

Spring 93

No 3

THE WANDLE INDUSTRIAL MUSEUM

Newsletter



**The Vestry Hall Annexe, London Road,
Mitcham, Surrey, CR4 5UD Tel 081 648 0127**

**OPEN: Every Weds 1-4pm,
First Sun of each month 2 -5pm.**

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

Admission: Adults 20p, Children & Senior Citizens 10p.

To Report:

The most significant event for the Museum recently has been our participation again in the Courtryside Comes to Town event in Morden Hall Park – see separate report in this Newsletter.

Thanks largely to an excellent article in the Merton Messenger, we are having increased interest from local schools, especially Middle Schools, for whom we have provide slide shows and printing workshops, as well as visits to the Museum. We have had a variety of adult groups visiting too- varying from members of the Greater London Industrial Archaeological Society (G.L.I.A.S.), to the local branch of the Manchester Unity Oddfellows. We also have an increasing demand for talks and slide shows for Women's meetings and luncheon clubs.

Looking ahead, we will be opening on Thursday 3rd June from 10.00 to 4.0p.m., to coincide with the Open Day in the Merton Volunteer Bureau next door on that day.

We are continuing to expand the stock in the Museum shop: Recent additions include supplies of Norfolk Lavender, Postcards of Carshalton Ponds (from Sutton Heritage Service), and our own Wandle Industrial Museum pencils!

We will also be loaning materials to an exhibition on the History of Morden being held at St. Lawrence Church, London Road, Morden from Saturday 19th June until Sunday 4th July, open 9.30-5.30

NEW EXHIBITION

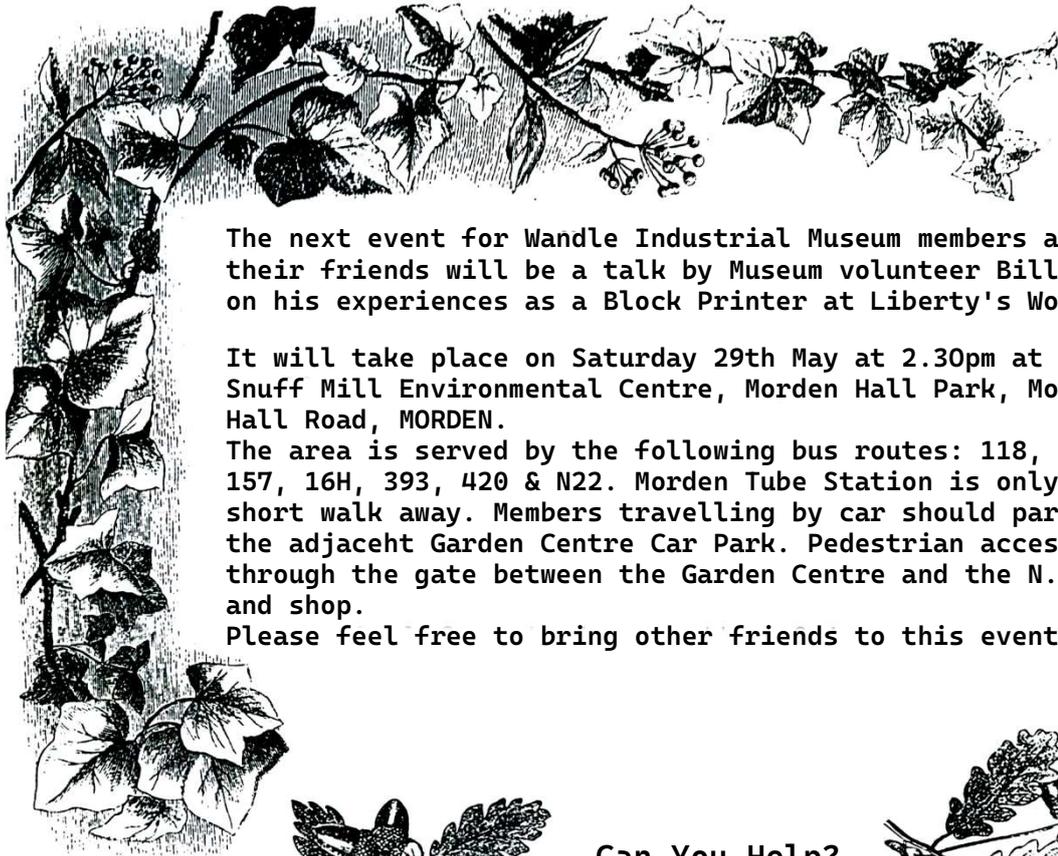
Our temporary display area currently features a display on "The Ancient Order of Foresters" Friendly Society, founded, 1834, a branch of which once met in the adjacent Vestry Hall. We are grateful to Roger Logan for the loan of the display and artefacts.

STOP PRESS...WANDLE WALK.

On Saturday 15th May Doug Cluett will be leading a walk from Wandle Park, Byegrove Road, SW19 entrance to Wandsworth, including a visit to Merton's new Nature Park. Cost;£2.00- details from Sutton's Heritage Service.



Forthcoming Event



The next event for Wandle Industrial Museum members and their friends will be a talk by Museum volunteer Bill Rudd on his experiences as a Block Printer at Liberty's Works.

It will take place on Saturday 29th May at 2.30pm at the Snuff Mill Environmental Centre, Morden Hall Park, Morden Hall Road, MORDEN.

The area is served by the following bus routes: 118, 157, 16H, 393, 420 & N22. Morden Tube Station is only a short walk away. Members travelling by car should park in the adjacent Garden Centre Car Park. Pedestrian access is through the gate between the Garden Centre and the N.T. cafe and shop.

Please feel free to bring other friends to this event.



Can You Help?



Over the May-Day Bank Holiday Weekend, the Museum was well represented at the Countryside Comes To Town, Conservation and Craft Fayre in Morden Hall Park. We are grateful to all the volunteers who gave of their time over the weekend to make the event a successful one for the Museum. A lot of interest was shown in the Museum's displays, and good sales achieved.

We are now looking for volunteers to staff stalls at the next two public events at which the Museum is participating:
The Mitcham Carnival, on Saturday 22nd May, on Three Kings Place
The Merton Green Fair, on Sunday 20th June, at London Road Playing Fields, Mitcham. If you may be able to help at either of these events please phone Andy Vail at the Museum on 648 0127.

Any Suggestions?

What events would you like arranged for Museum members?

If you can suggest speakers to invite or places to visit, or if you know of organizations whose aims are similar to our own (or, come to that, if you can offer something yourself), please let us know.

Mapping The Wandle

Written and Illustrated

By John Viner



A Rambler's Nightmare

Helping to produce a footpath map and guide to the River Wandle - was one of the principal projects I was asked to undertake as artist/co-ordinator at the Wandle Industrial Museum.

This was early in 1988, when the Museum was based in premises at Hartfield Road, Wimbledon. My first problem was - where to start? As I was responsible not only for producing the necessary artwork but also ensuring its accuracy, the obvious solution was that I should do a 'walk-about' of the area.

At the time the Wandle Valley was about as familiar to me as the nether regions of Tibet, or the upper reaches of the Orinoco. However, armed with an A-Z Street Atlas, a London Transport bus map, pencil and notebook, I ventured forth.



Some muddy areas...



Pub lunch

Walking, after all, for the reasonably fit, is not a difficult exercise. It is a matter of placing one foot in front of the other and steering oneself, at a reasonable pace, in the right direction. The trek from Wandsworth to Carshalton therefore, taken in easy stages, presented few problems. The route is reasonably well sign-posted apart from the perils of crossing the many busy main roads adjacent to its course, and a few muddy patches in its wilder areas.

I was also fortunate to enlist the help of two of the girls at the Museum, both ex art school students, who volunteered to cover the remaining section of the walk between Carshalton and Waddon Ponds. The notes and sketches they produced were both accurate and invaluable.

It was back at the drawing board where the problems really started. To interpret in visual form the many aspects of the Wandle Valley, to relate the forty-odd crossing points to adjacent roads and railways, devise a satisfactory way of identifying the various places of interest, and accurately plotting the route of the Wandle footpath was no easy matter. The map was to be produced in two colours, which involved laying two clear 'cel' overlays over the base artwork. Most of the lettering was hand-drawn, and, as the Museum had no access to desk-top publishing, computer graphics etc., the finished artwork involved a massive 'paste-up' job. Today, no doubt, with the aid of modern technology, artwork such as this would be produced in ten seconds flat!

Certainly such a project as the Wandle Trail map was in no way the achievement of any one person. Text had to be written and typed out, layout discussed and archives consulted. At the end of the day, all might have gone to waste had it not been for the helpfulness and expertise of the printers, Ark Litho.



tmare



Back to the drawing board.



Emma Hamilton



William Morris

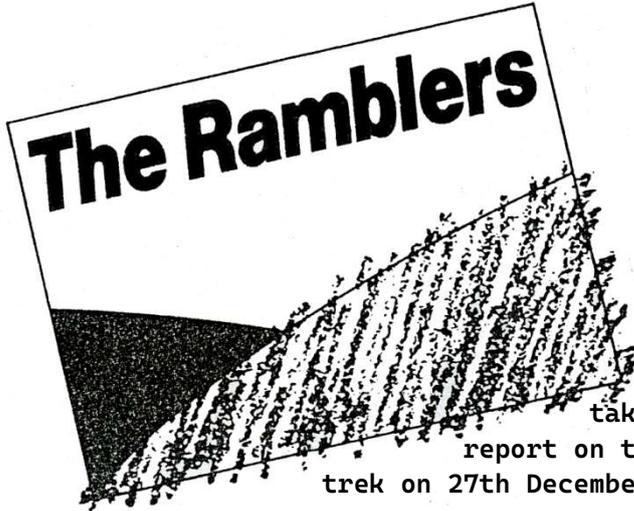
As to my own impressions of the Wandle valley, obviously its more picturesque areas might well inspire any latter-day Wordsworth to wax lyrical.

Yet even amongst the sprawling urban development which characterizes many of its parts there is much which, with a little imagination, one might enjoy. To tread the ground, for instance, where Lord Nelson and the exuberant Lady Hamilton held court at Merton Place; to savour in these times of change where William Morris practiced his art, or nearby on the site of Merton Priory where sundry Bishops preached their religion.

A new and up-dated edition of the Wandle Trail Map is now being discussed. It is to be hoped that this will bear evidence of improved facilities and access along the river banks, of a new determination to conserve the heritage of this unique area, and of an upsurge of interest in reviving those traditional crafts and industries which have long since disappeared.



Liberty style



WANDLE TRAIL REPORT 1992
from Colin Saunders

Once a year, I aim to lead a public walk along the whole length of the Wandle Trail, as this provides an opportunity for participants to see what developments have taken place in the meantime, and for me to report on them. I am pleased to say that, on my latest trek on 27th December 1992, most of those noted are for the better.

A bright and bracing "Christmas Sunday" morning saw five intrepid walkers set off at 9.15 from Waddon Station. These were the really keen ones who wanted to miss none of the 11 mile Trail. A further 20 or so, who could not or would not make such an early start so soon after their festive indulgences, gratefully accepted the alternative start one hour later at Carshalton.

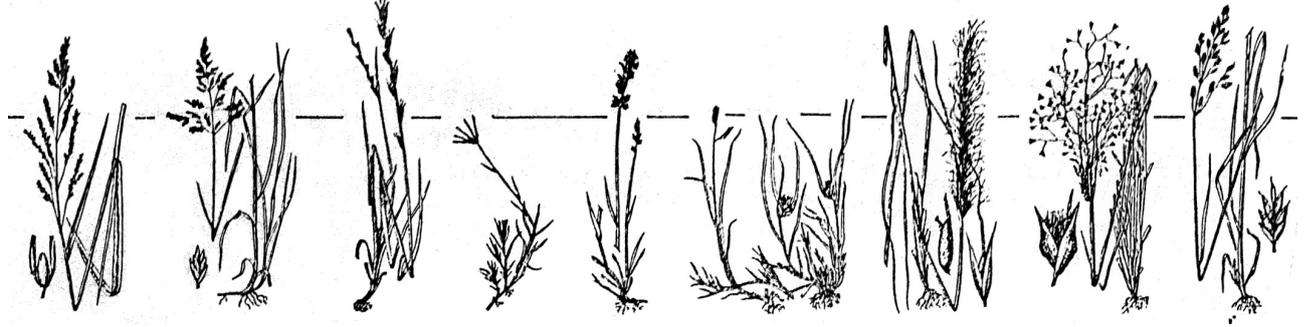
The first development, just half a mile from the Trails official start at Waddon Ponds, was encouraging: a new stretch of river path in Beddington, linking Richmond Green with Wandle Road on the north bank. I would have missed it, had not one of the party, who lived nearby, drawn it to my attention. The new path also provides a view, previously obscured, of the point where the mill race separates from the main stream to pass Beddington Mill.

Another half mile brought us to the flood alleviation scheme beside Whelan Way in Beddington Village, already under construction last year, and now complete. We all agreed that it was well design and already looked quite natural with its centrepiece pond, which has a dipping platform for the education and entertainment of schoolchildren. The appearance should be enhanced in a few years when trees which have been planted are more mature.

In Carshalton, the lower pond beside London Road now has water, lacking last time, though the upper one is still dry. (The water level throughout was noticeably higher than last time.) In The Grove, the long awaited restoration of the Charrington Corn Mill waterwheel now seems to be well under way. The BP Chemical works in Mill Lane has disappeared behind a hoarding, awaiting decontamination of the ground before redevelopment (which includes a river path) can get under way.

I don't know why it hasn't struck me before, but I realised that a bridge at the north end of Culver Island (Hackbridge) would link two sections of riverside path, and make unnecessary the walk through the island's housing estate. A point to be taken up by the Wandle Group and London Walking Forum perhaps?

At Watermeads, the holes in the fence have been plugged - for how long, we wondered. I do understand the concern of the National Trust to protect this wildlife reserve, but still feel that some way should be found for walkers to keep to the river here, instead of having to skulk along the murky path beside an unsightly wire fence. After all, as I understand, one of the original intentions of the gift was to provide a riverside walk.



Now in Merton borough, we saw the first of the council's splendid Wandle Trail signposts, and very impressive they are too, with the Trails waterwheel logo prominent. Well done, Merton, Croydon, Sutton and Wandsworth – please copy!

For most of my party members, the new National Trust cafeteria and shop at Morden Hall Park proved to be the highlight of the day. The Trust have certainly made a splendid job of it, and I was further gratified by getting my first view of the Snuff Mill waterwheel. We noticed posters advertising the sale of the lease of Morden Hall itself.

Another first view for me was that of the priory chapter house remains at Merton Abbey Mills. This is gained from a subway linking the Mills to the Savacentre. Unfortunately this is rather cut off from the rest of the Mills site, so doesn't get the attention it deserves. Better signposting and upgrading of the linking paths needed here, I suggest.

The former Wandle Valley Sewage works now has a sign announcing the "construction" of the proposed Nature Park, though this seems a rather inappropriate word. I was pleased to find that we could still use my "secret subway" under the railway line here, beside the Wandle, to reach the mouth of the River Graveney.

At Wimbledon, we considered how difficult it was going to be to cross busy Plough Lane when the riverside stretch beside the former football ground is accessible. As a matter of fact, one of the worst aspects of the Trail at the moment is the number of major roads where potentially dangerous unprotected crossings now have to be made. I make it six, i.e. Beddington lane, Beddington; London Road, Carshalton; Middleton Road, Beddington Corner (all in Sutton borough); London Road, Mitcham; and Morden Road (both in Merton borough); and Wandsworth Plain, Wandsworth. Another point to take up.

All the way from Waddon, through the boroughs of Croydon, Sutton, and Merton, the walk had been comparatively litter-free, considering the urban surroundings. So it was something of a shock, on entering "the brighter borough" (Wandsworth), to find the well designed footpath at Trewint Bridge, opened last year, carpeted to the shins by "wall-to-wall" litter, apparently tipped over the fence of the adjoining caravan site. The matter has been reported to the appropriate authority.

A more pleasant surprise was our arrival at Earlsfield with plenty of daylight to spare. I had left the finishing point rather vague. to allow for a slow pace and an early dusk. But the pace had been quickened by a chill east wind, so we had time to continue to Wandle Mouth. I claim no credit, but just as I was talking about the heron roost at the Shell Oil Terminal there, one of these gracious birds ascended and, backed by a wintery lemon sunset, flew slowly past us. A perfect end to an enjoyable walk.

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"WHAT'S ON"

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FORTHCOMING EVENTS ORGANIZED BY THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY
KELMSCOTT HOUSE, 26 UPPER MALL, LONDON W6 9TA Tel 081 741 3735

SATURDAY 15 MAY, 2PM
THE WILLIAM MORRIS SOCIETY'S
38TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.
At Toynbee Hall, 28 Commercial St,
(Just round the corner from
Whitechapel Gallery, Aldgate East
Underground, many buses).
Also Rosemary Taylor, an East
London historian, talks on William
Morris and his East End connections
Admission free.

SATURDAY 19 JUNE, 2.30 to 5PM
RED HOUSE GARDEN PARTY.
Red House Lane, Bexley Heath, Kent.
By kind permission of
Doris and Edward Hollamby.

Tickets £5 (including tea) from the Society.

For further information contact: Hon Secretary,
Mr V. Phillips, 22 Olaves Walk, SW16 5QQ.
Tel : 081 764 2421.

Friday, 14 May, a historical walk led by
Mr Eric Montague and Dr Tony Scott. Meet at
7.30 pm at the entrance to the footpath on the
south side of Ravensbury Mill (also known as
Whitely's Mill) at the junction of Morden
Road, Mitcham, and Wandle Road. The route will be
along the bank of the Wandle through Ravensbury Park
and the Watermeads.

Saturday, 19 June. A walk led by Julie Goodman to take a look at John Innes'
Merton Park. Meet at level crossing Dorset Rd / Kingston Rd at 2.30pm.
Buses: 152, 163 and 164.

See elsewhere in this Newsletter for the following;

- 1) Members event on Saturday 29th May.
- 2) Details of Museum Stalls at the Mitcham Carnival
and the Merton Green Fair.
- 3) Details of the History of Morden Exhibition.

MERTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY



FORTHCOMING PROGRAMME