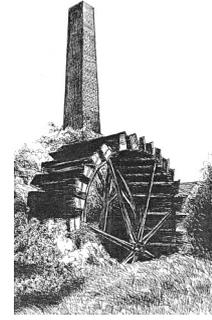


# WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM



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# BULLETIN

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# Contents

Operations Team Report	1
Brewery Well	2
Stories from R.F. White & Co Ltd	3
Our Cover Picture	4
Wandle Art Festival	6
Draining the Wandle	7
Volunteer Focus	8
Dates for the Diary	9

## WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

### PRESIDENT

Harry Galley

### TRUSTEES

Chair: Fr David Pennells,  
Nicholas Hart, John Hawks  
and John Harding.

### OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

Alison Cousins, Eric Shaw,  
Roger Steele, and Michael  
Taylor.

# Editorial

The summer edition of our bulletin is late this year. The reason being that the museum has been playing catch up after the pandemic. We now have talks booked into 2024!

In July we held our second *Wandle Art Festival*. John Sheridan has been leading a series of walks. The last of which is on 22nd September and we have completed the main part of the *Changing the View* Project. Which is to be officially unveiled on Mitcham Heritage Day 10th September.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of the bulletin and as always do let us have your feedback.

Best wishes,  
***Mick Taylor (Guest Editor)***

### ***Cover Picture:***

Find out the story behind the picture on Page 4.

### Photograph Credits

Cover picture: Auriel Glanville

Page 3 Peter Gauntlett (used with permission)

Page 4 WIM Archive

Page 5 John Hawks (Upper) and Auriel Glanville (Lower)

Page 6 Mick Taylor

## **Operations Team Report**

Having avoided Covid for over two years, a couple of our events were affected but only the planned block printing workshop at The Canons had to be cancelled. A very profitable day was held at Croydon's Green Spaces event – we had not attended before and there was sales success and much interest.

John Sheridan's walks programme resumed plus a special walk for a group from the SE Rivers Trust as part of Wandle Discovery Day. Our regular talks are still in great demand and we are reaching new groups and locations.

We mounted a new display at Mitcham Library during late July, and – a first for us – joined part of a “pop-up” shop in the Climate Hub within the Southside Centre in Wandsworth. Mick Taylor and Alison Cousins have both done a duty there and were present at a meeting with Councillor Judy Gasser to discuss Wandsworth's Environmental and Sustainability Study.

This year the annual Community on the Green event managed to avoid being washed out and we enjoyed good sales and many visitors. The highlight of the evening was the sight of the Mayor's driver, taking part in the Morris dancing. It was captured on video by the Mayor herself and is no doubt being circulated around The Civic Centre.

We took part in the latest session of the South East London Museum Service, which focussed on advocacy. We were able to provide excellent examples of our initiatives.

We completed the annual survey for the South West Museums Development Team, and as ever this enables us to reflect on our past year.

The final two window panels have now been completed by Portia Dadley and Dominic Fagan and will be unveiled on September 10<sup>th</sup> during Mitcham Heritage Day.

Merton's Heritage Discovery Day was back to full capacity on August 20th with record sales, but we were unable to run any children's activities this year. Huge thanks to everyone who helped out, especially the walking wounded (see below)

## Volunteers

We are grateful to Michael Hart for continuing the family tradition of supplying our lavender bags, sales of which have been steady all summer.

Sadly we said farewell to Fiona McKelvie and Karen Ellis-Rees. Fiona has relocated her online business to her beloved Northern Ireland and has bought a converted mill house (as you do!!).

Our sympathies to Chris Tanner who has sustained a broken arm and Jackie Godfrey who has had a bad fall

## New Acquisitions

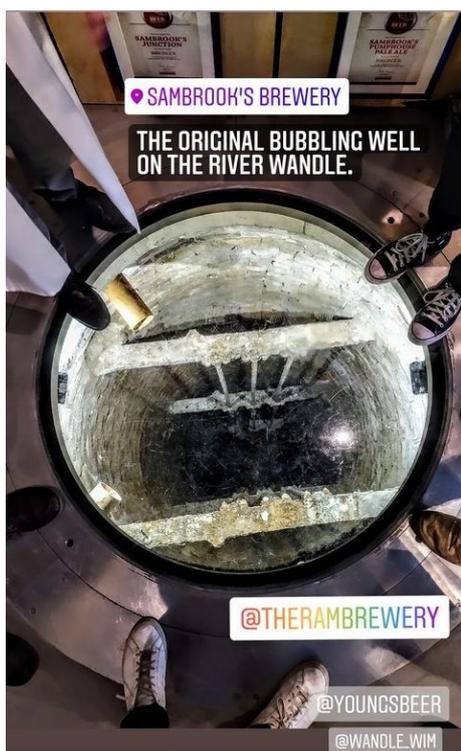
We received some photos and a detailed account of work at Grove Mills ( Mitcham ) from Peter Gauntlett, whose family ran RF White & Co. ( soap producers ) during the years 1932 – 79.

A well known local character, Bill Dedman, has reissued his memoir of Redskin Village, which we shall be selling.

We also ordered a reprint of “Mapping the Mills” for which we shall now have to make a small charge, as the original was part of a funded project from a now defunct organisation.

## Alison Cousins

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## Brewery Well

The picture left was shared with us on Instagram. It shows the well that was used by Young's Brewery at Wandsworth. Water was taken from the well to use in beer production. The water would have been pure as it wasn't taken directly from the River Wandle.

Our volunteer Eric Shaw has a picture in our archive he took of the well. It shows his feet as in this picture. However at the time he took his picture the well was still open. Eric avoided falling in!

## Stories from R.F. White & Co Ltd

Alison highlighted in the Ops Team report on Page 1 that we had received from Peter Gauntlett his memories from his families time at Grove Mill, Mitcham along with a selection of photographs.



Grove Mill when occupied by R.F. White & Co Ltd

We were amused by the stories that he told:

“I recall my father coming home in a particularly thick fog which was not unusual in the 50s and 60s. Apparently he turned into Grove Mills from Mitcham and was astounded to find a double decker bus behind him. The driver had followed him assuming he was on the main road. Grove Mills was no place to turn a bus round!”

“One day a lorry arrived to take a full load to Timothy Whites in Leeds. It was duly loaded, sheeted up and the driver was given his paperwork and off he went. We were somewhat surprised when Timothy Whites rang to say the delivery had not arrived. We were even more surprised to see the lorry arrive back in Mitcham with the load intact. Apparently he had lost the paperwork and couldn't remember where he was supposed to go. My father somewhat angrily asked why he hadn't rung his employer for the details. He replied that he didn't have their phone number. My father then pointed to the driver's door of the cab which was beautifully sign written with the name of the company along with the address and telephone number. Unsurprisingly we never saw that driver again.”

## Our Cover Picture

The photograph on the front of this issue of the bulletin shows John Hawks (Priory Trust) and the Mayor of Merton Cllr Joan Henry standing in front of a piece of history. The gateway that is behind was part of Merton Priory. It was housed inside the stone arch that stood in Station Road, Merton Abbey. When the stone arch started to collapse due to various reasons the wooden gateway was rescued by volunteers of the museum. Sadly the stone from the archway seems to have ended up being used as hardcore.



The gateway and arch in its original position.

When the museum was located in Wimbledon the gateway was on display as part of the exhibition on Merton Priory. This can be seen in the picture below.



After the museum moved out of Wimbledon and finally ended up at the Vestry Hall Annexe there wasn't the room to put it on display. As a result it ended up being laid against one of the walls in the museum office protected by wooden panels. This was in 1996 and it sat there

until this year.

For a while the Operations Team at the museum have felt that a home should be found for the gateway. It felt only logical that this should be The Chapter House. The decision, with the agreement of the Trustees, was taken to offer to loan the gateway to the Priory Trust. An offer they accepted.

After the necessary paperwork was completed John Hawks arranged with Merton Council to have the gateway transported from the museum to The Chapter House. While this took a few weeks to put in place it finally happened on the 13th July.



These workmen now have a story to tell on how they handled a piece of history.

Of course that wasn't the end of the story. Given its new home Katie Hawks put together the narrative to go with the gateway, this can be seen in our cover picture, and of course there had to be an unveiling of the gateway in its new home. This took place on the 25th July. The museum is pleased that the gateway is once more on display.



## Wandle Art Festival 2022

The second Wandle Art Festival took place over the weekend of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July. Despite clashing with the Wimbledon Tennis Finals and the F1 Grand Prix from Silverstone we had a good turn out over the two days. It would seem that our advertising of the event paid off. This involved not just social media but leg work dropping flyers through the doors of local residents as well as emails to various organisations, councillors, and others along with flyers and posters in libraries and local shops.

The event was opened by our Trustee John Hawks who stepped in when our Chair of Trustees Father David Pennells was struck down with Covid. We were very happy to welcome the Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Merton along with local councillors.

As with last year the weather was kind to us. The gazebos were needed to avoid roasting in the hot sun. It was certainly the case for the Dreaming River Band, who performed a one hour set on both days, and the Colliers Wood Community Orchestra who gave us a 45 minute set on Sunday afternoon. We welcomed two Morris dance groups. Saturday saw the Black Swan Borders entertain us and this was followed on Sunday by the Madder Mill Molly. The two groups have different styles of Morris dancing. Both were excellent and each involved the audience in one of their routines. Alan Paul read a number of poems which included one he had written himself on Merton Priory. We were very grateful to all the artists, without whom the festival couldn't take place, who took part along with Mitcham Camera Club, Wimbledon Nature Club and Elly Platt with her amazing Wandle Wardrobe.



Member of the Black Swan Border Morris Dancers



Christopher Killerby conductor of Colliers Wood Community Orchestra



Jimmy and Lena of The Dreaming River Band

Sadly, we were unable to provide the refreshments that we had advertised. Councillor Gill Manly had offered her services but was struck down with Covid on the Friday afternoon. Artist Dickie Wilkinson missed out as he was taken into hospital. Thankfully he has now recovered.

Lastly, I must say thank you to the volunteers who helped out over the two days. They may in some cases feel they made only a small contribution but it is the small things that helped to make the event a success.

To see photographs and videos from the festival please visit our museum FlickrR group <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mickysw6/albums/72177720301567027/with/52309245442/>

*Mick Taylor*

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## Draining the Wandle

This article in the Wimbledon Boro News from Feb 1919 caught my eye. The date fell between the Land Drainage Act of July 1918 and the amendments to the Act in July 1919. It is more what I can read into the

**THE DRAINING OF THE WANDLE.**  
A letter was read from the Surrey Agricultural Executive Committee, stating that a report had been received from the Board of Agriculture in regard to the River Wandle. This report recommended that the draining of the river Wandle, long overdue, should be put in hand forthwith, and pointed out that this was emphatically a case requiring some supervising authority to inspect the river, to dredge it, to keep watch on the levels of the weir crests, and to see that the sluices were opened regularly. The letter stated that, in order that the recommendations of the report might be carried out, the Agricultural Executive Committee were of opinion that a central authority was required in connection with the provisions of the Land Draining Act, in order to control operations for the prevention of floods in the district drained by the water courses in North-East Surrey. They had, therefore, passed a resolution applying to the Board of Agriculture to constitute the areas of the basins of the Wandle, Beverley Brook and Hogg's Mill River a separate drainage district, and to provide for the constitution of a Drainage Board for that district.  
It was agreed to refer the letter to the consideration of the Highways and Sewerage, and Electric Lighting Committees jointly.

request from the Surrey Agricultural Executive Committee rather than it may intend. We have to remember that at this time much of the area around the Wandle was still countryside and used for farming. Flooding would have been an issue that would affect crops. The Wandle may have been causing problems because of a lack of water management. What do you think? Let us know.

*Mick Taylor*

## Volunteer Focus Jackie Godfrey



Jackie is hidden in the background to the right.

I am passionate about social history. I want to know what ordinary workers did when times were relatively easy and particularly when times became tough as industries changed. There will be rich pickings for future historians re the pandemic, how the Russian invasion of Ukraine has affected world-wide economics and the how ideology of capitalism stands up to states such as China.

Firmly grounded in Merton, I grew up in Mitcham and realised early on education was key to development, in all senses, personally and to attain a reasonable life style. Civic pride was important, classes of school children shown round the Vestry Hall – it worked for me!

Ideally I would have followed a career in science, not seen as a 'girl' subject back in the early 60s, social sciences, though, have proved for me a 'nearly as good as' area. Work in the gas industry, NHS and Univ. of London funded my part time studies. British Gas South Eastern sponsored me to become a graduate of Chartered Institute of Personnel Development

Mitcham Parish church was where I was baptized, a number of relatives are buried there, including one with lavender connections. I believe a pioneering member of the Slater family (maternal side of the family) founded a Mitcham in Australia (I think there are several). I'm told my maternal grandfather was a churchwarden and I know the companionship of women in the church was important to my maternal grandmother. The role organised religion played as the glue of societies during late Victorian age through to end of WW2 fascinates and intrigues me. How societies work could lead me to anthropology – if no other projects, such as Heritage funded study of Royal Female Orphanage, Beddington, get in the way.

Volunteering has become a way of life since retirement (and no longer required for grannie duties) - not only at the museum but for several other local history society societies, an art society and as a friend of a local park. Nordic walking and taking classes for Age Concern was fun. An archaeological dig in a friend's garden which was opened up for local schools feeds my passion for trying to inspire young people to know more about the past - to ask questions - become involved.

My late brother, was a cricketer – my links with Mitcham and the Wandle remain strong .

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## Dates for the Diary

### **Mitcham Heritage Day 10th September 2022**

This day is a wonderful opportunity to find out about the heritage and history of Mitcham. The museum will be open from 10am until 4pm.

We are hosting book conservator Katarina Kelsey from 12-3pm.

For full of the Mitcham Heritage Day go to:

<https://mitchamcricketgreen.org.uk/mitcham-heritage-day/>

### **Wandle Fortnight 10th September until 25th September**

There will be something for everyone. The fortnight includes a range of walks, art displays, children's activities and more. Details can be found at <http://www.wandlevalleyforum.org.uk/wandle-fortnight.html>

### **Wandle Heritage Walk (part of Wandle Fortnight) Thurs 22nd September 2022**

#### **Mitcham Tram Stop to Morden Hall Snuff Mills**

The route is just over one mile yet in that short distance there is an amazing amount of history. An opportunity to hear about the railways, brewing, textiles, farming and of course snuff.

Starts at 11am. To book email [john.sheridan08@gmail.com](mailto:john.sheridan08@gmail.com)

### **Annual General Meeting 17th November 2022**

The AGM will take place in the Vestry Hall , London road, Mitcham from 7:30pm.

Guest speaker to be confirmed



Accreditation Mentor: Emma Harper Welwyn Hatfield Museum Service.  
Museum Advisor: Yvette Shepherd, Museum of London (Docklands).

The Wandle Industrial Museum, the Vestry Hall Annexe, London Road,  
Mitcham, Surrey CR4 3UD. Tel: 020 8648 0127

**Company No 01792482, Charity No 288655.**

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

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

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Free Admission. Donations welcome.

**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](mailto:office@wandle.org)

You can find us on:

