museum Mentor: Chris Taft, British Postal Museum and Archive.
Museum Advisor: Yvette Shepherd, Museum of London (Docklands).

A full colour version of this newsletter is available online at www.wandle.org. If any subscriber is happy to receive the newsletter by email, could you please send a request to office@wandle.org. This helps us to reduce our costs.

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Company No 01792482, Charity No 288655.

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OPEN: Every Wednesday 1 ~ 4 pm;  
Every Sunday 2 ~ 5 pm.  
(The Museum may be closed some Bank Holiday weekends)

The Museum is also open to schools and groups by appointment.

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Admission: Adults 50p, Children & Senior Citizens 20p

The Wandle Industrial Museum would like to point out that the views of contributors to this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Museum. We would be happy to give the right to reply to anyone who finds the content contentious.

All contributions and news items gratefully received and appreciated - please feel free to let us know at any time - telephone or write or email to office@wandle.org